

Toronto Transit Consultation Meetings

June 2nd, 2016

Highlights Report

This concise Highlights Report has been prepared to provide the City of Toronto, TTC, Waterfront Toronto and Metrolinx with a snapshot of the feedback captured at the public meeting held on June 2nd 2016. A more detailed report of the feedback captured during this phase of consultations will be prepared in the coming days.

Introduction

On June 2nd, the City of Toronto, City Planning Division (Transportation Planning), Waterfront Toronto, the TTC and Metrolinx, hosted a public meeting on a series of key transit projects currently being planned. The meeting was held at Riverdale Collegiate Institute.

The public meeting presented an update on the various transit projects being studied as part of a network approach to transit planning, including:

- **Relief Line:** Present the preferred alignment as well as proposed station locations.
- **SmartTrack and GO Regional Express Rail (RER):** Present the integration of SmartTrack and GO Regional Express Rail to improve rapid transit service on three GO corridors in Toronto.
- **Waterfront Transit Reset:** Present preliminary transit concepts and their associated evaluation framework.
- **Scarborough Transit Planning:** Present the evaluation of options for the Scarborough Subway Extension and LRT connecting Kennedy Station and the University of Toronto.
- **Eglinton West LRT:** Evaluation of options extending westward from Mount Dennis along Eglinton Ave to Toronto Pearson International Airport.
- **Eglinton East LRT:** Evaluation of options connecting Kennedy Station and the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus.

The meeting featured a series of panels and interactive feedback activities on each project. Participants could freely move between display panels and activities at their own pace, and speak with project staff from the City, Waterfront Toronto, TTC and Metrolinx.

The main focus of this meeting was the Relief Line Project Assessment. Stella Gustavson (Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit, City of Toronto) provided a brief overview of Coordinated Network Transit Planning, followed by a status update on the Relief Line and the results of the evaluation of alignment options and the emerging preferred alignment. Following the presentation, participants had the opportunity to ask questions of clarification as well as provide feedback.

Approximately 225 individuals attended the public meeting, including MPP Peter Tabuns (Toronto-Danforth).

Highlights of Participant Feedback

Questions of Clarification

The discussion captured during the question and answer period following the overview presentation is summarized below. Questions are noted with a “Q”, comments with “C” and answers with “A”. Answers were provided by Stella Gustavson (Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit, City of Toronto) and supported by Paul Millett (Toronto Transit Commission), unless noted otherwise.

Q: Could you compare the sound generated by the Relief Line to existing subways?

A: Regarding noise and vibration, the existing subways along Yonge and University and the Danforth were built using old technology. The new technology that is currently being used for our subway extensions, and that would be used here, makes tracks almost float on rubber pads that help mitigate sound and vibration. It’s a completely different technology than in the past. This alignment will be much deeper than on the Bloor-Danforth line. From the geo-technical work that we have done so far it appears construction will be done predominately in bedrock. When the Bloor-Danforth line was built the standards were lower or non-existent. Now the standard is much more stringent and very strict for residential areas.

Q: How will the different routing options impact ridership of other routes? Would they have an impact on rerouting traffic on the Don Valley Parkway?

A: The way that we examine ridership on this line is to try and figure out how many riders would be generated by it and the recommended route would do the best job of adding more net new riders to the transit system. We have not specifically studied how the creation of this line would impact drivers on the Don Valley Parkway.

Q: There are a lot of people here who have come to a consultation for the first time and who are concerned about the impact construction will have on their neighbourhood. Considering the way that the Eglinton Crosstown is being constructed, could you highlight the different construction techniques with respect to the stations and tell us what we can expect to see.

A: This is a good opportunity to talk about the area on Pape between Gerrard and Queen. Along Eglinton, there are twin-bore tunnels going in. I (Stella Gustavson) live along that corridor and while it was under construction, I both heard it and felt it for around six weeks from inside my home. Along Pape between Gerrard and Queen, the right of way is approximately 18.3 metres wide (which is a narrower right of way considering other surrounding streets are approximately 20 metre). The tunnel (depending if it is twin-bore or single-bore) would be between 13-17 meters wide with an easement on either side along that. It is an objective of the project follow public rights-of-way as much as possible. It is also important to note that it is 18-20 metres underground. Once the project gets to the next stage we will have a better idea of the potential impacts will be.

Q: Will the route be constructed through cut-and-cover methods versus tunneling underground?

A: The typical technique is cut-and-cover but we are mining underground in areas for the Eglinton Crosstown so that may also be an option here. No matter how you look at it however, there would still be some street level construction activities.

Q: Why is it necessary to have two subway stops at Gerrard Square and Queen and Pape considering their close proximity?

A: We heard from some people that we do not have nearly enough stops on this subway, while others felt that it will not be fast enough. We try to achieve a balance to provide relief to the Bloor-Yonge subway as that is the main purpose of the Relief Line. The station at Pape-Gerrard has really good interchange opportunities for SmartTrack, good potential for redevelopment at the existing mall and along into the future. Concerning the stop at Queen and Pape, that would help offload some of the streetcar riders. Some residents at previous meetings asked that for there to be a station there.

Q: Are we talking about tunneling through the Danforth all the way through this community, or will there be cut-and-cover? And what mitigation will there be on service impact?

A: At this stage we are not quite sure what can be tunneled or what would be cut-and-covered. The tunneling would be done using large tunnel boring machines, so there would like not be cut-and-cover for the tunnels themselves. However as we consider emergency exits and other such construction areas we cannot say how those areas will be constructed. As we are still in the early stages, we do not know the specific properties that would be impacted. We try and look closely to where the cut-and-cover areas might be and try to minimize the impacts to property and community. If there is any property that we will need to acquire, we go through a negotiation process that has been successful in the past. We try not to expropriate if at all possible. Before any of that however we try to minimize the impact, keeping to the rights-of-way. There has been some question on why we would plan to have two entrances for a subway station (regarding the potential for additional property acquisition) but for each subway station there needs to be an emergency exit.

Q: Can you explain further the level of sound this subway would generate? Is the sound from the subway completely eliminated?

A: It is not completely eliminated but it is vastly mitigated. There is a minimum threshold that we have to meet at a decimal level percentage. This is a criterion regulated by the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. We can't give you a specific example of what this might be like because we haven't designed the subway, its depth, etc. and until we know that, we can't give a specific example. We can provide some information on what the noise levels are for future consultations. We would measure what we hear today at each area with noise receptors. I would imagine the noise and vibrations from the streetcar on Queen would make the sound decimal percentage very easy to be met. On Pape, being a quieter street, means that we would need to work harder to meet that noise level.

Q. Is there any information on electromagnetic fields coming from the tunnels?

A: That is not something that we have looked at yet as we are still in the early stages. The next step is more detailed planning and design. That is something that we can take note of and include as part of the analysis as we go onto potential impacts in more detail.

Q: In the same way that you explained why Richmond versus Queen, could you explain why Pape and not Carlaw?

A: Carlaw is not an option that we included in this study. With Pape being selected as the interchange station on the Bloor-Danforth subway, and the opportunities for an interchange station at Pape/Gerrard, it makes Pape the most logical route to follow the right-of-way and connect to the Bloor-Danforth line. Also as you create more curves along the way, the subway would operate less efficiently (potentially providing a slower service). Connecting to the Pape subway is the better solution the same way that going along Queen is the better solution.

Q: The first time I heard about this (Relief Line project) was two days ago in a letter coming from a neighbour. I'm shocked that Carlaw has not been considered or Jones or Greenwood.

A: If we go back to the earlier work we did for this project, we looked at many different potential anchors along the Danforth. Broadview and Pape emerged as the two best options of all of the other stations along the Danforth and then it was narrowed down to Pape. Concerning the project communication, this project was launched at the end of 2013. This is our fifth round of consultation and in City Planning; public consultation is a big part of everything we do. We do our very best to get the word out to as many people as possible. For this project we advertised in the Metro News, as well as the local papers more than once; we had displays on the screens in the subway stations with information about upcoming meetings; we provided information to the Stakeholder Advisory Group to share with their community members; we sent out email notices to the project mailing list. We have used social media extensively and there has been a lot of media coverage. The Councillor for this particular ward has also sent out newsletters and emails to the people she has on her mailing list.

Q: Regarding the film industry and studios near the foot of Pape and Eastern, how will the subway affect production? Will we have to take six weeks off work as they tunnel underneath? Because if we hear those construction sounds we can't work. Will this put an end to that industry?

A: I would appreciate if you can please write that comment down so we can better understand that issue. All comments that anyone has tonight, please write them down so we can do our best to address them moving forward.

Q: How long has this technology been available for sound and vibration mitigating floating mats and have you always met this minimum standard post construction?

A: The only study we have done concerning noise post-construction is for the Sheppard Subway. Sheppard Subway has been in operation for 14 years and as far as I know we have never had noise complaints on it.

Q: Only one in four of the 30,000 people that crowd into Yonge and Bloor (each day) originate from the East. Why is this project (considered) the decision (solution) to reduce congestion (rather than a second north-south line) and can anything be done in the interim to further reduce congestion? There are a number of options that should be looked at.

A: Thank you for those comments and please make a note of them on a comment form so we can review those options further.

Q: Is it possible to have it put back on the agenda to look at other route options including Greenwood and Coxwell. I love the idea of a Relief Line. Access to the Beaches is a problem as we all know. As there are existing subway stations at both locations, is that something that you could consider?

A: The notion of the Relief line has been a line on the map for close to a hundred years. It has been studied through a tremendous amount of planning over the last four decades. There is currently political will (across all levels of government) for new public transit. We are being directed by City Council to move these projects forward and get them shovel ready. We could continue to restudy everything as we have done in the past. We have already considered the route options and are now at the point of recommending a preferred route.

Q: One of the challenges for a lot of people here today is that you just released a map that has satellite images of our homes with a line or a subway station underneath it. I don't think there are any other areas of the city where the subway goes directly underneath residences.

A: Now that we have a preferred option to present to Council, the next phase (if approved) will be to try and get it aligned to greater detail and identify the impacts and mitigation measures. We need direction

from Council for this. So while we will eventually be able to tell you more about the impacts, we cannot start that until we have an approved alignment to study in greater detail.

Q: What is meant by right-of-way, does that mean foundation to foundation of houses?

A: The public right-of-way is where private property stops and public property begins.

Q: I envy a lot of cities that can offer express subways. I was wondering on this line or any line, can we build a third track to allow for express trains to go from major mode to major mode?

A: That is a valid comment; we would appreciate your thoughts on a comment sheet to reflect that idea.

Q: You mentioned that Carlaw was not considered. If this is a consultation, I'm asking if Carlaw could be considered.

A: Not in time in our report to the Executive Committee on June 28th.

Q: Have you actually walked the streets between Pape and Carlaw and noticed that Carlaw is a four lane street while Pape is a two lane street?

A: We have a lot of people on this study team, City staff, TTC staff, engineering consultants, urban planning consultants. Yes we have walked these streets many times and have compiled a wide array of existing conditions information.

C. If anyone here has an opinion that they feel needs to be addressed, they should email Councillor Paula Fletcher to get some movement on the issues brought forward today.

Q: I am a major supporter of the Relief Line and think it will actually improve everybody's housing value. Can construction be done sooner? What can we do to help?

A: One of the comments that we have received is that we just need to make a decision on the Relief Line and move on. In order to do that probably the best course of action is to let the Councillors know that you support this. This has been the number one project across the City in terms of support by the public for many years. We recognize that there are some potential local impacts and there will need to be mitigation measures developed to address issues.

Q: The Relief Line is very important. In the last round of consultations, there were two corridors that went south along Queen/Eastern being proposed, can you explain why the EQ alignment is considered the more affordable?

A: The two lines are a little different with the Unilever site being farther south and the two would have crossed the Don River at different areas. Regarding the cost, the project engineers would be able to answer that better at the display boards.

C: I live on Pape and I support the preferred alignment. I think it is inevitable that someone will lose in a project like this and unfortunately I think that for this project the losers are the residents on Pape. I am disappointed that we were not mailed directly about this project once the preferred corridor was selected. If the preferred alignment gets approved I think that we need to have a different meeting than this covering the worst things could happen to those impacted. This would help me prepare for some of the things that scare me about this project.

A: It is important to remember that this project is still in the planning phase. Further design work will be needed before potential impacts on specific properties can be identified. Please write your comments down so we can address these concerns in the future.

Q: Is there a preference when it comes to acquiring or disturbing land?

A: At this stage of the project we do not have an answer for that question. In future phases we will know better what that looks like.

Q: Is this the exact route? Do you want to make the route better? Can you look at making a change in the preferred route?

A: The proposed route will go forward as our preferred option taking into account the results of the consultations. If you have suggestions to make it better please write your comments down or email them to your Councillor for consideration.

C: The alignment is a very good alignment, however the big mistake that you are hearing from people here is the section between Gerrard and Queen on Pape, and that section doesn't make any sense. It should be veering towards Carlaw. I am a resident of Carlaw and this will disrupt me in a major way but I don't care because that is the best route.

Q: I live on Pape between Queen and Dundas. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to have the microphone. After the last couple of comments we are starting to get an idea of what the greatest concern is from this group tonight, that that there are no other subways in this City that run under such small spaces, and that there are other options for this small stretch. We all support the Relief Line and realize it must be a very tough decision but there are very few of us who had any idea that this was progressing, and now it seems quite far down the line. So for the group that lives between Gerrard and Queen on Pape, I think that we need to have something specific to review and discuss in terms of what impacts we can expect.

A: We were aware that this would be a concern in advance and we hear these concerns tonight loud and clear.

C: As you know this neighbourhood is a series of old houses. I would like to take a moment to let everyone know that this is the third meeting that I have been to, I was on a list, I got invited to be here and my sense is that people are paying lip service to transit as long as it is not in their own backyard. This group needs to think about that and how the project will honestly affect your daily lives considering how much the City is doing to mitigate the impacts. If we do not want city hall to put this on the back burner for another decade, it is important to make our opinions known but it is more important that we get this project underway. Please do not act like this is the first time this has come up. If you are interested in transit you would have known about this project.

Q: I live on Pape, when will we know what is going to happen to our homes?

A: I would recommend signing up on the Relief Line website to receive future information. An Environmental Project Report would be prepared after the recommended route is approved by Council and this will include identification of potential impacts and mitigation measures, including property impacts. That would be in the report at a high level and then the project would move into detailed design at which time there would be more communication with the people who would be affected.

Q: I echo the room consensus that is asking 'Why not Carlaw?' I have heard the explanation that the turn would make the line more difficult but I am not sure I am convinced by that, there is even a turn already built into the preferred route around Broadview. My question to build on that comment is that there are two places of worship between the section between Queen and Gerrard on Pape, a mosque and a Sikh temple, also the first Jewish cemetery. Was any consideration given to these places of worship when considering the proposed route?

A: We have collected detailed information about the land uses within each of the proposed station areas and there are some materials available on our resource table explaining that. But again if there are impacts to these places then that would have to be mitigated. So just because those land uses are there, that does not mean they would be impacted at all by this project. In fact placing a subway near these places of worship might actually be a plus and it would result in greater access to those areas.

Q: Is there a possibility to have underground streetcar stops, similar to St. Clair West where the street car goes underground and meets the subway for easier transfers.

A: There has been some interest in eliminating some of the streetcar stops and rerouting to areas such as Pape and Gerrard to align with the subway. Further detail around this has not been considered yet, but we will be looking at what the interchange options are in the future.

Q: What does this mean for homes near the proposed subway stations, considering cut-and-cover, property acquisition? Will they have to be expropriated? I would also like to say that we are not against the Relief Line; we are just concerned about the potential property impacts of these stations.

A: The maps that we have out there right now are a conceptual idea of the planning and design work on where a platform could fit and where it might make sense to have a main and secondary entrance. We have had meetings with our Community Planning and Heritage colleagues in City Planning to help understand what makes the most sense for the Relief Line alignment and station locations. Stations will need to be, and can be, well-designed and integrated into the community.

Q: I am wondering about what streetcar service to the Unilever site might look like as well as what will happen to streetcar service on Queen downtown during construction.

A: What we know right now is that there are plans to extend Broadview south, and so that would enable the streetcar to be extended further south through the Unilever site. There are some preliminary plans that I have seen of the road network that incorporate the idea to extend that streetcar section.

Next Steps

A more detailed report of all consultation activities will be made available after this round of consultation. Comments must be submitted by June 30, 2016 to ensure inclusion in this report.