



RE.

**EX33.2 Advancing City
Priority Transit**

Expansion Projects –

The urgency of funding and building the Waterfront East LRT now

TO.

Mayor John Tory and
Councillors Ainslie,
Bailão, Crawford,
McKelvie, Minnan-Wong
and Pasternak.

DATE.

8 June 2022

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of the Executive Committee,

Thank you for continuing to advance the Waterfront East LRT and Waterfront Transit Network as a priority funding project for the City of Toronto. We are grateful to see the project prioritized in the Mayor’s communications with provincial leadership candidates during the recent election, and also that elements of the east waterfront route are now noted in development charge reviews as eligible for funding. We are very encouraged by work in the last year by City Staff, TTC and Waterfront Toronto to explore alignments for the first phase of the Waterfront East LRT that maximize potential to develop alongside with Villiers Island and the Port Lands on an accelerated timeline.

We are writing in strong support of continued advancement and acceleration of planning for the Waterfront East LRT. While we are surprised to see the eligibility for construction funding delayed to mid-2023, it appears the project will then be a complete package with: a funding strategy; coordination with the City’s revised priorities through its Next Phase of Waterfront Revitalization review; and with the best options ready for both the Union Station to Queens Quay tunnel, and through Villiers Island to ensure the Port Lands full potential can be unlocked.

The Waterfront BIA has been a consistent advocate for putting transit first when developing the eastern waterfront and Port Lands.

- We are supportive of the route and alignment of the Waterfront East LRT going further into the Port Lands in this first phase to maximize development potential.
- The Waterfront East LRT should be funded, planned and built immediately as a collaboration of all three levels of government.
- Planning and design on an accelerated timeline must prioritize the avoidance of construction disruption along Queens Quay, including maintenance of east-west connectivity.
- Waterfront Transit should be supported alongside other transit priorities, including the nearby Ontario Line, emphasizing the benefits of building out the broader transit network in tandem for the benefit of the whole region.



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Since 2010, Toronto's inner harbour has been the fastest growing neighbourhood in North America with 16,000 new residential units completed or under construction, and 130% growth in employment, now more than 25,000 jobs. As seen on the following pages, the Waterfront East LRT will support density of development to continue this rapid growth of housing and jobs through the Port Lands. Tenants are now moving into two new office towers on the LRT's route that will add 7,000 jobs along the waterfront in 2022 alone (*See A1*).

The City of Toronto can also achieve a number of its goals by ensuring the eastern waterfront and Port Lands are built to their full potential. More parks and recreation space will be built, and it will be better connected to the rest of the City by public transit, enlarging the role of the central waterfront as 'Toronto's backyard.' Climate and environment goals will be achieved by reducing a reliance on vehicle traffic in the downtown core. As described in an economic impact study completed in 2019 by Hatch for the Waterfront BIA (*See A2*), building the Port Lands 'transit-first' will decrease vehicle use in the area by 44%. If transit commitments are not in place soon, the Port Lands will develop with shorter building housing fewer residents and jobs, and parking lots will be larger to accommodate them, all decreasing the use of public transit in the longer term. The City of Toronto is also in a better position to meet its commitments to affordable housing and its support of the creative sectors if the Port Lands are built out with a higher density supporting more development overall. This can all be unlocked with public transit commitments in place now.

Thank you and please contact me at tkocur@waterfrontbia.com with any questions.

Sincerely,

Tim Kocur,
Executive Director,
Waterfront BIA

Carbon copy to: Councillor Joe Mihevc, Ward 10
Shalin Yeboah, Program Management and Planning, Transit Expansion Office
James Perttula, Director, Transportation Planning
David Stonehouse, Director, Waterfront Secretariat
Vic Gupta, CEO, CreateTO
George Zegarac, CEO, Waterfront Toronto

Employers are choosing the waterfront

Businesses are already moving in and need LRT connectivity - and there's significant room to grow in the Port Lands.



The opportunity for continued growth

Ready to be built this decade, all levels of government must commit to funding and building now



Existing LRT

Union Station

Waterfront East LRT through Port Lands

25,000+ housing units
near major job centres

\$22.8 Billion increased tax revenue
for all three levels of government

'Transit first' development
reduces reliance on vehicles with a 44%
decrease in automobile use



[Economic Impact Study, Hatch, 2019](#)

