

## Options for Davenport Position Statement

May 5, 2016

If money was no object, Options for Davenport would prefer that Metrolinx tunnel the portion of the Barrie Corridor that it currently plans to elevate. However, since money is a serious concern, Options has recommended that Metrolinx press pause on its project in order to address the countless outstanding questions associated with the overpass.

This "due diligence" option, we argue in "Our EA, Our Say," is the most financially prudent thing to do given that we still don't even know the long-term maintenance costs, or the associated social and economic costs to the community, associated with the overpass. As we saw with the Gardiner Expressway demolition debate, the option that appears the cheapest upfront can turn out to be the more expensive solution once future costs are considered. And studies show that communities exposed to high levels of noise and limited green space have a lower quality of life.

While Options will continue to remind Metrolinx and the province about the benefits of the "due diligence" option, we realize Metrolinx is proceeding with the overpass option and thus we are participating in that process. We are committed to fighting for the demands of this community where the overpass is concerned.

We need to see the following from Metrolinx:

- A commitment to incorporating state of the art noise and vibration mitigation technology, in recognizing the detrimental impacts on quality of life for local residents should this not be addressed
- A date commitment to electrify the corridor, to ensure that the community will not be forced to endure an extended period of increased diesel train traffic
- A commitment to extend any multi-use path to include north-south connections, including the West Toronto Railpath to the south, and EarlsCourt Park and the Green Line to the north, as a best practices example of planning for active transportation
- A detailed explanation of rail safety for this elevated structure
- A safety and lighting strategy for the space beneath the structure, as well as a plan for ongoing maintenance
- Innovative design and a cohesive vision for the structure itself and the land unlocked below that maximizes potential public realm improvements
- A realistic funding plan for the public realm space
- A commitment to build a GO station stop at Bloor

- A demonstration of community inclusion, by purposefully involving representatives from marginalized communities in the process, including seniors, non-English speaking and low-income residents living alongside the Barrie corridor

We believe Metrolinx owes us this much.

Options for Davenport, which represents more than 1500 local residents, is committed to pushing for the best possible project for our neighbourhood. It's why we conducted our own EA - so that we could collect widespread opinion on what is important to the people who stand to be most impacted by the project. Our members are deeply concerned about: impacts of noise and vibration; rail safety (i.e. concerns about derailment); degraded air quality due to increased diesel train traffic; increased crime and concerns about personal safety; and the visual disruption of the overpass on our densely populated neighbourhood. Residents want these issues properly addressed before the project moves ahead. They would also like to see the land unlocked beneath the overpass put to good use. They would like to see public realm improvements that draw people to the area, such as rail and bike paths that have real north-south and east-west connections, parks and green space that attract positive and inclusive community activity, and a GO station stop to provide access to the transit infrastructure itself.

Furthermore, despite our best efforts as a community group, Options for Davenport remains seriously concerned at the lack of engagement with residents living in Toronto Community Housing and Co-op buildings closest to the Barrie line, including seniors, non-English speaking and low-income residents. These residents will be the most impacted by this project and continue to remain largely uninformed about this process. While we recognize Metrolinx's outreach efforts have improved, including the development of a Community Advisory Committee, there is still a long way to go to ensure the process is inclusive and representative of the members who make up this community.