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Scarborough-Malvern Light Rail Transit (LRT)

Updated of November 13, 2009

in 51 languages

Frequently Asked Questions

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General

When is the earliest that construction could start and finish?
At present the Scarborough-Malvern LRT has not received dedicated funding. The very earliest that construction could begin is in 2014, in order to commence revenue service in 2019. However, as of 2009, without acceleration this project is currently scheduled for construction in the Metrolinx "Big Move" regional transportation plan in the future 16 to 25 year period.

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How will Transit City help Toronto?
The Toronto Transit City Light Rail Plan is an exciting initiative that will significantly improve transit across Toronto. The lines will help to revitalize neighbourhoods, spur economic growth, and improve air quality. Seven new Light Rail Transit (LRT) lines will bring reliable, fast, quiet and comfortable transit service to many Toronto neighbourhoods. Transit City has been strongly endorsed by the TTC, the City of Toronto,

and Metrolinx, the regional transportation agency.

The Province of Ontario has announced funding for the construction of the lines and they are incorporated into the Regional Transportation Plan recently proposed by Metrolinx. .

Transit City routes have been selected to reinforce the strong pro-transit focus of the Citys Official Plan. All seven routes will connect with the existing TTC subway system, GO Rail lines and other Transit City routes. They will provide new, direct transit links to areas that are currently far removed from rapid transit, including the north, west, and eastern areas of Toronto.

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How is Light Rail Transit (LRT) superior to existing streetcar service in Toronto?
All-door loading (not just front doors) with automatic fare collection is characteristic of modern LRT lines in North America. Riders will be able to board the light rail vehicles (LRVs) at any one of several doors, speeding up the service and reducing waiting times. Inside, the LRVs will have a bright, contemporary feel, with air conditioning, large windows, comfortable seats, considerable standing space and hand holds. Transit City vehicles will have fully accessible, low floors, so that people with all levels of mobility can use the service with confidence and ease.

LRT service will be reliable. Service wont be affected by traffic delays, because the LRVs will be in their own reserved transit lanes. Traffic signals will give priority to the LRVs. Stops will normally be 400 to 600 metres apart and LRVs will operate frequently, similar to the subway.

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What work has been completed since the last round of Open Houses in 2008?
The publics and stakeholders comments have been reviewed and the preferred LRT alignment and stop location design has been developed. Detailed assessments have been completed to identify potential effects, including environmental, traffic and property impacts. Mitigation measures for the potential impacts have been investigated and incorporated into the preferred LRT alignment and stop location design.

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What specific transit connections is the LRT aiming to address?
The new line will address important transit connections, improving convenience for transit customers by connecting to the TTC's network and to other transit agencies.

1. At Kennedy Station
    a. Bloor-Danforth Subway
    b. Future Eglinton Crosstown LRT
    c. Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT)
    d. GO Transit Stouffville Line
2. Future Sheppard East LRT at Morningside Avenue
3. Proposed Kingston Road transit improvements at Eglinton Avenue / Kingston Road
4. Eglinton GO Station
5. Guildwood GO / VIA Rail Station

The LRT route will provide high quality service to University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and Centennial College Ellesmere Campus and link Kennedy Station with northern Scarborough, in a manner which:

1. is affordable

2. makes transit a much more attractive travel option relative to the private auto
3. supports the Citys growth objectives of a better variety and density of transit-oriented developments

It is recommended that fully accessible, modern, electrically powered light rail vehicles be operated in dedicated lanes, with the only interference from other traffic limited to crossings at intersections.

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Existing Bus Routes

What will happen to existing bus routes in the area after the LRT is built / Which routes will be changed or removed?
A formal analysis of bus routing changes, including public consultation, will be undertaken between 12 and 18 months prior to the opening of the Scarborough Malvern LRT line. For planning purposes, TTC staff has developed a preliminary bus plan in draft form to help guide discussion about LRT facilities and potential bus connections. The preliminary bus plan includes the following changes to the existing bus network related to the Scarborough Malvern LRT:

- 34 Eglinton East bus route replaced with the Scarborough Malvern LRT and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT;
- 86 Scarborough bus route shortened to operate between Sheppard Avenue (Toronto Zoo) and the vicinity of Kingston Road and Eglinton Avenue (via Meadowvale Road, Kingston Road, Morningside Avenue, Guildwood Parkway, and Kingston Road);
- Maintaining a bus route operating from the vicinity of Kingston Road and Lawrence Avenue to Beechgrove Drive (via Lawrence Avenue, Beechgrove Drive, Coronation Drive, Manse Road, and Lawrence Avenue); and
- 116 Morningside bus route replaced south of Sheppard Avenue with the Scarborough Malvern LRT and the shortened 86 Scarborough bus. Bus service would be retained on Morningside Avenue north of Sheppard Avenue (The proposed extension of the Scarborough RT to Malvern Town Centre would result in changes to some local bus routings.)

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Connections and Service

How will a connection be made at Kennedy Station?
It is essential that a convenient and high quality connection be provided at Kennedy Station. A separate study is currently underway at this location to review and evaluate alternatives. Exact details are not available at this time.

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How does the Scarborough-Malvern LRT relate/connect to the proposed extension of the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT)?
A separate study is investigating the Scarborough RT extension, including into the Malvern community. Additional studies have indicated that the communitys transit needs would be better served in the foreseeable future by the SRT extension, rather than the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line. As a result, planning for a potential connection between the Scarborough-Malvern LRT and the Scarborough RT has not been further considered in this study. However, a transfer between the Scarborough-Malvern LRT and SRT will be available at Kennedy Station or via the future Sheppard Avenue East LRT.

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Are both projects (Malvern and SRT) needed north of Sheppard Avenue?
No. The SRT project will serve communities north of Sheppard Avenue East to the Malvern Town Centre. The Scarborough-Malvern LRT line is planned to end at, and connect to the Sheppard East LRT.

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What are the future plans for TTC connections at the Guildwood GO / VIA Rail Station?
A Scarborough-Malvern LRT stop is being provided to serve the station. The possibility of routing the LRT off Kingston Road to more directly serve the GO/VIA station was considered. However, given the projected level of transfers between the Scarborough-Malvern LRT and GO Rail service the dis-benefits to those not transferring would be significant with this option. In addition this connection would negatively impact traffic flow, and increase property requirements and costs.

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Could GO / TTC increase parking spots at Guildwood GO/ VIA Rail Station?
The Transit City initiative does not envision the addition of parking spots, but rather to encourage connection to major transit lines or to local bus services.

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Could the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and Scarborough-Malvern LRT terminate at Guildwood GO / VIA Rail Station instead of Kennedy Station?
Studies have indicated that the major transfers between the various transit lines and their associated travel markets will occur at Kennedy Station, rather than the Guildwood Station.

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How will the Scarborough-Malvern LRT connect with the Kingston Rd transit project?
A major objective is the provision of a direct platform to platform connection with the Kingston Road BRT and with other local bus services, including high quality access to and from the bus terminal site.

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How frequently will vehicles serve the Scarborough-Malvern LRT route? (e.g. every 10 minutes)?
It is envisioned that the Scarborough-Malvern LRT will eventually operate between 3 - 4 minutes during the rush hours along most of the line, with frequent service at all off-peak times. 24 hour transit service will be provided on the corridor.

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Protecting Green Space

How will green spaces and trees (Morningside Park) be protected?
The protection of green spaces and tree planting is a priority. The park paths under the Highland Creek bridge will be maintained. As indicated in the typical Transit City mid-block cross section, street trees are being considered for inclusion where possible to increase the urban tree canopy.

As part of the preliminary engineering phase, a detailed inventory of the existing street trees will be undertaken. In cases where existing trees will be affected, efforts will be made (where possible) to relocate the tree. The TTC, in concert with the City of Toronto, will develop a tree planting

program to identify areas for installation of trees where they are not present today . Any trees lost during the construction of the new LRT lines will be replaced according to the City's forestry policy.

There will be tree removal requirements for the LRT route along the east side of Morningside Avenue approaching Ellesmere Road. Detailed natural environment assessments have been undertaken. The TTC has been working with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to develop workable solutions to the crossing of Highland Creek at Morningside Avenue and to the alignment within the Highland Creek valley. The TRCA has favourably reviewed the proposals submitted to date.

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Traffic

What will be done to minimize traffic infiltration on local roads during construction of the LRT?
A construction traffic management plan will be developed for each line, taking into account the unique needs of local residents and business owners. Typically these plans will provide for a minimum number of available traffic lanes and include adjustments to traffic signal timings, particularly during peak periods.

The feasibility of overnight and weekend work will be considered to avoid impacts during peak traffic periods. Finally, notification of the proposed works will be extensive, using various media outlets and signage (static, and dynamic) so that motorists can make informed decisions about alternate routes.

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What will be done to minimize traffic infiltration on local roads during operation of the LRT?
A traffic monitoring program will be undertaken by the Citys Transportation Services Division. The monitoring program related to local traffic impacts will be an ongoing initiative. It is not possible to be definitive at this time regarding the specific measures (such as turn prohibitions or traffic calming) that would be implemented as a result of the monitoring program, because the exact nature and magnitude of the traffic effects is uncertain. However, Transportation Services staff will work with City Councillors and the community to address any local traffic issues. Should any residents/businesses have existing traffic/operation concerns they are encouraged to contact Transportation Services.

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Has a traffic analysis been undertaken for the study area?
During this preliminary planning study, traffic assessments were undertaken to identify potential LRV and traffic operational issues, and to resolve key problem areas. It is recognized that there are resulting traffic operational impacts, and the TTC is committed to conducting additional detailed studies during the preliminary engineering phase to address site-specific issues.

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How will access to the Highway 401 be affected by the LRT line?
Access to Highway 401 will not be affected. During the preliminary planning study, the TTC worked with the Ministry of Transportation to ensure the maintenance of safe and efficient movement of people and goods along their highway network.

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With the raised right-of-way for the LRT in the middle of the street, how will vehicles make left turns?

Left turns will be permitted where there is a traffic signal. Between traffic signals, where the LRT travels across un-signalized intersections or driveways, left turns will be prohibited. However, there will be separate left turn lanes provided at signalized intersections and motorists will be able to make U turns from these lanes. For example, a motorist on Eglinton Avenue who now makes a left turn into a midblock driveway could, with the LRT in place, simply go past the driveway, to the next signalized intersection, and make a U turn to return to his/her destination.

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Will regular traffic lanes be moved closer to properties?
In general, on Eglinton Avenue and Kingston Road, the traffic lanes will be closer to existing buildings only at signalized intersections, where the cross-section widens out. Along Morningside Avenue between Kingston Road and Highland Creek the traffic lanes will be closer to existing buildings. It should be noted that the City's Official Plan has designated this roadway to be 30m in order to protect for an ultimate 6 lane cross-section. With the implementation of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT line, there is no need for the additional traffic lanes in the future.

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What is going to be done to prevent bottlenecking when Kingston Rd goes from 3 lanes to 2 lanes at Morningside Ave?
In order to maintain lane balance of 2 lanes in each direction along Kingston Road, the outer lanes of Kingston Road east of Morningside Avenue will be converted to bus only lanes. It is recognized that the implementation of the Scarborough-Malvern LRT and the Kingston Road BRT will result in the removal of a traffic lane in each direction, but will increase the overall people moving capacity in the corridor.

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Funding

How will this project be funded?
The Province of Ontario, announced MoveOntario 2020 and Metrolinx announced The Big Move, regional transportation plan. Both announcements included all the Transit City alignments.

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Construction

When is the earliest that construction could start and finish?
At present the Scarborough-Malvern LRT is planned to start construction in 2014, in order to commence revenue service in 2019.

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Alternative Routes

Why was Morningside Avenue chosen over Meadowvale Road north for the LRT?
The Scarborough-Malvern LRT (SMLRT) alignment has been developed to provide continuity to the network, link/grow communities, develop ridership, connect the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and Centennial College Ellesmere Campus, and serve the future needs of the area. Extending the SMLRT further east on Kingston Road and up Meadowvale Road would bypass the above key destinations, and would cost significantly more than the current alignment because of its longer length.

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Are there future plans for LRT on Meadowvale Road north of Sheppard Avenue to serve the Toronto Zoo?

s A study will be undertaken to evaluate a potential LRT connection from the Sheppard East LRT north to the Zoo.

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Noise and Vibration

What will be done to limit noise and vibration from the LRT?
There will be minimal noise and vibration impacts to surrounding residents and businesses resulting from LRT operations. Advances in vehicle and track technology, has improved over existing streetcar infrastructure and produces noise and vibration levels comparable to the operation of a diesel powered city bus. The TTC's track construction standard employs the use of vibration damping resilient fastening technology which reduces ground borne vibration to imperceptible levels outside the public right of way. The LRT operation will not contribute any noise levels above those currently experienced in a busy urban street environment. Noise levels of light rail vehicles operating in the centre of the road are directly comparable to a standard diesel bus.

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Property

Is it anticipated that any properties will be expropriated to accommodate the LRT?
Yes, property will be required for the preferred alignment and stop design. In general, only minor partial takings are required along Eglinton Avenue and Kingston Road. Full and partial property takings are required along Morningside Avenue between Kingston Road and Highland Creek. Significant investigation was conducted to minimize the property requirements, while addressing the communitys traffic and accessibility concerns, and providing a high quality transit stop location.

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Is any erosion anticipated to hillside properties?
Erosion to major embankments adjacent to existing hillside properties will not occur.

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Vehicles and Technology

What type of effect/relationship does an LRT have on our air quality?
Local emissions from the transit vehicles will essentially be eliminated which will benefit the local communities. The power for the LRTs will be provided through the Toronto Hydro network. Power generation is not within the control of the TTC. However, the Ontario Government is actively promoting and advancing cleaner energy options and pollution control measures. The entire Transit City network (120 kilometres of LRT) is projected to have 175 million riders and 92% less emissions than the same amount of passengers in automobiles. The expansion of transit should be viewed as a benefit to the environment as it will give residents across Toronto a competitive alternative to the private auto.

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Why is LRT technology preferred over improving bus service?
Why is LRT technology preferred over improving bus service? LRT is more comfortable for riders, quieter, has no emissions on the street, and is far superior in carrying capacity in a constrained environment such as an arterial roadway. Buses in dedicated lanes, sometimes called BRT, or bus rapid transit, could not easily accommodate 4600 to 5000 people the peak hour demand projected in this corridor in 2031- unless the bus ROW includes by-pass lanes at intersections/stations to allow some buses to operate express and pass local buses stopped to serve

customers. To illustrate the problem, it would require 64 articulated buses per hour to accommodate a peak hour demand of 4800 people. That is a bus approximately every minute. Even with dedicated lanes, buses operating this close together would catch up to one another and bunching would result if some of them dont operate express. Further, if the projected demand is greater than expected, a bus-based system would not be able to adapt easily, while the LRT could by increasing the frequency and/or adding more light rail vehicles.

Given that there are a variety of important objectives for the study corridor in addition to high quality transit such as a comfortable walking environment, attractive streetscaping, bike lanes, etc., there is insufficient width available to allow the construction of a by-pass lane to be added to the transit right of way. In addition, rail transit has proven to be more supportive for public and private investment along their corridors.

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How will the LRT deal with the slope of Morningside Ave., especially during the winter season?
The LRT vehicles can negotiate the 5% grades on Morningside Avenue.

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Ridership

What information is used to forecast the future projected ridership on this LRT?
To forecast the 2031 projected demand, the City and TTC have worked jointly to develop forecasts using the most current information available for future population / employment trends and future road / transit networks. The models used by the City and TTC are based on transportation trends measured through the Transportation for Tomorrow Survey and other monitoring programs

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