



December 3, 2018

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Mr. Antoine Belaieff  
Director, Regional Planning  
Metrolinx  
97 Front Street West  
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Dear Mr. Belaieff,

**RE: York Region Comments on Metrolinx Proposed Prioritization Process for the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide York Region and YRRTC staff comments on the projection process Metrolinx will use to set priorities to deliver transit projects in the GTHA over the next 22 years (to 2041).

**York Region supports the 2041 Frequent Rapid Transit Network (FRTN), as shown on Map 6 of the RTP, for the GTHA.**

The 2041 Plan is ambitious and will require a great deal of coordination and participation from all member municipalities if the Plan is to be realized.

Implementation of this forward thinking Plan will require an accelerated construction timetable, along with a long term stable funding mechanism, if all 75 transit projects are to be completed by 2041. By way of comparison, it has taken 10 years from the approval of the 2008 Business Case to construct Phase 1 of the Viva BRT Network (approximately half of the overall Bus Rapid Transit Network in York Region).

**York Region and YRRTC have a number of comments on the Proposed Prioritization Process**

The proposed prioritization process needs to be comprehensive, consistent and equitable in its treatment of the 75 transit projects (or whatever reduced number of projects results). On this basis, we believe some adjustments to the prioritization framework will be required.

The objective of a prioritization framework is to rank projects in terms of their overall net value creation for the GTHA and the Province, factoring in all elements which affect well-being of users and the community (mobility, economic development, environmental and social equity factors) as well as the implementation readiness of the project.

We commend the use of BCR metrics in the proposed project level evaluation (slide 12 of 2041 RTP MTAC presentation). However, it is important that the BCR ratios be consistent across projects (e.g. projects compared to same base case; evaluating the same benefits and costs, etc.). Crowding and connectivity are also important criteria, but these should be evaluated as part of the BCR metrics. Introducing separate, additional criteria around connectivity and crowding can lead to arbitrary results, since there is no objective approach to weighting the different criteria.

In order to ensure that the prioritization is comprehensive, it is also necessary to take into the account economic development potential (e.g. additional employment density, real estate development opportunities)



and social equity impacts (e.g. proportion of users or trips benefitting from project who are from low-income households) of projects. All analysis should also be done with consistent, Provincially approved, population and employment forecasts.

We also believe that the project complexity and readiness for implementation are important criteria and should factor heavily in the prioritization. However, we think it requires additional criteria related to the deliverability of the project and the percentage design already completed.

The current prioritization process should not be designed to replace or undermine the results of any previous prioritization process. This refers notably to the top 15 priorities which emerged from the Big Move in 2008, which included both the Yonge North Subway Extension and the full VIVA BRT network. Failure to respect the results of the 2008 RTP prioritization process could also undermine the current prioritization process, by implying that there may not be appropriate follow-through in delivering the designated priorities.

### **York Region Transportation Master Plan identifies Transit Project Priorities in York Region**

The Transportation Master Plan for York Region was completed and approved by Regional Council in 2016. The TMP maps out York Region's transportation priorities to the year 2041 and should be considered in the overall prioritization of projects.

### **Yonge Subway Extension is York Region's number one transit priority**

During deliberations and discussions on the TMP, York Region Council reaffirmed that the extension of the Yonge Subway to Richmond Hill is the number one transit priority in York Region. The TTC and YRRTC are currently conducting preliminary engineering to take the project design to 15%-30% completion. The Yonge Subway extension has been identified as a priority Next Wave project, and the preliminary engineering now underway is being funded by the Province.

The project prioritization process now being proposed by Metrolinx should not delay the timing of the YSE implementation as it moves to the next stage gate at the completion of the preliminary design business case.

### **York Region's Viva BRT Network should remain as one bundle**

The bundling of projects is a strategy used by Metrolinx to reduce the number of transit projects from the original 75 to 59 projects. One important consideration of bundling is that the identified projects should be at a similar stage of development so as to avoid combining projects which have different degrees of uncertainty around the capital costs, benefits and even project feasibility.

York Region is of the opinion that the Viva BRT Network is already a bundled project that was based on the 2008 business case that resulted in full build out of the BRT Network along Highway 7, Young Street and Davis Drive. This is reflected in a supportive Regional Official Plan. The various segments of the BRT Network actually relate to the construction phasing and are not suited to further prioritization of segments, but rather as fulfillment of the larger plan supporting TOD. The East segment of Hwy 7 (Unionville GO Station to Cornell) should not be bundled with Hwy 7 in Pickering, which has no current project status, adjacent development or even current bus service. All of Hwy 7, Yonge Street and Davis Drive in York Region should remain as one bundle.

At the time of the original funding approval, it was proposed by the Province that funding for the Viva BRT network be assigned in two construction phases. The first phase of construction is nearing completion and it has always been York Region's understanding that Phase 2 funding would be available when Phase 1 is complete. Phase 2 construction can, most effectively, follow the completion of Phase 1. YRRTC's BRT implementation team is set up and staffed to complete the entire approved BRT Network.

The York Region Viva BRT Network is classed as an "In Delivery" project and construction must continue to achieve the full network. Re-examining the Viva BRT project, and other "In Delivery" projects currently under construction or about to be constructed, is counter-productive and will only unnecessarily delay the completion of the 2041 RTP. In addition, unbundling and re-prioritizing Phase 2 of VIVA would also delay and put at risk the realization of benefits associated with the program.

**York Region has provided Data Requirements**

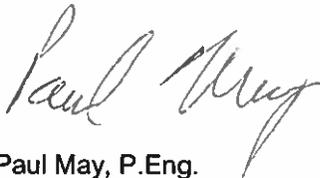
It is our understanding that Metrolinx does not require any further data from York Region. If Metrolinx requires further data from York Region and YRRTC, please inform us of your requirements and we will get the data to you as quickly as possible.

**Recommendation Re: YSE and Viva BRT**

York Region and YRRTC recommend that the project prioritization process be conducted to reflect the overall net value creation for the GTHA. The Yonge Subway Extension remains as the number one transit priority project for York Region. We recognize that the original Viva BRT business case is 10 years old and should be updated but this should be done in the same context as the original business case and not affect its status as an In Development project. The full Viva BRT Network (both the In Delivery and In Development segments) should remain as one bundle and not bundled with Hwy 7 in Pickering.

We thank you for engaging us in this important dialogue and appreciate the significant effort Metrolinx is making to consult on the RTP implementation. If you have any questions, please let us know.

Yours truly,



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Vice President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation

Cc: Bruce Macgregor, Chief Administrative Officer, York Region  
Mary-Frances Turner, President, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation  
Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, Planning and Economic Development, York Region  
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