



January 28, 2025

Submission to City of Toronto Executive Committee

Re: EX20.9 Advancing Eglinton East Light Rail Transit

From: Larry Whatmore, President, Scarborough Community Renewal Organization

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My name is Larry Whatmore and I am the president of the Scarborough Community Renewal Organization, an all-volunteer organization that strives to bring thoughtful advocacy to Scarborough civic affairs, to create a more livable, dynamic, and prosperous Scarborough, where more than 600,000 Torontonians have chosen to call home.

Thank you for this opportunity to speak about staff's latest status report on the Eglinton East LRT project and staff's recommendation to continue moving forward with project design and due diligence and to continue the work needed to address the maintenance and storage facility requirements.

SCRO endorses the staff recommendations.

Thank you for your unwavering support of this ambitious project and for using the \$1.2 billion that you have committed to it to keep moving the design process forward, to make it shovel-ready as soon as possible and to position this project so it is attractive for the Province and the federal government to build on your financial commitment to bring this much needed project to fruition. In fact, SCRO has made this project the central theme of our provincial and federal budget submissions for 2025.

In October, 2023, your staff completed an Initial Business Case for this project. This 90 page document provides a thorough and compelling strategic and economic rationale for this project.

The conclusions of that business case are as compelling today as they were in 2023. To highlight a few of them:

***Constructing the Eglinton East LRT is far better than not doing so***, as the projected demand in 2041 along the study corridor far exceeds the capacity than can be provided by the Base Case.

***The economic case is strong***, with almost \$1.4 billion in discounted benefits with an expected Net Present Value of \$4.4 billion.

***The project will enable us to better serve equity-deserving groups in Scarborough***, by reaching seven of the City's Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, supporting sustainable mobility in historically underserved communities, which also include a large number of aspiring newcomers, who have a higher dependence on public transit than others.

***The University of Toronto's Scarborough campus will be able to serve students better***, given that an estimated 56% of UTSC's students travel to campus by local transit.

***If we don't continue to move this project forward, inequity will become worse.*** To quote from the Initial Business Case: "increasing traffic congestion over time will continue to degrade the existing transit service, thereby increasing the cost of living and degrading quality of life, perpetuating a cycle of further inequity."

As you know, the Province instructed you to prepare your recent Official Plan review on the assumption that 700,000 more residents will be living in Toronto by 2051. Realistically at least 175,000 of them will settle in

Scarborough. The only practical way to prepare for this and to avoid massive gridlock is through a large scale increase in higher order public transit. Thankfully, that is starting to happen in Scarborough. But much more needs to be done, including this project, which will finally bring higher order public transit to the eastern half of Scarborough.

The 2023 Business Case makes compelling arguments to move this project forward which are just as compelling today, to address the population surge that is coming and to address serious inequities in transit access for Scarborough's equity-deserving and newcomer communities.

And the proposed connection with the northern terminus of the Scarborough subway extension now under construction will allow the two projects to support each other, to their mutual benefit.

The Transit and Rail Project Assessment Process is complete and has been signed off by the Minister, so another important milestone has been reached.

Let's support the work plan proposed by staff to keep the project moving forward.

Thank you.

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

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