
TRANSIT REVIEW

Transit Review Public Information Centre – June 20, 2019 Highlights Report

This Report has been prepared by AECOM to provide the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) with a snapshot of the feedback captured at the Public Information Centre (PIC) held on Thursday, June 20, 2019 in North York. The meeting was the second in a series of four meetings that were held across the City of Toronto in June 2019.

Overview

On Thursday, June 20, 2019, the City of Toronto and the TTC hosted a PIC to inform the public about the Transit Responsibilities Review being undertaken by the City and the Province. The meeting was held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at North York Memorial Community Hall, located at 5110 Yonge Street in North York.

At the sign-in table, attendees were invited to sign up for the project mailing list and were notified of opportunities to provide their feedback via a comment form and through the online survey which will be open until August 31, 2019. The open house component of the meeting featured a series of 15 informational display boards and several handouts for attendees to view and take home. Attendees could move freely between display boards and speak with Project Team members from the City and TTC.

At 7:00 p.m., Alicia Evans (AECOM) welcomed attendees to the meeting and provided an introduction to the Transit Responsibilities Review. Scott Haskill (Manager of Project Development and Coordination, TTC) and James Perttula (Director of Transit and Transportation Planning, City of Toronto) provided a 30-minute informational presentation about Toronto's multi-billion dollar transit needs, including maintenance, operations, and transit expansion needs. The presentation also provided an overview of the current governance and funding model for transit in the City, the Province's proposed transit expansion proposal and the Province's two-part plan to upload the TTC subway system as described in the 2019 provincial budget. The presentation concluded with next steps and information on how to get involved and provide feedback. Immediately following the presentation, attendees had the opportunity to ask questions and provided input related to the presentation topics in a 30-minute facilitated Question and Answer session (see **Appendix A** for the questions and responses).

The facilitated Question and Answer session was adjourned by Alicia Evans (AECOM) at 8:00 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m., after attendees had additional time to speak with members of the Project Team.

Twenty-two individuals signed into the PIC. Councillor for Ward 22 (Scarborough-Agincourt) Jim Karygiannis also attended the meeting.

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Highlights of Participant Feedback

Several key themes emerged during the PIC, including:

- Concerns regarding how the Capital Investment Plan would be funded and suggestions for the Province to provide more funding;
- Concerns regarding the funding gap related to the City's Transit Plan;
- Concerns regarding the upload of the transit system to the Province, and the potential impact on currently planned projects, funding and jobs/ roles;
- Concerns regarding Bill 108's cap on the revenues the City would receive from development charges and the potential impact to transit funding;
- Concerns regarding the negotiation process between the City and the Province, and the impact on the existing City Transit Plan;
- Concerns regarding the lack of the Province's participation in the public consultation process;
- Concerns regarding current and future maintenance-related/ service delays and closures on the subway system;
- Concerns regarding the future plans for the Relief Line/ Ontario Line and what areas it will service now that the Province is taking responsibility for the study;
- Suggestions for modifications to the Province's Transit Expansion Proposal, including the addition of the Waterfront LRT and removal of the Ontario Line, and the removal of the Yonge Subway Extension and replacement with GO Transit service from Richmond Hill;
- Discussions regarding the high cost of subway infrastructure in the City of Toronto; and
- Discussions regarding a transit extension to Richmond Hill.

Next Steps

A summary report on the Phase 1 Consultation will be reported out in Fall 2019.

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Appendix A – Question and Answer

Details of the Question and Answer session that followed the presentation are provided below. To provide transparency for those not present at the meeting, the questions and answers received have been transcribed as much as possible.

Questions are noted with a “Q”, comments with a “C” and answers with an “A”. Answers were provided by James Perttula (City of Toronto) and Scott Haskill (TTC) unless noted otherwise.

Q1: The fact that nearly 70% of projects are unfunded is disturbing, especially if these are the funds required to maintain what we currently have. I am a bit confused about the funding gap as there was reference to the Gas Tax. From what I understand, the Province did not fulfill a previous commitment to pass on more of the Gas Tax. Is this correct? Can the Project Team clarify what this means for the funding gap? One of the funding sources for operations, maintenance and expansion needs is development charges, but Bill 108 looks to cap development charges. How does this impact the funding gap? I also heard the Province announce a cut to TTC maintenance, is this correct? The City’s Guiding Principles for negotiations with the Province seem very reasonable, does the City have any indication of whether the Province will honour any of these principles?

A1: Regarding the Gas Tax, the Capital Investment Plan was prepared in late 2018 and therefore predates the announcement by the Province that they will not double the Gas Tax. Approximately \$90 million dollars is provided to the TTC each year from the Gas Tax; the anticipated gas tax increases were intended to go to capital investments. Therefore, the Capital Investment Plan must be reevaluated each year and this year we will need to account for less money from the Gas Tax, which will impact what projects can or cannot be funded.

Regarding development charges, you are correct that Bill 108 makes changes and puts a cap on how much money the City is able to receive from new developments. This could have an impact on how the City funds transit and other elements of infrastructure that we fund through development charges. City staff from the Finance Department are present at this meeting if you would like to have a one-on-one discussion about this following the Question and Answer session.

The Province has agreed to discussions with the City about transit governance and funding. The Guiding Principles are what the City would like to see reflected at the end of the Transit Responsibilities Review, to help guide City staff through the negotiation process.

C1: I would suggest the City provide the Province with the expenditure required just to maintain the transit system and then what is required to expand the transit system. If the transit system is uploaded to the Province, and the Province doesn’t follow through with planned projects, they will be blamed. I would suggest the City negotiates by reiterating that the Province is taking away a certain amount of money, so the City needs a certain amount of money to expand transit. The Province wants certain projects delivered and should have to pay more since City funds have been cut by the Province.

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R1: To clarify, if the transit system is uploaded to the Province, the TTC will still be responsible for the safety of the system. There is still a role for the TTC to ensure the province fulfills the requirements to invest in safety.

Q2: Based on the presentation provided, the Project Team has identified what they need to do to maintain and expand transit and what needs to be funded. But funding is not the only issue. Other issues and priorities that were voiced in a previous meetings include Presto hours, fare integration, and Montreal-type signage that provide riders with a trip travel time estimate. These issues can be solved with very low cost. Many of us have other concerns that are not related to funding, where can these concerns be addressed?

A2: The TTC will be launching a five-year service plan which intends to review how the TTC needs to change services to maximize value and enhance customer experience. The TTC is also conducting a five-year fare plan where we will review the way fares are categorized and collected. There will be opportunities for the public to get involved in this in September 2019 through public consultation activities similar to this PIC. After this PIC, please take a moment to write down your ideas so they can be shared with the Project Team.

Q3: The TTC still has many closures, especially during weekends. I do not see any efficiency improvements to the system after much work has been completed. I am not satisfied with the service and am suffering as a transit rider as closures impact my daily life. Also, regarding taxes, will the funding issue impact the taxes of Toronto homeowners? Is there a way to resolve the issues without impacting our taxes? I appreciate the Project Team speaking to the community and allowing us to ask questions and provide feedback on this important matter.

A3: Line 1 is TTC's busiest line and carries the most amount of people, making it the biggest concern with regard to overcrowding. The TTC is currently installing a brand new signal system on Line 1 that unfortunately will not be finished until 2021 or 2022. Following this installation, we will see a significant improvement to the reliability of the subway service. The TTC is excited for this upgrade, and wish it could be completed faster, but the end result will outweigh the current impacts to service as the new signal system will allow for much fewer closures in the future.

Regarding funding sources and property tax, the City does not know if the transit upload would impact property taxes as Council has not made any decisions regarding this matter. There are exercises underway to attempt to find efficiencies and address some of the cuts across different programs. In recent years, the City has also investigated different tools and mechanisms to fund transit expansion. Questions regarding funding in general will need to be addressed in the coming years as the City is looking at its plan for long term financial sustainability.

Q4: I just received my property tax bill which seems to be lower by approximately \$30.00. This concerns me as it may mean other costs will increase. I have also heard a lot about the Richmond Hill subway extension, Scarborough Subway Extension, and Eglinton Subway Extension but have not heard news on the Relief Line. If the subway extends from Richmond Hill to Finch, a lot more people will be using the subway from Finch,

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creating overcrowding. The Relief Line is a necessary project, when will it be constructed?

A4: In the Provincial Transit Plan, the Relief Line is now known as the Ontario Line. The Provincial budget states that the Ontario Line must be in place before an extension to Richmond Hill can operate. Planning for both projects may happen in parallel, but the Province made a commitment in the budget to open the Ontario Line first in order to provide relief to the Yonge subway. Regarding property taxes, unfortunately we cannot fully answer these questions right now but you are welcome to speak with the representative from the City's Finance Department after the Question and Answer session.

Q5: What will happen with the Relief Line, especially now that it is the Ontario Line? How will it be integrated with the rest of the transit system? How will the work on this project be distributed? If the system is uploaded to the Province, will City transit planners still be working on the project?

A5: The Province has announced where they would like the Ontario Line to go. The alignment draws on existing work that the City and TTC have conducted as part of the Relief Line project. It appears the Ontario Line would run from Eglinton and Don Mills to Exhibition Place and would connect to Line 2 at Pape and Osgoode stations. The City and TTC are currently trying to understand and find out more about the Ontario Line to determine whether it meets the original goals and objectives outlined for the Relief Line. Metrolinx has specified that the Ontario Line should be a rail rapid transit line. TTC's main concern with the Ontario Line is capacity. Regarding Line 1 capacity, the TTC believes we will be able to increase capacity along Line 1 until the mid-2020's. Regarding staffing in the event of the upload, we do not have answers currently. This is an issue that TTC and City staff will be discussing with the Province.

Q6: The Spadina extension was the most expensive subway infrastructure project in the world, but it was built along flat ground. Why is it so expensive to build subway infrastructure in Toronto? How do we keep costs down for new transit expansion projects so that taxpayer dollars can be maximized? Also, with the Yonge subway line being extended up to Highway 7, there is an opportunity to provide a stop at Steeles so that office developments are built in this area. Why don't we build a subway that coexists with good urban planning?

A6: The Spadina extension that opened in 2017 was not the most expensive in the world, but it was expensive. We can connect you with a member of the Project Team to have a one-on-one discussion following the Question and Answer session. We have much more experience building subway lines now than we did in the past.

Regarding linking employment and subway development, the City is interested in seeing employment and residential development uses surrounding subways because we want to try to avoid people living in one area and having to travel to another to work. In some areas, there is a lot of pressure to develop more condos than to grow employment space which creates a difficult dynamic between the City and developers. This is an issue the City is conscious of and are working to improve on.

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Q7: Since SmartTrack is a GO Transit service, which falls under the responsibility of the Province, why is there not a SmartTrack from Richmond Hill to Toronto? Why is there no increased capacity here to address the issue?

A7: You are correct that SmartTrack aims to increase the amount of stations along certain corridors within the City of Toronto to provide greater access to areas throughout Toronto. The City has raised questions regarding the Richmond Hill corridor to provide additional capacity to remove some people from the Yonge line, which Metrolinx is reviewing. There are a number of challenges with expanding the Richmond Hill corridor, particularly through the Don Valley, that Metrolinx is reviewing. This corridor is not as straight forward as other transit corridors but the extension is something the City would promote.