



Toronto Convention

September 11–14, 2020

For 2020, the Electric Railroaders' Association returns to Toronto for its annual convention, an exciting four-day weekend event from Friday morning, September 11 through Monday, September 14.

It was 2003 when we last held our convention in Toronto, and a LOT has changed. This year's convention will feature tours of the Hillcrest Overhaul Shop and adjacent Operations Control Center, a day trip to the Halton County Radial Railway (Trolley) Museum, and a Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) streetcar charter. We will also visit to the new Kitchener ION light rail line.

Transit in Toronto needs no introduction to most of our members. The area is rich with many different systems and modes and significant changes since ERA's 2003 visit. Since 2003, the Toronto region has seen these significant changes in transit service:

- Total replacement of the streetcar fleet with the new Bombardier Flexity multi-section streetcars;
- Reconstruction of the 512 St. Clair line to grade-separated median, the 1.6-mile King Street streetcar priority lane near Downtown and the Cherry Street extension to the 504-King streetcar;
- Opening of the 5.3-mile extension of the Spadina subway north to the Town of Vaughan, operated with the first open gangway subway trains in North America and featuring spectacular new stations;
- Opening of the direct high-frequency Union-Pearson Express diesel-multiple unit train service between Pearson International Airport and Union Station in Downtown Toronto;
- Significant expansion in the GO-Transit commuter rail service, both in frequency and network covered;
- For bus fans (yes, there are some in the ERA!), two major traffic separated busways, one on Highway 7 north of Toronto and the 11-mile Mississauga MiWay Transitway, both featuring fully built stations.

A pre-loaded tap and go PRESTO fare card will be distributed to each participant purchasing the full ERA convention package or the September 11th Hillcrest tour with the September 13th TTC streetcar tour. Your PRESTO card will be good for our scheduled trips to and from Hillcrest and to and from our Sunday charter, plus two additional two-hour trips on TTC subways, streetcars and buses. PRESTO cards can also be used on the Union-Pearson Express train, GO Transit and suburban bus carriers. There will be plenty of free time to travel on your own; be sure to **re-load** your PRESTO card with enough funds to cover any transportation fares beyond the TTC fares provided.

Note that hotel prices will be stated in Canadian dollars. As of January 1, 1 CAD = 0.77 USD (1 USD = 1.30 CAD). This conversion rate fluctuates, however. As a foreign country, you must take a passport valid for six months beyond your last day of travel. See <https://bit.ly/2Fb51AW> for details on document requirements. **You are solely responsible for having the proper document to cross between the United States and Canada.**



Overall, the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) system has the second highest per capita transit ridership in the U.S. and Canada, exceeded only by New York City. Two of the four TTC rapid transit lines have frequencies and passenger loads rivaling the NYC subway. The subway features unique fare-free transfers between the subway and surface buses and streetcars. Toronto operates the largest light rail/streetcar system in North America with 10 lines and 204 new Flexity cars. The 504 King Street line is the busiest surface transit line in the U.S. and Canada with 84,000 daily riders. This is an intensively used system for all modes.

Toronto is not only Canada's largest metropolis, but it's the country's premier tourist destination. There is much more to see than its large rail transit system, including...

- **Famous sights:** CN Tower, Toronto City Hall, Parliament Building, St. Lawrence Market, Kensington Market, Toronto Islands, Casa Loma (early 20th century castle), Greater Toronto Zoo, Ontario Place;
- **Iconic neighborhoods for dining:** Chinatown, Queens Street West, The Danforth (Greek), Little Italy, Little Portugal, Entertainment District and the booming and restored mid-19th Century Distillery District;
- **Endless shopping:** Eaton Center (North America's busiest shopping mall) or high-end shopping in the Bloor-Yorkville area (Toronto's "Fifth Avenue");
- **World-class museums:** Art Gallery of Ontario, Museum of Contemporary Art/Toronto, Royal Ontario Museum, Gardiner Museum, Bata Shoe Museum, McMichael Canadian Art Collection (requires an auto)
- **Cultural attractions:** Toronto Symphony, Royal Opera of Canada, live theater and (from September 10-20) the Toronto International Film Festival which hosts over 450,000 visitors each year.

This is a convention weekend not to be missed!

Convention Headquarters

Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre

30 Carlton Street
Toronto, ON M5B 2E9, Canada
416-977-6655

The centrally located Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre is a two-minute walk from the College Street Station on Subway Line 1 (the Yonge-University-Spadina Line) at Yonge and College Streets. From that station, **all of the above destinations, except the Greater Toronto Zoo and Ontario Science Center, are no more than 30 minutes away by foot, subway and/or streetcar.**

The ERA has secured a block of rooms at the discounted rate of CA\$195 (US\$150) plus 13% harmonized sales tax (HST) and a 4.52% municipal accommodations tax (MAT), for a king bed or two-double-bed room for one or two guests for the nights of September 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 with checkout on September 15 (plus three days **before and after** these dates, at hotel's discretion based on availability).



Hotel features include:

- Hotel check-in at 3:00 PM; checkout at 11:00 AM;
- Complimentary Wi-Fi in guestrooms, in the lobby and public areas;
- Heated indoor pool;
- Fitness center.

Holiday Inn is part of the InterContinental Hotel Group, so IHG Rewards Club members get points for their stay (you can sign up on check-in if you're not currently a member).

Breakfast is **not** included in the room rate. A buffet breakfast is available in the hotel restaurant for CA\$19.95 (US\$15.36) plus tax. A continental breakfast is also available for CA\$14.95 (US\$11.52). Other options include:

- Cora's Breakfast and Lunch is right across the street from the Holiday Inn;
- Starbucks and Tim Horton's at College Street and Yonge Street, a two-minute walk from the hotel;
- McDonald's and Wendy's on Yonge north of College St., within a roughly six-minute walk from the hotel.

You can book online using the special link provided on the second to last page of this flyer (hotel reservation instructions). You can also book your reservation either by calling Holiday Inn Reservations at 1-855-914-9610 or directly with the Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre at 1-416-977-6655 (ask for "reservations").

Mention the "**group reservation block ERA**" when calling to get the CA\$195 per night plus taxes room rate. Contact Bob Newhouser immediately, at bnnyc1955@aol.com or 917-482-4235, if you don't get the CA\$195 per night room rate when you request it by phone or online.

The cut-off date for reservations is Friday, August 12, 2020 OR when our room block has been fully booked, whichever occurs first. Reservations booked after August 11 will be accepted by the Holiday Inn at the hotel's discretion based on availability and rate. **Book early and get this discount!**

Day 1: Friday, September 11 (best to arrive at hotel on September 10)

Hillcrest Complex Tour

At 8:45 AM, we will assemble and distribute pre-loaded PRESTO fare cards to all participants booked for this tour. We will use regular TTC subway and bus service to reach the Hillcrest Complex. We have requested tours of both the **D.W. Harvey Shops** and the **Operations Control Centre (OCC)**, both co-located at Hillcrest. All three TTC modes — bus, subway and streetcar — are managed at the OCC. We will likely be divided into several sub-groups to provide more personal attention and opportunity to ask questions and safe conduct through both facilities. The rest of the afternoon is free time on your own with two pre-loaded one-way trips (actually two-hour passes) on your PRESTO card.

A Rare Look at TTC in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s

At 7:15 PM, for our **Annual Slideshow Evening** we have invited 21-year TTC veteran Keith Littlewood to present rare slides of TTC operations in the 1950s through the 1970s, being shown publicly for the first time. The presentation will be based on TTC electric operations from that era, including detours, construction shots and test runs of the original 1954 Yonge subway. Also included will be the last shots of Peter Witts on Yonge (and other places), as well as some shots on lines that were abandoned after the opening of the



Yonge or the Bloor-Danforth subways. Keith will close with some work cars and a few buses including some red and cream diesel, trolleys and E-buses.

In his 21 years with TTC, Mr. Littlewood has worked all over the TTC in various capacities such as Wheel-Trans planning and scheduling, the Transit Control Centre, route supervisor at Arrow Road Division, assistant superintendent at Arrow Road and Roncesvalles Divisions, and most recently as an instructor for bus transportation in the Operations Training Centre. He is one of the two agency experts on the ongoing E-Bus project, so we'll be treated to some photos of this newest electric transit mode. Keith has a total of 39 years of experience in public transit, having held positions in operations, planning, and scheduling at several other Ontario transit properties prior to joining TTC.

Day 2: Saturday, September 12

Halton County Radial Railway Museum

Our chartered motor coach(es) will pick us up at 9:00 AM in front of our hotel to carry us to the Halton County Radial Railway in Rockwood, Ontario. The Ontario Electric Railway Historical Association maintains an extensive collection of operating streetcars on its 1-mile line, which has loops at each end. We will be able to ride and photograph rolling stock from single-truck streetcars to PCCs, as well as rapid transit cars. A box lunch is included in your tour price (select your sandwich on registration page). Return is by 6:00 pm.

En-route to the museum, our motor coach will also drive by and make a selected photo stop or two at the ongoing Eglinton Crosstown light rail line construction underway by Toronto's metropolitan transit agency Metrolinx. This 12-mile line features extensive grade separated median and subway operation and will be Toronto's second east-west crossing since the Bloor-Danforth subway line (Line 2) opened in the 1960s.

Day 3: Sunday, September 13

TTC Streetcar Tour

Early start! We will leave from the Holiday Inn lobby at 8 AM and travel to the meeting point for our charter at approximately 9 AM. Our TTC Streetcar Tour is anticipated to include one CLRV and one PCC car and will cover as much of the network that's possible in four hours. We plan to cover portions of the Carlton, Kingston Road, King-Cherry Street extension, Bathurst, Spadina and Queen lines. Actual routing will depend on trackage made available to us by TTC on the day of the tour. Due to the large anticipated group, photo stops will occur in streetcar loops (no street photo stops due to the always high frequency of TTC streetcar service). The tour will be completed by 1 PM to allow you to have the afternoon free for lunch and riding.

Annual Banquet and Presentation

ERA's Annual Banquet will be held in a private room at the Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre. An hour-long informal reception and cash bar will begin at 6:00 PM and dinner will follow promptly at 7:00 PM. A Metrolinx President & Chief Executive Officer Phil Verster has been requested as our guest speaker and will provide an overview of present and future transit projects in Greater Toronto, perhaps the most extensive such long-range investment program in North America. Metrolinx is the region's metropolitan transit agency.



Day 4: Monday, September 14

Kitchener ION Light Rail

Last day. We will leave the Holiday Inn at 9:00 AM on our chartered motor coach and head to Kitchener, Ontario, which launched one of the two newest light rail lines in Canada (the other being Ottawa). The 12-mile ION light rail line opened in June 2019. Each person booked on this trip will receive a day pass to ride the light rail and bus system. You will have four hours to ride and photograph the line and have lunch. Each one-way trip on the light rail line takes 45 minutes. We have requested a tour of the maintenance shops, which will be included if possible.

We anticipate arrival near Kitchener City Hall by 10:30 AM. We will leave the Kitchener City Hall area at 3:30 PM and return to the hotel by 5:30 PM.

Logistics

Reaching the Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre

Arriving bus passengers at Toronto Coach Terminal (Dundas and Bay Streets): The Toronto Coach Terminal is a roughly 15-minute walk to the Holiday Inn. Walk north on Bay Street to College Street. Turn right on College Street and walk 1.5 long blocks east to the hotel. You can also walk on Dundas Street to Yonge Street and take the northbound Line 1 subway one stop to College Street and walk two minutes east to the hotel. Taxi fare from the bus terminal to the hotel will be inexpensive since the distance is under one mile.

Arriving train passengers at Union Station: Take the Finch bound Line 1 (Yonge) subway four stops to College Street station. Walk two minutes east to reach the Holiday Inn. Taxi fares will be moderate.

Arriving at Toronto Lester B. Pearson International Airport: Buy a CA\$12.35 (US\$9.50) ticket and board the Union Pearson Express (UP Express) train from the airport to the last stop at Union Station in Downtown Toronto. The UP Express diesel multiple-unit trains run every 15 minutes most times and trip time is approximately 25-30 minutes. Once at Union Station, look for the subway entrance. Take the Finch bound Line 1 (Yonge) subway four stops to College Street station. Walk two minutes east to reach the Holiday Inn. Taxi fares from Union Station will be moderate.

Arriving at Billy Bishop/Toronto City Airport: Once you have arrived at Toronto City Airport, walk through the short tunnel to the airport's mainland entrance and take the free shuttle bus to the Royal York Hotel stop, directly opposite Union Station. The ride is roughly 15 minutes depending on traffic. At the Royal York Hotel, locate the Union Station subway entrance. Take the Finch bound Line 1 (Yonge) subway four stops to College Street station. Walk two minutes east to reach the Holiday Inn. Taxi fares from the airport direct to the hotel will be moderate.



Making Your Hotel Reservations

The Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre ERA discounted rate is CA\$195 per night (US\$150) plus a 13% HST and 4.52% MAT tax per room per night (two queen beds for one or two guests). This hotel is a member of the **InterContinental Hotel Group, IHG Rewards Club**. There are two ways to book your reservation:

1. **Use the hotel's special ERA link to book your room:** [ERA 2020](#). Using this URL will automatically bring up the discounted rates of CA\$195 per night (plus tax) for rooms with two queen beds. To obtain these discounted rates, please book as soon as possible. **You may not book with Rewards Club points otherwise you will lose the ERA discount.** The room rates are available for the nights of September 10, September 11, September 12, September 13 and September 14 with checkout on September 15 (plus three days prior and after these dates, depending on availability).
2. **Phone:** Book your reservation either by calling Holiday Inn national reservations at 855-914-9610 or directly with the Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre at 1-416-977-6655 (ask for "reservations"). Mention the **"reservation block: ERA"** when calling to get the CA\$195 per night plus taxes room rate.

Cut-off date for discount rate: These discounted rates expire after August 12, 2020. Further offers of the discount rate after July 30 are at hotel's discretion on a space available basis.

Arrivals and Departures at the Hotel

Check-in / Check-out Times:

Check-in is at 3 PM on day of arrival. Check-out is 11 AM on day of departure.

Room Cancellations:

Room cancellations must be received no later than 24 hours prior to check-in (3 PM) for refund at the hotel. Your cancellation number **MUST** be obtained to ensure a refund. All succeeding reservations will be automatically cancelled by the system if guests fail to check-in on the first arrival date and the first night will be charged on the credit card provided with no refund. *If you can't make the first night of your visit, but can make the other nights, call the hotel immediately to preserve the rest of your reservation.*

Please Note:

Scheduled events, their content and times given in this flyer are subject to change in the final itinerary issued in July/August 2020 or during the trip without prior notice. Daily trip itineraries may be changed without prior notice to ensure on-time return at the end of each day. Announcements will be made each day to update guests on essential information during all ERA events. **Providing your phone number (and email address) on your registration form is critical.** If you have questions regarding the itinerary or accommodations, please e-mail **Bob Newhouser** at bnnyc1955@aol.com or call/text him at **917-482-4235**. E-mail is preferred.

