

Laura Zeglen, Chair
Options for Davenport
[REDACTED]
Davenport, Toronto, ON
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December 5, 2016

Bruce McCuaig, CEO
and Metrolinx Board of Directors
97 Front Street West
Toronto, ON
M5J 1E6

**In regards to the upcoming Board of Directors meeting Thursday December 8th, 2016
RE: Answering to the Community: The Davenport Diamond Overpass**

Dear Mr. McCuaig, Chairman and Board of Directors members,

I am writing to express ongoing concern with the Davenport Diamond Overpass project that is being planned for my community in the riding of Davenport.

In our [Community Environmental Assessment](#) conducted in early 2016, Options for Davenport surveyed over 500 members of the Davenport community and decisively concluded that an overpass was not the best grade separation option available, given the scale of the structure, its proximity to homes, parks and businesses, and related issues around noise/vibration, safety and impacts on quality of life.

However, despite this and also serious reservations voiced by the City of Toronto (perhaps best exemplified in the [City Council vote of 38-1](#) against this option in December of 2015), Metrolinx and the province have insisted on pushing this overpass through our largely residential community, at times mere metres from people's homes. It is a scary proposition to know that in a few short years, this now mostly-sleepy rail corridor will house a towering, concrete expressway for high-frequency train service.

Given this regrettable situation, a coalition of 9 community organizations in the Davenport community came together with our local City Councillor Ana Bailao to petition the province to address specific concerns related to the overpass structure. On June 9 2016, Davenport MPP Cristina Martins read this [petition to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario](#).

Yet, since June, we have seen little by way of meaningful commitments to address any of these issues. The majority of concerns remain far from sufficiently addressed to merit moving forward

with the project, and they must be resolved before the community will be able to feel any measure of confidence in this project.

In particular, we are concerned with the following issues, as raised in the community petition:

1. **Developing a comprehensive vision** with a separate budget for public realm improvements and a design competition.

Metrolinx has been unable to provide the community with numbers indicating the budget for the public realm amenities being promised to the community, leaving us to believe there is no actual commitment to build anything resembling what has been shown in renderings to date.

2. **Addressing noise, vibration, and safety issues and concerns** to the community's satisfaction.

Noise and vibration remains the most outstanding concern of the community, including Ubisoft, a tech company whose vibration-sensitive work requires state of the art noise and vibration mitigation (they currently stop work every time a GO train passes). Ubisoft currently employs 500 staff, set to increase to 800 by 2019, and is a cornerstone of the local economy in Davenport.

3. **Creating a multi-modal station at Bloor.**

Despite the commitment of Metrolinx and the City to move ahead with a local GO station at Bloor and Lansdowne, there has not yet been a commitment to include an extension of the proposed Davenport Diamond railpath to connect to this station and points further south to make this station truly "multimodal".

4. **Establishing cycling and walking connections throughout** including connections to the West Toronto Railpath, the Green Line, and an elevated connection to Earls Court Park.

As per Metrolinx's Big Move document, an effective transportation system has provisions for cycling and walking, and connectivity between places and along corridors is key. There is an opportunity to build a network of trails in Davenport, but to date, Metrolinx has not committed to any of these connections.

5. **Devising a long-term maintenance plan and an endowment fund for community programming** in conjunction with the community and City.

6. **Resolving concerns relating to Dupont St.**

There are many complications surrounding the grade separation at Dupont Street in particular that remain to be addressed, including new condo developments directly

bordering the rail corridor, the proposed beginning of the berm section of the overpass, and what to do with the existing rail bridge over the Dupont underpass.

- 7. Providing the community with a date commitment to electrify the corridor and a guarantee that no more than the proposed 36 trains per day will be in use until electric trains are operational on the corridor.**

In addition to all of this, Metrolinx has just announced it will be increasing service on the Barrie Corridor to 36 diesel trains/day as of summer 2017, despite our community having been told previously that service would increase incrementally, and only once construction of the overpass was complete. Increasing service will complicate and delay construction, prolonging the duration of negative impacts related to noise and vibration, and pushing any potential benefits of this project (e.g. building trail connections, improvements to the public realm) even farther into the future. To the community, this only confirms our convictions: that to Metrolinx, we don't matter.

I ask you, Mr. McCuaig, Chairman and Board Members, to carefully consider these concerns as you examine the Davenport Diamond proposal. This project has the potential to be a shining example of Metrolinx building transit that serves both the region and the local community; but so far, it is shaping up to be another Metrolinx boondoggle, like so many others highlighted in the auditor's report, that the public have now come to expect of Metrolinx.

Respectfully,

Laura Zeglen
Chair, Options for Davenport

Cc:

Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario
Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation
Cristina Martins, Member of Provincial Parliament for Davenport
Julie Dzerowicz, Member of Parliament for Davenport
John Tory, Mayor of Toronto
Ana Bailao, Councillor, Ward 18 (Davenport)
Cesar Palacio, Councillor, Ward 17 (Davenport)