



October 22, 2019

Mayor John Tory and Members,  
City Executive Committee  
City Council, City of Toronto  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

By email to: [exc@toronto.ca](mailto:exc@toronto.ca)

## RE: **EX 9.1 - Toronto-Ontario Transit Update**

Dear Mayor Tory and Members,

We are writing to express our conditional support for the proposed agreement between Toronto and the province. However, we would also like to express our concerns regarding the risks associated with the proposal.

### **The proposed agreement**

We strongly support the cancellation of the upload of the TTC ownership to the province and in principle are in favour of a more ambitious Ontario Relief Line that extends all the way north to Eglinton and west to the Exhibition GO station. This expanded line will provide additional high density neighbourhoods with high speed transit and take pressure off the existing Yonge and Bloor-Danforth subway lines.

### **Our concerns**

The Ontario Line is still at a conceptual stage, both in terms of route and transit technology. This poses a significant risk of delay beyond the alternate City Relief Line completion date. A relief line component of any Ontario Line Plan must be fast tracked. The Yonge and Bloor-Danforth lines are already heavily congested. And ridership demand for both lines is expected to continue to grow significantly.

In a recent TTC report — "**Line 1 Capacity Requirements - Status Update and Preliminary Implementation Strategy**" (April 2019), TTC staff commented that *"failure to deliver the necessary capacity on Line 1 will have serious effects on the transit system throughout Toronto. If the line ridership regularly exceeds capacity, the quality of the transit service will decline. Delays will become longer and more*

***common. Customers at some stations will be unable to board trains at busy times. Crowding in stations and on trains will increase. Without increasingly proactive operational measures, such as temporarily closing stations to passenger entry and bypassing of crowded stations by trains, the safety of customers could be compromised by the mid-2020s. Ridership will decline, trust in the transit system will be damaged, and the wider economic and social benefits of a well-functioning transit service will not be fully achieved.***

The report goes on to identify initiatives that increase capacity to accommodate projected ridership demand for a period of time. However, cost estimates for these initiatives total more than \$9 billion, **with funding only approved for completion of Line 1 Automatic Train Control (“ATC”)**.

Please note that these TTC warnings about subway capacity were issued prior to the province announcing increased development density and height targets for Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) in Bill 108, and for the midtown and downtown areas (OPA 405/6). The need for an early relief line is even more important,

### ***Short term recommendations***

#### **Ridership capacity**

- (1) That the initiatives listed in the "*Line 1 Capacity Requirements - Status Update and Preliminary Implementation Strategy*" report be funded and accelerated.
- (2) That a review is undertaken to establish alternate north-south transit capabilities that can be implemented quickly, such as dedicated road lanes for Bus Rapid Transit, including fast tracking the Midtown in Focus implementation study for express buses at peak travel times (Yonge St, Avenue Rd and/or Mt Pleasant Rd.)
- (3) That the SmartTrack program be accelerated, using the potential for mass transit of existing GO Lines, including broadening the scope of SmartTrack to use additional GO Lines such as the Richmond Hill and Barrie GO Lines.
- (4) That fare integration between the TTC and GO services be achieved to optimize the use of the combined TTC and GO transit network.

#### **Ridership demand**

- (1) That the completion of the Yonge Line 1 extension to Richmond Hill be delayed till the central and east portion of the Ontario Relief Line are operational
- (2) That the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) with the City of Toronto take active steps to match the growth of development in the Yonge and Eglinton East corridor to the available transit capacity, including potential changes or delays in implementation of Bill 108 (MTSAs) and OPA 405/6.

## ***Longer-term recommendations***

Even with the Ontario Relief Line reaching Eglinton, we continue to have a concern with congestion on the Yonge Line over the longer term. Today, during AM Peak hours, the Yonge line is at 80 percent capacity when leaving the Sheppard station. Development growth is projected to continue in the Yonge corridor, north of Eglinton. And ATC will at best yield a 10 percent increase in capacity.

We recommend

- (1) That the Ontario Line be extended to Richmond Hill using the Richmond Hill GO Line as an alternative to extending the Yonge Street subway north of Finch.
- (2) That City Planning be requested to report on other longer-term initiatives (such as potentially twinning the Yonge Subway south of Eglinton) and on measures that should be undertaken now to preserve options.

## ***Summary***

Important though these concerns are, they do not diminish the fact that the Province is proposing to take financial responsibility for delivering a substantial upgrade to mass transit in Toronto. We support the proposed agreement but stress that the Relief Line component of the Ontario Line must be planned and completed quickly.

We also must stress that the backlog of unmet needs for existing mass transit has to be addressed and funded in tandem with the construction of the Relief Line and that local restrictions on growth of development might be required to prevent gridlock of the current mass transit system.

Respectfully submitted,

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cc: Other members of Council  
Gregg Lintern, Chief Planner  
James Perttula, Director, Transit and Transportation Planning

**The Federation of North Toronto Residents' Associations (FoNTRA)** is a non-profit, volunteer organization comprised of more than 30 member organizations. Its members, all residents' associations, include at least 170,000 Toronto residents within their boundaries. The residents' associations that make up FoNTRA believe that Ontario and Toronto can and should achieve better development. Its central issue is not *whether* Toronto will grow, but *how*. FoNTRA believes that sustainable urban regions are characterized by environmental balance, fiscal viability, infrastructure investment and