

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: November 17, 2009

(Re-submitted December 16, 2009)

SUBJECT: DUPONT SUBWAY STATION AND CASA LOMA

ACTION ITEM

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Commission:

1. Not change the name of Dupont Subway Station, or the routing of the 33 FOREST HILL bus route, noting that:
 - the current name of Dupont Station provides the best possible travel and orientation information to TTC customers;
 - an extension of the 33 FOREST HILL bus route south to Casa Loma and Spadina Station would attract very few new customers to the TTC and, therefore, would not satisfy the TTC's ridership or financial performance standards;
 - there is signage in place at Dupont Subway Station, and in TTC customer information material, to assist TTC customers travelling to Casa Loma;
 - an improved "Station and Vicinity" map will soon be installed at Dupont Station, and this map will clearly display the location of Casa Loma relative to the station; and

2. Forward this report to the Board of Trustees of Casa Loma for their information.

FUNDING

This report has no effect on the TTC's operating or capital budgets.

BACKGROUND

In a memo dated August 13, 2009, Vice-Chair Mihevc requested that staff report back on several issues related to Dupont Station:

1. Renaming the station to be called Casa Loma;

2. Adding Casa Loma to the existing name so that it would be called “Dupont-Casa Loma;”
3. Keeping the name “Dupont” but adding wayfinding within the station and on TTC maps;
4. Any other options that would identify Dupont as the nearest subway station and best way to access Casa Loma;
5. Extending the 33 FOREST HILL bus service southbound past St. Clair West station to Spadina Station, serving Casa Loma, as well as the growing student population to George Brown College.

This report responds to these requests.

DISCUSSION

Renaming the station

It is recommended that the Dupont Station name be retained, and that the station not be renamed. TTC subway stations are, first and foremost, transportation facilities, not advertising vehicles. As people travel through our system, they need to know where they are geographically, in the context of the roads and neighbourhoods within Toronto. The names of subway stations are selected to give the clearest possible information to customers as they travel on the TTC. For this reason, the TTC’s corporate policy regarding the naming of stations is that stations will bear the name of the major intersecting street at which the station is located, unless there is no such street because of the alignment of the subway line. The great majority of TTC stations, including Dupont Station, are named in this way.

There are some instances where there is no major street nearby, and the name chosen is, instead, a minor street, a nearby landmark, or a district name. Old Mill and North York Centre are two examples where the nearby minor street name gave no useful indication of the station’s location and, so, the nearby landmark or neighbourhood name was used. Dupont Station is not in this situation and, for the 31 years that the station has been open, the name Dupont has clearly indicated to people travelling on the Spadina Subway that, when at that station, they are at the intersection of Spadina Road and Dupont Street. Any other name would convey less information to the majority of our customers about the location of the station.

There have been other, similar suggestions to rename other stations in recent years, and TTC staff have consistently applied the Commission-approved station naming policy, because it is intended to provide the best possible travel information to our customers, not to promote or advertise a nearby destination.

While the TTC is supportive of the City’s attempts to increase attendance at the City-owned Casa Loma heritage and tourist attraction, the fact is that very few transit customers using Dupont Station are headed to Casa Loma. Our most-recent origin-destination survey shows that less than one percent of the customers using Dupont Station on an average day are travelling to or from Casa Loma. This contrasts with the nearby George Brown College,

which is the origin or destination for approximately 40 percent of the transit customers using Dupont Station. Overall, the majority of customers at Dupont Station are travelling to various local destinations, which have nothing to do with Casa Loma.

There is also the possibility of creating the false perception that Dupont Station is the best way to get to Casa Loma by public transit. Given the need to climb the difficult Baldwin Steps to reach Casa Loma from Dupont Station, it is better for customers if they use the 7 BATHURST bus to the bus stop on Bathurst Street and Nina Avenue, and walk east to Casa Loma; or take the 512 ST CLAIR streetcar to the stop at Spadina Road and walk south. The relative inaccessibility to public transit of Casa Loma and Spadina House, located as they are at the top of an escarpment, is an unfortunate legacy that can never be completely overcome.

There would be a considerable cost to renaming the station, as signage and other customer and internal information, both at Dupont Station and system-wide, would have to be changed. Not all signs could be replaced at the same time, and so there would be confusion during the changeover period. Some of these items are regularly updated as other route and service changes are made, but a large number of costly changes would be required and justifiable only if a name change were to take place.

A partial list of changes that would be required by a station renaming is:

- Station signage at Dupont Station (14 wall signs, four exterior signs);
- "Next Station" wall signs at Spadina Station and St Clair West Station (three signs at each station, except St Clair West, which has 4);
- System map on platform edge signs at five Sheppard Subway stations and at St George Station (approximately 80 sign panels);
- "You Are Here" platform directional maps at all stations on the Yonge-University-Spadina Subway (approximately 140 signs);
- Infopost maps and schedules at approximately 25 bus stops on the 26 DUPONT and 127 DAVENPORT routes (approximately 50 maps);
- Subway car route maps, four in every subway car (approximately 3,500);
- Station opening and first & last train schedules at Dupont Station entrances (four signs);
- Multiple internal documentation, including safety-critical information for emergency services;
- Subway schedules at Dupont Station designated waiting areas (four signs).

The approximate cost estimate for these sign changes, including materials and installation, is over \$500,000. This expense could not be justified at a time of budgetary challenges at the TTC.

Other items which are occasionally updated and which would have to be updated in coordination with any station renaming are:

- Ride Guides (approximately 250,000);
- Bus and streetcar shelter maps (approximately 2,400);

- System maps at all subway stations (approximately 1,000);
- Internal reference maps for telephone information, planning, and operational use (300 maps).

Given the TTC's operating and capital budget restrictions, any unbudgeted expenditure on a station renaming, especially when the new station name would more-poorly describe the location to transit customers, cannot be justified.

Signs and customer information

A sign to direct TTC customers to Casa Loma is in place at Dupont Station. The sign is located on the mezzanine level, and is clearly visible to customers leaving the fare paid area of the subway station. The sign directs customers to the north-west exit from the station, which provides the shortest walking distance to Casa Loma.

Casa Loma is identified as a place of interest on the TTC's Ride Guide system map, and transit directions to Casa Loma are included in the Points of Interest section of the ttc.ca web site.

The TTC is currently updating and improving its "Station and Vicinity" maps, which are posted within each station and which provide travellers with information pertaining to local streets and landmarks near each subway station. A new such map is being prepared for Dupont Station, and it will clearly display the location of Casa Loma to assist visitors travelling to it.

33 FOREST HILL – Extension to Casa Loma

An extension of the 33 FOREST HILL bus route south to Casa Loma and Dupont Station was operated in the summers of 1992 and 1993 on a trial basis, and was discontinued because of very low ridership. This route extension was evaluated again in the report on *Service Improvements for 2002*, and was not recommended for implementation because it was projected that the change would cause an overall inconvenience for customers

Staff have revised and updated the analysis of the possible route extension, to include operation to Spadina Station. Service would be provided from approximately 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., every day. The new service would be used for approximately 70 customer-trips each weekday, and these trips would be made with a shorter walk to Casa Loma. The change would improve service for approximately 380 customer-trips each weekday which are made on the 33 FOREST HILL route, because these trips would be made with a shorter wait. The change would improve service for approximately 200 customer trips each weekday which are now made on the 127 DAVENPORT route between George Brown College and Spadina Station, because these trips would be made with a shorter wait. Approximately 10 new customers each weekday would be attracted to the TTC because of the improved service.

One additional bus would be required at all times that the extension is operated and so, a financial evaluation was carried out. The comparison of the operating costs with the projected increase in ridership indicates that the service would not meet the TTC's financial standard. For this reason, the proposal is not recommended.

SUMMARY

The station name "Dupont" provides the best information to customers about the location of the station, and no change to the station name is recommended. An extension of the 33 FOREST HILL bus route to Casa Loma and Spadina Station is not recommended because it would attract very few new customers to the TTC.

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