



Needed: Transit to airport from all directions

Fewer than 1 per cent of travellers now take public transit to Pearson

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VANESSA LU
CITY HALL BUREAU CHIEF

All transit roads should lead to Pearson airport.

That's the message of Metrolinx chair Rob MacIsaac, who says new transit networks should allow passengers to get to Pearson International Airport from all directions, including the long-promised fast link from Union Station.

With fewer than 1 per cent of all travellers getting to and from Pearson by public transit, MacIsaac says access needs to be a priority.

The plan calls for moving the Toronto bus terminal, currently at Bay and Dundas Sts., to Union Station, in part to provide better bus-rail links.

Rapid transit will link to Pearson from the east along Eglinton Ave., from the north along Finch Ave., from the west via the Highway 403 transitway, and from the south via Highway 427 and Kipling subway station.

The idea of a fast rail link from Union Station to Pearson, which handles more than 31.5 million passengers a year, has been debated for more than a decade, but the proposal has been mired in controversy over regulatory hurdles and neighbourhood opposition in Weston.

"The fixed rail link is perfect. We really need it. The city really needs it. The airport really needs it," said Toby Lennox, vice-president of corporate affairs and communications for the Greater Toronto Airports Authority.

"But also, the really important part is that it's actually part of an overall transit plan so you're now actually talking about transit to the airport."

Pearson officials are already working with the TTC to make sure there's a light rail link directly into the terminal building, probably the planned Eglinton line, said Lennox, who noted that 42,000 people work at the airport.

With half of Canada's air freight moving through Pearson, the GTAA will also be working with Metrolinx on its strategy for moving goods around the region.

Toronto Board of Trade president Carol Wilding agreed the airport link is a significant step.

"If we talk about Toronto from a globally competitive standpoint, the ability to move

people quickly in and out of one of our key hubs is absolutely essential," she said.

With files from Tess Kalinowski