



Rob Prichard
Chair, Metrolinx
97 Front St W, 4th floor
Toronto, Ontario M5J 1E6

June 27, 2017

Dear Mr. Pritchard,

We are pleased to have the opportunity to provide feedback on a number of items before the Board at your June 28, 2017 meeting.

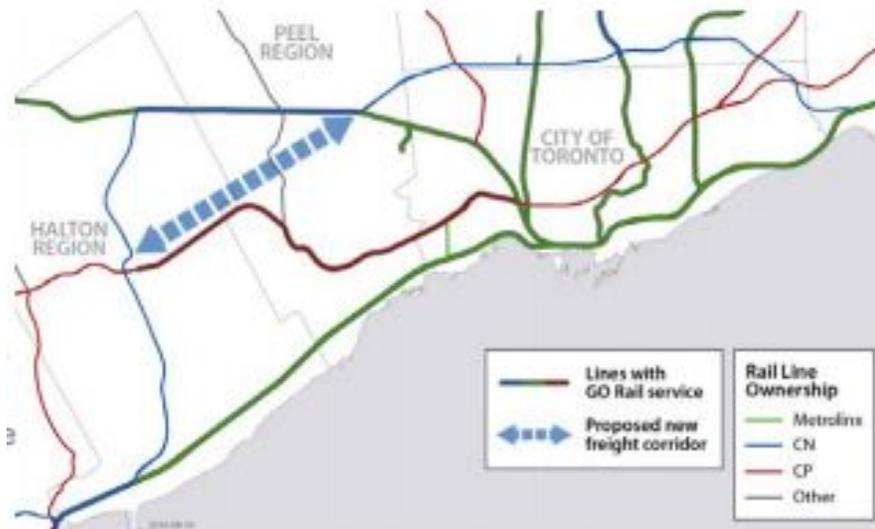
Fight Gridlock in Brampton is a volunteer-based group of residents who want to see more complete streets and rapid transit in Brampton. We've spoken out and organized over the years in support of transit projects, such as the Hurontario-Main Light Rapid Transit (HMLRT) project, the Queen Street Rapid Transit Master Plan Study, and Regional Express Rail (RER).

In no order of prioritization or preference, please see below for our comments based on the June 2017 agenda and reports.

1) Brampton-Halton Freight Rail Bypass (BHFRB) for the CN Rail Halton Subdivision

To make life easier when we are talk about this project internally or with residents who have questions, or when we need to geographically locate it, we've just come to call the concept of diverting the mainline CN Rail freight traffic from the Kitchener Line between Bramalea and Georgetown the Brampton-Halton Freight Rail Bypass (BHFRB) or the "Bypass".

We support the Bypass and do hope the Master Agreement, as referenced on page six of the Capital Project Group's update presentation¹, can be signed soon with CN Rail in order to allow more service.



Map from September 2016 Board [report](#)².

We enjoyed reading a few more details about the Bypass in media coverage of a Metrolinx presentation to a stakeholder engagement meeting in Kitchener. It was helpful for us to understand the specific logistical considerations for the Bypass as [reported](#) by local media:

- The Bypass could require up to 35 new bridges;
- The relocation or modification of up to 17 hydro towers and relocating up to 3.4 kilometres of major gas lines; and
- A total of 60 kilometres of new track would be laid (two tracks at 30 kilometres each), a new signal system is required and a new grade separation would be built where the new Bypass meets the existing rail corridor³.

If Metrolinx would like to give the same presentation in Brampton, our group would be more than happy to book a meeting room and encourage local Brampton stakeholders to attend. We always find it helpful when there are public engagement opportunities to explain railroad information, technology, logistics, and knowledge (for example, the weight and speed differences between freight trains and passenger trains, switching considerations, grades and grade separations).

¹ <http://bit.ly/CapitalProjectGroupJune2017ppt>

² <http://bit.ly/MetrolinxSept2016Report>

³ <http://bit.ly/TheRecordApril2017>

We noted with interest page two of the Capital Projects Group Quarterly Report⁴ which we believe lists publicly for the first time the budget for the “Kitchener Extension” which we assume includes the cost of the Bypass.

As we indicated in our [June 2016](#) letter to you and the Board⁵, CN Rail is a major direct and indirect employer in Brampton and the CN Halton Subdivision is a key part of their transcontinental route which is important for Brampton’s economy. So we understand that this is a sensitive and delicate situation. We send best wishes to those at the negotiating table and the hopes of thousands of people boarding GO trains each day in our city and to our city.

2) Hydrogen

While studying new technologies can be good, we have read various opinion columns (IE [here](#)⁶, [here](#)⁷, or [here](#)⁸) detailing where new technologies have been used or studied in the past and challenges have resulted (GO-ALRT or using Intermediate Capacity Transit System (ICTS) for the Scarborough RT instead of LRT). We ask for careful consideration of this matter by staff, external consultants, and of course the Minister. We also look forward to seeing how acceleration with hydrogen compares to electric trains as we believe the acceleration is one of the key benefits of electrification.

We have read some speculation that one of the reasons for using hydrogen could be the reduction in concerns from a small number of people living along certain portions of the proposed electrified network. We hope that specific and dedicated outreach to these particular areas could continue.

3) Off-Peak GO Train Service

The Ministry of Finance’s 2016 Budget materials did not consistently provide the disclaimer respecting negotiations with CN Rail and allowing off-peak service in fiscal 2016-2017. The disclaimer was not listed in the “Backgrounders” section of the main 2016 budget page. Within the section for [infrastructure “inside the GTHA”](#) in “Backgrounders”⁹ the disclaimer was not listed. However, it was listed in the full-page [budget PDF](#) (page 68)¹⁰ and [HTML text version](#)¹¹.

⁴ <http://bit.ly/CapitalProjectsReportJune2017>

⁵ <http://bit.ly/June2016LettertoMetrolinx>

⁶ <http://bit.ly/SeanMarshallPostJune2017>

⁷ <http://bit.ly/TVOcolumnJune2017>

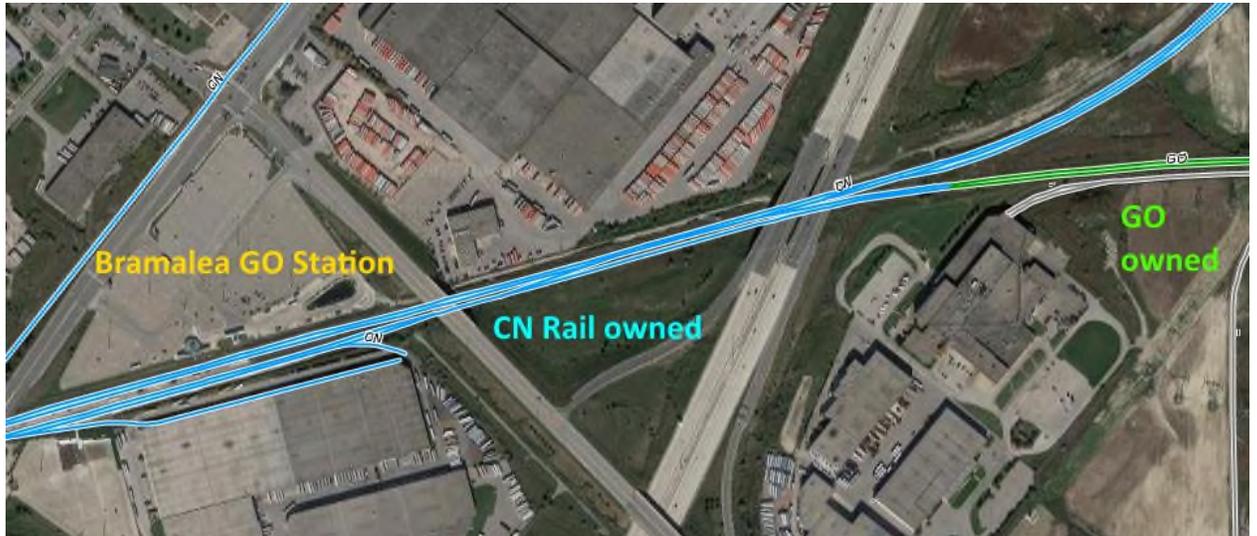
⁸ <http://bit.ly/SelleyColumnJune2017>

⁹ <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2016/bk2.html>

¹⁰ http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2016/papers_all.pdf

¹¹ http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2016/papers_all.html

We are supportive of off-peak train service and hope negotiations with CN Rail prove to be constructive and lead to a solution. We are aware that Metrolinx does not own the last small section of track east of the Bramalea GO Station (see map below) and hope that this can be resolved so that off-peak trains could at least run to Bramalea.



Track ownership near the Bramalea GO Station. Original base layer map from the Railway Association of Canada and labels added by letter authors.⁵

We hope that the references to off-peak service noted on page 8 in the Proposed Fare Changes report¹³ will include service to Bramalea. However, we do note as indicated in the “[GO Transit Service Expansion Update](#)” presentation¹⁴ the information in the Appendix, page 13, which outlines what is involved including CN Rail and CP Rail negotiations.

The reason, as you know, off-peak train service is helpful is because it provides a more consistent travel time and level of service that is much more desirable than battling traffic on the 410, 401, 427, and Gardiner. Residents in our group have experienced the direct benefit of the introduction of off-peak service on the Kitchener Line in September 2015. A family member was in a serious car accident and relatives were able to use the service to do hospital visits. Using the train instead of driving offered a much less stressful commute which was critical for the family’s mental health.

4) Bramalea GO Station Revitalization

We provided comments through the GO Transit online survey for the changes to the Bramalea GO Station and noticed a reference to the upcoming improvements to the

¹² <https://rac.jmaponline.net/canadianrailatlas/>

¹³ <http://bit.ly/FareChangesReportJune2017>

¹⁴ <http://bit.ly/June2017GOServiceExpansionPPT>

station in the Capital Group's report on page five¹⁵. We do hope that dedicated cycling paths into the station can be included, as well as enhancements for pedestrians. If you stand at the corner of Steeles and Bramalea you might be surprised to know that people can and do cycle and walk to the station. We believe with GO RER service the active transportation opportunity can only increase. We hope there can be cycling connectivity to nearby City of Brampton pathways.

As an example, the Erindale GO Station has helpful cycling and pedestrian access as shown below.



5) Naming of the Hurontario LRT (HuLRT) LRVs

While the production of the HuLRT Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs) is several years away, one fun suggestion we have is to name the actual LRVs. This has been done in the past for special steam engines or passenger coaches. In fact, VIA Rail Canada still uses several passenger coaches inherited from CP Rail with and named "after important figures in Canadian history. The names were chosen to commemorate famed explorers and administrators of the first French and British colonies¹⁶. While we realize the LRVs will have numbers (IE the new Toronto streetcars are in the 4000-series), we propose that in addition to the HuLRT LRVs being given numbers (IE 1000-series), names can be added.

¹⁵ <http://bit.ly/CapitalProjectsReportJune2017>

¹⁶ <http://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail/our-fleet/chateau-sleeping-car>

We recommend a collection of Indigenous names recommended by the Peel Region Indigenous community, and names for various Brampton and Mississauga historical figures (with diversity included) and neighbourhoods. This simple suggestion would just involve a little extra plastic lettering to the LRVs.

6) High-Speed Rail (HSR)

With respect to the HSR report on page nine of the Capital Project Group's presentation¹⁷, we do hope that HSR does not remove capacity for RER west of Bramalea (the "Kitchener Extension") or east of Bramalea and ask Metrolinx to monitor this situation and the forthcoming Environmental Assessment closely. The HSR proposal by the Province is a concern to some in Brampton who have been involved in the transit conversation¹⁸.

7) Thank you

We would like to thank many Metrolinx staff members for their responsive and timely engagement when we have questions or suggestions. We continue to encourage fellow residents to contact Metrolinx or attend a public meeting if they have questions. In addition, we would like to thank the Transit Safety Officers who engage with us on Twitter, including sharing cool train and transit pictures.

While social media can certainly have some negative and cynical elements, engaging with staff who are dedicated to their profession and enjoy interacting with the public is positive part of social media.

We look forward to attending as many future public meetings as we can. Thank you for considering the above points.

Sincerely,
Kevin Montgomery and Chris Drew
Co-Founders, Fight Gridlock in Brampton

cc: Mayor Jeffrey
Brampton's MPPs
Minister of Transportation
Chris Duyvestyn, P. Eng., Director, Transportation Special Projects, City of Brampton
Darshpreet Bhatti, P.Eng., Director, Hurontario Light Rail, Metrolinx

¹⁷ <http://bit.ly/CapitalProjectGroupJune2017ppt>

¹⁸ See "A need for high-speed rail reality (Updated)" by Sean Marshall:
<http://bit.ly/SeanMarshallMay2017Post>