



## 1. Introduction

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### 1.1 Waterfront West Light Rail Transit EA (1993)

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and former Metropolitan Toronto (City of Toronto) completed the Waterfront West Light Rail Transit (WWLRT) Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) in compliance with the *Environmental Assessment Act* in the early 1990's to address transportation system deficiencies along the waterfront between downtown Toronto and south Etobicoke. The IEA process and results were documented in the WWLRT EA Report (August 1993). The IEA was approved by the Minister of the Environment in 1995.

The WWLRT IEA studied an extension of streetcar service and recommended a light rail transit system that would improve the transportation system connections between downtown Toronto and south Etobicoke. An overall concept plan for the light rail transit system was developed that included both short term and long term improvements (see **Figure 1**; all figures can be found at the end of the document in the Figures section before the Appendices).

The short term improvements consist of an extension of the Harbourfront Light Rail Transit (LRT) line from Spadina to the north side of the Dufferin bridge and improvements to the existing streetcar line from the Humber Loop to a new terminus at Legion Road in south Etobicoke. The WWLRT IEA recommended an alignment for the streetcar along Lake Shore Boulevard passing south of Exhibition Place, then north on Dufferin Street to a new Dufferin Street loop. Streetcars were to operate in protected rights-of-way (ROW) to improve transit service for area residents and businesses through a higher speed, higher capacity line, and enhance public accessibility to recreational and cultural facilities along the waterfront.

In the longer term, it was recommended that the higher speed, higher capacity streetcar line on the Queensway be connected with the Harbourfront LRT by means of a line that extended from the terminus at the new Dufferin Street Loop to the Queensway streetcar track at the Roncesvalles Avenue and King Street West intersection.

The WWLRT IEA study concluded that together these short term and long term improvements would create a continuous streetcar route in an exclusive transit ROW between downtown Toronto and south Etobicoke that would offer improved service through a higher speed, higher capacity line.

The WWLRT IEA received approval in 1995 for the short term improvements and endorsement of the concept plan as a whole; however, the long term improvements were not included as part of the undertaking, and were therefore, not part of the approved project. As a result, the long term improvements were not implemented and were deferred to a later date.



## 1.2 Purpose for the Current EA Modification

By obtaining approval for the short term improvements in the WWLRT IEA, TTC and the City of Toronto put themselves in a position to implement the project as funding was made available. However, before that work could commence, the existing Exhibition Place loop was relocated to allow for construction of the Direct Energy Centre (formerly National Trade Centre). The Exhibition Place loop was reinstated at the northern boundary of Exhibition Place along the CN/GO rail corridor (see **Figure 2**). An exemption to the WWLRT IEA was obtained to allow for this loop relocation.

Shortly afterward, the Harbourfront LRT streetcar line was extended via Queens Quay and Bathurst Street to Fleet Street, rather than via Portland Street and Lake Shore Boulevard as originally envisioned in the WWLRT IEA (see **Figure 2**). This rerouting was approved by means of an EA Modification in 1995.

Most recently, the TTC implemented the conversion of the Fleet Street tracks from mixed traffic operation to an exclusive transit right-of-way (see **Figure 2**). This change was approved by means of an EA Modification in 2006.

By means of these projects, the TTC and the City of Toronto have completed most of the short term improvements to the Harbourfront LRT approved in the WWLRT IEA. With completion of the Fleet Street dedicated right-of-way, the TTC will be operating entirely within a reserved streetcar right of way (outside the influences of road traffic) from Union Station to Exhibition Place. This provides greater speed and reliability to the Harbourfront service.

However, the WWLRT IEA envisioned the extension of the Harbourfront LRT to the existing streetcar track on Dufferin Street. It is this connection that is the subject of the current Study. By initiating this study, the TTC is completing the WWLRT IEA short term improvements.

However, many changes have occurred since the WWLRT IEA was approved in 1995. In the intervening years, the physical environment has changed, including new development and changes to the local community, and the TTC operational priorities have also changed. Where the WWLRT IEA heavily favoured a streetcar line that followed Lake Shore Boulevard in order to provide greater access to the waterfront, the existing Harbourfront LRT currently follows Fleet Street and continues to the northern boundary of Exhibition Place where it loops and returns.

Based on these changes to the Harbourfront Streetcar service, the existing conditions in the Study Area, and TTC priorities, the TTC and the City of Toronto commenced the current Study in order to review the approved WWLRT IEA alignment along Lake Shore Boulevard, and consider potential new alignments that take into consideration current conditions. This Study, therefore, is to provide an extension of streetcar service from the existing streetcar loop on the grounds of Exhibition Place to the existing streetcar track on Dufferin Street north of the Gardiner Expressway.



However, in order to consider the potential effects associated with changes to the existing environment since 1993, including alternative new routes, a modification to the 1993 WWLRT IEA is required. Therefore, the purpose of the current Study is to undertake an EA Modification in keeping with the requirements of Chapter 11 of the WWLRT IEA for the identification of a Preferred Route between Exhibition Place and Dufferin Street. This route would then be taken forward to construction.

## 1.3 EA Modification Requirements

Chapter 11 of the WWLRT IEA describes the procedures that must be followed in order to accommodate modifications and changes to the IEA after its approval by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). Chapter 11 describes the potential for both minor and major changes to the approved WWLRT IEA.

### 1.3.1 Procedures for Addressing Major Changes

According to the descriptions provided in the WWLRT IEA, the current modification is considered a major change. Major changes entail significant variances to the concept of the undertaking identified in the original WWLRT IEA such as:

- a) the selection of a new corridor for all or part of the project;
- b) a major change in alignment (i.e., underground or at-grade);
- c) the addition of a new station; or
- d) a change in transit vehicle technology.

In the case of this assignment, new corridors have been identified due to the change in location of the Exhibition Place loop, realignment of the existing streetcar track on Fleet Street rather than along Lake Shore Boulevard, and changes to the Study Area.

The EA Modification proposed by this Study does not alter or affect the conditions of approval of the undertaking as outlined in the 1993 WWLRT IEA, and only applies to the components of the undertaking described in this EA Modification Report.

This EA Modification Report documents:

- a) the reason(s) for the change (modification to the design);
- b) alternative solutions (routes/designs) being considered;
- c) the net effects (positive and negative) associated with the alternative solutions;
- d) the public consultation process involved, including review agency involvement;
- e) the recommended change, including any mitigative or enhancement measures required to eliminate or minimize any adverse effects; and
- f) further recommendations/commitments by the proponent for the future.



### 1.3.2 Notification and Approval

The TTC has notified the general public and interested stakeholders of completion of the EA Modification Report through newspaper advertisement and direct mailing. Information included the locations where the EA Modification Report was filed (along with the 1993 WWLRT EA document) for public review and comment. The EA Modification Report has also been filed with the MOE.

The TTC and City of Toronto have therefore completed this EA Modification in accordance with the amending procedures presented in Chapter 11 of the 1993 WWLRT EA Report, the process and results of which have been documented in this EA Modification Report.