



CITY COUNCIL REFERRAL OF MEMBER MOTION

Replacing the Lost Railway Stations of West Toronto

Date:	November 14, 2016
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Council
Wards:	All Wards

City Council Decision

City Council on November 8 and 9, 2016, referred Motion MM22.7 to the Executive Committee.

Recommendations

Councillor Cesar Palacio, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton, recommends that:

1. City Council indicate its support for replacing the lost railway stations of West Toronto by requesting Metrolinx to work with the residents of these communities, in order to reach a design for these new stations which includes the architectural template of former railway depots in this area.
2. City Council request Metrolinx to involve individuals from the local community who have interest and experience related to railway history and heritage preservation in the community consultations and advisory panels during the Environmental Assessment process for these new stations.

Summary

In earlier times, Toronto's West Toronto – Davenport - Parkdale area held at least nine railway stations. Suburban depots located in what were originally standalone communities, including Parkdale, West Toronto, and York, were a core part of the economic and transportation infrastructure. These communities began, and developed, due to the arrival of railways and the construction of major railway facilities in these areas.

None of these stations have survived as working or heritage structures. By 1980, the heritage value of these structures was recognized; however, owing to weaker laws and lack of funding, attempts to preserve these buildings were unsuccessful. Two stations – Canadian National St. Clair Avenue Depot, and Canadian National Parkdale Depot – were lost to fire shortly after having been set aside for restoration. The third station, the former Canadian Pacific West Toronto depot, was demolished by its owner just as the City was taking steps to relocate and preserve it. The loss of the West Toronto Depot was a particularly bitter blow to the community and spurred interest in more concentrated heritage efforts.

Metrolinx is currently planning new rail stations in some of these same locations – St. Clair/Keele, Bloor/Lansdowne, and Liberty Village/Parkdale - to support the planned new GO Regional Express Rail and SmartTrack services.

There is an opportunity to design and construct these new stations using the architectural template of former railway depots in this area. This will restore this lost element of past history into the community.

Use of traditional architecture will complement the prevailing flavour of dwellings and businesses in these areas, and prevent the mismatching of 2016 architecture into public space at these locations.

Since the new buildings will be working transit facilities, no new funding is required to achieve this. Once constructed, these heritage relevant structures will have longevity in these communities. Their future role is aligned to their original purpose. Proper security and ongoing maintenance is assured.

Background Information

Toronto Star article entitled "City halts CP Rail project"

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-98132.pdf>)

Communication

(November 7, 2016) Letter from Paul Cordingley, Etobicoke York Community Preservation Panel (MM.New.MM22.7.1)

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2016/mm/comm/communicationfile-64014.pdf>)