

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

**REPORT NO. 6
OF THE REGIONAL
COMMISSIONER OF TRANSPORTATION AND WORKS**

**For Consideration by
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
on November 8, 2001**

**1
TTC RAPID TRANSIT EXPANSION STUDY (RTES) - SCREENING OF OPTIONS**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The TTC Rapid Transit Expansion Study dated August 29, 2001 be endorsed in principle, subject to the comments contained in this report.
2. The earliest possible extension of the Spadina Subway to Steeles Avenue be endorsed.
3. Extension of the Yonge Street Subway be given equal consideration in the subsequent analyses to be undertaken for the Sheppard and Spadina Subway extensions.
4. A north/south corridor linking Markham Centre to the TTC Rapid Transit network be investigated for implementation of transit priority strategies including future rapid transit services.
5. In recognition of the need to engage in inter-regional planning and implementation of transit services, the City of Toronto, the Toronto Transit Commission and GO Transit be requested to work with the Region of York to address mutual planning, policy, funding and implementation issues, including a strategy to engage Federal and Provincial levels of Government.
6. This report be forwarded by the Regional Clerk to the Federal and Provincial Ministers of Transportation, City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) and York Region MPs and MPPs.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to respond to Toronto Transit Commission's (TTC) request to provide comments on their report "Rapid Transit Expansion Study – Screening of Options" (RTES), dated August 29, 2001 and the associated technical report. This report is intended to identify a unified Regional position on rapid transit expansion issues addressed in the TTC report, as well as other related issues.

3. BACKGROUND

The Toronto Transit Commission considered a staff report (*Council Attachment 1*) entitled "Rapid Transit Expansion Study – Screening of Options" (RTES) at its meeting on August 29, 2001.

3.1 Purpose of the TTC Report

According to the report, "The purpose of the RTES is to examine the needs and priorities for expansion of the TTC's rapid transit system in support of the population and employment growth envisioned in the new City of Toronto Official Plan and in recognition of Greater Toronto Area (GTA) development trends. It is important for the TTC to have a clear vision on the need and feasibility of the development and expansion of the rapid transit system in the next ten years and that the Commission be able to articulate a short-term strategy for expansion for discussion with the current term of Toronto City council (2001-2003), should funding be made available over and above the TTC's other higher priority capital needs."

3.2 Scope and Context

The RTES report deals only with rapid transit requiring fully separate right-of-way (subway, Rail Transit). It is not intended to deal with such issues as High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes, reserved bus lanes, transit priorities and Light Rail Transit (LRT) in a reserved right-of-way. The report does address short-term operational improvements, including bus rapid transit, in corridors not recommended for rapid transit extensions.

In setting the context for the study, the RTES report indicates that the TTC faces a huge capital shortfall just to maintain the existing system in a good state of repair. The capital needs in the next decade and the estimated short fall, assuming no capital expansion, are stated as follows:

- Capital needs \$3.8 billion
- City of Toronto target \$2.2 billion
- Capital shortfall (assuming no expansion) \$1.6 billion

It should be noted that the above figures were prepared prior to the recent Provincial announcement on transit funding.

3.3 Prioritization of Capital Projects

The RTES report presents the following method for prioritizing capital projects:

<u>Priority</u>	<u>Capital Item</u>
• 1	State of Good Repair/Safety
• 2	Legislative
• 3	Ridership Growth Related
• 4	Transit Priorities/Improvement
• 5	Rapid Transit Expansion/System Enhancements

The report states that the implementation of expansion projects “would be supportable only after the TTC’s base capital needs have been met”.

3.4 List of Rapid Transit Initiatives Considered in the Report

The report examined the issue of Yonge-University-Spadina Loop and concluded that such a loop is not required for the foreseeable future. The original concept of looping on Steeles Avenue “could be pushed further north (e.g. Highway 7) if required in the future.”

The report identified six rapid transit initiatives for potential implementation in the next ten-fifteen years (representing a total of 15 staging options) as outlined below:

- Sheppard Subway (six options)
- Scarborough Rail Transit (one option)
- Eglinton Subway (one option)
- Bloor-Danforth West (three options)
- Spadina Subway Radial (two options)
- Yonge Subway Radial (two options)

3.5 Evaluation Criteria

The above initiatives were evaluated using the following criteria:

- Ridership
- Population and employment
- Capital cost effectiveness
- Operating cost effectiveness
- Network connectivity
- Development potential
- Official Plan support
- Staging flexibility/Risk
- Inter-regional impacts.

3.6 Recommended Priority Projects

Based on the evaluation, two projects – Spadina Subway extension to Steeles Avenue and the Sheppard Subway (three staging options) were short listed. Regarding the Yonge Subway, the report notes: “while the Yonge Subway options rank higher than most options, a northerly extension of the Yonge Subway line has the potential to overload the Yonge

line”. It was also noted that “from an operational perspective, it would be more prudent to better balance the ridership” on the Yonge Spadina lines, by first extending the Spadina line.

The RTES report also recommends two other corridors for priority attention for interim improvements including transit priority measures. They are:

- Yonge Subway corridor from Finch Avenue to Highway 7, and
- Bloor-Danforth Subway corridor from Kipling to Sherway Gardens.

3.7 Next Steps

The next steps include:

- Further detailed analyses of the preferred options, including the preparation of business case analyses, leading to a recommendation of the highest priority rapid transit project.
- Study of future downtown development scenarios and the resulting long-term GO and rapid transit capacity needs into the core area.
- Identification of opportunities to implement surface transit priority strategies and bus rapid transit services as a precursor to future rapid transit services. Possible corridors include: Yonge Street north of Finch and Downsview station to York University and Vaughan.

3.8 Actions by the TTC and the City of Toronto

At the meeting on August 29, 2001, the Toronto Transit Commission essentially approved the staff recommendations, with several amendments requiring staff to conduct additional analyses.

The City of Toronto is currently developing a transportation plan as part of their Official Plan Review. It is expected that TTC’s recommendations will be reviewed as a part of that effort.

3. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The following comments are based on staff review of the Commission report and the RTES technical report; the presentation and discussion at the August 29, 2001 Commission meeting and a review of implications of the recommendations to York Region.

- TTC is to be commended on taking a broader GTA view in examining rapid transit needs and priorities. The study and recommendations are in accordance with the Regional Official Plan, although the TTC study provides only a ten year capital forecast which falls short of the twenty-five year growth outlook and vision on which the Official Plans are predicated.
- The recent Provincial announcement regarding proposed funding of transit infrastructure is welcome news. This provides new opportunities for the Region of York

-
- and the City of Toronto to work together towards an integrated overall transit solution that benefits both the Region and the City. It is therefore important that York Region be involved in future analyses of rapid transit improvements in Spadina, Yonge and Sheppard corridors, in order to best integrate transit plans of York Region and the City of Toronto. A joint review by the City and the Region will allow due consideration to be given to:
- the proposed rapid transit links in York Region (for example, the Highway 7 Transitway), and
 - the Region's population and employment forecasts.
- The short-listing of the Spadina Subway Extension to Steeles Avenue supports the Regional and Vaughan Official Plans. The OMB has approved Vaughan's OPA No. 529, which identifies and preserves a higher order rapid transit right of way, extending from the Vaughan Corporate Centre to York University. The subway extension will serve York University and the City of Vaughan well and sets the stage for an eventual further extension to the Vaughan Corporate Centre. It is important that York Region and City of Vaughan staff be consulted in the detailed analyses to follow.
 - The report contains an analysis of population and employment concentrations in Toronto. A similar analysis for York Region is being completed, especially for the Highway 7 and Yonge Street Corridors, as part of the Region's Growth Management Strategy.
 - The Steeles Subway Loop is no longer considered necessary. This decision to consider more northerly alignments will better serve the Vaughan Corporate Centre, the Yonge Street Corridor, Richmond Hill Centre and Markham Centre.
 - The TTC report analyzed the relative benefits of each of the options for subway extensions. The evaluation of the Yonge Subway extension determined that it had similar benefits to the two projects that were selected for the short list for further consideration (Spadina and Sheppard). Therefore, it is recommended that the Yonge Subway extension also be included in the short list for further consideration. In particular, the Yonge Subway extension was found to have the following benefits:
 - the highest projected ridership of any of the proposed extensions
 - a similar number of new riders compared to the Spadina and Sheppard extensions
 - one of the lowest costs per rider
 - an extension to the Langstaff Gateway provides the overall network connectivity to both GO Rail as well as the Yonge and Highway 7 Transitways.
 - TTC's assessment of the Yonge Subway extension appears to have been greatly influenced by operational considerations. The Yonge line has limited spare capacity south of Bloor and, therefore, any additional demand created by an extension needs to be addressed carefully. In light of the importance of Yonge Corridor to York Region, TTC should be requested to:

- re-examine ways of increasing capacity on the Yonge line, studied previously as part of the Let's Move Program.
 - carry out a detailed analysis of the expected destinations of the new riders to determine significance of the operational problems created by the extension (for example, it is reasonable to assume that most of the York Region riders destined to points south of Bloor are already using either the TTC subway or GO Transit and any new riders are most likely to be destined to points north of Bloor).
 - determine the preferred staging for the Yonge Street extension to Highway 7.
- Short-term operational improvements in the Yonge Corridor from Finch Subway station to Highway 7 have been recommended for priority attention. This is welcome news.
 - The prioritization method described in the RTES report does not seem to give due importance to the growing inter-regional transit demands. According to the method, no transit priorities/improvement or Rapid Transit Expansion/System enhancements are entertained until all of the TTC's "base capital needs" are fully met. This includes State of Good Repair/Safety, Legislative and Ridership Growth related items. While these are all important, what is required is a less rigid approach that gives due consideration to the rapidly growing inter-regional transit needs. Taken to the extreme, the RTES approach could result in no capital improvements at all to serve the growing needs of the northern part of the City of Toronto and the rapidly expanding ridership base in York Region.
 - Two corridors, Yonge and York University/Vaughan, are given as examples of potential routes for implementation of transit priority strategies and bus rapid transit services as a precursor to future rapid transit services. A north/south corridor linking the Markham Centre to the TTC Rapid Transit network, as identified in the Transportation Master Plan, should be added to this list.
 - It is important that the Region is consulted by the TTC/City of Toronto in conducting the follow up rapid transit studies which affect the Region.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report have no financial implications at this stage.

5. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

The recommendations in the TTC report and future actions recommended in this report are expected to lead to significant transit improvements for residents of the City of Vaughan, and the Towns of Richmond Hill and Markham. This report has been reviewed by staff from Vaughan, Markham, and Richmond Hill.

6. CONCLUSION

The TTC Report generally represents welcome news to the York Region by highlighting the need for rapid transit extensions to the north. This report identifies several new initiatives

necessary to address the growing inter-regional transit needs to serve the residents of both Toronto and the York Region.

This report has been reviewed by the Senior Management Group.

(A copy of the attachment referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)

(Regional Council at its meeting on November 8 amended the foregoing Clause to read as follows:

- 2. The earliest possible extension of the Spadina Subway to Steeles Avenue be the preferred option of the TTC.)***

Respectfully submitted,

**Newmarket, Ontario
November 1, 2001**

**K. Schipper
Commissioner of
Transportation and Works**

(Report No. 6 of the Commissioner of Transportation and Works was adopted, as amended, by Regional Council at its meeting on November 8, 2001.)