



## **Waterfront West Streetcars Environmental Assessment**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**January 2008**

#### **What is the purpose of the project?**

The purpose of the study is to identify the most effective streetcar route to provide high quality, higher capacity and reliable service in a protected right-of-way (uninterrupted by vehicular traffic) to serve all communities along the way from southern Etobicoke to downtown Toronto. As part of the Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan, the Waterfront West LRT will eventually provide excellent transit access from Long Branch in Etobicoke to downtown (Union Station), serving all intervening communities and the western waterfront. The specific sections of this line now under study are between Roncesvalles and Dufferin, and between Dufferin and Strachan. A separate EA is also underway for the section between Strachan and Union Station.

#### **Will a preferred route accommodate future improvements to waterfront access?**

Yes. Any new streetcar route will not preclude any future pedestrian and cycling improvements as determined by the Waterfront West Master Plan.

#### **How does the project take into account Official Plan objectives?**

A key goal of the City's Official Plan is to reduce auto dependency and road congestion through expansion and upgrading of the transit system, among other things. The Official Plan shows the Waterfront West streetcar route extending as far west as Legion Road on Map 4- Higher Order Transit Corridors. Its further extension west to Long Branch at the Mississauga/Etobicoke border is shown on Map 5- Surface Transit Priority Network and is included in the new Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan. Altogether, the new line will provide upgraded transit service in the entire western waterfront corridor, thus enhancing non-vehicular access between downtown Toronto and other communities and destinations along the western waterfront.

#### **What is the projected annual ridership of a Waterfront West Streetcar Route?**

10 to 11 million trips in 2021.

#### **Are the ridership projections different for the various potential routes between Dufferin and Roncesvalles? / Which route has the highest projected ridership?**

Standard ridership forecasting models are generally not sensitive enough to differentiate such subtle differences as between the various alignment options currently under review. However, based on industry-accepted principles of travel behaviour, some conclusions can be made. People generally regard wait time and walk access time as the most important factors when choosing how to travel. In-vehicle travel time is usually the least important factor. Therefore, in evaluating various alignments, assuming the same frequency of service in all cases, the alignments which provide the most convenient access to the most people will have the greatest potential ridership, compared to those that offer a faster ride, but have fewer stops and/or longer walking distance to access stops.

**How much faster is a new route projected to be for travel time between Dufferin and Roncesvalles compared to current service on the King Street streetcar?**

Based on surveys, it is estimated that the trip via Waterfront West streetcars from Roncesvalles to Union Station will be up to 12 minutes faster than via King Street. Of equal or higher importance is the significantly more reliable service that will be provided by the Waterfront West streetcar service.

**Has a preferred route been identified?**

No. Additional community and agency consultation is needed as a number of new potential routes have emerged based on feedback provided during the last round of consultation. At the current stage of the EA process, the list of all options is being pared down to a short-list of options to be carried forward. This is being done through evaluation by eliminating the least-preferred options based on the previously-established evaluation criteria. A preferred route will be presented to the public at a future Public Information Centre.

**How is the study taking into account protection of Heritage Features?**

All routes have been evaluated for impacts to heritage features including bridges. The route with the greatest potential impact to the bridges (Route 2 at rail level) has been dropped from consideration.

**How has the study responded to concerns about private property impacts including noise and vibration?**

All routes have been evaluated for private property impacts. The route with the greatest potential impact to private property was "Route 2 at rail level", due to effects of a retaining wall that would be needed for a rail level option. For this reason and others, this route has been dropped from further consideration.

In response to comments from Parkdale residents, additional routes south of the CN rail corridor have been added for evaluation. Noise and vibration analysis has also been conducted by certified experts and is included as one of the evaluation criteria for all options.

**How will Park land be protected?**

All routes have been evaluated for effects to parkland, including potential expansions of park land. One route has been added that would re-align Lake Shore Boulevard and could allow for the expansion of Marilyn Bell Park. Also added is an alignment within the Lake Shore Boulevard right-of-way that does not require widening of the road or encroachment on park land. Further, the EA study is being coordinated with the concurrent Western Beaches Study to ensure that the objectives of both studies are achieved.

**Following the EA process, when could a new route be constructed?**

Subject to funding, a new Waterfront West Streetcar Route from the Exhibition Grounds to Dufferin could be constructed in about two years following EA approval. The completion of the section from Dufferin to Roncesvalles could follow three years after that, subject to funding and expansion of Union Station.