



# Don Valley Corridor Transportation Master Plan

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## REPORT ON INPUT RECEIVED AT PUBLIC CONSULTATION CENTRES (ROUND 2)

APRIL 27, 2004

APRIL 29, 2004

PREPARED BY CUMMING + COMPANY  
201 RIVERDALE AVENUE,  
TORONTO, ONTARIO, M4K 1C4

## DON VALLEY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN REPORT ON INPUT RECEIVED AT PUBLIC CONSULTATION CENTRES (ROUND 2)

*This meeting record was prepared by Cumming + Company. It presents the key information and outcomes from the round two public consultation centres and is not intended as a verbatim transcript. It has been provided to the City of Toronto Urban Development Services Department for distribution to participants and for posting on the study web site. Please direct inquiries pertaining to this meeting record to Mr. Gene Corazzola, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning, City of Toronto, Metro Hall, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor, 55 John Street, Toronto, Ontario, M5V 3C6, (Tel) 416-397-0041 (fax) 416-392-3821 or [dvcinfo@toronto.ca](mailto:dvcinfo@toronto.ca) or to Sue Cumming, Cumming + Company, Consultation Coordinator at 416 406-6607 or email to [cumming@total.net](mailto:cumming@total.net)*

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### ABOUT THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION CENTRES (ROUND 2)

The City of Toronto in conjunction with the Toronto Transit Commission, and GO Transit has been conducting a Master Plan Class Environmental Assessment (EA) study investigating ways to improve person-carrying transportation capacity in the Don Valley Corridor, within the City of Toronto. During the first phase of the study, the study team examined the existing transportation conditions and trends in the corridor and the long list of possible alternatives to improve transportation capacity and manage transportation demands. This information was presented to the public at a series of Public Meetings in the spring of 2003. During Phase 2 of the study, the alternatives have been examined and evaluated.

The City Planning Division of the Urban Development Services Department is leading the Study being conducted in accordance with the Master Planning process of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA). Public Consultation is a key aspect of the study and input has been invited through the publication of study newsletters, interactive study web site, and holding of public meetings. The second round of Public Consultation Centres (Round 2) was held in two locations within the study area:

- **Tuesday, April 27, 2004 at Don Mills Library – Auditorium, and**
- **Thursday, April 29, 2004 at the S. Walter Stewart Library - Auditorium**

The purpose of the Public Consultation Centres (Round 2) was:

- To provide information on the screening and evaluation of alternatives;
- To present the proposed key initiatives;
- To present the study conclusions and preliminary recommendations;
- To receive public input on all aspects of the study (i.e. comments, suggestions and questions); and
- To outline the next steps in the process.

This study will complete Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA requirements for Master Plan Studies. For projects which are subject to EA approvals, subsequent phases of the Class EA process must be completed to further refine and evaluate the recommended options prior to implementation.

Each Public Consultation Centre (PCC) began with an Open House from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., followed by a presentation by City staff and facilitated discussion at 7:30 p.m. The Open House provided the opportunity for members of the public to view the display materials and to talk informally with the project team. Three newsletters (Newsletter No. 1, December 2002, Newsletter No. 2, March 2003 and Newsletter No.3, April 2004), a presentation handout and comment form were distributed.

Each meeting was facilitated by Sue Cumming, Cumming + Company. Senior Planner, Mr. Gene Corazzola, of the Urban Development Services Division, gave the presentations. City of Toronto, TTC, GO Transit, and Ministry of Transportation representatives and the City's consultants addressed questions. Comments have been noted below. This record of input has been organized by the two meeting dates and is intended to summarize the comments, questions and responses, and is not a verbatim account. The responses were provided by City staff and consultant team members.

## SESSION ONE: APRIL 27, 2004 MEETING AT DON MILLS LIBRARY

The formal presentation began shortly after 7:00 p.m. The following comments after the presentation were noted:

Could you clarify the timing and process for moving forward?

*Response: Some recommended measures require further study. Others require separate or additional environmental assessment review. Some improvements are operational in nature, and not subject to EA requirements. They can be undertaken sooner while others will require more analysis. When the study is concluded we will take recommendations forward to the Planning and Transportation, and Works Committees. There will be an opportunity for public deputations at that time and you could speak to the recommendations.*

What will be the (preferred) Don Mills BRT Routing?

*Response: The preferred routing must be confirmed as part of additional EA review. This presentation included slides showing 5 routing options between Steeles Avenue and the North Downtown (Bloor-Danforth Subway) 4 options serving the Downtown core. The routing options northbound from the North Downtown include using either the Bayview Extension to an extension of Redway Road/Millwood/Overlea Boulevard or using the Don Valley Parkway between the Bayview/Bloor ramps to the Don Mills interchange.*

On the BRT (using the Redway extension), will the railway (tracks) remain? Will it use part of the rail corridor?

*Response: The main CPR line in the corridor is located north of the proposed road extension. The spur track branches to the south prior to Bayview Avenue. The concept identified by the Master Plan would propose a minor realignment of the spur track closer to the main line.*

If you put shoulder lanes down the DVP would there be serious constraints and problems when it merges back into traffic?

Operational details of bus shoulder operations will need to be assessed further as part of future study. One of the issues to be reviewed is the effect of merging traffic where the shoulder lane operation is not possible (e.g. physical constraints). City staff are monitoring the experience by the Ministry of Transportation of bus shoulder lane operations on Highway 403, and by other cities worldwide, to apply to the assessment of possible options for the DVP.

Which side of the street would the (proposed commuter) parking be located at Finch and Don Mills?

*Response: It is proposed to be located on the west Side of Don Mills Road within the Hydro Corridor (between Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue)*

With the BRT (proposal) on Don Mills Road – can it be put in the centre lane (of the roadway) and operate articulated buses so that it can be converted to LRT in the future

*Response: The study analysis identifies the potential need for LRT (technology) in the corridor. However, the anticipated passenger demand (to 2011) can be served by buses, and the additional expense (of LRT) is not seen as warranted; bus mode also provides more (operational) flexibility.*

*Extra: Transit technology options for higher order transit on the Don Mills Road, will be evaluated as part of subsequent EA review.:*

The City should look at signal optimization at Leslie and Victoria Park? Have you looked at widening?

*Response: Yes widening of Victoria Park north of Ellesmere has been examined, Leslie has not been assessed – emphasis on transit. The study does not propose whole scale road widenings; some will be considered at a reasonable level. On Victoria Park Ave, there is good bus service today. It could be enhanced with exclusive bus lanes – the road may have to be widened in specific locations to accommodate these. North of Highway 401- York Rapid Transit is proposing a connection into the Sheppard Subway by an express bus service to key locations in Markham.*

Buses on Broadview Avenue experience bottlenecks much of the time. In reference to Castle Frank Station, where would the buses go (to head northbound)?

*Response: They could go up the Bayview Extension and then either go along Redway (extension) to Millwood and Overlea to Don Mills Road or use the (Bayview/Bloor) ramps, DVP to Don Mills Road. TTC would evaluate rerouting (other existing services including) the Flemington Park buses to Castle Frank Station as part of this proposal.*

What potential destinations (stations) would be served by a proposed GO Station at Eglinton Avenue?

*Response: The GO service would operate between Union Station to Richmond Hill, serving Oriole and Old Cummer stations (in the City of Toronto) and north to Langstaff, with directional service.*

What is the capacity of the (GO) trains? Are there constraints? Can the trains be made longer? Are we at capacity with the trains now?

*Response: The line is not at capacity now (the trains can be made longer; GO Transit is proposing longer and additional trains on this and all their lines). There is a fine balance between ridership and capacity. TTC have undertaken a ridership growth strategy looking at fare reduction, passes, increased service priorities. We anticipate that a Don Mills BRT would have more ridership (than additional ridership generated by the new GO station).*

Are there plans to provide relief to the Yonge Subway during the peak south of Bloor Station?

*Response: The study identifies the need to provide direct service to the Midtown and Downtown.*

*Extra: Analysis of expected ridership indicates that a BRT service on Don Mills Road would attract many current riders away from the Yonge subway north of Bloor Station (approximately 1500 riders in the peak hour)*

How feasible are the improvements cost-wise?

*Response: The key issue is how can we keep system operating efficiently and make strategic improvements (on a cost-effective basis). The range of transportation improvements being put forward is fairly reasonable. The improvements recommended are not a huge expense. Look at all of the numbers of improvements – there are a number that can be done now and others that will require further studies. We have reviewed cost effectiveness with cars and parking and transit. How does the average individual look at this – everyone has to make a decision. If transit is better, then people will take it. The first phase is identifying the potential of the transit system. We will evaluate ways to improve numbers during the next phase (of EA study) The key is increasing the person carrying capacity (of the corridor).*

How will you consider the impact on the natural environment? What about noise and pollution?

*Response: No additional lanes are planned on the DVP south of Bloor. There could be minor widenings required to allow bus shoulder lane operations (at some locations), but they are not expected to be significant. Redway Road is the only proposed new road/extension of the study. The next step is to study the impacts more thoroughly in subsequent Environmental Assessment.*

What is an acceptable cost per rider for the TTC?

*Response: Approximately \$4.00 per rider would have TTC breaking even (cost vs. revenue). Other factors (in deciding to operate new service) include how the service meets the goals of attracting riders to transit, City planning objectives, economic development and land use benefits.*

There has been no mention of travel times in the corridor.

*Response: With transit signal priority (example: along the #42 Cummer Bus route) and dedicated bus lanes, we expect there to be travel time savings which should encourage people to use transit instead of their cars. People will use transit if they can get there quicker. We really want to relieve the Yonge Subway Line. The travel time study is very key. Focusing on the corridor – we could see a 6% to 8% savings on total travel time. Travel time analysis needs to be an assessment of door to door travel time. We would like to see a faster option than using the Yonge Line to get downtown. The average operating speed is currently about 18 km per hour for the Don Mills Bus. With a BRT service it could be 24 -28 km/hour.*

*The Yonge Line is over capacity for a short period of time in the am. TTC can't add more trains. The auto travel is very busy from 6 to 9 a.m. and the subway from 8 to 8:30 a.m. with peak loading. It is at capacity for about 40 minutes. As the City grows, we need to manage (the transportation demand and network) better and that is why we are proposing other transit options. We also need to take people directly to Midtown to avoid them having to travel all the way the downtown (i.e. Union Station) before they can arrive to midtown (destination). There is also the need for improved connections and movements east and west through the midtown to facilitate peak period travel.*

How effective is the HOV Policy?

*Response: This is an operational policy and it relies on enforcement. Enforcement unfortunately is not a priority. Compliance overall is not good.*

Where is traffic coming from on the Parkway? Is it coming from York Region and is there a freeway still planned between Markham and Scarborough?

*Response: The freeway was called the East Metro Freeway and was once in the plans (but no longer being considered). In the west, there is Highway 427/QEW and 400. In the centre of the City, we have the DVP and nothing in the east. With the stopping of the Spadina Expressway in 1972, it ended the potential for the Scarborough Expressway. Kingston Road provides an easterly route.*

Extra: The study presentation and information presented during the Phase 1 Public Consultation Centres, and Master Plan Report provides details on the existing travel patterns and trends. Approximately 35%-40% of all peak period trips in the corridor south of Highway 401 originate from York Region. Southbound auto trips originating in York Region that are destined for Downtown Toronto account for only 12% of total southbound auto trips south of Highway 401.

The meeting ended at 9:30 p.m.

## **SESSION TWO: APRIL 29 MEETING AT S. WALTER STEWART LIBRARY**

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The formal presentation began shortly after 7:00 p.m. The following comments were noted:

When you look at growth and congestion, what do you consider? What is the source of the growth in congestion on the Parkway? Is it from north of the City or south of Steeles Avenue?

*Response: The traffic analysis has shown a significant amount of growth in trips, are from the Don Valley corridor within the City of Toronto, north to York Region, due to growth in major employment areas north of Steeles Avenue. All agencies (involved in this study) develop projections in travel demand.*

It seems to me that we have been skirting around the issues and haven't been planning the roads, and while we tinker there is a big mass of people that must come down the DVP. Should we be looking at how to get them off the DVP and onto transit and other routes? TTC should be pushed further north. I can't understand why Redway would be used for buses only.

*Response: York Region and York Region Transit (YRT) have ongoing work to develop an expanded transit network and build new transit facilities at key destination points to/from Toronto with fixed connections on major routes like Don Mills Road, DVP and Victoria Park. City staff participates in their studies and York Region staff are part of the project team for this study.*

As growth continues to push further north, I would like to see rail links utilized.

*Response: We are looking at how to manage growth better and where to place transit with the view to having better choices. As the first speaker indicated, people feel that they are limited to using the DVP when traveling between the north and south ends of the corridor – better choices with transit is key.*

It was noted that Redway Road could be used as a busway. (Impacts on) the Don Valley is a significant consideration. How will the criteria be used to shape the recommendations and impact on the natural environment?

*Response: Redway Road is a proposed new road extension and is proposed to be two-lanes only for Bus Rapid Transit. Other impacts at the edge of the Don Valley Parkway are expected to be very minor – for example there could be 2 metre widening at the most. More detailed design is required to identify the impacts of the roadway. The expected impact (of the road alignment) on the natural environment is minimal. The proposed road would fit within the existing rail corridor. These impacts will be assessed in greater detail as part of a future environmental assessment.*

*Extra: Evaluation methodology and criteria will be developed in consultation with TRCA, Ministry of the Environment, other government agencies, stakeholder groups and the adjacent community*

What is a TMA – this was glossed over in the presentation?

*Response: TMA is a Transportation Management Association. Reference was made to the Black Creek TMA. It is a non-profit voluntary association, in partnership with employers to provide and promote alternative choices for travel to jobs and other locations with the TMA area. Elements can include carpooling and ridesharing programs, privately operated shuttle bus services, free transit passes and other incentives to reduce auto use and parking needs. The Black Creek TMA has been very successful.*

What changes are proposed for on-street parking?

*Response: The peak parking period restrictions are generally from 7-9am and 4-6pm. We suggest looking at extending these hours on major streets. The main concern in commercial districts is from businesses who favour maintaining existing peak hour rather than extending them. We plan to review this issue further and reporting to City Council (subsequent to this Master Plan study) on the implications and benefits of this.*

Crother's Woods is an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA). There are few left in the lower Don – this natural ecosystem needs to be protected. There would be high impact from salt spray, diesel pollution and particulate; severe impact on the Woods if built and there would be a loss of value. The building of two lanes even if for buses would create severe negative impacts. If buses go in, cars will follow. You need to do everything possible before proceeding with the Redway option. Right now, you are talking about bus only lanes, but there will be tremendous pressure for cars in the future. This should be considered only as a last resort. What is happening with the Leslie Street extension?

*Response: If the Redway Road proposal (as part of a Don Mills BRT routing) is assessed further there would be a detailed environmental assessment to determine expected impacts on the Valley and Crother's Woods. We would want to have your involvement to articulate and share concerns and discussion about the impacts. We haven't made that determination yet – there a number of things that need to continue to be studied. The study team has walked from Bayview along the CPR tracks. If the spur line moves closer to the main line, the road may be kept away from the wooded area. Physical impacts and effects of operating buses adjacent to the ESA will need to be assessed. The Leslie Street Extension has been removed from the new City of Toronto Official Plan.*

I would have thought that costs would be attached to the proposals and that it would be the key driving force for what you can do? Why are there no dollar values being presented?

*Response: Some cost estimating has been done, while others are ongoing. Cost estimates will be provided in the final Master Plan Report.*

Why is the improvement of the Bayview Extension not considered a preferred proposal? TTC service from Thorncliffe to Flemington must be improved.

*Response: We need to look at efficiency of moving people. In Thorncliffe Park, Flemington Park and Wynford, there are some 54,000 people living in these communities. Only 35% currently use TTC. TTC is currently working to get people to the Pape/Danforth subway. TTC buses are very expensive to operate. This study's objective is to find cost effective solutions. The widening of Bayview is very difficult at the south end. Leaside Bridge is under construction for the next four years. We will be trying to keep one lane open for next four years*

You keep referring to 2011 – is the 2011 plan still alive? Instead of selling off abandoned railway lines and hydro corridors these should be kept for possible future transit use. Crother's Forest is mostly a dump so why is it so environmentally sensitive?

*Response: Population, employment and travel demand projections are usually for ten-year intervals. These have nothing to do with the 2011 plan which has been superceded. The new Official Plan includes the Finch Hydro Corridor with higher order transit.*

*Extra: Ongoing discussions are occurring between staff from the Province, City of Toronto, other affected government agencies and Hydro One, to develop a framework for future potential uses and opportunities using the Hydro corridor lands.*

Isn't the Don Mills BRT concept attacking the monopoly of TTC?

*Response from TTC: If we had more money we could run more buses. The BRT would be an extension of what we have with more efficiency by using dedicated bus lanes.*

Consider expropriating land for future transit lines. I'd also like to see quieter vehicles and pathways for cyclists.

I am here representing Friends of Don East and am pleased to learn that you are listening to our comments and concerns from the first public sessions. A lot of good work as been done here with a lot of good benefits to the City. I would like to ensure that my comments are accurately reflected, since last time my comments were attributed to the task force to Bring Back the Don. We are an independent non-profit group and were instrumental in getting Crother's Woods designated. Councillor Pitfield has walked this area with us and has seen its value. The Crother's Woods are vital. We have highlighted issues emanating from stormwater run-off; snow and salt damage and can't look at this in isolation. What we see here in the proposed initiatives could be a win-win. Would be concerned if there was tinkering at staff level before this plan gets presented to Council. If there was, then we would need another public meeting.

With respect to HOV lanes – would like you to really consider – going from 3 to 2 people (occupants) There are already so many bottlenecks with too much arterial parking close to corners. I appreciate the needs of the merchants but Bayview goes down to one lane. Need to look at the movements here. The cycling and hydro corridor is just outside of our boundary. There is the Warden Corridor – FODE proposed Taylor-Massey Trail – major element to buy the Hydro Corridor. Hydro and ORC staff are dealing with Hydro Corridor – City staff should think about its use. I am impressed with the phenomenal job and focus on transit. I appreciate the good work here. Don't see any sign of dealing with the 100,000 more people that will be coming into the City. What issues will the TMA's address? Can we not as a society reduce our trips? Are all of these journeys necessary – everyone doesn't have to drive downtown? Why can't we live closer to work?

*Response: Thanks for the excellent comments. There is a lot of research about how to influence travel behaviour and the new Toronto Official Plan is focused on living and working closer together. The problem that we are encountering is that many people live in York Region (and rest of the 905 area) and work downtown, so we need to find a way to move these people to their destination more efficiently - using transit.*

Up until 2000, we had bus service in the area and then there were a lot of changes with service being phased in. Can TTC bring back more service in different parts in the study area? We need to make TTC more appealing.

*Response: We are doing what we can with limited resources. It is really a simple analysis of cost and what service we can provide.*

Has there been any more thought about neighbourhood impacts particularly in relation to the bus service into Castle Frank and the impacts on the neighbourhoods? There are noise and air quality issues and the intersection at (Castle Frank/Bloor) is absolutely jammed. There is no parking at the Castle Frank Station and no safe drop-off and pick-up area. What will happen to the intersection and neighbourhood infiltration with parking? There could be serious consequences. What volume are we talking about?

*Response: There could be as much as 30 buses an hour initially. The issues you've raised will be examined in greater detail as part of a future environmental assessment*

This area is totally jammed, how are you going to get the buses in there?

*Response: We would consider using shoulder lanes, or widen the shoulders and use the area that is undeveloped to provide the connections to/from the DVP and Bayview Avenue.*

The area that is undeveloped in the centre (at Castle Frank Station) is a park with 100-year-old trees and a significant part of the community aesthetics. I cannot see how this can work.

The Official Plan talks about a million plus new people in Toronto. If all of these or most buy a car, we will be in such a bad situation. We will have to vastly increase public transit. I suggest that there would be, even with better transit service, several hundred thousand new vehicles more on the road than what we have now. We need to look at the growth that is expected and take a good hard look at what we are doing.

*Response: The new Official Plan projects that there will be an additional 500,000 to 1 million people over the next thirty years living in Toronto. We expect that 25% of this growth will occur in areas that are well served by transit – along major arterials and in the North York City Centre, East York City Centre and Downtown. There are many policy initiatives underway to encourage more live-work relationships. Wholesale growth will not be allowed in the other 75% of the City.*

Glad to see increase in the emphasis on public transit. See this as a link to human health. We will need to change our travel behaviour. We need to address parking and make it more difficult for drivers.

*Response: The recommendations see a key role in using transit to affect modal split in the overall big picture. It will be important to make transit more competitive than the car by increasing over time the services and the speed through transit priority at signals, exclusive lanes and other measures. We have done a lot of work on assessing travel times to see what is achievable towards this desired result. TTC has some old buses and they are looking at diesel-electric fuel (hybrid)buses.*

I have a number of suggestions as follows:

- Who do we speak to at TTC to tell them how important this Master Plan is? I understand the financial realities but advocate that continuous improvement is important.
- At the interchange of the DVP and Highway 401, the sign is very confusing as to which direction to go in and as a result people are weaving and it is a problem. This sign has been there for at least ten years.
- There needs to be some relief or signage at a minimum about congestion on the DVP. When you come across the Gardiner you don't know that the DVP is backed up until you are into it and there is no way out. If there were some warning or even an exit ramp, this would allow people to get onto Bayview and would decrease the congestion on the DVP. I could see a sign at Jarvis saying that the DVP is jammed.
- There are a number of operational and service improvements that TTC should look at. I have contacted TTC a number of times and do not get any response
- I wonder whether tolls have been taken off the table for the foreseeable future. If you want to prevent people from living outside of the City, then tolls would help. Businesses should stop

- paying for their employee parking as well. If you live in the City, then you shouldn't have to pay tolls.
- Roundabouts work in other countries and improve the flow of traffic – there are environmental benefits – less idling, improved safety and traffic movement. The Victoria Park and Eglinton Avenue intersection is an eyesore – this could be a location for a roundabout.
  - I don't like the idea of increased bus bays at Castle Frank. I generally avoid that area because it is always jammed up. It is a disaster – you should avoid it.

Why is the rail system not being expanded?

*Response: There is limited property within the existing rail corridors in the Don Valley. GO has identified a plan to increase tracks where possible and increase frequency of service. I understand the desire to use the rail line instead of the roadway. There are huge cost issues. The new Official Plan shows the objective for commuter rail/ higher order transit service along the North Toronto CP Line (which crosses Yonge Street near Summerhill Station). There would be interconnects with the feeder system. CP will need to agree to have GO or others to use their tracks.*

GO has shown its intent to have a station at Wynford Drive. The Leaside Spur is not in Leaside. There are two rail lines in the corridor – the CP Spur and the Richmond Hill Service CN Line. There are so many people living in the Wynford Area and it would link with Midtown.

*Response: Leaside spur tracks were taken out but the corridor is still owned by the City. The proposed link from the CN Line to the CP North Toronto line immediately west of the Parkway was reviewed during this study and would cost 25 million dollars now that the development has taken place.*

What are the next steps?

- Hope to move forward with public input to have a report in the fall 2004.
- This study will complete Phases 1 and 2 of the Municipal Class EA requirements for Master Plan Studies. Subsequent phases of the Class EA process must be completed to further refine and evaluate the recommended options prior to implementation. Some improvements are operational and can be undertaken sooner while others will require more analysis.
- When the study is concluded, the recommendations will be taken forward to the Planning and Transportation, and Works Committees. There will be an opportunity for public deputations at that time and you could speak to the Plan and its recommendations.

The meeting ended at 9:45 p.m.