

**Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) Extension –Redux
Report**

Date:	April 29, 2010
To:	Scarborough Community Council
From:	Director, Transportation Planning
Wards:	Ward 38 – Scarborough Centre and Ward 42 – Scarborough-Rouge River
Reference Number:	08 158603 CPS 00 OZ

SUMMARY

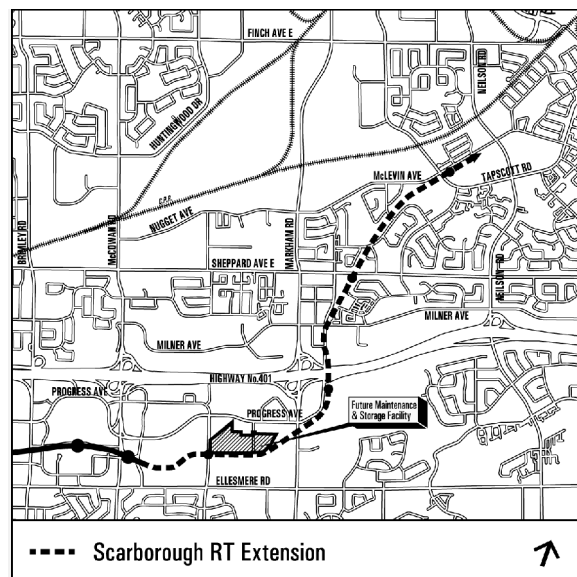
On March 21, 2007 the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) endorsed a light rail transit plan for the City of Toronto which included seven projects across the City, and subsequently initiated environmental assessment studies for those projects, as well as one for the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) extension to Malvern.

On May 6, 2010 the Toronto Transit Commission is considering the outcome of the Transit Project Assessment Study and draft Environmental Project Report (EPR) for the Scarborough Rapid Transit Conversion and Extension, including Kennedy Station Improvements.

On May 19, 2010 Planning and Growth Management Committee is holding a Public Meeting on the Official Plan Amendment (no. 92) required to enable this project to go ahead.

On March 9, 2010, Scarborough Community Council adopted a resolution requesting the Manager of Transportation Planning, Scarborough Division, to provide a report to the May 25, 2010 meeting of Scarborough Community Council on the document by Councillor Thompson entitled “Scarborough LRT Redux”.

This report responds to that direction.



RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Planning Division recommends that:

Scarborough Community Council receive this report for information.

Financial Impact

The recommendations in this report have no financial impact.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 21, 2007 the Toronto Transit Commission endorsed the Toronto Transit City – Light Rail Plan as the basis and priority for rapid transit expansion within the City, and subsequently initiated environmental assessment studies for the projects identified in the plan, as well as one for the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) extension to Malvern.

At its July 2, 2008 meeting, Planning and Growth Management Committee approved a Request for Direction report directing staff to bring forward an enabling official plan amendment. The report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2008/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-13910.pdf>

The Final Report recommending the adoption of Official Plan Amendment number 92 is being considered by Planning and Growth Management Committee at its May 19, 2010 meeting.

It is anticipated that the Transit Project Assessment Study and draft Environmental Project Report (EPR) for the Scarborough Rapid Transit Conversion and Extension, including Kennedy Station Improvements, will be considered by the TTC at its meeting on May 6, 2010, with a recommendation that Toronto Council approve the recommendations of the Transit Project Assessment Study and authorize staff to submit the EPR to the Ministry of Environment. It is anticipated that the project will be considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on May 17, 2010 and by Toronto Council on June 8, 2010.

On March 9, 2010, Scarborough Community Council:

1. requested the Manager of Transportation Planning, Scarborough Division, to review the document by Councillor Thompson, titled, “Scarborough LRT Redux,” and report back to the May 25, 2010 meeting of Scarborough Community Council, commenting on the following;
 - a. Physical feasibility;
 - b. Quality of the service (number of stops, average speed, reliability, etc.)

- c. Urban development impacts, including transit-oriented development and accessibility of the service, compared to TTC preferred alignment;
 - d. Economic impacts, environmental impacts, and capital cost savings, compared to TTC preferred alignment;
2. reaffirmed its support for the Brimley Station to be incorporated in Phase I of the SRT; and
3. expressed its support the process being undertaken by Planning Transportation staff in developing a business case in support of the Brimley Station for presentation to Metrolinx.

The report can be found at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2010/sc/comm/communicationfile-14240.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Official Plan, Map 4 Higher Order Transit Corridors, identifies a transit corridor from the existing terminus of the SRT at McCowan Road eastward to Markham Road and north on Markham Road to Steeles Avenue and potentially beyond. This reflects the recommendations of the environmental assessment that was approved in 1994 for the extension of the SRT from its existing terminus at McCowan Road to the Markham Road-Sheppard Avenue area.

The current environmental assessment process for the SRT extension comprises a Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) for an extension from McCowan Road to Malvern. The study recommends the alignment as shown in the key map. It is anticipated that with the SRT Extension to Sheppard Avenue as part of a phased construction, the new transit vehicles will use the proposed maintenance and storage facility on Sheppard Avenue East at Conlins Road. The LRT trains are proposed to connect to the new SRT system via a service track connection along Progress Avenue from the tunnel portal north of Highway 401 to Sheppard Avenue.

COMMENTS

The first public consultation introducing the environmental assessment study was held on April 15, 2008. Subsequent sets of public open houses were held on June 4 and 5, 2008 and June 2, 2009. The fourth set of public open houses was held on March 8 and 11, 2010. The most recent set of public open houses was held on April 12 and 15, 2010 following the issuance of Notice of Project Commencement under Ontario Regulation 231/08 which governs the TPAP procedures.

These extensive public consultations held for the TPAP study and input from the public and the various stakeholders have influenced the project design, which is intended to minimize adverse impacts and control costs. Metrolinx, the Provincial regional transportation planning agency which has control of the flow of funds for the TTC

projects, has also influenced the study outcome. Staff from City Planning, Transportation Services, Technical Services and other Divisions have been closely involved with the SRT and other Transit City projects from their inception.

One key exercise early in the process was the development of a standard LRT complete street cross-section, which includes two lanes of traffic in each direction, the raised LRT trackbed and stops with shelters, bicycle lanes, sidewalks, utilities and street trees. To provide adequate but not generous space for all of these essential elements a 36 m right-of-way is required. The LRT line in the centre of the road allowance minimizes the disruption to side road and driveway access, although limiting this to right-in, right-out operation unless traffic signals are installed. As well, dedicated left-turn lanes at signalized intersections can be provided opposite the transit stop platforms.

The basic design parameters for the LRT lines include a maximum slope of 5%, a maximum slope of 3% at stops, and a minimum curve radius of 25 m.

City Planning staff resources do not permit a detailed analysis of the SRT Redux document as was requested. However, it should be noted that the EPR will contain detailed analysis and evaluation of the alternatives that were considered, including technical aspects and costs. General comments are provided below on certain issues raised in the Redux report.

LRT at grade on Progress Avenue

The Metrolinx Benefits Case Analysis (BCA) published in January 2009 recommended LRT technology using the existing guideway west of McCowan, and an at-grade alignment along Progress Avenue to Sheppard Avenue, with an extension to Malvern Town Centre on an unspecified alignment. The feasibility of using Progress Avenue had not been tested at this time. As well, the proposal involved short-turning alternate east-bound trains at McCowan Station so passengers bound for Malvern would have to transfer or wait for a through train.

Subsequent analysis by TTC and City staff determined that Progress Avenue would not be suitable for several reasons:

- 27 m right-of-way is inadequate for the standard Transit City cross-section, so property would have to be purchased;
- Grades on Progress Avenue around Markham Road are not compatible with LRT technology, and a Centennial College stop would not be possible;
- LRT barrier is not compatible with frequent driveways and truck movements in this industrial area. Truck routes are an issue on the Golden Mile section of Eglinton Avenue, for example.

Service Tracks at Sheppard Avenue

The SRT is proposed to be underground from just north of Highway 401 to just west of Tapscott Road, to preserve Rosebank Park and mitigate against noise and privacy issues for nearby residents along the alignment. Somehow, LRT trains have to be moved into the tunnel from the planned yard at Conlins Road. Since the Redux report was written, TTC and Metrolinx have determined that underground service track connections between the Sheppard East LRT and the SRT Extension are too costly and will not be carried forward. The most recent (April 2010) recommendation is for at-grade service tracks on Progress Avenue as far as the tunnel portal. There are some access and noise issues to be addressed.

Centennial College Area

An alignment on the east side of Progress Avenue was explored so that the proposed Centennial Station would be closer to the campus. However, this option had undesirable impacts on the existing ramp to eastbound Highway 401 and on the new Metro Label factory further north. Closing the ramp as suggested in the Redux report would require an EA study of its own.

Parklands

The abandoned rail/hydro corridor north of Milner Avenue was reserved for a Malvern Transportation Corridor for some years. However, upon the approval in 1994 of the SRT Extension alignment terminating at Markham Road and Sheppard Avenue, this corridor protection was removed. The section south of Sheppard Avenue became Rosebank Park, a school site and part of the Chinese Cultural Centre.

The corridor north of Sheppard is still owned by Ontario Hydro and consequently has remained as a green space, but it is not parkland. A special meeting held for residents in this area led to the recommendation for going underground.

The vacant land at Malvern Town Centre is not parkland. The terminal location is being recommended at this site west of the shopping centre because the previously identified one north of the mall is a protected woodlot that is to be preserved.

Other Stations

A station at Bellamy Road is to be “roughed in” so that it can be built when and if development in the area warrants it. A station at Brimley Road on the existing SRT line is currently being explored. A better connection from Ellesmere Road to the Ellesmere station should also be considered – this was omitted from the original 1980’s construction to save money.

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