

# Transit City Light Rail Plan: Status Update For April 2008

Meeting Date: April 23, 2008

Subject: Transit City Light Rail Plan: Status Update For April 2008

Action Item: X

## Recommendations

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Note that progress is being made on many fronts on the Transit City Light Rail Plan, as described in this report, with greater efforts currently being placed on the first-priority lines of Sheppard East, Etobicoke-Finch West, and Eglinton-Crosstown, the Scarborough RT, and maintenance and storage facilities for Transit City lines;

2. Approve staff's proposed allocation and use of already-approved funding for the Transit City Light Rail Plan, including the Scarborough RT, to allow continued implementation of the Plan. Specifically, the currently-approved funding of \$11.1 million will be allocated as shown in Appendix 1, in support of these activities:

- Environmental Assessments (EA) on all Transit City lines, and Scarborough RT;
- Design work on the first-priority lines of Sheppard East, Etobicoke-Finch West, and Eglinton-Crosstown, and the Scarborough RT;
- Refinement of maintenance and storage requirements for the Transit City network, and preparation of conceptual design for such facilities;
- Property searches and negotiations for property for maintenance and storage facilities;
- Ongoing work with Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) related to the Regional Transportation Plan, project benefit case preparation, and the analysis of project delivery models including Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP);

3. Authorize the Chief General Manager to re-allocate funding between the projects and activities listed in Appendix 1, if necessary, to reflect the differing pace of progress among the projects and changing work demands which might arise from decisions made by Metrolinx or the Province;

4. Note that, while the already-approved funding of \$11.1 million is enough to allow current project work on Transit City to continue for now, staff project a need for an additional \$5.2 million in 2008 alone, for a total of \$16.3 million, as outlined in Appendix 1, to complete engineering design work planned up to the end of the year, and to allow previously-confirmed environmental assessment work plans to also address three inter-regionally significant issues:

- the western alignment of the Eglinton-Crosstown LRT, notably the intention to terminate this line at Toronto Pearson International Airport;
- the western alignment of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT;
- the eastern alignment of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT, notably the continuity of travel across Yonge Street, and connecting to the Sheppard Subway alignment

5. Note that, as with all major capital projects, Transit City needs committed and predictable funding to allow continuous and uninterrupted progress, so as to avoid delays to the projects and their targeted construction start dates;

6. Request Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario to provide the required funding of \$9.2 million (the interim \$4 million provided by Toronto City Council, plus the \$5.2 million mentioned above), for a total of \$16.3 million in 2008, to cover the cost of work and expenditures planned/forecast to the end of 2008;

7. Forward this report to the City Budget Committee noting that, if Metrolinx does not approve this funding for use in 2008, then the City will have to approve an additional \$5.2 million in 2008 budget and commitments, or it will not be possible to complete the work planned for the balance of 2008; and

8. Note that staff will be requesting additional funding to continue working on all Transit City and related projects in 2009 and beyond, as part of the TTC's 2009-2013 capital program submission;

### **Funding**

Funds in the amount of \$7.1 million for Transit City environmental assessments were included in the 2008-2012 TTC Capital Program budget, as approved by City Council on December 11, 2007. The March 25, 2008 provincial budget announced funding to cover this \$7.1 million cost, as part of Metrolinx's Quick Wins initiatives.

Funding of \$13.0 million was requested at the Commission meeting of November 14, 2007 to allow

engineering design and associated work to proceed concurrently with the environmental assessments, so that Transit City projects can proceed as quickly as possible. However, City Council and the Commission ultimately approved only \$4 million (hence the current approved funding of \$11.1 million), pending a further announcement from Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario, regarding funding to cover this \$13 million cost plus other aspects of Transit City, expected as part of the Province's budget in March. Neither Metrolinx nor the provincial budget in March provided any additional funding for this planned engineering design work or other aspects of Transit City (beyond the \$7.1 million noted above). As a result, it is projected that the currently-approved funding will not be sufficient to cover the costs of work planned till the end of 2008.

## **Background**

The Transit City Light Rail Plan consists of seven new light rail transit (LRT) lines that would, upon implementation, provide a network of rapid transit throughout Toronto. The Commission endorsed the Transit City plan at its meeting of March 21, 2007 and has since received several updates.

At its meeting of June 13, 2007, the Commission approved a report entitled, Transit City Light Rail Plan – Implementation Work Plan, which outlined the activities being undertaken to implement the Transit City Light Rail Plan. That report presented a work plan to allow for the start of construction on at least one of the light rail lines by 2010.

At its meeting of November 14, 2007, staff requested funding of \$13.0 million, over and above a previously-approved \$7.1 million for environmental assessments, to allow engineering design and associated work to proceed concurrently with the environmental assessments. However, City Council and the Commission subsequently approved only \$4 million for this purpose, on an interim basis, pending a further announcement about funding from Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario, expected as part of the Province's budget in March. TTC staff were requested to report back on the status of funding for Transit City work upon clarification of any funding provisions in the provincial budget.

At its meeting of February 27, 2008, the Commission received a presentation pertaining to the status and progress of all aspects of the Transit City Light Rail Plan. At that meeting, the Commission requested staff to provide further progress updates on the Plan.

This report responds to both requests for status updates.

## **Discussion**

For the sake of brevity, this report will include updates on only those Transit City activities where noteworthy progress has been made since the February 27, 2008 update.

## Sheppard East LRT

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process is underway for the Sheppard East LRT, using the new process approved by the Minister of the Environment last September. At the first public meetings for this project, which were held on April 15 and 17, 2008, staff presented the main objective for the study which is to identify the best way to provide high-quality transit service in the Sheppard Avenue East corridor, from Don Mills Subway Station, to Morningside or Meadowvale, in a manner which:

i) is affordable,

ii) makes transit a much-more attractive travel option relative to the private auto, and

iii) supports the City's growth objectives of a better variety and density of transit-oriented land use and development, and a better cycling and walking environment.

The public was presented with the reasons that a new Light Rail Transit (LRT) line best satisfies those objectives.

The two public meetings were very well attended, estimated at 250-350 people each night. Many attendees gave favourable comments on the proposed LRT line, while others stated their preference for a subway extension east from Don Mills Station.

The next phase in the EA study process is to complete the design of the LRT to Morningside Avenue, including the grade-separation of Sheppard Avenue at the GO Transit crossing, just east of Kennedy Road. This further work will include a detailed evaluation of the original Transit City design of an eastward alignment to Morningside or Meadowvale, and of City Planning's proposal for a separate branch of this LRT line, operating via McCowan Road to the Scarborough Centre area.

The final public meetings for the EA study are scheduled for the week of May 26, allowing submission to the Commission in June, and then to Toronto City Council for approval. Detailed design must start in mid-2008 to allow construction to begin in the spring of 2009, subject to receipt of funding from the Province.

## Finch West LRT

The environmental assessment (EA) for the Finch West LRT project has been started. As a result of technical team work and discussions with Metrolinx, it has been determined that the work plan for this

EA must be modified to evaluate various alignment and terminal options at the west end of the line, as well as alignment options and questions of network connectivity across Yonge Street.

The first public meeting for this project is planned for late spring. The public will be apprised of the study area boundaries, introduced to the possible alignment options, and be made familiar with the evaluation criteria for the potential alignment options in localised areas. Engineering design work will be started immediately following the first public meeting.

The second and third public meetings are planned for the summer and fall of 2008, with the completion of the EA report planned for late 2008.

#### Eglinton-Crosstown LRT

The Municipal Class EA process for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT has been started. This EA has added complexity because a substantial portion of the line will be in an underground alignment. Therefore, the EA will extend into 2009. The first public meeting is planned for this summer, the second for the fall/winter, and the final public meetings in early 2009. Completion of EA is planned for the summer of 2009.

Following direction from the Commission and Council that this LRT line should connect to Pearson International Airport, there has been significant effort focussed on this matter. Staff from the TTC and the Mississauga Bus Rapid Transit project have met twice and agreed to work together to identify alignment options, for both the LRT and Mississauga's BRT, from the Eglinton-Renforth area to the airport. They have also agreed that their respective consultants should work jointly on this in order to achieve cost savings. Staff have met twice with the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) to discuss transit to the airport, and the GTAA has agreed to dedicate resources to assist in this work. Additionally, a work group, headed up by Metrolinx, has been established to coordinate the broader objective of establishing a transit hub at the airport for a larger number of transit operators, including GO and Brampton Transit. This group met for the first time on April 17, 2008.

While the Eglinton-Crosstown LRT is a more-complex undertaking, it is still one of the first-priority lines in the Transit City plan, and the Plan calls for this line to be operational by 2015. In order to achieve this delivery schedule, design activities will be initiated this summer, concurrently with the EA work.

#### Scarborough RT

The Environmental Assessment (EA) process for the extension of the Scarborough RT has been started. The work includes an amendment to the EA that was approved in 1994 for an extension of this line from

McCowan Road to Sheppard Avenue, as well as a Municipal Class EA for an extension of the line from Sheppard Avenue to Malvern Town Centre. The first public meeting for this EA was held on April 15, 2008, where various alignments were presented. Approximately 250-300 people attended the meeting.

Comments and input from the public at this meeting showed a high level of support for extending the Scarborough RT to Malvern Town Centre, and concern over options which would have such an extension provided by a different technology than that used for the Scarborough RT, because two different technologies would impose a transfer between the current line and the extension.

Subsequent public meetings are planned for this summer, with completion of the EA planned for late 2008.

Work is also proceeding on the development of design alternatives for a new, much-improved integration of services at Kennedy Station for both the Scarborough RT and the two planned light rail lines, together with existing subway and bus services, all of which will connect there. Staff are committed to rectify the previous design and ensure that the new arrangements are highly customer-focused and convenient.

Also underway is the structural analysis of the existing infrastructure of the Scarborough RT, which is a requirement for the Scarborough RT Upgrading project.

#### Maintenance and Storage Facilities

The Transit City Light Rail Plan's seven new LRT lines require new maintenance and storage (M&S) facilities, because the current facilities are too small, are not designed to serve modern, low-floor vehicles, and are too far away from the planned new LRT lines. The Master Plan Study for streetcar maintenance and repair facilities, currently underway, addresses the M&S requirements for the Transit City LRT fleet.

Much work has already been completed on the Master Plan Study, and a draft of this report is being reviewed. TTC staff are targeting to present the conclusions and recommendations of this study to Commission in the spring or early summer.

Upon approval of the Master Plan Study recommendations, staff will commence these activities:

- Preparation of detailed documentation of program requirements for Transit City
- Preparation of procurement documentation

- Search and acquisition of property  
Waterfront West LRT

TTC staff are now finalizing their report on modifications to the original Waterfront West LRT for the section from Exhibition Place to Dufferin Street. A report to the Commission pertaining to the EA modifications is planned for the May Commission meeting, so that the report can be forwarded to the Ministry of the Environment.

The Municipal Class EA addressing possible LRT alignments between Dufferin Street and Roncesvalles Avenue is on hold to allow consideration and inclusion of the results from the Western Beaches Master Plan. It is currently anticipated that work on the EA will resume in late summer and that a preferred alignment will be presented to the public and stakeholders in the fall. The EA is planned for completion early in 2009 when the review period is over and notice of completion to the MOE has been filed.

The feasibility study for the Park Lawn Road to Long Branch section of the Waterfront West line has been completed. The Municipal Class EA for this part of the line has started, and the first public meeting is planned for late spring. It is anticipated that this EA will be complete by the end of the year.

Completion of the design of the Park Lawn loop to replace the facilities at Humber Loop is in progress. If funding for construction of the new loop is approved and the required special trackwork is delivered on schedule, then the loop will be built in late spring 2009.

#### Don Mills LRT

The EA for the Don Mills LRT is proceeding under the Municipal Class EA process. Since a Transportation Master Plan for the Don Valley Corridor was completed and approved by City Council, the current study is starting at Phase 2 of the Class EA process.

The project scope has been modified from its original definition to include the complete Transit City line between Danforth Avenue and Steeles Avenue. The original work plan addressed the line only as far north as Sheppard Avenue, where the line would intersect with the Sheppard Subway.

The first public meeting on this EA is scheduled for May/June 2008, with the second one to be held on September/October 2008. The current schedule would result in the completed EA study being presented to Council in December 2008.

#### Scarborough-Malvern LRT

The Municipal Class EA process for the Scarborough/Malvern LRT has been started. The work plan is still preliminary, and the first public meeting will be held in the summer 2008. The current schedule calls for the EA report to be complete in 2009.

#### Jane LRT

The Municipal Class EA process for the Jane LRT line has been started. One of the alignment options to be addressed will include an underground section and it is, therefore, expected that the EA report will go into 2009 before completion. The first public meeting is scheduled for late spring 2008. The EA report will be completed early in 2009.

#### Project Work Financial Status

As described earlier in this report, in November, 2007, staff had requested additional funding of \$13.0 million, over and above the already-approved funding for the Transit City environmental assessments, to allow engineering design and associated work to proceed concurrently with the EA's, so that Transit City projects can proceed as quickly as possible. However, City Council and the Commission ultimately approved expenditures of only \$4 million in 2008 for this purpose, on an interim basis, pending a further announcement about funding for this engineering design and other related work, from Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario, expected as part of the Province's budget in March. While the Provincial budget announced funding of \$7.1 million for Transit City environmental assessments and study work (which has been paid to the City), neither Metrolinx nor the provincial budget provided any additional funding for any other aspect of Transit City. As a result, it is projected that the currently-approved funding will not be sufficient to cover the costs of work planned till the end of 2008.

Also, recent technical team work has concluded that certain previously-confirmed environmental assessment work plans have to address three inter-regionally significant issues:

- the western alignment of the Eglinton-Crosstown LRT, notably the intention to terminate this line at Toronto Pearson International Airport;
- the western alignment of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT; and
- the eastern alignment of the Etobicoke-Finch West LRT, notably the continuity of travel across Yonge Street, and connecting to the Sheppard Subway alignment.

Therefore, staff are recommending that the Commission request Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario to provide funding of \$9.2 million to cover these projected expenditures in 2008, consisting of the \$4

million previously approved by Toronto City Council on an interim basis, plus \$5.2 million to cover planned work and expenditures to the end of 2008.

#### Improvements to EA Process for Transit Projects in Ontario

In order to facilitate faster implementation of transit projects, the Ministry of Environment has recently proposed a significantly-faster environmental assessment process in support of "... the development of a sustainable transportation system that gets people out of their cars and on to public transit".

Under the new process, decisions as to the type of transit project to be considered in an EA would be the responsibility of the proponent. The province would not require that alternatives be assessed, or that the particular type of transit project be justified, as part of the EA study, as is now the case. The new EA process would begin once a preferred transit project has been identified, and would require the proponent to assess the site-specific aspects of their proposal, and identify the appropriate mitigation measures.

Using the Sheppard East LRT as an example, the new EA process would begin with a proposal for LRT on Sheppard Avenue, and include an assessment of the various design alternatives, for example, whether the dedicated LRT right-of-way is on the side or centre of the road, the size of platforms, widening the road to incorporate the transit right-of-way versus converting traffic lanes, etc.

The proposed six-month duration for the EA process would begin once the public is formally notified that an EA study had been initiated. Then, strict timelines would apply in order to incorporate, within the six-month period, the necessary technical work and public consultation, a 30-day public review of documentation once the EA study has received the necessary municipal approvals, and a 35-day period to allow the Ministry of Environment to assess any objections that may have been received during the 30-day review period.

The proposed new EA process is currently available for public comment and input. Any submissions must be received by the Province by May 12, 2008.

This is a significant, progressive improvement to the EA process for transit projects in Ontario. TTC and City staff are very supportive of this proposal, and are preparing joint comments on ways it might be further improved.

On a related note, TTC and City staff have been meeting with Metrolinx's lead on EA processes, Jim O'Mara, and providing comments on ways to also improve and streamline the federal requirements for environmental assessments for projects which receive federal funding. Mr. O'Mara is meeting with staff from the federal government in an effort to simplify federal EA requirements and harmonize those

requirements with those of the province.

#### Alternate Financing and Procurement of Transit City Projects

TTC, Mississauga, and York Region staff are meeting on an almost-weekly basis with Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario (IO) in order get the Transit City first-priority projects, including the Scarborough RT and Transit City maintenance and storage facilities, ready for implementation as quickly as possible.

Each project is progressing on two parallel but dependent tracks. Track A includes project scoping, justification, and “benefits case” development to support Metrolinx staff recommendations and Metrolinx Board decisions regarding funding. Track B includes the analysis, assessment, and selection of project delivery models such as Design-Bid-Build, Design-Build, and other Alternate Financing and Procurement (AFP) arrangements. Projects selected for AFP/Alternate delivery models would then proceed to the procurement/commercial phase that would culminate in contract award.

In recent meetings, there has been very thoughtful discussion about which projects would lend themselves best to AFP models, and which to traditional agency-managed delivery methods.

Staff from all agencies are very mindful of municipal and provincial objectives of getting projects to the implementation stage as quickly as possible and, therefore, are feeling considerable pressure in this work. They are, nonetheless, working cooperatively and closely to ensure that work is progressing at a good pace.

#### **Justification**

Approval of funding and expenditures of \$9.2 million in 2008, over and above the \$7.1 million previously-approved for Transit City environmental assessments, should be requested of Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario to cover the engineering design and associated work which is projected to year-end in 2008. This funding is needed to allow this work to proceed concurrently with the EA's, so that Transit City projects can proceed as quickly as possible. Transit City needs committed and predictable funding for continuous and uninterrupted progress, so as to avoid delays to the projects and their targeted construction start dates.

April 21, 2008

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Attachment: Appendix 1

## **Appendix 1**

### Project Approval – Transit City Light Rail Plan Projected Expenditure To End Of 2008

Current Allocation / Year-End Forecast of Authority (\$ million) (\$ million):

- Sheppard East LRT - 2.50 / 1.90
- Etobicoke-Finch West LRT - 1.50 / 2.45
- Eglinton-Crosstown LRT - 3.00 / 5.25
- Waterfront West LRT/ Park Lawn Loop - 1.00 / 1.30
- Kipling Loop - 0.10 / 0.00
- Scarborough RT Extension - 0.90 / 1.50
- Scarborough-Malvern LRT - 0.70 / 1.30
- Jane LRT - 0.70 / 1.50
- Don Mills LRT - 0.00 / 0.20
- Maintenance & Storage Facilities - 0.70 / 0.70
- Alternate Financing & Procurement - 0.00 / 0.20
- Total - 11.10 / 16.30