

# SCARBOROUGH TRANSIT ACTION

Tomorrow (Thursday, Aug. 31) at 11:00 a.m. Scarborough Transit Action and allies are gathering to release our plan for ensuring that sanity prevails and climate-change impacts are considered in decisions relating to the replacement of the Scarborough RT.

Following our announcement, we will submit to Chris Balland, the new Minister of the Environment and Climate Change (MOE) part of that plan: a Notice of Objection to the Scarborough Subway Extension Environmental Project Report (ERP) that was prepared by the City of Toronto and the TTC.

Minister Ballard acknowledged at a media event earlier today that climate change “is one of the – if not the – greatest challenges facing humankind.” He added that “there are no easy solutions. But we do know that the status quo is not an option.” Ballard then announced the launch of a “**one-stop shop** to help homeowners and business reduce energy costs and fight climate change”. He clearly must also do his part to ensure that the climate-change impact of the multi-billion-dollar proposed **one-stop subway** is properly assessed.

On August 24, the City of Toronto and TTC submitted the ERP for the Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE) to the MOE. However, their study looked *only* at alternative alignments for the one-stop subway, not alternative options to the SSE. We have thoroughly reviewed the document and found that the proponents also failed to consider and properly assess a matter of provincial importance that relates to the natural environment: climate change.

We are asking the minister to send the ERP back to the City and the TTC, and ask that they assess the impact of Greenhouse Gas emissions caused by this gigantic construction proposal.

We strongly object to the proponents’ use of the streamlined Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) for the SSE, instead of conducting a full environmental assessment (EA), which would require an objective comparison of alternatives. This is a gross violation of best practices -- and of the right of people in Scarborough to have an impartial assessment of an unprecedented, huge megaproject that affects their transit future.

There is also another prong in our strategy.

STA members have been dismayed to discover that under a regulation created by the Ontario government in 2014, municipal transit projects are exempted from full EAs (including the environmental impacts of the proposed transit projects as well as those of their alternatives). Thus, in addition to asking the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to ask for a complete and proper EA, members of Scarborough Transit Action and allies are asking the City of Toronto and the TTC to either:

1. return to the shovel-ready 24-stop LRT network and simply update its previously approved EA, or;

2. undertake a proper EA comparing the subway project with the LRT network.

Here is more background information:

- Instead of carrying out a full EA, the city and the TTC used the TPAP to conduct the SSE's EA. This is a quick, 'short-cut' process, designed for projects of a routine nature. But the SSE is not routine: at just the very preliminary (5% design) stage, the cost is \$3.5 billion dollars -- and climbing quickly as the complexities of the project become clearer.
- But using the TPAP for the SSE, the City and the TTC are trying to push this project forward without the benefit of an objective comparison. We believe that not only is this a gross abandonment of best practices, but also of common sense.
- The project report fails to address **a matter of provincial importance that relates to the natural environment**, that of climate change. This failure is a contravention of the MOE requirement to consider climate change in environmental assessments.
- Premier Wynne recently declared that climate change is the "**greatest threat confronting humanity**," and that "the reality is the whole world needs to be involved in fighting climate change."
- The ERP does mention the words "climate change" and makes a few, hopeful, but unsubstantiated statements about how the SSE may reduce car travel. But there is no actual evaluation or analysis of climate change. **In fact, the report completely ignores the wealth of research pointing to the dangerous levels of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) that result from the construction, operations and maintenance of subways. And it ignores the advice from many authorities that assert LRT technology would be preferable for many reasons including having a lower climate-change impact.** As well, the report uses misleading information about ridership and ignores the fact that ridership is a critical factor in the ability of a transit infrastructure project to pay back its climate burden.
- Wynne's September 23, 2016, mandate letter to the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change included the responsibility to "work collaboratively across every sector of government to support **evidence-based decision-making** to ensure that programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable..." We call on Minister Ballard to live up to this very important responsibility.

**We the undersigned call on the Ontario Minister of the Environment and Climate Change to ensure that evidence-based decision-making forms the basis for planning and decisions with the replacement of the Scarborough RT.**