

# EX13.3.1

Dear Mr. Mayor and Executive Committee Members,

2016 03 07

## Re: EX 13.3 Staff Report Developing Toronto's Transit Network Plan

Transport Action Ontario supports most of the recommendations in this Phase 1 report, especially the extension of the Crosstown LRT East and West. However, we strongly disagree with Recommendation 2.b. to “remove Scarborough Express Rail (SmartSpur) from further consideration,” and believe that councillors should not be satisfied with staff’s work without a ridership model on Scarborough ExpressRail (SER) as they promised Executive Committee to undertake due diligence on this concept. As a proposal that offers potentially significant alleviation to the subway system, including along Yonge south of Bloor, in the context of the modeling work to date that shows Yonge south of Bloor to still be at capacity in most network combinations in 2031 and in all combinations in 2041, a ridership model for SER is critical information for Committee and Council before any final decision on it. SER has not been given a fair evaluation until it has been modeled for a ridership projection.

At the January 28, 2016 Executive Committee meeting, planning staff presented the concept of building a one-stop Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE) to Scarborough Centre, replacing the three-stop extension running up to Sheppard Ave. This revision to the SSE would free up funding to allow the construction of the Crosstown East LRT within the same funding envelope. However, at the same meeting, the Chief Planner committed to ensure that SER has been given due consideration as an addition to the planned SmartTrack upgrade of the Stouffville corridor.

The latest staff update published March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 and under consideration this Wednesday dismisses SER without any attempt to run the ridership modeling exercise including SER in comparison to the one-stop SSE. Transport Action Ontario has also prepared a response to some of the comments from the January 28, 2016 Executive Committee meeting, in the form of a technical memo submitted March 1, 2016, which staff have not yet reviewed and considered. The grounds for recommendation 2.b. are incomplete and erroneous as follows:

**Service Frequency:** Our recent technical memo to staff demonstrated that up to 20 trains per hour could be run on this combined corridor – 14 to 16 to Scarborough Centre and 4 to 6 to Unionville. That provides a level of service better than the SRT today, but with five times the capacity on each train. Secondly, headways of 110 seconds on the SSE require an expensive overbuild of the turnaround terminus at Scarborough Centre that is not needed for the ridership projected. The recently released ridership projections for the three-stop SSE are 9,800 to 11,600 passengers per hour per direction if SmartTrack is built (13,700 without SmartTrack). The Chief Planner confirmed in The Star that ridership generated by the one-stop option is expected to be less than the three-stop option, which again won’t warrant such a high level of service.

**Property Impact:** The report cites “significant impacts to private property and existing business.” Yes there are up to eight properties required to accommodate the revised alignment for SER, but the SSE will require property for its emergency exit buildings as well. This new alignment was created to permit the SRT to operate during the construction phase of SER. However, all these properties are single-storey structures with low density employment and so are prime candidates for redevelopment once better transit is offered to the area.

**Connectivity:** While the SSE does offer a one-seat ride to stations on Line 2, it requires the majority of riders to switch to Line 1 to reach the final destination for around half of them. In contrast, SER offers riders a one-seat ride directly to the heart of downtown, and saves them 20 minutes in travel time – a significant improvement. In addition, for those whose destinations still require Line 1, they would use Line 1 in the reverse-peak direction instead of the overloaded peak direction, providing improved utilization of underused capacity that must be provided for sustaining peak direction service. Connectivity is therefore better with SER.

**Factors Left out of the Staff Analysis:**

**Cost:** The SSE is projected to cost \$2.5B while the SER is estimated at \$1.1B, a savings of \$1.4 billion which can be used in Scarborough to fund an extension of SER to Centennial College (a major learning and employment hub), which gets no rapid transit in the current staff network proposal.

**Relief on Lines 1 and 2:** No matter what new projected ridership numbers result from the new design of SSE, they will increase the existing crowding on both subway lines. The SSE also aggravates the extreme congestion at Bloor-Yonge Station. The additional riders from SSE will increase safety risks at this station, as trains put more passengers on the platform before passengers from the previous train can get off the platform.

In summary, city staff will be rerunning the modeling to take into consideration both the modified SSE design and the addition of the Crosstown East to the network. We are asking that in that same exercise that SER be run in the model in order to compare it with the ridership results for the revised SSE.

REQUEST: Amend recommendation 2.b. to read: “Include Scarborough Express Rail (SmartSpur) to Centennial College via Scarborough Centre in ongoing modeling work, at frequencies of ten, six, and four minutes, in networks with and without the one-stop Scarborough Subway Extension, with the impact on Bloor-Yonge transfer traffic in the same format as provided for the Yonge Subway Extension model results (per EX13.3 Attachment 2 of Appendix 1).”

Respectfully submitted,

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