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Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch

April 28, 2006

Mr. Imants Hausmanis, P.Eng.
Corridor Manager
ADM Program Managers
20 Bay Street
7th Floor
Toronto ON M5J 2WE

Dear Mr. Hausmanis:

Re: Draft Georgetown South Corridor GO Transit Service Expansion and Express
Transportation Link Between Lester B. Pearson Airport and Union Station Preliminary
Outline of Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference

The Ministry of the Environment (MOE) appreciates the draft submission of the Georgetown South Corridor GO Transit Service Expansion and Express Transportation Link Between Lester B. Pearson Airport and Union Station Preliminary Outline of Environmental Assessment Terms of Reference (ToR). The Environmental Assessment Project Coordination Section has reviewed the draft ToR and I offer the following comments.

General Editing

I have provided some general editing comments in the body of the text of the draft ToR. Throughout the draft ToR Chapters and Sections are referenced. I am unsure if these references are suppose to reflect sections in the final ToR or if you are references sections that will be in the environmental assessment (EA). There is no need to reference sections of the EA at this time.

Glossary

The glossary in Appendix A is a useful tool. I recommend that you include other words that are relevant to GO Transit operations. For example you may consider defining passing tracks and connecting tracks.

Previous Studies

GO Transit has completed a number of previous studies for the Georgetown corridor. These

studies provide the rationale for one component of the undertaking. Are these studies going to be submitted as supplemental information for the ToR?

Previous studies for the Express Transportation Link (ETL) have also been completed. The level of detail in the draft ToR that outlines the previous work completed for the ETL is significantly less than what is described for the Georgetown Corridor. Additional information about the background studies would be helpful.

The Expression of Interest for the ETL resulted in the Union Pearson AirLink Group being awarded the project. Please describe or acknowledge what they have proposed.

Organization of the ToR

The background information is useful and provides the context for the ToR. You may consider re-organizing the ToR so that the information currently in Section 1.1: Background gets incorporate into other sections of the ToR. For example the information about the previous studies can get incorporated into Section 2: Purpose of the Undertaking. The previous studies establish the problem and the opportunity and may be useful in Section 2. The information about the corridor environment can get incorporated into Section 4: Overview of Environmental Conditions and Potential Environmental Effects. The current corridor conditions can provide the baseline information about the environment and potential effects.

Undertaking

The draft ToR clearly explains that there are two components of the undertaking, how the analysis will occur, and how the two components are linked. In Section 1.1.2 you explain that GO Transit initiated an EA under the Class EA process. This description should also explain that the Class EA was for infrastructure improvements that would in part meet the needs of the ETL. And then make the next step that explains why both projects are being assessed under an individual EA.

Current Conditions in the Study Area/Corridor

Maps and figures illustrating current conditions on the corridor would be helpful.

You have provided a good explanation of who uses the Georgetown Corridor. Additional information explaining who has track priority and the number of trips per day that VIA and freight trains make would also be helpful.

Alternatives

It was a good idea to explain the terminology that you will be using for to describe the alternatives to and alternative methods.

For the GO Transit Planning alternatives watch the level of detail that you go into for the expansion of the existing rail service alternative. The information about tracks and grade separation that you elude to in the planning alternative section may also be assessed as alternative methods as these could be included as design elements.

Assessment Criteria

The Planning Alternatives for both components of the undertaking will be assessed against similar macro-indicators or objectives. However, for the ETL component of the project more specific criteria and measurements have been suggested. You may consider providing this level of detail for the Georgetown component of the project.

ETL Assessment for Planning Alternatives:

- Why are only AM peak periods being used to evaluate ridership?
- Why is a qualitative assessment being for the potential impacts to access? There should be a quantitative assessment associated with road closures, crossings and grad separations?

First Nation Consultation

You have acknowledged that First Nation consultation will occur for the ToR and throughout the EA process. The ToR should include what steps have been taken to consult with the First Nation communities that may have an interest in the undertaking. For example, you should outline who you have contacted, how the different communities have been identified, and what steps you have taken to consult with them.

Thank you for letting me to comment on the preliminary draft ToR. I look forward to reviewing the next draft. If you have any questions please feel free to contact me at (416) 314-7106 or by email at hayley.berlin@ene.gov.on.ca

Yours sincerely,



Hayley Berlin
Project Officer
Environmental Assessment & Approvals Branch