

AUG 19 2014

mid-August 2014

Dear Councillors, many MPPs, some candidates, TTC/Metrolinx/CUTA etc.

Re: East of Yonge transit

We may need to thank Rob Ford and Glen Murray for up-ending east-end transit plans.

Why? Because we need better plans, plans for more transit, plans that could get done far faster and for less than what currently has momentum, some of which rightfully remains an issue in this election. (See Neptis Foundation's Schabas critique, and also the Spacing analysis of the Scarborough subway politricks by John Lorinc). Also, we need to broaden transit not just for Scarborough, but all of the GTA. And money is an issue.

What follows isn't just criticism though, but propositional, and very realistic in ways. We need a LOT more transit, the energy, climate, and economic issues are pressing, and it will cost a lot. So in re-visioning east end transit as outlined here, there's a sense of real urgency, including going beyond just one project/Big Fix in 20 years. Yes of course, it's hard to develop political will and the larger sums for some of this, and new ideas being brought in can be so uphill to the point of being at 90 degrees - or more! So with some ranking of actions in mind, here are 7 ideas for improving east end transit.

QUICKER ITEM: Go back to the Scarborough LRT project; nix the subway scheme

Revert to the Scarborough LRT plan: it's funded, it was underway, and gives as much, if not better, service sooner - for more people. To have a quite costly subway extension atop an overloaded subway - when this isn't even planned, and lacks a full approval - that's a waste of time, momentum and money. As we must squeeze the billions better, this is where to start - surface is cheaper, and can work as well or better.

QUICKER ITEM: Being sceptical the DRL as touted is The Fix: could it be a staledated stubway, inadequate and costly, but in the core?

Yes, there's a lot of pressure on both the Yonge and Bloor/Danforth subways, with a real problem at Bloor/Yonge.

The current "fix" of a limited diagonal DRL from Union to Pape area is about was proposed 60 years ago, but the City has grown to be maybe 20 times as big. It's valid to now ask how a diagonal stubway in the well-served core costing some billions will really change the transit congestion at one station and along two lines vs. a wider mix of solutions, spread out in many areas. That should also include all GO options too; sub-regional/surface transit A to E may be quite good, (and cheap, relative to diggings).

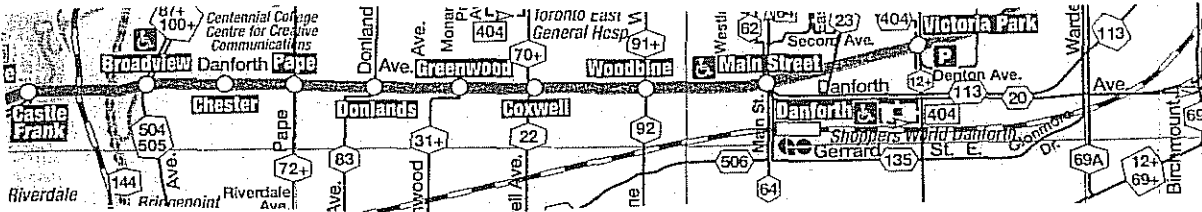
Along with weak-to-missing origin/destination data (which suggest far longer trip pressures than this stubway might try to serve), we need thinking beyond "all routes to King and Bay", and one thing doing in all the budget. All the GTA needs a transit boost, and we also need to have a systemic redundancy. This stubway as now being promoted is also a not-too-long bike ride, but will eat billions.

So unless we really open up the planning for real rigour, and make a clear, present hard-cash commitment now to extra billions to push any DRL further northwards up to the Eglinton axis, this is NOT good enough, despite many decades and some broad public support for doing things like spending money, and a hope for improved transit.

Surface transit can work well. The Brazilian city of Curitiba couldn't afford all the subways desired, so they did some busways providing subway capacity but for one percent of the cost. This example has helped some of the thinking/ideas that follow.

QUICKER Item: Linking Main subway & GO Danforth with more GO to core

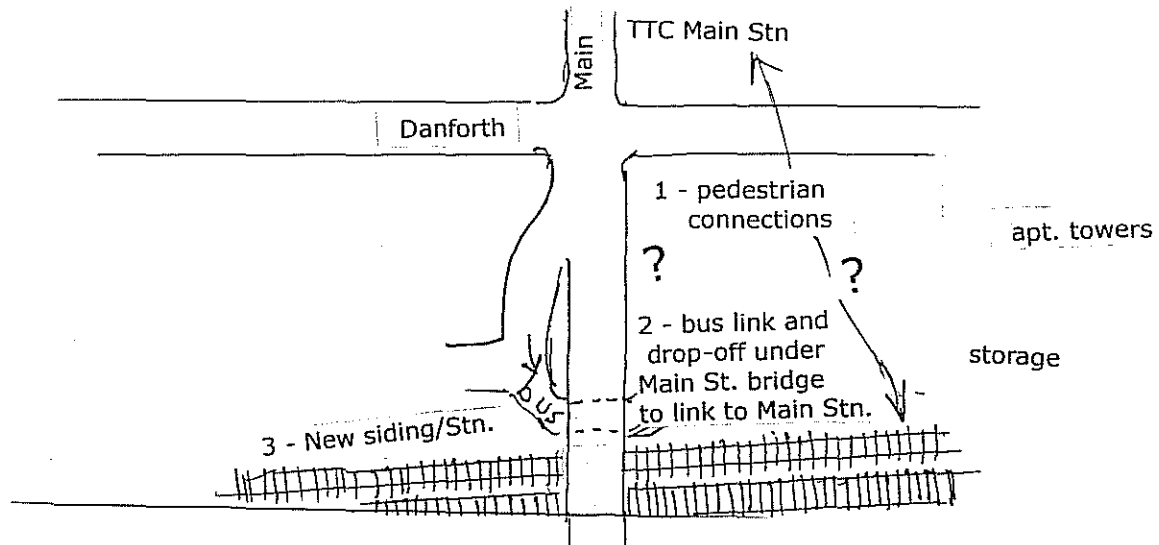
This could be a quicker-progress item, and one with high odds of previous study and merit. It may be quite easy and cheap to get at least a quick walkway done through an underground parking garage for not too many millions as a starting point; then perhaps direct bus inputs, then other improvements.



The Main Station and Danforth GO are much further east; that could divert far more person-trips earlier on the Danforth subway which equates with more seats/less pressure and greater efficiencies than a DRL for more people/stops. And 8 bus routes now feed into Main Station: it's a logical hub.

One impediment may well be improving GO frequency from Main Station to the Union Station, but if this is possible somehow, there could be larger savings vs. billions to a DRL, as GO exists and is on-surface and goes to Union. M to U...

A more extensive/expensive project would have the bus links to the TTC's Main Station directly accessing the Danforth GO. Incoming may be quite easy as the old Main St. southbound is to the west of the bridge, and then tunnel east under the bridge for a transit-only access for drop-off and pick-up. Going northbound on east-side of Main to get into the TTC is not so easily done: consult + cost.



Given the lack of buildings near the tracks/station, was this a former railyard? So could there be a re-installation of a siding and new transfer/station best on the north side and west of the Main St. bridge. This may be a surface DRL done far more quickly, and with better odds of more diversions, and better value.

QUICKER ITEM: A Bloor/Danforth bikeway

Only since 1992 has Bloor and the Danforth been the best east-west route in Toronto for a bikeway, a status arising from a reasonably OK study. This study was commissioned by the former City of Toronto as part of our civic response to the Toronto Target, a greenhouse gas reduction effort of 20% of GHGs by 2005. Some indicators have shown a 20% increase at target date since, sigh, and transport is still a leading sector, eg. ECO's latest climate sum-up "Looking for Leadership". From the 1992 study 711.72097135M13

Bloor/Danforth was the most popular bicycle route according to the 1990 Bike to Work Survey. It is an ideal route due to the fact that there are few street car track crossings, it is the most direct east-west route that spans the entire City, it has a relatively flat gradient, and has excellent potential for utilization based upon 1990 origin/destination data, as shown in Exhibits 4 and 5.

No, bikes don't work for everyone, the City is HUGE, and yes we still have some winter. But bikes are legitimate transport, a long list of world cities has done much to embrace the bike, including as means of transit relief. Yet in Toronto, despite some fresh change and some good park paths, overall we've at times been taking *out* some bike lanes, or overbuild, or we put bike lanes in the less-wise to wrong places. So we still lack even one, straighter, long, direct, fully and safely connected east-west route.

World cities such as London do see bikes as complementary to transit: even in Toronto, the DRTES report of 2012 also gave a nod to biking as a step towards relief of transit woes at Bloor/Yonge. (DRTES Sept. 2012 Table 3-3 p. 68 "Providing improved cycling infrastructure within the downtown core and shoulder areas"). This came just after the Fordists scrapped a signed-contract and long-awaited EA study of the entire length of the Bloor/Danforth subway to save \$500,000, a sum spent on severance pay for the former TTC CGM Webster when his opinions didn't match desired subway mathemagics. The rough cost for switching Scarborough transit projects is a mere \$100,000,000-ish.



Repainting a road's lane lines is a cheaper thing to do at \$25,000 a km. So putting new painted bike lanes parallel to the 500,000 daily transit rides on our stretched B/D line is about another \$500,000. While painted bike lanes are less-OK in some important ways, they're often what is done in many places. A bike symbol/sharrow is around \$200 each. Signs are cheap too. So load-shedding to bikes for the price of paint is almost free.

Since the 26-19 suburban-led vote scrapped the Bloor/Danforth EA study and repudiated a few years worth of commitment to study, in late 2013 there emerged new commitment to study as many wheels fell off the Fords. But this is only for the core 8kms of Bloor from Sherbourne to High Park, just the length of what was the scope of the originally approved second study c. 9 years ago.

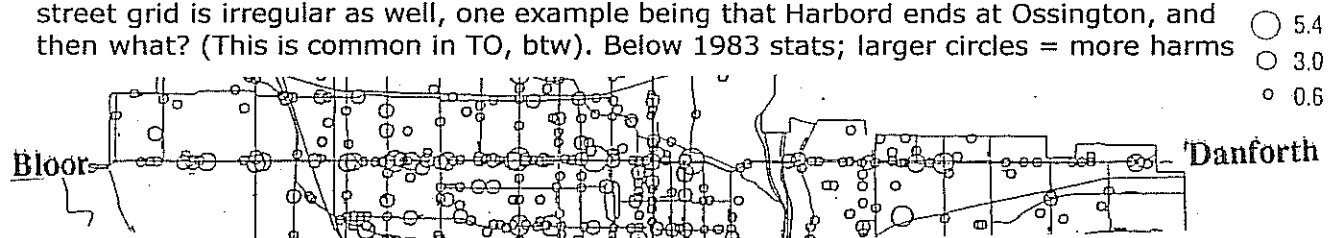
The cost to repaint these core 8kms would be about \$200,000: but the City has not even managed to do a tiny segment of Bloor St. E. in the Bike Plan yet, despite it being just mere \$20,000 to redo Bloor lane lines between Sherbourne and Church St. Smooth road would be very good too; many roads are in very bad condition, more so for cyclists.

In many places of Bloor and Danforth, absolutely there would be a need to clear away

some on-street parking for bike safety. (Bike safety doesn't always mean bike lanes btw as at times and under certain conditions a wider curb lane may be some progress for TO - but there's also signage/sharrows/speeding enforcement needed). With the parking, a look at the Green P website for parking lot locations shows that this long corridor is likely the best serviced of all TO corridors, before the great mobility benefits of the subway are added in. It is thus likely the best place in all of TO, if not Ontario for a long bike lane, especially when the load-shedding synergy to transit is added. The 1992 study missed this point; and if the new EA isn't well-scoped, it again may be neglected.

If we provided a safer, longer, maintained (including winter) bike route, we may well be able to shed 2% of the transit loading to biking for the cost of planning paint, and signs. That's cheap transit expansion; it could work elsewhere too eg. Queen. Core councillors have often been outvoted on this issue through the years by a more suburban majority.

As cycling also is often health-promoting, the provincial budget would also get a bit of relief, and we have 30 years of knowing that the Bloor/Danforth is a real hazard for cyclists, along with many other core east-west roads. These other roads have streetcar tracks that dictate lane positions, and in many parts of the City beside the subway, the street grid is irregular as well, one example being that Harbord ends at Ossington, and then what? (This is common in TO, btw). Below 1983 stats; larger circles = more harms



Key linking segments now are thus on the bit of Bloor St. E. but also on Bloor St. W. west of Ossington that have now been repaved in a status quo carterial with NO change to bike safety etc. as seems mandated by the Places to Grow Act 3.2.2 and 3.2.3. So there is a provincial role, far more of oversight than enforcement, or there are no penalties for breaking provincial planning law.

It is deeply disappointing that there is scant change in the biking conditions all along Bloor/Danforth implying that cyclists lives are worth less than others. There have been five cycling deaths along these core 8kms of Bloor since that 1992 study, but really very little has been done. More money is spent on relative waste of cosmetic frippery for the Pan Am Games Viaduct lighting than on bike safety. Even the consultant retained to give a sense of how many more millions were required for the lighting - if that payment were applied to Bloor - we'd have bike lanes High Park to Sherbourne ie. \$200,000 got burnt!

In theory, lane line painting and repainting could be done almost overnight; even in time for the Pan Am Games maybe. Better biking could also alleviate other core transit issues eg. King/Queen: but both the City and the TTC benefit financially from having the competition to the TTC remain dangerous, so the money from the captive riders in the core helps support more suburban service, and the old suburbs outvote the Toronto core.

Stinky, carrupt, carist, and callous. It's no longer trying to catch up with NYC, or Amsterdam or Copenhagen. Nor is it trying to match Montreal or Vancouver. It's now trying to match Burlington, Hamilton, and Kitchener-Waterloo. Many roads are also too brutal to be riding along; taking the lane might be legal, but also suicide. For those who get negative about cyclists, with obvious cause at times, try biking for a week.

MEDIUM Item: A north-south bus priority on Bayview via Don Valley to core

The Brazilian city of Curitiba got the same capacity as a subway through (in part) having bus priority on roads, but for 1% of a subway cost. There is no doubt that the Yonge line is quite stretched, and while GO may be able to pick up some slack, those studies aren't forthcoming yet. And if we waste billions on another subway etc, odds are we won't be able to do a few other things, given how averse we now are to pay more.

Having fast direct transit in a partial new RofWay, but parallel to Yonge St., would give Relief, though with some changes to some areas and some arterials. It would also likely cost bigger money.

Rather than adjusting Mount Pleasant, or seeing how bus priority might work on the Don Valley Parkway, (this could likely help too), a degree of bus priority on Bayview south from c. Lawrence to near Moor Park in rush hours is proposed to begin this route. Perhaps Leslie may also work: but any new asphalt must be transit-only.

Key to this new transitway is using a rail spur line across the Don that's now owned by Metrolinx. This railway has an old bridge that crosses above the Don by the Brickworks, and then it goes south, parallelling both the Don Valley Parkway and the GO rail line.

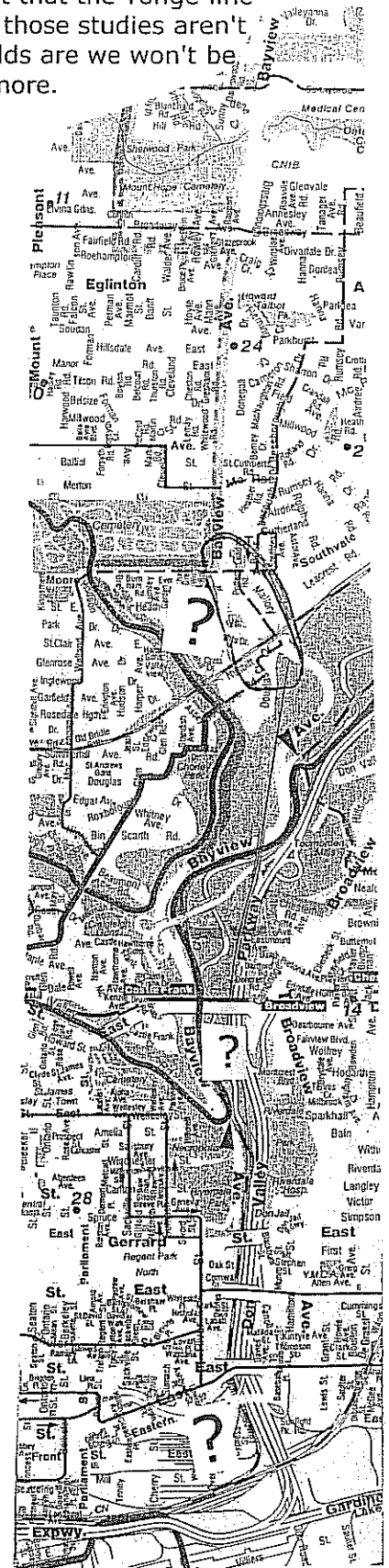
Determining what the best thing is to connect Bayview and the top of this spur line will take imagination, broad consults, and perhaps big money, as tunnelling may well be the only real option in parts. Topography and environmental concerns make complexity before any of the politricks, local or otherwise.

But the existing rail bridge is only track-narrow: while the supports are solid concrete, (except neglect is having a toll at their tops) it is far too narrow for any buses as built now. So some modifying and repair is necessary; the concrete bases could have collars put on and then braces for a wider deck. Also, a one-way-at-a-time bridge means signals and waiting areas for each way of bus traffic. This one-way is done in England and surely elsewhere. To re-use and repair might not require an EA as it avoids a bad/large construction process in a clear environmental zone. A Brickworks-area stop would help access all the Don Valley, though every stop can slow down the quick trips to the core that we need, F to M etc.

Once across the Don, the rail RofW parallels both the DVP and the existing GO rail line, but at different places. One option is thus to clear off some of the DVP car traffic for real transit priority, but this is south of Bloor. As there may be a 2 for 1 option with this RofW (keep reading), we must ensure that both buses and light rail can use whatever gets built in or nearby this DVP/rail portion. There could be dreaming of Gardiner transit too, and why not??

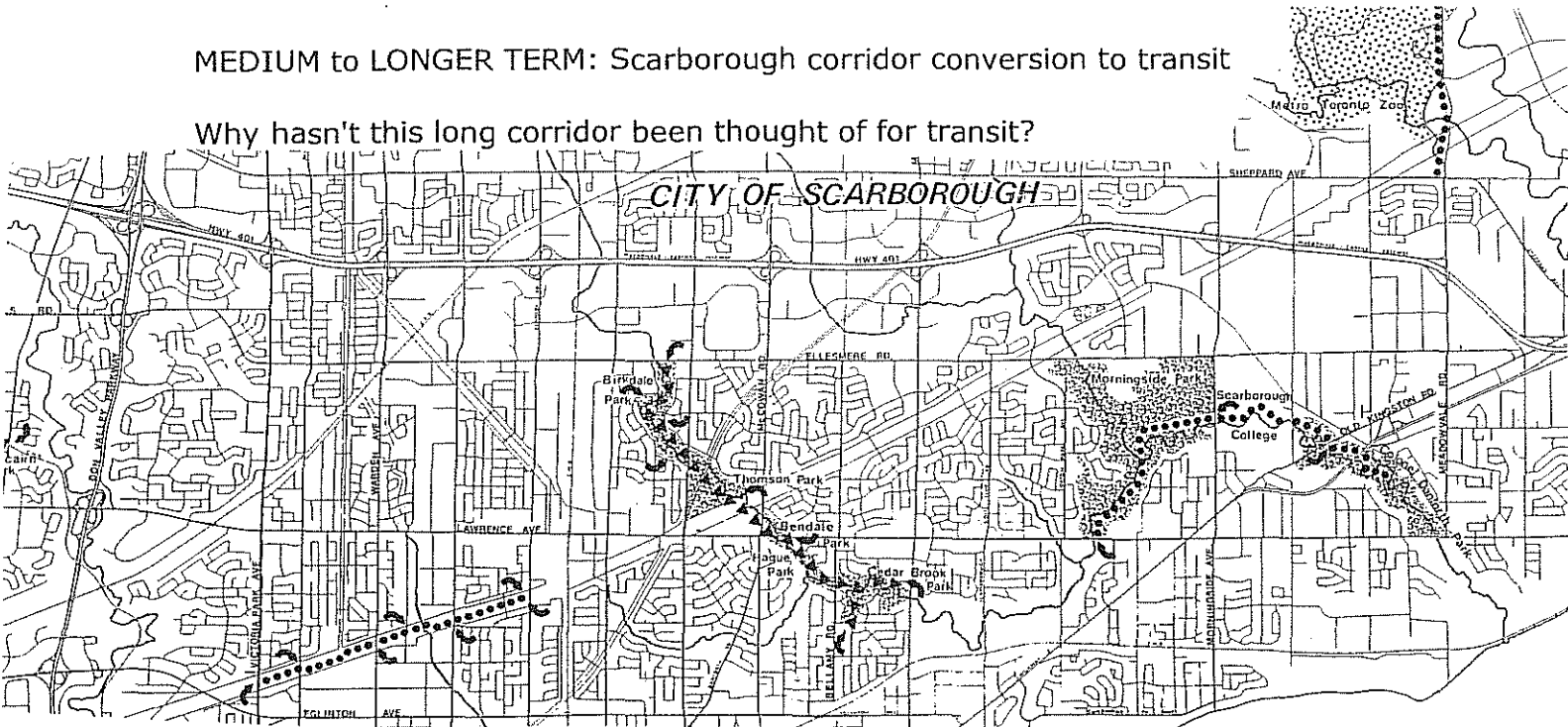
If this all gets too complex, costly or politically "hot", maybe have this bus RofWay exit the Don Valley a bit away from the very dense core itself eg. Gerrard or Dundas or Queen area. Not all TTC routes must lead into Union Station; diversity is also resiliency in transit.

This is all clearly more complex: it needs a fuller design/EA process and political will. It would cost big, but far less than fully digging a new subway etc., and so in theory it could happen sooner.



MEDIUM to LONGER TERM: Scarborough corridor conversion to transit

Why hasn't this long corridor been thought of for transit?



This was originally to be an excessway. Diagonal corridors are efficient to move on, and tax dollars used years ago bought/established this rare RofWay. The highest and best use of this may well now be for transit, as it links the near-core through great swaths of Scarborough to the Zoo as well.

Of course, local users would have some amenity loss, but superior transit, as both steel wheels (if going straight) and cleaner buses can be quiet and cleaner. So both noise and air pollution would be better than the car travel now upon us. One would trust that usage for transit would be far more upon varied parking lots etc. than upon community gardens or meadows.

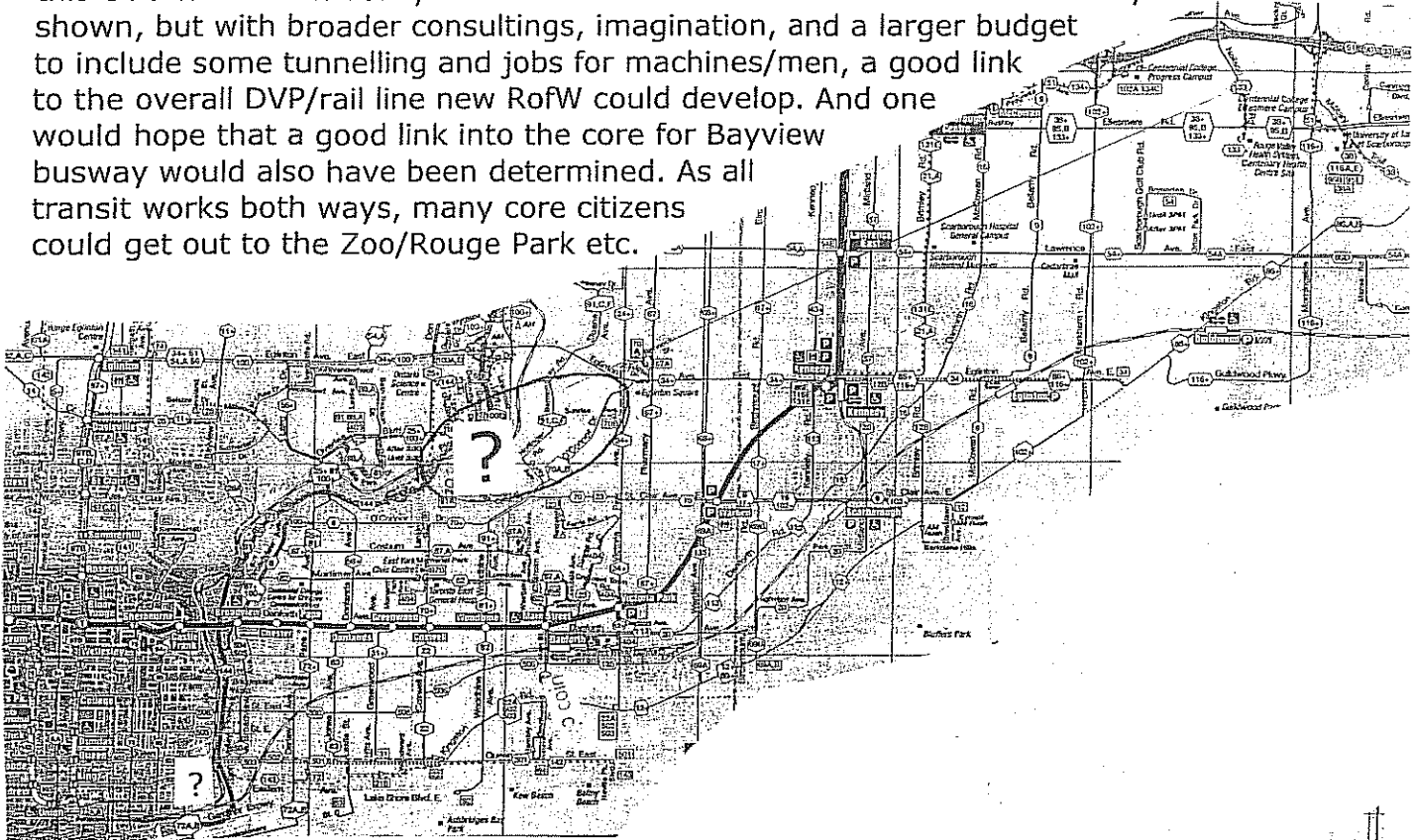
Clear, long corridors like this are exceptional in built up communities in this greenhouse century. Surface transit is also far cheaper than undergrounding. So it may be possible to do 20kms of fast surface RofWay transit for the cost of 1km of subway, and as this corridor is superbly positioned to serve great areas of Scarborough, we should think about it. Connections with the core via the Don and other options follow.

But could this be the real Relief Line, starting with buses and/or LRTs? A key to good transit is redundancy: it's like investments- not doing just one thing.

As the complexities, including the politics, of having something reach all the way into the core, may take longer (and given the longer history of it taking too long to get near-nothing done of real long-term value in Toronto transit, this is valid concern), perhaps starting out near the Zoo, and bringing the corridor to the east, linking up with the subway/GO at Main Station perhaps.

MEDIUM TO LONGER term - Scarborough Transit Corridor linkage to core via DVP and transitway to core.

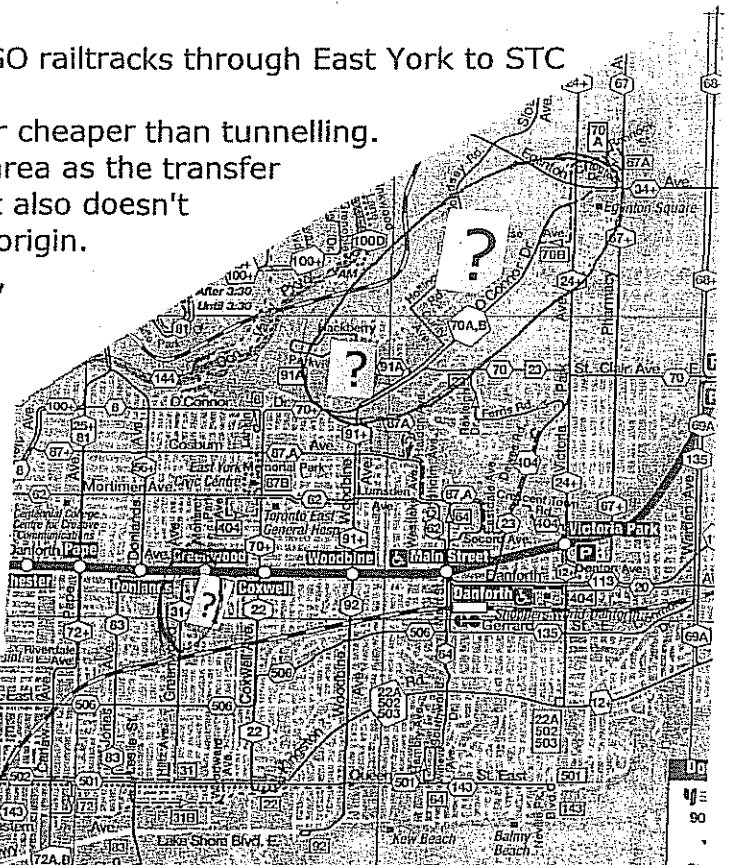
Ensuring connectivity with the Bayview/Don Valley busway by continuing along this STC to the Don Valley area. The exact connection route can't be easily shown, but with broader consultations, imagination, and a larger budget to include some tunnelling and jobs for machines/men, a good link to the overall DVP/rail line new RofW could develop. And one would hope that a good link into the core for Bayview busway would also have been determined. As all transit works both ways, many core citizens could get out to the Zoo/Rouge Park etc.



MEDIUM TO LONGER term - mini DRL via GO railtracks through East York to STC

Again, if surface works as well, it can be far cheaper than tunnelling. "Current" thought for a DRL has the Pape area as the transfer point, but this is too close to the City and it also doesn't enable enough transit to the real points of origin. So if the GO/rail lines become some transit, go along that to the Greenwood area, and then north to Greenwood station: yes, consider tunnelling.

Keep tunnelling on the diagonal to connect with East York Hospital and old EY City Hall ie. a station. Then to the NE again, aligned with O'Connor to get to the Scarborough Transit Corridor. This all could be heavier transit eg. beyond buses.



Please think on this, ask about, talk over, and steal ideas. Thx.

Hamish Wilson