



PLANNING A GREAT CITY
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Relief Line Project Assessment (formerly Downtown Relief Line)

Presentation - Staff Report to
December 4, 2013 Meeting of
Planning and Growth Management Committee

Transportation Planning Section
City Planning Division

Background

- Planning and Growth Management Committee at its meeting of February 28, 2013, adopted a motion requesting the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, in consultation with appropriate officials, to report back to the June 20, 2013 meeting of the Committee on:
 - “ a process for establishing the criteria for selecting alignments and station locations for the first phase of the Downtown Relief Line and the subsequent measures to be taken to meet the approval requirements of the Environmental Assessment Act. “
- The staff report provides:
 - A summary of studies by the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC), Metrolinx and City Planning related to the Relief Line;
 - Options available to undertake an environmental assessment;
 - A recommendation that the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, be directed to undertake public consultation on the Relief Line proposed Terms of Reference and Public Consultation framework, with technical support provided by TTC staff, and report back to City Council seeking approval of these documents in early 2014

History

- There is a long history of proposals for downtown rapid transit expansion.
- The City's Official Plan, adopted by Council in 2002, does not include the relief line concept.
- In 2008, Metrolinx released its draft Regional transportation plan, "the Big Move", which recommended the relief line as a project in the 15 - 25 year time frame.
- Metrolinx advanced the eastern section of the "Downtown Core" line (a.k.a. Downtown Relief Line) from the 25-year plan to the 15-year plan and the Top 15 Transit Priorities as part of the 2013 update to The Big Move.
- In January 2009, City Council requested Metrolinx to advance the timing of the relief line, ahead of the proposed northerly extension of the Yonge subway line.
- Council also requested the TTC evaluate the merits of the relief line concept for the purpose of raising its priority for Metrolinx. "Phase I Strategic Plan" of the TTC's relief line study was completed in October, 2012 confirming the project's merits.
- In November, 2012, Metrolinx announced its "next wave" of major transit projects which included the relief line proposal.

TTC work to-date has determined a new high capacity, grade separated rapid transit service could:

- provide increased transit capacity to relieve the pressure on the Yonge Subway;
- provide relief to the Bloor-Yonge Station;
- provide flexibility for the TTC subway system; and
- Improve transit service to the downtown shoulder areas and relief to congestion on the streetcar network.

The TTC work also noted other potential solutions might be possible at a “network” level, but this would require a regional review addressing potential improvements to GO Rail corridors

Coordination of Work

- The City, TTC and Metrolinx are working in close collaboration to advance the Regional Relief Strategy which is comprised of:
 - The Relief Line Project Assessment, the first phase of which is to consult on the Terms of Reference (scope of work) and to develop a detailed Public Consultation Plan, both of which will be brought back to Committee and Council in early 2014 for approval;
 - Metrolinx's Yonge Relief Network Study, to relieve congestion on the Yonge Subway, while providing other benefits to the regional transit network.
 - Other related studies to progress implementation of The Big Move, and transform transit in the region.

Environmental Impact Review Options

- The staff report highlights options available to undertake evaluation of public transit projects, including:
 - The Class Municipal Environmental Assessment process;
 - The Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP);
 - The Individual Environmental Assessment process; and,
 - Declaration Order process.
- The process that has been applied to the vast majority of major transit infrastructure projects in Toronto since 2008 is the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP).
- The recommended study approach for this project is a Project Assessment study and reporting to the TTC Board & City Council, followed by the TPAP process.

Structure of Study Process for the Relief Line Project Assessment

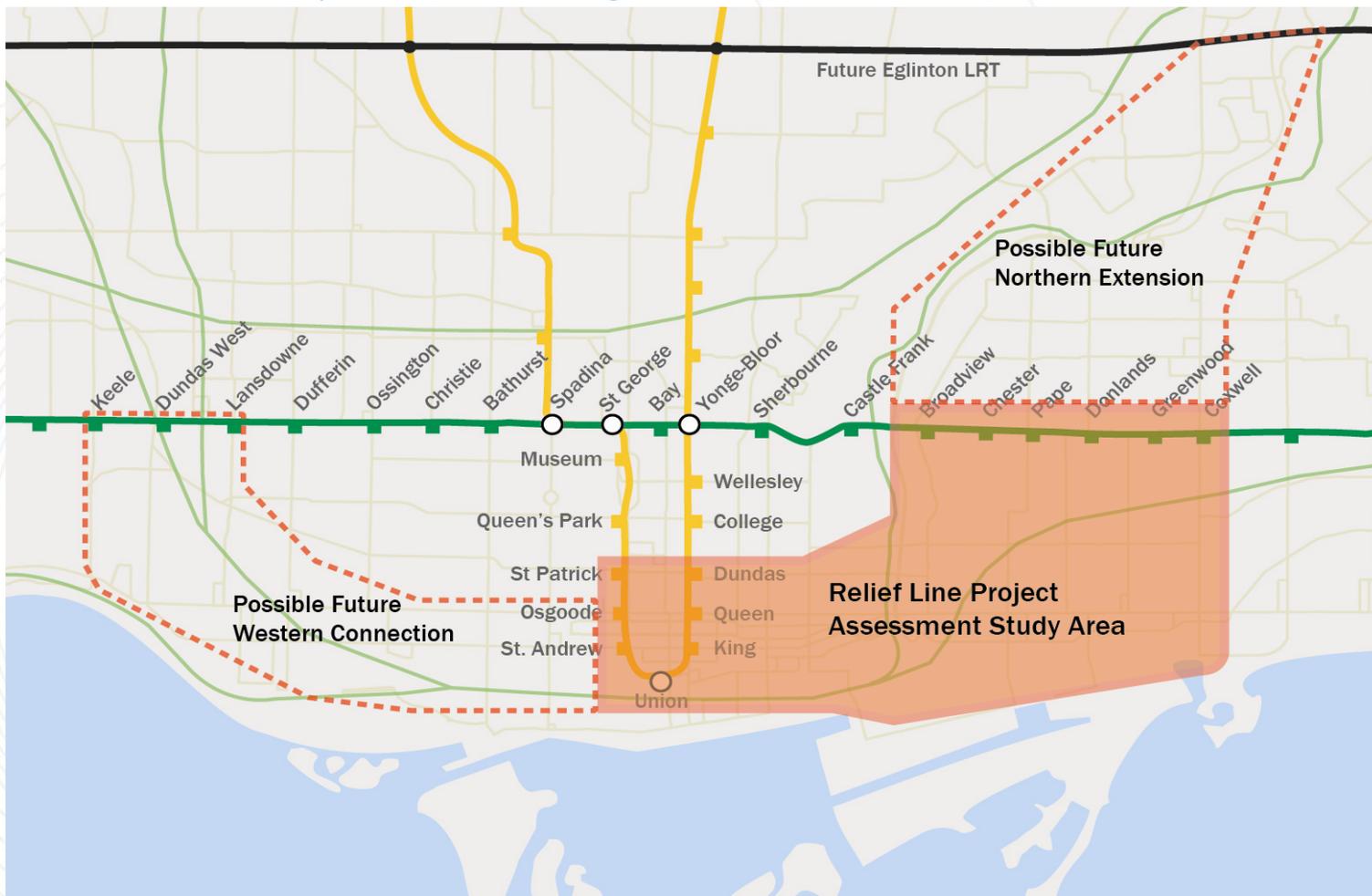
Applies attributes that are appropriate for a project of this magnitude and complexity including:

- Develop a Terms of Reference (scope of the work) setting out:
 - the tasks that will be undertaken,
 - proposed public consultation, and
 - timing and deliverables,

The Terms of Reference are appended to the staff report. Following public review and approval by Council, this will provide direction for the study.

- Requirement to assess reasonable alternatives to the undertaking as part of the environmental review. This ensures an objective, thorough consideration of a broad range of solutions; and,
- A robust public consultation program developed with public input

Relief Line Study Area (Area of Alignment Considerations)



Toronto Relief Line Project Assessment: Work Plan

Key Steps:

Phase 1A – Public consultation on Terms of Reference, develop detailed Public Consultation Plan with public input;

Report to City Council

Phase 1B – Study Introduction, background, rationale, problem statement

Phase 2 – Develop "long list" of options and evaluation criteria, public consultation seeking input to the options

Phase 3 – Evaluate options to produce "short list", public consultation on the short list

Phase 4 – Evaluate "short list" of options, produce draft recommendations, public consultation on the draft findings. Prepare draft study report

Report to TTC Board and City Council

TPAP Final Project Review, finalize report, submit to Minister for review

Toronto Relief Line Project Assessment: Work Plan

This report seeks authority to proceed with Phase 1A

Phase 1A – Public consultation on Terms of Reference, develop detailed Public Consultation Plan with public input

Report to City Council

Phase 1B – Study Introduction, background, rationale, problem statement

Phase 2 – Develop "long list" of options and evaluation criteria, public consultation seeking input to the options

Phase 3 – Evaluate options to produce "short list", public consultation on the short list

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Proposed Study Organization

Potential Stakeholder Engagement:

- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), including the TTC, key divisions of the City of Toronto and Metrolinx;
- Stakeholder Group e.g. comprising ratepayer groups, advocacy groups, BIAs, professional associations, industry experts;
- Citizen Advisory Group appointed in consultation with local Councillors.

Coordinating Committees:

- City-TTC-Metrolinx Executive Transit Coordinating Committee
- City/TTC Executive Coordination Committee (City Manager, CEO of TTC)

Next Steps

- **December 16/17** – City Council
- Assuming Council authority to proceed is granted :
 - December/January** – proceed with Phase 1A. Retain a public consultation consultant. Prepare a draft Public Consultation Plan for comment, organize Phase 1A consultation.
 - February** – undertake consultation on the proposed Terms of Reference, seek input on the draft Public Consultation Plan, revise ToR and Consultation Plan to reflect comments received.
 - March/April** – report to PGM Committee and Council, seeking approval of the Terms of Reference and Public Consultation plan, and authority to proceed with the next phases of the project assessment

Thank You