

August 12, 2010

Members of the Executive Committee
City of Toronto
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

Dear Executive Committee Members:

Re: EX46.33 – Staff Review of Waterfront Toronto's Proposed Sale and Lease of City Lands for Waterfront Revitalization - Bayside

We write in regard to Executive Committee Report EX46.33. We are concerned that approval of the Bayside (Hines) development application entails the installation of another traffic signal on Queen's Quay which would have a negative impact on the operation of the proposed high-capacity East Bayfront light rail transit service. The addition of another traffic signal for the Bayside development would be the fifth signal which will have been added, in the approximately three-kilometre section of Queen's Quay between Spadina and Parliament. When added to the 15 already-existing or approved traffic signals on this same short section of roadway, the total of 20 traffic signals means that this section of Queen's Quay will have 43 percent more traffic signals than the corresponding sections of King Street, Queen Street, or Dundas Street in downtown Toronto, and will be the most signal-laden section of road anywhere in Toronto. No single traffic signal causes transit to be slow, unreliable, and unattractive. However, taken together, this significant number of traffic signals on such a short line – including the additional one now proposed as part of the Bayside development will not allow this light rail transit service in the Waterfront area to meet the transportation requirements set out in the Official Plan.

Throughout the planning of the Central Waterfront/East Bayfront areas, the TTC has consistently raised concerns regarding the addition of traffic signals. The consequence of continually adding traffic signals to facilitate private vehicular movements will be that the transportation infrastructure for the Waterfront – both roads and transit – will be unable to effectively serve residents, businesses, or visitors to the area.

Here are some pertinent facts:

- The Central Waterfront/East Bayfront area was planned to break the pattern of car-oriented development precincts whose roads cannot accommodate the resulting traffic volumes and become congested and gridlocked. Instead, most travel in this area – 70 percent according to the Official Plan – was to be carried by attractive, convenient, high-capacity, high-speed light rail transit operating in its own protected right-of-way, as well as walking and cycling.
- The international design competition for the Waterfront resulted in a concept to concentrate all non-automobile public space – including transit – on one side of Queen’s Quay. This arrangement is problematic for transit, but the TTC reluctantly agreed to it on the understanding that, in order to allow transit to work at least reasonably in this configuration, there would be a strict limit on the number of traffic signals on Queen’s Quay.
- As the EA process progressed, additional traffic signals were added to Queen’s Quay, in spite of our concerns. In our opinion none of these additional signals were technically warranted and they are to the detriment of quality attractive light rail transit service.
- After four additional signals and two uncontrolled crossings of the right-of-way had already been approved – the Environmental Assessment for East Bayfront, as approved by Council in September, 2009, included an explicit condition that no additional signals would be allowed unless they demonstrated to have no detrimental effects on transit. The EA was approved by the Minister of the Environment in July 10, 2010 on this basis. From our perspective, each and every new additional traffic signal is detrimental to the speed and reliability of transit service. The Bayside development, therefore, as submitted today will require Council to reopen the EA, submission of an EA amendment, and subsequent approval by the Minister
- The TTC has the extensive operating experience and expertise to enable it to assess the effects of traffic signals on rail operations and the resulting effects on transit service quality and ridership.
- The EA-approved single signalized access – if focussed to Lakeshore Boulevard instead of Queen’s Quay – would accommodate all projected traffic volumes without queuing problems. We see no technical reason why the Bayside development has to have an additional traffic signal over what was approved in the environmental assessment.

We are concerned that the proposed transit service on Toronto's waterfront – originally envisioned as a fast, reliable convenient alternative to car travel, and intended to demonstrate a new model of environmentally-sustainable and responsible development – has been degraded to the point where the service can now only be expected to operate at an average speed not much faster than those operating in mixed traffic in downtown Toronto. In order to not allow even further degradation to the quality of transit service on the waterfront, we ask that consideration be given to alternative one-signal egress options. TTC staff would be pleased to discuss these alternatives with Waterfront Toronto and City staff.

Sincerely,

Original signed by V. Rodo (for)

Gary Webster
Chief General Manager
11-80

Copy: TTC Commission