



## **Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment**

Public Information Centre #2

August 15, 2007

Bonar Parkdale Presbyterian Church

250 Dunn Avenue

6:30-9:30 pm

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### **SUMMARY NOTES**

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#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This public Information Centre #2 for the Waterfront West Streetcars EA (Dufferin to Roncesvalles Avenue) was held on August 15, 2007.

34 people attended.

#### **ATTENDANCE: City of Toronto/TTC Project Team**

- Chris Bishop, TTC
- Karl van Kessel, Gartner Lee Ltd.
- Terry Wallace, LEA
- Vivian Leung, LEA
- Adrienne Long, Earthtech
- Saikat Basak, Transportation Planning, City of Toronto
- David Nagler, Public Consultation Unit, City of Toronto
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#### **1.1 Notification**

On Thursday, July 26, 2007, notification was mailed to 280 individuals on the established project stakeholder list. On Thursday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 24 989 notices were distributed to Canada Post, for delivery to residents and businesses in the study area. Public notification was also placed in the Parkdale Liberty on Wednesday, August 1<sup>st</sup> and NOW Magazine on Thursday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>.

## **2.0 Handout Package**

The following was handed out at the public meeting:

- Comment Sheet – Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment
- Diagram - Exhibition Place to Dufferin Street: Alternative Routes
- Diagram – Individual EA Alternative Routes (Dufferin St. to Roncesvalles Avenue)
- Table – Description of Route Options and Detailed Description of Routes in writing

## **3.0 Welcoming Remarks and Overview**

**David Nagler** opened the presentation portion of the meeting at 7:30 pm. David thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He informed everyone that the three handouts are provided at the entrance and further encouraged everyone to provide comments in writing and to ask questions through various means (by phone, email and mail).

**David Nagler** noted that the presentation is about 20-30 minutes followed by a question and answer period.

**Terry Wallace** provided a brief overview of the Waterfront West Streetcar Environmental Assessment. He explained that there are two studies being presented – one as a modification to the 1993 EA study which spans from Exhibition to Dufferin street; and a second as an individual EA study that spans from Dufferin to Roncesvalles Avenue.

**Karl Van Kessel** explained in detail the environmental assessment process for each study and updated the public on the progress of each study. He pointed out that alternative routes have been proposed for both studies and more detailed information on alternative routes would be provided by the next public information centre (#3). The presentation is posted on the project website for review.

## **4.0 Question and Answer Period**

The following is a summary of the discussion, including questions asked and responses provided. **Chris Bishop**, TTC Project Manager provided all responses below unless noted otherwise.

### **Question 1**

Currently, there is only 1 safe entrance at the beachfront down at Roncesvalles. There is no way to get to the Lakefront. Are there any proposals for bridges?

### **Answer 1**

We are not considering any additional bridges in these two EA studies.

David Nagler said that the project team will be comparing potential routes in terms of their ability to permit or facilitate future improvements to cycling and pedestrian access to the waterfront. Specific improvements will be studied during the Waterfront West Masterplan which is being overseen by Pinelopi Gramatikopoulos in the Waterfront Secretariat.

### **Question 2**

There is a lot of worry because the LRT has been described as an express route. Why in the area with a high ridership will it run with one stop from Jameson?

**Answer 2**

We looked at the existing stops from King St. and developed new possible stop locations for a new Waterfront West line at Spencer Avenue, Jameson Avenue and Wilson Park Road. We dropped the stop at Wilson Park Road because there is low ridership at that location. To clarify, four stops are proposed to serve the Parkdale Community: Dufferin, Spencer, Jameson, and Roncesvalles.

**Question 3**

Will the route to Roncesvalles connect to King Street?

**Answer 3**

It could. One option is to connect the new route to King Street east of Roncesvalles. Another option is connect the new route to The Queensway west of Roncesvalles. We are still working on what could be done at the Roncesvalles-King intersection.

**Question 4**

At the next PIC tentatively scheduled for October, you implied that you are going to present the preferred route. I would like to see the detailed design for the Dufferin bridge and relationship of the line to the Dufferin Gates. I would also like to see the grading required across the existing Dufferin Bridge and what impact a new design will have in the area. Could you tell me what you think the impact would be on Dufferin Gates and the looping in front of it?

**Answer 4**

With regards to the looping, if the line was to be extended to the north side of the railway corridor, the Dufferin Street bridge would need to be replaced. It would need to be replaced because the City wishes to expand the Dufferin bridge to accommodate the LRT, 4 traffic lanes, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks for pedestrians.

Streetcar service would continue on Dufferin north to King Street until the second section from Dufferin to Roncesvalles is constructed.

**Question 5**

With respect to the Dufferin Bridge, it is a cultural landscape. However, you seem to want to replace it for the expansion of Dufferin Street and it seems to me that should be discussed in the EA for Dufferin Street project.

**Answer 5**

The existing rail bridge could not carry the streetcar load. The expressway bridge can, but the railway bridge can't and therefore the bridge has to be replaced.

**Question 6**

Is there some way we can stop Dufferin Gates from being affected by the LRT route?

**Answer 6**

Yes. None of the designs requires the removal of the Dufferin Gate. The alignments pass on the north side of the Gate.

**Question 7**

Why has the stop at Wilson Park been removed for consideration? Has any cost been allocated from Dufferin to Roncesvalles? I also noticed that Route 1 along the Lake Shore would take away 22 feet of Lake Shore from the lakefront for installation of TTC tracks along the southern part of Lake Shore and Gardiner. We as tenants do not want to lose 22 feet of Lake Shore plus you also have to put walkways across which would add to the cost of the construction.

**Answer 7**

A potential stop at Wilson Park was evaluated but was seen to have low ridership. We will be considering routes that we have shown you and we will put forward a preferred route and stop locations based on the environmental assessment process which includes ridership projections. In terms of cost of each alignment, it will be affected by a number of factors including the grade of the route. The projected costs for the different routes will be considered as one of the factors in the evaluation.

**Question 8**

We only have 1 bridge right now and you are going to have streetcar stops at the same time with car traffic stops. They are not real crossings.

**Answer 8**

The Western Waterfront Masterplan being led by the Waterfront Secretariat is starting and concerns such as improvements to pedestrian crossings for access to the waterfront will be evaluated. Our EA will compare routes for their ability to permit these future improvements which are important for the community. The Waterfront Secretariat has the mandate to oversee specific improvements to pedestrian and cycling linkages.

**Question 9**

My concern would be if the LRT is built at-grade this could be close to our homes such as on Springhurst, and I was wondering if the onus is on us (homeowners) to individually make contact to express our concerns? There are a lot of obstacles between us and the lake and there are potential for a number of stations to be put very close to our doorsteps and that poses a lot of loitering concerns.

**Answer 9**

A northern route could be built at grade or below grade for the LRT. From an environmental viewpoint, the onus is on the project team to do the evaluation of the issues that you are talking about. If you have any additional concerns then please let us know. Visual and noise effects will be of concern during this evaluation as well.

**Question 10**

Would the existing northern route preclude a future southern route along the Lake Shore as planned for in the 1993 EA study? In the 1993 study the focus seemed to be more on enhancing access via transit to the Waterfront. What does the northern route do for the waterfront?

**Answer 10**

Since the approval in 1993 for a southern route along Lake Shore Boulevard south of the Exhibition Grounds to Dufferin Street, there have been a number of things that have changed which affected the new proposed alignments for the EA modification and for the Dufferin to Roncesvalles section. The Direct Energy Centre was built and the alignment you refer to from the 1993 study has since been moved to the north end of Exhibition Place. However, we are not precluding the opportunity to have a future seasonal line to the waterfront.

**David Nagler** suggested that it would be best to put forward in writing additional comments related to the 1993 EA so that all specifics are captured.

**Question 11**

When you say you are at level grade, do you mean at a grade where the houses are right now? There is hardly any land between the road and CN tracks. I cannot see how that is done without significantly impacting my house.

**Answer 11**

For a northern alignment, there is an opportunity to build the deck to support new tracks and that would be on CN land and not on privately owned property. Any potential effects will be evaluated. We will consider the options and evaluate them and present them at the next meeting (PIC#3).

**Question 12**

Could you clarify what the relationship is between this consultation around the LRT and the waterfront consultation because people in this community fought hard for consultation for the future of western waterfront which has been excluded from the waterfront plan. Essentially, how do we as a community see these processes working together so that the concerns of homeowners, tenants are taken into account?

**Answer 12**

We have met with the project manager Pinelopi Gramatikopoulos who is overseeing the Western Waterfront Masterplan. We will be co-ordinating waterfront work with her staff and we will continue to provide them with work that we have done and vice versa. A Waterfront West LRT plan has been in place for the last 15 years and the piece that is missing from Dufferin to Roncesvalles was shown as a long term solution to join the 2 pieces together. We certainly understand that the community is concerned about pedestrian and cycling access to the waterfront, and as mentioned, all proposed routes will be compared based on their ability to permit or facilitate future improvements.

**Question 13**

What is the specific purpose for the line? Is it to allow for people to get downtown or is it to provide public transit as an alternative to accessing the facilities on the waterfront?

**Answer 13**

The objective of the line is to provide high speed high capacity service between Etobicoke and downtown that serves the whole corridor such as Parkdale, Liberty Village, and High Park.

**Question 14**

Is there a date when construction would begin?

**Answer 14**

As planned, the section from CNE to Dufferin could be complete approximately 3 years after approval and the section from Dufferin to Roncesvalles would be 2-3 years after that.

**Question 15**

Is any of the land on the north embankment going to be expropriated?

**Answer 15**

Based on current data, there are 2-3 properties encroaching on the CN right of way. Those encroachments may have to be removed. In the next 2 months, we will evaluate the issue in more detail.

**Question 16**

Does TTC have a cost benefit analysis showing that this process could really show the importance and is profitable? What impact will the LRT have on people's lives and on the Gardiner, the Lakeshore, etc?

**Answer 16**

The justification for the line was developed within the EA approved in 1993. The ridership on the line will be substantial. There is no cost benefit analysis in place as it is not done anymore. However, there will be detailed ridership projections and numbers presented for the public at PIC #3. The LRT will provide high capacity transit service from Downtown to Etobicoke and serve the whole corridor including Parkdale which should be a benefit to the community.

**Comment 17**

I think it would be useful to represent some of these conditions 3 dimensionally so that people will know what it would look like. In the case of the blue line – referring to the northern alignment that starts south of the corridor and crosses the Gardiner at Tyndall. I believe, it could wipe out the bridge. There needs to be a detailed analysis of how this will affect the community and identify any concerns. If alternatives are presented 3 dimensionally it will help, particularly the at-grade option so there are no misconceptions of what it is going to be like and what any effects would be. A good example of where a 3 dimensional drawing would help would be along Springhurst where a route at-grade could be close to houses.

**Answer 17**

Thank you. Comment and suggestion has been noted.

**Comment 18**

We want to make sure that none of the potential crossings to the lake are closed for pedestrian access and TTC and consultants should consider probable places for new access. One solution is to bridge at a lower level at the rails where they are sufficiently low at present. The second solution is to put a crossing at grade so that pedestrians can simply walk across the track.

These are two solutions to preserve future access links. Another thing that staff has to commit to is where you have a transit stop and where you would permit residents to be able to get down north and south. Could the Dufferin Bridge be reinforced instead of having to replace it? That could most likely preserve the cultural landscape and the problem of removing cultural heritage can be overcome. We rely on engineering experts to develop solutions that can preserve the cultural landscape.

**Answer 18**

Thank you, comment and recommendations have been noted.

**Comment 19**

We do not want to see our neighbourhood being destroyed like the Gardiner has destroyed the neighbourhoods when it was constructed.

**Answer 19**

There are not expected to be any property impacts outside of the CN rail corridor.

**Question 20**

If we want any bridges to go from King Street over to the routes we have to approach the City. What I want to ask is if bridges are needed during the EA process, will this be presented to City Council as part of the requirements for LRT construction? How does the EA process address concerns?

**Answer 20**

**Karl Van Kessel** said: When conducting the Environmental Assessment process, we are looking at these routes and considering how to provide greater access to these routes and evaluating what the effects will be when being constructed. Essentially, we are asking if such routes will improve or worsen a number of environmental factors in some fashion. Evaluations are then made concerning mitigation measures of any negative effects. For example, an

evaluation would take place of how Jameson is a key route and how can we best ensure that the route would not adversely affect the pedestrian, cycling and vehicular traffic and could permit for future improvements.

**Chris Bishop** added that he understands the concerns being raised and the evaluation presented will be more detailed in the round of consultations.

***Question 21***

Parkdale is overlooked. We want to bring waterfront access to the Parkdale community. Your study does not address how this can be done. The community is getting angry that it is still happening and nothing has improved. There is no good access to the waterfront and there are no existing parks in place. The noise from the turning streetcars is terrible. I have been working in Parkdale for many years with the poor. The noise is very disruptive.

***Answer 21***

**Karl Van Kessel** said: Our intent in coming to you is to get information from the Parkdale community to have a better understanding of what your concerns are. We rely upon the community to inform us of and I believe this is an important process. I want you to put in writing what your concerns are and pinpoint key issues so we can address them.

**David Nagler** encouraged everyone to speak individually to the project team at the end of this public information session to ask questions and raise any additional concerns.

***Question 22***

Have you people been to Roncesvalles in rush hour? The situation is chaotic especially at the Roncesvalles and King intersection. Any route should avoid joining King Street east of Roncesvalles. The route should bypass this intersection to ensure fast service.

***Answer 22***

We are aware of the problems at the intersection today and study is underway to improve the situation. As you know, it is very complicated. A route that crosses onto King Street east of the Roncesvalles intersection would go into reserved Right of Way on King Street. It would be separate from cars and TTC would be able to have a dedicated lane.

## ***5.0 Closing Remarks***

**David Nagler** ended the meeting at 9:15 pm. He asked everyone to submit comments in writing and to speak individually with project team members.