

To: Alan Tonks, MP
Joe Cordiano, MPP
Frances Nunziata, Councillor

Dear Alan, Joe and Frances,

At our last Weston Community Coalition meeting, the representatives unanimously endorsed the enclosed proposal for a rapid transit line along the CN Weston Subdivision ending at Pearson Airport. Our research has determined that this is, in fact, what the city originally asked Mr. Collenette to provide when it passed the motion in 1998 asking the senior governments to create a rapid transit link to the airport. Somewhere between the original city request and the final outcome of the IBI study, the KPMG study and the department of Transport, the request morphed into a single purpose private Air-Rail Link with a 50 to 100 year locked-in right for the proponent, rather than a public rapid transit connection.

Clearly a proper rapid transit link is far more useful to the citizens of Toronto, and will provide a far, far greater reduction in auto use, which in turn will reduce harmful emissions, and reduce gridlock in the GTA. There are many side benefits to a full transit link, as well, not least of which is the economic boost it will give the extreme northwest quadrant of Toronto. It will provide affordable rapid transit to the airport (potentially from the east end of Toronto as well as downtown). It could reduce congestion on the existing Bloor and Yonge/University rapid transit systems by removing the need to transfer to the Yonge line to get downtown. It can connect to the Georgetown GO service to allow passengers from Mississauga, Brampton, and Georgetown rapid transit to the airport. Finally a rapid transit system, properly planned, will be a huge return on investment, both in terms of the productivity of the citizens, whose commutes will be seriously shortened, but also in terms of the raw economic advantages of the development which follows rapid transit, and of course the health care advantages of reducing harmful emissions.

Creating a rapid transit system will allay the fears of the communities along the line that their neighbourhoods and heritage are being destroyed for private profit, as they too will enjoy the benefits of rapid transit, and being residents of Toronto, will own the rapid transit system as a public right. And despite the fears of politicians that such systems are too expensive, we believe this rail corridor provides an ideal venue for the creation of a much cheaper line than any other. The rights of way are already in place, rail systems already use them, it would only need to be buried through residential areas, and no businesses or roadways would need to be disrupted during construction.

Kudos to the Provincial Government for its recent release of the 20 year predictions for the province. This document clearly indicates the need for a sophisticated transportation system in the GTA. It is folly to spend almost a third of a billion public dollars to build an unsophisticated single-purpose elite private railroad while there is clearly a need for a transit system which will serve all the public. It will prevent using this corridor for rapid public transit for 50 to 100 years, and it will not provide the 'city building' infrastructure so desperately needed and identified in this document.

We will be preparing to present this proposal as one of the options for study in the upcoming 'Environmental Assessment' being run by GO Transit on behalf of SNC Lavalin. It does seem a bit backwards that the mechanism for public involvement in a project so massive is after all the decisions about what Toronto wants are made in Ottawa, and is labelled an Environmental Assessment. But that is what both senior levels of government have repeatedly advised is the proper forum for changing the plans. We hope that this continual reference to the EA is genuine, and not merely a 'smoke screen' to keep public concerns from being voiced in legislatures and at city hall.

We would ask that you, as our representatives, clearly and unequivocally state your support for the implementation of a true rapid transit connection between Pearson and Union, and in turn assist us in whatever way your offices can in trying to make this project proposal a reality.

Yours Truly,

Mike Sullivan
Chair
Weston Community Coalition