

Coordinated Transit Consultation Meetings
SmartTrack, GO RER, Relief Line, Scarborough Subway Extension
June 22, 2015
Highlights Report

This concise Highlights Report has been prepared to provide the City of Toronto, TTC and Metrolinx with a snapshot of the feedback captured at the public meeting held on June 22, 2015. A more detailed report of the feedback captured during this phase of consultations will be prepared in the coming days.

Introduction

On Monday, June 22, 2015, the City of Toronto, City Planning Division (Transportation Planning), the TTC and Metrolinx, hosted a public meeting on four key transit projects currently being planned. The meeting was held at Winston Churchill Collegiate Institute, 2239 Lawrence Avenue East, Toronto.

The purpose of the public meeting varied by project:

SmartTrack: Introduce the SmartTrack concept and study process for the Eglinton West Corridor Feasibility Study, and gather feedback on three conceptual alignments being studied in the Feasibility Study

GO Regional Express Rail (RER): Introduce the GO RER program in Toronto

Relief Line: Collect feedback on the results of potential station area evaluation and potential corridors

Scarborough Subway Extension: Collect feedback on preliminary analysis of potential corridors and potential alignments and station concepts

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, TTC and Metrolinx.

At 7:00 pm, an introductory presentation on coordinated network transit planning, with a focus on the Scarborough Subway Extension, was given by James Perttula, Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit. After the presentation, participants had the opportunity to ask questions of clarification as well as provide feedback.

Approximately 35 people attended the public meeting, including Councillor Chin Lee (Ward 41).

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”, and answers with “A”. Answers were provided by James Perttula and Gary Carr, TTC Project Manager for the Scarborough Subway Extension.

Q: Will you be building the subway where people are?

A: Both existing and future projected population and employment densities are key criteria we are using to compare the various options.

Q: **Will feedback about corridors that did not make the short list still be considered?**

A: Yes, we want you to provide feedback on our corridor evaluation – did we get it right? Did we miss anything? You can provide your feedback tonight at the public meeting or you can provide your feedback online by visiting the website www.scarboroughsubwayextension.ca/provide-feedback. While we have a lot of great conversations with you at the public meetings, it is important for you to write your comments down in the discussion guides or online so that we have a record of it.

Q: **Where is the development potential along the three shortlisted corridors?**

A: Keep in mind that we consider the development potential that exists within 500-800 meters of a potential station, rather than along the entire corridor. Starting in the north, the area around a future Sheppard Station at Sheppard and McCowan is an employment area. With the combination of a future subway and LRT, there is good development potential. There is already a great deal of development underway in Scarborough Centre and there is more planned for the future – particularly east of McCowan and north of the Scarborough Town Centre. Along Lawrence, there is development potential in the areas surrounding Midland and Bellamy. The potential for development is limited at McCowan and Lawrence, as this area is primarily residential with natural areas. The Scarborough Hospital site is also at this corner. However, there is significant interest in this intersection as it creates access to the hospital which is an employer and sees many visitors per year. Finally, there is a great deal of development potential along Eglinton, in the area of a fourth station for the Bellamy corridor and McCowan corridor. This area has been designated as an Avenue in the Official Plan.

Q: **According to *Choices for Scarborough*, a report created by researchers at the University of Toronto, the approved Sheppard LRT line has the most potential for economic development and created the most benefit. Can you comment on when the Sheppard LRT line will be built?**

A: The construction of the Sheppard LRT has been held back until the completion of the Finch LRT in 2021.

Q: **If the Midland corridor is so close to SmartTrack, then why are we spending any time and resources studying that area, instead of focusing on corridors further east? As well, why are we studying Bellamy when no one lives there?**

A: The short list of corridors represents what the evaluation process has identified as the best corridors in the west, central and eastern parts of the study area. In the western portion, Midland performed the best in the evaluation. We still do not know all the details of how SmartTrack will be implemented, so it is prudent to carry forward a western subway option at this point. When we finalize the evaluation, particularly looking at the ridership modeling, we may see that this corridor does not make sense because it is close to SmartTrack. In the eastern portion of the study area, Bellamy performed the best in the preliminary evaluation. While Bellamy is not a busy street, ridership is only generated at the stations, not along the corridor. We do see potential

ridership from bus routes along Lawrence and transfers at the Eglinton GO station so we are still assessing this option.

Q: Are we learning from our mistakes with the SRT?

A: The information and technology we have available now is much more advanced to help us best plan for and design the new subway. We should also have a better sense of ridership than we did when we were planning and making assumptions for the SRT.

Q: What is the distance between each station?

A: Generally, each station will be about 2 kilometers apart. The distance between Kennedy and Lawrence along McCowan would be the greatest distance between any two stops in the subway system – around 4 km - which is why it is prudent to consider a 4th stop at Eglinton and Danforth.

Q: Can you consider different (i.e., not just linear) bus routes for the proposed stations?

A: As we move forward with the study, the TTC will consider what changes are need to the bus network to connect to the proposed stations.

Q: How did the City of Toronto get involved in heavy rail? I thought that Metrolinx had jurisdiction over that.

A: Heavy rail is the basis of the SmartTrack concept. We have been directed by City Council to study this concept to enhance service to Toronto residents and connect major employment nodes. We are working closely with Metrolinx on this review.

Summary of Comments Provided in Interactive Sessions

Scarborough Subway Extension: Preliminary Corridor Analysis

The public feedback regarding the preliminary corridor analysis was mainly positive and concurred with the evaluation results thus far.

Overall, the majority of the feedback was in agreement that the SRT (Line 3), Midland to Markham/Progress, Hydro and Brimley and Markham corridors should not be carried forward for further study due to capital costs, low development opportunities, and impact on the SRT.

Regarding the three short listed corridors that are proposed to be carried forward for further study (Midland to McCowan, McCowan and Bellamy), McCowan appeared to be the most preferred and Bellamy was the least preferred. Many disagreed with carrying forward the Bellamy corridor due to the added capital costs and lower population within the area. There were mixed reviews regarding the Midland to McCowan corridor. Some felt it would be too close to the proposed SmartTrack corridor and felt very strongly against the SRT closing for three years, whereas others felt the corridor was a good option as the capital costs would be low in comparison to other options, the corridor would hit the target market and connect well to Kennedy Station and the Scarborough Town Centre. Most people favoured McCowan because of the opportunity for a fourth station with additional development potential, the proximity to the hospital, there would be no need to shut down the SRT, and because this option would minimize travel time between Kennedy Station and Scarborough Centre.

Scarborough Subway Extension: Potential Alignments and Station Concepts

There were few comments received during the meeting about the preliminary alignments within each of the short listed corridors and the alternative station concepts. Generally people questioned the use of existing elevated structures instead of incurring costs on tunneling and suggested choosing the option that would ensure proper shelter in inclement weather and connectivity to the Scarborough Town Centre.

Next Steps

Two more public meetings are scheduled during this phase of consultations, after which a more detailed report of all consultation activities will be made available. Comments must be submitted by July 3, 2015 to ensure inclusion in this report.

SmartTrack: Feedback received will inform the Eglinton West Corridor Feasibility Study. Draft results of the study will be presented and consulted on in September, 2015.

Relief Line: The project team will use the feedback received to inform the evaluation of potential corridors. The preferred corridor, along with potential alignments and station locations, will be presented and consulted on in September, 2015.

Scarborough Subway Extension: The project team will use the feedback received to help finalize the evaluation of the potential corridors and evaluate the potential alignments and station concepts. The draft preferred corridor, alignment and station concepts will be presented and consulted on in September, 2015.