



# TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO

Advocating for Integrated Public Transportation across Ontario

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Hon. Jeff Yurek, MPP  
Minister of Transportation  
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8  
Email: [minister.mto@ontario.ca](mailto:minister.mto@ontario.ca)

April 3, 2019

Dear Minister Yurek:

## OPEN LETTER

### Cost-Effective Surface Subway for Scarborough – "Smart Spur"

In March, the Special Advisor to Cabinet – Transit Upload issued two letters on Ontario's priority transit expansion projects, including revising the one-stop Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE) to a three-stop extension. On April 2, you indicated on TVO's *The Agenda* that a historic investment in subways is expected in the upcoming Ontario budget. However, it is clear that Ontario taxpayers expect the government to be a prudent financial manager.

There is a much more cost-effective option for a Scarborough subway that requires detailed study. Termed "Smart Spur", it was first proposed by our organization in 2013, publically discussed extensively in 2016, and ultimately dropped by the City as it went against campaign promises by Premier Wynne and Mayor Tory. Transit journalist Steve Wickens has recently revived the idea in his article of March 27, 2019.

In summary, Smart Spur proposes frequent GO service on a new electrified GO line branching east off the existing Stouffville GO line, which is to be expanded and electrified as part of GO Expansion, as shown below. This is akin to a surface subway.



A key advantage of Smart Spur versus the one-stop SSE is its lower capital cost of \$0.7B versus \$3.9B, but there are numerous other advantages as summarized in the Table below. More details are available in the Wickens article (worldwidewickens.com) and on our Transport Action Ontario website <http://ontario.transportaction.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/TAO-SER-FAQ-2016-02.pdf>.

<b>Network Impact</b>	<b>Scarborough Subway Extension (one-stop)</b>	<b>“Smart Spur” Surface Subway</b>
Length of New Corridor (km)	5.9	1.5
# of stops (Kennedy-Scarborough Centre)	1	3
# Transfers to Front St. and Bay St.	1	0
Average Operating Speed km/h	40	45
Capital Cost (\$B)	3.9 (per City report, April 3, 2019)	0.7
Prospects for Extension	Low	High
Requires Line 2 Upgrades	Yes	No
Alleviates Lines 2 and 1 Congestion	No	Yes
<b>Overall Rating</b>	<b>Weaker</b>	<b>Stronger</b>

The City of Toronto has recently reported that it has spent almost \$200M in studies for the one-stop SSE, and that it is ready to proceed to procurement and construction. The Provincial intention to move to a three-stop extension will clearly require further study, causing increases to schedule and cost. As part of any further study, we urge you to give serious study to Smart Spur as a surface subway. The taxpayers of Ontario will appreciate it.

We will be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Yours truly,

*Peter Miasek*

Peter Miasek  
 President, Transport Action Ontario

cc. Liam O’Brien, Policy Director