

# TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

**MEETING DATE:** February 17, 2010

**SUBJECT:** TRANSIT VISITOR CENTRE STUDY - PHASE 1  
STATUS UPDATE

## **ACTION ITEM**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Commission approve the concept for a Transit Visitor Centre as outlined in this report, noting that a phase 2 of the study will be undertaken to develop a business case justification to identify the recommended site for a Transit Visitor Centre.

### **FUNDING**

Funds of \$85,000 were available in 2009 to undertake the study under project 3.9 Transit Visitor Centre Study (Category Expansion) as outlined on pages 907-909 of the 2010-2014 Capital Program which was approved by City Council on December 8, 2009. Phase 2 work will bring the total cost to \$120,000, which will be accommodated by under expenditures in other 3.9 Buildings and Structures projects.

No funding is currently approved to proceed with implementation of the Transit Visitor Centre as this project is included below the line and subject to identification of funding before it can proceed. The Transit Visitor Centre – Below the Line is outlined on pages 1577–1580 of the 2010-2014 Capital Program which was approved by City Council on December 8, 2009.

### **BACKGROUND**

Several major cities around the world have facilities that provide the public with the opportunity to view historical data and artifacts related to their public transit systems. They include the Cable Car Museum in San Francisco, the Transit Museum in New York City, and London Transport Museum in London.

In April 2009, the terms of reference for a study into the potential for a Transit Visitor Centre in Toronto was developed and Lord Cultural Resources was selected to conduct the study in June 2009.

## **DISCUSSION**

The study is being conducted in two phases. Phase 1 consisted of developing a conceptual scope for a Transit Visitor Centre to determine appropriate display scope and format, facility size and location through:

- Analysis of the experience of similar centres,
- Identification of potential markets: residents, educational, tourists, etc.,
- Assessment of potential collections and display subjects,
- Pre-design recommendations associated with size, visitor experience, governance and operation,
- Initial assessment and short listing of potential sites/locations.

Phase 2 will further investigate the feasibility of a Transit Visitor Centre for each of the short listed sites to determine the best location, including:

- Capital cost estimates,
- Operating costs,
- Business case justification.

### **Recommended Concept**

The study considered and evaluated four possible development options.

1. A museum with a large collection and a focus largely on the past,
2. A museum with a smaller collection, but also with focus on the past,
3. A Transit Visitor Centre without (vehicle) collections,
4. A Transit Visitor Centre with small vehicle collections.

The first three of the options were rejected on the basis of market, cost, competitive and collection availability factors. The fourth option for a Transit Visitor Centre with a small representative vehicle collection and a focus on the past, present and future of public transit in Toronto is the recommended concept.

The concept includes the potential for ticketing and information, an orientation film/presentation, restrooms, contemporary thematic exhibits on the past, present and future of public transportation in Toronto, and an interactive zone.

Spacial requirements that would allow for exhibition space are estimated at approximately 4,100 square feet to 7,500 square feet. Space requirements for a representative collection of historical vehicles range from 3,800 to 10,800 square feet, for a total combined spacial requirement of 7,900 square feet to 18,300 square feet.

The recommended concept may require staff, supported potentially by volunteers, and may include other revenue generating and marketing initiatives that will be considered during phase 2 of the study.

### Site Selection

The study reviewed 23 potential sites (see Appendix A for full listing) for the proposed Transit Visitor Centre. Each site was considered for further analysis or rejected based on review against criteria as listed:

- Easy access by public transportation,
- Visibility from well-used public transportation,
- Visibility of and access to the “real thing”, views of large numbers of streetcars, buses, subway cars, access to historic vehicles on site and potentially tours of maintenance facilities,
- Ability to limit capital costs, i.e. sites owned by the TTC with suitable buildings,
- Synergy of a site close to other facilities generating visitor traffic such as attractions, retail and restaurants,
- Parking.

This resulted in a short list of 7 sites including Danforth Bus Garage, Ashbridges Bay, Russell Carhouse, Roncesvalles Carhouse, Bay Station lower platform, Hillcrest and Wilson Station North Bus Terminal.

The 7 short listed sites were then further evaluated in detail and ranked against an expanded list of criteria that included:

- Likelihood of public and corporate funding,
- Ability to meet space and facility requirements,
- Ability to work harmoniously with TTC operations,
- Aesthetic, historical and physical features.

The evaluation resulted in the highest scoring for the Danforth Bus Garage site, followed by the Ashbridges Bay replacement maintenance and storage facility.

Design for the Ashbridges Bay replacement maintenance and storage facility for the new Legacy LRVs is underway. A preliminary assessment indicates that the design would be delayed to accommodate the Transit Visitor Centre. The impact of the proposed Transit Visitor Centre will be evaluated during the next phase of the study.

### Next Steps

Conduct further analysis of the two highest scoring site options (Danforth and Ashbridges Bay) to select a recommended location. This will include capital and operating cost estimates and a business case statement associated with potential funding sources.

Staff anticipate that a report with final recommendations will be submitted to the May Commission meeting.

**JUSTIFICATION**

Approval of the concept will permit completion of phase 2 which will provide the business case.

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January 26, 2009  
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Attachment: Appendix A

# APPENDIX A – EVALUATED LOCATIONS

## TRANSIT VISITOR CENTRE STUDY - PHASE 1 STATUS UPDATE

The following 23 sites were evaluated against the site selection criteria:

- Davisville Carhouse
- Greenwood Carhouse
- McCowan Carhouse
- Russell Carhouse
- Roncesvalles Carhouse
- Arrow Road Garage
- Birchmount Garage
- Comstock Garage
- Davenport Garage
- Eglinton Garage
- Lakeshore Garage
- Lansdowne Garage
- Malvern Garage
- Mount Dennis Garage
- Queensway Garage
- Danforth Garage
- Bay Subway Station Lower
- Queen Subway Station Lower
- Wilson North Bus Terminal
- Sheppard Transit City Facility
- Finch Transit City Facility
- Eglinton Transit City Facility
- Ashbridges Bay Replacement Maintenance and Storage Facility

# *Transit Visitor Centre*

**Presentation of Phase 1 Report to TTC  
Commission, February 17, 2010**

**Ted Silberberg**, Senior Principal, Market and Financial  
Planning, Lord Cultural Resources

Creating Cultural Capital



- TTC requested proposals for pre-design conceptual study for TTC Streetcar Museum.
- Lord Cultural Resources selected. Headquartered in Toronto, with world-wide offices.
  - Largest museum-planning firm in the world
  - Some Lord Cultural Resources Clients / Projects:

## **Canada**

- **National Museums of Canada**
- **Canadian Museum for Human Rights**
- **Canadian Railway Museum**
- **Canada Aviation Museum**
- **Ontario Pavilion 2010 Vancouver Olympic Games**
- **Royal Ontario Museum**
- **Art Gallery of Ontario**
- **Future Use of Old City Hall, Toronto**

## **International**

- **Guggenheim Bilbao, Spain**
- **NASA Science Center, Maryland**
- **Saadiyat Island Cultural District, Abu Dhabi**
- **West Kowloon Cultural District, Hong Kong**
- **New York Transit Museum**
- **British Museum**
- **Smithsonian**



# Research and Context

3

- Considered experience of other transit-related museums in Canada, US and UK
- Conclusion: mission important but limited attendance and earned income potential means need to also limit size of collection, spaces and staffing



London Transport  
Museum Pioneer Tube  
1890  
[www.ltmuseum.co.uk](http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk)



Cable Car Museum, San  
Francisco, Washington &  
Mason powerhouse, carbarn  
and museum  
[www.cablecarmuseum.org](http://www.cablecarmuseum.org)



Edmonton Radial  
Railway display  
Hans Ryffel, ERRS



# Recommended Concept

4

Research and analysis indicated need to:

- widen concept to pre -TTC period
- beyond streetcars
- both science and history
- not just past, but also present and future of public transit

*=Toronto Transit Museum and Visitor Centre*

# Recommended Collections

5

- Small representative collection from TTC's own resources or Canada Science and Technology Museum, without cost.



Horsecar in Toronto; photo from City of Toronto Archives, reproduced at <http://www.trainweb.org>



Witt streetcar, ca. 1950s; photo from [www.transit.toronto.on.ca](http://www.transit.toronto.on.ca)



Red Rocket subway car. Photo from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davisville\\_Subway\\_Yard](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Davisville_Subway_Yard)

# Visitor Experience and Spaces

6

## Two Main Components:

- Visitor Centre = Contemporary thematic exhibits, retail, office and storage = 4,100 to 7,500 net sq. ft
- Museum = Curated and interpreted display of 3 to 6 transit vehicles = 3,800 to 10,800 net sq. ft
- Combined space: 7,900 to 18,300 net sq. ft depending on site and budget



Children's interactive zone at New York Transit Museum,  
<http://www.achildgrowsinbrooklyn.com/2008/07/25/our-visit-to-the-new-york-transit-museum/>



Interpretive panels in front of subway car display at New York Transit Museum,  
[http://www.ehow.com/how\\_2167549\\_transit-museum-new-york-city.html](http://www.ehow.com/how_2167549_transit-museum-new-york-city.html)

**Lord**  
Cultural Resources



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# Governance, Staffing and Operations

7

- Not-for-profit governance with TTC representation
- Staff range of 5.5 to 7.5 FTE plus volunteers
- Modest admission charges with incentives to pay by token and use Metropass



Ticket stub from  
[http://www.toronto.ca/archives/becker\\_collections/images/tc\\_ticket\\_first\\_peter\\_witt.jpg](http://www.toronto.ca/archives/becker_collections/images/tc_ticket_first_peter_witt.jpg)



# Site Evaluation and Recommendations

8

- Reviewed 23 TTC sites, 7 short listed
- Further analysis using 10 evaluation criteria, weighting scale and objective analysis and rating
- Highest Ranked are:
  - Danforth Bus Garage:
    - 11,125 nsf vacated by Habitat for Humanity
    - Easily adaptable at relatively low capital cost
    - Across street from Coxwell subway station
  - Planned Ashbridge's Bay LRT Facility:
    - Purpose-built construction, possible impact on LRT facility implementation being advised by TTC

- Finalize site and other assumptions regarding size, staffing, operations
- Prepare capital cost estimates
- Forecast attendance, operating revenues and expenses

## Post-Study

- Consider funding opportunities
- Consider business case

## Questions/Discussion



Exterior of the Danforth building indicating good visibility and a positive historic character.



Some of the unoccupied space in Danforth vacated by Habitat for Humanity capable of being part of Visitor Centre component



Some of the space vacated by Habitat for Humanity capable of use for vehicle display. Note the existing loading doors and ceiling height.



View of Coxwell subway station across street from Danforth building.





# Ashbridge's Bay Site

11



Ashbridge's Bay site. View of site in relation to nearby sewage treatment plant and other facilities in the area



Ashbridge's Bay site. View of planned site for major TTC facility at southeast corner of Lakeshore and Leslie



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