

**ST.CLAIR AVENUE WEST TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS  
CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY**

---

**PHASE 2 PUBLIC MEETINGS  
SUMMARY OF FACILITATED DISCUSSION SESSIONS**

**February 17, 2004  
February 19, 2004**

Prepared by:  
Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited

March 3, 2004

## ST. CLAIR AVENUE WEST TRANSIT IMPROVEMENTS CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

---

### PHASE 1 PUBLIC MEETINGS: SUMMARY OF FACILITATED DISCUSSION SESSIONS

#### Introduction

This report provides a summary of the public comments and questions received during the facilitated discussion session at the Phase 2 public meetings for the St. Clair Avenue West Transit Improvements Class Environmental Assessment Study (Class EA Study). **This report does not provide a verbatim transcript of the discussion at the public meetings.** Nor does this report include comments submitted by comment sheets, emails or by telephone during Phase 2 of the study.

A comprehensive Phase 2 public consultation report will be prepared that will include all input received from the public during Phase 2 of the Class EA Study.

#### Background: Purpose of the Class EA Study

The City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) are undertaking a Class Environmental Study to identify and evaluate options for improving transit operations on St. Clair Avenue West between Gunns Road to just east of Yonge Street. The study is being undertaken according to Schedule C of the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA). The study has been undertaken as the streetcar tracks on St. Clair Ave. West are in poor condition and are scheduled for replacement in 2005. Since the new tracks will be a major capital investment in place for 30 years, it is important to use this opportunity to review possible enhancements to transit operations as part of the broader overall improvements planned for St. Clair Ave. West.

#### Phase 2 Public Meetings

Two public meetings, together with a community stakeholder workshop, were held in Phase 2 of the Class EA study, which involves the identification and evaluation of alternative (planning) solutions. By the end of Phase 2, a preferred alternative solution will be chosen. Alternative design concepts will be reviewed in Phase 3 of the study.

The Phase 2 public meetings were advertised in community newspapers in early February, 2004. Notices were also placed in the Toronto Metro, the City of Toronto's website for the study, and in a study Newsletter mailed to approximately 50,000 households in the study area during the same weeks. The TTC also posted notices of the meetings at its St. Clair Ave. subway stations and at busy streetcar stops along St. Clair Ave. West.

The Phase 2 public meetings were held in two locations within the study area:

- Tuesday, February 17, 2004 at the Holy Rosary Parish Centre;
- Thursday, February 19, 2004 at the Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre.

The purpose of the Phase 2 public meetings was to provide an update on the progress of the study since the first public meetings in October. This information update included:

- The comments and concerns heard from the community at the first set of public meetings and at the stakeholder workshop;
- The list of proposed alternative solutions for improving transit;
- The criteria for evaluating those alternatives.

The Phase 2 public meetings began with an Open House from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., followed by a presentation by City of Toronto and TTC staff at 7 p.m. and a facilitated discussion session from 7:45 p.m. onwards. Members of the public were asked to sign-in to be added to the study mailing. Attendance at the Phase 2 public meetings totaled 450 individuals based on the sign-in sheets.

All display and presentation materials were provided to participants along with comment sheets and postage paid envelopes to be returned by Friday, February 27, 2004.

During the Open House portion, project displays were available for viewing and City and TTC staff, and members of the consultant team were present to receive comments and answer questions.

The facilitator for the public meetings, Marc Rose of Hardy Stevenson & Associates Ltd. welcomed the audience and provided an overview of the purpose of the public meetings. Presentations were then made by the following City and TTC staff and their consultants:

- Mitch Stambler, Toronto Transit Commission;
- Joanna Musters, City of Toronto, Urban Development Services;
- Jim Gough, Marshall Macklin Monaghan.

Mitch Stambler emphasized the importance of streetcar track improvements. Mitch stressed the poor condition of streetcar tracks and the urgent need to replace them. He provided a brief discussion on the surface and sub-surface structure failure to the streetcar tracks on St. Clair Avenue.

Joanna Musters provided a brief overview of the Class Environmental Assessment Study process, focusing on Phase 2 of the study process. She identified and discussed the three main areas of concern derived from community discussions, which were:

- (1) the study schedule and public consultation opportunities;
- (2) the effects of the streetcar improvements on the community and businesses; and,
- (3) the proposed alternatives.

Jim Gough presented and elaborated on the four main categories for the evaluation criteria:

- (1) Transportation;
- (2) Community and Business;
- (3) Natural Environment;
- (4) Costs.

He asked the meeting attendees to review the presented criteria on pages 2 and 3 of the handout package and provide the study team with input.

Jim presented the following alternative solutions that the study team is considering:

Alternative #1: Do Nothing

- No improvements beyond streetcar track replacement and platform improvements

Alternative #2: Minor Transportation Improvements

- Signal timing changes for all vehicles, road improvements and turn restrictions;
- Cost: Lower- \$50- 250k/ intersection.

Alternative #3: Transit Priority Improvements

- Signal Priority - Green Light Extension (already existing on some parts of St. Clair)
- This alternative presents lower to medium costs: signals - \$50- 150k/ intersection; redesign - \$250- 1M

Alternative #4: Other Transportation System Strategies

- High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- Transportation Systems Management
- Travel Demand Management Program
  - Ride matching
  - Van pools
  - Cycling facilities
  - Guaranteed ride home
- This alternative also presents lower costs depending on the programs and technology

Alternative #5: Major Transit Improvements on other East- West Streets

- This alternative presents opportunities for additional buses, signal priority, intersection improvements
- Cost: low to moderate

Alternative #6: Exclusive Transit Lanes on St. Clair Avenue

- This alternative would allow for public transit operations separated from other traffic
- Cost: moderate to high, depending on design and features

Alternative #7: Change Technology

- Examples: bus service or articulated streetcars
- Subway is not under further consideration, because demand does not warrant it
- Cost: moderate to high

Alternative #8: Road Widening - St. Clair or Parallel Roads

- Property purchase required
- Cost: high

### Alternative #9: Combination of Some of the Above Options

- Alternative designs can be combined by section and would reflect the needs, opportunities and constraints of the distinct communities
- For example one option for the section east of Bathurst Street, another option for the section west of Bathurst Street where options are compatible with each other

### Questions, Comments and Responses from Phase 2 Public Meeting February 17, 2004 – Holy Rosary Parish Centre

The formal presentation began at 7 p.m. The sign-in sheets indicated that 125 individuals attended the meeting including Councillor Joe Mihevc.

The following comments and questions were noted from the facilitated discussion session. The comments are attributed to individuals, in cases where the speaker identified themselves (e.g. resident, business owner) or specified that he or she represented a specific group or association. Responses from City and TTC staff are indicated in *italics*.

- 1) Question from local resident: Is twenty five million dollars a fixed cost to replace the streetcar tracks regardless of which alternative is chosen? What is the cost of replacing the streetcars with buses?
  - *Response from Mitch Stambler: In considering the option of replacing streetcars with buses we need to bear in mind the fact that buses carry less people than streetcars, therefore the TTC would need to purchase additional 30-40 buses. The capital cost of replacing the streetcars with buses would be somewhere in the range of \$20 to 25 million including storage/maintenance facilities.*
- 2) Question from local resident: From your presentation it seems that the cost of transit signal priority improvements would be approximately \$1 million per intersection. Is this correct?
  - *Response from Jim Gough: This is not an estimated cost for all of the intersections on St. Clair. This would probably only apply to one or two of the major intersections.*
- 3) Question from local resident: Could you elaborate on the articulated streetcars?
  - *Response from Jim Gough: Articulated streetcars are longer than the regular streetcars. They have an ability to bend. They are currently operating on Queen Street.*
- 4) Question from local resident: Instead of changing streetcars to buses, is it not possible to top up streetcar capacity with additional buses?
  - *Response from Mitch Stambler: We could increase the carrying capacity of the route by adding more buses. However, if a decision is made to keep streetcars operating on St. Clair, there is a large capital investment of rebuilding the tracks and the platforms. Once this investment is made, we would also have to face operational implications due to mixing streetcars with buses, which have different carrying capacities. Buses catching up to streetcars would also create congestion and delayed service. It makes the most economic sense to operate only one type of vehicle (only streetcars or buses) for the entire route, not both.*

- 5) Question from local resident: How have the different raised median systems worked in Toronto (on Lakeshore and Spadina) so far? Have any studies been done to determine the success of their operation?
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The particular design to separate streetcars from the rest of the traffic on Spadina, with raised curbs, have proven to be very effective. The design is much more pedestrian friendly, mainly due to existing refuge islands. The Harbourfront tracks are less effective because motorists find it easier to drive up on the right-of-way, not being mindful of streetcars. Therefore the effectiveness of the design depends on how the streetcars are separated from the rest of the traffic. As for St. Clair Avenue we have not yet made a decision for this study, on whether exclusive streetcar lanes should be recommended. If it is, the particular design aspects will be open to public input (during Phase 3).*
- 6) Question from local resident: Based on your presentations there are obviously a lot of accidents with pedestrians, motorists and streetcars. Will you bring back the red light cameras to intersections (Dufferin and St. Clair)?
- **Response from Joanna Musters:** *Pedestrian safety on St. Clair Avenue is a major priority of this study. We are currently working with the Works Department to look at the circumstances of those collisions. The City-wide red light camera project is currently in the evaluation stage, but will definitely be considered for this project.*
- 7) Question from local resident: Which of the presented alternatives would provide the best improvement for TTC passenger service? Can you quantify that?
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Any of the presented solutions we deliver will provide better service to the TTC passengers. We have not yet chosen a preferred alternative. In our experience, the fastest, most reliable service provided to TTC customers results from a dedicated right-of-way for public transit vehicles.*
- 8) Question from local resident: Isn't it the case that loading and unloading of passengers from streetcars causes the greatest delay?
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Not necessarily. The amount of delay and obstruction due to traffic we have on St. Clair exceeds the delays from streetcars loading and unloading passengers.*
- 9) Question from local resident: Could we not retrofit streetcar garages we are no longer using to store buses? Where are the streetcars being stored now? Would it be cheaper to retrofit the garages?
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Presently the TTC owns only two garages. The garage at Yonge and Eglinton is a very old fashioned facility with huge environmental problems. It is also located in a highly dense residential area. The City would not agree to re-open this facility. The other non-operational garage facility is at Danforth and Coxwell and was closed for the same reasons. It is very small, inefficient and surrounded by a stable residential community that would never accept an active garage. Retrofitting of old streetcar garages, which tend to be smaller in size, to accommodate buses is inefficient. The most cost effective solution would be to build a new,*

*large bus garages to store 250 buses taking advantage of economies of scale. Buses have different storage and maintenance needs than streetcars.*

10) Question from local resident: Would it not be cheaper to store streetcars and buses together?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *No it wouldn't be cheaper. The maintenance of buses requires specialized facilities, specialized material and workforce which are different for streetcars. The trend to efficiency for the TTC is to build larger garages that would fit a minimum of 250 buses. The operational cost of a facility that fits 30 buses would be unacceptable.*

11) Question from local resident: Are there any hydrogen buses available? Is this an option for St. Clair?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Some hydrogen buses are being currently tested. They are not in large use. The vehicles using this relatively innovative technology are extraordinarily heavy, expensive and cannot run for long distances or for many hours. A more promising technology would probably be vehicles operating on a combination of diesel and electric power, as currently being tested in the USA. These tests are being monitored by TTC before a decision is made to consider using them in Toronto. This is currently the most likely alternative fuel option for the future TTC buses.*

12) Question from local resident: Alternative #1 – “Do nothing” - does this consider the existing traffic? How would traffic growth affect the alternative?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The preliminary results from the City's traffic forecasts indicate traffic increasing on St. Clair Avenue in the future. It is also predicted that if traffic increases dramatically, streetcar movement will become obstructed but the traffic and therefore the public transit service will be less productive. Although buses can maneuver better than streetcars (around traffic) they would be limited by the increasing level of traffic congestion.*

13) Question from local resident: Was the Spadina LRT originally planned with small barriers at first, followed by larger barriers? Is it more expensive to begin with smaller changes?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Yes it is more expensive to retrofit and reconstruct the tracks. The best approach is to do it once and do it right to capture all costs, not only monetary costs but also the disruptive effects on the community. We are planning to deal with each part of St. Clair Avenue separately, with construction occurring during specified weeks, so as to complete the improvements in the most efficient and least disruptive manner.*

14) Question from local resident: It seems that the separation of streetcars from the rest of the traffic will be decided first, followed by the type of dedication. The global question is “are we going to have a dedicated right-of-way”? St. Clair is made up of different types of neighbourhoods and each one has to be addressed in a specific way.

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *We are not making a decision at this stage of the study on whether to separate the streetcars from the rest of the traffic or not. The intent of this consultation process is to present and discuss all available options. The study team also recognize the*

*changing character of St. Clair Avenue (from east to west) and that is why we are considering different solutions for different parts of St. Clair Avenue.*

- 15) Question from local resident: A lot of people advocated replacing the streetcar with alternate fuel buses. Given the condition of the streetcar tracks currently, what is the likelihood of replacing the streetcars with buses a few months from now?
- ***Response from Mitch Stambler:*** *The possibility of removing streetcars from St. Clair Avenue completely in a few months is very high. A recent TTC field survey estimated that sixty percent (60%) of the streetcar track is in critical condition. In the Spring, because of the winter weather conditions, this estimate is expected to rise to eighty five (85%) or higher. For the safety of passengers and other traffic, we may have to remove the streetcars from St. Clair Avenue. We do not have enough buses to replace the streetcars. There is a possibility the streetcars may not be brought back to service on St. Clair Avenue until the tracks and trackbed are replaced.*
- 16) Comment from local resident: I hope we can retain streetcars on St. Clair Avenue as they are cheaper, larger and more comfortable than buses. They serve the greatest number of people and take less space than automobiles. Streetcars should be separated from the rest of the traffic.
- 17) Question from local resident: In the business surveys, business owners always exaggerate the parking issue. In your surveys, you should also be asking customers, in addition to business owners, about their feelings concerning access and parking issues. Most customers actually walk to stores.
- ***Response from Joanna Musters:*** *We have interviewed business owners and customers. We conducted a customer survey of over 500 shoppers along St. Clair and asked them questions such as how they travel to stores, how they travel between the stores and how quickly they get to their destinations. We have conducted a range of business surveys and asked questions about parking concerns.*
- 18) Question from local resident: In your presentation of alternatives, you only had one slide that displayed six pictures of possible solutions. Can we see more to open up peoples' minds?
- ***Response from Joanna Musters:*** *We are looking at case studies of about twenty five transit systems in different cities worldwide, similar to St. Clair Avenue. We will be presenting more about them in this study and future public meetings.*
- 19) Question from local resident: Will the City Planning Department integrate this Class EA study into their Avenue Study for St. Clair Avenue?
- ***Response from Joanna Musters:*** *The Urban Development Services Department – City Planning is the author of the new Toronto Official Plan. This is one of the reasons why we are leading this study, and working with the TTC and the city's Works Department to come up with the best transit solution that meets the community's needs and also the objectives of the Official Plan.*

- 20) Comment from local resident: St. Clair Avenue West is very unique in character. We need sustainable transportation to replace the cars that are destroying the tourism activity in city centres. Streetcars are one of many options.
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *We agree the streetcars are one of many options and through this study we are aiming at giving public transit a greater importance on the roadway, help decrease the dependency and use of automobiles, as well as to help increase business and tourism activity.*
- 21) Question from local resident: Are there any plans to divert traffic from St. Clair Avenue West? Do you have a qualitative response to this question?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *The City of Toronto has not yet reached such a sophisticated level of managing traffic flow into the city as other cities that restrict travel into the downtown core. Toronto is not yet at the stage of diverting traffic as in London, UK - perhaps in the future. In addition to quantitative analysis, we will be carrying out qualitative of traffic impacts St. on Clair Avenue (i.e., opportunities for festivals and access for tourist buses).*
- 22) Comment from local resident: This process has allowed for a lot of public consultation. It has also presented the reliability of service along St. Clair Avenue. The new alternatives will improve air quality, ridership and allow for more people to access St. Clair Avenue making it a more vibrant community. The dedicated right-of-way would be a good solution in some parts of St. Clair Avenue (perhaps on Yonge and Bathurst), but would be more difficult to implement further west on St. Clair. We need to look at all criteria to make an informed decision.
- 23) Comment from local resident: The proposed reduction of automobile use on St. Clair in the City's Official Plan has not been considered.
- **Response from Joanna Musters:** *The City of Toronto's Official Plan states that we need to reduce automobile usage and reliance by making public transit more attractive, reliable and comfortable. The criteria that we have included in this project recognize the goals of the Official Plan.*
- 24) Comment from local resident: A partial dedicated right-of-way will increase the speed of traffic. We need biking lanes and more walking facilities to address safety concerns.
- **Response from Joanna Musters:** *Safety concerns are a large element in any solution we present. We must assess the benefits and impacts of all alternatives on all road users, not just drivers.*
- 25) Comment from local resident: The transit priority signal allows the streetcars to pass before the signal changes. As a passenger, I often wait on the curb for the signal to change to get to the streetcar, but it doesn't, and it leaves, making me wait longer for another one to arrive. Also, I think part of the reason for "bunching" of streetcars is poor scheduling, not just due to operating in mixed traffic.
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *This is one disadvantage of transit signal priority (green time is extended to allow passengers already at the stop to board, and streetcar to proceed through the intersection). It occurs on all routes which have signal priority, and is a tradeoff (benefiting people*

*on the streetcars) which is unavoidable. Yes, poor service management is part of the problem for bunching of streetcars, and it is the TTC inspectors responsibility on the street to address this.*

26) Question from local resident: Have you considered the impact of dedicated right-of-way on emergency service vehicles?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *On Spadina Avenue, the dedicated right-of-way allows the emergency vehicles to by-pass traffic and congestion at all times.*

27) Question from local resident: How efficient are the TTC parking lots? Could we have a parking lot near the west end of St. Clair Avenue near Keele? Perhaps we could also consider cheaper fare rates. We should encourage more people to leave their vehicles and take the rest of the way via TTC.

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *To our knowledge most people prefer parking where there is access to the fastest public transit available, which is the subway. This project, however presents interesting opportunities to enhance public parking at high speed public transit locations, such as streetcar routes, should the streetcar service be significantly improved. Currently, however, parking is more effective near subway stations.*

28) Question from local resident: The residential development will increase along improved transportation corridors, such as St. Clair West, providing more potential customers for small businesses. Will the City take future development into consideration?

- **Response from Joanna Musters:** *One of the Official Plan objectives is to provide opportunities for new development and to allocate growth along major transit routes such as St. Clair West and to attract residential and employment areas along corridors having good access to public transit. Those corridors are called Avenues in Toronto's Official Plan. St. Clair West is one of those Avenues and we expect that, if the public transit service is improved, the area will grow and provide opportunities and benefits for businesses along the corridor.*

29) Question from local resident: Reliable public transit attracts riders and the dedicated right-of-way seems to be the right alternative to achieve this goal. With Alternative #9: "Combination of Some of the Above Options" (combination of presented alternatives), if there are sections of the route where there is a dedicated lane for streetcars, but other section(s) where streetcars still compete with traffic, does the streetcar lose the reliability all along the line?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *Yes, service reliability on the entire route would be affected, including in the dedicated right-of-way. It would largely diminish the benefits of moving the streetcars freely, because problems encountered by streetcars in mixed traffic would affect vehicles on the entire line (e.g. streetcar "bunching" at the problem location). However, this study will be analyzing these options in more detail.*

30) Question from local resident:

The dedicated right-of-way would be efficient, convenient and sustainable. How will this study affect what development and zoning by-laws are proposed by the (future) Avenue study? It should be a more pedestrian-oriented street. With all the money being spent on infrastructure, perhaps the City could

consider making St. Clair more pedestrian-oriented, and this Study could show what improvements on St. Clair could look like.

- **Response from Rod McPhail:** *One of the Official Plan strategies for the City of Toronto is the study on Avenues. We are currently in an EA Study, not an Avenue Study. The reason for this EA study is to look at options for replacing the deteriorating streetcar tracks. However, as part of the Official Plan (implementation), City Planning are undertaking about four Avenue studies each year, which look at the existing land uses along the road and how they can be improved, partly by implementing new zoning. The land uses must complement the transportation characteristics of the road and vice versa. The Avenue studies include extensive community consultation. I have asked our department to make St. Clair Avenue a priority as one of the next Avenue studies to be started. It is City Council's decision to direct us to which Avenue Studies should be conducted next.*

*Please note the study team handed out our study package. We noticed that an additional white pamphlet was handed out outside. Please be informed that the pamphlet was not distributed by the Environmental Assessment study team, and does not represent the information that we are presenting or discussing here tonight.*

31) Question from local resident: Is there an opportunity to improve the streetcar waiting area at Yonge and St. Clair as part of this study?

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *This study is looking at the streetcar tracks rather than the waiting areas at the subway stations. If there was a clear community consensus in improving the waiting areas, I believe these concerns should be made to the TTC and we would consider making those improvements, but they'd be outside the scope of this study.*

32) Comment from local resident: Is there budget for replacing the sidewalk on St. Clair Avenue near St. Michaels' College, near Bathurst Street. It is very narrow. The City should negotiate with St. Michaels' College to remove the wall.

- **Response from Jim Gough:** *That area is within the study area, so we will review and identify any opportunities for improving sidewalks in that area.*

33) Comment from local resident: I have not heard of any improvements to transit in the area of St. Clair west of Gunns Road and Scarlett Road. There is no direct service from Scarlett Road to Keele Street. That area does not appear feasible for streetcar service. A bus would be a better option. There are housing developments in that area and there will be an increased demand for public transit. At a meeting I recently attended I was informed by Councillor Nunziata that the TTC would consider extending their service if a GO station was to be put at Scarlett Road.

- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *This study design deals with two phases: The first Phase, this EA Study, deals only with the existing streetcar tracks between Yonge Street and Gunns Road. The second Phase of the Study is to look at the feasibility of extending the streetcar service from Gunns Road to Jane Street or Scarlett Road, and would occur after this study is completed. GO Transit have indicated that it would only consider a new station, near Caledonia Road, if the transit*

*service on St. Clair Avenue were improved to a level where it would be cost feasible for GO to provide a station (i.e. where there was sufficient ridership demand to justify a GO station).*

- 34) Question from local resident: The dedicated right-of-way may work well on Spadina, but Spadina is a wider street than St. Clair. Could there be problems with turns (for traffic) especially at major intersections?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *We are looking at traffic concerns by using computer model simulations to show traffic flows under the different alternatives. We would like to achieve order and predictability on St. Clair Avenue.*
- 35) Comment from representative of MySt.Clair.com: There are members of the community here that have a difference of opinion. If the community is interested in discussing their view, My St. Clair invites you to attend a town hall session that the organization is planning to host.
- 36) Question from local resident: What are the chances that Alternative #1 "Do Nothing" is chosen as preferred solution? Is the City committed to completing this study this year?
- **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The choice of Alternative #1 "Do Nothing" as preferred solution depends on the level of support and interest in the community. The rate at which the progress of this study will move also depends on the level of support and interest of this community. Ultimately, it is up to City Council to make the final decision on which alternative will be chosen.*
  - **Response from Joanna Musters:** *The study team are very serious about looking at the various options which will improve St. Clair, and we have a large number of staff from different City Departments working with us.*
- 37) Question from local resident: We need to consider the fact that on Spadina Avenue, there was no streetcar service before the dedicated right-of-way. Business suffered during construction and many who suffered business loss sought refuge on St. Clair Avenue, only to have to deal with the consequences of streetcar tracks improvements again. If you take away parking and sidewalks what will happen to the neighbourhood?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *The solution needs to work for the entire community - residents and business owners. The EA study seeks to find a solution that has minimal negative effects; and we hope this project will have a positive effect on improving the vitality of St. Clair Avenue.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m. Joanna Musters reminded everyone to leave any completed comment sheets in the comment box at the entrance or to mail/fax them back to the project team by February 27, 2004. She also announced that there would be another public meeting (presenting the same information) on Thursday February 19, 2004, and the next set of public meetings are planned in early Spring. Joanna encouraged everyone to visit the City's website for further updates and comments.

Questions, Answers and Comments from Phase 2 Public Meeting  
February 19, 2004 – Joseph J. Piccininni Community Recreation Centre

The formal presentation began at 7 p.m. The sign-in sheets indicated that approximately 250 individuals attended the meeting including Councillor Joe Mihevc and Councillor Cesar Palacio.

The following comments and questions were noted from the facilitated discussion session. The comments are attributed to individuals, in cases where the speaker identified themselves (e.g. resident, business owner) or specified that he or she represented a specific group or association. Responses from City and TTC staff are indicated in *italics*.

- 1) Question from local resident: Is twenty five million dollars a fixed cost to replace the streetcar tracks regardless of which alternative is chosen? Is there no “no-cost” option?
  - *Response from Mitch Stambler: \$25 million is the estimated cost of replacing the tracks and trackbed.*
- 2) Comment from local resident: The condition of St. Clair Avenue is terrible. There is too much noise from streetcars and traffic and there are parking issues. There should be more respect for residents.
- 3) Comment from local resident: Alternative #6 “*Exclusive Lanes on St. Clair Avenue*” seems like the best alternative. Alternative #4 “*Other Transportation System Strategies*” will not work on St. Clair. We need better public transit service to reduce congestion.
- 4) Question from local resident: How is St. Clair Avenue compatible with any of the examples presented on streetcar right-of-ways from other cities? Have you considered the needs of the community as those cities did prior to the establishment of their streetcars? In the examples shown in the presentation, the streets are much wider.
  - *Response from Jim Gough: Many of these examples have many common features with St. Clair West. The example shown of San Francisco, for example, is very compatible to St. Clair. The street is also narrow with residential and business uses along the street. We have looked at the similarities in terms of concerns such as access to business and parking issues. We would like for St. Clair to remain a destination area.*
- 5) Question from local resident: It is surprising that, despite the other options available, the dedicated right-of-way is still one of the alternatives. Other options would work better for the community as a whole - motorists, residents, cyclists, pedestrians, business owners and streetcars. If you eliminate one lane to create a dedicated right-of-way, how do you intend to preserve the cultural makeup of St. Clair? How will you accommodate street festivals? The (exclusive streetcar lane) options you are presenting are an earlier version of Spadina Avenue and will only make matters worse for St. Clair. Concrete islands in the middle of the road, with trees that cannot grow because of salt in the winter, obviously will not work in Toronto.

- **Response from Jim Gough:** *We are still considering exclusive transit lanes as one of the options at this stage of the EA process. We are trying to serve all users of St. Clair Avenue, including the TTC customers. We are looking at a balanced solution. We will be evaluating each of the presented alternative solutions. Exclusive lanes assist in moving the high numbers of people using St. Clair Avenue, but we will have to analyze the impacts on all road users. To understand people's travel needs, we are interviewing residents and business owners, but also considering needs of TTC customers, pedestrians and automobile users. We understand the St. Clair community does not want a Spadina design. We do not believe that providing transit exclusivity is incompatible with the cultural makeup of St. Clair and we are working with municipal planners to develop a unique solution for St. Clair.*
  
- 6) Comment from local resident: We do not want the money to be spent on streetcars on St. Clair. We need it elsewhere in the community.
  
- 7) Comment from local resident: Our community should have input in decision making. There used to be pedestrian islands on Dufferin and Lansdowne, and today pedestrians have nowhere to stop.
  
- 8) Question from local resident: Your previous comments lead us to believe the decision has already been made. The dedicated right-of-way is one of the presented alternatives. Is there no plan to purchase wheel-chair accessible streetcars? Why are we spending twenty five million dollars to provide wheelchair inaccessible transit for the next 30 – 40 years?
  - **Response from Mitch Stambler:** *The TTC has not budgeted to purchase wheelchair accessible streetcars as part of this study. This does not mean the TTC will not consider acquiring some in the future.*
  
- 9) Question from local resident: What percentage of St. Clair Avenue will be taken up by the dedicated right-of-way?
  - **Response from Jim Gough:** *There have not been any detailed plans developed for any of the alternatives, because we have not yet reached that point of the study process.*
  
- 10) Question from local resident: What is the carrying capacity of a streetcar on a dedicated right-of-way versus other lanes?
  - **Response from Jim Gough:** *On a streetcar service going in one direction, the expected carrying capacity is between 3,000 and 3,500 people compared to the carrying capacity of 700 to 1,000 people in cars.*
  
- 11) Question from local resident: Alternative #5 "Major Transit Improvements on Other East-West Streets" improving transit seems to be most suitable for St. Clair. We need to vote on a preferred alternative. Will there be a chance for the public to comment?
  - **Response from Jim Gough:** *There will be more public consultation opportunities for the public to contribute to the final design.*

- 12) Comment from local resident: Community representatives are not the community and they should not be making the decisions.
- 13) Comment from local resident: There is only one option the TTC focuses on and that is the dedicated right-of-way. The problem with motor vehicle accidents seems to be focused on the drivers, but does not look at the TTC drivers. You are concerned with providing more space for traffic. If you narrow the sidewalks, where will the electrical poles go? What is the actual number of people taking the TTC compared to motor vehicle drivers?
- 14) Question from local resident: Alternative #6 "Exclusive Lanes on St. Clair Avenue" is the way to go. We also need improvements on St. Clair such as more street lights and trees. Alternative #8 "Road Widening – St. Clair or Parallel Roads" seems ridiculous. We do not want to create what is in Detroit on St. Clair.
- *Response from Joanna Musters: We are currently working with a public art group through the City's Economic Development (Culture & Tourism) Department to see what an appropriate streetscape vision would be for St. Clair.*
- 15) Question from local resident: The dedicated right-of-way is the way to go. Today, as I was travelling along St. Clair, a streetcar was cut off by a car and there was an accident and thousands of people had to walk to the subway. Currently, the public transit system is not serving the vast majority of people. What do you think the benefit would be if the dedicated right-of-way is built on only part of St. Clair?
- *Response from Mitch Stambler: There would be minimal impact. Streetcars operate on a fixed route where they cannot pass each other; therefore they will operate more quickly on a dedicated right-of-way, but would be subject to today's problems in the remaining section (operating in mixed traffic).*
- 16) Comment from local resident: Spadina Avenue experienced a significant improvement in transit service once the right-of-way was implemented. Prior to the dedicated right-of-way the public transit service was slow and unreliable. In 2002, we have had 26 smog days in Toronto, starting March 17<sup>th</sup>.
- 17) Question from local resident and business owner: The fact that the City failed to notify our community of this meeting on time is very disturbing. Most of our residents do not understand what the process entails and need to be continuously informed in a timely and professional manner. The budget Chief told our community that the TTC has no additional money for initiatives that work. If there is no money in the budget why are we spending it to build such an expensive system? We would like to tell the Mayor we want to save our St. Clair.
- *Response from Mitch Stambler: There is money available for the TTC to rebuild the streetcar tracks, and there is an additional amount provided for streetscape designs.*

- 18) Question from local resident: There is so much money being spent, where is it all going? What about improvement of our streetscapes? The right-of-way separates drivers from the TTC riders. We do not need the right-of-way on St. Clair. The TTC streetcars are primitive - other countries use high-tech buses instead. We could be using the money to purchase such vehicles.
- *Response from Mitch Stambler: This project is not about beautifying the St. Clair or enhancing the business. The main goal of this project is to replace the damaged tracks. This is not a revitalization study, the focus is on transportation. There is money available for the TTC to rebuild the streetcar tracks, and there is an additional amount provided for streetscape designs.*
- 19) Comment from local resident: The right-of-way is the most viable option. The TTC obviously cannot afford to buy new buses to replace the streetcars or to provide extra garage space. If buses are to replace the streetcars, the TTC will have to reduce the level of service which will contribute to more automobile drivers.
- 20) Comment from local resident and business owner: If the dedicated right-of-way is implemented on St. Clair it will crush all of the efforts of the St. Clair West Revitalization Committee (SWRC). St. Clair is a commercial district and a destination area. People need to have space to walk, bike, and drive and be able to use the streetcars, we need a system that will work for everyone. There is so much congestion on St. Clair because the cars cannot get through. We also have a problem with the "Problem Statement" of this study. We agree to have a dedicated right-of-way at rush hours, but not 24/7.
- 21) Comment from representative of MySt.Clair.com: Today's presentation is a taste of alternative solutions. We would like to see the presentations more detailed. There appears to be a divisiveness of community over this project. MySt.Clair invites you to attend a town hall session that the organization is planning to host to discuss the alternatives.
- 22) Comment from local resident: The numbers proposed by you comparing of 50% of rush hour drivers to 50% of people travelling on streetcars are unclear. St. Clair is very different from Yonge Street to Weston Road. We need different solutions for different part of St. Clair.
- 23) Comment from local resident: This is a question of community not public transit. St. Clair is a safe and vibrant community and this project could jeopardise the well being of this community. We are concerned about the survival of small businesses, if store owners lose business they will never come back. There should be more consideration paid towards the young mothers, the elderly and disabled people's access to public transit vehicles.
- 24) Comment from local resident: This is a community problem. We cannot separate community from transit. St. Clair is already congested and there is no dedicated right-of-way. When congestion gets worse, it reproduces itself. This is not an anti-business campaign. Areas in Toronto with a designated right-of-way like Spadina Avenue are flourishing. Spadina Avenue and Queens Quay have dedicated right-of-way and their businesses are flourishing. It is the congestion that will kill the St. Clair community. Congestion and public transit issues are interconnected with the community.

- 25) Question from local resident: This EA process intends to review all reasonable alternatives. Are alternatives 1-9 a short list of options?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *This is not a short list; we are exploring all options compatible with St. Clair.*
- 26) Question from local resident: Why wasn't a subway option included?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *The subway option was originally considered, as was an underground tunnel for the streetcars, but both options are much too expensive to implement.*
- 27) Comment from local resident: The dedicated right-of-way is the best option to improve passenger capacity. Perhaps we could see different options for the dedicated right-of-way.
- 28) Comment from local resident: We do not believe the tracks will last 30 – 40 years. We need to replace streetcars with fuel-efficient buses.
- 29) Question from local resident: Has the City begun comprehensive studies on the long term impact and benefits to residents, businesses, and landowners?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *These studies are on their way.*
- 30) Question from local resident: Has the city considered the issues of sanitation and snow removal? Can we have access to these studies?
- **Response from Jim Gough:** *Those issues will be addressed as part of the Environmental Assessment. The study design document is available on the City's website. Please provide your comments.*
- 31) Comment from local resident: We need to encourage everyone to provide constructive criticism and produce a long-term vision. We need to focus on addressing the question on how to move more people along St. Clair as our population grows. The solution is effective public transportation, like in European cities. We need to think of everyone's well being.
- 32) Comment from local resident: We need to provide constructive input. To those who oppose the dedicated right-of-way – what other solution is there besides buses? Buses will only contribute to more air pollution and health problems as well as slow traffic.
- 33) Comment from local resident: Improved public transit is the next best option to bicycles. We would like to see the dedicated right-of-way to move the TTC customers faster.
- 34) Comment from local resident: The streetcar is a vital part of the St. Clair community and it deserves its own dedicated right-of-way. By bringing more people to St. Clair the streetcar can make this community more attractive. Please consider keeping the current number of operating streetcars. Between morning and evening rush hour, they are full of passengers.

- 35) Comment from local resident: What will the situation look like on St. Clair in thirty years? We need politicians to get involved in extending the whole subway line to help St.Clair. If we have a full Eglinton subway line, St.Clair would not be facing congestion problems today.
- 36) Question from local resident: What would be dedicated right-of-way's impact on the emergency vehicle access?
- *Response from Mitch Stambler: The dedicated right-of-way would provide the emergency vehicles with exclusive access. Currently emergency vehicles make regular use of the dedicated right-of-way on Spadina Avenue from downtown.*
- 37) Comment from local resident: This presentation is misleading. Most of our smog comes from the United States. The TTC carries approximately 32,000 people and you are denying access to motorists. The dedicated right-of-way will not work for everyone; we need four additional subway lines in addition to what we have in Toronto. We need King Street and Spadina Avenue subway extensions. The alternatives you should consider are hydrogen power and vegetable power generated buses. The current streetcars are in very poor condition and break down constantly. When looking at alternatives elsewhere, Europe has a different type of climate. In Canada we fluctuate between -30°C and +30°C, at which point the cement will crack. Many motorists that come to St. Clair car pool and your calculations of 1.5 people per car are wrong.
- 38) Comment from local resident: The dedicated right-of-way will block access for the people who come to St. Clair from other areas. Children will not be able to play and people will be unable to walk, because cars will be using the side streets to make detours to beat the traffic. Fix the streetcar tracks, but do not implement the dedicated right-of-way.
- 38) Comment from local resident: This community is providing the City and TTC with our comments and you record everything we say, but evidently the dedicated right-of-way has been named as the best solution. The TTC says that emergency vehicles have exclusive access on dedicated right-of-way, but the fire chief says the emergency vehicles have difficulties on Spadina's dedicated right-of-way, increasing response time. Let's get a cost effective solution that will address all our needs as well as TTC's needs. The City and Parking Authority said "no" to new parking. If we want to keep our parking we would have to narrow St. Clair. The city wants a 30-year solution. In 30 years most of us will no longer be here.
- *Response from Jim Gough: None of the solutions have been pre chosen. We are simply following the EA process where we have attempted to share all of our proposed solutions including suggestions made by the community.*
- 39) Question from local resident: How will we know that the chosen alternative will last for the next 30 years? Can we expect monitoring after the solution is implemented?
- *Response from Mitch Stambler: We cannot be absolutely sure that it will but, given the projections of new development and travel demands which flow from the new Official Plan, given that the road system is already at or nearing capacity in some locations, and given that the only way to significantly increase the person-carrying capacity of the road is through increased use of public transit, we believe that exclusive lanes for transit will provide the best overall improvement*

*for travel in the city. Both the TTC and the City have regular ongoing monitoring programs for transit and traffic operations, and the overall effects of any changes to St.Clair will be monitored through these programs.*

40) Question from local resident: When the streetcar stops it is the passengers who are not using the rear doors to exit that cause all the delays. Can we not enforce polities to address this issue?

- ***Response from Mitch Stambler:*** *It would be faster if people exited the streetcar via rear doors, however it is difficult to force people to do this.*

The meeting ended at 10:00 p.m. Joanna Musters reminded everyone to leave the comment sheets in the box provided or send them by February 27, 2004 to the project team. Joanna encouraged everyone to visit the City's website for further updates and comments.