

Peter Smith, Chair and the Board of Directors
Go Transit

Dear Members of the Board,

At last month's meeting some of your discussion centred around the unprecedented public response to your Environmental Assessment process in Weston. Part of the decision you made was that 'staff develop an enhanced public communication strategy for the ongoing Environmental Assessment process currently underway ensuring that the community at large receive all information relevant to that process.'

Two things have happened since your meeting. GO has rescheduled the PIC, and both mailed and bulk-mailed a letter from Gary McNeil. A long-scheduled meeting between representatives of GO and community representatives at the behest of Councillor Nunziata took place April 4.

A working group had been promised on February 7, traffic counts, pedestrian counts, emergency vehicle counts, previous 'Board Orders', etc. To date these have not been made available.

The cart seems to be firmly before the horse here. We are told to wait until the PIC for answers to our questions but also that the PIC will be the place for comment on the project, the details of which we can't see until the PIC. A handful of us have managed to 'find' answers from other sources, but GO or UPAG ought to be much more forthright about their preferred concept of plans, and state so in the notice.

I have now put in writing to Mr. Ashbee and Mr. Mehr, 13 questions which were developed by the 'working group' referred to above. A copy is attached. Some of those questions were put directly to them at the meeting on April 4. There were no responses.

If Mr. McNeil's letter is to be the only notice of the next PIC, it is clearly deficient. (See the letter from Mr. Harris to Imants Hausmanis, attached. There was no reply to that letter). It does not 'disentangle' GO and the ARL. It does not state clearly that in the preferred alternative, no at grade crossings will remain. It tries to diminish the street closures as 'local (minor) roads'. John Street, for example is the major connector between the centre business area and the residential community. It does not give factual detail about the project, which would clearly alert the public to the scope of what is in the 'preferred' alternative concept. For example:

- There is planned to be a six-fold increase in the number of trains through the town.
- There is planned to be two new sets of rails through the town.
- There will be, for safety's sake, no level (at grade) crossings between road and rail permitted.
- Although technically the GO project is a provincial EA and SNC's is Federal, because GO is implementing the infrastructure required for the ARL, the GO EA process will deal with both projects
- There will be at least pedestrian access constructed between the east side and the west side of the town.

- There is between \$140 and \$150 Million currently budgeted for the project.

There are probably other 'factual' elements which could clearly be stated in the notice to the public but the above is just a sample. Clearly without these 'facts' in advance, the public will be completely unable to assess the impact of the project in the space of a 2 hour meeting attended by hundreds if not thousands of residents. As a result, solutions to potential or perceived problems will not be forthcoming in the time frames allotted, and identification and discussion of other concepts will be impossible.

Indeed, according to GO's own Class Environmental Assessment Document, at stage two, interested participants are supposed to be informed of the concept alternatives and given an opportunity to comment on the alternatives and suggest other 'concept' alternatives. Instead what we have gleaned from the Powerpoint presentation is that 'design' alternatives have been misrepresented as 'concept' alternatives. It is, for example, in the presentation that the placement of the new rails either north or south of the existing rail is a 'concept' alternative. Decisions about whether existing at-grade crossings are to be replaced by bridges or tunnels are presented as 'concept' alternatives, when they are in fact, 'design' alternatives, of a previously chosen 'concept'.

With the utmost respect, it would appear that the process is not well understood by those presenting it. A 'concept' alternative is meant to be a solution to the need or problem identified by GO. In the instant case, GO has identified a 'need' to carry more passengers in the Georgetown corridor. GO could solve this need with a number of different approaches, including, for example, longer trains, more frequent trains, express trains, etc. These are all 'concepts' to be studied at the second stage of the EA. We all understand the 'preferred' concept is the installation of a second set of tracks and the increasing of the number of trains. But the Class EA requires a study and acceptance or rejection of a number of 'concept' alternatives in the public stage of the process.

In addition, the provision of the infrastructure for the ARL is not in response to a 'need' or 'problem' identified by GO transit. GO Transit has not identified as part of it's mandate, a need for GO transit to provide an ARL. The Federal Government has apparently decided to undertake to provide the infrastructure for one, and to award the right to run same to UPAG. However, now that it is part of the GO Transit EA process, it needs to follow the same rules and conventions. So we need to be able to identify and analyze additional 'concept' alternatives to the current concept of a 140 train per day 22 minute express service. So far, that is not part of the process identified by your project manager or consultants.

I would therefore respectfully request that GO Transit undertake to answer the questions of the community, raised at the April 4 and other meetings, in writing, prior to the PIC, and distribute same to the public in the community. In addition, I request that GO transit clearly identify other 'concept' alternatives to the current concept and distribute same to the general public in advance of the public meeting, along with the advice that other 'concepts' for the increasing of

commuter service on the Georgetown Corridor can be presented for discussion at the meeting. Further I request that GO Transit pay for the services of an engineer to be retained by representatives of the community to evaluate the project, and to comment on the viability and efficacy of proposed solutions to the problem. Finally, I request that GO Transit pay for the services of an environmental legal counsel, to be retained by the community, to evaluate the project from the perspective of the Class EA process and to advise and counsel the community as the project proceeds.

Respectfully,

Mike Sullivan
Resident of Weston.
Member of the Working Group.