

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM35.48	ACTION			Ward: 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25
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Protecting Jobs in Scarborough - by Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelview

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office and the General Manager, Transportation Services, to request Metrolinx to immediately revisit the design of the Progress Avenue Grade Separation, and others, to reach a joint design solution suitable for continued operations of all other affected businesses, prior to proceeding with project procurement.

Summary

The Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations are one component of the GO Expansion Program that recently underwent a Transit Project Assessment Process (Ontario Regulation 231/08). As part of the GO Expansion Program, Metrolinx has identified various infrastructure required to achieve service level targets across their network.

The purpose of the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations is to accommodate the increase of GO service through grade separations or road closures at seven at-grade road-rail crossings, including Progress Avenue, where a Road Over Rail Grade Separation is proposed. The Project will facilitate the expansion of service, however it will severely impact the ability to conduct operations of a number of businesses that are strategically located close to rail.

Atlantic Packaging Products is a good example. It is a privately owned, Toronto-based company that has been in business since 1945. Over time, it has become one of the largest and most respected companies producing sustainable packaging products for large and small businesses in both Canada, and in the United States. Through vision, timely acquisitions, and a service driven mantra, they have become an example of a Scarborough-based industry leader.

There are significant employers on Progress Avenue between Midland Avenue and Kennedy Road, including the second largest private sector employer in Scarborough, providing well-paying jobs in the community. These facilities and the economic benefits they generate are at risk by Metrolinx's adjacent Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations project, as are the operations of a number of other businesses here and elsewhere in Scarborough. The proposed grade separation designs will adversely affect these businesses' ability to conduct their operations by limiting access to their facilities. Despite design discussions over the past year between Metrolinx and area businesses and landowners, which seemed to be focused on an approach that could work for the affected businesses, Metrolinx recently revealed a final design for the grade separation that takes a different approach.

The Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations project went through the Transit Project Assessment Process Phase; consultations were held online from August 18 to September 1, 2020. The Notice of Commencement was issued on September 8, 2020. Metrolinx continued in the Fall of 2020 through the third and final round of consultation.

The Environmental Project Report for the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations Transit Project Assessment Process was available for public review from January 6 to February 4, 2021. It has been reviewed by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks. The Statement of Completion has been issued, and the project can now proceed to the detailed design and implementation phase.

This Motion is requesting the Executive Director, Transit Expansion and the General Manager, Transportation Services, to request Metrolinx to allow the designs to be revisited before procurement of the Progress Avenue Grade Separation takes place, to reach design solutions suitable to all parties. This matter is urgent. Metrolinx is planning to go to procurement without first consulting with business owners and property owners on the revised proposal.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM35.48

