



Midtown Ravines Group

*Working for a better ecological balance
and improved park in Midtown Toronto*

July 6, 2022

Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Chair, and Members,
Infrastructure and Environment Committee
City Council, City of Toronto

Re: IE 31.20 Metrolinx Don Valley Layover Facility

Councillor McKelvie, Councillors:

We are a consortium of eight Residents Associations in Midtown Toronto writing to express our support for the motion presented by Councillor Paula Fletcher.

On behalf of our members, we are signatories to the attached letter expressing concerns about the impact of the proposed Don Valley layover facility on the quality of public parkland space and natural environment in the Don Valley. The Don Valley is an exceptionally important element of Toronto's ravine system. Its preservation and ecological integrity are of key importance as a major element in the Don Valley Ravine parkland. The proposed layover facility would drastically reverse decades of progress in eliminating industry from the Don Valley.

Yours truly,

John Bossons, Co-chair
jbossos@gmail.com

Tim Ross, Co-chair
tim.n.ross@gmail.com

The Midtown Ravines Group is an incorporated non-profit organization formed by eight Residents Associations in Midtown Toronto. The member associations are the ABC Residents Association, the Bloor East Neighborhood Association, the Deer Park Residents Group, the Governors Bridge Residents Association, the Moore Park Residents Association, the North and South Rosedale Residents Associations, and the Summerhill Residents Association.



www.buildthepark.ca

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Donald Wright, Chair
Metrolinx Board of Directors
97 Front St W Toronto, ON
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29 June 2022

Dear Mr. Wright and Metrolinx Directors:

We, the undersigned, call on the Board of Metrolinx to revisit its plans for the proposed diesel train parking and service facility in the Don Valley Park and we urge it to work with other stakeholders to find a transit system solution that appropriately considers the strategic importance of urban green space, along with transit system optimization.

We also encourage Metrolinx to act with utmost ecological restraint when developing infrastructure in Ontario's Greenbelt, including Toronto's river and ravine system and other ecologically sensitive areas. For this reason, we ask you to provide full transparency around decisions that could have significant ecological impacts, including the criteria and decision-making around alternative sites.

Metrolinx Go Transit has proposed the establishment of an obtrusive parking and service facility for diesel trains in an environmentally sensitive section of the Lower Don Valley. This is completely unacceptable, reversing fifty years of progress restoring the Don Valley, and is directly in conflict with successive visions and strategies recognizing the potential of the Don Valley as both an important ecological resource and an iconic park showcasing Toronto's unique natural landscape. The Don River valley has long been the focus of restoration efforts, culminating in billions in public funds spent on flood protection and revitalization.

Today, the Don River valley is part of Ontario's award-winning Greenbelt due to its central role as a wildlife corridor that connects the Oak Ridges Moraine to Toronto's ravine system and Lake Ontario. Once a key First Nations travel route connecting the shores of Lake Ontario with its hinterlands, this history should be celebrated and reconciled as opposed to paved. The Valley is also widely recognized as an important green space and wetland that mitigates climate change and biodiversity loss, supports birds and wildlife, and increases urban quality of life.

Municipally, the Don River valley has become an essential environmental resource encapsulated by a multitude of community-driven, publicly funded, and City supported plans for its use as natural parkland, including Forty Steps to a New Don, the Taskforce to Bring Back the Don, the Lower Don Trail Master Plan, the Don Valley Superpark, as well as the City of Toronto's

Ravine, Parkland, and Biodiversity Strategies. As the pandemic has illustrated all too well, realizing these visions will become ever more critical as Toronto's population grows, and accessible nature becomes even more important for public health and a more resilient city.

Metrolinx threatens to reverse this progress by proposing a parking lot and service facility for diesel trains in the exact area that has been painstakingly cleaned up and revitalized by thousands of volunteers over almost half a century, one tree at a time, to the benefit of all citizens. The agency itself acknowledges that this facility will have severe negative impacts on the park setting and imposes considerable ecological impacts within an environmentally significant area. Transit experts, community groups, politicians, urban residents, and environmental stewards have expressed dismay over the prospect of the proposed permanent damage to our urban river valley; this location appears inappropriate, unreasonable, expensive, and intrusive. A better choice must be found.

The lower section of the Don Branch rail line (west of the Don River) has been suggested as a viable alternative to the proposed layover site. The approximately 1.5km long Don Branch rail line runs north from Eastern Avenue to Rosedale Valley Road, is easily accessible from Bayview Avenue, and could be used for daytime storage – a possible solution that Metrolinx has not even included in the list of other options explored by the agency. The least Metrolinx can do is to show what would be involved in the use of a different site that meets the essential operational requirements for a layover.

We urge Metrolinx's Board of Directors to work with stakeholders and representatives from all levels of government to meet its layover requirements in a way that marries transit planning considerations with established policy goals for the protection of urban green space and the development of parkland. A parking lot and service facility for diesel trains in the Don Valley Park is unthinkable and unacceptable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Signatories Listed on Following Pages

CC: Hon. Caroline Mulroney, Ontario Minister of Transportation
Hon. David Piccini, Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks
Peter Tabuns, MPP Toronto-Danforth
Jessica Bell, MPP University Rosedale
Kristyn Wong-Tam, MPP Toronto Centre
Mayor John Tory, City of Toronto
Councillor Paula Fletcher, City of Toronto
Councillor Michael Layton, City of Toronto
Ms. Julie Dabrusin, MP for Toronto-Danforth
Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and MP for University Rosedale

Signatories

Professor Sandy Smith
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Ellen Schwartzel
 President
 Toronto Field
 Naturalists



Geoff Kettel
Cathie Macdonald
 Co-Chairs
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 Toronto Residents'
 Associations



John Bossons
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 Co-Chairs
 Midtown Ravines Group



Floyd Ruskin
 Founder
 A Park for All



**The Hon. David
 Crombie**
 P.C., O.C., O.Ont.
 Former Mayor
 City of Toronto

John Wilson
 Chair (2001–2011)
 Task Force to Bring
 Back the Don

Chris Williams
 Lead Volunteer
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Joan York
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 Friends of Riverdale
 Park East

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Rob Corcoran
 Chester Hill
 Cambridge Thorncliffe
 Residents' Association

Blaine Pearson
Jason van Bruggen
 CEO / President
 Wilder Climate
 Solutions

Ian Carmichael
John Caliendo
 Co-Presidents
 ABC Residents
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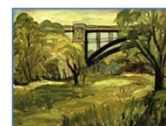
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Signatories

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& Charles Sauriol
Conservation Area



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Humber River Pals



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Don't Mess With the Don



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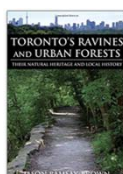
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Island First Nations



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Naturalist, Steward, and
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