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To: [Chair of Metrolinx](#); [CEO Correspondence](#)
Cc: [Tom Connell](#); [Catherine Berka](#)
Subject: Letter to Metrolinx Board of Directors
Date: December 5, 2022 7:05:08 PM
Attachments: [Mlinx.docx](#)

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Please find attached a letter that was sent in advance of Metrolinx's most recent Board Meeting.

I did not see it on the list of letters received by Metrolinx so I am resending

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Chris Williams



Metrolinx's plan to use the Don Valley for layovers is not supported by GO Expansion ridership numbers.

The projected ridership growth detailed in GO Expansion's 2018 business case has failed to materialize due to the pandemic. With ridership hovering around 50% is no need to expand the GO network. While Metrolinx compares Sep 2022 ridership to Sep 2020 ridership to promote the 59.2% recovery number touted in this meeting, the calculation should use the numbers from the business case projection to test whether ridership supports GO Expansion. It does not, the 59.2% becomes about 50% vs the business case. Worse, Metrolinx is cherry picking which months to compare, October is the latest month which data is available yet September is used to calculate the KPI reported at the Board. Why? October 2022 is lower than September when in other years October trends higher than September.

Metrolinx provides no rationale to support expansion when ridership has contracted by 50%.

With ridership uncertainty, GO Expansion's business case doesn't provide an argument for expansion and therefore no need to destroy parts of the Don Valley for layovers. The data is obsolete and therefore the plan can be deferred until new data is available and plans revised to suit reality.

Cost projections wrong, BCR wrong.

On top of far lower than hoped for ridership, costs will need to be recalculated given the inflation rate over the life of the project is not going to be 2%. With ballooning costs and wild uncertainty over future ridership the Benefit Cost Ratio as published is an embarrassing fantasy. While the staff of Metrolinx may indulge in their love of trains, it's the Board's fiduciary responsibility to challenge the numbers and ensure the Government is receiving value for public funds.

Public already enjoys benefit of reduced commuting.

Since most of the public benefits of GO Expansion are based on the dollar value of reduced commuting time, we must consider the value of reduced commuting generated by "work from home" arrangements which are now very common with Metrolinx's core commuting customer. We find that work from home has delivered a far greater public benefit than anything Metrolinx has planned. Metrolinx is now in the awkward position of trying to convince commuters to give up this benefit to spend **more** time commuting vs work from home so that Metrolinx can then claim it is providing a benefit by **reducing** the commuting time. There is no point spending billions of dollars of public money to provide a public benefit which they already enjoy.

Board is aware of problem, time to act.

Clearly the GO Expansion business case is obsolete and must be redone with new ridership projections and financials to provide the Government a more accurate Benefit Cost Ratio. It seems the Board agrees since the largest item (30 minutes) at last Board meeting's agenda was this very point. Unfortunately, the public is not privy to the depth and logic of the Board's discussion however it is clear that the Board must assert it's power to demand Metrolinx staff update GO Expansion business case with a much reduced plan to present to Government.

Public benefits of revised GO Expansion

Cutting wasteful public spending is an obvious virtue. In addition, Metrolinx's revised plan could reduce GhG emissions by eliminating additional use of diesel trains on lines where ridership is weak. Fewer diesel trains means less demand for layovers which eliminates the Don Valley for consideration as a train parking lot. This results in further benefits as the area is an urban greenspace, is prone to flooding and trains parked alongside the DVP will degrade from salt spray off the highway.

In summary

The conditions which drove planning of GO Expansion in 2018, no longer exist therefore GO Expansion plans are obsolete. New revised plans would see dramatically different levels of investment, reduced use of diesel and eliminate network reliance on a flood prone Don Valley.

Links with evidence about commuting patters:

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-montreal-downtown-economic-recovery-covid/>

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-canadian-suburbs-cities-foot-traffic/>

<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/lilley-the-daily-commute-and-the-office-culture-have-been-forever-changed-by-covid>

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2022/03/13/friction-over-the-return-to-work-is-settling-on-a-hated-aspect-of-office-life-getting-there.html>