



**To:** Toronto City Council  
100 Queen Street West, Suite A8  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

December 10, 2024

**Subject:** Support for the Adaptive Reuse of the Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) Infrastructure

As Director of the *Institute for Inclusive Economies & Sustainable Livelihoods* (IIESL) and an associate professor of Geography and Planning at the University of Toronto, Scarborough (UTSC), I urge the City to continue exploring the technical and fiscal feasibility of adaptively reusing the existing Scarborough Rapid Transit (SRT) infrastructure. I also encourage the City to be ambitious in considering all possibilities, including the creation of an iconic project that integrates public space, active transportation and spaces for community services, arts and culture, while enhancing opportunities for the local economy.

The repurpose of the SRT aligns with the goals of the IIESL, which aims to foster vibrant, sustainable, and equitable local economies in Scarborough. We are committed to facilitating this process by providing spaces for community engagement at UTSC and leveraging expertise in transportation, urban planning, and economic development from the University of Toronto's faculty and researchers.

On October 8, 2024, the IIESL convened 25 individuals from local organizations, community groups, student leaders, and environmental advocates for a productive community conversation on the future of the SRT at UTSC. The event revealed overwhelming support for keeping the adaptive reuse of the SRT existing infrastructure (including the elevated parts and the stations), with participants envisioning a project that supports a wide range of uses: community-focused spaces, improved active transportation networks, economic development and local businesses opportunities, recreation, sustainability, and cultural programming.

This Fall, students in the University of Toronto ENV461 course collaborated with IIESL to review case studies of similar infrastructure repurposing projects in Toronto and across the Americas. Their final report, based on extensive literature review, key informant interviews, and an analysis of Scarborough, concluded:

“Scarborough has the potential to transform the SRT corridor into a dynamic space that not only improves active transportation but also addresses equity gaps, highlights local culture, fosters inclusive economic opportunities, and celebrates the district’s natural beauty.”

We believe the City must seriously consider the potential of this project to become a new, transformational and iconic space for Scarborough. Given Scarborough's historical underinvestment in transportation and community spaces, the repurposing of the SRT infrastructure presents a unique opportunity to integrate public space, mobility, and cultural expression, while also promoting local economies and providing a platform to celebrate the community's diverse needs and traditions. We also believe that it is essential that this repurposing process incorporates diverse perspectives, both technical and community-based, from the outset. Equally important is the integration of considerations related to climate emissions, equity, and sustainability, ensuring the project not only serves current needs but also positions Scarborough for a sustainable and inclusive future.

The IIESL stands ready to continue supporting this effort, providing expertise, facilitating community engagement, and collaborating with all stakeholders, including the City of Toronto, to ensure this project becomes a model for future infrastructure repurposing in Toronto and beyond.

I look forward to the continued dialogue and the opportunity to contribute to a project that can truly transform Scarborough.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'S' followed by a horizontal line extending to the right.

**Sergio Montero, PhD**

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