

Facts About Light Rail Being Built in Scarborough

There has been an overwhelming amount of misinformation regarding the Toronto City Council-approved Light Rail Transit (LRT) plan. Here are some frequently asked questions and answers in order to separate facts from fiction.

Q: Is Light Rail Transit (LRT) the same as streetcars?

A: No, Light rail transit (LRT) is faster and carries more passengers than streetcars. LRT trains travel at an average of 22-25km/h while streetcars average 10 to 18km/h. LRT can carry up to 25,000 passengers per hour while streetcars carry only 10,000 per hour.

Q: Would LRT block traffic?

A: No. LRT does not block traffic. Unlike streetcars, LRT operates in a dedicated right of way and is isolated from traffic. This means that LRT has a minimal impact on traffic. It also gives emergency vehicles a guaranteed lane to use to get around traffic.

Q: Would LRT's take away car lanes?

A: No. In Scarborough, both Eglinton Avenue and Sheppard Avenue are wide enough to accommodate LRT without having to eliminate regular car lanes.

Q: Would LRT's work in Toronto's cold winters?

A: Absolutely. LRT runs effectively year-round in cold cities such as Edmonton, Calgary, Stockholm and Denver. Both Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo are building new LRT lines as well.

Q: Is LRT the same as the Scarborough RT?

A: No. The Scarborough Rapid Transit (RT) was built in 1985, and has outlived its usefulness and uses outdated ICTS technology. LRT, on the other hand, is an advanced, proven mode of transportation that has been operating successfully across the world. Hundreds of cities worldwide have active LRT lines.

Q: Building an LRT on St. Clair Avenue took a long time and went over budget. Would this happen again?

A: No. St. Clair is a streetcar and is not an LRT. The TTC has also learned a lot from the St. Clair project. The problems on St. Clair were not caused by the streetcar construction but other work done on upgrades to water mains, curbs and roads that were done in addition to the transit work. The city now has a dedicated planning office to avoid these problems in future.

Q: Why do we need population density?

A: Studies have shown that we need 30,000 passengers/hr on the subways for it to be cost effective. The Sheppard subway continues to cost taxpayers every year because it has not reached the 30,000 passengers/hr mark.

Q: Why can't we afford subways?

A: While building transit, we are being faced with tough economic times. To build a subway, residential and business taxes would significantly increase. This would also threaten funding for community services and programs. Even by bringing back a vehicle registration tax, and increasing property taxes and development charges for new construction, the City would still face a \$1 billion shortfall in funding with no way to raise those funds.

Q: Could we get subways in the future?

A: Yes! Long ago, both Yonge Street and Danforth Avenue had streetcars until they reached the density needed for subways, and then subways were built. This is how responsible transit investment is planned and has been planned to reach the needs of residents now and in the future.

COMPARISON OF TRANSIT PLANS FOR SCARBOROUGH

COUNCIL APPROVED PLAN

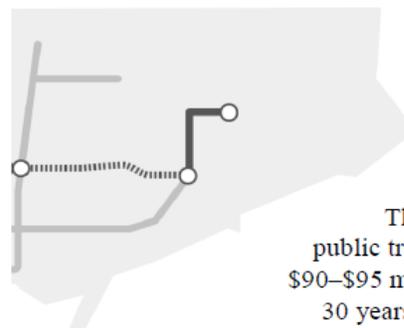


Cost: \$164 million per km

Serves: 460,000 people

It will create 52 km of public transit and four fully-funded lines – three of which will be in Scarborough.

THE OTHER PROPOSED PLAN



Cost: \$348 million per km

Serves: 217,000 people

This plan will create 25 km of public transit and will cost taxpayers \$90–\$95 million per year over the next 30 years for the Sheppard line only.