



Keep York Moving



Relief Line South and Yonge North Subway Extension Should Open at Same Time

February 4, 2019

On February 1, 2019, Metrolinx released a new report entitled “Relief Line Update” that stated that “transit network forecasts show that Relief Line South needs to be in operation before the Yonge North Subway Extension”. Keep York Moving (KYM), a volunteer organization made up of residents of York Region and adjoining regions, supports this conclusion.

Lest there be any doubt, we believe that a Yonge North Subway Extension (YSE) is badly needed. A significant fraction of the mandated growth in York Region is slated for the Yonge corridor, including the Yonge/Steeles area and the Richmond Hill Centre (RHC)/Langstaff Urban Growth Centre. There are already 2,500 buses per weekday travelling on Yonge St north of Finch, plus many auto commuters from York Region. Modeling by Metrolinx shows that 2031 boardings at RHC and Langstaff stations will be 14,000 people in the peak AM hour, well above ridership thresholds for subways to be cost-effective, and well above the 7000 boardings expected per peak AM hour at Scarborough Centre station on the proposed Scarborough Subway Extension.

There is also no doubt that the Yonge Subway is at capacity today, particularly at Bloor-Yonge Station and south of Bloor Street. The severe overcrowding during last week’s cold snap provides dramatic evidence. Although improvements such as Automatic Train Control will add capacity, it is expected that this will be consumed by extra demand from growth in the corridor south of Finch and from new passengers from new lines like Eglinton and Sheppard East LRTs. Improvements to the GO system will off-load some demand, but the key GO Richmond Hill line is limited by heavy CN freight traffic north of its York Subdivision and by the unfavourable topography of the line in Toronto.

The biggest part of the solution, both for Toronto and York commuters, is construction of the Relief Line South (RLS) subway. Modeling in 2015 showed a RLS from Pape Station to Queen Station to Osgoode Station would dramatically reduce congestion at Bloor-Yonge and south of Bloor, opening up capacity for the YSE.

An important milestone was reached in May, 2017 when the City of Toronto and York Region agreed to jointly pursue funding for both projects. Both governments and Metrolinx agreed that the RLS and the YSE need to advance in an integrated way and both lines should open at the same time. We support this agreement. Another important milestone was recently achieved when Toronto decided to accelerate work on the RLS, meaning it could open in 2029.

KYM believes that elected officials and citizens in both York and Toronto should work together to pursue full funding for these two vital projects so they can be built simultaneously and open at the same time. The capital costs are significant, with RLS estimated at \$6.8B and YSE at \$5.6B. Federal funding under its PTIF-2 program totals under \$5B over 10 years for all new rapid transit projects in Greater Toronto. Provincial funding will likely match this, but this still leaves a significant funding gap. **We must work together to pursue full funding!**

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Core Team - Keep York Moving