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**Deputation to Toronto Budget Committee – January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021**

**Re: City of Toronto, 2021 Budget**

**From: Larry Whatmore, President, Scarborough Community Renewal Organization**

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Members of the Budget Committee:

My name is Larry Whatmore. I am president of the Scarborough Community Renewal Organization. SCRO is an organization of engaged volunteers that works to connect, promote and renew Scarborough, so Scarborough can be strong and prosperous.

One of the City's objectives in this budget is to stimulate our economic and social recovery without straining the City's finances beyond what COVID has already done.

SCRO would like to focus on two initiatives that we believe are well aligned with this objective.

**1. Construction of the Eglinton East LRT from Kennedy Station to University of Toronto Scarborough and then to Malvern.**

On December 10, we deputed to Executive Committee, encouraging Council to support this project. We are pleased that Council decided to support the staff recommendation.

This is a \$4 billion project. Fortunately, the City can partially pay for this through the \$800 million public transit levy, originally set up for the Scarborough subway but which is no longer needed for this purpose. Let's use it instead to create the full length of the Eglinton East LRT, all the way to Malvern, as was originally intended.

Last week, we deputed to the six Scarborough Members of Parliament, who conducted their own federal budget consultation. We are hoping – and anticipating – that the federal government may be willing to fund infrastructure projects which promote a post-COVID economic renewal.

We urged our MPs to advocate for infrastructure funding to pay for at least 50% of the cost of this project. We would urge City Council to work with your federal colleagues to make this happen.

This project has the potential to be a game changer for Scarborough. Think of the spin-off benefits:

- construction jobs for thousands of Scarborough residents, some of which could be done through a community benefits agreement,
- development renewal along the transit line,
- a huge boost for U of T Scarborough and Centennial College, and
- transit equity for Malvern, which relies heavily on public transit and whose residents endure punishing commute times to places of employment in Scarborough and in the city,

Also, fast, reliable public transit supports your climate change policy objectives and those of the federal government.

## **2. Revitalizing the Scarborough Civic Centre with more employment and more City services.**

In 2019, the mayor announced that 1,200 municipal jobs would be moved to Scarborough as part of the Modern TO initiative. We were so pleased to hear this!

Then COVID happened. So the Modern TO Workplace Modernization Program is now evolving to recognize that partial work-from-home arrangements and flexible office environments are the way of the future.

SCRO supports the themes of this program. City staff who live in Scarborough would welcome the opportunity to report to a City workplace that is closer to home. And City staff working in Scarborough, be it at home or at the Civic Centre, are more likely to spend money locally, which contributes to Scarborough's prosperity.

The latest staff report proposes a business case with a remarkable return on investment. The retrofits to the Scarborough Civic Centre would be completed by 2023.

Let's make this happen! Not only does it provide workplace benefits for City staff, it can bring City services closer to home for the 25% of Toronto residents living east of Victoria Park Avenue and can bring City decision-makers closer to the issues and concerns of suburban residents and businesses.

Thank you for your time and attention. I have provided the City Clerk with a copy of my remarks.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Larry Whatmore', with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

Larry Whatmore  
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