

# SCARBOROUGH TRANSIT *ACTION*

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## **Transit advocates demand Metrolinx show evidence for Lawrence East**

Scarborough Transit Action (STA) is asking the province's transit agency to come clean on John Tory's wasteful scheme for transit in Scarborough. Or, if it persists in its planning charade for the Lawrence East GO/SmartTrack station, to at least use its own robust methodology.

Two weeks ago STA wrote to Metrolinx's Chair, Rob Prichard and CEO Phil Verster, asking if the proposed Lawrence East GO/SmartTrack station would undergo a Business Case Analysis using Metrolinx's own framework methodology. The agency is updating its analysis of the station as part of its review of its approval of the proposed new Kirby GO and Lawrence East SmartTrack station.

Metrolinx's framework document specifies that these analyses should be conducted in such a way that:

“a sufficiently broad range of solutions has been considered and the options developed from this long list of solutions have been selected through a transparent and defensible process. These options are evaluated against a base case which considers a “business as usual” scenario.”

The only reason for the Lawrence East SmartTrack station is because the proposed Scarborough Subway Extension (SSE) would eliminate four RT stations, removing access to rapid transit for thousands of riders. Our [letter](#) notes that the city acknowledges this in its [submission](#) to the Metrolinx review and that the city's new information would also support building an LRT instead. The city complains that Metrolinx used the three-stop subway extension as a comparator. We agree that this is wrong, but so is the other hypothetical base case proposed by the city – the one-stop SSE. We asked Metrolinx if the updated review would include the SSE and the previously approved seven-stop LRT and if the base case would consist of the current Scarborough RT.

“Metrolinx has yet to respond to our letter. We think our questions have important implications” said Brenda Thompson of STA. “ The overriding issue is the need for evidence-based planning for major transit infrastructure projects. We also know from speaking with hundreds of riders at the Lawrence East SRT station that very few of them would use the proposed SmartTrack station.” Our evidence indicates that a seven-stop LRT is a much better plan for Scarborough transit riders.

“We believe that the review provides an opportunity to conduct an analysis of the entire project - the Lawrence East SmartTrack station and the SSE”, said Vincent Puhakka. “The provincial government is contributing \$1.48 billion to the SSE but without supporting evidence from a proper Business Case Analysis from its own planning body. This is in spite of the pledge made by Premier Wynne that the ‘stations will not be built unless the evidence is there’”.

Despite this assurance, we are concerned that the review of the station may be a sham, as Metrolinx is proceeding with the planning for it as if it is a fait accompli. This can be seen, for example, in Metrolinx's response to the recent Toronto Star article about the possibility that the Lawrence East RT station may have to be demolished in order to build the new GO/SmartTrack station. Metrolinx says its engineers have been hard at work on the problem.