



**Michael
Thompson**

Chair, Economic Development
and Culture Committee

Toronto City Councillor
Scarborough Centre, Ward 37

January 7, 2015

Bruce McCuaig
Metrolinx
20 Bay Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 2W3

Re Naming of a Transit Stop Hakimi (north leg of Lebovic)

Dear Mr. McCuaig and Members of the Metrolinx Board:

We are writing in support of a TTC request to designate the Eglinton LRT line Hakimi Avenue stop at Hakimi Avenue and Eglinton Avenue East, west of Warden Avenue "Hakimi Avenue."

Hakimi Avenue was named in 2008 after entrepreneur, businessman and philanthropist Kareem Hakimi, founder of Hakim Optical. The home of a Hakim Optical shop for more than thirty years, it is the first street in Canada named for someone of Persian heritage.

Mr. Hakimi, who was born in Iran to a poor family, is the embodiment of the Canadian dream. Immigrating to Canada in the 1960s after learning lens-making skills in Europe, he carefully saved the money he earned working for others and used it to open his first Toronto optical lab in 1967. Through hard work and good judgement he has created one of the Canadian optical industry's largest and most successful chains, selling more than 50 million pairs of glasses since the company's founding.

Nearly 100 people work at various Hakim locations in Scarborough, and the firm's oldest site - also located in Scarborough Centre - is one of the company's largest laboratories. Operating in Scarborough for more than three decades, the Hakim name and presence have been rooted in the local community longer than any other name proposed for the LRT stop.


While he was building a business that now employs hundreds of people across Canada, Mr. Hakimi also remembered his responsibility to help the less fortunate. Over the years, he has donated hundreds of thousands of pairs of eyeglasses to people in need around the world in co-operation with Lions International. He also has led the Ride for Sight motorcycle charity parade of more than 1,000 motorcyclists across the GTA to raise money for vision research. Ride for Sight has raised more money than any other motorcycle charity ride in Canada, contributing significantly to the millions of dollars received by the Foundation Fighting Blindness. In recognition of his generosity and humanitarian efforts, Mr. Hakimi was inducted as a Knight of the Sovereign Order of St. John of Jerusalem, Knights of Malta, in June, 2005.

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A leader in the quarter-million-strong GTA Persian community, Kareem Hakimi is a true reflection of the changing, multi-cultural face of the Toronto region, and Scarborough in particular. He is a shining example of the opportunity for success that awaits new Canadians, and a role model for people of all cultural backgrounds. Designating an Eglinton LRT stop after the street named in his honour will be a constant reminder to the many newcomers to Canada who pass through the stop each day that there is room in our city for all people to succeed.

Therefore, we both believe strongly that there is no more appropriate name for a Scarborough transit stop than Hakimi Avenue.

Sincerely,
Yours Truly,



Michael Thompson
Chair, Economic Development and Culture Committee
Chair, Invest Toronto
Councillor, Scarborough Centre
Ward 37



Glenn De Baeremaeker
Councillor, Scarborough Centre
Ward 38