



## TORONTO - WELCOME TO TRANSIT CITY

(Transit Toronto Website - Friday March 16th 2007)

Whilst Britain has gained the reputation during 2007 of officially restricting its "spend" on Supertram networks, some English speaking countries are preparing to invest heavily on modernising and extending their tramway type light rail systems. Toronto, with a moderately sized but very efficient tramway network, has unveiled an ambitious blueprint for a light rail system that would criss-cross the city far beyond existing and planned subway lines. The plan envisions a vast network of above ground tramways that stretch out to the far reaches of this city and in order to bring reliable and effective transit to these communities, rapid transit vehicles in their own dedicated lanes are being proposed on many corridors.

Supertrams generally have "grown-up" and their moderate carrying capacities of 50 years ago are becoming much closer to Metro loadings and, with their more frequent services, possibly surpassing it. This point in Britain is unfortunately being overlooked even though it tends to make a Supertram service somewhat low cost, more convenient and probably as efficient as a metro service. (light rail @ \$30m-km compared with metro @ \$250m to 300m-km). Toronto has estimated that a 60 to 80-km web would cost \$6bn. Compare this with the tube infrastructure cost to Docklands in London.

The aim is to move 175m people a year, a third of which would be new transit riders. This would make a significant contribution to reducing traffic congestion. The plans call for seven light rail lines covering 120-km of the city. The new network would connect neighbourhoods currently not served by transit. ***Nobody living in Toronto should be disadvantaged because they don't own a car.***

The large system being planned offers an opportunity to consider buying two distinct types of streetcars, compact ones for downtown routes and larger ones in more suburban areas. As it stands, the plan calls for 250 new model street cars.

This review provides a good comparison between the Toronto approach to urban transit and British attitudes, already covered in SUPERTRAM - IS IT NOW A POLITICAL FOOTBALL ! (mid-September 2007)

The TTC Chairman, realising its magnitude, is on record as claiming ***:Its not pie in the sky: But can I say we do not have all the money to pay for it. Help is expected from the Federal and Provincial levels of Government for a significant amount. It is hoped also that some will come from gasoline taxes and from the Prime Ministers \$2bn National Transit Strategy. It is a pragmatic approach, plan it and then figure out how to pay for it.***

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