



June 26 2016

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RE: **EX16.1 Developing Toronto's Transit Network Plan to 2031**

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee,

We provide this correspondence on behalf of the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FoNTRA), a federation of over 30 residents' associations in the Yonge Corridor between Bloor Street and Highway 401 and between Avenue Road and the Don Valley.

Transit in the Yonge Corridor is at a crisis point. The Yonge Street subway (Line 1) is at capacity. From Eglinton south, it is often necessary during rush hours to queue for several trains until being able to squeeze into a train packed with commuters. Even in the middle of the day, trains are standing room only, often packed to capacity.

And the pressures will only get worse. The City and the OMB keep approving developments in the Yonge Corridor that add to the number of commuters trying to get onto the Yonge Street subway. Over the past fifteen years, developments in the Yonge/Eglinton area have added 10,000 new residents, and today this rate has increased to 3,000 more people per year. A population increase of 24,000 is in the application stream, with a further build-as-usual projection of 20,000 expected to emerge on soft sites. More commuters, all competing to get onto a subway that is already operating at capacity.

So what is the City planning to do to relieve this? What is it prioritizing? How soon will relief come? The answer provided by the Transit Network Plan is that we should have patience; that we should wait. The Plan prioritizes investment elsewhere.

It proposes extensions of the Eglinton LRT, extensions that will only bring even more commuters into the Eglinton station on Line 1. Yet more commuters competing to get on the Yonge Street subway.

It proposes that the City spend more than \$3 billion on a Scarborough subway extension. An investment that adds only one stop in Scarborough. A \$3 billion investment that serves fewer people than the much less expensive 7-stop LRT proposed earlier.

Yes, the Transit Network Plan does propose implementing Smart Track, which will help. But that is too far east and west to do more than slightly moderate the pressure on the Yonge Street subway. And yes, it does propose a Downtown Relief Line. But not until 2041 will the Relief Line reach Eglinton.

Real relief comes only in 2041 — a wait of 25 years.

A 25-year wait is not acceptable. Putting money into other transit projects first —projects that only increase the pressures on the Yonge Street line— is unacceptable. Continuing to approve new development in the Yonge Corridor in the meantime, developments that ratchet pressures even higher, is unacceptable.

So what is the result of this transportation supply crisis? An explosion of redevelopment applications in the Yonge corridor is bringing massive physical, economic and social pressure on the communities. And implications that were considered unacceptable are now being seriously considered. For example, we are now talking about addressing the burgeoning populations of children through putting schools in high rise buildings. Meanwhile we are closing schools outside the Yonge Corridor.

To quote Councillor Shiner at last week’s Planning and Growth Management Committee in reference to the MidTown in Focus planning study; “Development in the Yonge and Eglinton area is out of control.....we have to get it back in control”. It is time to face up to the crisis. We cannot wait 25 years. The Downtown Relief Line must be accelerated. And, in the meantime, we must be realistic about how much development can be approved before Phase 2 of the Relief Line opens.

We urge City Council to impose a moratorium on all Official Plan Amendments and rezonings having significant density increases in the Yonge Street corridor until construction has begun on phase 2 of the Downtown Relief Line.

We are not opposed to development. We recognize that the City population will grow. But the City must invest in the transit and other infrastructure which population growth requires. And in the meantime the City must apply the tools – the carrots and the sticks to control and steer development away from the Yonge Corridor to avoid a planning disaster.

It is irresponsible to approve new development without providing the infrastructure required to support it. If the City, together with higher levels of government, will not do that within a reasonable time frame, then growth in the Toronto region must be redirected elsewhere.

Yours truly,

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Cc: Jennifer Keesmaat, Chief Planner and Executive Director, City planning

**The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)** is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of over 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and social renewal.