

SCARBOROUGH TRANSIT **ACTION**

October 4, 2017

Contact: Vincent Puhakka
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Bonnie Lysyk,
Auditor General Office of the Auditor General for Ontario
20 Dundas Street West,
Suite 1530 Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Ms. Lysyk,

Scarborough Transit Action, a grassroots transit advocacy group, along with Scarborough Village Residents Unite and individual residents, submitted a [complaint](#) to your office on Aug. 23, 2017. The complaint requested a study of the Kirby and Lawrence East GO stations as well as the Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE).

We are encouraged that according to a recent Toronto Star [article](#), you plan to highlight Kirby and Lawrence East in your 2018 report on Metrolinx.

However, we strongly urge you to include the Scarborough Subway Extension in your audit and that you release your report before June 2018.

A 2013 draft business case [analysis](#) by Metrolinx of then three-stop concept for the SSE determined that it was "not a worthwhile use of money." Despite this, both the municipal and provincial governments moved forward with it. And now, although the one-stop concept would

serve fewer riders, provide less connectivity, continue to balloon in cost and fails to address climate change, the provincial government continues to pledge financial support for it.

And while your review of Metrolinx will no doubt include an analysis of the review that Mr. Prichard ordered of the approvals of the stations, we are somewhat sceptical of their process. Mr. Prichard reported at the Metrolinx board meeting on September 14 that he has asked the mayors of Toronto and Vaughan to "prepare comprehensive submissions around each of these stations, and their views on these matters, and they're both more than happy to do so, they're strong supporters of the stations in their respective cities. So we will gather that info and then do a comprehensive update of our analysis, our thinking and then report back in February."

We have no faith that the submission and views that Mr. Tory may provide would be rigorous. It was under Mr. Tory's watch that city council was sold on the SSE with cost estimates that were about half what they are now and ridership estimates that were double what they are now. The fact is there has been so much opposition to the removal of the SRT stops that will happen if the SSE is built, especially Lawrence East RT station, that Mr. Tory needs the SmartTrack station approved in order to sell his SSE scheme.

We can't help but note that the AECOM business case [analysis](#) practically invites more of this kind of exaggeration of benefits with its rather contradictory statement:

While municipal policy targets the station area for growth, employment densities, population densities and real estate demand in the immediate area are all predicted to remain low. However, there is opportunity to work with Toronto and landowners to encourage comprehensive and aggressive transit-oriented development.

The two schemes - the Lawrence East station proposal and the SSE - are inseparable. This is why we ask you to conduct an investigation of the SSE either as part of your review of Metrolinx, or alongside it.

Another recent Star article: [Time for transit audit is now](#) gives an example of a similar subway proposal from Montreal to Laval (our bolding for emphasis):

Just a few weeks shy of provincial elections scheduled in November 1998, the provincial government in Quebec passed an order-in-council instructing the Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT), the Quebec equivalent of Metrolinx, to extend the subway from Montreal by 5.1 kilometres to the Island of Laval in the north.

*The incumbent provincial government made the last-minute announcement of a subway extension in exchange for support of suburban voters in the forthcoming elections. When the Quebec government increased the budget to \$547.7 million in 2003, **the auditor general of Quebec acted proactively in the public's interest and ordered an audit of the under-construction project to determine "if the AMT had managed the project carefully and with a concern for economy and efficiency."***

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Vincent Puhakka, on behalf of Scarborough Transit Action and Rosemary Frie