



CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL OF MEMBER MOTION

Save Our Subway: Ensuring Torontonians Know the Facts

Date:	February 27, 2019
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Council
Wards:	All Wards

City Council Decision

City Council on February 26, 2019, referred Motion MM3.10 to the Executive Committee.

Recommendations

Councillor Josh Matlow, seconded by Councillor Joe Cressy, recommends that:

1. City Council request the City Manager to create and implement a public information campaign regarding the importance of retaining control of Toronto's subways, and related property rights, through multiple channels including, but not limited to:
 - a. advertisements on Toronto Transit Commission vehicles, stations, and shelters;
 - b. public messages in Toronto Transit Commission stations;
 - c. at least one (1) public consultation session in every Community Council District; and
 - d. in addition, one (1) monthly public consultation meeting, with the first to be held in March 2019, to provide residents with up-to-date information.

Summary

At its meeting of December 4, 5 and 13, 2018, City Council reaffirmed its position that the Toronto Transit Commission should stay in Toronto's hands. It did not specifically speak to the question of separating the subway from its surface route feeder lines. As outlined in the subway upload Terms of Reference, negotiations with the Province regarding the future of our transit system is being done at a staff-to-staff level, with little opportunity for public involvement. This risks leaving Toronto residents in the dark about its most important asset.

While staff-led negotiations continue, Premier Doug Ford's government has already begun efforts to frame the narrative, claiming that they are taking Toronto's subway in order get new transit built. Every day we see public statements from Provincial Cabinet Ministers and Members of Provincial Parliament outlining their rationale for uploading Toronto's subway system.

The City of Toronto must also articulate the risks of a potential upload.

Torontonians deserve to know the truth - that nothing is actually stopping the Province from building transit in Toronto right now. Uploading the existing subway does not affect the Ford government's ability to construct and own new lines or extensions. In fact, the Province is currently building, and will own, the Eglinton Crosstown.

The public should be aware that because the Province of Ontario contributes less, per transit rider, to the Toronto Transit Commission than any other state/regional government in North America or Europe, they have had to pay a larger share, through the fare box, than in any other comparable system.

Torontonians should also know that with Toronto's subway, the Province would gain control of lucrative air rights above stations and adjacent properties, owned and paid for by Torontonians.

"The better way" would be for the Toronto Transit Commission to utilize these public assets to invest in fact-based transit plans and work with City planners and communities to build much-needed public amenities for Toronto residents, including affordable housing, childcare, and recreation space; and, to have a partner in Queen's Park that invests in Toronto, rather than one that sells the value of our subway to spend elsewhere.

The Toronto Transit Commission is a complex network involving four rapid transit lines, 570 bus routes, 10 streetcar routes, and 570 million annual riders. It is an integrated network and Torontonians deserve to know what the implications would be if one of the components were removed from City ownership and control.

It would be preferable for every order of government to work cooperatively to improve transit for residents. In response to a unilateral announcement and messaging campaign by Premier Ford's government about its intention to upload Toronto's subway (along with its land and air rights), it is necessary to provide the public with factual information about the consequences of such a move.

Communications (City Council)

(February 25, 2019) Multiple Communications from 763 individuals with the subject line "Save Our Subway" (MM.Supp.MM3.10.1)

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/mm/comm/communicationfile-91716.pdf>

(February 25, 2019) E-mail from Hamish Wilson (MM.New.MM3.10.2)