

Appendix 4

Letter from Chief Planner to President and
CEO, Metrolinx

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February 12, 2016

Mr. Bruce McCuaig
President and CEO
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5J 1E6

Dear Mr. McCuaig:

Re: Metrolinx Evaluation of Potential New GO RER Station Sites within the City of Toronto

I am writing to summarize key points from recent meetings between City and Metrolinx staff regarding the evaluation of potential new RER station sites identified by Metrolinx. The discussions have taken place to provide City Planning input to the Metrolinx evaluation of station site options and your intended further shortlisting of options and reporting to the Metrolinx Board.

Comments from City staff on the GO RER station sites has focused on planning considerations including development/city building opportunities, accessibility, and network connectivity, reflecting some of the key elements of the City's Feeling Congested evaluation criteria for rapid transit projects. These meetings have involved City Planning staff from each District, with the exception of the East District (Scarborough) in which all new RER station sites are associated with the SmartTrack initiative. In this case, comments on these station evaluations were previously reported to the October 20, 2015 meeting of the City's Executive Committee:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX9.1>

City comments on the remaining GO RER new station sites are detailed in Attachment 1.

For ease of reference, Attachment 2 also provides material considered at the October, 2015, Executive Committee meeting for the GO RER / SmartTrack station sites.

Key Findings

Based on information presented in Attachment 1, there are three GO RER station sites under consideration by Metrolinx that have alignment with important City Planning objectives. These sites include:

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- Park Lawn (Lakeshore West Corridor)
- Bloor/Davenport (Barrie Corridor)
- Highway 27/Woodbine (Kitchener Corridor)

In addition to these sites, the City also has a high degree of interest in the existing York University station (Barrie Corridor), and a potential new station in the Lawrence-Highway 401 area (Barrie Corridor).

A brief summary of the planning merits of each of these sites follows, with further detail on these and other GO RER sites provided in Attachment 1.

Park Lawn (Lakeshore West Corridor)

The Park Lawn station site needs to be considered in the context of the Humber Bay Shores Secondary Plan area and the City's Official Plan which identifies this as an area of growth with approximately 3,000 new residential units recently occupied and another 10,000 residential units in the planning process. The recent closure of the Christie's plant and Council direction to protect for a future GO Rail stop in the Park Lawn area presents opportunities that are consistent with your station site planning. Concurrent with your work, City staff are initiating a transportation master plan study for this area shortly. The potential to link the Lake Shore streetcar with the GO RER network in this key growth area of the City would address a number of important planning objectives for this area.

Bloor/Davenport (Barrie Corridor)

As you are aware, the Bloor Davenport station site is one that the City has previously indicated provides significant benefit from an overall transit planning perspective, providing two-way, all day links between the City's subway system, the regional GO RER service and the UP Express to Pearson.

Map 4 of the Official Plan "Higher Order Transit Corridors" identifies a GO RER station at Bloor Street on the Barrie Corridor. This is augmented by the Official Plan policy that supports enhanced local and inter-regional transit. Good transit includes connections at key locations and a GO station on the Bloor-Danforth subway line is seen as an important transit node and network link.

The consideration of a new station at this location, to improve transit network connectivity as well as provide accessibility to existing and new development occurring as a result of revitalization of this community, is seen by City Planning as an integral element of the ongoing Davenport grade separation work. The City encourages Metrolinx to make provision in the grade separation planning for this station site, to ensure this connection is secured at the earliest possible opportunity.

Highway 27/Woodbine (Kitchener Corridor)

A station site on the Kitchener corridor in proximity to Woodbine Racetrack has been discussed for several years. The most recent discussions occurred during City Council's consideration of expanded gaming at the Woodbine Casino. During Council's consideration of this matter, the City Manager was directed to consult with Metrolinx about the opportunities and costs for establishing a Union Pearson Express and/or GO Rail stop as part of the future

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development of the Woodbine site. Further details on this direction are set out in Attachment 1. The Woodbine site continues to generate planning discussion and the consideration of a new station in this location continues to be consistent with planning objectives for the area.

York University – existing station (Barrie Corridor)

The York University existing station is located within 2km of approximately 7,000 administrative staff and 52,800 students that commute to the site from all areas within the Greater Toronto Area. The Secondary Plan developed for the University envisages growth at the university and surrounding area that will result in up to 24,500 permanent residents and 21,000 jobs. The station also services the employment uses and centres in the City of Vaughan.

Notwithstanding these levels of development, the current station layout does not provide good pedestrian or vehicular access from the east side of the rail corridor where approximately 50 percent of the areas employment is situated. Given the constraints of the existing station, City Planning recommends the station be relocated to Steeles Avenue to improve visibility and access. Alternately, if it is to stay in its current location it should be expanded and improved to provide better function, visibility and access. Maintaining a York University station is consistent with the goals of the City's Official Plan and the area Secondary Plan, and is seen as a key component in achieving the long term land use and transit planning objectives for the University and surrounding area.

I also bring to your attention a Motion put forward by Councillor Perruzza, seconded by Councillor Pasternak, at City Council's meeting of February 3, 4 and 5, 2016 (MM12.31) requesting Metrolinx not close the York University GO Train Station:

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.MM12.31>

Lawrence-Highway 401 – new station proposal (Barrie Corridor)

The Lawrence/Highway 401 area encompasses employment in the vicinity of Dufferin Street and Lawrence Heights. The Barrie GO line forms the west boundary of this area, the sixth largest employment district in Toronto. This area has 27,100 existing employees with the majority of employment located between Lawrence Avenue West and Highway 401. In total, planned growth is estimated to comprise 48,000 new residents and 23,000 new employees. Planning staff have considered a number of possible locations for a new GO RER station in this area, and suggest property immediately north of Lawrence Avenue which was previously a station site. This site could readily provide space for multiple platforms/rails and vehicular and bus drop off, etc. to directly service the significant surrounding employment areas and seamlessly integrate with the local bus transit network.

Conclusions

In concluding, I anticipate the comments provided here will assist in the evaluation currently underway to consider new GO RER station sites in Toronto. I request that you include this letter and attachments in any material going forward to your Board on this issue, as planning input from the City of Toronto.

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City staff are prepared to continue to work with Metrolinx on further refinement of new station opportunities as part of your ongoing assessment within the current GO RER program. Should you have any questions concerning the details contained in this letter or attachments, please contact Tim Laspa, Director of Transportation Planning (Phone: 416-392-8100 or email: tlaspa@toronto.ca).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Keesmaat
Chief Planner and Executive Director

cc: John Livey, Deputy City Manager
Jeff Climans, Director, Major Capital Infrastructure Coordination

**ATTACHMENT 1
COMMENTS ON GO RER STATION SITES**

INITIAL PHASE CORRIDOR ELECTRIFICATION

1. LAKESHORE WEST CORRIDOR	
Station Sites	
a) <u>Roncesvalles</u>	<p>This potential station site is in an area that is predominantly low density residential with recreational uses along the waterfront. St. Joseph's Hospital is the key employer and visitor destination. There is no large scale land use change envisioned for this area.</p> <p>The City is initiating a Waterfront LRT "Reset" study to consider a continuous corridor from Long Branch to Woodbine Avenue, and this area is a key section along the corridor. The study will recommend a preliminary alignment for the LRT, with a set of potential alternatives in key sections. Results of the first phase of the study are anticipated in spring/early summer of 2016. Subject to further assessment, there is currently no identified need/basis for a GO RER station in this location.</p>
b) <u>Park Lawn</u>	<p>The Park Lawn area includes the Humber Bay Shores Secondary Plan area and is identified in the City's Official Plan as an area of growth. Approximately 3,000 new residential units have recently been occupied with another 10,000 residential units in the planning process.</p> <p>The major employer in the area (Christie's) closed its doors in 2013 and the lands currently sit vacant. The lands are designated Employment Areas in the City Official Plan and Council has endorsed the employment designation.</p> <p>Recent Council decisions on the use of the Christie's site and the need to protect for a future GO Rail stop in the Park Lawn area can be found at the following links:</p> <p>Etobicoke York Community Council Members Motion EY9.37 – "GO Transit Stop at Park Lawn" (November 3, 2015)</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EY9.37</p> <p>City Council Members Motion MM9.23 dated September 30, 2015 – "The Shoreline: Request for the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission to provide improved transit for the City of</p>

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<p>c) <u>Mimico</u></p>	<p>Toronto's western waterfront"</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewPublishedReport.do?function=getCouncilAgendaReport&meetingId=9694</p> <p>Planning and Growth Management PG23.8 "Addressing Mobility, Aligning Growth and Transit - Study the Relocation of the Mimico GO Train Station to the Vicinity of Park Lawn Road" (2013)</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.PG23.8</p> <p>Economic Development Committee, November 22, 2013, ED27.7 "Working Group Results for the Mr. Christie's Site at 2150 Lake Shore Boulevard West and 23 Park Lawn Road"</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2013.ED27.7</p> <p>A Transportation Master Plan will be commenced shortly for the Park Lawn area, and will be coordinated with the broader Waterfront LRT "Reset" study. In response to the above-noted directions, these studies will be considering the status of a new GO RER Station at this location.</p> <p>Mimico GO Station is currently undergoing a \$55 million update for AODA compliance, including a new tunnel to the south side of the rail corridor, new station buildings and elevators.</p> <p>The Mimico Judson Industrial Triangle Secondary Plan was recently completed and considered at Planning and Growth Management Committee (Agenda item PG9.2 "Mimico-Judson Regeneration Area Study - Directions Report"):</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.PG9.2</p> <p>Current planning for this area assumes the continuing operation of the Mimico station.</p>
<p>d) <u>Kipling</u></p>	<p>This potential station site is located within an Employment Area, with a Neighbourhood designation in the southwest quadrant. This area is not being considered by the City at this time for intensification. Subject to further assessment, there is currently no identified need/basis for a GO RER station in this location.</p>

3. BARRIE CORRIDOR	
Station Sites	
<u>a) Bloor-Davenport</u>	<p>Map 4 of the Official Plan “Higher Order Transit Corridors” identifies a GO RER station at Bloor Street on the Barrie Corridor. This is augmented by the Official Plan policy that supports enhanced local and inter-regional transit. Good transit includes connections at key locations and a GO station on the Bloor-Danforth subway line is seen as an important transit node and network link.</p> <p>The area around Bloor/Lansdowne is a mix of residential densities, and commercial and employment uses. The GO station would be on the Bloor subway line and close to the Lansdowne subway station on Line 2. Integration between the two stations is a key City objective for the transit network.</p> <p>The City is currently on record supporting the need for Metrolinx to provide this new GO RER station as part of the Davenport Grade Separation initiative.</p>
<u>b) St. Clair West</u>	<p>A station in this location would need to be located north of St. Clair, on the east side of the rail corridor. Lands in this area are currently designated Employment Areas in the OP with the St. Clair frontage designated as Mixed Use Areas. The site is located 2 km south of the planned Barrie/Caledonia GO Station and 2 km north of a potential Barrie/Bloor GO Station and approximately 800m east of a potential RER/SmartTrack Station on the Kitchener Corridor. The area has seen little in the way of redevelopment in proximity to the proposed station and is not considered a priority at this time.</p>
<u>c) York University Station (Existing)</u>	<p>York University GO Station is an existing station on the Barrie GO Line that provides services primarily to York University and the Dufferin Keele North Employment District.</p> <p>York University is located within 2km of the GO Station that services approximately 7,000 administrative staff and 52,800 students that commute to the site from all areas within the Greater Toronto Area. The Secondary Plan for the University includes policies that encourage growth in both residential and institutional uses within the campus core and on lands declared surplus for University uses. These are now designated with a range of uses at "transit supportive" densities. The Secondary Plan developed for the University envisages growth at the university and surrounding area that will result in up to 24,500 permanent residents and 21,000 jobs.</p>

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<p><u>d) Lawrence-Hwy 401 Station (NEW)</u></p>	<p>In addition to the University, the Dufferin Keele North Employment District is diversified in uses with a strong office and manufacturing mix. It is currently the fifth largest employment district within Toronto at 30,850 existing employees, which has grown steadily at a rate of 4.6% since 2009. The station also services the employment uses and centres in the City of Vaughan. The employment land north of the station is considered prestige employment uses and two centres identified along Steeles Avenue in the Secondary Plan are Steeles West Centre and Yonge and Steeles Centre. Notwithstanding the robust catchment area this presents, the current station design does not service pedestrians or vehicles from the east side of the rail corridor, where approximately 50% of the areas employment is situated.</p> <p>Overall, there is tremendous potential to continue to grow transit ridership for the existing station with vibrant employment districts and the student, teacher, administration and research demographic that is growing at York University. The main issue with the existing station is its limited access and poor connectivity to the areas identified above. The station is currently sited behind one storey warehouse buildings and accessed by a single walkway on the west side between two buildings. There is no formal pickup area, commuter parking or connection to high order transit.</p> <p>City Planning recommends the station remain, and be relocated to Steeles Avenue to improve visibility and access. In terms of accessibility, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) is identified on Steeles Avenue West in Metrolinx's The Big Move Plan and in the City's transit priority projects as part of the Official Plan review (Feeling Congested). The City of Vaughan also identified Steeles Avenue as a Regional Rapid Transit Corridor in their Official Plan. The need for high order transit on Steeles Avenue West is consistent from a local and regional perspective. The Steeles location would allow a GO RER station to better integrate into the TTC and Viva bus network. Alternatively, if it is to stay in its current location, it should be expanded and improved to provide better function, visibility and access for lands both east and west of the rail corridor.</p> <p>A Motion put forward by Councillor Perruzza, seconded by Councillor Pasternak, at City Council's meeting of February 3, 4 and 5, 2016 (MM12.31) requested Metrolinx not close the York University GO Train Station:</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.MM12.31</p> <p>The Barrie GO Line forms the west boundary of the sixth largest employment district in Toronto (Dufferin Keele South) and since 2009, it has grown by 11.4% (2,780 new employees), making this one of the fastest growing employment districts in Toronto. The District has 27,100 existing employees and the majority of the employment can be</p>
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	<p>found between Lawrence Avenue West and Highway 401.</p> <p>There are currently three Secondary Plans (Downsview, Dufferin and Lawrence Allen) and two regeneration studies within 2km of this particular segment of the Barrie GO corridor. The Secondary Plans are aimed at a transit supportable mix of land uses and densities, and are backed by comprehensive Transportation Master Plans. In total, planned growth is expected to be 48,000 new residents and 23,000 new employees.</p> <p>Currently, Lawrence Avenue West, Wilson Avenue, Caledonia Road and Dufferin Street are well served by local bus service. The City's Official Plan Map 5 Surface Transit Priority Network identifies Wilson Avenue and Dufferin Street as Transit Priority Corridors. Dufferin Street buses currently carry 40,000+ passengers a day, making this the busiest bus route in Toronto. Some of the key transfer points are at Lawrence Avenue West, Orfus Road and Yorkdale Mall.</p> <p>The distance between the current planned stations at Caledonia and Downsview/Sheppard is approximately 7km. This separation leaves large areas of this part of west Toronto with no access to GO RER Service.</p> <p>Planning staff have considered a number of possible locations for a new GO RER station along the Lawrence Avenue and Highway 401 corridor and these have been provided to Metrolinx's Hub and Station Planning staff for consideration.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the available options, a new GO RER station north of Lawrence Avenue would be particularly interesting since it was historically a train station site, and consequently has a rail corridor width of 60 metres rather than the typical 20 metres on the line. This expanded space could provide space for multiple platforms and rails including by-pass rails, and vehicular and bus drop off, etc. This site is City Planning's preferred location for a new Lawrence/Highway 401 GO RER station as it has the most potential to directly service the surrounding employment areas, Dufferin and Lawrence Heights area and integrate with the local bus transit network.</p>
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3. KITCHENER CORRIDOR	
Station Sites	
<u>a) Islington/ Etobicoke North</u>	<p>Adjacent lands are designated in the City's Official Plan as Employment Areas. Lands located off Resources Road are owned by Metrolinx and identified in the UP Express Electrification Study for a future Maintenance and Storage Facility.</p> <p>Subject to further assessment, there is no identified need/basis for a GO RER station in this location. It is anticipated the existing Etobicoke North station will continue to operate to serve transit ridership and development in the area.</p>
<u>b) Highway 27- Woodbine</u>	<p>A station on the Kitchener corridor in proximity to Woodbine Racetrack has been discussed for several years. The most recent discussions occurred during City Councils consideration of expanded gaming at the Woodbine Casino and are documented in staff reports as excerpted below:</p> <p>Executive Committee Report EX7.4, "Expanded Gaming at Woodbine Racetrack" http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX7.4</p> <p>Recommendations from the City Managers report, as adopted by City Council include:</p> <p><i>1. Expanded gaming at Woodbine shall occur within the context of an integrated entertainment complex as previously approved by City Council in 2007. The approval of expanded gaming is conditional upon the service provider agreeing to finalize the outstanding Site Plan Control and Plan of Subdivision applications for an integrated complex, including entertainment, retail, hotel, restaurant and office for Woodbine's Phase 1A lands or agreeing to undertake a new development consistent with the previous Phase 1A concept. It is City Council's requirement that the integrated entertainment complex be built concurrently with the expanded gaming facility.</i></p> <p><i>And</i></p> <p><i>12. Council request the City Manager to consult with Metrolinx about the opportunities and costs for establishing a Union Pearson Express and/or GO Transit stop as part of the future development of the Woodbine site.</i></p> <p>As part of the Casino file, a Benefit Case Analysis was also completed for the Finch LRT extension from the Humber College campus to</p>

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	<p>Woodbine and Pearson Airport.</p> <p>The City supports Metrolinx's consideration of a new GO RER station at this location.</p>
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LATER PHASE CORRIDOR ELECTRIFICATION

4. RICHMOND HILL	
Station Sites	
<u>a) Queen/Dundas/Gerrard</u>	<p>The three potential station locations have been collectively reviewed for this response.</p> <p>The Richmond Hill line in this area is located within flood sensitive lands in the Don Valley corridor. The rail line operates in a constrained corridor between Bayview Avenue and the Don River.</p> <p>The area has a mix of land uses with the most significant employer being the Bridgepoint Healthcare Centre on the northeast corner of Gerrard Street and the Don Valley Parkway. The feasibility of this location is also subject to a potential station location on the Lake Shore East line, which could potentially serve both corridors. Subject to further assessment, there is currently no identified need/basis for a GO RER station in this location.</p>
<u>b) York Mills and Don Mills/Bond Stations</u>	<p>The proposed York Mills and Don Mills/Bond GO RER Station sites are in proximity to the Duncan Mills Employment District, which has 19,000 existing employees and has grown by 7.5% since 2009. The current employment and transit use in the area demonstrates the need to plan for higher order transit as part of the future growth of the employment district.</p> <p>The York Mills site is 15 km south of the Oriole Station. Given the high concentration of quality employment uses, City Planning supports Metrolinx's consideration of a new GO RER station on York Mills Road in proximity to Don Mills Road. Adjacent feeder surface transit routes/operations that exist or are planned (e.g. York Mills Road, Don Mills Road) would support station activities.</p>
<u>c) Eglinton and Millwood Stations</u>	<p>The feasibility of converting the existing multi-use trail back to a two-way rail corridor requires considerable review prior to the consideration of the proposed Eglinton and Millwood Stations. City Planning reserves the opportunity to comment further on these station sites in the context of either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further Metrolinx study of conversion of the multi-use trail to rail operations; or • the conversion of the Canadian Pacific Rail line from freight use to commuter rail, as suggested in the recently published "Missing Link" study.

5. MILTON CORRIDOR	
Station Sites	
<p><u>a) The East Mall</u></p>	<p>The East Mall was identified as a future subway station in the Bloor Danforth Subway Westerly Extension EA. This EA study was completed in 1993 as part of the TTC Let's Move Projects.</p> <p>More recently, the lands around The East Mall were the subject of the Dundas Street West/Highway 427 Planning Framework Study which envisioned a vibrant mixed use development with a new street network, parks and a future subway station. A link to the Planning report and Council Decision follows:</p> <p>Etobicoke York Community Council EY8.5, June 22, 2011 " Final Report - Dundas Street West/Highway 427 Planning Framework Study"</p> <p>http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.EY8.5</p> <p>In the 5 years since this approval, there has been little activity on this site. In addition, plans for the future westerly extension of the Bloor Danforth Subway are not identified in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, which instead focuses on the Dundas Street West corridor. Without a future connection to higher order transit, this GO RER Station is not seen as a priority given its proximity to Kipling Station.</p>
<p><u>b) The West Mall</u></p>	<p>The lands surrounding a possible station in this location are designated in the City's Official Plan as Mixed Use Areas, Institutional, Utility Corridors and Employment Areas. The City is currently undertaking a Sherway Gardens Secondary Plan Study for the lands south of the rail corridor. A link to the project website follows:</p> <p>http://www1.toronto.ca/wps/portal/contentonly?vqnextoid=2d1200d0a76d4410VgnVCM10000071d60f89RCRD</p> <p>As indicated in the East Mall Station discussion, the Regional Transportation Plan does not identify the westerly extension of the Bloor Danforth Subway to Sherway and The West Mall/The Queensway. Without a future connection to higher order transit, this potential station is not seen as a priority.</p>

ATTACHMENT 2

**COMMENTS ON SMARTTRACK/RER STATION SITES
(from Report to Executive Committee EX9.1)**