

Toronto Transit Consultation Meetings

June 1, 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 1, 2016. A more detailed report of the feedback captured during this phase of consultations will be prepared in the coming days.

Introduction

On June 1st, 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 Metro Toronto Convention Centre, South Building.

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

- **SmartTrack and GO Regional Express Rail (RER):** The integration of SmartTrack and GO Regional Express Rail (RER) to improve rapid transit service on three GO Corridors in Toronto.
- **Relief Line:** The emerging preferred alignment as well as proposed station locations.
- **Waterfront Transit Reset:** Preliminary transit concepts and the proposed evaluation framework.
- **Scarborough Transit Planning:** Evaluation of options for the Scarborough Subway Extension.
- **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 SmartTrack/GO RER and Relief Line. Following an introductory presentation on Coordinated Network Transit Planning and SmartTrack/GO RER given by James Perttula (Acting Director, Transit and Sustainable Transportation, City of Toronto) and Stella Gustavson (Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit, City of Toronto), participants had the opportunity to ask questions of clarification as well as provide feedback.

Approximately 50 individuals attended the public meeting.

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 James Perttula (Acting Director, Transit and Sustainable Transportation, City of Toronto) and Stella Gustavson (Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit, City of Toronto), unless noted otherwise.

Q: I noticed that the proposed Relief Line has very few stations going through the downtown core where many people live. This contrasts with how subways are done in the States, where there are quite a few stations. I am interested in your thoughts on the number and spacing of stations.

A: The station spacing for the Relief Line is based on a balance of land use considerations, achieving good ridership, time travel time, cost implications and various other technical issues. We also looked at accessibility of the stations to consider how people might access the line. As stations are added it tends to slow down the system, which then reduces the potential relief that this line can give the Bloor-Danforth line. To make it worthwhile for riders to get off the Bloor-Danforth line, the Relief Line should result in a lower travel time for transit users.

Q: In the SmartTrack proposal, what is the difference between the C and D options in terms of peak ridership and what is the frequency during peak and throughout the entire length of the line? What is the sensitivity to the frequency regarding relieving crowding around the Yonge Street line?

A: We are still working out some of the details regarding frequency with Metrolinx as we work out the specifics around station locations. Certainly as we add more stations, the travel time increases for those along the line, which has an impact on ridership. For SmartTrack, the key aspects are fare integration and reducing the travel time. The more frequent, the more attractive SmartTrack becomes. We anticipate that C and D will be relatively close in comparison timing.

Q: At the last Executive Committee meeting, it was directed that all of the reports should be released by June 14th. Is that still going to be done?

A: The direction from City Council was to release the reports two weeks in advance of Executive Committee and that is what we are planning to do.

Q: There was also an option in that same motion to possibly have a dedicated Executive Committee meeting on transit. Has there been any advancement on that?

A: The Executive Committee meeting in June is expected to be a two day meeting, with at least one full day devoted to discussing the recommendations on the transit initiatives.

Q: I noticed that the Metrolinx Board meeting is scheduled for the same morning as the Executive Committee meeting on June 28. Is that still the case?

A: Yes, we understand that the Metrolinx Board meeting is taking place on June 28. We are working closely with Metrolinx on all of these projects, particularly on SmartTrack, and are confident that the City's interests will be reflected when the Metrolinx Board meets.

Q: I have spoken with your expert on SmartTrack and presented the option of an express route option of SmartTrack across Toronto for existing GO riders. From what I understand that option was deemed

unfeasible; can you elaborate on why this was considered unfeasible? Have you taken into account the loss of ridership considering the slower speed of adding all these stations?

A: Part of the challenge of both options A and B is we did have both an express and a local service planned; it would require significant additional infrastructure in order to implement that. For an express to work, you need to clear areas for express route tracks and the costs and challenges of adding that additional infrastructure would be in the billions of dollars. Regarding reduced ridership as a result of extra stops, certainly that is part of the conversation with Metrolinx. This is an issue that we are working with Metrolinx in balancing but one of the purposes of SmartTrack is to make this a more attractive option for residents of Toronto primarily. A report is available on the SmartTrack website explaining the rationale for eliminating options A and B.

Q: With SmartTrack having an integrated fare with TTC, are we to understand that the other GO RER lines are not going to have an integrated fare? And if they are then what makes SmartTrack any different?

A: What separates SmartTrack is an increased number of stations along those corridors, greater frequency and fare integration. You are correct in asking how does this relate to the rest of the GO network and certainly the conversations that we are having with Metrolinx have to be a bit broader than just looking at SmartTrack. Broader integration is certainly something that will need to be considered.

Q: Will the idea behind SmartTrack connect people across a greater network?

A: It is intended to connect major employment centres and provide relief to the Yonge line.

Q: Toronto residents expect perfect alignment between GO RER and SmartTrack, similar to other cities. Can we be confident that we will see the stations that are proposed going forward and if those stations do not go forward for any reason, what is the thinking towards accelerating the western spur of the Relief Line to help alleviate some north-south pressure of the TTC?

A: There are still negotiations underway with Metrolinx regarding what the integration looks like. There is real convergence around a number of these stations. Both Metrolinx and the City recognized that there is a need for transit around Liberty Village, the Unilever site and future growth areas. We are working through all of the stations we have on that list to see what we can move forward with and I am confident that we will be able to develop additional stations.

Q: How does the use of the GO RER along Lakeshore figure into planning for Waterfront transit? Will there be more stations, more frequency and ideally alignment and integration of fares with TTC modes?

A: The Lakeshore West corridor is included in the GO RER plans. Our study is coordinated with Metrolinx on the RER and has included new stations on Lakeshore West. Metrolinx is part of the Waterfront Transit "Reset" study.

Q: Regarding the Relief Line and the preferred alignment, in the Discussion Guide it mentions that one of the advantages is that it has lower impact on property acquisition, especially relating to stations at Broadview, Eastern and Sumac. I am wondering if property acquisition was being considered along any of the other stations along the route?

A: It is a project objective to follow public rights-of-way as much as possible in order to limit the amount of property acquisition that will be needed. It is too soon for us to be talking about specific impacts to property. That is something that will be addressed as part of the next phase of the study. Once City Council approves a preferred alignment, we can start to look more closely at potential property impacts and what measures can be taken to mitigate those concerns.

Q: Metrolinx is already committed to building additional stations and are studying them right now. They are going to be revealed at the June 28 board meeting. So if the only difference between SmartTrack/RER is that SmartTrack would have more stations, I don't understand the purpose of this study if Metrolinx is conducting a similar study but in more detail, assessing more station locations and they are going to pay for the entire thing.

A: The City and Metrolinx are working together. Metrolinx would most likely not have included many of the stations in their study if the City did not identify the need for them. So although Metrolinx is going to be taking the proposal to their Board on June 28, we are in deep conversations with them about SmartTrack/GO RER consideration and have been for months. In terms of cost you cannot assume that Metrolinx is going to pay for everything. This is also a matter that the City and Metrolinx will need to discuss.

Q: How does the Union-Pearson Express along the western corridor integrate with SmartTrack? I am referring to the stretch from Union Station west on the Kitchener Line.

A: Right now the Union-Pearson Express has dedicated tracks within the corridor and will only stop at a small number of stations. SmartTrack is adding additional stations and will certainly be stopping at more stations, as it heads south towards Union Station. The service concepts for the two things are quite different and are serving a different purpose and a different target.

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 10, 2016 to ensure inclusion in this report.