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Mayor John Tory and Executive Committee Members  
City of Toronto  
Toronto City Hall  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

**RE: Item EX13.9 (Allocation of the Public Realm Amount – Finch West LRT)**

Dear Mayor and Members of Executive Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf the Emery Business Improvement Area (BIA) regarding the Executive Committee Agenda Item EX 13.9 Allocation of the Public Realm - Finch West LRT and the Deputy City Manager's report and recommendations as it relates to our community. I would like to convey the BIA's support for this report as it acknowledges many of the concerns identified by our members since the introduction of the LRT project. I would also like to provide you with details of other BIA initiatives that have not been recommended as mandatory or discretionary for the RFP, but are critical to the success of the LRT.

The BIA would like to expressly thank the Mayor and his staff for their concerted efforts in working with the BIA, and our local Councillor who advocated on behalf of the BIA despite his serious reservations about the LRT and his public support for a subway.

This project is a tremendous example of how the Province, Metrolinx, the City and BIA can work together on behalf of the citizens of Toronto. Together we participated in over 7 stakeholder meetings facilitated by the City and/or Metrolinx over the course of one year. Additionally, the BIA held 3 public meetings to survey and inform its members and the public. The result is a report that recommends mandated and discretionary elements for the RFP, and that references BIA initiatives complementary to the LRT. Together, these projects will breathe life into our community by creating a destination that will attract Torontonians to Emery and not just transport them away from our dynamic community. The development of the Finch West LRT and the implementation of these initiatives can be the catalyst for renewed interest and growth in this community which is critical to providing the right environment for employment growth, easing the conventional impression of Emery as a strictly industrial area, and developing a more cohesive interface throughout this portion of the Finch corridor.

Following the release of the original Environmental Assessment in 2009, the Emery BIA expressed serious reservations regarding the LRT project, mainly because of the negative traffic impact that would result. Vehicular travel times were expected to triple in some instances. As a result, the BIA worked with Metrolinx, MTO and the City of Toronto to develop solutions that the BIA could support. Furthermore, the BIA embarked upon a series of initiatives that would animate and enhance the Finch West corridor, creating a catalyst for renewed investment and development in Emery.

These BIA-initiated public realm improvements are not only complementary to the LRT but critical to its success and the revitalization of this community. The BIA was pleased to see the inclusion of these initiatives in the Allocation of the PRA report, however the BIA believes that these initiatives should be considered mandatory, or at a minimum discretionary, by the City and Metrolinx for the RFP. We are however heartened by the staff report which references these initiatives that the City is pursuing to complement the Metrolinx LRT.

By Metrolinx's own admission in a report entitled *Finch West LRT Real Estate Market Conditions, Setting the Stage: Encouraging Transit Supported Places on the Finch West LRT Corridor*, the portion of Finch Ave W that extends across the Emery district has been described as unwelcoming from a pedestrian, cycling, and transit perspective. It endures heavy usage by both vehicular and transport traffic on a daily basis as a primary connection between the 400 series highways and many of Toronto's industrial sites. Unemployment in this area is high and most commuters travel by car. Although City and Metrolinx studies have indicated that there is an opportunity to change mobility habits to encourage the use of public transit, the LRT alone will not change these driving habits. The BIA believes there are additional opportunities to increase transit ridership across the Finch West corridor that should be considered. The BIA's initiatives, as reflected in this report, encourage improved traffic flow and community building in order to develop a dynamic transportation corridor that invites the use of the LRT by Torontonians from across the City.

The BIA supports the staff recommendations for elevated bike paths along the Finch West Corridor and in addition, the BIA has undertaken to develop a bike path infrastructure plan that will link the Finch Corridor to the Humber River Trail and complement the TPA Bike Share program. This will provide a safe and continuous cycling infrastructure that will connect this quadrant of the city with the south, while keeping cyclists safe from the heavy tractor trailer traffic common along Finch Avenue.

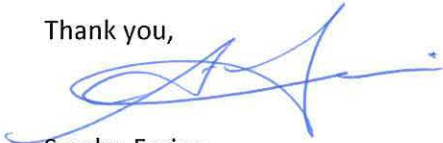
Additionally, the BIA is pursuing a historical indigenous initiative as part of the bike path plan. It is meant to highlight the heritage and culture of those that travelled through and settled in Emery prior to and during the early years of the Euro-Canadian settler culture. The hydro land located south of Finch Ave on the east side of Weston Road has been designated archaeologically significant by the Ontario Archaeological Sites Database (OASD). The site is maintained by the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport. Accordingly, the BIA will honour the 11,000 years of history that it represents. The Metrolinx report referenced above recommends "*better use of the hydro corridor in ways that provide better amenities to areas where intensification is anticipated, including parks and pedestrian and bicycle trails.*"

The historical indigenous site will be connected to both the public square and Finch West corridor, as well as the southern portion of the City through the proposed bike path system. This is another example of how the BIA is working hard on behalf of its members to ensure the LRT is successful.

The BIA remains committed to promoting the economic health and good functioning of the Emery business park as it relates to the Finch West LRT. To that end, City staff developed Terms of Reference for a Goods Movement Study (GMS) a year ago to undertake a comprehensive review of existing and future truck operations related to goods movement in the Finch West corridor, where road and traffic operations will undergo a significant change as a result of Metrolinx's implementation of the Finch West LRT. The study will develop a scenario to improve goods movement and truck operations to, from and within the Employment Districts along the Finch West corridor, and address the expected demands on the City's road infrastructure and the Ministry of Transportation's expressway infrastructure. The BIA supports this initiative and understands that it will be completed in a timely manner.

I look forward to continuing to work with Council and City staff on the Finch West LRT project, BIA initiatives and future development that will ensue as a result.

Thank you,



Sandra Farina

Executive Director, Emery Business Improvement Area