



# TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

(formerly Transport 2000 Ontario)

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**Comments for Public Information Centre #2 for GO Stouffville Corridor Rail Service Expansion, as they relate to City of Markham  
(as modified per discussion at Markham DSC, January 21 and PIC#2 January 28, 2014)**

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General – We are very supportive of GO’s proposal to expand and improve rail service on this corridor. In general, improvements to GO Rail offer badly-needed, region-wide rapid transit that is cost-effective and rapidly implementable and has little interference to road capacity for autos. However, the scope of this EA appears to be narrow. We believe there are a number of additional issues that need analysis in the EA study.

Issue	Comments
Extend scope of track twinning to Major Mackenzie Drive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-60% of passenger volume originates north of Unionville</li> <li>-Single track north of Unionville Station prevents two way service from Unionville to Mt Joy during peak periods – just when you need it</li> <li>-Utilize passing tracks north of Unionville, in newer areas with good setbacks. Identify locations for these</li> <li>-Identify best location for Major Mac station, considering future parks and development in area</li> </ul>
Electrification should be considered as it has many benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Lakeshore corridor express rail/electrification (prerequisite for Stouffville) included in Metrolinx Next Wave projects and currently under study</li> <li>-Stouffville corridor (including electrification and additional stations) is under active consideration by Metrolinx in their Yonge Relief Network Study</li> <li>-Constructed infrastructure (e.g. clearances) needs to be compatible with future electrification</li> <li>-In conjunction with low noise bogies and bogie skirts, electrification could eliminate/reduce height of costly noise walls</li> <li>-Reduced localized air pollution and fumes near the corridor</li> <li>-Significant long term operating cost savings versus diesel, e.g. energy recovery, shorter trains during non-peak periods (if EMU)</li> </ul>

Additional stations should be considered to allow Markham riders to connect with TTC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- For example, Transport Action Ontario’s report “Regional Rapid Rail: A Vision for the Future” studied conversion of GO Rail to a “surface subway”, as per European cities. This report is under active consideration by Toronto in their “Feeling Congested” study, as input to their Official Plan.</li> <li>-That report contemplated additional stations at Finch and Ellesmere</li> </ul>
Improve connection to TTC Route 53 Steeles E bus at Milliken Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Steeles E bus can be used by many Markham residents</li> <li>-Current route does not make a convenient connection at Milliken Station</li> </ul>
Connection needed at Scarborough GO station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-To allow riders to transfer to/from Lakeshore East points (eg Oshawa)</li> <li>-Complex – a rail-rail grade separation (fly under) is needed at Scarborough Junction for north-bound Stouffville trains. Therefore there will be an elevation difference between the track and station</li> </ul>
Parking and station access must be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Potentially a significant constraint as train service ramps up</li> <li>-Most Markham stations are currently near parking capacity, and local roads exiting the stations are at capacity during evening peak period</li> <li>-“GO Transit Rail Parking and Station Access Plan” (June, 2013) provides draft plans. For the four Markham stations, short term plans were shared parking with Markville Shopping Centre for Centennial, improved intersection improvements near Mt Joy, and improved transit/shuttle buses for all stations. In the medium term, the plan identified parking structures at Mt Joy and Unionville.</li> <li>-Strongly urge that the EA review and potentially improve/add specificity on these plans. For example, at Unionville Station, the mobility hub studies now underway will hopefully identify additional local roads to be constructed for station access.</li> <li>-Local residents are open to assisting GO in testing new ideas, such as shuttles and new transit routes, car-pool zone, fare and parking pricing to change travel behaviour, cycling/walking incentives</li> </ul>
Road-Rail grade separations should be studied for all arterial roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rule of thumb is that if vehicles/day x trains/day &gt; 200,000, study grade separation</li> <li>-52 trains per day in 2020/2025 south of Unionville Station, 40 north of Unionville</li> <li>-4-lane arterials such as Steeles, Kennedy ( N. of Steeles), Dennison, Highway 7, Kennedy (N. of Hwy 7), McCowan, Markham Road carry in excess of 20,000 vehicles/day.</li> <li>-Cross product 40 x 20,000 is about 800,000 movements</li> <li>-Will also help with vexing problem of train whistles disrupting quiet enjoyment by residents</li> <li>-Construction at Steeles could be synergistic/cost shared with plans for Remington Centre (Kennedy/Steeles), which currently include an underground ramp below Steeles and improved pedestrian connections to Milliken Station</li> </ul>
Noise from Train Whistle must be considered	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-With 40 trains a day north of Unionville Station, this will become a major issue of public concern</li> <li>-Although road-rail grade separations will eliminate the issue for those crossings, there may be some road crossings where this is not possible</li> <li>-GO is already involved in Anti-Whistling Working Group lead by the City</li> <li>-EA must identify the problem and potential solutions</li> </ul>