



Carefirst

SENIORS & COMMUNITY SERVICES ASSOCIATION
Since 1976

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November 14, 2014

Board of Health

City of Toronto Health Unit

10th floor, West Tower, City Hall

100 Queen Street West

Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Sir or Madam

**Re: Item HL 34.15 - TTC McNicoll Garage Project for Meeting 34 on
November 17, 2014 – Carefirst's Concerns**

With regards to the TTC's plan for a new bus garage at McNicoll Avenue and Kennedy Road in Scarborough, Carefirst Seniors and Community Services Association (Carefirst) would like to reflect our serious concerns and advocate on behalf of the seniors clients who we serve, our volunteers and staff members of the potential hazards and impact posed by the new bus garage.

Carefirst, a 37 year old charity non-profit community social service organization, has been providing a full range of social, health care and supportive services primarily to seniors and their families since 1976. Carefirst serves a capacity of serving 6,500 clients every year and is building a 4-storey multi-services centre with 52,000 sq. ft. at 300 Silver Star Boulevard in Scarborough, which location is only about 500 metre apart from the TTC's new bus garage site.

The new "Carefirst One-Stop Multi-Services Centre" is expected to commence its service operation by mid-2015. The Multi-Services Centre is basically a health care facility which includes the following major service components:

- A primary family health centre with at least an enrollment of 10,000 patients with at least 250 patients visiting the clinics per day
- A chronic disease management centre with at least 3,000 patients enrollment with at least 50 patients dropping in per day
- A transitional short stay respite care beds with 29 beds
- A community social centre for seniors with a membership of at least 2,500 members and over 250 members frequenting the centre per day
- An adult day centre with 50 frail seniors attending the program per day
- A vocational training centre with at least 50 trainees attending per day
- A community service coordination centre and a general administration centre with at least 150 staff members/volunteers working daily at the new centre

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As a public service provider, Carefirst understands the mandate and purposes of building the bus garage as to provide better transportation services to the community. That being said, TTC's proposal of building a new bus garage in the neighbourhood does pose health hazards and safety risks to our clientele, volunteers, staff members and the neighbourhood community at large. We would like to raise our serious concerns about the development as follows:

Safety Risks

- TTC is planning to have the new site as a bus garage. According to the information released by TTC, the new garage will maintain and store 250 buses, which will go in and out of the facility every day. The heavy traffic poses high safety risks for our seniors members who frequent the community social centre and the patients who travel to the centre either by foot or public transit. The heavy traffic poses high safety risks when they cross the streets, especially when they are old and when the patients are unwell.

Air Pollution and Health Hazards

- The proposed TTC bus garage will also serve as a fuel station. Inevitably, the vehicles will add a high volume of toxic diesel fumes in the area. Carefirst's new centre serves as a health facility for the community in Scarborough. The residents of the transitional care centre are likely seniors and patients with multiple medical conditions, such as chronic respiratory diseases and vascular diseases. The purpose of the short-stay respite care centre is to provide them with a clean and healthy environment for convalescence, so that they can go back home sooner. We have grave concern about air pollution caused by the bus garage, which will be a serious factor worsening the vulnerable seniors residents of our transitional care centre.
- The existence of the fuel storage will create not only air pollution, but also the risk of explosion. Despite the fact that Carefirst does have emergency evacuation plans, the TTC bus garage poses additional hazards and dangers to our seniors and staff as it is always challenging to evacuate the frail seniors and the sick patients from the facility.

Noise Pollution

- Aside from the buses going in and out, the new garage will operate 24/7 with maintenance work. Noise pollution will be another additional negative impact on our seniors. Since Carefirst's new centre will provide rehabilitation and transitional care services to patients, we are concerned that the noise pollution will affect the patients' and residents' health restoration and well-being.
- As well, hearing impairment is a common health issue for seniors, the nuisance noise created by the garage and the vehicles will further impact their hearing.



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In view of the above negative impacts and potential hazards, on behalf of our clients, volunteers, and staff members, Carefirst would like to advocate that the construction of the new garage, which is categorized as "heavy industrial facility", is definitely not harmonized with Carefirst One-Stop Multi-Services Centre, which is a social and medical care combined facility, nor the new bus garage is harmonized with the community development in the vicinity. The last thing that we want to see is that TTC's plan is developed at the expense of the seniors' health and safety and is compromising the well-being of the neighbourhood community. Therefore, Carefirst urges the Committee to consider the re-location of the new bus garage.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Yours sincerely,

for Helen Leung
Chief Executive Officer

c.c. Mr. Sunny Ho, Board Chair, Carefirst Seniors

Mr. Michael Wong, Building Committee Chair, Carefirst



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