

Don't close Strachan Ave.

Road is vital to the communities that surround it and to the economic vitality of Exhibition Place

Group fights link that divides

March 11.

Your article failed to identify one of the major issues related to the environment assessment being undertaken by GO Transit to allow for increased traffic on the Georgetown line and the implementation of the Union-Pearson Air Rail Link (ARL). In your article you focused on the issue of the closure of three level rail crossings in Weston. However, GO Transit is also suggesting the closure of Strachan Ave. to all traffic. As Chair of the Board of Governors of Exhibition Place and councillor for Ward 19, I want to bring to your attention our serious concerns about the Strachan closure proposal. In an area already desperately short of north-south streets to access the waterfront, Strachan is vital to the communities that surround it and to the economic vitality of Exhibition Place.

Closing Strachan Avenue would isolate Exhibition Place and would be counter to the exercise that the board of Exhibition Place is undertaking to further integrate this property into the City of Toronto. Furthermore, there has been a continuous and tremendous growth in this area relying on Strachan Ave. remaining open.

On an annual basis, Exhibition Place welcomes more than 5 million people to the site for such prestigious events as the annual CNE, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, the Home Show, the International Boat Show and Caribana, to name only a few. In 1997, The National Trade Centre was opened after an investment of \$180 million and is the sixth largest trade and consumer show venue in North America. All surpluses earned by Exhibition Place are returned to the City.

While Exhibition Place is supportive of the GO expansion and the airport link, such improvements must be undertaken in a way that would not be detrimental to one of Toronto's busiest entertainment and commercial properties.

Joe Pantalone, Deputy Mayor,
Chair, Board of Governors of Exhibition Place, Toronto