

September 5, 2020

Dear Mr. Verster,

As President and CEO of Metrolinx, we respectfully ask for your help in addressing our problem here in Guelph. The location you describe as the preferred site to build a large TPS Traction Power Station, as part of the electrification of the Guelph-Kitchener Corridor rail service, is literally in the backyards of residents' homes bordering Margaret Greene Park. Choosing park land to build a TPS is blatantly wrong and is insensitive to the needs of both Guelph citizens and to Ontarians alike.

The City of Guelph has designated Margaret Greene Park as a naturalized area: “to recognize, protect and restore the viability of natural ecosystems within the city and thereby provide a healthy environment for our housing, recreation and economy.” The park has been nurtured for over 40 years by the City of Guelph and it includes a walking trail that acts as a community hub enjoyed by hikers, dog walkers, cross country skiers and runners and provides a nature trail for both day care and school children. Importantly, the park space has enduring benefits to human health. The pandemic has raised our awareness of the value of natural open spaces which foster mental and physical well-being and community health and where we can find refreshment enabling us to return more effectively to our jobs and responsibilities as citizens. Furthermore, The City of Guelph opposes the placement of the TPS in a Guelph City Park.

Your plan is causing increased stress and alarm during this time of the pandemic. You informed our community of your plan during this summer and during this pandemic when public meeting and engagement is difficult. We were given only three weeks notification of your plan and limited response time. This does not speak of democratic engagement valued here in Canada. Moreover, this is not only a problem for Guelph, a progressive green city, it is a bigger problem for Ontario. Green space is valued as a heritage asset and is sought after by Ontarians and tourists to Ontario. Loss of green space has far reaching consequences.

We urge you to consider alternative locations that are available for this project. Please protect our park lands and Ontario's reputation as a great place to live and grow. Please listen to our City of Guelph Mayor and Councillors do not support your proposal to build a TPS in a city park. Please uphold the democratic process and respect the voices of Guelph citizens and thereby help our city to thrive. We welcome you to find more information on our Facebook site – Save Our Green Space; Margaret Greene Park as well as a link to our petition.

Thank you for reading this letter. Please continue to do what is right moving forward by balancing the need for rail infrastructure with the needs of citizens in established residential areas where naturalized green space is so vital to public health.

Yours Sincerely,

Maureen Busby-O'Connor
Guelph, ON