STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED

Mobility Hub Study in the Main Street and Danforth Avenue Area

Date:	July 11, 2016
To:	TTC Board
From:	Chief Executive Officer

Summary

This report, prepared in consultation with City of Toronto Planning and Metrolinx staff, discusses the current status of planning studies related to the 26 locations in Toronto which have been designated as mobility hubs by Metrolinx, and comments more specifically on a requested mobility hub study for the Main-Danforth area.

Mobility hubs are places where different modes of transportation come together seamlessly. Mobility hub studies are led either by Metrolinx -- when Metrolinx is making significant infrastructure investments and/or where it has significant land holdings -- or by City Planning, when municipal issues are more significant. TTC staff participate in these studies, but do not lead or initiate them, because of the broader land-use, development/intensification, and multi (non-TTC)-modal objectives of such studies.

The Main-Danforth area has been identified in Metrolinx's regional transportation plan as a Gateway Hub. This area has a lot of transit service, but the physical separation of the GO rail line and the subway is significant. An improved pedestrian connection would likely be expensive, would still require a long walk, and would likely not be a big enough attraction to offset other deterrents to use of both systems. This question would be explored in any study of the area.

Since mobility hub studies are led by Metrolinx or City Planning, the request to prioritize a study of Main-Danforth was discussed with both groups. City Planning is reporting in the spring of 2016 on a draft terms of reference for a planning study on a stretch of Danforth Avenue, including the Main-Danforth area. Study initiation is anticipated later this year, and will include an examination of public realm improvements. As part of its Regional Express Rail (RER) project, Metrolinx is initiating master planning work for the Danforth GO Station area, including possible connections to Main Street Subway Station, and is meeting with City of Toronto and TTC staff to review the scope and discuss collaboration.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Board:

Forward this report to Councillors Davis and McMahon, to Metrolinx, and to City of Toronto Planning.

Financial Summary

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

Accessibility/Equity Matters

There are no accessibility/equity issues associated with this report.

Decision History

At its meeting on April 29, 2015, the Board received correspondence from Councillor Janet Davis (Ward 31) and Councillor Mary Margaret McMahon (Ward 32) requesting that a Mobility Hub Study be done for the area around Main Street and Danforth Avenue.

http://www.ttc.ca/About_the_TTC/Commission_reports_and_information/Commission_meetings/2015/April_29/Reports/1_2_Councillors_Davis_and_McMahon_Mobility_Hub_Study_request.pdf

The Board directed staff to report back, in consultation with the City of Toronto Planning, on a strategy to prioritize review of mobility hubs within Toronto as identified by Metrolinx.

Issue Background

A Mobility Hub is a place where different modes of transportation come together seamlessly, and where connections between regional and local rapid transit service can be made. Such hubs have, or are planned to have, intensive concentration of employment, living, and shopping activities around a major transit station. Two types of mobility hubs have been identified in Metrolinx's regional transportation plan, *The Big Move*:
1) Anchor Hubs, which are major transit station areas associated with an urban growth centre; and 2) Gateway Hubs, which are major transit station areas that are located at the interchange of two or more current or planned regional rapid transit lines, and are projected to meet a minimum ridership threshold (2031 horizon).

Mobility Hubs are also referenced in Toronto's Official Plan as a means to help focus growth in compact, strategic locations where good transportation connectivity exists or is planned. The Official Plan supports a system of Mobility Hubs at key intersections in the regional rapid transit network to provide travellers with enhanced mobility choices and create focal points for higher density development.

The correspondence from Councillors Davis and McMahon indicates that a mobility hub study of the Main-Danforth area would be useful because this location has been recently

included in a fare integration pilot project between TTC and GO Transit, and they would like to see an improved connection between TTC and GO. To follow-up on the possibility of such a study, TTC staff consulted with Metrolinx and City Planning staff.

Comments

The Main-Danforth area has been identified by Metrolinx as a Gateway Hub, and includes the Danforth GO Station on the Lakeshore East GO line, and the TTC Main Street subway station on Line 2, which also includes one streetcar line, and seven bus routes. *The Big Move* says that this hub is planned to eventually integrate Express Rail, rapid transit, and local transit service.

Metrolinx's profile of the Main-Danforth Mobility Hub area includes some interesting characteristics. The hub area has a significantly-higher population density than the average for the GTHA, a significantly-higher job density, a slightly-lower average household income, and a lower-than-average level of car ownership. The mode split for people who start their morning commute from this area is almost even between transit and driving. No dedicated parking is provided for the GO Station, so 80% of the people who use Danforth GO Station access it by walking, while 6% come by local transit. Approximately 500-600 people use GO trains at Danforth Station during the morning and afternoon peak periods. The subway at Main Street Station is used by about 6,400 people in the morning peak period, and about 8,800 in the afternoon peak period.

A deficiency sometimes cited regarding this mobility hub is the physical separation of the Danforth GO Station and the TTC Main Street Station. The subway station is located north of Danforth Avenue, while the GO Station is south of it. Signage is provided at the subway station directing passengers to the GO station, and indicating estimated walking time. There is also an accessible ramp from the Main Street overpass down to the GO station. Nevertheless, patrons must use the public sidewalk on Main Street to travel between the two stations, which is a walking distance of approximately 330 metres in non-weather-protected conditions. For comparison, the underground pedestrian tunnel between Spadina Station on Lines 1 and 2 is approximately 140m long, and the recently-completed tunnel under the Western Channel to the Billy Bishop Airport is 240m long. To overcome this physical separation at Main-Danforth would require a dedicated pedestrian connection/tunnel which would likely be costly. There are other variables which also affect the attractiveness of transferring between TTC and GO at this location, including fares, the relative frequency of service, and the resulting overall travel time. The Main-Danforth area currently has an extremely-high level of transit service, and it is unclear whether providing a weather-protected, but still very long, pedestrian connection would bring about a significant increase in customers choosing to use both TTC and GO services, both of which provide access to the same primary destination (downtown). Whether there are less-expensive solutions that could make transfers more attractive, such as better signage and public realm improvements, will be considered in upcoming studies on the Main-Danforth area by both Metrolinx and City Planning.

Metrolinx's *Big Move* identifies 51 mobility hubs in the GTHA, 26 of which are within the City of Toronto. With regard to conducting studies on any of these locations,

Metrolinx states that their priority is at locations where they are investing significantly in infrastructure and/or have considerable land holdings, and where a mobility hub study would be helpful in designing the station facilities and planning for transit-oriented development in the context of the surrounding station area (e.g. Kennedy, Kipling).

In terms of upcoming work, it is expected that Metrolinx will do planning at mobility hubs and other GO Station areas which are part of Regional Express Rail and/or funded LRT projects. Metrolinx is continuing work on the RER program to determine and prioritize station and mobility hub planning needs in the coming years, and is initiating master planning work for the Danforth GO Station area. The study will consider the connections to Main Street Subway Station, in collaboration with City Planning and TTC staff.

In Toronto, the City Planning Division is responsible for leading area-based city-building studies, which include areas identified as mobility hubs. The term "city-building study" captures a range of study types such as area studies, precinct studies, Regeneration Area studies, and Avenue studies. City Planning prioritizes their work on these studies based on the following 5 criteria: 1) when detailed implementation guidance is needed in areas where growth activity correlates with the Official Plan vision and priorities; 2) where and when significant public reinvestment is available; 3) where changes are occurring that indicate a policy gap in the Official Plan, or where monitoring of change is required to assess the impact of a policy; 4) when mandated reviews are required (e.g. 5-year Official Plan reviews) or where legislative changes affect an existing policy framework; and 5) when City Council defines key priorities that require planning study/advice to inform Council's decision-making process. TTC staff participate in these studies if there are aspects which are important to the TTC, such as transit operations in the hub area, potential to increase ridership, the quality of connections/transfers, and the overall transit customer experience. Fare integration is an issue wherever connections between different transit systems are involved.

City Planning has completed studies for some mobility hubs, and plans to do others as part of ongoing work. Table 1 lists the 26 mobility hubs in Toronto along with the current status of related studies. Although a formal mobility hub study at Main-Danforth is currently not included in the work program, City Planning will be reporting in the spring of 2016 on a draft terms of reference for a planning study on a stretch of Danforth Avenue, including the Main-Danforth area. This multi-phased study will cover an area focused along Danforth Avenue that is larger than a typical mobility hub study. The study is anticipated to be started later this year and will include an examination of various city-building components, including public realm improvements.

In summary, mobility hub studies are led by either Metrolinx or City Planning. The request for a study of the Main-Danforth hub area was discussed with both Metrolinx and City Planning. Both agencies are expecting to do studies of the area, with Metrolinx focusing on station planning, and City Planning focusing on city-building elements in a larger study area, both in collaboration with each other and TTC.

Contact

Jacqueline Darwood
Head – Strategy and Service Planning
416-393-4460
Jacqueline.darwood@ttc.ca

Attachments

Table 1: Status of Mobility Hub and Related Studies in Toronto

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Mobility Hub Location	Study Status (Lead Agency), Year
Kipling	Completed (Metrolinx, City Planning), 2015
Jane-Bloor	None
Dundas West-Bloor	Completed (Metrolinx), 2011 Avenue Study (City Planning), 2009
St. George	TOcore (City Planning), Ongoing
Yonge-Bloor	Secondary Plan Review (City Planning), 2016 TOcore (City Planning), Ongoing
Pape	None
Main-Danforth	Danforth GO Station master planning study (Metrolinx) Danforth Avenue planning study (City Planning), both to be initiated in 2016
Kennedy	Completed (Metrolinx), 2014
Scarborough Centre	Secondary Plan (City Planning), Ongoing
York University-Steeles West	York U Secondary Plan (City Planning), 2009
Jane-Finch	Completed Finch West LRT Corridor Study (City Planning), 2015, identifying this area for study in the near future (estimated to begin in 2018)
Finch West	Keele/Finch Study (City Planning), initiated 2016
Jane-Eglinton	None
Eglinton-Mt. Dennis	Completed (Metrolinx), 2013 Completed Community/Cultural Hub Study (City Planning), 2015
Eglinton West	Studied as part of Eglinton Connects (City Planning), 2014
Osgoode	TOcore (City Planning), Ongoing
Union	TOcore (City Planning), Ongoing
Queen	TOcore (City Planning), Ongoing
Yonge-Eglinton	Secondary Plan Review Phase 1 (City Planning), 2016
Yonge-Sheppard	Within North York Centre Secondary Plan
North York Centre	Within North York Centre Secondary Plan
Finch	Completed North Yonge Secondary Plan (City Planning) 2014
Steeles	Completed North Yonge Secondary Plan (City Planning), 2014
Don Mills-Steeles	None
Don Mills-Sheppard	Within Sheppard East Subway Corridor Secondary Plan
Don Mills-Eglinton	Studied as part of Eglinton Connects (City Planning), 2014 Focus Area Review Phase 1 (City Planning), 2016