SUMMARY

At its meeting of December 9 and 10, 2015, City Council, in considering item PG8.13, "Davenport Community Rail-Rail Grade Separation", directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to report in early 2016 on the "Missing Link" initiative and its merits as a key element of the freight rail network serving the City and the GTA. City Council also opposed the Davenport overpass grade separation in favour of a tunnel option, and requested that Metrolinx reconsider this option. Despite City objections Metrolinx launched the formal Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) for the overpass option in January 2016 and the Notice of Completion for the project was issued May 26, 2016.

At this juncture, there is little opportunity to request reconsideration of the project recommendation for an overpass. The Minister for the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (MOECC) may only require further consideration or conditions where a matter is of provincial importance in relation to the natural environment or cultural or heritage values, or where a constitutionally protected aboriginal interest is involved. The Minister’s response to this project is anticipated August 2nd of this year. In light of Metrolinx’s decision to undertake the overpass option, and with no formal options to object, City staff are prepared to continue discussions with Metrolinx, the local community and elected officials to address the outstanding issues of concern.
On June 14, 2016 the Province of Ontario announced its plans to expand GO Transit rail service to the Waterloo Region. The Province, through its agency Metrolinx, secured an agreement-in-principle with CN to allow GO Regional Express Rail (RER) to be built along the Kitchener GO corridor. The agreement-in-principle also provides direction to initiate a planning and technical analysis to build a new freight corridor by-pass that would divert most of CN's rail activity on the Kitchener GO line between Bramalea and Georgetown. The by-pass could effectively function as the Missing Link (see Maps 1 and 2). This is a timely and welcomed announcement by the Province, as the Missing Link has the potential to also redirect freight traffic currently using the CP North Toronto rail corridor that runs east-west through the City. It is recommended that City Council recognize the Provincial announcement to initiate the planning and technical analysis to build a new freight corridor by-pass, and direct staff to participate in further discussions with all relevant parties.

The Missing Link

The impetus for a review of the Missing Link initiative was led by the City of Mississauga and jointly commissioned in early 2015 by Mississauga and the cities of Cambridge and Toronto, and the Town of Milton. The review was undertaken by the IBI Group, and a report was produced in August, 2015, entitled “Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link”. The purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of separating freight rail traffic from passenger rail traffic on the Kitchener GO rail corridor and Milton GO rail line. Within the City of Toronto, this study has bearing on the CP freight rail line that intersects the Barrie GO rail corridor at grade, at the point of the currently planned Metrolinx Davenport grade separation, as well as the Kitchener GO rail corridor within which increased passenger rail service is being planned in the context of the City’s SmartTrack initiative and Metrolinx’s Regional Express Rail program.

The Feasibility Study, included as Appendix 1 to this report, concludes that the separation of freight and passenger traffic is possible if the majority of freight traffic is redirected to alternative freight rail corridors north of Toronto, requiring construction of a new rail connection within the City of Mississauga, i.e. the Missing Link. Map 1 identifies the existing rail network and Map 2 shows the potential network with the Missing Link added.

City staff determined that the Missing Link is consistent with the City Official Plan policies to expand passenger rail service in the City and provide multi-modal travel options within Toronto. The Missing Link also aligns with the Mayor’s recently announced “Technology Corridor” between Toronto and Kitchener-Waterloo, and with better management of freight rail within Toronto.
The Davenport Rail Grade Separation initiative on the Barrie GO rail corridor is part of the Metrolinx Regional Express Rail (RER) program, which envisions the expansion of GO Transit rail service across all seven corridors. RER will provide two-way, all day, GO service as frequent as every 15 minutes through electrification of provincially owned GO rail corridors. The RER program is expected to be delivered over the next ten years by Metrolinx. The City of Toronto supports this overall commitment to transit expansion in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

In the spring of 2015, Metrolinx advised of their intention to conduct an Environmental Assessment under the streamlined Transit Project Assessment Process for the grade separation of the Barrie GO rail corridor and the CP North Toronto Subdivision rail line north of Dupont Street, and that the option under consideration is to elevate the GO corridor on an overpass structure above the CP rail line. Metrolinx indicates the grade separation is needed to accommodate the increase in GO service, to minimize potential delays, and to ensure safety as GO trains are currently required to wait if a freight train on the CP line is crossing the Barrie corridor at the level interchange point.

The preliminary design for the overpass structure is approximately 1.4 km in length, beginning just north of Bloor Street West, rising to a height of approximately 8.4 m above the CP corridor, and returning back to the existing grade just south of Davenport Road. Metrolinx refers to the reduced length of 570 m for a "guideway" structure on columns (not including the sections on berm), but the total length of the grade separation remains at 1.4 km.

In addition to the structure height, there will be noise mitigation walls integrated into the overpass structure, and overhead catenary with eventual electrification, that would add to the structure’s vertical dimension. By comparison, the total height (13.4 m) at the highest point is similar to a 4+ storey residential building. A revised rendering of the proposed structure by Metrolinx is shown in Exhibit 1, and included as Appendix 2 to this report for reference.

The Transit Project Assessment Process (Ontario Regulation 231/08) sets out the steps to be followed for this study, including completion of an environmental project report containing a description of all studies undertaken in relation to the project, and consultation on those studies. The process expressly removes the requirement to consider need, alternatives, and many local impacts typically considered in environmental assessments. Significant preparatory analysis is required to develop the project concept, examine the potential environmental impacts of the option(s), consult and consider input, and identify measures to mitigate any impacts.

Despite City objections the formal TPAP process was launched January 2016 with the issuance of the Notice of Commencement, which began the official process by the proponent under the Environmental Assessment Act.

Staff report for action - "The Missing Link" Freight Rail Alternative and Davenport Diamond Grade Separation Update
Significant planning issues and community impacts have been identified to-date for the overpass option, and they include, but are not limited to the following:

- The need for a comprehensive vision for the areas immediately surrounding the overpass structure;
- A multi-modal station at Bloor;
- Cycling connections from the proposed multi-use path to the West Toronto Rail Path;
- The need for a mitigation strategy for the design of the overpass at Dupont Street;
- Issues of long-term operation and maintenance of the proposed Greenway;
- The need for a design resolution between the proposed Greenway and City Park land; and
- The need for resolution of outstanding Noise, Vibration and Safety issues.

Notwithstanding the unresolved issues, the Notice of Completion was issued May 26, 2016, and City staff are prepared to continue discussions with Metrolinx, the local community and elected officials on the remaining issues of concern.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Deputy City Manager, Cluster B and Chief Planner & Executive Director recommends:

1. City Council recognize the Province of Ontario's June 14, 2016 announcement to initiate the planning and technical analysis to build a new freight corridor that will by-pass the Bramalea to Georgetown section of the Kitchener GO corridor (The Missing Link), and direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to participate in further discussions with Metrolinx, other municipalities, levels of government and transportation agencies to consider this plan, and request the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to report back with an update on the Missing Link initiative within 12 months, or sooner if progress necessitates such action;

2. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B and the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to continue negotiations with Metrolinx to secure a new multi-modal GO Station at Bloor Street, a Community Improvement Plan for the study mitigation area, a multi-use path and connection south to the West Toronto Railpath, a design solution and mitigation strategy for the rail corridor intersection at Dupont Street, and to participate in the project Community Advisory Committee.
DECISION HISTORY

The Missing Link

At its meeting of December 9 and 10, 2015, City Council, in considering item PG8.13, directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to report in early 2016 on the Missing Link initiative and its merits as a key element of the freight rail network serving the City and the GTA. This report responds to that direction

Safety, Accountability and Transparency on Toronto's Rail Lines

At its meeting on June 30, 2015, Executive Committee considered EX7.13 Transporting Hazardous Materials – Safety, Accountability and Transparency on Toronto's Rail Lines, which provided information and follow up activities that address Council motions to improve rail safety. The Executive Committee requested further follow up with Transport Canada to provide status updates on the status of the rail companies' risk assessments of rail lines carrying dangerous goods and the examination of alternate modes of transporting dangerous goods across Toronto.
http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX7.18

Davenport Grade Separation

On March 31, April 1 and 2, 2015, City Council adopted Motion MM5.33, "Metrolinx GO Train Bridge Plan", directing the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to ensure that land use planning and urban design considerations are part of the EA process being carried out by Metrolinx for the rail grade separation project at Dupont St. and Lansdowne Avenue.

On July 7, 8 and 9, 2015, City Council adopted Motion MM8.40, "Metrolinx Davenport Community Rail Overpass", endorsing the list of issues that Metrolinx needs to address and properly fund as part of this initiative, as identified in the letter (June 16, 2015) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning to Metrolinx; and requesting Metrolinx to extend its project schedule by two to three months to provide more time to address City staff and community comments prior to the Notice of Commencement for the Transit Project Assessment Process.

At its meeting of November 16, 2015, the Planning and Growth Management Committee, in considering item PG8.13, directed the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, to further engage Metrolinx representatives to seek clarification with respect to the commencement of the Davenport Rail Grade Separation TPAP process in January,
2016, and report directly to the December meeting of City Council on the outcome of those discussions and any further action as may be appropriate.  

At its meeting of December 9 and 10, 2015, City Council also took action to oppose the overpass grade separation option within the Davenport Rail Grade Separation Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), and supports a tunnel option for this rail grade separation and communicate this decision to Metrolinx. In doing so, City Council also requested the Deputy City Manager, Cluster B to include in subsequent reports, information on the existing cost-sharing agreements and the cost-sharing expectation of Metrolinx for this project. This report responds to that direction and provides an update on the Davenport Grade Separation project.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Missing Link Initiative

On June 14, 2016 the Province of Ontario announced its plans to expand GO Transit rail service to the Waterloo Region. The Province, through its regional transportation agency Metrolinx, secured an agreement-in-principle with CN to allow GO Regional Express Rail (RER) to be built along the Kitchener GO corridor. The decision was also made to initiate the planning and technical analysis to build a new freight corridor by-pass that would divert most of CN's rail activity on the Kitchener GO line between Bramalea and Georgetown. The by-pass could effectively function as the Missing Link (see Maps 1 and 2). This is a timely and welcomed announcement by the Province, as the Missing Link has the potential to also redirect freight traffic currently using the CP North Toronto rail corridor that runs east-west through the City.

In August, 2015, IBI Group reported on a study entitled “Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link”. The impetus for this study was led by the City of Mississauga and jointly commissioned by the cities of Mississauga, Cambridge, Toronto and the Town of Milton. The purpose of this study was to investigate the feasibility of separating freight rail traffic from passenger rail traffic on the Kitchener GO line and Milton GO line. Within the City of Toronto, these lines converge onto the Kitchener GO rail corridor within which increased passenger rail service is being planned in the context of the City’s SmartTrack initiative and Metrolinx’s Regional Express Rail program. Freight rail traffic would also be diverted from the CP North Toronto Subdivision rail corridor as a result of this proposal.

The Feasibility Study, included as Attachment 1 to this report, concluded that the separation of freight and passenger traffic is possible if the majority of freight traffic is redirected to alternative freight rail corridors north of Toronto, requiring construction of a
new rail connection within the City of Mississauga, i.e. the Missing Link (see Maps 1 and 2 for the existing and potential rail network).

Davenport Grade Separation Project

In 2009, Metrolinx initiated an Environmental Assessment study to consider options for separating the Barrie GO Rail Corridor and the CP North Toronto Subdivision, which currently operate as a level interchange crossing just north of Dupont Street.

The Barrie GO corridor is a single track north-south rail line situated in a 20 m wide corridor between Symington Avenue and Lansdowne Avenue in the Davenport area. It crosses a double track east-west CP rail line, situated in a 26 m wide corridor just north of Dupont Street. The Barrie corridor requires a second track to meet anticipated increases in GO service levels. The proposed grade separation of the existing Davenport Diamond level crossing of the CP line and Barrie corridor will help to increase the reliability, efficiency and safety of the crossing, as passenger trains will no longer need to stop to let an oncoming freight train cross the interchange.

In the 2009 work, Metrolinx proposed a plan to elevate the Barrie corridor on a closed retaining wall (i.e. berm) structure over the CP line. The elevation would begin just north of Bloor Street and end just south of Davenport Road. The proposed plan received critical comment from the public and the City regarding visual impacts, noise and air quality related to diesel trains, impacts on neighbourhood connectivity, property values, redevelopment opportunities, public realm impacts, construction pile driving methods, lack of opportunity for new stations, and other concerns.

As a result of the concerns raised with the plan, the Environmental Assessment study was suspended and the work was continued as an internal Metrolinx feasibility study. This study was finalized in 2010 but the findings were not publicly released for comment/input, and upon completion the document was not circulated to the City for review.

In 2014, the Province made a commitment to deliver Regional Express Rail (RER) which envisions expanding GO Transit rail service across all of its corridors. RER will provide two-way, all-day, GO service as frequent as every 15 minutes. The improved service frequency will ultimately require electrification of provincially owned GO rail corridors. The RER program will be delivered over the next ten years by the Province's regional transportation agency, Metrolinx. In the 2015 Budget, the Province committed $13.5 billion of the $16 billion to Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) transit infrastructure funding over the next ten years for GO RER

In the spring of 2015, City staff were advised by the local Councillor of Metrolinx’s intention to grade separate the Davenport Diamond and conduct an Environmental Assessment under the streamlined Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), with a focus on a rail overpass option. Inquiries to Metrolinx resulted in meetings with City
staff in April 2015 and the establishment of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) which met seven times over the past year.

Technical Advisory Committee members attended numerous community engagement meetings hosted by Metrolinx and consulted directly with local residents at the request of the local Councillor. The above list of planning issues and community impacts is a direct result of that consultation work.

**COMMENT**

**The Missing Link**

The Province of Ontario announced on June 14, 2016 that an agreement-in-principle had been secured with CN to allow GO RER to be built along the Kitchener GO corridor. The decision has also been made to initiate the planning and technical analysis to build a new freight corridor by-pass (the Missing Link) to divert most of CN's rail activity on the Kitchener GO line between Bramalea and Georgetown. This is a significant announcement for regional transit, for freight movement in the GTA, and for the City of Toronto in many ways.

The IBI Missing Link study (August 2015) is a high level business case review of the opportunity to improve passenger and freight rail operations in the GTHA and surrounding area. The study concluded that there is a business case to reroute the freight rail traffic from the existing CP Rail corridor through mid Toronto and Mississauga to the CN Rail corridor in the southern part of York Region and northern part of Mississauga (see Map 1). The Feasibility Study also recommended further investigation of the Missing Link which is a new section of rail line connecting the CN Rail Line at Bramalea with the CP Rail Line near the Milton-Mississauga border, as described on Map 2. This would then separate most of the freight traffic in the western part of the Greater Toronto Area from the Milton GO Line and the Kitchener GO Line. It is important to note that even with the Missing Link, some freight movements would continue to occur in the City of Toronto to serve local business needs.

As previously reported, the Missing Link has many advantages to the GTA and municipalities from a planning and transportation servicing perspective. In the case of Toronto, it has the potential to benefit communities, freight operators, and GO Transit service in a number of ways:

- concentrates freight rail activities on key corridors outside of the city which frees up capacity of rail lines within the city for additional passenger rail service that can benefit Toronto residents. This is consistent with Official Plan policy and strengthens the transit "network" planning approach, to create greater connectivity to increase mobility choices for residents of Toronto;
• removal of the majority of heavy through freight traffic from the central areas in Toronto thereby improving public safety in one of Canada's most densely populated urban areas; and
• reducing the existing conflict at the Davenport interchange between freight rail traffic on the CP North Toronto Subdivision line and GO trains on the Barrie Corridor.

The proposal is consistent with key policies contained in the City of Toronto’s Official Plan including:

Section 2.2, Policy 1(e)
1. Toronto will work with neighbouring municipalities, the Province of Ontario and Metrolinx to address mutual challenges and to develop a framework for dealing with growth across the GTA which:
   e) increases the efficiency and safety of the road and rail freight networks in the movement of goods and services;

Section 2.2, Policy 3(g)
3. The City's transportation network will be maintained and developed to support the growth management objectives of this Plan by:
   g) supporting the increase use of existing rail corridors within the City for enhanced local and inter-regional passenger service;

Section 2.4, Policy 12(c) and 12(d)
12. The City will work with other orders of government, other municipalities, representatives from across the goods movement industry and the public to develop a comprehensive multi-modal strategy for the safe, efficient and environmentally sustainable movement of goods within the GTHA. This strategy will include:
   c) identification of innovative approaches for urban freight movements;
   d) the establishment of a study of potential measures to encourage long distance freight trips not serving Toronto to bypass the City by using alternative corridors such as Highway 407 and those provided by the rail network;

In addition to the obvious passenger rail service benefits from completion of the Missing Link, there are also a number of current transportation policies and initiatives that align with this proposal as noted in the following sections.

The Mayor’s Recently Announced “Technology Corridor”

There are approximately 200,000 technology jobs between the Toronto area and Kitchener-Waterloo, which is reportedly roughly half the size of the workforce in Silicon Valley right now. The mix of current and growing technology activity in the Waterloo area, and business and economic activity in Toronto that is backed by Toronto’s growing...
international presence, is seen as a potential opportunity that can be beneficial to both cities and the corridor that joins them. Improved passenger rail service either through GO Transit or dedicated high speed rail is seen as a key requirement to fully realize this opportunity. The City has been working through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities with Transport Canada on alternative routings. The Missing Link has the potential to advance improved passenger rail service between the two cities and leverage the full potential of this “Technology Corridor”.

*Better Managing Freight Rail Within Toronto*

Mayor Tory and City Councillors representing wards that border the CP North Toronto Subdivision rail line through the mid-town of the City recently wrote to the Honourable Marc Garneau, Federal Transport Minister, requesting further consideration of measures to increase rail safety in densely populated areas. One of the suggested measures was to examine alternative routes for goods movement transportation as recommended in the recent Canada Transportation Act review. This suggested action aligns with the Missing Link initiative to examine viable options to logically redistribute freight and passenger rail to the benefit of both services.
Map 1 - The Existing Rail Network

Map 2 – The Missing Link

Base Map Source: IBI Group Report, Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link, August 19, 2015, Map 2 – Existing Through Freight Routes

Staff report for action - "The Missing Link" Freight Rail Alternative and Davenport Diamond Grade Separation Update
Davenport Diamond Grade Separation

City staff continued the ongoing work with the community and Metrolinx since the official TPAP announcement of the Notice of Commencement of the Davenport Grade Separation study at the end of January 2016. And although the Notice of Completion of the study was announced on May 26, 2016, staff are continuing efforts to resolve outstanding issues, and this effort will extend into the next project stage that is detailed design by Metrolinx. This work has continued, notwithstanding City Council's stated objection to the overpass option and endorsement of a tunnel option.

The following provides a status update of key issues stemming from the discussions with Metrolinx and the community:

**A Comprehensive Vision** – Metrolinx has indicated a willingness in recent meetings to explore the funding of a city led comprehensive planning exercise and funding strategy for public realm improvements similar to the successful and recent Eglinton Crosstown project. This strategy would provide separate funds for a comprehensive public realm plan that considers the Metrolinx overpass study area as well as the adjacent lands and city structure.

Further discussions are required to clarify both the timing and scope of this work as the project moves forward, and pending TPAP approval. This process can run in tandem with detailed design development for the overpass option and be coordinated appropriately.

**Cycling Connections** – Metrolinx has indicated that they will work with the city to integrate the proposed greenway and multi-use path into the existing and future cycling network, including the expansion south to the West Toronto Railpath. Requirements to accommodate this expansion include the widening of the existing Bloor Street Bridge and partnering with the City to facilitate expansion. A key issue will be the available rail corridor right of way south of Bloor Street and options to complete the cycling connections. Further discussions are planned with senior City staff on this issue.

**Multi-modal Station** – Senior City Planning staff have participated in confidential discussions with Metrolinx staff regarding how a potential station might be planned to integrate with this community and provide appropriate interchange opportunities. Further work is required to advance these discussions, which will be dependent on the concurrent evaluation being undertaken by Metrolinx on all new station options for the RER program. This item will be further reported to the Metrolinx Board at their meeting of June 28, 2016.

**Safety** – Metrolinx recently released information on safety statistics to the public (April 27, 2016 public meeting and on the project website) that illustrate the proposed benefits of grade separation, including further details of the proposed overpass structure and safety guiderail (Jordan Rail) feature. Metrolinx has also made public the Transportation Canada safety regulations that govern the design which they adhere to.

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Further discussions with Metrolinx are required in order to re-imagine the public realm with active frontages and partnerships with adjacent land owners to activate these facades to ensure a safe public space for all.

**Noise and Vibration** – This item continues to be a key issue for the community and the City, and further information on "best practices" regarding noise and vibration has been requested. A preliminary review of international best practices reveals that there could be lessons and procedures from other projects and jurisdictions that could lead to positive measures to be undertaken for the Davenport study.

**Community Advisory Committee** - At present Metrolinx is liaising with the area councillor to set up a Community Advisory Committee process which will be comprised of a mix of partners, community organizations, residents and business owners to help guide the detailed design and construction of the project. Metrolinx has requested participation from City of Toronto staff on this committee moving forward.

**Cost Sharing** – The Major Capital Infrastructure Coordination (MCIC) Office is leading discussions with Metrolinx on the location of new grade separations. MCIC will engage all applicable City Divisions and the Toronto Transit Commission to ensure the City derives maximum benefit from the locations selected by Metrolinx. MCIC will advise City Council on the financial implications of the cost-sharing arrangements with Metrolinx as this project progresses.

**CONCLUSION**

The Provincial announcement to begin the planning and technical analysis for a new freight by-pass corridor is a positive direction for the City of Toronto. This decision aligns with the City's objective to increase the use of existing rail corridors within the City for enhanced local and inter-regional passenger service, increase the safety and efficiency of freight rail traffic and goods movement, and it aligns with the Mayor’s recently announced “Technology Corridor” linking jobs between the Toronto area and Kitchener-Waterloo with improved passenger rail service. It is recommended that City Council endorse the Provincial announcement, and direct staff to participate in further discussions with all relevant parties.

The Davenport Diamond Overpass is likely expected to advance according to Metrolinx schedule and TPAP legislated timing requirements. Under this circumstance, City staff are prepared to ensure the appropriate planning for the area is underway to manage and mitigate the effects of this new infrastructure on the local community. Key considerations include ensuring appropriate connections are made or protected for during future development and a revised station location is recognized at the appropriate time in the City's area specific policies and Official Plan. It is paramount that city building opportunities are not lost as grade separation work begins and development pressures build. At present there are a number of approved developments adjacent to the Barrie
Rail Corridor, and coordination of both the proposed Metrolinx infrastructure work, and residential and commercial buildings will need to be prioritized. City staff are prepared to continue to work with Metrolinx, the community and elected officials to ensure City interests are addressed consistent with the Official Plan and related plans and policies.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Report "Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link", IBI Group, August 18, 2015

Appendix 2 – Exhibit 1 – Rendering of the Proposed Overpass Structure by Metrolinx
Appendix 1 – Report "Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link", IBI Group, August 18, 2015

(PDF sent separately)
Appendix 2: Exhibit 1 – Renderings of the Proposed Overpass Structure by Metrolinx
Images: Courtesy of Metrolinx

Simulated view looking southwest from the third floor of condominiums at 812 Lansdowne Avenue

Simulated view looking east along Sarnia Avenue toward the Guideway

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