



Via email: pwic@toronto.ca

May 12, 2015

PW4.1.30

Councillor Jaye Robinson
Chair, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee
10th floor, West Tower, City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Committee Members,

Re: The Future of the Gardiner East

The Ontario Trucking Association (OTA) is writing to express its strong interest to see a continuous freeway link maintained between the Gardiner Expressway and the Don Valley Parkway. The association believes this is a far more practical solution than the proposed option to tear down the elevated portion of the highway without a suitable replacement for the traffic capacity on the eastern portion of the Gardiner and Lakeshore Blvd East.

OTA was founded in 1926 and is the voice of responsible trucking in Ontario. Today our membership comprises about 1000 companies from all segments of the industry. OTA is also a member of the Gardiner Coalition and provided funding for the recently released report by the University of Toronto, which found that removing the eastern portion of the Gardiner would cost up to \$37 million dollars per year as a result of increased delays and traffic congestion within the downtown core and surrounding arteries. OTA agrees with the study's researchers, who concluded there is zero traffic-related benefit to removing the eastern portion of the Gardiner.

Trucking is a critical service to downtown businesses. Each and every day in the City of Toronto, trucks supply hospitals, grocery stores, gas stations, retail outlets, and office towers with the vital supplies they need. In turn, the associated costs with moving those goods to and from downtown are factored into their price. With congestion already a major issue in the city, it is OTA's concern that any additional disruptions to commercial operations will only lead to increased costs of downtown goods and services. In a worst case scenario, as the current truck driver shortage intensifies and capacity continues to tighten, some carriers could even decide to opt out of the downtown market – as has happened in other highly-congested cities like New York – which would drive costs up even further for Toronto businesses and consumers.

OTA is certainly supportive of the beautification of Toronto and opening up the waterfront and port lands, but it's important for the well-being of the city's economy and for the safety of drivers, cyclists and pedestrians that we move ahead with these projects by choosing the least disruptive option possible. Whether accomplished through the so-called 'hybrid' option, the maintain options or a combination thereof, OTA believes that maintaining a continuous (limited access freeway to freeway) link and ensuring east-west traffic flow on Lakeshore Blvd to and from downtown Toronto is essential not only for the trucking industry, but also for all downtown businesses, residents and the GTA economy in general.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Laskowski".

Stephen Laskowski
Vice President

Stephen Holyday – councillor_holyday@toronto.ca; Chin Lee - councillor_lee@toronto.ca; Mary-Margaret McMahon - councillor_mcmahon@toronto.ca; Ron Moeser - councillor_moeser@toronto.ca; Anthony Perruzza - councillor_perruzza@toronto.ca; Luke Robertson - luke.robertson@toronto.ca; Stephen Buckley - sbuckle@toronto.ca