



7. Summary

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and former Metropolitan Toronto (now the City of Toronto) completed the Waterfront West Light Rail Transit (WWLRT) Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) in 1993 and obtained approval for the short term improvements in the IEA in 1995. The TTC and the City of Toronto have completed most of the short term improvements to the Harbourfront LRT; however, the WWLRT IEA envisioned the eventual extension of the Harbourfront LRT from Strachan Avenue to the existing streetcar track on Dufferin Street. It is this connection that is the subject of the current Study.

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. The existing Harbourfront LRT currently follows Fleet Street and continues to the northern boundary of Exhibition Place where it loops and returns.

In order to consider the potential effects of alternative routes associated with changes to the existing environment since 1993, 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.

A total of 4 routes, plus the “Do Nothing” alternative, were considered as part of the EA modification. Following a comparative evaluation of the 5 alternatives, the Project Team concluded that **Alternative Route #1: Parallel to the south side of the CN/GO rail corridor** was found to have several key advantages over the other routes, thus accounting for its ranking as most preferred. These advantages include:

- Best serving the sporting, cultural and trade events at Exhibition Place while still providing easy access for residents/workers travelling to/from Liberty Village (via the existing GO transit pedestrian tunnel)
- No requirement for expropriation of private property, and no known archaeological sites or built heritage resources disturbed along the route
- The most direct of the routes, having the lowest travel time.
- Offering efficient connectivity with the existing and future transit network
- Lowest potential capital costs, operation costs and maintenance costs
- Removing the smallest amount of vegetation and the least number of trees

There are, however, a number of potential adverse environmental effects associated with constructing this Preferred Route based on the existing project area conditions and the input received from external agencies and the public.



The greatest potential technical effect of the project is on the Dufferin Street bridges, which will need to be modified or reconstructed to accommodate the new streetcar ROW. However, through consultation with the City of Toronto, we understand that the two bridges (one over the Gardiner Expressway and the other over the GO/CN corridor) require rehabilitation and/or replacement independent of this project, and that such work will take into account the requirements for the streetcar tracks and potential requirements of GO Transit for additional tracks through the CN corridor and updated vertical clearance requirements. The work may also involve an improved design that would also provide for enhanced vehicular and bicycle access along with larger pedestrian walkways for improved safety.

Construction of the preferred route may have minor impacts to operations on Manitoba Drive; however, traffic volumes on this road are low and minimal vehicle delays are expected. A traffic management plan will be developed to minimize any such adverse effects. The pavement width will not be noticeably reduced and will therefore not affect traffic operations and will be sufficient to accommodate the requirements of the Toronto Grand Prix (Indy Racing League).

The preferred route has the potential to remove approximately 23 trees, which will be replaced with urban-tolerant native tree species. The removal of one utility/washroom building in the area of the Dufferin Gate, and the removal of buildings used for the children's area of the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) may have to be replaced in another suitable location pending discussions with Exhibition Place and the CNE. Short-term nuisance and access effects during construction are to be mitigated.

Public involvement has been an integral part of this study. An extensive consultation program with stakeholders and community groups was undertaken in parallel with the technical/planning work in order to facilitate meaningful two-way dialogue between the Project Team and affected parties. Public consultation activities included the creation of a Community Advisory Group (CAG) and a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), consultation with the Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, three Public Information Centres (PICs), the use of a project website and direct contact with stakeholders in response to comments received.