



TTC Line 3 Bus Replacement and Corridor Adaptive Re-use Study Focus Group with Resident Members of Scarborough Neighbourhood Planning Tables Summary

Thursday, July 29, 2021
6:30 – 8:30 pm
Meeting held online

Overview

On Thursday, July 29th, 2021, the TTC hosted a focus group with resident members of the two Neighbourhood Planning Tables (NPTs) in Scarborough – Kennedy Eglinton Progressive Engagement Collaborative and Southeast Scarborough Planning Table. The purpose of the meeting was to share and seek feedback about the Line 3 Bus Replacement and Corridor Adaptive Re-use Study. See Attachment 1 for the Agenda. Three participants attended the meeting, along with staff from TTC and Swerhun Inc., the third-party facilitation team retained by the TTC to support the consultation process on the Study.

This focus group, part of the TTC's first round of public and stakeholder engagement on the Line 3 Study, was one of several ways the TTC worked to bring an equity lens to its engagement process by consulting with customers who are residents in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas served by Line 3. Recruitment of participants for the focus group was done in collaboration with the City of Toronto's Social Development and Finance Administration Division. The recruitment process involved sending an email to the resident members of the two local NPTs about the focus group and asking those who are interested in joining to complete a brief online form. To support and these residents' participation, TTC offered a pre-loaded PRESTO card with \$50 value as an honorarium. Eligible participants were selected if they met both of the following criteria:

- **They self-identified as being a resident member of one of the two NPTs** to ensure participants had been previously identified by the City as people who might experience barriers to participating in engagement processes.
- **They self-identified as not belonging to another stakeholder group engaged in this process** in an effort to engage a broad range of perspectives in the engagement process.

Swerhun Inc. prepared this meeting summary. A draft of this summary was subject to participant review before being finalized. The intent of this summary is to capture the range of feedback shared at the meeting; it is not intended to serve as verbatim transcript. The TTC will also post the final summary on its [project website](#).

This summary includes three sections:

- Key themes in feedback shared at the meeting
- Detailed feedback
- Next steps

Key themes in the feedback shared at the meeting

The following themes reflect a summary of the feedback received from participants during the meeting. The remainder of this summary provides additional details regarding these and other points participants shared.

Preference for Line 3 Right-of-Way as the corridor to operate the bus replacement service. There was consensus amongst all three participants that the Line 3 Right-of-Way is the best corridor option as it would utilize an existing infrastructure that is separate from other road traffic. Since participants were from south Scarborough, near Kennedy Station, they had no opinion on the proposed extended bus routes from Scarborough Centre Station.

Overall support for the proposed framework for evaluating the routing and corridor options. Participants expressed support for the evaluation criteria and highlighted that impact to the community is an important consideration. No new criteria were added but a participant said equity considerations should go beyond assessing vulnerable populations by geography (i.e. if they live in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas). Defining vulnerability by geography may inadvertently miss populations who live outside of NIAs but are still part of vulnerable communities, including those with low-income who are renting rooms, basements, and houses in areas outside of NIAs.

Re-use Line 3 stations and corridors as interesting spaces where the community could gather, meet, and socialize. If Line 3 bus replacement service does not operate on Line 3 Right-of-Way, participants would like to see the stations and corridors become neutral gathering spaces for the community, as well as a space where events and festivals could be held.

Make bus stops more accessible by keeping the distance between stops shorter. Participants said bus stops have been removed as part of RapidTO on Eglinton Avenue East which has resulted in longer walks between stops. They said this is an issue especially for those carrying heavy loads and those who have mobility issues.

Many questions about the shutdown of Line 3 Scarborough and the details of Line 3 Bus Study. Throughout the discussion, participants asked questions of clarification about the details of the Line 3 shut down. Participants know there are issues with Line 3, but there were different understandings as to why the line will be decommissioned. Participants were also initially unclear on whether there is still room for discussion to keep or shut down Line 3. With many different transit developments happening in Scarborough, it will be important to clearly explain the potential next steps and how it relates to other ongoing and future developments.

Detailed feedback

Summarized below are participants thoughts on the emerging ideas for the route options and corridor analysis, proposed evaluation criteria, and potential re-use of the Line 3 corridor and stations.

Corridor and route options

- **All participants preferred the Line 3 Right-of-Way for operating the bus replacement service.** Operating buses on the Line 3 Right-of-Way would make the connection to Kennedy Station simpler. Given the existing traffic conditions on major roads in

Scarborough, including Kennedy Rd and Eglinton Rd, all three participants expressed support for operating buses on Line 3 Right-of-Way.

- **No opinion on the extended bus routes.** Participants live close to Kennedy Station so they do not have an opinion on the bus routes proposed to be extended from Scarborough Centre to Kennedy Station.

Evaluation criteria

- **Support for the evaluation criteria.** Participants said the criteria TTC is considering are sufficient and make sense.
- **Impact on the community should be an important consideration.** Participants said that it will be important for TTC to consider the impact on the community when determining which corridor option to operate the bus replacement. Participants understand that there will be inconveniences but efforts should be made to minimize the impact to riders as much as possible.
- **Re-evaluate who is considered to be part of the vulnerable population when assessing equity considerations.** Participants had questions on who is considered vulnerable. They suggested to not define vulnerability based on geography alone, as there are areas in Scarborough that may not be part of Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) but still have vulnerable populations. For example, neighbourhoods where 129 McCowan, 131 Nugget, and 133 Neilson buses operate have many vulnerable people renting rooms, basements, and houses who may not be captured when assessing the impact to vulnerable populations. They suggested looking at populations that often fall through the cracks.

Adaptive re-use of Line 3 stations and corridor

- **If Line 3 stations become a surplus, turn the stations into community gathering spaces.** Participants suggested re-using the stations as a hub or a café where people can meet on neutral ground.
- **If the Line 3 corridor becomes surplus, turn it into an open park where people could socialize, gather, and host events, festivals, and bands.** They also said that making it a tourist attraction like the High Line in New York is an interesting idea.

Other feedback

- **Keep the distance between bus stops shorter.** Participants raised issues with the removal of bus stops, especially with the introduction of the dedicated bus lanes along the RapidTO corridor on Eglinton-Kingston-Morningside, resulting in longer walks between stops. They were concerned that the removal of stops creates accessibility challenges, particularly for senior transit riders who may be carrying heavy loads.
- **Improve bus stop waiting areas by providing covered shelters.** Bus stops with no shelters are also a concern as they expose transit riders to the elements.
- **Provide more frequent transit service along Lawrence Avenue East to serve more marginalized communities.**
- **Explore ways to make taking public transit more financially accessible.** Participants shared a few suggestions, including:

- extend the 2-hour transfer time by half an hour or more as completing a trip could take longer than two hours due to the need for multiple transfers and unforeseen events or inclement weather prolonging travel times
 - consider having one day every week or two where people could ride the bus for free – this free day would be especially helpful for low-income riders or those who are on social assistance who barely have enough money for transit after paying rent and groceries
 - look into potentially expanding existing City programs that offer free monthly passes to low-income riders
- **Suggestions for how to reach local transit riders about future engagement processes:**
 - Put up flyers in shopping areas, grocery stores, and community boards of apartment buildings
 - Notify participants already engaged through the process via email, including the focus group participants, so they can spread the word to their friends and families
 - Drop flyers in mailboxes
 - Phone blast

Next Steps

Eric Chu, Manager of Project Development & Coordination at TTC, thanked participants for their time and feedback. He reminded participants that there will be another round of engagement and TTC would like to continue these conversations with them in the next round. Khly Lamparero, independent facilitator, committed to sharing a summary of the meeting in draft with participants for their review before finalizing to ensure accurate representation of feedback shared at the meeting. She also committed to following up with participants about details on how honorarium for their participation will be received.

Attachment 1. Agenda

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6:30 – 8:30 pm

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Meeting purpose

To provide an overview of the Line 3 Bus Replacement and Corridor Adaptive Re-Use Study and to share and discuss:

- route options and corridor analysis to extend bus service from Scarborough Centre Station to Kennedy Station
- a proposed evaluation framework
- adaptive re-use of Line 3 corridor and stations

Proposed agenda

6:30 Welcome, land acknowledgement, introductions, agenda review

Eric Chu, Scott Haskill, TTC

Khly Lamparero, Facilitator, Swerhun Inc.

6:45 Line 3 Bus Study Overview

Eric Chu, TTC

- About the Study
- Corridor Options
- Evaluation Framework
- Adaptive Re-Use of Line 3

Questions of clarification

7:15 Discussion: route options, corridor analysis, evaluation

1. What are your thoughts on the proposed bus routes to be extended from Scarborough Centre to Kennedy Station? What changes, if any, would you suggest? Why?
2. Do you prefer any of the corridors under consideration? Why?
3. To what extent do you support the proposed evaluation criteria? What changes, if any, would you suggest? Why?

7:55 Discussion: adaptive re-use of Line 3

4. What future use would you most like to see given to the SRT corridor if all or part of it becomes surplus?
5. What future uses would you like to see given to the SRT stations if all or some of them become surplus?

8:25 Wrap up and next steps

8:30 Adjourn