

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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### VINCE VERSACE

Federal finance minister Jim Flaherty talks about the merits of the new \$38-million York University Busway. The busway will reduce commuting times between Downsview station and York U campus by seven minutes.

Plan for York U busway includes construction of bus-only lanes in Finch hydro corridor

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staff writer

Ground will break this summer on a \$38 million rapid bus transit route to York University from Downsview Station to help reduce travel time for thousands of students.

The six-kilometre York University Busway will shave an estimated seven minutes off the typical

bus commute between the university and Downsview subway station. The busway is regarded as a stop-gap measure as the Spadina subway is extended.

“While we all know designing and building the Spadina subway extension will take time — this additional six kilometres of dedicated bus lanes are an interim solution which is both practical and efficient,” said Jim Flaherty, federal finance minister.

The route involves dedicated high-occupancy vehicle lanes on Allen Road and Dufferin Street as bus-only. Also, new bus-only roadways will be built in a portion of the Finch hydro corridor between Keele Street and Dufferin Avenue, just north of Finch, and on York University lands. The busway is expected to carry almost 5,000 people an hour. York currently has 1,700 bus trips to its campus daily. The busway is expected to open August 2009.

The federal and provincial governments are each contributing \$9.7 million and Toronto \$18.4 million to the project. Once the Spadina subway extension is completed, plans are to incorporate the busway into the general TTC transit network.

“This busway shows what can happen when three levels of government work together in partnership,” said David Miller, mayor of Toronto.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) recently identified the Finch hydro corridor as one of many “regionally significant transit opportunities” in a commissioned report which looked at transportation opportunities in the Greater Toronto Area.

“In an ideal world, it (the York busway) would have been done already or there would be no need for it because the subway would have been extended,” said Andy Manahan, executive director of RCCAO. “It is an important project and may be it sets a precedent for using hydro corridors for transit or bike lanes.”

Richard Soberman, RCCAO’s consultant for the transit opportunity report, said use of the Finch hydro corridor as a busway could provide rapid connections with intersecting subways as well as north-south commuter rail services servicing Stouffville, Richmond Hill and Bradford.

“Thus, while the corridor may not generate substantial new transit ridership from nearby areas, a variety of public and private regional bus services would be able to expand opportunities for transit service to a wider variety of destinations within Toronto and from origins in Durham, York and Peel, as well,” wrote Soberman.