



# METROLINX

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
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Office of the President and Chief Executive Officer

Bruce McCuaig

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December 5, 2016

Lorne Ross

Scarborough, ON

**RE: Response to your October 16, 2016 Letter**

Dear Mr. Ross,

I would like to thank you for taking the time, care and consideration in sharing your concerns regarding the importance of grade separating current road-rail crossings, particularly as it relates to the Stouffville corridor. Please allow me to respond to your letter on behalf of Robert Prichard and the Board of Directors. Your correspondence will be shared for information at the next Board meeting on December 8, 2016.

I would like to emphasize that we have a shared objective to improve the transit and safety for not only GO Transit riders, but also of the communities that make up the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The safety of our customers, workers and the surrounding community is the top priority at Metrolinx. To that end, safety considerations factor heavily in our assessment of all road-rail crossings within our network, which reflects traffic volumes and existing conditions such as vehicle sight lines, geometry and collisions.

A higher number of movements through the intersection of road and rail generally corresponds with the benefits that result by grade separation. However, there are additional factors that may also be important, including physical characteristics of a location, the surrounding land use, municipal road use and planning and operational considerations. Metrolinx has been working with municipalities including the City of Toronto and York Region to gather input about level crossings in this regard. Recently, as part of a provincial-city agreement regarding transit funding, it was announced that work would be proceeding to grade separate a number of high-traffic volume level crossings in the City, including Finch Avenue and Steeles Avenue on the Stouffville corridor.

We will continue to work with our municipal counterparts to review all road-rail crossings along the Stouffville line and elsewhere in the region to identify what the best course of action to continue ensuring they are safe crossings. This can include a grade separation, enhancements to the existing crossing and its protection systems, or in some cases removing the crossing entirely. In addition, Metrolinx will continue to do its part to educate and inform communities about the importance of exercising caution and appropriate activity around crossings.

We value the input of concerned residents such as yourself. In addition to public meetings that help engage communities, our community relations and project teams have met over the last few weeks with resident associations and elected officials addressing specific grade separations in the Stouffville corridor and beyond. We continue to welcome this dialogue.

Again, I sincerely appreciate your letter, which reflects the passionate, knowledgeable and concerned resident that keeps us engaged, and ensures we in turn can deliver a transit system that works for residents, riders and communities alike.

Sincerely,



Bruce McCuaig  
President and Chief Executive Officer

- c. The Honourable Steven Del Duca, Minister, Ministry of Transportation  
Lorenzo Berarinetti, Member of Provincial Parliament, Scarborough Southwest  
Soo Wong, Member of Provincial Parliament, Scarborough-Agincourt

October 16<sup>th</sup> 2016

Chairman and Members of the Metrolinx Board

97 Front Street West  
Toronto, ON  
M5J 1E6



**RE: GRADE SEPARATIONS ON REGIONAL EXPRESS RAIL PROJECTS**

**STOUFFVILLE GO LINE**

Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

I wish to speak to only one of the many rail corridors in which you are considering increasing commuter rail service: the Stouffville GO line.

With present service on this line 15 trains rumble across level crossings in Markham and Scarborough from the Unionville Station south carrying +/- 14,000 passengers downtown to Union station each weekday morning and back again in the evening.

Your July 2014 Stouffville GO Service Expansion Environmental Study Report by Burnside predicted this line would carry 26,000 passengers by 2025 if expanded to all day two way frequent service. Your Regional Express Rail programme has upped the ante to all day 2 way 10 minute electric train service between Union and Unionville stations on weekdays and weekends and evenings.

Regional Express Rail is promoted as "reducing travel times and getting people where they want to go."

Well, for some people that's probably true. For the predicted 26,000 people who want to head out on their 30 kilometer trip from Unionville to their office job downtown, it'll be great. They'll get "where they want to go with a reduced travel time". Congratulations. Job well done. For them.

How about the rest of us?

The Burnside study predicted that 230,000 vehicles cross these tracks each day at level crossings on the following 9 major roads:

|         |               | Daily<br>Vehicle<br>traffic<br>2018 | Daily<br>Vehicle<br>Traffic<br>2021 |
|---------|---------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Markham | Major Streets |                                     |                                     |
|         | Denison       | 18,030                              | 18,950                              |
|         | Kennedy       | 32,581                              | 33,569                              |

|             |                  |         |         |
|-------------|------------------|---------|---------|
| Scarborough | Steeles          | 47,295  | 48,729  |
|             | Passmore         | 12,087  | 12,453  |
|             | McNicoll         | 23,122  | 23,823  |
|             | Finch            | 42,040  | 43,314  |
|             | Huntingwood      | 14,714  | 15,160  |
|             | Progress         | 17,867  | 18,409  |
|             | Danforth-Midland | 22,597  | 23,281  |
|             | Totals           | 230,333 | 237,688 |

Burnside counted vehicles crossing your tracks. Not the number of people.

It's not all single passenger gas guzzling SUV's headed out on discretionary personal trips to the golf course or the squash court.

It's TTC buses:

- 2,000 TTC buses a day, carrying over 100,000 passengers cross your tracks at level crossings in Scarborough.
- Additional Markham Transit buses cross these tracks on the Dennison and Kennedy routes

That leaves 235,000 other vehicles crossing your tracks. What are they?

- It's school buses carrying our children to and from school each weekday. Does Metrolinx know how many school buses cross your tracks every weekday? How many school children they carry? Have you asked the Boards of Education for their data?
- It's the emergency police fire and ambulances vehicles we depend on to get where they need to go in a hurry.
- It's the trucks that deliver our goods, making our industries and businesses viable.

Let's say the traffic is 20% trucks and 5% school buses and emergency vehicles. That leaves 176,250 personal vehicles. At 1.2 persons per vehicle that's 211,500 people in private vehicles. So the total number of people crossing your tracks at level crossings in Scarborough-Markham every weekday is somewhere in the range of 300,000 people plus whatever number of children are on our school buses.

They are heading east-west. Improved north-south Stouffville GO service won't help them. You could provide 5 minute service and make it free and it wouldn't reduce the number of people who need to cross your tracks.

How often will the lights flash and the gates come down? With 10 minute service that's 6 trains per hour, in each direction. The likelihood of the southbound and the northbound trains crossing any one of these major roads at the same time is minimal. We could have 12 trains per hour closing these roads. I have seen estimates that the gates will come down every 7 minutes.

There are very few alternative public roads available. In fact, north of Sheppard there are no alternate routes: every one is a level crossing.

I need to hear your answer to the question of why over 300,000 people, including 100,000 on TTC buses, plus our school children should be basically gridlocked on their travels east west across Scarborough each day so you can whisk maybe 26,000 other people down to their jobs in the office towers around Union Station.

Are there good people and bad people? Are the ones living 30-50 kilometers away from where they work downtown the good people whose trips should be improved? You have money to make this happen for these people?

Are the people riding the TTC buses in Scarborough, or in their personal vehicles and trucks trying to get to work, the day care, the nursing home, shopping, whatever...are these the bad people? Their trips are not important? You can interrupt it, create congestion, basically gridlock their travel. Not your problem. You have no money for these people?

The resolution is simple:

1. Build the grade separations we need at Dennison and Kennedy in Markham and at Steeles, McNicoll, Finch, Huntingwood and Midland-Danforth.
2. Have these open and operating BEFORE you start running 200 trains a day through our communities.
3. Allow both groups of travelers to get where they are going without interfering with each other and without creating a serious safety hazard.

Let me take you back, way back, to December 1975, and show you a news photo:



This is all that remains of a TTC bus struck by a GO train on the Lakeshore line near St. Clair. The bus was travelling east. St Clair was a level crossing.

9 people died. 20 were injured.

To quote from the Globe & Mail:

"Officials have said that the site of the accident was a priority for construction of an overpass but that funds have still not been approved..."

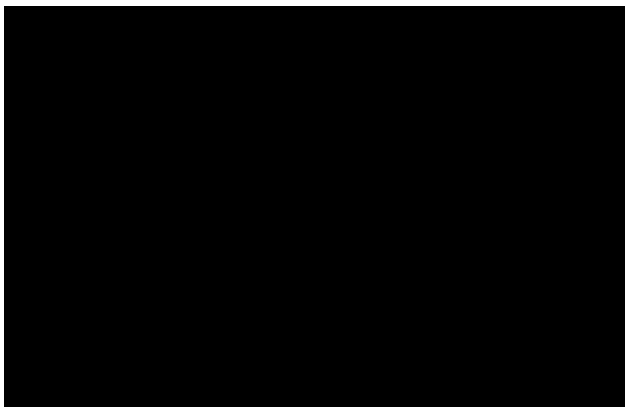


Your public presentation to date on requests for grade separations basically says, we're looking at them, well, some of them, and we don't have the funds anyway, and you know it's not really our responsibility anyway so go talk to maybe the City of Toronto or Markham or York region.

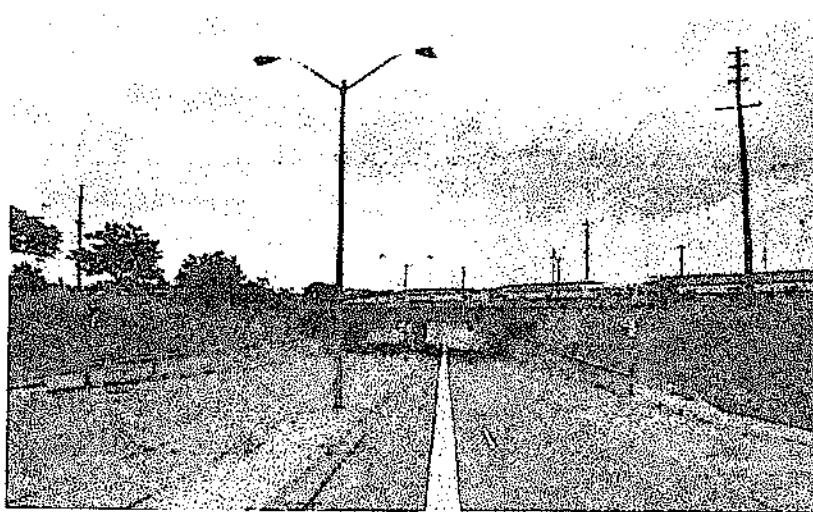
Not good enough.

I can't believe any of you wish to reprise what Metro Chairman Paul Godfrey, Scarborough Mayor Paul Cosgrove, Provincial Transport Minister John Rhodes, Federal Transport Ministers Otto Lang and Jean Marchand, TTC Chairman Gordon Hurlburt and General Manager Jim Kearns had to do in 1975 when they faced the injured and the families of the 9 who died at this level crossing.

Here are their names:



Five days after the fatalities, before many of the injured were even released from hospital, \$5.2 million was committed to build underpass on St. Clair Avenue East and another at Midland Avenue, just down the tracks.



Here's one of your trains at the St. Clair grade separation today.

No-one has died at the St. Clair crossing ever since.

Metro Toronto and Scarborough knew 60 years ago that the major roads crossing this rail line would eventually require grade separations to preserve the carrying capacity of the roads and the rail. And to ensure terrible accidents never occurred. Their Official Plans designated grade separations all along this rail line. As development took place near these intersections, the city took the property they needed to eventually build the underpasses-overpasses. The land is still publically owned.

The price has gone up about 10 fold since 1975: these run in the neighbourhood of \$50Million each.

If you don't have \$400 million in your budget to build and open grade separations at Dennison and Kennedy in Markham and Steeles, McNicoll, Finch, Huntingwood, Progress and Danforth-Midland BEFORE any of your new train service is operating, you are grossly rewarding one small group of people moving north-south through this city at the expense and the potentially fatal jeopardy of a very much larger group of people moving east-west.

We don't need to know or care about interjurisdictional squabbling over who has responsibility, who has jurisdiction, who has the cash to build these.

- [REDACTED] weren't thinking about which agency was responsible.
- [REDACTED] didn't wonder who had jurisdiction.
- [REDACTED] weren't thinking about budget priorities.

They just wanted to get home safely on a dark December night and they never made it.

Don't open your expanded service on this line without these 8 grade separations. Don't play favorites with different groups of people trying travel around this city. Keep us all safe.

Yours truly,

[REDACTED]

Lorne Ross, [REDACTED] Scarborough

CC via email:

Honourable Steven Del Duca, Ontario Minister of Transportation.

[REDACTED]

Lorenzo Berardinetti, Scarborough Southwest

[REDACTED]

Soo Wong, Scarborough Agincourt, PA to Minister of Community Safety

[REDACTED]

Ben Spurr, Star Transportation Columnist

[REDACTED]

Mike Adler, Scarborough Mirror

[REDACTED]

Attachment:

### Estimating Transit Ridership Crossing Stouffville GO line

Today over 2,000 TTC buses cross Stouffville GO at level crossings, weekdays, 5:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

- Steeles 53, 53E, 53F: 568 buses
- Kennedy 43A: 244 buses
- McNicoll 42 A and B: 96 buses
- Finch 199 and 39A and B: 516 buses
- Huntingwood 169: 84 buses.
- Kennedy-Progress 43B: 290 buses.
- McCowan 16 at Midland-Danforth: 216 buses

How many passengers do these TTC buses carry across Stouffville GO level crossings? Hard to tell, TTC data is for entire bus route. There may be more or less at any particular pint in the route. Here's the TTC Ridership data for 2004-2005:

- Steeles 53, 53E, 53F: 568 buses, 19,600 passengers
- Kennedy 43A: 244 buses 12,600 passengers
- McNicoll-Cummer 42 A and B: 96 buses, 7,200 passengers
- Finch 199 and 39A and B: 516 buses 38,300 passengers no data on 199 Rocket
- Huntingwood 169: 84 buses 1,300 passengers
- Kennedy-Progress 43B: 290 buses. No data on 43B passenger load
- McCowan 16 at Midland-Danforth: 216 buses, 9,400 passengers

Total passenger as of 11 years ago, not including additional passengers on Finch Rocket and Kennedy-Progress 43B: 88,400 passengers. Let's add an additional 10% for ridership increases in the past 11 years and the two routes for which there is no data, and we have over 100,000 TTC bus passengers riding buses which cross Stouffville GO at level crossings today...each day.

Additional passengers on Markham Transit bus routes on No. 2 Dennison bus and the Number 8 Kennedy bus...unknown.

School buses...unknown. Has Metrolinx asked any-all Boards of Education for the data? Not known?

Lorne Ross.