

# Bloor St. W. – St Clair Ave. W. Noise Wall Consultation

## Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1

Thursday April 4 2013

St Josaphat Church Hall, 110 Franklin Avenue

6:30 – 8:30 p.m.

### DRAFT SUMMARY REPORT – FOR PARTICIPANT REVIEW

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*This draft report was prepared by Jane Farrow and Suzannah Kinsella as the independent notetaker and facilitator of the meeting. It reflects the key points raised and is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript. This draft report is subject to the review of the participants at the meeting. If you have any questions, comments or suggested edits, please contact Kelly Thornton **by Monday April 22** ([kelly.thornton@gotransit.com](mailto:kelly.thornton@gotransit.com) or 416-604-9582), after which point the record will be finalized.*

#### **Meeting Overview:**

*This was the first meeting of the Bloor Street West to St. Clair Avenue West Noise Wall Community Advisory Committee (CAC). The purpose of the meeting was to: introduce CAC members to each other and the GO Transit team; provide background on the Georgetown South Project; review the key steps and milestones for the design of proposed noise walls; review and discuss the role of the CAC (including the proposed Terms of Reference for the CAC); and to begin identifying the key issues and opportunities CAC members would like to see considered through the process.*

### KEY POINTS

1. **The community is participating in this process to contribute to an optimal solution for noise mitigation that balances various needs, eg. residents, GO Transit, businesses.**
2. **In the interests of an informed and helpful consultation process, CAC participants requested more information on:**
  - wall locations, specifically more pictures and maps to help them identify where walls begin and end and where they're located in relation to property lines.
  - wall heights, how they're determined and how it interacts with grading
  - greening technologies, landscaping and green walls and their potential relevance or viability in neighbourhood locations

**GO Transit has confirmed that** this information will be provided and discussed in greater detail with the Landscape Architect designing the walls who will be present at the second meeting.

3. **Site walks:** Several participants requested site walks to see the location of the walls up closer, with a knowledgeable GO Transit staff member and the landscape architect present. Other participants expressed concerns that this would take away from valuable meeting time. Going forward, CAC members are encouraged to get out and walk the site, take pictures on their own and/or reach out to Go Transit Community Relations representative, Kelly Thornton, to arrange site walks.

## 1. Background & CAC Process

The meeting began with a welcome by facilitator Suzannah Kinsella, of Swerhun Inc., independent facilitators of the Noise Wall Community Consultation process. Suzannah gave a brief overview of what will be happening in the CAC process and series of meetings. This was followed by a roundtable of brief introductions where CAC members stated their interest and associations in the noise mitigation process including being local residents, parents, stewards and Rail Path users who are mindful of safety, aesthetics, community gardens and green space adjacent to the corridor, noise levels and connectivity.

The agenda was reviewed and is included here as Attachment A and Participant Attendance List as Attachment B. Mandeep Jassal from GO Transit then delivered a presentation of the Georgetown South Project and the proposed plan for noise mitigation with noise walls on the corridor. A copy of the presentation will be posted online at [www.gotransit.com/gts](http://www.gotransit.com/gts).

## 2. Terms of Reference Review

The CAC Terms of Reference (ToR) document was distributed by to all CAC members before the meeting. Participants suggested that the ToR be edited to address the following points:

1. That section **4.4 Members as Community Representatives** include the option of sending and receiving information through community association channels e.g. resident association websites, forums, meetings and emails.
2. The list of people and community groups represented on the Bloor Street West to St. Clair Avenue West CAC should be shared with all members of the Committee, including links to their community association websites: Members with links to share should send them to Kelly Thornton at GO Transit.
3. Suggestion that the Bloor Street West to Dupont Street CAC name be changed to Bloor Street West to St. Clair Avenue West CAC which better reflects the geographic area it covers.
4. That the Terms of Reference for the CAC be edited to reflect the feedback received.
5. All members present agreed to sign the ToR when these changes have been made.

## 3. Questions, Answers and Points of Clarification on GTS Noise Mitigation

During and following the presentation, CAC members discussed the proposed plans to mitigate noise on the GTS with the GO Transit staff present, Stephen Lipkus, Manuel Pedrosa, Mandeep Jassal and Kelly Thornton. Feedback from the CAC focused on a number of key topics, including: Size and Location of the noise walls, Site Walks, Greening, Landscaping and Maintenance, Noise and Vibration Mitigation, 2015 & Full Service Walls, Development and Empty Lots. Note that numbering is intended for ease of reference and is not meant to imply priority.

Questions, comments are listed below. Unless otherwise noted, Metrolinx gave the responses.

### 3A. Size and Location of Walls

- Where are the walls located?
  - *Along the GO Transit property line, right where the fence line is now. GO Transit has approximations for where they start and end now. Precisely where they will be built isn't known at this time as it depends on a more detailed survey and mapping exercise that will be undertaken as part of the construction and engineering plan that includes soil sampling and geo-technical testing.*
- Will there still be room for a green space on the west side of the railway on Dundas West for the railside garden?
  - *GO Transit will plan the installation of the walls so the railside garden is not impacted, where possible.*
- Would the walls ever be higher than 5 metres? Are you measuring 5 metres from the sidewalk or road, or up at the track level.
  - *It depends. We haven't designed for all those questions yet. But basically, it's 5 metres from where the GO property line is. So for instance, it could be, in essence, 6 metres if the sidewalk is 1 meter below the property line.*
- Will walls that are 5 metres high mitigate noise for people living above that, for instance on the second storey of a house?
  - *The train noise won't be fully mitigated but some of the wheel noise will be. The net effect is the quieter passage of all trains.*
- Most CAC members requested detailed drawings and maps to show the wall locations before the next meeting in May including maps showing the proposed 2015 and full build service walls. More detailed Google maps (not aerials) might suffice in some cases.
  - *GO Transit will provide a version of the aerials presented at the meeting on a Google map image (not satellite view) The Landscape Architect will be providing more of this type of detail.*
- Some members wanted the placement of the walls to be marked out with spray paint, surveyors tape or stakes on the ground to show where these walls start and stop.
  - *GO Transit will speak to the CAC members to help develop a plan to make this happen with support from the CAC members*

### 3B. Site Walks

- Some CAC members felt that corridor site walks would help them see where the wall would be, to make it less abstract and conceptual. Others questioned the value of site walks or said they didn't want walks to take away from valuable meeting time.
- *All CAC members are strongly encouraged to get out and walk their portions of the corridor to fully familiarize themselves with the site and existing conditions. Kelly Thornton will endeavour to host site walks with CAC members before the next meeting in May.*

### 3C. Greening, Landscaping and Maintenance

- CAC members were asked whether they support green and/or living walls as an approach to noise mitigation. Just over half of the CAC members present indicated this would be an option they would like to see considered. Green approaches and solutions were discussed

with an emphasis put on the need to examine these options closely and thoroughly, including their heights and effectiveness in mitigating noise.

- Members of the CAC requested that the appointed Landscape Architect have experience in green solutions and that GO Transit share the terms of the Landscape Architect's RFP.
  - *GO Transit will share information about the Landscape Architect terms and scope.*
- If there's a maintenance budget for the hard walls for things like graffiti removal, is there a budget for maintenance of the green walls? Will GO Transit work with the community on trying to figure out innovative solutions?
  - *GO Transit is working with the City to determine what a reasonable budget may be for green walls and maintenance. GO Transit will also work with the community to examine local solutions, noting that the railside gardens have been maintained for 15 years by local residents as an example of these sorts of arrangements.*
- The concrete walls will require graffiti removal which can be very toxic with chemicals such as Zylene which can run down the walls into the ground and groundwater supply when used. The community wants to do something progressive and environmentally responsible with these walls and it's important for GO Transit to listen to this.

### 3D. Noise and Vibration Mitigation Engineering

- Are the decibel average increases based on 2015 service or full build?
  - *It is based on both scenarios.*
- How much quieter are electric trains?
  - *When you read the Assessment of Noise Impacts with Electrification of Union Pearson Express and GO Trains, you can see various pieces of equipment were measured. The two largest contributors to noise are wheel/track interaction and the locomotive engine. The electric trains are not as quiet as you might think. With average speeds, for example, a GO locomotive is approx 86 decibels, and the electric trains we have information on is in the 83 decibel range. So when you average it out with other noises, the difference ends up being about 2 decibels.*
- We are concerned that the walls could bounce more noise into our community, because streets like Dundas are very loud already. Will the wall increase the car and truck noises on one side while mitigating train noises from the other?
  - *Some walls absorb sound and others reflect it. The design that we come up with working with the CAC will address local conditions.*
- Where does the train begin to brake to stop at Bloor Station?
  - *The braking distance will be extended and noise will be mitigated by a wall at Wallace Ave. The property developers for that site are required to do a noise and vibration assessment, and have to plan for ways to mitigate the noise.*
- Is vibration mitigation within the scope of this committee?
  - *It is not within the scope of this committee to do design work on the vibration mitigation as there is no visual impact.*

### 3E. 2015 Service vs. Full Build Service Walls

- Let's say we don't get the full build walls in 2015, but later the walls are needed to mitigate noise. What happens?
  - *If the full build service walls are not installed in 2015, we will develop a process to re-install the full build service walls when needed. GO Transit may require easements, or*

*some kind of agreement in writing that says that the full build service wall installation was deferred.*

- Beyond this committee what are the other regulatory bodies who will be consulted in the designs?
  - *No further regulatory approvals are needed. That said, we are in consultation with the city of Toronto as there are landscaping and maintenance issues to be addressed.*
- What is full build versus 2015?
  - *In terms of service increases, 2015 represents UP Express trains and 10 more GO trains. Full service means all day-two way GO service plus the UP Express service. For instance, Milton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Barrie only go morning and evening now, in future they would go all day in both directions. Implementation depends on ridership, demand, funding. Realistically, when the EA was done a decision was made that looks at the ultimate conditions that could happen, all day-two way, plus morning/evening rush. With UP Express that works out at approximately 450 trains. It's not physically possible to actually operate this number of trains as Union Station can't handle that volume. So realistically, it probably ends up being 380 to 400 trains maximum, over 25 years and staged up.*
- Full build walls may not be needed for many years to come – so do we only need to discuss 2015 service walls?
  - *GO Transit has received requests from people adjacent to the corridor who are experiencing a lot of noise now and want the full service walls to be built. When we made the decision to provide the benefit now, we did so because of those requests and because it's easier to build now. We don't want to be in the position of not having the walls up if the noise happens sooner than later. The Bloor-Dundas area has the highest decibel levels in the GTS corridor, so it is a very real consideration.*
- CAC participants are committed to ensuring that something equitable can be worked out in terms of solutions for the whole community instead of weighting decisions in favour of one group of neighbours over another.

### 3F. Development and Empty Lots

- Why is there a wall being put up at the empty lot near Ernest Ave, and not at the empty lot by Wallace Ave?
  - *We are only mitigating for the present conditions of homes that are there, such as those near Ernest Avenue. Noise mitigation of the empty lot at Wallace Ave will be the responsibility of the property developer.*
- Why wouldn't you mitigate the homes on the north east side, near Osler? Is CP going to address the issue?
  - *Noise in that area is CP's responsibility. GO Transit can provide the relevant contact at CP to address noise issues.*
- What about the Wallace Avenue walls – as the area develops what consultation is going to happen as we need to add new noise walls?
  - *A new road is being built in that area and that's why they're not putting a wall at that location. The wall ends where the developer has to take over, it's their responsibility to install noise mitigation.*

## 4. Action Items & Next Steps

1. Terms of Reference Review: (as outlined in Section 2 above) Participants requested that the Terms of Reference be edited to address the following points:
  - That section **4.4 Members as Community Representatives** include the option of sending and receiving information through community association channels e.g. resident association websites, forums, meetings and emails.
  - The list of people and community groups represented on the Bloor St Clair CAC should be shared with all members of the Committee, including links to their community association websites: Members with links to share should send them to Kelly Thornton at GO Transit.
  - Suggestion that the Bloor-Dupont CAC name be changed, and instead be known as the Bloor – St Clair CAC which better reflects the geographic area it covers.
2. GO Transit will provide, either directly or through their Landscape Architect, more detailed information on wall locations, heights, greening technologies and landscaping strategies.
3. That the Terms of Reference for the CAC be edited to reflect the feedback received (complete - see updated draft TOR included as Attachment C).
4. All members present agreed to sign the ToR when these changes have been made.
5. GO Transit will explore the feasibility of adding livelinks on the GO Transit website other discussion groups, such as the Junction Triangle Facebook page, to foster transparency.
6. Site walks will be offered by Kelly Thornton where possible before the next CAC meeting in May.
7. GO Transit will examine the feasibility of marking out wall location with spray paint, surveyors tape or stakes in the ground.
8. GO Transit will share terms and scope of the Landscape Architect Tender.

## 5. CAC Tasks for Next Meeting

### The GO Transit team requested that CAC members:

1. Consult the community and consider the following questions prior to the next CAC meeting: When designing the noise walls, what issues and preferences should the landscape architect consider? e.g. deterring graffiti, minimizing shadows, maximizing plants and greenery, reflecting local history etc.
2. Get out and walk the corridor to become fully familiar with the corridor and the general locations where walls are planned before the next meeting, with or without the planning and assistance of GO Transit staff.
3. Review CAC meeting notes: All CAC participants will receive a draft of the meeting notes for their review after which time they will be posted on the GO Transit GTS webpage for the public to see.

## ATTACHMENT A: Meeting Agenda

**Georgetown South Project**  
**Noise Wall Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1**  
St. Josaphat Church Hall  
110 Franklin Avenue, Toronto ON

April 4, 2013  
6:30 – 8:30 pm

### PROPOSED AGENDA

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|----------------|--|
| <b>6:30 pm</b> | <b>Welcome</b>   |
| <b>6:35 pm</b> | <b>Introductions and Agenda Review</b>   |
| <b>6:50 pm</b> | <b>Presentation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Big Move and Georgetown South Project update</li><li>2. Noise study and mitigation</li></ul> <p><i>Questions of clarification</i></p>   |
| <b>7:30 pm</b> | <b>Terms of Reference: Group review and confirm</b>  |
| <b>7:55 pm</b> | <b>Location of noise walls</b>   |
| <b>8.15 pm</b> | <b>Involving the wider community &amp; preparing for meeting 2:</b> Members consider and explore this question with the wider community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. When designing the noise walls, what issues and preferences should the landscape architect consider? e.g. deterring graffiti, minimizing shadows, maximizing plants and greenery, reflecting local history etc.</li><li>2. Confirm date, location and purpose of Meeting 2</li></ul> |
| <b>8.30 pm</b> | <b>Adjourn</b>   |



## **ATTACHMENT B: Participant Attendance List**

### **The following CAC members attended the meeting:**

Desmond McComish  
Scott Dobson  
Richard Mongiat  
Joey Schwartz  
Elka Weinstein  
Tariq Asmi  
Ruth Caspell  
Stewart Clark  
Tina Earl  
Toni Earl  
Jennifer Francisco  
Peter Goddard  
Janet Kimber  
Francis LeBouthillier

William Martinen  
Kevin McCarthy  
Barb McQuoid  
Chad Mounteny  
Claire Naranjo-Vargas  
Timothy Noronha  
Teresa Pavlin  
Lunette Postuma  
Sarah Smithies  
John Suline  
Netami Stuart (City of Toronto)  
Stephanie Nakitsas (for MP Andrew Cash)  
Gerard DiTrollo (for MPP Cheri DiNovo)  
Paul Ferreira (for MP Mike Sullivan)

### **CAC members unable to attend:**

Christopher Bembridge  
Brian Holmes  
Karen Jones  
Greg Majster  
Vicki McGregor  
Ian Parsonage  
Patrick Pritchard  
Rodderick Daffyd  
Shafina Soobrattie

Peter White  
MPP Laura Albanese  
Councillor Ana Bailao  
MP Peggy Nash  
Councillor Frances Nunziata  
Councillor Cesar Palacio  
Councillor Gord Perks  
MPP Jonah Schein

### **GO Transit Team:**

Stephen Lipkus, Executive Director, Georgetown South Project  
Manuel Pedrosa, Manager, Community Relations, Georgetown South Project  
Mandeep Jassal, Supervisor, Community Relations, Georgetown South Project  
Kelly Thornton, Community Relations, Georgetown South Project

### **Independent Facilitator & Notetaker:**

Suzannah Kinsella, Jane Farrow, Bianca Wylie of Swerhun Inc.