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## THE TORONTO EASTERN RAILWAY

## RADIAL ON THE EASTERN LAKESHORE

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With almost 25 years of progress of GO Transit service expanding, and continuing to expand, easterly from Toronto along the Lakeshore, together with periodic electrification studies, it is appropriate to look back to over a half century earlier at a system that almost succeeded in accomplishing the same objectives.

## ORIGINS AND PLANS (1910-1911)

When the Canadian Northern Ontario Railway surveyed its proposed route from Todmorden, in the Don Valley north of Toronto, to Trenton, the alignment missed the communities on the shore of Lake Ontario until it reached Cobourg. Contact was made with only the northern parts of Oshawa and Port Hope. East of Cobourg, the line was closer to the Kingston Road (Highway 2) and the Grand Trunk Railway to just west of Trenton, where it diverted further south. (The Canadian Northern Ontario line was opened to Trenton in 1911, and from there to Ottawa in 1913.)

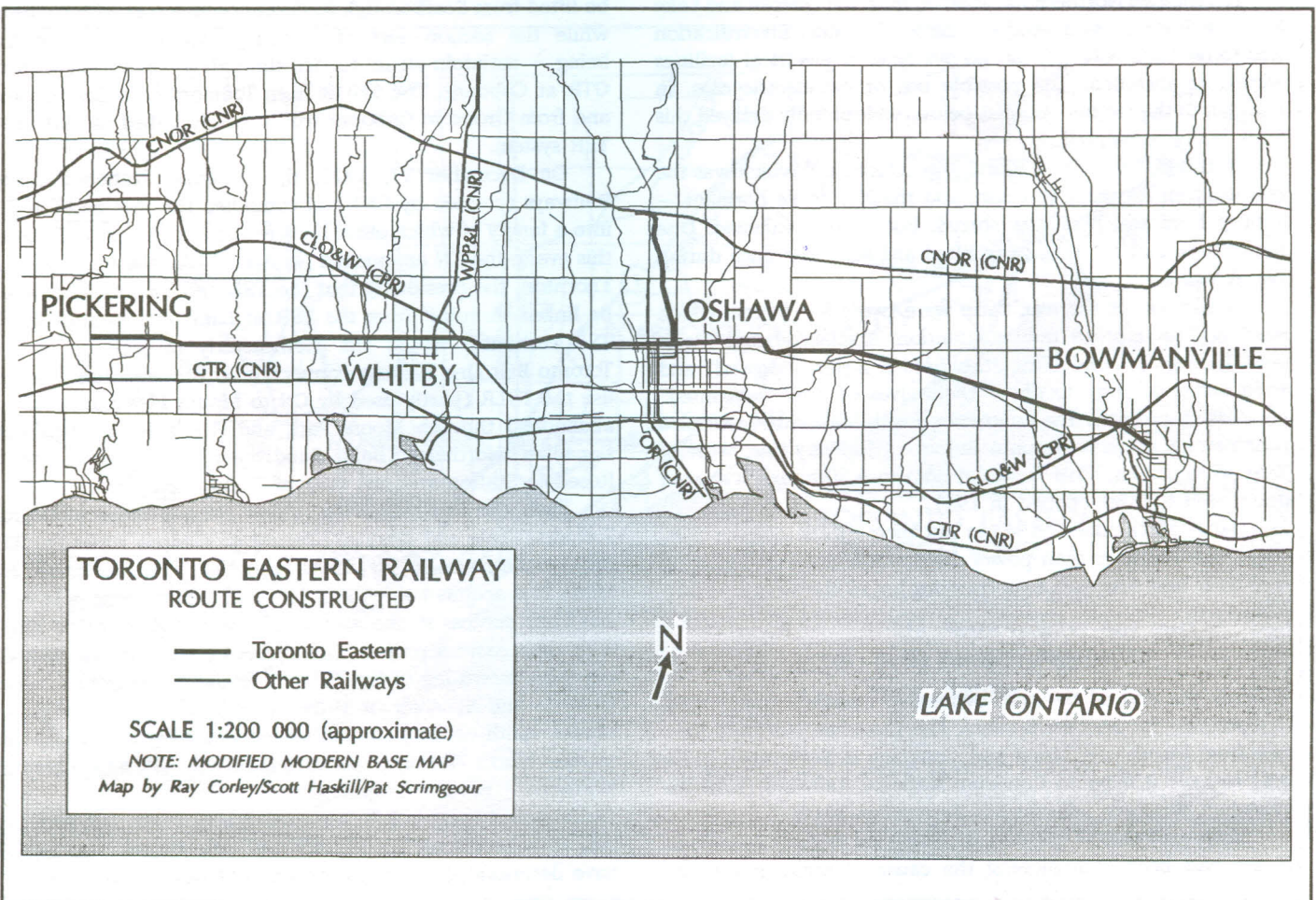
Following opposition from the towns on the lake, the partners in the Canadian Northern - Mackenzie and Mann - indicated that an electric railway would be built to provide

local service along the lake shore. The two acquired the charter of the Toronto Eastern Railway through their partnership, Mackenzie, Mann and Company, a separate organisation from the Canadian Northern.

The Toronto Eastern Railway (TER) had been incorporated by an Oshawa group on April 12, 1910, and chartered on May 4, to build from Toronto to Cobourg with branches from Cobourg to Peterborough, Scarborough to Uxbridge, and Oshawa to Lindsay and Oshawa South. Surveys commenced in the summer of 1910, with the first section planned from Toronto to Newcastle. The federal Board of Railway Commissioners approved plans from Pickering to Bowmanville in 1911. Construction did not start since the use of gas-electric (rather than electric) cars was being considered in the fall of 1911.

At the same time a further branch was proposed from Port Hope to Peterborough, Lindsay and Orillia. An interesting twist was that an "engineer," H.M. Graham, representing himself as a TER employee making surveys in Lindsay, was arrested and sentenced to jail, for soliciting funds from landowners to alter the route.

The future looked bright, but the period ahead could not have been more troubled in several arenas.





## DEVELOPMENT (1912–1918)

The first problem – which was never resolved – was the route out of Toronto, through Scarborough Township and the western part of Pickering Township. Consequently, work by the contractor, Ewan Mackenzie, began in the spring of 1912 easterly from the west limits of Pickering Village at Church Street through to Liberty Street at the eastern side of Bowmanville.

One third of a mile of track was laid in Wellington Street in 1912, between Scugog (at the CPR) and Liberty Streets, as was a two mile spur connecting to the Canadian Northern in North Oshawa.

(There is an unexplained report that a car was operated on the TER in Bowmanville in August 1912. See the short article on Page 6.)

By May 1913, grading was 90 percent complete from Bowmanville to Ritson Road in Oshawa, 8.8 miles, and about 50 percent from Oshawa to the CPR crossing at Whitby, 4.0 miles. The track was laid over these sections later in the year.

From the CPR crossing at Whitby to Church Street in Pickering, 6.4 miles, grading was over 50 percent complete in May 1913, the principal work being west of Whitby. Grading within Whitby on Mary Street did not commence until September, was halted in the winter, recommenced in May 1914, followed by track laying from the CPR west to Lynde's Creek (near the west town limits of Whitby), which started in July and was completed in August.

Trackage west of that point to Pickering was not laid at that time, nor was any further grading ever done west of Pickering.

A Canadian Northern locomotive, from the Québec and Lake St. John Railway, was used on the work trains. Electrification was to be 1200 volts DC but no overhead or electrical facilities were ever installed. The possible use of gas-electric cars, in addition to the factors outlined below, undoubtedly delayed this work being committed.

At this point, the first World War intervened, which was the reason given for work to cease, and the line to lie dormant – a sleep from which it later stirred, but never awakened. One source says that the rails were lifted and sent to France during World War I.

In addition to the war, there were two other factors which were not brought to public attention. Mackenzie and Mann were having financial difficulties (which never improved) and were under scrutiny to divest themselves of their "separated" partnership projects. The contractor, Ewan Mackenzie, was also constructing the new Toronto Suburban Railway line, west of Toronto to Guelph. This work did not cease, although it slowed down, and the line opened in 1917.

Hence Mackenzie and Mann put their efforts into the TSR, which was linked to their power distribution interests, believing that their best financial opportunities lay to the west.

## OWNERSHIP DELAYS (1918–1922)

Towards the end of the war, ownership transfers complicated any progress for another 5 years. The Canadian Northern took title from Mackenzie, Mann and Company in September 1918, only to have it move to Canadian National Railways (with the Canadian Northern takeover) in September 1919.

However, other plans were afoot. Sir Adam Beck of Ontario Hydro had been championing the cause of radial/interurban

lines throughout southern Ontario, and the communities affected by the TER's proposals actively promoted that the line be included in the Hydro system. A revised entrance into Toronto was proposed in January 1920 by Beck, to feed into a new radial terminal centre. By December 1921 even Toronto, Scarborough, and Pickering were holding referenda supporting Hydro's purchase; these passed overwhelming in the two townships but only marginally in the city.

But by 1922 it was back to dealing directly with the CNR. The Sutherland Commission of 1920 had effectively ended the radial system and the TER's owners were finally goaded into action by the municipal deputations, now supported by the Province of Ontario.

## THE LAST GASP (1922–1925)

On November 2, 1922, S.J. Hungerford, the vice-president and general manager of CN, announced a new plan. The former Canadian Northern route from Todmorden would be used to northeast of Kennedy Road and Eglinton Avenue in Scarborough, then a new line would cut across to join the former Grand Trunk line near old Scarborough Village. It would then parallel the GTR/CN line on its north side until striking off to connect with the western end of the TER at Pickering Village. The TER would then be used to Bowmanville, where a new extension would cut north to regain the Canadian Northern line at Orono, following it to Cobourg. Cobourg was a logical terminal, not only since it was the easterly limit of the neighbouring populated and industrialised communities east of Toronto, but also because terminal and interchange facilities were readily available. The Canadian Northern tracks were to be lifted from Scarborough to Orono (which met with protests), while the section east of Cobourg would – for the time being – maintain steam service through a connection with the GTR at Cobourg. The CNOR from Todmorden to Scarborough, and from Orono to Cobourg would be electrified as part of the TER system.

On December 17, 1923, the Canadian National Electric Railways (created by CN) had combined the TSR and the TER into a family of which other lines would become part. To herald this event, the CN announced (in April 1923, through Sir Henry Thornton, the president) that the TSR and TER systems would be linked. A cutoff from the TSR at Lambton (location of the TSR carhouse) would cut northeasterly to pick up the old Toronto Belt Line Railway connection at Fairbank Junction, and use the TBLR (partly used by CN to Mount Pleasant Road and abandoned through Moore Park and Rosedale) to regain the Canadian Northern (Bala Subdivision) line just north of Rosedale Station and just west of Todmorden.

Thus, the TSR, which succeeded going west 50 miles from Toronto (Keele and Dundas Streets) to Guelph while the TER lay dormant, was to be linked with the TER. Mackenzie and Mann had acquired the TSR's city and suburban lines in 1911 and their success in the west was now proposed to be linked with their eastern project. (As events turned out, the TSR did use the western leg of the TBLR's Humber Loop from Lambton to Keele and St. Clair in 1925. A projected extension – in a tunnel, south easterly, to parallel the CPR's North Toronto line, to the North Toronto union station of CP and Canadian Northern – never materialised).

A new engineer, S.B. Wass, was appointed. His first task was to rehabilitate the original TER line, which was said to have deteriorated. Electrification would now be at 1500 volts



DC, to conform to the TSR technology.

A slight delay occurred through arguments in Oshawa as to who would pave the track allowance. Oshawa finally agreed.

The crews first tackled the Oshawa–Bowmanville section in September with new ties and relaid the North Oshawa spur, said to have been taken up earlier. The Whitby–Oshawa section was not reported for any major work, but track was finally laid with 80 lb. steel from Whitby to Pickering in October and November.

The major work was the replacement of 14 trestles (four west and two east of Whitby, one at Oshawa, six east of Oshawa, and one major one at Bowmanville) tendered in November. No electrical work was undertaken.

In July 1924, all work ceased, followed by Thornton's announcement in 1925 that the project was abandoned.

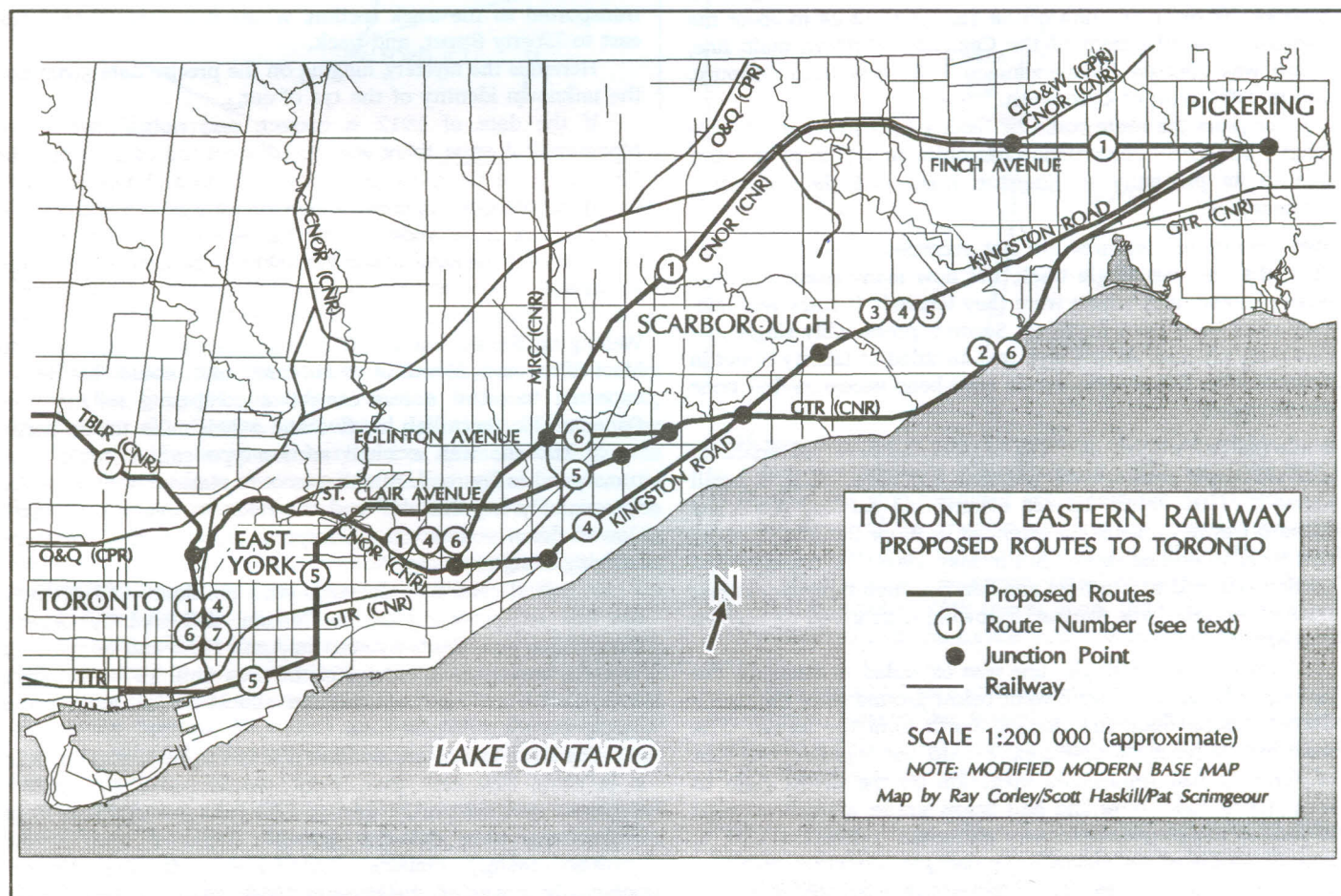
Apart from inspection trips on CN self propelled cars, revenue operation, let alone electrified service, was never instituted. The line was dismantled during 1925, except for three sections in Oshawa:

- The connection from the mainline on Bond Street at Ritson Road, to North Oshawa (Canadian Northern station, Orono Subdivision).
- On Bond Street, from Ritson Road westerly to Mary Street, as a new freight line connection.
- From the east end of Bond Street (at Ritson Road) easterly for 2000 feet, as a tail track. This section was reported to have been retained (and is so shown on a topographic map from the 1930s) for almost two miles as far east as the Ontario Missionary College, and not torn up until the mid-1930s.

## THE TORONTO ENTRANCES

The question of ready access to central Toronto was never successfully resolved, since all plans hinged on interfacing proposals that were yet to be effected. Following (in numbered sequence, as references to the map) are the access routes proposed west of Church Street in Pickering:

1. July 1910 – From Pickering, parallel to Finch Avenue to meet the Canadian Northern at Cherrywood Station (on Altona Road, Mile 17.0 from Todmorden), thence over the Canadian Northern into Toronto. Canadian Northern was still debating terminal facilities in Toronto.
2. May 1913 – From Pickering, southwest across Kingston Road to parallel the GTR from near Rosebank to a junction with the Scarborough Division of the Toronto and York Radial Railway near Scarborough Golf Club after crossing Kingston Road. However, the T&YRR had no downtown access, and was TTC gauge (4'10<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>").
3. 1913 – Conjecture that the line might follow Kingston Road into West Hill, to make the T&YRR connection.
4. 1913 – As part of a plan to consolidate all radial lines at Yonge and Cottenham Streets (near North Toronto station), one map from March 1913 shows the TER leaving Kingston Road around the junction of Danforth Avenue and proceeding to connect to the Canadian Northern around Victoria Park Avenue. (No route details were given, and artistic licence may have been present!)
5. January 1920 – A route was developed for the Hydro proposal. From Pickering, on Kingston Road to the GTR, beside the GTR to near McCowan Road, southwest to





Birchmount Road, following St. Clair Avenue to west of Woodbine Avenue, south on Durant Avenue and Craven Road, and west on private right-of-way near Keating and Lake Shore Streets to a terminal at Bay Street.

6. November 1922 – CNR's proposal for a route southeast parallel to the GTR from near Rosebank to near Scarborough Village at Markham Road, then west to join the Canadian Northern northeast of Kennedy Road and Eglinton Avenue, using the Canadian Northern to a new terminal at Queen Street, by the Don River. (Coincidentally, the Bowmanville–Orono link, and use of the Canadian Northern from Orono to Cobourg, would occur, and the Canadian Northern abandoned from Scarborough to Orono).
7. April 1923 – A second CNR proposal, as for November 1922 plus the connecting link to the Toronto Suburban Railway over the Belt Line Railway from Rosedale to Fairbank Junction, then on a new line southwest to Lambton.

#### REFLECTIONS

Conceived to answer the needs of commuter type service with Toronto for the Lakeshore communities, promoted to aid the Mackenzie and Mann interests, halted by World War I and ownership changes, confused as to how to reach downtown Toronto, revived too late by the CNR – the TER missed a place in electric railway history.

The CNR had seen the handwriting on the wall for the future of a new interurban, concentrating any efforts on upgrading the TSR Guelph line which had made the grade during the war.

Some observers believe that the CNR only continued to propose the reconstruction of the TER in 1922-24 to cover the planned dismemberment of the Canadian Northern main line, which was effected commencing in 1921 east from Cobourg, and in 1926 west of Greenburn.

For years the route could be readily traced over most of its length, but recent construction has obliterated it in most areas, due to its proximity to Kingston Road and the expanding communities.

Two operational features are not recorded in sources found. First, the line was single track, but how many passing sidings were planned, and where were they located? If track was laid, they must have been installed. Second, presumably single end cars were planned since a wye was installed at Liberty Street in Bowmanville. Other wyes would have been necessary, but none are recorded.

While the TER's operations east of Pickering never materialised, and westward routes were planned but never built, a small segment of the latter did see electric rail service. When the Toronto Transit Commission extended its Bloor-Danforth subway east from Woodbine to Warden in May 1968, the underground portion emerged to join the Canadian Northern right-of-way just west of Victoria Park Avenue, following it at grade to Warden Station.

In November 1980 the line was extended to Kennedy, but just east of Warden it again went below ground since the CNR's Geco industrial loop line coming north from the former GTR main line, to meet the CNR's ex-Toronto and Nipissing line east of Kennedy, had resurrected operation on the CNOR right of way. Hence, half above and half below grade, a small segment of four of the projected Toronto entrances (references 1, 4, 6, and 7) produced an electrified passenger service – with the unique operation of railroad freight above a portion of it. ■

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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#### DID A CAR RUN ON THE TER IN 1912?

In a history of Bowmanville, published in 1958, there is an account of a young man riding (unauthorised) on a car on Wellington Street, Bowmanville, which was said to have come over the TER from Toronto. The date given was August 6, 1912.

Considering that the only TER track laid by that date was 0.36 miles on that street, the car had to be somehow transported to the track section, where it is said to have run east to Liberty Street, and back.

Herein is the mystery, hinging on the precise date given and the unknown identity of the tye of car.

If the date of 1912 is correct, and not a memory or typographical error, there was no adjacent rail connection. The CPR line (the Campbellford, Lake Ontario and Western) had barely started grading construction, and did not have track laid in this area until mid-1913 at the earliest. Hence the rail connection at the Scugog and Wellington Street crossing did not yet exist.

The GTR had a freight spur to a point four blocks south of Wellington Street, but the GTR was less than sympathetic to Mackenzie and Mann at that time, and could hardly be expected to move a test car for a competing railway. The Canadian Northern line lay two and a half miles to the north.

If the car was a small section-type car, it could have transferred in by road. But the account states it was of a type "presumably for officials," and the rider "swung aboard" as it slowed down – thus the assumption that it was a passenger carrying design.

A logical candidate dovetails with the date – CNOR 500, the first self-propelled car in Canada, delivered by General Electric (of Erie, Pennsylvania) in April 1912 and assigned to Trenton, remaining in service in the area until 1914. But since it weighed 81,000 pounds and was almost 60 feet long, it was hardly transportable by road.

The most logical explanation is that the date, exact as it is, is in error. The next year, 1913, would probably permit a transport over the partly finished CPR from perhaps Port Hope or Cobourg.

The mystery remains. The "rider," Mr. Roy Hooper, personally recounted the story in 1958.

—RFC