

**East Don Trail Project
Environmental Assessment**

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting #7
Notes**

Wednesday September 10, 2014
Flemingdon Park Library, 2nd Floor Community Room #2
29 St. Dennis Drive, Toronto
6:30 – 8:30 pm

Meeting Chair: Adele Freeman

Note Taker: Natalie Seniuk

ATTENDANCE	
Name	Affiliation
Jennifer Hyland	City of Toronto
Wendy Strickland	City of Toronto
Vojka Miladinovic	City of Toronto
Violetta Tkaczuk	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Lisa Turnbull	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Rob Amos	Aquafor Beech Ltd.
Ronald Kluger	Bike 25
John Taranu	Cycle Toronto
Andy Wickens	Don Watershed Regeneration Council
John Routh	Friends of the Don East
Chris Winsor	Resident
Paula Davies	Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve
Charles Chaffey	Toronto Field Naturalists
Anne Marie Leger	Toronto Ornithological Club
David Moore	Wynford Concorde Residents Group
Regrets: Munjeera Jefford (Action for Neighbourhood Change/Hub, Victoria Village), Terry West (Don Mills Residents Inc.), Louis Fliss (Flemingdon Health Centre), Chris Winsor (Resident Ward 29), Nancy Smith Lea (Toronto Centre for Active Transportation), George Bizios (Victoria Village Community Association), Mike Jones (Walk Toronto)	
OBSERVERS	
Kaitlyn Hundt	Student Observer

WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS

The Chair, Adele Freeman (AF or The Chair) – Director of Watershed Management Division at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) - welcomed everyone to Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting #7. AF informed CLC Members that Natalie Seniuk - (NS) – Project Manager with TRCA – would be recording meeting notes. New attendees and observers in attendance at the meeting introduced themselves to the group.

The Chair provided an overview of the materials provided as part of CLC Meeting #7, including: PowerPoint Presentation and Agenda for CLC reference during the meeting.

The Chair handed the meeting over to Violetta Tkaczuk (VT) – Project Manager at TRCA- for the presentation.

HOUSEKEEPING AND UPDATES

VT reviewed the agenda for CLC Meeting #7 including the intended purpose of the meeting which was to present the preferred design concept, detailed design consideration, construction considerations and project next steps.

Confirmation of CLC Meeting #6 Notes

VT asked CLC members if there were any changes or corrections required to the Meeting Notes from CLC #6. Participants did not have any comments. CLC #6 Meeting Notes were accepted as presented.

Project Updates

VT provided an update regarding the project process and timelines.

OVERVIEW OF THE PREFERRED DESIGN CONCEPT

VT provided an overview of the preferred design concept and explained that the majority of the design concepts were the same as those presented at CLC Meeting #6, with one exception. VT explained that the design concept for segment F was the most challenging and that based on discussions with the CLC, City of Toronto's Urban Forestry Department, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the public. Option #3 was selected to move forward (Option #3 is the design concept where the trail ran along the edge of the forest, and included boardwalk over wetland areas).

CLC Question

Is the proposed boardwalk an actual boardwalk? Or will it be concrete like the boardwalk currently in place at Wilket Creek?

Project Team Response

This is a question that will be further evaluated during detailed design. Options for the boardwalk could include weathering steel, similar to what we see currently on Parks pedestrian/cycling bridge decks.

CLC Comment

I have heard a lot of complaints about the metal and wood regarding slipping. The concrete is a great solution and is obviously a viable option for the City in some situations, as it has been installed in the past.

CLC Comment

I agree with this and second it. Material for the boardwalk is very important in this location, especially in regards to climate (i.e. rain and snow melt). There are examples of metal bridge decks that have been recently installed by the City where, when it rains or snows, the bridge deck freezes over and are very dangerously slippery. I would like to see this avoided.

CLC Comment

I had sent in some photographs of wetland restoration examples that show where the depth of a wetland could be increased. For this project, this would allow us to build the path around the area and avoid the raised boardwalk concept.

Project Team Response

Yes, thank you for sending the photos. The project team did receive them. Within this area we are suggesting that opportunities for restoration should be explored. Option 3 (Segment F) means we are "conforming" to the space because in the EA we are looking at the area at a very high level. This does not preclude us from doing something different in the same space/area that is not a boardwalk option. This is something that will be discussed with other TRCA and City staff during detailed design. The project team has the information and is committed to taking a look at it during the detailed design stage.

VT asked if there were any additional questions/comments regarding moving Segment F - Option 3 forward to detailed design. There were no additional questions or comments.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED DESIGN CONCEPT

Description of the Preferred Design Concept

Rob Amos (RA), from Aquafor Beech Ltd., presented a description of the preferred design concept for the project. RA noted that the total length of the trail would be approximately 4.8 kilometres (km), there would be 10 bridges to cross the East Don River, and 5 Metrolinx Railway crossings (including 1 underpass, 2 tunnels, and 2 at grade or above rail crossings with a bridge). The presentation was broken up into three segments based on the proposed order of implementation of the trail.

Phase 1 (south end of the trail) – approximately 3.1 km in length - includes two Metrolinx railway crossings, and five bridges.

- First stretch of the trail connects to the exiting Toronto Water access route via bridge 1, over Taylor Massey Creek. This will continue to bridge 2 (see presentation).
- After crossing bridge 2 the trail enters a low lying floodplain area where there are currently unmaintained footpaths. The trail stays away from the river at this point because it is an actively flooding stretch. As a result, the trail is located closer to the rail line.
- The trail then crosses the rail line using a tunnel that will be facilitated by an existing embankment. The other side of the tunnel will have room for a small landing point before crossing the river at bridge 3
- After crossing bridge 3, the trail extends through another floodplain where the river has a strong natural meander (or bend) and crosses the river at bridge 4.
- Before bridge 5 there is an opportunity for a lookout where the trail could be placed far enough from the edge of the river that erosion and bank stability will not be an issue but will allow for the view.
- After bridge 5 the trail enters the area where Flemingdon Park Golf Club starts. The trail skirts along the base of the golf course and then starts to climb up through the first major elevation change toward a second crossing of the rail line. At the second crossing there are no built-up embankments so opportunity to tunnel is not available. In this section the trail will cross the rail line at grade (pending approval from Metrolinx).
- After crossing the rail line the trail will extend up through the Hydro Corridor and provide a connection to Bermondsey Ave.

Phase 3 (middle section of trail) – approximately 900 metre (m) – includes one bridge

- This section begins at the connection to the Hydro Corridor and continues north along the east side of the rail line. In this section the trail runs right through the valley and is generally straight.
- As the trail system continues north it enters an area dominated by shrubs and then a lower lying area, where it goes along the base of the valley floor. There is a small drainage feature in this section which will be accounted for in the design.
- As the trail continues north, the existing valley wall slope impinges on the rail line, the trail will traverse up the slope staying out of Metrolinx's 30 m buffer to try to minimize the grade as much as possible to meet the accessibility standards.
- At this point the trail is approximately 15 m from the centre of the rail track and up on a slope. It should be noted that the trail will be placed an appropriate distance from the rail line, and as a result there will be some cutting of the existing slope to build the trail, and there will be a retaining wall on one side and fall protection on the other.

- The slope then opens up near a tributary to the East Don River, where a bridge will be used to cross the river.

Phase 2 (north section) – approximately 1.4 km long - includes three Metrolinx railway crossings and five bridges

- This section of the trail starts at the Eglinton Avenue underpass, staying east of the East Don River and the rail line. The existing infrastructure in this location is numerous, including rail line and Eglinton bridge footings, and will act as constraints for trail placement however sufficient room is available. After this, the trail will have a landing point where a natural connection point to Eglinton Avenue exists and could be used for access during construction and for trail users in the future.
- The trail then crosses the rail line for the third time where again, there is no opportunity for tunneling so an at-grade crossing has been proposed (pending approval from Metrolinx).
- The trail continues through a small section of woodland where an opportunity to have a natural lookout exists.
- Over the next 1.4 km there are five (5) bridge crossings, a little bit of elevation change to keep with the topography and go from bridge to tunnel. Tunnels and bridges will be designed with careful attention to site lines, and grade changes for user safety.
- At bridge 7 there is another opportunity to look at a more natural trail system off of the main trail to the natural sand bar. Bridges 8 and 9 go through one of the most natural river settings (river doing what it wants) so bridges will be placed to allow the river to continue to change over time.

CLC Comment

Regarding Phase 1, I have commented on this before, and that comment is that we could have chosen an option that allowed us to go by the Charles Sauriol memorial and I don't know why we have chosen this less aesthetically appealing option.

Project Team Response

The road in this area has already been formalized and lowered which makes crossing the river in this location to pass the memorial more challenging. There is also a bridge structure that is planned to be placed in this area, under another process.

CLC Question

Is there an area between bridges 4 and 5 where there is a small tributary that needs to be bridged?

Project Team Response

Yes, there is an area here that receives storm flows from a culvert and we will have to look at water flows here when we are designing the trail.

CLC Comment

There is an existing tunnel near Gerrard St. that goes below grade, and therefore there is precedent set for this. Where we can cross the rail line at grade, let's cross at grade. Where we cannot, tunneling below grade is preferable to crossing using a bridge, in my opinion.

Project Team Response

We have exhausted options for crossing the rail line at the second and third crossings of the rail line. For the second crossing if we were to tunnel here, by the time we were able to come back up to the existing elevation we would be right at the next bridge crossing for the river, and it would be too tight.

CLC Question

Are there any existing at grade crossings in the area?

Project Team Response

Yes, and this is part of the discussion we are having with Metrolinx. Crossings will need to be placed perpendicularly to the rail line and be flat (no grade change) at either side.

CLC Comment

There may be drainage issues on the east side of the rail road embankment at the 2nd crossing because there is a small existing creek at that point. You will likely need to mitigate drainage issues from that creek.

CLC Comment

Tunnels can be designed well or badly. The lower Don tunnel is bad example of a tunnel and is being redesigned and rebuilt. It is great to note that there are not any planned blind corners in this proposed design.

CLC Question

As part of the EA I know we did not look at access points, but with the trail location now set, have you considered any additional connections? And if so, which ones?

Project Team Response

Part of the last slide in the presentation is future recommendations, which includes access points that are recommended to be looked at in the future. These will also be included into the EA report (ESR). There are a couple of points that will be looked at further, and some that are very difficult and should be considered long term implementation goals. Discussions will continue during detailed design, regarding what is possible. As part of EA the only things that will be confirmed are the key connections.

CLC Comment

This is a limitation of the approach that was taken. The route you have chosen now provides limited access. Because we do not have the Flemington Golf Club we are precluding easy access points.

Project Team Response

The project team recognizes that community access would have increased had Flemington Golf Club been acquired for public use, however this option is not available at this time. The project team will look at other opportunities to increase access for the community during the detailed design phase.

CLC Comment

The trail marked for Gatineau corridor connection, that route already exists as well and will have minimal impact on natural environment. This is good.

CLC Comment

I would like to see pictures of the slope by the rail where you need to cut.

Project Team Response

We will send/post picture examples for CLC so they can see **(ACTION ITEM)**

CLC Question

What length of fencing are you anticipating in the area where the trail is close to the rail line?

Project Team Response

Likely we will require less than 100 m of fencing. However, it is fair to say that you may find Metrolinx putting up their own fencing after the fact as we see this often in other areas.

CLC Question

Why not make the Eglinton construction access a more permanent access?

Project Team Response

This area near Eglinton Avenue is something that we would use as a construction access point and could be left after construction for public use.

CLC Question

Is there any chance that GO/Metrolinx will be putting in a connection to the Eglinton LRT or to the existing GO rail line at this point?

CLC Comment

GO/Metrolinx is undergoing a study however, no stations are planned for south of the 401, that I am aware of.

Project Team Response

Metrolinx have been forthcoming about twinning of tracks but have not mentioned a station to the project team to date. Based on this discussion, we will follow-up with them though. **(ACTION ITEM)**

CLC Comment

In the scenic viewing areas in Phase 2, you could consider a cul-de-sac idea for the lookout that would run in to and back out.

CLC Question

Regarding the connection to Eglinton Avenue, how will the timing of this project line up with the timing of that project and is that connection part of the Eglinton LRT work?

Project Team Response

We will be maintaining communications with GO/Metrolinx on this, at one point cost sharing for access points was discussed. We will be following up with them to see if there is funding available for this connection, and will be taking this information to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) as we have members from Eglinton LRT project on this committee.

Detailed Design Considerations

RA showed some of the details from the 2014 City of Toronto Trail Guidelines which are currently draft, and reviewed some of the key components of this that will be applied to the proposed East Don Trail. Features will include minimum buffers of 0.6-1 m from the edge of the trail to prevent bike handles, etc. from hitting the trees.

RA reviewed different types of bridges that could be used for the project including, a truss bridge with natural weathered steel and anti-slip that will have a 3.5 m wide clearway (width).

RA also discussed rail crossings including tunnels including.

CLC Question

Do the City of Toronto Trail Guidelines mention trail markings and lanes?

Project Team Response

Yes, centre lines are identified, as well as calming/slowing mechanisms at trail intersections.

CLC Question

What is normal practice?

Project Team Response

It varies, on the Martin Goodman trail there is a double centre line that gives clear distinction for trail users and they like it. The City has moved away from colouring that resembles a road because people think of it as a throughway. The City is currently trying to test softer colouring. The City has also looked at opportunities where only separating lines are used at intersections and at entry so people know how to orient themselves.

CLC Comment

The Don Mills Trail in Bike25's ward was supposed to have painting and wayfinding. Doesn't seem to be any real reflection of what is good or bad. Personally, I think it is good to have separation.

Project Team Response

Where trails are really busy it is best to have the centre line.

CLC Comment

Where the trail goes through places where it could be flooded, I have found in the past that asphalt trails react poorly to overland water flow. At Wilket Creek whole pieces of asphalt were lifted and pushed. The team should consider using another material in these areas, or construction to a higher quality level.

Project Team Response

Wilket Creek is prone to high velocities, but this area may not have the same issues regarding velocity.

CLC Comment

It does not take much of a grade when using brick/limestone to be washed away by water. The material then extends itself into other areas.

CLC Comment

The Lower Don Trail system is asphalt and has held up really well.

Project Team Response

Operation and maintenance of these is looked at by the City of Toronto and will be reviewed with a fine tooth comb. There is an operation and maintenance representative on the TAC for this project.

CLC Question

Are there any places on this trail where the cyclists will be required to dismount? There are a number of places that have signs that say cyclists must get off and walk.

Project Team Response

Not anticipating any areas like that here. That is why bridges are being designed to the width they are and site lines are good.

CLC Comment

If there is a possibility of flood levels coming up to the bridge or over the bridge, railings should not impede the flow of water.

Project Team Response

Noted. As a general standard the water flows during 2 year flood would set the baseline conditions, and this would then set the minimum elevation of the bridge soffit at approximately 1.5 m above the 2 year flood mark.

CLC Comment

A bridge was recently installed at Taylor Creek, and there is always a discrepancy between the drawings and implementation. There is pooling on the edge and on the vegetated rip rap. These are the sorts of things that when the on the ground stuff is going on someone needs to be supervising. **(ACTION ITEM – TRCA will look into this bridge that went in this year)**

CLC Comment

If the proposed tunnels under the rail line are long and low, will the tunnels be lit? I would like to note that they should be lit even if the trail itself is not.

Project Team Response

There are also other mechanisms we can use, like wing walls, etc. that can look at ways of shortening the tunnel. We would prefer not to light tunnels to reduce the maintenance requirements and vandalism opportunities.

TRCA has used light cones to get daylight in to dark halls. Not sure if there is a way to do this here, but will note this for something to look into. **(ACTION ITEM)**

CLC Comment

The tunnel at Corktown Common is fully lit and great. If the weather is bad people will use tunnels for shelter and if no lighting it may be difficult to see other people coming or hiding.

CLC Comment

If you put in lights please have them turn off at night to avoid light pollution.

Project Team Response

In many of these areas we do not have sources of electricity so this could provide a challenge.

CLC Comment

There is a tunnel at Moccasin Park with no lighting and it is not a problem.

Detailed Design Considerations & Construction

RA reviewed:

- the considerations that have been applied throughout the design concepts and will be applied throughout the detailed design phase of the project;
- the construction phasing, staging and proposed access points; and,
- the potential construction impacts and mitigation measures.

VT noted that the construction impacts and mitigation measures in will be provided to the CLC in the Dropbox folder once finalized (**ACTION ITEM**).

NEXT STEPS

VT went through the Next Steps for the project, which is currently in Phase 3 and wrapping up, next will be Phase 4 which will include preparing the ESR, and this will be followed by detailed design.

CLOSING

Summary of Comments Heard

- Need for good construction supervision
- Trail and bridge surface materials are important
- Consider potential for lighting in tunnels
- Continue to look at Community Access points
- Include where possible, the added opportunities (e.g., Eglinton LRT link, connections to views and vista) that enhance the trail

Questions

VT asked if there were any additional questions before the meeting was closed.

CLC Question

The preferred choice is not the one we have been looking at, which is River Walk. Will that be indicated in the final report?

Project Team Response

As part of the EA, it is currently written in that the River Walk alternative was evaluated as the preferred route. However we do not have landowner permission or the land so the EA was required to move forward with the second preferred alternative, Rail Trail East.

CLC Question

Are the notes we received part of the public record?

Project Team Response

Yes, everything that was submitted by the CLC will become part of the public record for the project.

CLC Comment

The original objectives are not being achieved as a result of rail trail east being selected. I would like to note this.

CLC Comment

Speaking for residents of the Don Mills and Wynford communities, what has come out of this is our preferred route. For our community the golf course is a huge community asset.

CLC Question

How else will you be reaching out to the community between now and the construction? We have seen community members rise up in arms about not being notified.

Project Team Response

The project team is still working this out. The project website and list serv going forward will be maintained for regular communications and updates. The idea of an additional public meeting has been discussed but not confirmed. The consultation plan going forward is still under development.

CLC Comment

In detailed design you should keep in mind future community connection point. If those connections are built into the design now, when it comes time to implement them there will be less need to modify the trail in the future.

CLC Comment

Some of the councilors have been promoting the trail and are trying to keep constituents aware. Please continue to use this channel for getting the word out.

CLC Comment

Is there funding for this when it gets approved?

Project Team Response

Funding for Phase 1 has been secured from the City of Toronto Cycling Infrastructure (Transportation) and Parks, Forestry and Recreation Divisions. The City will still however, be meeting to determine how to gather funding for phases 2 and 3 of trail implementation.

CLC Question

Along the existing East Don Trail (at Milne Hollow) there was talk about renovating Milne House and putting offices on top and washrooms on the bottom to provide necessary supervision of the area, and perhaps winter maintenance of the parking lot. Does the City have any update about this?

Project Team Response

The City's PFR Division is conducting a servicing study for services such as water and electricity. The study will assist the City in determining the cost, and then funding will need to be secured for implementation. This is an asset the City does not want to lose and will try to protect.

CLC Comment

We require safe ways to call out to emergency vehicles, and be able to provide addresses or location markers within the valley system. There needs to be an assurance to the public that they will not end up there without a way to get out.

Project Team Response

The bridges are designed to accommodate an ambulance. The City has implemented address points to assist emergency vehicles, and they are located on the blue signs at park entrances. The City is aware of this issue and is working with emergency services to address it.

VT thanked everyone for their participation in the meeting. The Chair closed the meeting at 8:30 pm.