



ADVOCATING FOR SUSTAINABLE PUBLIC AND FREIGHT TRANSPORTATION
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Network Capacity Concerns with the Scarborough Subway – Request Consideration of Electrified GO Options

Below is the deputation that Peter Miasek and Karl Junkin made before the Toronto Transit Commission at its meeting on September 25.

Transport Action Ontario is appearing before the Commission with the understanding that the Scarborough Subway is very likely a fait-accompli, although there are a few hundred million dollars in funding yet to be secured. That said, there are issues directly resulting from this Bloor-Danforth subway extension that will affect not just Scarborough, but much of the city. Similar impacts would result from either Scarborough Subway alignment in the report before the Commission today.

We know that these issues exist because staff, including the TTC CEO, Mr. Byford, raised these concerns to City Council in July when the Scarborough Subway was debated in the Council Chamber. These issues include some alarming realities, among them:

- The ridership projection for the Scarborough Subway was based on a network model that included the unfunded Downtown Relief Line
- It remains undetermined if the Relief Line is a prerequisite for the subway extension to be in place without serious downstream problems on the subway network
- Expensive and unfunded upgrades to the subway network would be required in the absence of the Relief Line, including Automatic Train Control on the Bloor-Danforth line, a complex expansion of Bloor-Yonge station, and unspecified capacity expansion south of Bloor along the Yonge line. Each of these items are in the hundreds of millions of dollars in capital cost.

There is no funding commitment for any of these upgrades, and staff have yet to complete their assessment of how the network will cope in a configuration where the Scarborough Subway is present but other enhancements are not. If more people try to use the subway system than it is capable of handling, the reliability of the subway system will be devastated; the subway system will fail to perform its intended role.

In July, our organization released a report called “GTHA Regional Rapid Rail: A Vision for the Future.” The report discussed electrifying the GO Rail system and converting it to a frequent,

all-day “surface subway” similar to those that exist in many European cities. The capital costs, including Union Station expansion, average about \$55M/km, about 20% of an underground subway. The surface subway system would have minimal impacts on roadways and can be implemented relatively quickly on the existing rights-of-way. Since July, we have been presenting this report to many elected officials and transit professionals across the region – with very positive feedback. It has been included as input for the Metrolinx Relief Line Network Study.

In our report, we criticized the now-rejected Scarborough LRT plan as we felt it had too little capacity over the long-term. We also were aware of the subway capacity issues identified by staff in its July report to Council. To address those issues, we proposed having a new GO corridor, served by electric multiple-units, branch off the existing GO network at Ellesmere station and run along a horizontal alignment virtually identical to that in the EA for the SRT extension and conversion.

The subway is also served by electric multiple-units, but such vehicles in an electric GO operation would be bi-level and would have a much higher top speed, about double that of TTC vehicles. GO corridors have track geometry that can take advantage of such speed. With Lakeshore electrification, which Metrolinx has as a Next Wave priority, it is possible to link Scarborough Centre and Malvern to Union Station directly, in a fast, one-seat ride and thus attract riders that would otherwise be on the subway network. This proposal happens to dovetail well with the Commission's July motion that staff look at the Kitchener and Lakeshore East corridors, electrified, for subway network alleviation.

It is critical for the City and the TTC to address the capacity constraints that threaten the entire subway network. Transport Action Ontario is supportive of the Relief Line and concludes from Metrolinx ridership projections that both electric GO operations and the Relief Line will ultimately be needed. One of us worked with Councillor Thompson in 2009 to establish the Relief Line as a prerequisite for the Yonge subway extension, to protect the subway from being overloaded. Even without the Yonge subway extension, keeping up with demand in the Yonge corridor is a major challenge, as the Chief Planner, Ms. Keesmaat, articulated in the media the other week. While the Relief Line's importance cannot be understated, it cannot be considered a magic bullet, either.

Given the important network concerns present, we ask that the Commission request staff to look at all opportunities for alleviating the subway network, including the GO network options discussed in our report. This could be considered an expansion of scope to work staff are already undertaking.

Respectfully submitted,

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