

Making tracks to Torontonians

CONTEXT

In order to inform the development of a transit plan for Toronto, this report examines costs and benefits of two transit options currently under consideration by city council:

Option 1: The four light rail transit “priority projects:” These four lines were identified as priorities in the regional Metrolinx *Big Move* plan, and in 2009 the province committed funding to the four lines. In 2010, a portion of this was held back, and the currently available budget has been directed to Phase One of these lines – to build 52 km of the total 75 for the full four lines.

Option 2: The proposed subway extension. An alternate proposal to redirect available funds to extending portions of the subway and converting the SRT to subway.

COST COMPARISON

A transit plan with a limited budget should aim to provide rapid transit to as many people as possible, rather than over-capacity to one region. Phase One of the LRT plan would deliver more than twice as much service for every dollar invested, compared to the proposed subway plan. The fully completed four LRT lines would provide close to five times as much service as the subway extension. Even Phase One would bring rapid transit to the doorsteps of over three times as many residences and workplaces as the subway extension.

PAYING FOR OVERCAPACITY

For subways to be cost-effective they require a minimum peak (rush hour) ridership of 15,000 commuters; however, peak ridership is projected to be only 3,100 along the proposed Sheppard route and 6,400 along the Scarborough line. Building a subway on these routes would result in over-capacity, which may not justify the investment.

Proposed Transit Line	Projected peak ridership 2031	Peak capacity
Sheppard LRT	3,100	
Eglinton Crosstown LRT	7,800	LRT: 10,000-20,000
Finch LRT	4,500	Subway: 30,000
Scarborough RT	6,400	

Existing Transit Line	Projected peak ridership 2031	Current peak capacity on these routes
Yonge-University-Spadina Subway	25,400	
Bloor-Danforth Subway	16,400	Subway: 30,000
Sheppard Subway	5,900	

SUMMARY

The table below presents a summary of costs and benefits for the LRT priority projects and the proposed subway plan. For comparative purposes it presents Transit City as well.

Costs/ benefits	Subway extension plan	Priority LRT lines (Phase One)	Priority LRT lines (full completion)	Transit City
Length of new service	18 km	52 km	75 km	148 km
Cost (2010 dollars)	\$6.2 billion	\$8.7 billion	\$10.5 billion	\$17.2 billion
Cost per km	\$344 million	\$167 million	\$140 million	\$116 million
Torontonians within a three minute walk of a transit stop*	61,000	200,000	290,000	630,000
Torontonians served**	122,000	400,000	580,000	1,260,000
Low-income population connected	7,200	30,000	45,000	106,000
Estimated transit trips per year	65 million	86 million	126 million	224 million
Cars out of gridlock	60,000 - 70,000	80,000 - 100,000	120,000 - 140,000	220,000 - 240,000
GHG emissions reduced (by 2031, tonnes)	75,000	130,000	201,000	327,000

*Number of residences or workplaces within 250 metres of rapid transit.

**Number of residences or workplaces within 500 metres of rapid transit.

WHERE WILL IT GO?

Map shows the proposed routes of the completed four LRT Priority Projects and the proposed subway extension

