



Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment

Public Information Centre

November 28, 2006

Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place

100 Princes' Boulevard

Toronto

6:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

SUMMARY NOTES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The second Public Meeting and Open House during round one of consultation for the study was held on Tuesday, November 28th at the Direct Energy Centre at Exhibition Place (100 Princes' Boulevard) in the City of Toronto. The purpose of the Open House was to introduce the study, present available information, and provide an opportunity for public feedback on the following two studies:

1. Exhibition Place to Dufferin Street: Environmental Assessment Modification
2. Dufferin Street to Roncesvalles Avenue: Individual Environmental Assessment

The format was a drop-in centre with display panels. The Information Session commenced at **6:30 pm**. A formal presentation and a question and answer period followed at **7:30 p.m.** 20 participants signed the optional sign-in sheets and approximately 18 people stayed behind for the formal presentation and discussion.

The following representatives from the City of Toronto, and the project team were at the Open House to discuss details of the project and answer questions:

ATTENDANCE:

- Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone
- Chris Bishop, TTC
- Richard Nusink, TTC
- Sameh Ghaly, TTC
- Wieslaw Chojnacki, TTC
- David Nagler, City of Toronto
- Nigel Tahair, City of Toronto
- Terry Wallace, Lea Consulting Ltd.
- Karl van Kessel, Gartner Lee Ltd.
- Leslie Martin, Earth Tech

1.1 Notification

On Tuesday, November 14, 2006, notification was mailed to 125 individuals on the established project stakeholder list. On Thursday, November 15, 2006, 24 989 notices were distributed to Canada Post, for delivery to residents and businesses in the study area. A media release was issued on Monday, November 20, 2006 and public notification was also placed in Now Magazine on November 23, 2006.

The project website www.toronto.ca/involved was launched on Monday, November 6, 2006 and a link was provided from www.ttc.ca on Friday, November 10, 2006.

2.0 Handout Package

The handout package consisted of the following:

- i. A comment sheet for attendees to provide feedback
- ii. A return envelope
- iii. A notice that was distributed earlier entitled "Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment: Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre #1"

Comments could be provided to the City **until January 15, 2007**.

3.0 Welcoming Remarks and Overview

City of Toronto public consultation co-ordinator **David Nagler** opened the meeting at **7:30 pm** and welcomed everyone to the first round of consultations for the Waterfront West Streetcar Environmental Assessment. After briefly informing participants of his role as the liaison between TTC staff and the public, **David Nagler** reminded everyone to submit comments in writing using the comment sheet. He then introduced **Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone**, TTC Staff **Richard Nusink**, **Chris Bishop** and the consulting team: **Karl Van Kessel** and **Terry Wallace**.

4.0 Meeting Presentation

Formal presentation in Powerpoint format was conducted by **Chris Bishop**, Senior Project Engineer of the TTC. The information presented was also displayed on boards in the meeting room. The presentation was 15 minutes long followed by a question and answer period.

The meeting presentation can be accessed from the City of Toronto's website at www.toronto.ca/involved/projects "Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment".

The following is a summary of the information presented at the public meeting:

4.1 What is an Environmental Assessment?

It is an evaluation of facilities to determine potential effects on the environment. An EA is not just concerned with flora and fauna, but more comprehensively, in this case, it is involves an examination of how an introduction of a new streetcar line would affect people. It is therefore important to encourage public involvement and participation during this process to ensure that stakeholders understand the process and are satisfied with what is set out. It is also important to note that this EA will serve as the foundation of analysis before any facilities are constructed.

4.2 Environmental Assessment and the Waterfront West area

An Environmental Assessment (EA) was conducted in the early 1990s on the feasibility of a TTC extension from Spadina Avenue to Dufferin Street. The approved route ran from the existing Spadina Loop via Queens Quay, Portland, Lake Shore, Newfoundland, Ontario Place and Dufferin to a loop on the east side of Dufferin north of the CN Rail corridor. An extension from Dufferin to Roncesvalles was considered but not included in the 1993 EA approved undertaking. The intention of the EA, which was approved by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment in 1995, was to provide high-speed and high-capacity transit service to the area between downtown and south Etobicoke.

Since 1993, three key changes occurred:

1. First the exhibition loop was moved from the previous location in front of the Coliseum to a location behind the Coliseum
2. In 1998, the line was extended from Spadina through to Bathurst Street, and rather than via Portland and Lakeshore, the route went along Queens Quay to Bathurst Street and connected to the existing Fleet Street track.
3. To further improve on service, the streetcar on Fleet Street has been designated for a reserved right of way that will continue to the existing Exhibition Loop.

The project team will come back in the late spring to present findings and recommendations to the public. Because of the need to integrate the alignment through the two sections, the final recommendation will likely be held until a decision is made on the Dufferin to Roncesvalles portion. The final EA modification report will be submitted to the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) at that time.

4.3 Why are we conducting an Environmental Assessment now?

As a result to the changes that occurred in the area in the 1990s, a number of options are available in addition to the ones that were previously examined. In keeping with the spirit of the EA to provide high-speed, high-capacity transit service linking to south Etobicoke, TTC now proposes to review the alternatives between Lake Shore Boulevard and Dufferin and establish a preferred alignment from Dufferin to Roncesvalles Avenue to connect to the reserved right of way in the Queensway.

This proposed streetcar extension study is broken down into 2 study areas, namely from the Exhibition loop through to Dufferin and from Dufferin onwards to Roncesvalles. While the proposed streetcar extension from Lake Shore Boulevard to Dufferin is a modification to the existing EA, the streetcar extension from Dufferin to Roncesvalles must involve a new EA study as the line through this area was not included in the previous EA report. At present, a Terms of Reference (ToR) will be drafted and when approved, it will set the foundation for an individual EA for the extension.

4.4 Exhibition Place to Dufferin Street: Environmental Assessment Modification

There are three options currently being considered for a route alignment from the Exhibition Place loop to Dufferin Street Environmental Assessment Modification:

1. The original alignment from the 1993 EA, along Lake Shore Blvd south of Exhibition Place through Ontario Place
2. Extension of the track from the current loop at Exhibition Place, west to Dufferin St. on the south side of the Gardiner Expressway and CN corridor
3. A route via Strachan Avenue, north under the Gardiner Expressway, over the CN corridor, and westward to Dufferin Street along the north side of the CN corridor.

Each of these options is being considered and evaluated based on the degree of impact on the surrounding environment. Specifically, these options will be evaluated based on the following criteria, namely: technical, natural environment, land use, social environment, cultural heritage and archaeological resources and financial. Each key area has sub-factors or indicators that will be used for the evaluation.

4.5 Dufferin Street to Roncesvalles Avenue/Queen Street West Intersection: Individual Environmental Assessment

The Individual EA involves a two stage process. The first stage is the creation of a Terms of Reference (ToR) that acts as a road map for how the study will be carried. When approved by the Ministry of the Environment, the full Environmental Assessment (stage 2) will be undertaken.

At this time there are four preliminary corridors that will be evaluated for the study area. In the comment sheet we have asked for your specific feedback on these corridors and also if you would like to see additional corridors evaluated:

1. Do Nothing (Mandated as part of the EA process)
2. Lakeshore Boulevard Corridor (south of the Gardiner Expressway)
3. CN Rail Corridor (north of the Gardiner Expressway)
4. Dufferin Street to King Street corridor

4.6 Next Steps

The TTC encourages the public to submit written comments from now until **January 15th, 2007**. In late spring of 2007, TTC staff will conduct the next round of consultations to update stakeholders on progress and receive feedback.

Between now and January 15, 2007 comments obtained will be considered in the development of a "Terms of Reference" (ToR) for the Dufferin to Roncesvalles Individual EA. The ToR is a roadmap for that study.

The ToR will be available for review on the project website – www.toronto.ca/involved or more specifically: www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/waterfront_transit/index.htm. In addition, it will also be posted on the MOE website during their review:
http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/env_reg/ea/english/ToRs/ToRs_index.htm

Once the ToR is approved, the study team will get into the details on routing as part of the next stage of the study - the "Environmental Assessment" portion.

At the second round of consultations tentatively scheduled for Spring 2007, an evaluation of "Alternatives to the Undertaking" which are the Preliminary Corridors between Dufferin and Roncesvalles will be presented to the public for comment.

At Public Information Centre 3, the schedule is to present an evaluation of "Alternative Methods" to carry out the undertaking. The Alternative Methods are more specific streetcar track routes. The third round of consultations is tentatively scheduled for Fall or Winter of 2007. Please note that plans and schedules are subject to change based on agency and public input.

At Public Information Center 4, details of the preferred alignment and the detailed evaluation of its effects will be presented for comment.

The public can submit comments to **David Nagler** of Toronto's Public Consultation Unit and additional information is available online at the City's website, www.toronto.ca/involved or directly: www.toronto.ca/involved/projects/waterfront_transit/index.htm

David Nagler advised that all information (including this presentation) will be posted on the city's website either by this Friday, December 1st, or Monday, December 4th at the latest. He encouraged the public to visit the project website from www.toronto.ca/involved for further information.

5.0 Question and Answer Period

The Formal presentation ended at **7:50 pm** and was followed by a period of discussion. The following is a summary of the comments expressed, and responses provided during the discussion. Responses to comments are highlighted in boxes. It shall be noted that not all participants identified themselves by name.

Comment 1.0

There is no reason why there must be a connection made by the TTC to south Etobicoke. GO Transit serves the area further away from downtown. On this corridor, in particular, there are four tracks and three of which are used by GO Transit. I can see why a connection must be made between the Exhibition Loop and Dufferin Street because then you get better streetcar access, but anywhere further from downtown such as south Etobicoke, I don't see a point simply because there is already GO Transit. There must be some integrated fare system that ties GO Transit with TTC otherwise you are just wasting your time since GO is doing something and TTC is doing something else.

Response 1.0

Chris Bishop: The points you raised are beyond the scope of this study, as the idea of this study is to develop a continuous service from downtown to South Etobicoke. GO Transit has limited stops in the area. You are right that if the fare was the same it would likely attract more people to GO transit. But GO doesn't have the catchment area that TTC has. The stop spacing for TTC service is much closer.

Comment 2.0

My name is **Lynn Clay** and I represent the **Liberty Village BIA**. Currently, there are 6000 employees in the area, and I would take a guess that approximately 6000 new residents reside east of this employment district. This means that you have a ready source of 12,000 people that would all love to use public transit. I do not want to move the Exhibition Loop over and I would also support another extension to Roncesvalles, but right now the King Street car is infuriatingly slow and does not serve the area well. We hope that the route could be constructed on the north side of the corridor instead of the south side. If constructed on the south as planned, people have to go under the Gardiner or across Dufferin or Strachan to access the LRT (light rail transit). We have to make it easier for people to access public transit into the area. Going to the north side makes perfect sense as opposed to the south to visitors who go to shows such as the One-of-a-kind Show that are only held once a year.

Response 2.0

Deputy Mayor Joe Pantalone: It is my understanding that any further construction on the north side beyond the Front Street work would involve the demolition of Canada Bread which is a major industry to the area and I think the BIA should take into consideration the consequences of getting rid of a major industrial use in the area. Also, it should be noted that a submission was put in yesterday by CNE which claimed that this line not only serves CNE but also businesses in the area. The 4 million visitors to Exhibition Place could then be served by this streetcar.

Comment 2.1

Lynn Clay responded to Deputy Mayor **Pantalone's** answer with the following: We are certainly aware that Canada Bread is there. However, we must also take note that land values are increasing in the

downtown core and Canada Bread might not be there forever. We should, therefore, not limit public transportation based on an industrial use in the area.

Response 2.1

Chris Bishop: We are considering all these issues and we are certainly aware of Liberty Village and the size of the development taking place. The question of whether or not Liberty Village residents would be willing to cross the Rail Corridor to access the line in the Exhibition Grounds or whether they would only use a line on the north side of corridor will have to be evaluated. This information will be taken into account through the evaluation process. We have talked to GO and to the City and will try to come up with a preferred alternative.

Comment 3.0

I used to live down on King Street West and I couldn't get anywhere including taking the streetcar so I actually moved up to Queen Street to live. It is ridiculous down there and I feel bad for the people there. They are trapped because there is no efficient public transit that they can use. I also have a hard time driving around in the area.

Response 3.0

Deputy Mayor Pantalone: The Official Plan to alleviate these problems is already there and it is important to note that there is a time lapse from translating the Plan to implementation.

Chris Bishop: If everything goes ahead, and money is provided to build it, the first piece (from Exhibition-Dufferin) can be built in 3-4 years and the second piece (Dufferin-Roncesvalles) in 5-6 years. The TTC is well aware of the King and Queen Street situation. What I mean by this is that the congested situations are not only problematic for streetcars, but are also equally so for cars.

Comment 4.0

When you are talking about hooking up service with South Etobicoke, you are in reality connecting the streetcar line to Queensway. Is there any future track being considered for Ellis and High Park on the Lake Shore?

Response 4.0

Chris Bishop: It has been suggested but the further away from the Queensway corridor, the further away it is from existing and potential development so few passengers would be drawn from that area.

Comment 5.0

There is hardly any development on Queen, Parkside Drive or even Roncesvalles (the area where you are proposing for a TTC streetcar). So to say that no TTC could be going that way because there is no development south of the Gardiner is not really accurate. I think that hooking up with south Etobicoke by connecting it to the Queensway might not be a good idea anyway because of the traffic congestion that is already in existence.

Response 5.0

Chris Bishop: Significant development exists or is planned on either side of High Park. The Queensway streetcar right of way is already available on the Queensway so that is why we are trying to use that service. The service is high-speed, high-capacity and it gets you to where you want to go fairly quickly.

Comment 6.0

Is the streetcar going to go underneath the train tracks as it moves north? I am also concerned about the delay at the turn at Roncesvalles.

Response 6.0

Chris Bishop: The previous EA study looked at several options. One option would be built into the bank on the north side of the Gardiner Expressway where the advertising is located. Depending on where the new track crosses the Gardiner (whether it starts on the north side at Dufferin or continues on the south side of the Gardiner and crosses north somewhat further west), a new route would have time to get up to King Street by the time it gets to Roncesvalles. TTC has had discussions with residents in the Queen and Roncesvalles area regarding changes to the Queensway through the area immediately west of Roncesvalles. Plans have been developed to improve streetcar operation through the area and reduce traffic delay at the Roncesvalles/Queen intersection.

Wieslaw Chojnacki of TTC further explained the details of the Roncesvalles - Queen operation: The Roncesvalles Car House is a vital part of the system and streetcars have to return to that location in off peak hours and for maintenance work to be performed. The option developed in this area will be displayed in the next open house and TTC will explore how it will be incorporated into the current study.

Comment 7.0

Lynn Clay: What is the impact of the Waterfront West streetcar on the CNE and on Ontario Place?

Response 7.0

Chris Bishop: The previous alignment south of Exhibition Place had an impact on parking for Ontario Place. We recently met with the current management at Ontario Place and they support the previous alignment. The existing loop behind the coliseum of Exhibition Place may not be there had previous Ontario Place management approved of the alignment through Ontario Place.

One of the alignments we are evaluating would affect the CNE Food building as part of the building would be lost. Furthermore, some of the parking on the south side, west of Dufferin Street would also be lost. That being said, running different options would affect surrounding environments so each of the options has to be considered and weighed against each other.

Comment 8.0

In addition to streetcar, wouldn't it be better to have buses on the road, Queen, King also? Streetcars make stops and short turns and there are potential delays. I understand the scope of an EA meeting, but I think that express services might be better because short turn cars are so slow. Maybe an express bus of some kind during peak hours. Most people are getting off at University, Bay and Yonge and maybe such a service could help a lot of people.

Response 8.0

Chris Bishop: Past studies suggest that bus services are slower than streetcars. That was found with the streetcar service on Spadina Avenue. The buses were running at 5-6 miles an hour and now the Spadina streetcars have their own right of way. With regard to express buses, they exist in the east end and our service planners evaluate potential new services on an on-going basis.

Deputy Mayor Pantalone: It is not the streetcar that is the issue, traffic congestion is the culprit. Adding more buses to the area might not be the solution. The roads that go from east to west such as Adelaide, Richmond, Front do not extend beyond Bathurst Street, and those people that wish to proceed west need to connect to Lake Shore, Queen Street and King Street West. As a result, this has created a lot of traffic congestion for the area and that has inadvertently affected the streetcars that run along Queen and King West. What it boils down to is that there is a problem with the existing grid system of Toronto.

Comment 8.1

I notice that there are signs indicating diamond lanes on King and on Dufferin (lane reserved for vehicles with more than 3 people). Is it still in the by-law and if it is not enforced, why are the signs still there?

Response 8.1

Chris Bishop: To my knowledge, it is no longer enforced.

Deputy Mayor Pantalone further elaborated: You need an authority to enforce the diamond lane and that means police must monitor the use of the road. However, hiring of officers requires a lot of money and the city spends 700 million dollars a year on police.

About 50% of tax revenue goes to the Feds, 40% goes to the Province and the remaining small percentage goes to cities which it needs to fund not only the police but also other services such as libraries, parks, etc. That is why the city is trying to do the best that it can in a difficult situation. The reality of a diamond lane is that it is not feasible at this time for the police to use limited resources to enforce it.

Comment 9.0

We have no idea what may be purchased in the future, there might not even be a streetcar. I have questions about noise and vibration and I hope that my concerns are being answered by senior officials.

For us living in the area, we need to hear from independent professionals what exactly is being promised here with the various options that we are presented with. We do have significant questions and I hope that these types of concepts are registered and replied to by qualified industry recognized professionals and not just by in house responses – organs of local civic municipalities. We know that there are streetcar systems around the world that have very acceptable transit services in tough urban environments.

Response 9.0

Chris Bishop: I hope that if you have those questions you can document them and send them to us.

Comment 10.0

Can you comment what the ongoing EA process is going to be like?

Response 10.0

Chris Bishop: The process is going to take place over the next year. This includes a report on the modification between Dufferin and the Exhibition Loop, as well as an Individual EA for the section from Dufferin to Roncesvalles. All of that is scheduled to be completed by the end of next year which would then be submitted to the Ministry of Environment (MOE) for approval. Construction would commence when there is approval of the recommended alignment and if money is available. Ideally we are looking at 3-4 years for construction from Exhibition Place to Dufferin- and potentially 5-6 years for the Dufferin-Roncesvalles connection.

6.0 Closing Remarks

David Nagler formally ended the Q & A at **8:32 pm**. He encouraged comments from participants and suggested they speak to staff and put comments in writing. Comments received will be documented as part of the EA.