

## Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study

### Public Meeting

December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012

6:30pm – 9:30pm

York Memorial Collegiate, Cafeteria

2690 Eglinton Avenue West

## MEETING SUMMARY

On December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2012, over 89 people participated in a public meeting held in the Mount Dennis community by Metrolinx at York Memorial Collegiate. Participants represented local residents, members of local community groups, as well as project team members, City of Toronto staff and Metrolinx staff. The meeting had two purposes:

- a public consultation for the Eglinton Crosstown Environmental Project Report (EPR) Addendum; and
- a public workshop for the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study (mobility Hubs are major transit station areas that are particularly significant given the level of transit service planned for them and the development potential around them).

This meeting summary reflects only the proceedings of the Mobility Hub Study portion of the meeting. The meeting included a one hour open house for participants to review presentation material and have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with project team members and other City of Toronto and Metrolinx staff on the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study. Following the open house, Nicole Swerhun, SWERHUN Facilitation, welcomed participants and reviewed the evening's agenda. Leslie Woo, Vice President, Policy, Planning & Innovation with Metrolinx then welcomed participants. Three presentations by project team members followed, including presentations by:

- 1) **Jamie Robinson, Director, Community Relations & Communications - Toronto Transit Projects, Metrolinx** who provided an update on the Eglinton Scarborough Crosstown LRT project;
- 2) **Ian Griffiths, Transportation Planner, Metrolinx** who provided an overview of Mount Dennis Projects including the Eglinton Environmental Assessment, the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study, and the Mount Dennis LRT Station Design, as well as an overview of project timelines; and
- 3) **Joe Berridge, Partner, Urban Strategies** provided an overview of the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study, and identified existing conditions and opportunities in the five areas of opportunity identified by the project team in the Mount Dennis.

After the presentations, participants asked questions of clarification and then divided into small group working sessions. The workshop was designed to seek feedback on both existing conditions and opportunities for the future in the five focus areas of opportunity including:

- 1) Eglinton Avenue
- 2) Weston Road
- 3) The Black Creek Business Area
- 4) The Kodak Lands (LRT Station Site)
- 5) Eglinton Avenue and Black Creek Drive (No Frills Site)

Participants worked in groups at stations, each with a group facilitator as well as one assigned note-taker, to identify and discuss existing conditions and opportunities for the future for each of the five focus areas. Each group facilitator then presented a summary of their discussion on behalf of their group during a full

room presentation. This report contains a summary of the feedback presented by each of the groups at the workshop (see Appendix A for the full meeting Agenda).

This report was drafted by Kate Green, Nicole Swerhun, Independent Facilitators for the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study as well as Franca Digiovanni and Ian Griffiths (Metrolinx), and Jed Kilbourn and Craig Lametti (Urban Strategies). If you have any comments on the report, please contact Franca Digiovanni at [franca.digiovanni@metrolinx.com](mailto:franca.digiovanni@metrolinx.com)

Additional details regarding the EA Addendum and timeline:

- A summary of input received on the Eglinton-Scarborough Crosstown LRT EPR Addendum is included in a separate report, also available on the Crosstown website. On the same day, an online consultation launched on The Crosstown website where the display boards were posted along with questions for those who were unable to attend the Public Open House and workshop. The online consultation ran from December 12, 2012 until January 4, 2013.
- Between December 12, 2012 and January 4, 2013, eighteen respondents filled out the online survey on the Crosstown website.
- Between November 29 and December 4, 2012, 12,018 public notices for consultations relating to the West Environmental Assessment Addendum consultation were delivered via Canada Post to properties within an approximately 0.5 km radius of the area between Jane Street & Keele Street.
- Between November 29 and December 6, 2012, newspaper ads were published in the York Guardian and the Metro News Toronto, reaching an estimated audience of 1,343,496. All ads were printed in English.

## QUESTIONS OF CLARIFICATION

The following comments and questions of clarification were shared by participants following the overview presentations. Questions are listed chronologically. Answers, where provided, are included in *italics*.

1. How can the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub be green if the trains going through the neighbourhood are going to be diesel? *This is a long-standing concern in the community that we are aware of.*
2. I am interested in seeing the maintenance storage facility intensified to use the space better. Do we need the extra parking for the LRT trains? Now that the plans have changed, isn't it true that we don't need as much space for the storage facility. Why are we building a maintenance facility to hold LRT trains that are not coming for several years? *The long term plan requires the Maintenance & Storage Facility at Mount Dennis to accommodate more vehicles than will be using it in the immediate term.*
3. Why is the Eglinton LRT stopping at Weston Road and not going all the way to Jane? *Metrolinx is committed to building the LRT all the way to Jane, however west of Weston Road is planned for the next phase of funding. We have not de-committed, it will get built. The problem is that we need to figure out how to pay for the next phase.*
4. The LRT is a major piece of infrastructure, and that means there will be a lot of jobs created from this site. If people in the community are interested in creating local jobs, this is a great initiative.
5. How is your work here being integrated with the work being done by the City of Toronto with Eglinton Connects? *Lorna Day is in charge of the Eglinton Connects program and Metrolinx has been working very closely with her and her team. The improvement of the streetscape along Eglinton is the City's*

*responsibility and we have been working with them. Note added by City staff after the meeting: At this time the streetscape improvements being shown as part of the Mobility Hub Study are not funded.*

6. Why is the LRT no longer going to Jane? *Line is terminating at Mount Dennis because it is a mobility hub so it is a full service station and can route transit from here. The current design preserves for the opportunity to go underground in the future. Also the reality is that the Metrolinx budget fixed and the increased expense of an underground station at Mount Dennis means that there is insufficient budget to have the line extend to Jane in Phase 1. .*
7. Who is responsible for refurbishing the Kodak building? What about the maintenance of the building? *Metrolinx owns the building and will be Metrolinx's responsibility to maintain it.*

## **FEEDBACK RECEIVED**

Feedback in this report is organized into five focus areas that were presented at the meeting including Eglinton Avenue; Weston Road; The Black Creek Business Area; The Kodak Lands (LRT Station Site); Eglinton Avenue and Black Creek Drive (No Frills Site). For each of the focus areas, participants provided their ideas and suggestions on both existing conditions (at most stations) and opportunities (at all stations).

### **1) Feedback on Eglinton Avenue**

#### Opportunities for the Future

#### **1. Design the new LRT station as a destination and a link that helps connect the community.**

Suggestions included:

- help reduce barriers; the new station should be open for pedestrians to walk through without paying a fare;
- make sure the station is designed to be open and airy, using glass rather than concrete to increase visibility along Eglinton; and
- some participants also suggested including a day care in the new station to replace the one being removed at Weston Rd. and Eglinton Ave.

#### **2. Improve lighting in the underpass on Eglinton Ave. to make a unique and “funky” space.** Suggestions included:

- some participants said that they liked the lighting in the new Queen St. and Dufferin Ave. underpass and suggest a similar approach to the Eglinton Ave. underpass;
- participants also said that they did not want there to be a large wall at the underpass and suggested creating a planted slope similar to the Queen St. and Dufferin Ave. underpass; and
- another suggestion to improve the space was add a small amount of retail or active space in the underpass.

#### **3. Retain the parks and green setting but look for new uses that could be added to the parks to turn them into bigger destinations.**

- most participants thought it was important to maintain and improve the existing parks along Black Creek Drive and extend the park setting where possible;
- participants suggested adding new uses that could draw people in such as a skate board park to Coronation Park or farmers market in front of the new community centre; and
- one participant thought it might make sense to add new buildings to the parks so that there could be active uses on both sides of the street.

- 4. Add separated bike lanes that connect to the transit station area or a multi-use pathway.** There was strong support among participants for separated bike lanes. Participants suggestions included:
- ensuring that new bike lanes were separated from traffic to help improve pedestrian and cyclist safety;
  - using the removal of dedicated turning lanes and channelized turning lanes (where possible given levels of traffic) to enable the separated bike path to extend east from Jane to the station
  - connecting bike lanes along the north side of Eglinton to bike parking facilities at the Weston Road and Eglinton Avenue entrances to the station;
  - widening the sidewalk under the Eglinton bridge to accommodate bikes; and
  - adding a location to rent bikes.
  - One participant suggested adding a multi-use pathway to the elevated portion of the LRT alignment (like the high-line in New York)
- 5. Focussing streetscape improvements along Eglinton Avenue between Weston Road and Black Creek Drive in order to strengthen the connection between the Mount Dennis Community and the station with the new Community Centre.** Suggestions included:
- creating a generous connection between the new station and the new York Community Centre along the north side of Eglinton with lots of street trees, pedestrian lighting and a streetscape design that emphasises the connection;
  - reducing barriers to pedestrian movement wherever possible, and improving lighting and safety on paths along Eglinton; and
  - extending the “green” landscape along Eglinton to connect the parks at Black Creek with the Eglinton Flats using more generous setbacks, street trees, green walls and landscaping
- 6. Some other suggestions on opportunities for Eglinton Ave. included:**
- lowering or improving the wall between Weston Road and Black Creek Drive;
  - improving the streetscape with lots of lighting and landscaping;
  - having active uses along Eglinton at the No Frills site so that people walking from Mount Dennis of the shops there could stop and get a coffee on their way to the Community Centre
  - One participant suggested creating a traffic loop through the neighbourhood connecting Weston Road to Eglinton to avoid building the intersection; and
  - One participant suggested taking down the houses along Eglinton, west of Weston Road to improve connections between Jane and Mount Dennis Station.
- 7. Several participants were concerned with the additional traffic along Eglinton Avenue that the diversion of Jane Street busses would cause and the additional time that it would take to commute along Jane Street**

## Feedback on Weston Road

### Existing Conditions

1. **Weston Road currently lacks amenities.** Some participants felt that Weston Road would be improved if there was a green grocer and a “place to pick up a loaf of bread”.
2. **The intersection at Weston Road and Eglinton Ave. is currently very challenging** intersection for drivers, pedestrians and cyclists, but is an important connection for the community.

### Opportunities for the Future

1. **Weston Road has its own special character that needs to be refreshed, but not completely changed.** Some Participants said that Weston Road has an old main street feel that could be “refreshed”, but like how it currently has “lots of character” and would like that character to be maintained.
2. **Maximize the space in the LRT station plaza by including a mix of green space, hard surfaces, and market stalls that function as a community hub of activity and gathering place.** Suggestions for the future:
  - some participants also said that they like the “charming” existing Scotiabank building currently on the site, and suggest finding ways to incorporate the building in the station plaza
  - some participants also said that they would like the station plaza to connect to local parks and green space proposed for Eglinton Ave; and
  - some said that the connection from the plaza to the station should be short and attractive.
3. **Some participants said that they feel what goes at the north east corner of Weston Road and Eglinton Ave is very important because it is a key connection to other areas in the community and in the City.** Suggestions:
  - some said that they would like the proposed station plaza to connect well with this intersection;
  - One suggestion was to “tame the intersection” by extending the plaza or adding bicycle traffic lights and bike lanes; and
  - One participant also suggested adding a library to this intersection to help make the intersection more of a community focal point.
4. **Provide more parking and vehicle drop-off areas.** Participants suggested looking for places to locate underground parking for drivers, so they can have places to park when shopping in the area. Some participants also said that additional parking will be needed in the future when the LRT station is built because there will be more people being picked up and dropped off in vehicles in the neighbourhood, and will need places to park their cars.

## Feedback on the Black Creek Business Area

### Existing Conditions

1. Some participants said that there is little employment currently in the area, but feel that the area is important to maintain as employment lands.
2. Some participants were concerned about selling land too soon before it reaches its highest value.
3. Concerned about how land will be used if it is contaminated.

### Opportunities for the Future

1. **Very important to maintain this space as an industrial area.** Some participants were concerned that noise from industry may be an issue for neighbours and suggested looking for ways to reduce the level of noise to limit complaints from neighbours.
2. **Increase amenities and public space in the area of the maintenance facility.** Participants suggested adding a bike lock-up station where people can park their bikes and get on the Eglinton LRT. Another suggestion was to provide more parking in the area by using space above the rail lines or above buildings.
3. **Plenty of potential on Industry St., Ray Ave., and in the Black Creek Business Area to encourage more pedestrian activity.** Suggestions:
  - one participant suggested adding coffee shops and restaurants to encourage people to walk to the Black Creek Business Area;
  - others suggested adding small industry shops who may be less likely to complain about noise from the local industry, or adding a recreation centre; and
  - some participants also said they would like to see more development on the south side of the Black Creek Business Area.
4. **Improve the streetscape to encourage people to use the space in the Black Creek Business area, and also to provide an incentive to potential investors.** Suggestions:
  - some participants said that they would like to see improvements to the streetscape along Industry St. and Eglinton Ave, and felt that unless the streetscape was upgraded, people may not use the space
  - some participants also felt that making the streets such as Bertal Road more attractive would help to enhance and preserve the employment area; and
  - another suggestion was to make the maintenance facility slightly smaller in order to make space for some additional retail space.
5. **Improve connectivity throughout the area.** Some participants felt that there needs to be better connectivity through the Black Creek business area. One suggestion was to add bike lanes or multi-use paths throughout the corridor to connect the Black Creek Business Area with local parks for both cyclists and pedestrians.
6. **Find creative ways to animate the site while maintaining the industrial land use.** One suggestion to help animate the site was to let people watch trains being washed and maintained through a type of display window.

## Feedback on the Kodak Lands (LRT Station Site)

### Opportunities for the Future

- 1. Participants had several concerns about the proposed maintenance storage facility including its size, location, and potential noise impacts.** Suggestions:
  - some participants said that they felt the storage facility does not properly address Eglinton Avenue and that more attention should be given to looking at how the area could be enlivened and the effect of the rail infrastructure mitigated;
  - several others said that they were concerned about noise from vehicles turning into the storage facility; and
  - some participants suggested that sound barrier design be brought to the public for review and that the trees are preserved as noise mitigation measures and that blank walls be either minimized or covered.
- 2. Maintaining the Kodak building is very important.** Many participants said that they would like the Kodak building maintained and used as a community space. One of the project team members noted that a market analysis showed difficulty attracting users to this building. It was suggested that the Kodak building be made into a public space and access to the building should be made without having to pay a fare. One suggestion from the project team to workshop participants was that the front of the building be used as office space while the back of the building serves as a type of “airy station entrance”.
- 3. Mixed opinion on whether or not to add additional parking to the site.** Some participants felt that additional parking should be considered for the Kodak Lands. Others were concerned that adding more parking would have a “deadening” effect on the area and do not want additional parking.
- 4. Participants had some concerns about the proposed LRT station including safety at night outside of the station and the potential for it to be overcrowded.** Some participants said they were concerned that the entrance to the station site might be very isolated at night and suggested that lighting options for outside of the station be studied carefully to maximize safety.
- 5. Design the station to act as a connection within the neighbourhood.** Many participants said they felt the station should be a public space and the fare-paid area should not obstruct connections through the neighbourhood. Some participants also said that they would like the station to be LEED certified and as environmentally friendly as possible.
- 6. Concern from some about the proximity between the Kiss N’ Ride and the bus loop.** Note that during the meeting a project team member said that all elements would tie together in the station mezzanine and that at-grade pedestrian crossing of the bus loop was considered operationally dangerous. There was also a comment from a participant that the bus-loop, although temporary, may be there for many years and should be well designed.
- 7. One participant asked if the existing stormwater pond would be relocated.** A member of the project team noted that it is likely that the pond can be moved to the east end of the site where it has a better chance of acting as habitat.

## Other feedback

1. **Several participants said they are supportive of having a new road or path through the Kodak Lands site.**
2. **One participant asked if the bus terminal could be placed in the area needed for future LRV capacity.** Note that during the meeting a project team member said that they felt this space would be better used to create a new street through the site.

## **Eglinton Avenue and Black Creek Drive (No Frills Site)**

### Opportunities for the Future

1. **Very important to improve the crossing at Black Creek Dr. and Eglinton Ave. to connect the community centre to the LRT station.** Many participants said they feel this crossing is currently very unsafe and would like to see it improved.
2. **Improve the edge of the site along Black Creek Dr.** Some participants said that the sidewalk is currently very narrow and the site needs to have a better relationship to the new community centre. Another suggestion was to include some public space on the site since it is near to the subway as well.
3. **Maintain housing affordability.** Some participants said that the area should focus on maintaining affordability. Some participants noted that it is currently an affordable place to live and would like to see a mix of housing types included in new development in the future to encourage a mix of income types.
4. **Keep the grocery store because it is very important for the neighbourhood but also include a mix of land uses on the site.** Some participants felt that adding diversity in the land uses on the site such as retail at street level with residential above would help “add life to the street”, but noted that they would like a grocery store to remain.
5. **Ensure that new retail does not take away from existing retail on Weston Road.** Many participants liked the idea of adding additional land uses to the site, and some noted that they did not want those additional uses to negatively impact existing local business.
6. **Participants shared a number of ideas on ways to encourage active transportation in the area including:**
  - building pedestrian bridges across Eglinton Ave. and Black Creek Dr. to improve pedestrian safety and access to parks;
  - improving pedestrian safety at the intersection of Black Creek Dr. and Eglinton Ave. because current sidewalks are not sufficient; and
  - considering how bikes will enter the LRT station.
7. **Important to work closely with the City to ensure the Mobility Hub plan is implemented.** Several participants said that they understand that some of the land being planned for through the Mobility Hub Study is privately owned, and would like to work closely with the City to ensure the plan is implemented through City processes.

## **8. Other Ideas**

- Desire for a station at Jane
- Desire for Metrolinx to pay for the streetscape between stations and west to Weston Road
- Want to know how privately owned land will follow plans created through this study.

## **APPENDIX A. MEETING AGENDA**

### **Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study**

#### **Public Meeting**

West EA Amendment Meeting and Mount Dennis Mobility Hub

York Memorial Collegiate, Cafeteria

2690 Eglinton Avenue West (Corner of Keele and Eglinton)

**6:30 pm**    **Review Display Boards (display boards will also be available throughout the meeting)**

**7:30**        **Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review**  
Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, SWERHUN Facilitation

**7:40**        **Overview Presentations**  
Jamie Robinson, Metrolinx  
Joe Berridge, Urban Strategies

Areas of opportunity:

1. Eglinton Avenue
2. Weston Road
3. The Black Creek Business Area
4. The Kodak Lands (Station Site)
5. Eglinton Avenue and Black Creek Drive (No Frills Site)

*Questions of clarification*

**8:15**        **Discussion**

Focus Questions:

For each of the five areas, help us understand:

1. Existing conditions; and
2. Opportunities for the future.

**9:25**        **Next Steps**  
Facilitator/Metrolinx

**9:30**        **Adjourn**