

# SCARBOROUGH TRANSIT **ACTION**

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New SmartTrack/GO Stations  
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## **Re: SmartTrack Transit Project Assessment Process public consultation**

Jade Hoskins and Georgina Collymore,

We would like to take the opportunity to submit the following comments and recommendations for inclusion as public record for the SmartTrack Transit Project Assessment Process.

### **Context**

Transit project planning in Toronto is broken. It has become too politicized. There are no regulations within the Metrolinx business case framework or the city of Toronto business case framework to ensure value-for-money and this is apparent with SmartTrack.

The City is not adhering to its own “Feeling Congested” prioritization of new transit lines. SmartTrack was approved for funding ahead of other transit priorities.

Council approved SmartTrack before demonstrating sufficient ridership, and in the case of the Lawrence East/Kennedy SmartTrack station they have approved a station design that will provide less rapid transit access than is currently provided by the existing Scarborough RT, the line it is intended to replace.

We are squandering billions of dollars on infrastructure of dubious benefit. Worse, the scope of the TPAP has been narrowed to the natural environment, cultural heritage and Aboriginal treaty rights.

**With the exception of Lawrence East/Kennedy station, we support SmartTrack, if it can attract [enough riders](#).**

A 2016 [study](#) by University of Toronto professor Dr. Eric Miller concluded that RER service every five minutes for a TTC fare would serve more than 300,000 daily riders. This would have the added [benefit](#) of “assisting congestion relief on the Yonge Subway at the critical point south of Bloor.”

However, under the approved SmartTrack plan total 2031 daily ridership would only be 123,500.

<b>GO RER/SmartTrack stations</b>	<b>2031 Daily ridership</b>
Finch/Kennedy	4,200
Lawrence/Kennedy	9,200
Gerrard/Carlaw	13,500
East Harbour/Unilever	68,100
King/Liberty	19,600
St. Clair/Old Weston	8,900
<b>Total daily ridership</b>	<b>123,500 *</b>

\*Total daily ridership based on data from [Metrolinx GO RER New Stations Business Case Analysis](#), March 2018

Recommendation: approval of SmartTrack stations with “planned” 6-10 peak hour and 15 minute off peak hour service for a TTC/GO fare within Toronto of \$4.50 will not achieve sufficient ridership and should be addressed before going any further with this project.

The city’s [justification](#) for **Lawrence East/Kennedy SmartTrack station** is that it will provide a substitute for a station at Lawrence on the Scarborough subway extension from Kennedy to Scarborough Town Centre.

The March 2018 Metrolinx business case suggested ridership demand for Lawrence East/Kennedy SmartTrack would originate mostly from pedestrians/riders travelling along Lawrence between Markham and Victoria Park heading downtown. But the report failed to account for the riders who will lose a connection to Scarborough Town Centre with the dismantling of the Scarborough RT or how the inconvenient access of the new station design, would inhibit riders travelling to the new SmartTrack station by bus.

Existing conditions for the Lawrence RT station allow for riders on the 54 Lawrence East bus to disembark at the station entrance. With the Lawrence East/Kennedy SmartTrack station they will have to disembark from the Lawrence East overpass, walk down several flights of stairs or take an elevator to get to the station. This is hardly an incentive to catch a GO/SmartTrack train.

Recommendation: Access for bus riders to any new or replacement rapid transit station should be equal to or better than existing rapid transit connections.

The ridership numbers for Lawrence East/SmartTrack are confusing. Lawrence RT daily ridership is 7,800 and the Metrolinx 2031 daily ridership is estimated to be 1,400 more at 9,200. However the City’s travel demand model is even more optimistic anticipating “approximately 4,000 daily boardings at the Lawrence-Kennedy, resulting in a net annual increase to the system-wide ridership of 0.21 million trips.”

Yet, according to an April 23, 2018 Toronto Star [article](#) by Jennifer Pagliaro, there was “a far more optimistic view of how many people would live and work close to the station at Lawrence East.” taken by City staff.

Recommendation: the City should ensure objective, unbiased ridership estimates are used when considering new transit projects.

In working with Metrolinx, the City has failed to address the rerouting of the 54 Lawrence East bus to accommodate for the loss of a convenient, rapid transit connection to Scarborough Town Centre from Lawrence East RT station. With the Lawrence East/Kennedy station, riders will have to take the 54 Lawrence East bus to Kennedy station to get to there. This increased travel time is a deterioration in service.

Recommendation: new transit must be an improvement over existing service it is intended to replace. The seven-stop Scarborough LRT to Sheppard East would alleviate this problem and should be included as a comparator so that decision-makers are adequately informed.

In conclusion, the City should ensure five-minute service for a TTC fare before going any further with SmartTrack. In addition, the City should abandon the Lawrence East/Kennedy SmartTrack - one-stop Scarborough subway plan and go back to the seven-stop Scarborough LRT as a replacement for the Scarborough RT. This would alleviate many of the issues with Lawrence East/Kennedy station by providing a more convenient, frequent rapid transit access to downtown and other places in Scarborough for a TTC fare.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Brenda Thompson and Moya Beall,

On behalf of Scarborough Transit Action

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