

Office of the President

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November 30, 2015

J. Robert Prichard
Chair Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

Dear Mr. Prichard:

Re: Metrolinx Board Meeting, December 3, 2015

With the Line 5 Crosstown LRT taking shape on Eglinton Avenue, we thought it would be timely to remind Metrolinx and the Toronto Transit Commission about Centennial College's special gem located just north of Toronto's vital thoroughfare. Our **Ashtonbee Campus**, which serves some 4,000 full-time students, was established in the "Golden Mile" retail strip in 1969 in what used to be the original Canadian headquarters of Volkswagen and Porsche

The redbrick VW building was a fitting acquisition for Centennial, which had previously absorbed the Provincial Institute of Automotive and Allied Trades in 1967 with the intention of moving the skilled-trades school out of its crowded garage on Wellesley Street and into larger automotive facilities in Scarborough. The new location would form the second campus of Ontario's first public college.

In 1973 our massive new Ashtonbee Campus opened adjacent to the VW building, with enough space to train technicians in every form of land, sea and air transportation technology. Half a kilometre long and complete with its own hangar, it was Canada's largest transportation training hub, with half of Ontario's automotive technicians attending classes there. Numerous Centennial graduates went on to join the TTC and GO Transit to maintain the locomotives and buses that move thousands of commuters daily in the GTHA. In fact, Centennial developed a modified apprenticeship program specifically tailored for transit operators.

Today, the campus boasts a gleaming presence on Ashtonbee Road at the intersection of Hakimi Avenue, where our new library and student hub forms a gateway to the property. *The Globe and Mail* described our bold addition as "both brawny and finely detailed, complex and rich with symbolism." The newspaper noted that the college earned one of the City of Toronto's coveted Urban Design Awards for the project.

Our campus addition is a testament to the new reality in transportation education: technicians require high-tech equipment and resources to maintain and repair today's aircraft, automobiles, heavy equipment and other forms of motive power. Yet our success has ushered another reality: many of our students rely on cars to travel to the campus, which has resulted in an overflow of vehicles using nearby commercial parking lots.

Campus expansion and a growing mix of programs have contributed to an increase in the number of students attending classes at Ashtonbee. We would like to see more of them relying on transit to commute to and from other areas of Toronto. Enhanced accessibility to the campus via a reliable, high-frequency LRT line is essential to serving the college's rising student population. The light-rail service running along Eglinton Avenue across the city will allow the college to appeal to a wider pool of students.

Given Centennial's long history in the area, our stature as a major educator in the city (with 20,000 full-time students), as well as being one of Scarborough's largest employers, it may be advantageous to our learners and our community to propose that the LRT stop at Hakimi Avenue be named after Centennial's Ashtonbee Campus.

Centennial College has been a fixture in the neighbourhood for almost 50 years, stemming back to when Ashtonbee Road was mostly a rural road crisscrossed by railway lines feeding the nearby factories that produced wartime armaments. The road was also used as a local drag strip for a time – and I can't say for certain that our students avoided participating in any late-night challenges! More recently, with the Golden Mile transformed into a regional retail centre, Ashtonbee Road has become a delivery route for trucks serving the big-box stores.

Redevelopment of the Golden Mile compelled us to give Ashtonbee Campus a long-overdue makeover and expansion. It's helped to put our transportation technology campus in the public eye, so that more students and their parents may weigh the benefits of learning a skilled trade.

We would like to augment our visibility by putting Ashtonbee Campus on the map – specifically, the TTC map displaying the Crosstown LRT stops along Eglinton Avenue. What a wonderful and fitting way to mark our 50th anniversary in 2016!

I hope you and your fellow board members at Metrolinx and the TTC might give our suggestion some thought. I would be delighted to come and speak to you about our ongoing plans to enhance and grow our presence in Scarborough's Golden Mile.

With respect,



Ann Buller
President & CEO

Cc: Josh Colle
Alan Heisey
Hon. Steven Del Duca