

Individual Environmental Assessment for expansion in the GO Transit Georgetown South Rail Corridor and an Express Transportation Link between Lester B. Pearson Airport and Union Station

GO TRANSIT RAIL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



THE STUDY

GO Transit has initiated an Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) to examine alternatives for expansion in the Georgetown South rail corridor and an Express Transportation Link including the proposed Air Rail Link (ARL) between Lester B. Pearson Airport and Union Station under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act.

This IEA study has two components:

- To examine possible improvements in the Georgetown South rail corridor to accommodate increasing demands for GO Transit service to the communities along the corridor between Halton and Peel regions and the City of Toronto. GO Transit is the proponent for this component.
- To examine alternatives for an express transportation link between Union Station and Lester B. Pearson Airport, both within and outside of the Georgetown South rail corridor, including the proposed Air Rail Link service. The co-proponents are GO Transit and the Union Pearson AirLink Group (UPAG).

Although the two project components serve different objectives, they are being planned together because the recommended alternative(s) could result in GO Transit, CN, VIA Rail and the selected express transportation initiative all operating within a shared corridor. As part of the expansion of the Georgetown South rail corridor, the IEA study must also take into consideration the future needs of all the potential corridor users including CN, VIA Rail, the selected express transportation initiative and GO Transit.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT PROCESS

This study will be undertaken as an Individual Environmental Assessment (IEA) under the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act. The purpose of an IEA is to provide a process to evaluate a reasonable range of alternatives to an existing problem or opportunity and to allow for informed and environmentally responsible decision making to occur.

The IEA considers potential environmental effects, mitigation measures and the public interest to determine a preferred alternative. The IEA provides for an accountable, logical and reproducible process of decision-making. It requires an open and systematic approach to find a preferred solution by examining a range of alternatives that can reasonably address identified problems and opportunities. Extensive public and agency consultation throughout the study is integral to the Environmental Assessment (EA) process.

The first step in the EA process is the development of a Terms of Reference (ToR) that outlines the framework for conducting the IEA including:

- A description of the purpose of the undertaking (that is, the problems and opportunities to be addressed);
- The range and types of alternatives to be considered;
- The process to be followed to select a preferred alternative;
- A description of the proposed study area and the existing environment; and
- The proposed public consultation process.

A draft ToR will be prepared by the Project Team and reviewed through consultation with the public and stakeholder agencies. A proposed ToR will then be submitted to the Ontario Minister of the Environment (MOE) for approval. Prior to a decision by the Minister, MOE will undertake a public and stakeholder agency review of the proposed ToR. If the Terms of Reference are approved, the EA process will continue in accordance with the framework identified in the ToR. The environmental assessment study will include: identification of issues and opportunities; development and evaluation of alternatives; selection of a preferred alternative; detailing of potential impacts and proposed mitigative measures; and, preparation of an individual environmental assessment report documenting the process. Following a comprehensive public and agency review of the report, the EA process concludes with a formal decision on the project by the Ontario Minister of the Environment.

As a result of federal funding and potential federal regulatory approvals, the proposed projects will also require an environmental assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). Consequently, the federal and provincial EA processes will be coordinated, pursuant to the Canada-Ontario Agreement on EA Cooperation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

In this initial stage of the study, the Project Team will focus on preparing a draft ToR. Public consultation is a required element during the preparation of the ToR. Over the next few months, the Project Team will consult with the communities and stakeholders in the study area. In addition, a Public Liaison Committee (PLC) will be formed to incorporate the vital input of residents, businesses and other stakeholders into the study. The PLC will be involved throughout the study and will include representatives drawn from community associations, neighbourhoods,

businesses and tourism groups. The purpose of the PLC is to:

- Promote dialogue and share information — including input on and the joint exploration of key issues, concerns, challenges and opportunities;
- Serve as a 'sounding board' — reviewing and commenting on project process, materials and reports; and,
- Act as a project liaison with the communities for the purpose of information dissemination and perspective sharing.

The draft Terms of Reference will be made available for public review prior to a series of Public Information Centres (PIC's) tentatively scheduled for Summer 2006. The dates and locations of the PIC's will be advertised once the details are finalized.

During the subsequent environmental assessment stage of the study public and agency consultation will continue as well as the involvement of the PLC. Up to four rounds of Public Information Centres are anticipated in this phase of the study to:

- Present alternatives to the undertaking;
- Present the preferred alternative;
- Present the preferred design; and,
- Present the preliminary design of the selected alternative.

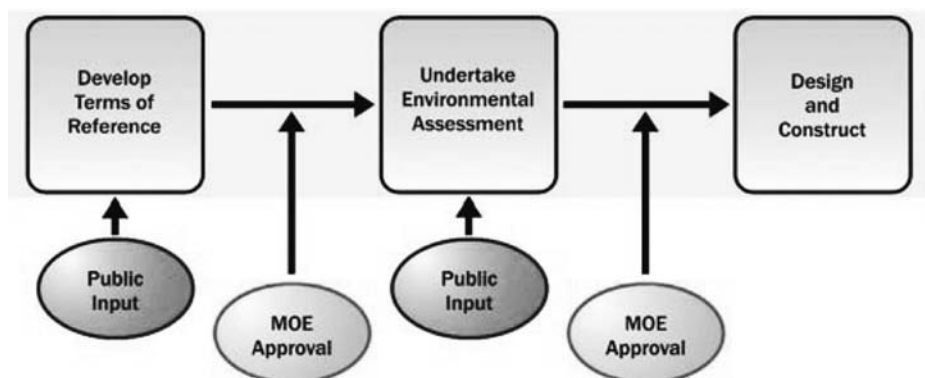
It is anticipated that the study will be completed late 2007.



PRELIMINARY STUDY AREA



EA PROCESS



To provide input at anytime during the study, you can do the following:

- Visit the project website www.georgetownpearsonstudy.ca and use the online option to provide comments and thoughts; or
- Address correspondence to the study Project Team members listed below:

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We encourage you to visit the project website throughout the study to stay up-to-date. The website will be continually updated to include information about the various topics covered at each stage of this Individual Environmental Assessment.

The Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario have jointly committed a total of \$770 million to improve and expand the GO Transit rail and bus transit system in the Greater Toronto Area. Funding is being provided under the Canadian Strategic Infrastructure Fund. Pour plus de renseignements, veuillez composer le (416) 869-3200 ou le 1 888 GET ON GO (438-6646).

