

Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study

Public Meeting

April 10, 2013

6:30pm – 9:00pm

York Memorial Collegiate, Cafeteria

2690 Eglinton Avenue West

MEETING SUMMARY

On April 10th, 2013, over 100 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:

1. Share what we heard at the public meeting on December 12, 2012; and
2. Present and get feedback on:
 - Refined concepts for the areas surrounding the new station that will form the basis of the Mobility Hub Plan (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); and
 - Suggested station design directions (to inform tender documents)

The meeting included a thirty minute open house for participants to review display boards and have an opportunity to speak one-on-one with Metrolinx staff and their consultants working on the Mount Dennis Mobility Hub Study. Following the open house, Nicole Swerhun, SWERHUN Facilitation, welcomed participants and reviewed the evening's agenda (attached). Jamie Robinson and Ian Griffiths provided an update and overview of the project on behalf of Metrolinx, followed by a presentation from Craig Lametti (Urban Strategies)

After the presentations, participants asked questions of clarification. Following the questions of clarification, participants divided into small group working sessions. The working sessions were designed to seek feedback on what participants liked or didn't like, and any suggested refinements for the following five focus areas:

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

Participants worked in groups at stations, each with a group facilitator as well as one assigned note-taker, to identify and discuss what they liked, didn't like and any suggested refinements for each of the five focus areas. This report was drafted by Magdalena Vokac and 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.

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. Why was there so little time spent in the presentation on the Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF)? Is there any more information you can provide? *The Maintenance and Storage Facility at this location has been presented in several public consultations for the Environmental Project Report (EPR) Addendum. This site was selected because it was the best candidate site (appropriate in size, close to Eglinton and a number of other criteria).*
2. Is there a plan for commuter parking? *The decision was made not to provide commuter parking at this location.*
3. I have a number of concerns:
 - Mt. Dennis is losing its second daycare, could Metrolinx consider moving it to the Kodak building?
 - Ensure the MSF roof allows for solar panels in the building
 - A study should be done to support the statement that development on the No Frills won't impact the businesses on Weston Road
 - There's a double standard with parking (it's underground at No Frills but at grade on the MSF site)
 - No information about the Environmental Assessment was provided
 - There was no discussion about jobs
4. Is there a way to release lands on the MSF site for other uses? I'm not sure Metrolinx has looked hard enough. *The Mobility Hub Study looked extensively at ways of accommodating other uses or future development on the Kodak Lands, given the constraints and operational requirements of the Maintenance and Storage Facility. The Kodak Building itself was identified as the main short-term opportunity for other uses within the Kodak Lands. In the long term, at the point when the LRT is extended west beyond Mount Dennis, the bus terminal site was identified as another major site for future development. The design of the station infrastructure will support the redevelopment of this site.*
5. I'm worried about what happens when Infrastructure Ontario takes over the design and build of the process. Your slide said that there would be no community consultation for a year – this could lead to big problems. We would like to have some more input into the future of the site. *During that year, three teams will be shortlisted and one will be chosen as the successful proponent. The consultation blackout is not intended to develop the project design, but is focused instead on finding the best qualified applicant.*
6. Why are you building for 162 vehicles right away when there is only enough money in the budget for 97? *Metrolinx wants to be ready to expand when the need arises and we feel it is most prudent to build it now.*
7. Is there a way to look at interim uses in the 10 years it will take before the whole MSF site is fully in use? We would like consideration of innovation areas and ways to partner with different institutions to animate the area faster.

8. It is amazing to watch the dreams for the area, the next generation will be able to enjoy it and it looks like it will be a marvellous place to live. The city of York was missing two things: a hotel and a McDonalds.

FEEDBACK RECEIVED

Feedback in this report is organized into five focus areas that were presented at the meeting including The Kodak Lands (LRT Station Site); Eglinton Avenue; Weston Road; The Black Creek Triangle (No Frills Site); and The Black Creek Business Area. For each of the focus areas, participants expressed what they liked, did not like, and any suggested refinements to the concepts presented.

1. The Kodak Lands (LRT Station Site)

Participant Concerns

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

Opportunities for the Future

- **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".
- **UP Express:** Many participants believe a stop for the UPEXpress should be at the new Mount Dennis station.
- **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.

- **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.
- **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

- **Several participants said they are supportive of having a new road or path through the Kodak Lands site.**
- **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.
- **Public art:** Participants would prefer public art over advertisements be incorporated into the station and surrounding area
- **Land value capture:** Should use land value capture above the stations to pay for transit.

2. Eglinton Avenue

Participant Concerns

- **Safety:** Primary concern was with safety and pedestrian experience on the north side of Eglinton Ave between Weston Road and Black Creek Drive. Underpass needs to be well lit and safe.
- **Green wall in the winter:** Concern was expressed about how the proposed green retaining wall would be sustained/maintained over the winter – precedent is not from Toronto and it was unclear how this would look in our climate.
- **Local school capacity:** One participant was concerned about the local school capacity if density is increased in the community – was reassured to know that any new development would be subject to the municipal development approval process, which would examine existing Communities and Facilities and determine if there was a local need for new social infrastructure.

Suggested Refinements

- **Retail along Eglinton:**
 - Participants would like to see retail along the north side of Eglinton
 - There was significant discussion about the constraints on the development of retail due to the alignment of the LRT tracks and market conditions not supportive of new development on a compromised site
 - With careful explanation of the above constraints, participants suggested possible marketplace/kiosks – participants were encouraged to approach City of Toronto Economic Development to see if this would be feasible
 - Kiosks/barbershops and craft markets could be located under the overpass

- **Incorporate art:** Participants asked about the incorporation of art into the station and retaining wall – suggestion was made that the retaining wall could be both ‘green’ and artistic. Participants agreed that the new station must incorporate art, NOT advertisements
- **Safety:**
 - Intersections should be made as safe as possible for bikes and people. One participant suggested that underpasses or overpasses for pedestrians, particularly at Black Creek Drive, would provide a safe crossing of the intersection
 - Secondary entrance should be designed with as much visibility as possible – maximize available light and allow people to see the LRVs from the sidewalk along Eglinton
- **Connections:**
 - Participants were interested in the plans for Keelestone park, particularly how it provides a safe connection to the communities to the east – currently, the park is the main connection between the easterly communities and the Eglinton/Weston intersection and will likely be the main route residents take to access the station
 - Intersections must be made as safe as possible for bikes and pedestrians– one participant suggested underpasses or overpasses at the Jane/Eglinton and Black Creek Drive/Eglinton intersections. Although consensus wasn’t reached on the nature of the connection, it was understood that the intersections must be safe for cyclists and pedestrians (particularly because of the new community centre
 - One participant suggested that the proposed underground connection at Barr Ave could provide connectivity for the community during construction of the station area
- **Transit:** Participants were interested in understanding the bus routes and circulation of buses in/around the station – station design should illustrate this well
- **Accessibility:** All secondary entrances along the Eglinton line should be fully accessible. At the very least, they should be designed to accommodate an elevator at a future date
- **Water feature:** One person wanted a water feature.

3. Weston Road

What Participants Liked

- **Enhanced public realm:** People were very supportive of the idea of an enhanced public realm and were keen to understand how that would come forward – would it be the City or private developers or both
- **Maintain retail:** There was a lot of interest in maintaining retail along Weston Road in whatever form possible, and concern that the small building form will make assembly and redevelopment difficult. Should explore options for interim uses.

Participant Concerns

- **Height:** New development block at near station entrance at Weston Rd and Eglinton - concern that 20 storey building may be a bit of a shock to the neighbourhood
- **Parking:**
 - Must be careful attention to manage parking in the area, challenges posed by the small lots with no parking in this area - this was one of the last areas of the city built with the traditional development pattern, north of here properties are larger with off-street parking
 - Parking is a significant issue around this station as not enough parking could lead to underutilization of the station or excessive parking on residential side streets
 - Any new parking in the area should be structured

- Potential for a shared parking facility on the City owned land between Eglinton and Photography Dr
- **Pedestrian connection at Barr Ave**
 - One local resident noted significant concern about safety and loitering in the area around the proposed pedestrian tunnel at Barr Ave
 - Look at alternatives to creating the entrance here
 - Consider moving the GO Train platforms north (response from Metrolinx: This may put it too close to Weston GO Station for Train operations)
 - Recognize that tunnel must balance access need in a way that improves its chances of ever being built
 - Consider running the tunnel all the way underground to Weston Rd
 - must find a way to prevent cars from dropping off passengers on residential streets around this secondary access
 - The tunnel could dramatically change the nature of the streets by creating too much pedestrian through traffic

Suggestions

- **Extend application of principles:** There was a suggestion that the principles being applied to this section of Weston Road be extended all the way to Jane and St Clair
- **Preserve laneways:** Interest in preserving for laneways and looking at other ways to better handle things like garbage collection
- **Community gathering:** Make sure the Mount Dennis park is a good place for community gathering
- **Scotiabank building:**
 - Too bad that it has to go, but general understanding
 - a park could be a nice use in its place
 - understanding that the building has already been moved once before
- **Streetscaping:** Should pay attention to pedestrian streetscaping along Weston Rd
- **Investment:**
 - Question of how you encourage investment in the community - agreed that this is an important issue for Mt Dennis
 - Difficulty in building consensus on stimulating broader community investment
 - Look at opportunities to incorporate a hotel in the area
- **Connections:**
 - More open streets with more pedestrian connections can lead to better safety
 - Look for opportunity to open up and connect Denarda St and Oxford Dr
 - Would be nice to open up the side streets off of Weston Rd
 - May want to include some thinking about Weston Rd north from the study area to Jane Street

4. Black Creek Triangle (No Frills Site)

What Participants Liked

- **Principles:** Principles for the area were almost universally supported, In favor of adding streets and blocks.
- **Parking underground:** Would like to see parking underground, wouldn't be efficient to have it at surface
- **Tall buildings and the mix of uses:** Buildings should be as tall as possible given the location beside the station and that there are not really any other homes around there that would worry about shadows etc.
- **Keep grocery:** Keeping a grocery store on site is very important.

Participant Concerns

- **Safety:** One participant expressed concern that the secondary entrance on Barr Ave could enhance crime and traffic in the area. There was also concern that without retail on the north side of Eglinton, crime could continue to be an issue and the area would remain uninteresting for pedestrians. The team explained the land area and cost constraints could make retail in this area difficult. Participants indicated that the intersections at Jane St., Weston Rd., and Black Creek must be made safer for pedestrians and cyclists.

Suggested Refinements

- **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.
- **Need convenient drop off:** Though this was not generally for the No Frills site, the importance of making convenient drop-off areas was identified. These perhaps might be comprised of lay-by on Eglinton to the east of Photography drive.
- **Allow for hotel/conference centre:** The street principle should allow for a large use like a hotel and conference centre, if there is interest
- **Land assembly:** One participant thought that more should be done to encourage the assembly of housing around the station area in order to get higher density development

Opportunities for the Future

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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 connect to the LRT station.

5. Black Creek Business Area

Existing Conditions

- Some participants said that there is little employment currently in the area, but feel that the area is important to maintain as employment lands.

Participant Concerns

- Some participants were concerned about selling land too soon before it reaches its highest value.
- Concerned about how land will be used if it is contaminated.

Opportunities for the Future

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.

Other Feedback

- **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.
- **Flood plain:** When development happens, it needs to take into consideration the flood plain.

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)

7:00 Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review
Nicole Swerhun, Facilitator, SWERHUN Facilitation

7:05 Overview Presentations
Jamie Robinson, Metrolinx
Ian Griffiths, Metrolinx
Craig Lametti, Urban Strategies

Questions of clarification

7:45 Discussion
Rotation 1: 7:45-8:15
Rotation 2: 8:15-8:45
Discussion Format:
5 working stations where participants can ask questions and share their thoughts regarding the proposed design concepts presented. Participants are encouraged to visit 2 working stations they are most interested in.

Working Stations

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

9:00 Adjourn