

February 5, 2019

Attention: Metrolinx Board of Directors
Mr. Donald Wright, Chair Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5J 1E6

VIA EMAIL: chair@metrolinx.com

Dear Mr. Wright and Metrolinx Board of Directors,

**RE: February 7, 2019 Metrolinx Board Meeting
Item 15 - Relief Line Business Case Development**

Ahead of my attendance at this week's Board meeting, and as written comments to the Board are welcomed in advance of meetings, I am writing today to express my serious concerns with the Relief Line Business Case Development presentation on the February 7, 2019 Board Meeting agenda.

The Relief Line Business Case Development presentation paints a flawed picture of the ridership modelling work being undertaken by Metrolinx, in conjunction with York Region and City of Toronto staff. The vague and contradictory information being used to update the public on slide 7 regarding Line 1: Ridership Demand and Network Effects has, once again, pitted two critically needed infrastructure projects against one another, namely the Relief Line against the Yonge Subway Extension. This positioning is not supported by the ridership modelling analysis and is at odds with the advice and information presented by Metrolinx at a recent meeting.

The result is widespread public interpretation that the completion of one project (the Relief Line South) and arguably a second (Relief Line North) must happen prior to the advancement of the Yonge Subway Extension. The recent media article [Relief line must open before Yonge North subway Extension, Metrolinx says](#) – Toronto Star, January 31, 2019 highlights this interpretation of the Relief Line Update being presented to you on February 7, 2019.

Metrolinx has long maintained that the Yonge Subway Extension and Relief Line South should be advanced as soon as possible and there is no new published evidence to show otherwise. In the 2008 Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, *The Big Move*, the Yonge Subway Extension and Relief Line were published as priority projects. Since then, no less than seven different ridership modelling studies have been completed to analyze future ridership and capacity on Line 1, and none of the constraints are due solely to the Yonge Subway Extension.

On June 25, 2015, Metrolinx released the results of the [Yonge Relief Network Study](#) to the Board. Supported by a Stakeholder Advisory Committee and a Peer Review Panel, the Board endorsed the finding that *“With the Yonge North Extension, the Yonge Subway will still be under capacity.”*

The Relief Line Update uses a blend of data and methodologies to make broad assumptions about future ridership. Each subsequent ridership model claims to have better information, more detail and more sophisticated analysis. Some models include independent findings and more recently, to our objection, some have been relying heavily on market driven employment and population data, contrary to the required obligation of all municipalities to follow the Provincially-mandated “Growth Plan” numbers.

The Relief Line Update being presented to the Metrolinx Board on February 7, 2019 has, according to Metrolinx staff, blended the findings of at least three different models and does not accurately represent any of the individual modelling analyses. Slide 7 suggests that, in 2041, Line 1 will be below capacity and then over capacity when the Yonge Subway Extension is added. This is completely inaccurate – current Metrolinx modelling shared as recent as January 21, 2019 demonstrates that the Yonge Subway Extension adds a relatively minor number of riders to the peak demand location and, in no case, is it the cause of Line 1 becoming over capacity.

I am respectfully requesting that the Metrolinx Board clarify the information presented on Slide 7 for the public record.

The facts are that only 20% of the new riders on an extension of the Yonge Subway line would be headed south of Bloor. Ridership growth on Line 1 is directly related to population and employment growth in Toronto. In fact, models show that ridership on Line 1 will exceed capacity regardless of whether the Yonge Subway Extension is constructed. We believe that by promoting the shift of as little as 10% of people from peak hour travel from the Extension to the Richmond Hill GO Line, and by using fare structure and level of service incentives, that substantial relief on Line 1 can be achieved while the Yonge Subway Extension is being constructed.

Modelling also shows that the majority of riders (80%) on the Yonge Subway Extension are headed to Toronto’s uptown employment centres north of Bloor, including St. Clair, Eglinton and York Mills. Furthermore, the Yonge Subway Extension will also serve a large number of Toronto residents that work in York Region

Other initiatives are underway, or should be underway, to alleviate Line 1 capacity problems. Metrolinx’s 2015 study concluded that a number of planned and funded initiatives such as Automatic Train Control, more Rocket Trains, GO Expansion, and the opening of the Line 1 extension to Vaughan Metropolitan Centre will add capacity and offload the Line 1 demand.

We should all be working collaboratively to achieve full fare integration, encourage off-peak travel, deliver better connections between east/west lines in Toronto and the north/south GO Rail lines, undertake the long overdue upgrade of Yonge and Bloor Station and implement other comparatively lower cost service and capital enhancements needed to keep the GTHA moving.

The Yonge Subway Extension is a critical gap in the GTHA network. The immediate benefit of the Yonge Subway Extension is the elimination of 2500 bus trips each day along the

busy Yonge street corridor already connecting riders to the Yonge Subway. No other major rapid transit project in the GTHA has had that level of pre-existing ridership prior to progressing to capital delivery. Metrolinx, in both the 2008 Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, *The Big Move* and *2041 Regional Transportation Master Plan*, established this fact having identified the Yonge Subway Extension as a priority project.

Unlocking billions of dollars of private sector investment and over 21,800 person years of employment during its construction, the Yonge Subway will attract 165,000 passengers per day. Not only will the Yonge Subway Extension help address the excessive travel demand currently operating along Yonge Street – it will provide the increasing amount of daily commuters travelling north into York Region as well as south into Toronto with a transit alternative to the private automobile.

With the Yonge Subway Extension, the Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Urban Growth Centre will be an intermodal hub, second only to Union Station in the GTHA in terms of the number of riders, scale of new development and transit connections between GO, the viva BRT network, conventional transit and the subway. The continued failure to get on with the construction of the Yonge Subway Extension, a critical rapid transit gap, should not be impeded by further ridership modelling analysis paralysis.

As Chair of the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation, I believe that advancing regional transit solutions that will alleviate gridlock and congestion across the GTHA should be the main focus of Metrolinx and the Province.

I am calling on Metrolinx to follow through on its findings from the 2015 Yonge Relief Network Study, and its Regional Transportation Plan, to clarify the findings outlined in the Relief Line Business Case Development presentation on February 7, 2019, and to reaffirm that the Yonge Subway Extension be approved, funded and constructed at the same time as the Relief Line South, regardless of which one opens first.

Regards,



Frank Scarpitti
Mayor, City of Markham
Chair, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation Board

cc YRRTC Board of Directors
Bruce Macgregor, CAO
Mary-Frances Turner, President, YRRTC