



Public Works and Infrastructure Background Guide

Chair: Jacky Lee

Dear Delegates,

The Model City Hall executive team would like to formally welcome you to the Model City Hall 2019 conference and to the public works and infrastructure committee. My name is Jacky Lee and I will be the chair for this committee. I have been involved with MCH for the last four years as a delegate, ambassador, and coordinator. Model City Hall is a federally registered non-profit organization dedicated to encouraging youth involvement in municipal politics and the community. The conference is in its fourth year and is attended by student delegates from all over the Greater Toronto Area.

Public works and infrastructure forms the scaffold of the modern city. Billions of dollars are spent each year to maintain, upgrade, and build new physical networks and facilities that citizens rely on. The TTC, roads and municipal expressways, parks, water treatment facilities, and traffic signals are all part of Toronto's infrastructure that is valued to over \$84 billion.

As the city continues to grow, more money will be invested to improve Toronto's infrastructure inventory. Metrolinx is continuing its construction on the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and there are ongoing plans and assessments for future TTC expansions, including the Finch West LRT, Yonge Subway extension, and downtown relief line. Likewise, Toronto aims to reduce commute times for residents and the committee will introduce you to the various efforts already taken. Finally, more severe storms are expected and the city plans to expand its flood mitigation efforts.

As delegates, you will have the opportunity to voice your opinions and discuss with your peers on how to best solve these complex issues. We encourage delegates to be respectful to their colleagues when listening and debating on the council floor. The resolutions passed in this committee will be forwarded to city hall officials. Once again, thank you for participating in this conference. MCH believes that active discussion and debate can drive change in the community. We hope this conference is an enjoyable experience for all.

Best regards,
Jacky Lee

Topic 1: Toronto Transit Projects

The Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) has many current and ongoing projects. Metrolinx expects construction for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT to be completed by 2021. Moreover, Metrolinx and the Province of Ontario have recruited contractors to build the 18-stop Finch West LRT (Line 6), which will connect the Finch West subway station to Humber College. The Line 2 subway extension to Scarborough Centre is currently in its design stage with a completion date of 2027. Following ridership estimates, the original 3-stop line has been reduced to a one-stop line; eliminating the two proposed stations at Lawrence and Sheppard.

In addition, Metrolinx and the TTC are conducting studies to expand its transit networks. These proposals include:

- A 5-station extension of Line 1 to Richmond Hill Centre, with an additional terminal at Yonge-Steeles
- An Eglinton-East LRT connecting Kennedy Station to the Lakeshore East GO Line and to the University of Toronto Scarborough campus
- An extension of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT west from Mount Dennis, ending at Pearson Airport
- A Sheppard East LRT connecting Don Mills Station to Morningside. The line will intersect with the proposed Eglinton-East LRT
- A downtown subway 'relief' line that connects Osgoode Station on Line 1 with Pape Station on Line 2. This subway line intends to provide commuters with an alternative route downtown, relieving the crowding on Line 1 and Bloor-Yonge station

On May 2, 2019, the Ontario government introduced legislation to upload Toronto's rapid transit projects to the government. Under the bill, the Crown agency, Metrolinx will take ownership of future subway projects. The province has also allocated \$11.2 billion in funding for the Ontario line in the 2019-20 budget, which would extend the southern terminal to Ontario Place and the northern terminal to the Ontario Science Centre. The TTC will maintain the responsibility of operating transit and will keep all revenue from fares.

Finally, the TTC has ordered the new 'Flexity Outlook' streetcar model in 2009 to replace the Canadian Light Rail Vehicle (CLRV) constructed 40 years ago. The new streetcars are manufactured by Bombardier Transportation. Bombardier's delivery of the new streetcars fell behind schedule, prompting the TTC to take legal action against the manufacturer and settle for an undisclosed sum. By the end of 2018, 117 of the 204 streetcars were in service. Furthermore, Metrolinx has signed a contract with Bombardier's competitor, Alstom for 61 light-rail vehicles on the Eglinton Crosstown Line fearing that Bombardier's delivery of the vehicles will be delayed.

Other endeavours taken in the realm of public transit includes improving stations to make them more accessible and the adjustment of streetcar stops to improve commuter safety.

Delegates should consider the priorities of these different routes and identify ways in which the transit map can be improved. Many of the stations are in the design phase and delegates can suggest strategic placement of stations that would provide an efficient commute. Additionally, delegates can pass resolutions to improve existing infrastructure such as TTC vehicles and stations.

Possible discussion questions:

How can the TTC's existing and future rapid transit network be improved for transit commuters? What implications does Bombardier's delayed streetcar delivery have on selecting construction bids for future transit projects?

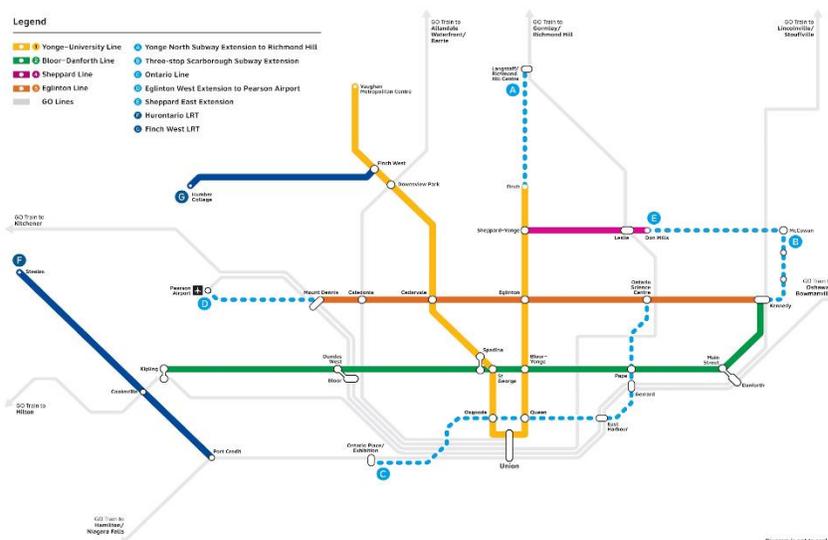


Fig. 1: Proposed transit expansions in the GTA following the announcement of the Ontario line are shown in dashed lines. Construction plans for the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT have already started. Source: Toronto Star

Topic 2: Redesigning Traffic - King Street Pilot and Bike Lanes

The King Street Pilot project was launched on November 12, 2017, with goals of improving transit commute time and capacity along King Street. This is achieved by prohibiting private vehicles from travelling across intersections and on-street parking. The street is served by the 504 King and 514 Cherry routes which comprises the busiest transit route in the city. City Council has recently voted to make this project permanent for the 2.6 kilometre road. This decision was made based on a city staff report that found transit commute times during afternoon peak service decreased by 4-5 minutes and a 16% increase in daily transit ridership; from 72,000 to 84,000.

There has been some opposition to the King Street Pilot from business owners in the area. Some restaurants on King Street argue that sales were down following the pilot as private vehicles were not able to park on the street. Other businesses say that their revenue has remained mostly unchanged. The city argues that the increased ridership will bring in more foot traffic to local businesses.

On the topic of road traffic, dedicated bike lanes have been implemented in Toronto to provide a safer street for cyclists and to encourage people to bike more. The 10-Year Cycling Network Plan was approved by City Council in 2016 to add 525 kilometres of new cycling infrastructure, including bike lanes, trails, and cycling routes. This year, City Council voted unanimously to have the bike lanes on Richmond and Adelaide street remain permanent. Although Toronto continues to move on with studies to add future bike lanes, the plan comes with opposition from residents. The addition of bike lanes would result in fewer on-street parking locations which could impact businesses.

Furthermore, residents are concerned that a decrease in motorist lanes would increase traffic in the area. Last year, city council voted to defer a plan to transform the Yonge Street stretch from Finch to Sheppard Avenue. The plan; recommended by city staff would narrow the street from six lanes to four lanes while adding bicycle lanes and widening the sidewalks. City staff

have also suggested an alternative plan to keep the existing motorist lanes while widening the sidewalks and moving the bike lanes to nearby streets; an idea preferred by the public works committee. The mayor, along with other councillors are concerned about the congestion caused by a narrowed Yonge Street, arguing that automobiles would continue to travel along Yonge Street and affect safety by cutting through neighbourhood roads.

Delegates will consider the different parties that utilize Toronto's roads. As Toronto's population is expected to grow, an efficient road infrastructure will be necessary. Delegates can identify creative solutions to cut commute times, such as the [coordination of traffic signals](#).

Possible discussion questions:

The King Street Pilot was one of Toronto's plan to redirect downtown traffic. Should a similar pilot be launched on other streets? Are there other solutions to cut commute times downtown?

What are the impacts of bike lanes on major streets? How can Toronto find a compromise between motorists and cyclists?



Fig. 2: The King Street Pilot allows streetcars to travel faster by restricting private vehicles in the downtown stretch. Source: CBC

Topic 3: Flood prevention

In 2017, water levels in Lake Ontario reached a record high, prompting the city to close the Toronto Islands to the public from May to the end of July. The floods cost the city \$8.45 million, including loss of revenues from ferry trips. In addition, many businesses and homes on the island were affected. Businesses such as the Centreville Amusement Park and Royal Canadian Yacht Club reported losses to revenue. Their license fee or rent fees were waived for the year if they presented financial statements indicating a loss of net income.

More severe storms are expected to impact the city in the future as a result of climate change. Some trails and boardwalks near the lake have been closed and more localized ponding and flooding has already occurred in parks and beaches this spring. The city's protection efforts include sandbagging shorelines and installing more water pumps near the island. Toronto is also focusing on erosion control, as increased precipitation can affect trails.

Furthermore, the city is updating its sewer system to mitigate flooding in streets and basements. City officials have considered adding a stormwater utility bill to partially fund these projects. The charge is implemented in some municipalities, such as Mississauga. To determine the bill, the city would calculate the area of the property that would produce runoff into sewers.

Given the impacts of severe storms on recreation, housing, and tourism, delegates should consider solutions to control active weather. Resolutions could include erosion prevention in rivers or ways to support residents and businesses on the Toronto Islands.

Possible discussion questions:

How can the city better prepare residents and businesses for flooding in at-risk areas?

What long-term efforts should the city invest in to combat the water levels?



Fig. 3: City crews and residents fill sandbags as they prepare for flooding in the islands.

Source: CP24

Further reading

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