

RELIEF LINE



Relief Line Project Assessment Phase 4 Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) Meeting #3

Monday, February 22, 2016 | 6:00 – 8:00 pm
Church of the Holy Trinity | 19 Trinity Square

Meeting Summary

Participants

Craig Nichol	Advisory Committee on Accessible Transit
Rory Macleod	Cadillac Fairview
Tricia Wood	CodeRedTO
Ole Calderone	Corktown Residents and Business Association
Berni Campbell	Degrassi/Wardell Neighbourhood Group
Evan M. Weinberg	Financial District BIA
Derek Goring	First Gulf
Mark Nesbitt	George Brown College
Keith Veira	Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association
Marcus Bowman	Metrolinx
Nithya Vijayakumar	Pembina Institute
Al Smith	St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA
Lorrie Naylor	St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA
Gilles Durot	The Pocket
John Kiru	Toronto Association of Business Improvement Areas
Joseph Ruscitti	Toronto Catholic District School Board
Tomasz Oharzewsk	Toronto Catholic District School Board
Jessica Mustachi	Toronto Women's City Alliance
Louis Mark	The Relief Line Alliance
Michael Niezdoda	The Relief Line Alliance
C. Myles Stickend	TTC Riders
Richard Joy	Urban Land Institute - Toronto
Amin Ali	Toronto City Youth Council
Lana MacInnes	Degrassi/Wardell Neighbourhood Group
Suhail Barot	TTC Riders
Michael Brewer	Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association
Juan Gomez	
Michael Brewer	

Project Staff

Stella Gustavson	Program Manager, Transit Implementation Unit
Paul Millett	Chief Project Engineer, Engineering, Construction and Expansion Section, TTC
Hans Riekkö	Transit Implementation Unit
Charissa Iogna	Transit Implementation Unit
Michael Hain	Transit Implementation Unit
Kristin Olson	Transit Implementation Unit
Mike Logan	Transit Implementation Unit
David Cooper	Transit Implementation Unit
Nishanthan Balasubramaniam	Transit Implementation Unit
David Brutto	Transportation Planning

Project Consultant Team

Sheldon Frankel	HDR
Nick Shaw	HDR
Jean-Pierre Veilleux	Argyle
Alissa Liotti	Argyle
Tasneem Dasoo	Argyle
Jim Faught	LURA
Leah Winter	LURA
Lily D'Souza	LURA
Niki Angelis	LURA

Also Invited (Meeting minutes will be circulated)

519 Church Street Community Centre	GreekTown on the Danforth BIA
BILD GTA	Kempton Howard Community Association
Bloor-East Neighbourhood Association	Leslieville BIA
Bloor-Yorkville BIA	Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change
Cabbagetown South Residents' Association	Oxford Properties
Cadillac Fairview	Regent Park Community Health Centre
Church of the Holy Trinity	Riverside District BIA
Confederation of Resident and Ratepayer Associations in Toronto	Ryerson University
Danforth East Community Association	Social Planning Toronto
Danforth Mosaic BIA	South Riverdale Community Health Centre
Distillery Historic District	St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
Downtown Yonge BIA	The Danforth BIA
Eastview Community Centre	Toronto Centre for Active Transportation
Evergreen	Toronto Region Board of Trade
Garden District Residents' Association	Transport Action Ontario
Gerrard East Community Organization	Woodgreen Community Services
Gerrard India Bazaar BIA	Yonge-Bloor-Bay Business Association
Gerrard Square	Yonge Dundas Square
Greater Toronto Civic Action Alliance	
Greek Community of Toronto	

1. Agenda Review, Opening Remarks and Introduction

Charissa Iogna, Transportation Planner, Transit Implementation Unit, City of Toronto, welcomed participants to the third Stakeholder Advisory Group meeting for the Relief Line Project Assessment. The purpose of the meeting was to report on the results of the corridor evaluation process and seek input on potential alignments. Ms. Iogna provided an overview of the meeting agenda and facilitated a round of introductions. Hans Riekko, Senior Transportation Planner, Transit Initiatives, City of Toronto, provided an overview of the corridor evaluation process and results. Sheldon Frankel, Transit Engineering Practice Lead, HDR, introduced the potential alignments being studied for the corridor. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions of clarification as well as provide feedback through small group discussions and a mapping exercise. Approximately 28 participants attended the meeting representing a variety of stakeholder groups.

2. Questions of Clarification

A summary of the Question and Answer period following the presentation is provided below. Questions are noted with **Q**, responses are noted by **A**, and comments are noted by **C**.

Questions of Clarification:

Q. Was a weighting system applied to the corridor evaluation framework? Some of the criteria appear to be more important than others.

A. No, weighting was not used in the evaluation. We used a reasoned argument approach instead (e.g., pros and cons of each corridor).

Q. To clarify, the criteria “Supports Growth” and “Shaping the City” were considered equally with the other criteria?

A. None of the criteria were weighted mathematically in relation to each other. Both these criteria were important factors in the corridor evaluation. All the criteria are about city building and given equal consideration.

Q. Ridership projections released last week estimate that the Yonge University line will still be over capacity despite planned transit improvements. Will these results impact the Relief Line evaluation going forward?

A. The ridership modeling numbers show that the Relief Line and SmartTrack will provide a benefit in terms of alleviating crowding at Yonge and Bloor Station, and on the Yonge University line south of Bloor Station. Taken together, the Relief Line and SmartTrack provide a synergistic effect.

Q. I understand that the Relief Line and SmartTrack are both important, but the ridership results suggest the relief they provide is not sufficient. Will the results influence network planning going forward?

A. The ridership analysis is based on a network modeling approach. Metrolinx completed the Yonge Relief Network Study. There is consideration of extending the Relief Line north of Bloor-Danforth to Eglinton Avenue or even to Sheppard Avenue to provide additional capacity.

Q. Are the current efforts to reduce crowding sufficient in the near term?

A. The ridership modeling results include different scenarios. We are still in the process of studying the Relief Line and SmartTrack. There are still some options that have to be decided in both studies. There can be sufficient relief to the Yonge University line; it depends on the specifics of those options.

Q. Options B1 to D2 which travel through the Unilever site scored lower on the criterion for “Supporting Growth”. Is the intent to support growth in built up areas as opposed to those that have not been developed?

A. The evaluation process takes into account the plans for growth as set out in the Official Plan, as well as new opportunities for significant growth such as the case of the Unilever site.

Q. If that is the case, then why do options B2 and D2, which both pass through the Unilever site have different scores?

A. A detailed analysis was undertaken using a 500m buffer around each potential station area to get quantitative information for each corridor in terms of current and future population and employment. Option D2 would be closer to the centre of the financial district so saw somewhat stronger results.

C. I understand the criteria are not weighted, but it appears that the results for the “Supports Growth” and “Shaping the City” criteria are diluted and weighting them should be considered.

Q. Was revenue from ridership factored in the financial analysis of the “Affordability” criterion?

A. Ridership is a proxy for revenue. We have yet to do any analysis on fare revenue aside from what new ridership would draw. This phase of the study does not include a detailed dollar analysis on revenue. It would be captured by ridership at this level of evaluation.

Q. Are these notional ideas of affordability or did the project team review detailed costs (e.g., net present value)?

A. The level of analysis at the corridor evaluation stage focuses on capital costs (e.g., corridor length, number of stations, river crossings, etc.). We will get into more detail when the potential alignments for the recommended corridor are evaluated.

Q. Is it assumed that there will be a SmartTrack/RER station at the Unilever site?

A. We are coordinating work with Metrolinx to identify a SmartTrack/RER station at the Unilever site.

Q. What kind of land value capture has been considered as part of this evaluation?

A. There has been some consideration as part of the work undertaken for SmartTrack, but not directly for the Relief Line as of yet.

Q. Has the evaluation taken into consideration tunnel boring entry and exit points, and strategies to minimize disruptions to streetcar service?

A. There are a number of options that can be considered. It is too early in the planning and design process to rule out a potential alignment due to construction concerns, or specifics regarding entry and exit points for tunnel boring machines. We will be giving this more detailed consideration as the process moves forward.

Q. How will the Relief Line interface with the streetcar network?

A. We don't see any change with the network in terms of streetcar routes.

Q. Estimated reductions for streetcar volumes were included in the evaluation results for option D, but not option B. Can you explain why?

A. We analyzed projected reductions in streetcar volumes for all the options. The modelling results indicate all the options minimize congestion on the streetcar network. The detailed evaluation contains more information about the results.

Q. Can we get a copy of the analysis used to identify the potential station areas?

A. One of the first things we did in the Relief Line Project Assessment was to seek input on potential station locations by identifying potential anchor points on the Bloor-Danforth Line and within downtown, as well as key activity nodes within the study area. The potential station areas were evaluated and have informed our work to date. Once we evaluate the alignment options and select a preferred alignment, we will be developing conceptual station plans.

C. Creating entrances at both ends of the platform may impact operations down the line (e.g., bunching at the front and back of trains). There needs to be some variation along the alignment.

Q. Were the results of the evaluation weighted?

A. The evaluation criteria were not weighted. We applied a reasoned argument approach to identify the preferred corridor.

C. The SAG did weight the criteria at an earlier SAG meeting.

A. We sought input from stakeholders and the public on which criteria were important; the feedback we received informed the criteria that were used in the evaluation.

Q. There is no station east of Broadview Avenue and west of Pape Avenue, which is a long stretch. Is there a reason for this? How will the station at City Hall interface with the Yonge line?

A. There are longer distances between stations on the Bloor-Danforth Line compared to the Yonge University Line. The more stations that are added to the Relief Line alignment the less this becomes a relief service; it will also increase travel times. Work is continuing to identify appropriate station locations and where entrances will be placed.

Q. How much slower is the alignment that travels between Queen Street and Eastern Avenue?

A. This is part of the next phase of work in evaluated the refined alignments.

Q. Does using the GO/RER corridor allow the alignment to travel further south?

A. This is not something currently being considered.

Q. Will you be using the same criteria to evaluate the potential alignments?

A. The evaluation criteria were identified at an early stage in the study process and are available on the study website (www.reliefline.ca). The criteria are generally the same, but the analysis will become more specific.

Q. Is there an opportunity to weight the criteria going forward? There appears to be an ongoing concern that some criteria are more important than others.

A. The opportunity is there, but there is unlikely to be a consensus on how the criteria should be weighted (e.g., varying opinion about the relative importance of the criteria). We believe it is more effective and defensible to use a reasoned argument approach.

C. There are two potential crossings over the Don River. Is the northern crossing preferred over the southern crossing? Will the crossing influence the alignment and connections to surrounding areas (e.g., future LRT service)?

A. The crossing under the Don River is one of many technical considerations. A more northern crossing could potentially be more cost-effective than a crossing further south due to soil conditions and distance, but there are other factors that need to be considered.

3. Facilitated Small Group Discussion and Mapping Exercise

Participants engaged in small group, facilitated discussions on the potential alignments. Participants were given large maps of the study area with the potential alignments and invited to provide feedback on them and identify potential station entrance locations. A summary of key feedback by participants is provided below:

Table 1:

- *Potential Alignments within the Preferred Corridor:*
 - Overall preference for an alignment on Queen Street.
- *Station Areas:*
 - *Downtown Core:*
 - Consider more than one station in the downtown core; one is not sufficient.
 - Consider subway entrances at University Avenue, Bay Street and Yonge Street.
- *Other Comments:*
 - Concerns expressed about accessibility at stations with skewed platforms; prioritize accessibility at all stations.
 - Ensure there is sufficient spacing between the stations (e.g., 850 m).
 - Ensure stations are designed to manage pedestrian volumes, particularly at interchange stations.

Table 2:

- *Potential Alignments within the Preferred Corridor:*
 - Concern expressed that the proposed alignments do not properly address the full potential for growth (e.g., Unilever site) and city building.
 - Some support was expressed for an alignment further south on Eastern Avenue based on the following reasons: fewer construction impacts compared to Queen Street; more opportunities for intensification and redevelopment; and proximity to the Port Lands and other areas with high redevelopment opportunities.
- *Station Areas:*
 - *West of the Don Valley:*
 - Some preference for a station at Regent Park, which may not be technically compatible with an alignment on Eastern Avenue.
- *Other comments:*
 - The potential to gain funding from developers to offset costs should be explored.
 - There is support for fewer stations and a faster route.
 - Flood protection and construction challenges of a more southerly Don River crossing should be carefully considered.

Table 3:

- *Potential Alignments within the Preferred Corridor:*
 - Preference for the GO/RER corridor alignment that continues onto Queen Street. There was some interest in extending the alignment from the GO/RER corridor further south to Eastern Avenue.
- *Station Areas:*
 - *South from Pape Station:*
 - There is no need for a station at Pape Avenue and Queen Street with the GO/RER alignment.
 - *West of the Don Valley:*
 - A minimum of two stations between the Don River and Church Street should be considered. Preferred locations for the stations are at: Sumach and Queen Streets, and Jarvis and Queen Streets.
 - Do not locate stations on heritage streets (e.g., Bright Street).
 - *Downtown Core*
 - Two stations between Yonge Street and University Avenue are not necessary; the cost cannot be justified. However path connections to the Yonge University Line are needed.
 - There was some disagreement with reference to City Hall as the “psychological centre” of the city; avoiding the use of this language was suggested.
 - The proposed alignment on Richmond Street should not be excluded based only on concerns about constructability around utilities; they will need to be addressed someday.

Table 4:

- *Potential Alignments within the Preferred Corridor:*
 - Overall preference for an alignment on Queen Street.
- *Station Areas:*
 - *South from Pape Station:*
 - Consider a station between Danforth Avenue and Queen Street on Pape Avenue.
 - Do not locate station entrances at only one end of the platform (e.g., Yonge Station).
 - Consider a station in the mall parking lot at Gerrard Square with entrances on both sides of the GO corridor.
 - *East of the Don Valley:*
 - If there is a need to minimize the number of stations, it would make the most sense to eliminate the one at Queen Street and Pape Avenue.
 - A station entrance at Queen Street and Pape Avenue would be ideal for people traveling eastbound on the Queen Streetcar.
 - Queen Street is an ideal location for stations on the east side of the Don River.
 - *West of the Don Valley*
 - Consider stations at Richmond Street and Jarvis or Sherbourne Streets to intersect with bike lanes.
 - Consider station entrances as far south as King Street or near the St. Lawrence Market, where connections to the PATH system are planned.
 - Consider locating stations near Moss Park and Regent Park (i.e., at Sumach and Sherbourne Streets along Queen Street).

- Consider stations at Parliament and Jarvis Streets to provide connections to north-south bus routes.
- A station at River Street could also provide connects to the proposed streetcar route.
- *Downtown Core*
 - A station entrance at Nathan Phillips Square would also provide the opportunity to expand the PATH system near City Hall.
 - General support for a station at Nathan Phillips Square.

4. Wrap Up and Next Steps

The potential alignments presented at the meeting will be evaluated using the defined criteria. SAG and public feedback obtained during the upcoming public meetings will also be considered in the evaluation process. The results of the evaluation of alignments will be the subject of further public and stakeholder consultation in Spring 2016.