June 27, 2016

Chair Robert S. Prichard and Board of Directors
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, ON  M5J 1E6

Re: Regional Express Rail 10-Year Program: New Station Analysis
Barrie Corridor: Proposed Kirby Station and Highway 7-Concord Stations
Board of Director's Meeting: Tuesday, June 28, 2016

The purpose of this correspondence is to express our appreciation for the work the Metrolinx Regional Express Rail Team has undertaken to date on this historic initiative. The City of Vaughan has been one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada for the last 35 years and we understand the critical role that transit infrastructure plays in building complete and sustainable communities. We are enthusiastic supporters of the move to two-way, all-day service in the Barrie GO Rail Corridor and the expansion of our existing stations at Maple and at Rutherford Road. We will continue to work with Metrolinx and Region of York staff on implementation of this initiative.

In recognition of the opportunities presented by the Barrie Corridor, we have also been focusing major planning studies on two potential GO Rail station sites, which were identified in our Official Plan and Transportation Master Plan. One site is in our Block 27 New Community Area (Kirby Station); and our approved Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan, which was founded on the principles of the Metrolinx Mobility Hub Guidelines.

As such, we are particularly pleased by the inclusion of the Kirby Station in the GO RER 10-Year Program. The Kirby station will be the centerpiece of the Block 27 Community which is expected to accommodate over 35,000 new residents. The station will also facilitate access to other nearby planned communities and employment areas along with recreation destinations including the North Maple Regional Park. We look forward to coordinating our work with the Metrolinx program to create an outstanding mixed-use community focus.

The second site is within our Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan Area, (Highway 7 – Concord Station) which was developed in consideration of the potential for this Intensification Area to accommodate a station in a high-rise mixed-use development context. While we recognize that this potential station site was not included in the GO RER 10-Year Program at this time, we take comfort in the indication that this site may be considered for inclusion in the GO Rail Network in the future. We are supportive of the assertion that, “Metrolinx will continue to work with municipalities to improve the strategic, economic, financial and operations cases for these locations and bring them forward for consideration.”

As it currently stands, the planning approvals around the Highway 7 – Concord Station can support a population of up to 8,000 people and approximately 10,000 jobs at build-out. Another feature of this potential station is its outstanding connectivity. It will be directly linked to the Viva Bus Rapid...
Transit System on Highway 7 and to the future Highway 407 Transitway. It also has excellent connections that will allow persons boarding at this station to connect to the Spadina Subway Line at Downsview Park and depending on the Barrie line links approved to the south, to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT and the Bloor Danforth Subway Line. This connectivity provides local commuters with an excellent range of transit options, thereby enhancing its attractiveness both as a place of residence and a place of business. It also supports our Economic Development Strategy by providing an alternative transit route into the nearby (3.5 km) Vaughan Metropolitan Centre from the north and the south.

In this vein, we will soon be embarking on a more detailed Mobility Hub study for the Concord site. Direction to undertake this study was included in our Concord GO Centre Secondary Plan, which reflects the City’s recognition of the multimodal transit opportunities available in this area. It is our intention to build on the already supportive land use plans to ensure that we achieve a level of transit-oriented development that optimizes provincial transit infrastructure investments. We look forward to working with Metrolinx to advance this Mobility Hub study and to revisit the business case for the proposed Concord GO station.

The City of Vaughan is expected to grow from approximately 320,000 currently to almost 500,000 by 2041. Based on the recently released draft of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, there is the expectation that much of this growth will be accommodated by intensification and development around planned transit. The new transit infrastructure resulting from the RER program provides the basis of support and structure that is necessary for the City to continue the planning work necessary to meet the new Provincial land use objectives. Therefore, we urge the Board to continue in this direction and move ahead with the Regional Express Rail program.

Sincerely,

Hon. Maurizio Bevilaqua, PC
Mayor

Cc: Wayne Emmerson, Chairman and CEO
    Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation