



Re: Oct 23, 2019 Executive Committee
Item EX 9.1

Oct 22, 2019

Dear Members of the Executive Committee,

ABC Residents Association (“ABC”) is an incorporated volunteer body that has been in existence since 1957. ABC represents the interests of residents who live in the area between Yonge Street and Avenue Road and Bloor Street to the CPR tracks. This is a neighbourhood that is rich in heritage, character and interest.

ABC has a long history of advocating for better planning and development. The Ontario Line, while outside of our traditional boundaries, will have an impact on our residents and thousands of other Torontonians. It is imperative we get this core infrastructure right.

Mass dithering on transit decisions in this City is a core reason for our current lack of mass transit. We believe that the City has an opportunity to endorse a plan with merit: a plan that has commitment from the Federal and Provincial levels, a business-forward approach to building, and serves some of the most isolated residents of our great City.

We are in support of the Ontario Line for 3 fundamental reasons:

1. Optimization of speed/cost
2. Capacity demands
3. Inclusion of Thorncliffe & Flemington park

1. Optimization of speed/cost

The original Downtown Relief Line sought to leverage the construction methods and heavy rail infrastructure leveraged elsewhere on line 1. At the highest level this may make sense from a continuity perspective, but it has a fundamental flaw. What is leveraged throughout the TTC is not leveraged internationally, and when it comes to major infrastructure “custom” can be synonymous with “cost”.

Conversely, the Ontario Line seeks to leverage a public private partnership (P3) model. What this enables is an open procurement from international best practices to build a line with better construction techniques, mechanics, and equipment. An example is fully automated, driverless trains with modern signalling that enables high-frequency service (similar technology is being used in Paris, London and Singapore). We feel the opportunities afforded by a more competitive procurement process include better technology, faster implementation, and ultimately a better final product for less.

2. Capacity demands

Albeit there is skepticism regarding how fast the Ontario Line could be built, the fact of the matter is that by the time the original relief line would come to fruition, Line 1 would already be back at full capacity as per the Metrolinx Business Case. This reflects planning for yesterday, not tomorrow and fails to serve the citizens the city. Relying on the expert opinion of Metrolinx, we believe meeting capacity is important and a line with more stops and a faster construction time seems better suited to meet the fundamental objective of congestion relief.

3. Inclusion of Thorncliffe & Flemington park

David Hulchanski, Director of U of T's Centre for Urban and Community Studies, authored a 2006 report on "The 3 Cities within Toronto." This report clearly identifies Thorncliffe Park as a city #3. The third city has seen a drop in income and an increase in immigrant populations since 1970, but of particular interest to transit is how the residents of the third city live on what is essentially an island.

City 3 has the lowest number of jobs in the immediate area (52 per 100 workers), highest percent of car commuting population (61%), and the lowest total % of subway stations within or near the area (28%). These residents are in critical need of the type of reliable mass transit a subway affords to become better stitched within the wider city. We believe that this should be a strategic imperative for Toronto and should weight opinion heavily in favour of the Ontario Line.

We hope to see the City of Toronto endorse the Ontario Line and continue the exciting momentum that has developed around this project.

Sincerely,

John Caliendo, Co-Chair
Ian Carmichael, Co-Chair

ABC Residents Association