

RE: Report of the Expert Advisory Panel Regarding Transit on Sheppard Avenue East

Date: March 15, 2012

Updated: April 4, 2012

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The report from this expert panel is flawed, not based on opinion, but based on the very criteria outlined in the report. The evaluation criteria within the report clearly defines the criteria, but then does not evaluate it according to its own definitions.

For example, the “Cost effectiveness and fiscal sustainability” criteria clearly states within its definition (in the report) that it must include *operating, maintenance, and capital costs*. However it only includes capital costs.

Another key criteria is “*Community Impact*”, yet the panel clearly ignores local requirements and needs of suburban residents and business owners of Scarborough. Local residents and business owners have come out overwhelmingly against LRT, but this report seems to ignore this fact. There is no local support or evidence for LRT in Scarborough. As a matter of fact, Professor Eric Miller admitted during his testimony that they did NOT consult with any residents and never attended any meetings in the Scarborough area, however still felt capable of judging what was good for the residents of Scarborough. Kind of a “we know better” attitude.

All the other conclusions that are made based on the criteria are equally flawed, misrepresentative and incomplete, and need to be corrected to allow this report to be fairly evaluated and voted upon. It cannot be voted upon in its current state as it is inaccurate and misleading.

BACKGROUND

With a university degree in Mathematics and a significant amount of experience creating and evaluating business proposals, I was surprised with some of the conclusions drawn by the report.

The report does not go into detail how a decision was made, other than using a few criteria and evaluating each option based on those findings (report table #15). There is no clear discussion where the actual numbers used in the table are calculated or evaluated.

There are some critical holes in the evaluation that I feel bias the entire report, which unfortunately puts

into question the recommended solution.

I did read the entire report, and all the attachments and was not able to find the answers to the following items that I believe are missing or incorrectly evaluated for purposes of this report.

I will go into detail for some of the critical 'misses' that should be considered if this is a true business plan/evaluation. (I will focus on reference option A (LRT) & B (Subway) as those are the two extremes).

1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - LRT vs. SUBWAY

From the report:

1 - Economic Development:	LRT	Subway
Economic development	3.71	4.14

Ratings out of 5 for LRT vs. Subway, for Economic Development factors.

The investment in Subway is predicted to provide a total economic impact of \$3.8 billion compared to \$1.6 billion for LRT, generate more than 22,800 person-years of direct and indirect employment compared to 9,500 for LRT, and increase business sales by \$7.2 billion compared to \$3.0 billion for LRT.

So not only will an additional 10,000 person years of direct/indirect employment be created for the subway, but a huge increase in business sales will be created. This will significantly increase property values, create new jobs. Never mind the overall economic impact of \$3.8B vs \$1.6B. This alone can justify the difference between the cost of LRT vs subway.

Based on these numbers alone, the Economic Development advantages should be rated significantly higher for the **Subway** option above (see chart).

However, what is not taken into account is the 'negative' costs of putting in LRT. The costs to businesses when the St. Clair right of way was constructed was immense, many business went out of business, many people lost jobs. There was a negative cost to the neighbourhood that is only now being erased.

To say that LRT is worth 3.71 vs 4.14 out of 5 is just wrong, inaccurate and misleading.

2: Cost effectiveness and fiscal sustainability	LRT	Subway
Cost effectiveness and fiscal	4.43	2.14

sustainability		
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Definition: The best transit option must consider minimizing short and long term operating and capital costs of the project, including the costs of the state of good repair. The option must also consider the long term fiscal sustainability of the transit system as a whole (this definition was from the report)

All business cases have to evaluate a solution on both **capital and operating costs**, and life of the investment. Based on the definition used above, it is supposed to take into account operating, maintenance etc costs of the systems being introduced. Only initial projected capital costs are included, and I'm not certain if costs such as a joint station where the LRT/Subway will meet are included. It seems that the costs to operate both LRT and subway on a single line would be significantly more than just operating one type of transit.

To say that LRT is worth 4.43 vs 2.14 out of 5 when no operating, maintenance or system operating costs are evaluated is just wrong, inaccurate and misleading.

3: Timeframe:

LRT

Subway

Timeframe	5.00	1.86
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Definition: The transit option must meet the timelines required to provide a clear response to the provincial directive.

I was not sure of the intent of the 'criteria' especially the way it was worded. The conclusion is that LRT is ready to go, zoned, evaluated etc, whereas Subway is starting from scratch and has no funding or plan to go ahead. Clearly, this is not true. We have a full environmental impact assessment. We already have funding to start the project. And we are only adding on to an existing Sheppard subway.

I'm confused by this conclusion, as there is no evidence that the subway could not be extended one stop at a time, the same way it is being done in Vaughan today, or was done when the original Sheppard extension occurred. It seems an arbitrary evaluation that makes no clear sense, especially considering streets must be widened, properties must be purchased, permits granted etc for the LRT. There is no way it could start "tomorrow". Whereas, we already have a model for a working subway on Sheppard.

Rushing the decision to go ahead with new unproven technology could take longer and end up disastrous (Isn't that what happened in St. Clair?)

LRT 5 vs subway 1.86 made no sense to me. Why is subway 1.86? These numbers seem completely arbitrary and not backed up by facts or measurable criteria.

4: Ridership

LRT

Subway

Ridership	4.57	2.29
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Definition: The transit option must provide the necessary capacity to meet expected ridership demand in 2031.

This was fascinating. It would seem that all 3 options would have the necessary capacity (unless there was huge growth in Scarborough, LRT would fall short, but lets assume growth stays low). So in order to make these numbers look better the report goes on to state:

However, as discussed under 'Cost Effectiveness and Fiscal Sustainability', factoring the cost to build the new transit line into the equation, the subway option is the least cost effective solution to increase the number of transit riders in the city. At a cost of \$221 to \$303 per new rider under the subway option, compared to \$130 per new rider under the LRT option, investment in a subway is less cost effective in terms of new ridership. More new riders can be achieved by investing in other LRT lines (such as those outlined in Table 10) instead of spending additional dollars for a subway on Sheppard Avenue East.

Huh? What does the 'cost per rider', or even other LRT routes, have to do with the evaluation of this single Sheppard route when we are discussing ridership, which by your definition is capacity to meet expected demand? Why are you adding cost into this criteria?

LRT 4.57 vs subway 2.29 - You cannot bring costs into this discussion as it has already been evaluated elsewhere. This is just plain pure misleading representation.

5. Network Connectivity

LRT

Subway

Network connectivity	4.71	3.14
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Definition: The transit option must provide a transit line that supports better connections with the transit system, improves overall access and network capacity.

The biggest drawback I see is that taking a route across Sheppard to Yonge from the east (and vice versa) will entail a transfer from LRT to Subway using the 'preferred' LRT solution; however a single high speed subway with no transfers gets a lower rating?? It has been stated previously the amount of riders will be greater with the subway option, so obviously greater access to the transit facility exists with the *subway*. Clearly greater capacity exists with an all subway option. It is shorter, but existing bus routes will still be maintained and can bring the system closer until the subway can be extended in the future.

LRT 4.71 vs subway 3.14 - This seems to be another rabbit out the hat evaluation to make the evaluation and recommendation biased.

6. Level of Service

LRT

Subway

Level of service	4.14	3.57
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Definition: *The transit option must consider the door to door travel time of the end users, including out-of-vehicle time (walk, wait and transfer times) in addition to in-vehicle time.*

As level of service means a lot more than just how long it takes (including walking, wait etc). It means convenience, speed, efficiency, downtime due to repairs/breakdowns, not having to walk outside in snow/rain etc Not having to go into the middle of a 6 lane highway to catch and leave an LRT.

If ‘door to door travel time’ is the only definition of Level of Service then buses are clearly the way to go, we can have door to door service, no walking into the middle of the road, have more stops, very good accessibility for the disabled, and the travel time is roughly equivalent to LRT.

Additionally, I would think this would be a strong consideration based on the fact that even the report infers ***everyone would prefer subways but we can't afford them.*** So doesn't that imply that Subways would have a higher level of service?

LRT 4.14 vs subway 3.57- Sorry, I think rapid underground dry transportation has a higher level of service than LRT's. And frankly, how are LRTs a higher level of service than already existing buses?

<i>7. Equity and accessibility</i>	<i>LRT</i>	<i>Subway</i>
Equity and accessibility	4.57	3.14

Definition:

The transit option must contribute to improved equity and accessibility across several dimensions including gender, income, race, age, and ability, in order to improve:

- *social cohesion and access to opportunity;*
- *transit safety and mobility;*
- *end user affordability (e.g. fares);*
- *equity in access to rapid transit across the City*

This assessment was particularly interesting. If the analysis seems to indicate that the best solution to provide equity and accessibility is to provide more stops along the route, I would suggest that the bus system is the best possible. Also, it is clearly more accessible and safe to be able to board transit from a curb or a secure underground system, then to have to cross a very busy intersection at every stop to board and disembark an LRT.

If the criteria is to provide affordability for the user, all forms are equal. I would suggest faster transit that is used by more passengers would be more affordable over the long term, than slower transit used by a few.

LRT 4.57 vs subway 3.14 I can't agree or disagree as this doesn't really make sense, as we'll still have

surface buses if required.

8. Environmental Sustainability

LRT

Subway

Environmental Sustainability	4.14	3.57
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Definition: The transit option must support long-term environmental sustainability objectives, including addressing resource and environmental challenges such as climate change and higher gas prices, while also supporting healthy and vibrant communities.

According to the report the LRT system will reduce Green House Gas emissions by 25.0 Tonnes, while the subway will reduce GHG's by **39.6 Tonnes**. So the Subway is almost **60%** more environmentally friendly according to this report. How does the LRT get a score almost 45% higher than the subway?

Looking at their definition it doesn't work, but if they add in the cost again (and again only capital costs here), then it works out. But we have ALREADY evaluated costs (ie., no operating included). You cannot bias an environmental report this way. It is a fact that subways are more environmentally friendly, so you cannot bias it with costs.

LRT 4.14 vs subway 3.47 and the subway is 60% more environmentally friendly. Uh Can you explain the evaluation please. This evaluation is wrong.

9. Community Impact

LRT

Subway

Community Impact	3.86	3.57
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In terms of community impact, construction of a subway may take longer (or not, given that we have an accurate model of success with subway construction locally in the GTA) but would be less disruptive as it is underground, tunneled, not above ground where businesses and people are most impacted.

LRT as proposed in the middle of a 6 lane street, would cause greater business disruption and lack of access. There is no discussion of business disruption and subsequent financial impact due to LRT construction.

It is not mentioned that local intensification around subway stations may lead to increased property values, business opportunities by developers, businesses and residential, and possibly more jobs, providing greater benefit to local communities who want greater/rapid access to the GTA.

The report goes on to state that we must “focus on what is the best transit technology to serve the needs of the community, and to more effectively engage the residents in discussions that impact their daily lives.”

Well, local residents have come out overwhelmingly against LRT, but this report seems to indicate otherwise. There is no local support for LRT in Scarborough.

LRT 3.86, and Subway 3.57? Clearly, this report ignores the local residents and what they have stated they need and want.

CONCLUSION:

The report cannot be used to solicit a vote from council as it is inaccurate and misrepresentative and misleading. It does not include:

- **Decreased Operating costs of subways**
- **Long term expansion capabilities of subways to meet increased population demands**
- **Environmental costs/benefits of either side (very vague)**
- **Benefits for shortening travel times via Subways**
- **Increased speed of Subways**
- **Decreased congestion for local traffic/business via Subways**
- **Increased ridership capacity and growth (and profitability) for Subways**