

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: AUGUST 26, 2009

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL OF THE
SCARBOROUGH-MALVERN LRT
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT STUDY

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Approve the recommendation, of the joint City/TTC Scarborough-Malvern Transit Project Assessment Study, for a Light Rail Transit (LRT) line from Kennedy Station to Sheppard Avenue East along Eglinton Avenue, Kingston Road, Morningside Avenue, Ellesmere Road, and Military Trail, as outlined in this report;
2. Forward this report to the City of Toronto, requesting that City Council, at its meeting on September 30, 2009, approve the recommendations of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT Transit Project Assessment Study and authorize submission of the Environmental Project Report (EPR) to the Ministry of Environment;
3. Note that City Planning is proceeding to amend Map 5 of the Toronto Official Plan to identify Morningside Avenue (from Kingston Road to Sheppard Avenue East) and sections of the roadways in the general vicinity of the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus (portions of Military Trail and Ellesmere Road) as part of the Official Plan's "Surface Transit Priority Network", in support of this project;
4. Note that City Planning is proceeding to amend the Right-of-Way widths shown on Map 3 of the Toronto Official Plan for a section of Morningside Avenue, north of Kingston Road to 36 metres (from 30m) and Military Trail between Ellesmere Road and Morningside Avenue to 36 metres (from 27m).

FUNDING

Funding for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT Preliminary Planning and Environmental Assessment was included in the TTC 2009-2013 Capital Program as approved by City Council on December 10, 2008. No further funding for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT is being requested at this time.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of March 21, 2007, the Commission endorsed the *Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan* as the basis and priority for rapid transit expansion in the City of Toronto. This plan included the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line as one of seven lines forming a network of fast, reliable, environmentally-sustainable light rail transit throughout the City.

Subsequently at its meeting of November 14, 2007, the Commission received the staff report entitled, *Transit City Light Rail Plan – Evaluation and Ranking of Routes*, which assessed all seven of the light rail lines which comprise the Transit City plan, and confirmed the earlier staff conclusion that the Sheppard East, Etobicoke-Finch West, and Eglinton-Crosstown LRT lines are good choices for the start of implementation of the plan.

Funding had already been approved to complete the environmental assessments (EA) for all the Transit City lines to ensure a state of readiness for all projects.

This report provides a summary of the results of the Transit Project Assessment Study and the rationale supporting the various elements of the recommended preferred design for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line.

On June 15, 2007, the Province of Ontario announced the *MoveOntario 2020* rapid transit plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA). *MoveOntario 2020* includes the TTC-City of Toronto *Transit Light Rail Plan*, which includes the proposed Scarborough- Malvern LRT line.

In Spring 2009 the Province announced funding for Etobicoke-Finch West, SRT and Eglinton Crosstown and the Province/Federal Government announced funding for the Sheppard Avenue East LRT. As no funding from the Province or Federal Government has been announced for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT, further design and engineering work will not be proceeding at this time.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT Project

The objective of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT is to provide LRT service in the Eglinton Avenue / Kingston Road / Morningside Avenue corridor, in a manner that is affordable, that makes transit more attractive compared to the private automobile, and that supports other important City objectives in the corridor, such as more dense, transit-oriented development, and an improved walking and cycling environment.

Study Area

The *Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan* originally proposed that the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line operate between Kennedy Station and the Malvern Area north of Sheppard Avenue East. However, based on projected ridership beyond Sheppard Avenue East and the planned SRT extension to Malvern Town Centre, it was decided to terminate the Scarborough-Malvern LRT at Sheppard Avenue East.

The Process to Date

The process to date has involved a number of study phases to develop a preferred LRT alignment and to assess the impacts of its construction and operation. These phases have included:

- A Feasibility Study was completed to assess the implementation of an LRT line within the defined Scarborough Malvern corridor. It identified key issues to be analyzed during the transit project assessment process.
- Data collection and analysis on transportation facilities, the natural environment, and the social environment was completed for the full corridor.
- For those areas where issues had been identified, alternative solutions were developed and analyzed. The preferred option was incorporated into the preferred project design.
- Environmental issues were identified and alternative elements were selected for the alignment to minimize and/or mitigate adverse impacts.
- At the beginning of the process, various agencies and stakeholder groups were canvassed to determine interest in the project. Meetings were held with City departments, interested stakeholders (e.g., University of Toronto, Scarborough Campus), and utility companies.
- A comprehensive public consultation program was developed to allow the general public to review the proposed project, provide comments and outline any objections. Three series of public consultation open houses were conducted. Information was posted on the City and TTC websites. Opportunities were provided for the public to comment verbally, by email or by fax. In addition, meetings arranged by local Councillors provided additional opportunities for the public to receive and respond to detailed information similar to the open houses. Responses to questions to individuals have been provided where requested and a summary prepared of all concerns and comments.
- The full process has resulted in the development of a preferred alignment and associated facilities for the Scarborough Malvern LRT line to operate from Kennedy Station on the Bloor-Danforth Subway line to Sheppard Avenue/Morningside Avenue.

The Preferred Design for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT

The design proposed on Eglinton Avenue, Kingston Road and most of Morningside Avenue consists of two LRT tracks operating on an approximately 150 mm raised median in the middle of the road. On Morningside Avenue, north of Beath Street to Ellesmere Road the LRT will operate to the east side off the roadway. Midblock, there will be two traffic lanes, plus a bicycle lane, on either side of the LRT. Generally, at signalized intersections, the raised right-of-way is lowered and the cross-section will accommodate a left-turn lane and LRT passenger platforms. On sections which currently have three traffic lanes in each direction, two of the existing six traffic lanes will be converted to LRT right-of-way, and any widening necessary would be minor.

Traffic will be permitted to cross the tracks at signalized intersections only. Unsignalized intersections and driveways will be limited to right-in/right-out operation. U-turns will be permitted from left-turn lanes at signals to assist motorists, who can no longer make left-turns at unsignalized locations, to reach their destination. In general, there will be reduced vehicular capacity on Kingston Road and Eglinton Avenue.

LRT stops will generally be provided every 400-to-600 metres. Passenger platforms will be 60 metres long to accommodate two-vehicle trains.

The urban design element of this project recognizes the importance of designing an “entire street”. As outlined in the City's *Vibrant Streets* document, a key objective is to create a street that is accessible, more attractive, and pedestrian-friendly. Urban design, cycling, and pedestrian-realm issues have been paramount throughout the development of the environmental assessment. During the detailed design phase, urban design considerations will continue to be integrated throughout the project, focusing on accessibility, treatments in areas such as LRT platforms, crosswalks, and boulevards that would be unique to *Transit City* LRT lines, provision of adequate space for street furniture, as well as incorporating special urban design treatments where possible. The project will include a public art component.

Special Design Areas

Connection at Kennedy Station: The connection of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT in the Kennedy Station area is part of the separate SRT/Kennedy Station Project that is addressing improved integration between the existing subway, the SRT, the Transit City Eglinton Crosstown and Scarborough-Malvern lines and buses. The connection of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT to Kennedy Station will be the subject of an EA amendment.

University of Toronto – Scarborough Campus: The University of Toronto is developing a master plan for the Scarborough Campus (UTSC). Although not complete at this time, in the context of the master planning exercise, the TTC, City of Toronto and UTSC jointly developed a recommended alignment that will connect to the University via Ellesmere Road and Military Trail.

Costs and Schedule

The capital costs of constructing the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line, between Kennedy Station and Sheppard Avenue East, including vehicles, apportioned maintenance and storage facilities and apportioned Kennedy Station Improvements is estimated to be \$1,078 million. These figures are expressed in 2009 dollars and do not carry any escalation allowance for work undertaken in future fiscal periods.

The Scarborough-Malvern LRT is not included in the TTC Transit City Priority Projects and has not received Provincial or Federal funding. The EA approval will ready this project for implementation and provide for corridor protection.

Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan schedules the Scarborough-Malvern LRT in the 15-25 year timeframe.

Official Plan Amendments

Map 5 of Toronto's Official Plan, "Surface Transit Priority Network" identifies Eglinton Avenue and Kingston Road as Transit Priority corridors from Kennedy Station to Morningside Avenue. City Planning staff are conducting an Official Plan Amendment to also identify the section of Morningside Avenue, between Kingston Road and Sheppard Avenue and the roadways in the general vicinity of the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus as Surface Transit Priority corridors, in support of this initiative. City Planning is also proceeding to amend the Right-of-Way widths shown on Map 3 of the Toronto Official Plan for the section of Morningside Avenue, north of Kingston Road to 36 metres (from existing 30m) and for Military Trail between Ellesmere Road and Morningside Avenue to 36 metres (from existing 27m).

Environmental Assessment

Under the Transit Projects Regulation of the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EA), transit projects, such as the Scarborough-Malvern LRT, are exempt from the requirements under Part II of the *Act*. The new regulation has created a process which allows for an assessment of potential environmental impacts to be completed and approved within six months.

The key steps in the Transit Project Assessment Study process are:

- Contact the Ministry of Environment for a list of agencies to contact;
- Distribute the Notice of Commencement;
- Take up to 120 days to consult with interested persons and regulatory agencies, and process the recommendation for approval;
- Publish a Notice of Completion of the Environmental Project Report (EPR);
- Provide 30 days for the public, regulatory agencies, Aboriginal communities, and other

- interested persons to review the Environmental Project Report;
- 35 days for the Ministry of Environment (MOE) to act if there is a potential for a negative impact on a matter of Provincial importance that relates to the natural environment or has cultural heritage value; is of interest to, or has an impact on a constitutionally protected Aboriginal or treaty right.

The preliminary planning has been completed for the project and the Transit Project Assessment Process Notice of Commencement was issued June 19, 2009. Public consultation has been included throughout the process. The attached report, entitled "Scarborough-Malvern LRT, Transit Project Assessment, Environmental Project Report Summary" provides additional details on:

1. The process followed to develop the project;
2. The rationale for the design elements selected for the Scarborough-Malvern LRT, and,
3. A summary of the environmental impacts of the project and net effects following proposed mitigation measures.

Complete details on the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line, including plans of the 13-kilometre corridor from Kennedy Station to Sheppard Avenue East, will be contained in the project's Environmental Project Report, which is in draft form and will be finalized following Commission approval. Following City Council approval of the recommended project, the Environmental Project Report will be completed and placed on the public record for the mandatory 30-day review period.

JUSTIFICATION

The Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail project is a component of the *Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan*, the Province's *MoveOntario 2020* plan and Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan. The recommendations of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT Transit Project Assessment Study should be approved by the Commission as a cost-effective way of providing excellent, reliable, high-capacity, environmentally-sustainable transit service and to, thereby, reduce auto dependency in this corridor and create a more liveable, attractive, and sustainable city.

August 13, 2009

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Attachment