



October 22, 2019

Good Morning Mayor Tory and City Councillors:

My name is Viresh Mathur and I am a director of the Scarborough Business Association (SBA), the voice of Scarborough's businesses community. On behalf of the SBA, I am here today to express our strong support for the agreement between the Province Ontario and the City Toronto that commits the Province to fully funding and constructing the three-stop Scarborough subway and the Ontario Line and allows the City to reallocate approximately \$1.2 billion in City funds to other rapid transit projects.

Scarborough's ongoing transit debate has left our members, their employees and customers, and Scarborough's residents frustrated by the lack of progress in cutting our commute times which typically run 1.5 to 2 hours each way. The Scarborough RT repeatedly breaks down and will likely be decommissioned for several years prior to the three-stop subway becoming operational, which means that the 35,000 trips made on the SRT on a typical weekday¹ will instead be made by buses thereby making our commute times even worse than they are now.

For these reasons the SBA unequivocally supports using the \$1.2 billion in reallocated funds to build the Eglinton East LRT to Malvern *and* the Sheppard East LRT which, when combined with the three-stop Scarborough subway, will create a Scarborough Rapid Transit Network (RTN) that connects Scarborough's neighborhoods and businesses to one another and the rest of the City. We also ask that some of the funds be used to begin preparing contingency plans for the SRT's inevitable breakdowns this upcoming winter, and its eventual decommissioning, so that residents, our employees and our customers aren't forced to rely on unreliable shuttle buses that get stuck in traffic.

A Scarborough RTN would bring rapid transit to seven priority neighborhoods², Malvern, two post-secondary campuses, five commercial shopping centers³, and several neighborhoods in eastern and northern Scarborough that have been promised rapid transit for decades. Upon completion, thousands of Scarborough residents living along Eglinton East and Sheppard East could walk to a rapid transit stop for the first time ever, creating the conditions for a more connected and prosperous Scarborough business landscape.

A Scarborough RTN would open up thousands of hectares of land for commercial and residential redevelopment by making these lands accessible by rapid transit, walking and/or cycling and would bring thousands of jobs to within walking distance of a rapid transit stop.⁴ Furthermore, when

¹ According to 2018, TTC figures - https://www.thestar.com/news/city_hall/2019/10/16/scarborough-rt-riders-may-be-taking-buses-for-years-under-new-city-provincial-deal.html

² Kennedy Park, Eglinton East, Scarborough Village, Woburn, Morningside, West Hill, and Highland Creek

³ Malvern Town Center, Scarborough Town Center, Victoria Park Square, Agincourt Mall and the Dragon Center.

⁴ In "Choices for Scarborough: Transit, Walking, and Intensification in Toronto's Inner Suburbs," published in March 2015, Professors Andre Sorensen and Paul M. Hess provided figures on the benefits to Scarborough from the

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connected to the Eglinton Crosstown and the planned Eglinton West LRT, the Scarborough RTN would provide residents with an affordable, convenient and direct route to Pearson International Airport. Such a route will also make visiting Scarborough's major attractions such as the Toronto Zoo, Pan-American Sports Center and Rouge National Urban Park more affordable and convenient for residents and visitors who in turn would patronage our businesses and put more money into our local economy.

The SBA also views the Scarborough RTN as vital to achieving TransformTO's goal that by 2050, 75% of trips under 5km are made by walking or cycling. Climate change is of the utmost concern for our members as it directly threatens our businesses and the communities we live in. City Council's recent decision to declare climate change an emergency committed the City to immediately 'look for opportunities to invest in and accelerate emission reductions'. The Scarborough RTN is such an opportunity. We do not see a plausible route to achieving the above-mentioned targets until Scarberians can walk or cycle to rapid transit stops near their homes, jobs, local businesses and so on.

To build the Scarborough RTN, we propose that the City immediately ask the Province for permission to build the Eglinton East and Sheppard East LRT lines as required under Bill 107. We then propose that the City fund the LRTs by reallocating the Scarborough subway property tax levy towards financing the construction of both LRTs. The SBA has significant concerns that if the City does not fully commit to building the LRT lines, the 48% of Scarborough TTC riders that use transit to travel within Scarborough will see no significant improvements in their commutes and are therefore unlikely to increase their patronage at our businesses.

We further fear that if the City does not begin serious preparations for the SRT's inevitable winter breakdowns and eventual decommissioning, Scarborough will be at a serious competitive disadvantage vis-à-vis other regions with respect to retaining skilled employees, attracting new businesses and growing our customer base particularly during the period of time when we expect the SRT to be decommissioned and the Scarborough subway to be several years from completion leaving no rapid transit in Toronto east of Kennedy station.⁵

Building a Scarborough RTN represent a once-in-a-generation chance to provide our members and all Scarborough residents with sustainable and ongoing business and employment opportunities in the construction, retail and commercial sectors and offers Toronto one of the clearest paths towards achieving TransformTO and building a sustainable, climate resilient city.

Regards,

Viresh Mathur

Scarborough, Eglinton East and Sheppard East LRT lines. We've generalized the numbers to account for the replacement of the Scarborough LRT with a three-stop subway.

⁵ 2026 to 2029.

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