



Office of the President & Chief Executive Officer

Phil Verster
Phil.Verster@metrolinx.com
(416) 202-5908

March 3, 2022

An open letter to Transport Action Ontario re: Yonge North Subway Extension alternate route proposal.

The Yonge North Subway Extension will bring quick and convenient travel options for more people across York Region and Toronto. It is just one piece of a critical transit network we are building across the region that will connect communities and people for decades to come.

We know that transit makes life better for the communities it serves, and we recognize the importance of community and stakeholder feedback when building transit projects. We appreciate that the Transport Action Ontario group submitted the proposal for alternative routes for the project alignment. We value your input and interest as we refine our designs to deliver the most benefits while also making the subway extension the best fit for all the existing and future neighbourhoods it will serve.

As we committed to your organization, our technical teams did a complete and thorough review of your proposal, examining all aspects and through every technically possible iteration. While we shared those detailed results with you on December 9, 2021 and in a follow up meeting on January 12, 2022, we appreciate that the findings may be of interest to the wider community. We are therefore sending this open letter to outline the results of the analysis and to address why the adjustments we have introduced will move the project forward in the best way possible.

The transit hub planned at Bridge Station will be a major benefit to riders in the northern part of the subway extension. It will make our regional transit network stronger by conveniently connecting the subway to as many as five regional transit services including GO train, GO bus, York Region Viva bus rapid transit routes and future potential Highway 407 transitway services. Bridge Station will also offer connections to the local bus network. Our plan will bring the many people who will live and work near Bridge and High Tech stations within a 10-minute walk of rapid transit and remove approximately 130 buses on the roadways per peak hour from travelling into the pedestrian-oriented Richmond Hill Centre.

The route we are moving forward with puts Bridge and High Tech stations at the heart of the Langstaff Gateway and Richmond Hill Centre area, which the province and municipalities have long planned for significant growth. Serving this growing community with convenient rapid transit will be good for everybody in York Region, including the people who live and work in the Royal Orchard community. Our plan will contribute to sustainable growth. This approach also protects for a future extension along the existing rail corridor. These significant benefits are only achievable by curving the route east of Yonge Street to run along the existing CN railway corridor.

The Option 1 proposal we considered would eliminate the need to tunnel under the Royal Orchard community by running the subway tunnels along Yonge Street to north of the cemetery, then curving east below the Langstaff Gateway area before reaching the CN railway corridor, with two locations of Bridge Station. As presented, the Transport Action Ontario proposal was not constructable, nonetheless, we studied minor adjustments that would achieve a theoretically constructable option, while reducing impacts to ensure no stone was left unturned. While the principles of the proposal are technically possible, in the end, we identified three major obstacles:

- **Significant cost increases:** If we went ahead with the Option 1 proposal, increased costs would limit our ability to include important benefits in the project, like a fourth station and the potential for additional stations. At a minimum, incremental costs for this Option 1 start at \$230 million above and beyond the approved project budget, with hundreds of millions more indirect costs related to impacts on already approved developments.
- **Complex construction:** This proposal keeps Bridge Station in the same vital location but places it partially underground. This makes the station construction significantly more complex to build, requiring excavation directly below the existing foundations that support the Highway 407 and Highway 7 bridges. There would be impacts to traffic on both highways, with financial implications to the project and society in addition to the cost increases presented above. The tight curves to achieve the Transport Action Ontario alignment are at the minimum threshold of the tunnel boring equipment and would cross through a complicated network of major utilities (large diameter gas pipeline and large diameter transmission water main) creating significant risk to achieving this option.
- **Technical constraints from tighter turns, steeper inclines, and slower train speeds:** To reach the existing CN railway corridor, the subway tracks would need to be curved much tighter than the current TTC standards, which would mean trains will have to travel along those parts at slower speeds to safely pass through the tighter curves, with longer travel times for riders.

The Option 2 proposal we responded to would eliminate the need to tunnel under the Royal Orchard community by running the subway tunnels along Yonge Street to

north of the cemetery, curve to the east, tunnel below Highway 407 and Highway 7 before reaching the CN railway corridor at High Tech Station. Our analysis of this option reviewed the significant constraints in this area, including the Enbridge Gas Pipeline, operating highways, high voltage transmission towers and large stormwater sewers. The constructible version of this option is effectively the [Initial Business Case](#) Option 2. Through the Metrolinx Initial Business Case it was concluded that Option 2 is not preferable to Option 3 when all cases are considered, including benefits and impacts.

Transport Action Ontario submitted a further option to Metrolinx on January 4, 2022. During our meeting on January 12 with Transport Action Ontario and a resident from the Royal Orchard community it was highlighted this new option was similar to Transport Action Ontario Option 1. Several iterations of this option were discussed with each encountering the same technical, construction and cost challenges.

We are committed to working closely with community partners on our plans for the Yonge North Subway Extension and will continue to do so as we make progress on this exciting and much-needed project.

Again, thank you for taking the time to reach out and for your interest in this important project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Verster', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

Phil Verster
President and CEO