

Mike Sullivan

From: Weston Community Coalition [info@westoncommunitycoalition.ca]
Sent: October 10, 2005 23:37
To: msullivan@cep.ca
Subject: Weston Community Coalition Update

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Since we last wrote to you, a number of things have happened.

First and foremost, the Weston Community Coalition has endorsed the concept of a rapid transit system between Union Station and Pearson airport with 10 stops (including Weston) along the route, and buried in residential areas. Our research found the genesis of the Air-Rail Link to be a 1998 City of Toronto Environment Committee report asking the senior levels of government to fund a 'rapid transit' link between Pearson and Union. It was clearly intended by the city to be a subway or subway-like system, as they envisaged having to make adjustments to the subway station at Union, and a \$1 extra fare for travel into the airport property.

Clearly Mr. Collenette's decision to turn this into a private, for profit, elite \$20 per ride, single-stop railroad was not in keeping with what the city asked for. And despite his promise that 'not one nickel' of public money would go into this project, the taxpayers are clearly funding all of the infrastructure for the Air-Rail Link, to the tune of between \$240 and \$315 Million Dollars. The Coalition believes it is folly to spend that many taxpayer dollars on such a limited-use system, when the city is clearly in need of real public transit infrastructure. Instead we believe the citizens of Toronto, and in particular those in the north-west quadrant which has no rapid transit, should see this kind of investment in true rapid transit systems that would benefit them and us.

A brochure describing the new rapid transit link through Weston is on our website (www.westoncommunitycoalition.ca). In the brochure, we call the link a subway, as that is what the public calls this. However in deference to the fact that the TTC no longer calls it a subway, but 'rapid transit', and due to the fact that politicians are frightened of the term 'subway' because of the cost of building it, we have called it 'rapid transit' in all our correspondence.

We met with Mayor Miller on this matter, and he undertook to examine our proposal as an element of 'city building'. We are awaiting a response.

We have also written to the three representatives of Weston (Frances Nunziata, Joe Cordiano and Alan Tonks) and asked them to support the concept of this rapid transit link.

Members of the Coalition are in turn asking the organizations they belong to, and other organizations along the line, to write to Mayor Miller expressing their support for this link. They are also reminding these organizations to contact GO Transit to indicate that they wish to be consulted on the upcoming Environmental Assessment. We would appreciate hearing from any of you about any organizations you might belong to which could endorse the concept of a rapid transit link through Weston. And of course you, as citizens, should feel free to contact your elected representatives on this matter. Their addresses are on our website.

Meanwhile the formal legal 'Environmental Assessment' will start in earnest later this fall after GO Transit hires a new consultant. The Weston Community Coalition has formally advised GO Transit that it wishes to be fully involved in the process. It is anticipated that the entire process will take between 18 months and 2 years to complete. Politicians and civil servants from both Provincial and Federal governments have told us and those of you who have written that the Environmental Assessment is the forum for discussion about this plan. We intend to have as much discussion as possible and as public as possible. Outside of the meeting in the Faith Sanctuary as part of an Environmental Assessment, there has been absolutely no public discussion or debate on this plan since the City originally passed the motion, and it was changed from what the city wanted to what the Federal Liberal Government wanted.

Mike Sullivan
Chair
Weston Community Coalition