



MEMO to Development Services Committee

To: Mayor and Members of Council

C: Andy Taylor, CAO
Arvin Prasad, Commissioner, Development Services

From: Brian Lee, Director, Engineering, x7507
Biju Karumanchery, Director, Planning & Urban Design x4713

Prepared by: Stephen Lue, Development Manager, Central District, x2520

Date: September 29, 2020

Re: Metrolinx Transit Project Assessment Process for Train Storage Facility in Markham Centre (Ward 3)-

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the staff memo entitled “Metrolinx Transit Project Assessment Process for Train Storage Facility in Markham Centre, Ward 3” be received; and
2. That Metrolinx and York Region be informed that Markham Council does not support a train storage facility in the proposed location; and further
3. That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

BACKGROUND

Metrolinx has been studying the expansion of its rail network for the last few years and has held various round one public consultation events related to different elements of its expansion project. Projects of interest in Markham include a proposed layover/storage facility in Markham Centre, and two road-rail grade separations on Kennedy Road (north of Steeles Avenue East) and Denison Street. Currently, there are three concurrent Transit Project Assessment Processes (“TPAPs”) and two TPAP addendums being undertaken as shown below. This round of the public consultation is a combined virtual open house for all TPAPs and Addendums, and was held between August 18 and September 1, 2020.

- 1) [New Track and Facilities TPAP](#)
- 2) Scarborough Junction Grade Separation TPAP (not in Markham)
- 3) [Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separation TPAP](#)

- 4) Addendums:
 - a) Network-Wide Structure Project (Addendum to the Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion TPAP 2017) (not in Markham)
 - b) Addendum to the GO Rail Network Electrification TPAP 2017

Staff generally supports the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separation TPAP. With both projects, Metrolinx proposes that the roads pass under the rail corridor. Staff is working with Metrolinx on the Denison Street Grade Separation with special attention to a potential [GO Station at Denison Street](#), which Council endorsed in April 2016, followed by a request to Metrolinx to incorporate the requested station. A combined Notice of Commencement (for all the TPAPs and Addendums) was issued on September 8, 2020 and there is a 120 day comment period, see Attachment B.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to present to Committee Staff's objection to Metrolinx's New Track and Facilities TPAP as it pertains to the new train storage facility in Markham Centre, the City's emerging downtown.

DISCUSSION

Metrolinx Proposes a Train Storage Facility in Markham Centre

Metrolinx proposes a layover/storage facility ("train storage facility") in the New Track and Facilities TPAP in the location west of the existing rail line, between Enterprise Boulevard and the Rouge River. This storage facility would provide train storage during off-peak periods, cleaning, servicing, waste management, crew services, and track, switches and utilities maintenance. Its location close to its "revenue" trips would mitigate any economic impact of travelling long distances without passengers ("non-revenue" trips). Metrolinx selected this location based on the operational needs to maximize service efficiently.

The proposed train storage facility in Markham Centre is a new single-track facility of approximately 600 metres in length, which would accommodate the storage of two 12-car trains. There will also be an access road with Metrolinx staff parking and electrification infrastructure located off Enterprise Boulevard. The train storage facility would be within the existing rail corridor and additional property would be required for the access road and electrification infrastructure. More information is available from the Metrolinx [Unionville Storage Yard Facility webpage](#) – also see Attachment A.

A Train Storage Facility in this Location is Not Compatible with Provincial and Municipal Planning Vision/Policies

During the pre-TPAP consultation, Metrolinx conducted numerous meetings with City staff regrading the location of the train storage facility. City staff has expressed that the location of the facility is not compatible with the City's vision of an emerging downtown. In particular, the following planning documents/principles does not support such a facility.

The Provincial Policy Statement 2020 (“PPS”)

The vision of the PPS supports efficient use of land, resources and infrastructure. Specifically, it states, “efficient development patterns optimize the use of land, resources and public investments in infrastructure and public service facilities. These land use patterns promote a mix of housing, including affordable housing, employment, recreation, parks and open spaces, and transportation choices that increase the use of active transportation and transit before other modes of travel.” The PPS encourages development patterns that support strong, livable and healthy communities by endorsing intensification as a means to accommodate growth and increase urban vitality.

Policy 1.2.6.1, respecting land use compatibility states, “*major facilities* and *sensitive land uses* shall be planned and developed to avoid, or if avoidance is not possible, minimize and mitigate any potential adverse effects from odour, noise and other contaminants, minimize risk to public health and safety, and to ensure the long-term operational and economic viability of major facilities in accordance with provincial guidelines, standards and procedures.”

The PPS defines *major facilities* as, “facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses, including but not limited to airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities.” Furthermore, *sensitive land uses* is defined as, “buildings, amenity areas, or outdoor spaces where routine or normal activities occurring at reasonably expected times would experience one or more adverse effects from contaminant discharges generated by a nearby major facility. Sensitive land uses may be a part of the natural or built environment. Examples may include, but are not limited to: residences, day care centres, and educational and health facilities.” The location of proposed train storage facility is adjacent to an existing high school, senior residences, and approved high-density residential developments.

The City acknowledges the requirement of the Metrolinx train storage facility to support this GO line. However, the proposed storage use in a location within the heart of Markham’s downtown, where the highest concentration of development to support the transit network is expected, cannot be evaluated with the PPS in absence of further design details on the neighbouring impacts to the existing and planned surrounding sensitive land uses.

A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2019 (the “Growth Plan”)

The Growth Plan implements the Province’s vision of stronger and prosperous communities. The vision and guiding principles indicate the overall intent to minimize sprawl by directing growth to existing built-up areas, limit settlement area expansions, create compact and complete communities, and optimize the use of existing infrastructure and transit services. The lands near frequent transit should be planned to be supportive of transit and active transportation and provide a range and mix of uses and activities. The Growth Plan defines transit-supportive as compact, mixed-use development that has a high level of employment and residential densities.

The Growth Plan further states that the minimum 40% intensification set by York Region within the Built-Up Area continues to be applied. This intensification target may increase to a minimum 50% upon the approval of the next municipal comprehensive review. Markham Centre, as a defined Urban Growth Centre (“UGC”) in the Growth Plan, is expected to accommodate a significant amount of population and

employment growth as stated in Policy 2.2.3.2b, where the planned minimum density of 200 residents and jobs per hectare will be achieved by 2031. Its vision includes these urban centres “be vibrant and characterized by more compact development patterns that support climate change mitigation and adaptation, and provide a diversity of opportunities for living, working, and enjoying culture.”

The use of lands for the Metrolinx train storage facility within the core of Markham Centre, a designated UGC, would not contribute to the successful implementation of the Growth Plan vision for a vibrant urban centre.

York Regional Official Plan 2010 (YROP)

The YROP identifies Markham Centre within the Urban Area and as one of four Regional Centres, which are intended to “contain a wide range of uses and activities, and be the primary focal points for intensive development that concentrates residential, employment, live/work, mobility, investment, and cultural and government functions.” Policy 5.4.23 states that these areas shall contain the highest development densities and greatest mix of uses in the Region.

The YROP identifies a hierarchy for accommodating intensification within the Urban Area. The highest concentrations of intensification are to be located in Regional Centres and along Regional Corridors, subsequently followed by GO Transit stations, bus terminals and subway stations. The lands for the Metrolinx train storage facility are located both in a Regional Centre and near the Unionville GO Transit Station, which represent an area where intensification should be focused. The policies continue to promote a more compact, mixed-use urban form to support a higher level of transit service.

It is Staff’s opinion that the use of the lands for the Metrolinx train storage facility does not support the vision and policies of the YROP which calls for the highest development densities and greatest mix of uses in this Regional Centre.

The 1987 Markham Official Plan (“1987 OP”), as Amended by the 1997 Markham Centre Secondary Plan (“OPA 21”)

The policies of the 1987 OP remains in effect, as amended by OPA 21, which site-specifically permits high-density and mixed-use developments in this area. OPA 21 establishes the framework for the creation of an urban, high density, mixed use community. Markham Centre is envisioned to contain the greatest mix of uses and highest densities with a currently projection of approximately 41,000 population and 39,000 jobs. OPA 21 is currently under review by the City and will update the current projections and existing policies to be consistent with the PPS and conform to the Growth Plan.

The proposed location of the train storage facility adjacent to planned high-density community west of the rail line may impose unexpected and additional requirements on future developments for noise, light, and safety mitigation works. Furthermore, the proposed location is located within the heart of the Markham Centre Secondary Plan Area. It is adjacent to existing and approved major residential and mixed-use developments and sensitive land uses, including valley lands, seniors’ residences, and the Bill Crothers Secondary School, and could pose potential health impacts to the existing and future residents and users within the downtown.

The use of the lands for the Metrolinx train storage facility does not conform to OPA 21 as the facility location contradicts the Secondary Plan vision and policies, would impede this area's emergence as a successful downtown, and is incompatible with the existing and planned surrounding land uses.

The Markham Centre Vision

A key strength of Markham Centre, an Anchor Hub and Urban Growth Centre designated by the Province in the 2008 Big Move and the Growth Plan, is the existing and planned high quality rapid transit network coupled with significant development potential. The area around the Unionville GO Station will continue to grow as a major transit hub for GO Train, GO Bus, VIVA Bus Rapid Transit, York Region Transit, and will eventually become a Mobility Hub, which not only provides a transit interface, but a major origin and destination. In the longer-term future, the 407 Transitway will integrate with this major hub and provide seamless rapid east-west cross town transit movement to connect the various radial rail corridors. The Mobility Hub area is identified for high density and high quality development as planned through the current Markham Centre Secondary Plan Study Update. To include a train storage facility in an area envisioned as a vibrant core of the City's emerging downtown would represent a lost opportunity to maximize its potential as a successful urban centre.

CONCLUSION

Based on the incompatible land use of the train storage facility within Markham Centre, Staff recommends Council advise Metrolinx that it does not support the proposed train storage facility. It is also recommended that this memo be forwarded to Metrolinx and York Region for their information.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Proposed Unionville Storage Yard Facility – City of Markham (Metrolinx Webpage)

Attachment B – Notice of Commencement Issued on September 8, 2020

GO Expansion – New Track & Facilities TPAP

Proposed Unionville Storage Yard Facility – City of Markham

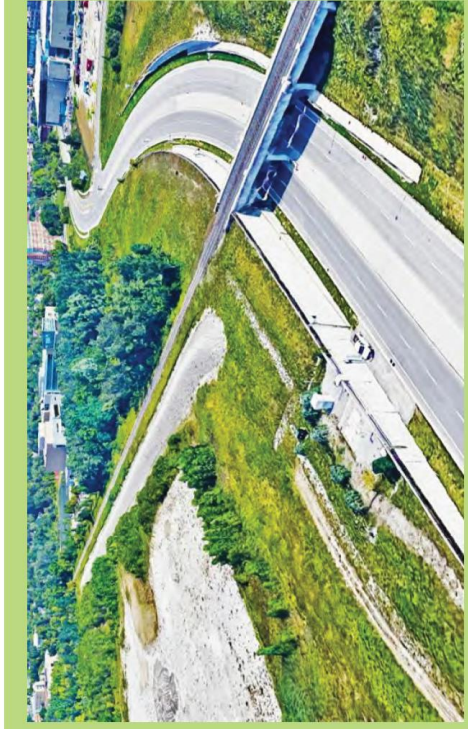


Proposed Site Plan



GO Expansion – New Track & Facilities TPAP

Proposed Unionville Storage Yard Facility - City of Markham



Existing Site



Proposed Site

Note: conceptual design subject to further study

GO Expansion – New Track & Facilities TPAP

Effects and Proposed Mitigation Measures Proposed Unionville Storage Yard Facility – City of Markham

Type of Effect	Description of Potential Effects	Proposed Mitigation Measure
Natural Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Electrification clearance zones will entail vegetation removals/clearing mainly within the existing Metrolinx owned rail corridor.• The lands identified for property acquisition and construction are comprised of vegetation dominated by non-native grasses and common urban tolerant herbaceous plants.• While vegetation communities provide foraging and nesting/shelter habitat for resident and migratory birds and common urban mammals, the proposed minor encroachments are considered to be of low impact from an ecological perspective given the position of these communities along the exiting rail corridor and the availability of similar and higher quality habitat nearby.• As no bridge modifications are included in the proposed works, no direct or long-term impacts are anticipated to the Rouge River aquatic environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tree/vegetation removals, and any associated permitting or compensation, will proceed in accordance with Metrolinx's Vegetation Management Guidelines and Tree Removal Strategy.• Measures will be implemented to avoid destruction, injury or interference with wildlife. On-site personnel will be provided with information (e.g. fact sheets) that address the existence of potential SAR on site, the identification of the SAR and the procedure(s) to follow if a protected species is encountered or injured.• Construction Monitoring Plan will be developed with site- specific mitigation measures and regularly monitored for.



GO Expansion – New Track & Facilities TPAP

Effects and Proposed Mitigation Measures Continued Proposed Unionville Storage Yard Facility – City of Markham

Type of Effect	Description of Potential Effects	Proposed Mitigation Measure
Stormwater Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increases to impervious areas, with potential effects to water quantity and quality.Potential for alterations to the local drainage system, both overland and storm sewers.Proposed construction activities pose a potential impact due to sediment transport into adjacent natural areas including watercourses, wetlands and municipal drainage infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">A Drainage and Stormwater Report, an Erosion and Sediment Control Plan and detailed drainage design and erosion and sediment control drawings will be prepared prior to construction.Requirements for stormwater quantity and quality controls will be carefully reviewed and implemented as required.A hydraulic assessment will be completed for the adjacent tributary of the Rouge River prior to construction to determine potential flooding effects and further mitigation measures.
Visual	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Visual impacts affecting existing view sheds from Bill Crothers Secondary School and recreational areas nearby	<ul style="list-style-type: none">As part of detailed design, efforts will be made to minimize visual impacts as much as possible.A Design Excellence process will be followed to integrate the new infrastructure design into the existing environment to reduce the extent of visual impacts.

Attachment B

Notice of Commencement Issued on September 8, 2020



Notice of Commencement

GO Expansion Program - Transit Project Assessment Process

The population of the Greater Golden Horseshoe is increasing, and with it, traffic and transit congestion. Metrolinx is committed to improving the GO Rail Network to bring 15-minute, two-way electrified service to core parts of the rail network through the GO Expansion Program. There are a number of Metrolinx projects currently underway or planned along several GO rail corridors that are associated with the GO Expansion Program and support Metrolinx's goal of transforming the GO Rail Network into a comprehensive regional rapid transit network. The GO Expansion Program is intended to support the planning, design and construction of new infrastructure within existing GO rail corridors and includes consideration of the need for new structures or facilities (such as grade separations and layover sites), track work and electrification systems. To this end, Metrolinx is proposing new infrastructure that involves carrying out three (3) Transit Project Assessment Processes (TPAPs) as prescribed in *Ontario Regulation 231/08, Transit Projects and Metrolinx Undertakings* (Transit Projects Regulation).

The TPAPs

Metrolinx has identified various infrastructure requirements to achieve GO Expansion service level targets across the GO Rail Network. Proposed infrastructure includes new/upgraded tracks, new layover and storage facilities, grade separations, pedestrian crossings, and new switches. The infrastructure requirements are being planned as three separate transit TPAPs and are described below:

New Track & Facilities TPAP:

To support GO Expansion and increased service along the Lakeshore West, Kitchener, Barrie, Stouffville, Lakeshore East, and Richmond Hill corridors, the following rail infrastructure is proposed (see Figure 1):

- Four (4) new rail layover/storage facilities needed to facilitate train storage and maintenance:
 - Don Valley Layover Facility, in the City of Toronto;
 - Unionville Storage Yard, in the City of Markham;
 - Walkers Line Layover Facility, in the City of Burlington; and
 - Beach Layover Facility, in the City of Burlington.
- Three (3) new GO Station platforms at:
 - Oshawa GO Station;
 - Mount Joy GO Station; and
 - Unionville GO Station.
- Thickson Road bridge expansion, in the Town of Whitby;
- Electrification of a portion of the Richmond Hill rail corridor (along Bala Subdivision, north to Pottery Road), in the City of Toronto;
- New or upgraded tracks; and
- New switches along six (6) rail corridors (not shown on key map):
 - 60 proposed switches Lakeshore West Corridor
 - 21 proposed switches Kitchener Corridor
 - 32 proposed switches Barrie Corridor
 - 3 proposed switches Richmond Hill Corridor
 - 10 proposed switches Stouffville Corridor
 - 23 proposed switches Lakeshore East Corridor
 - Detailed mapping of proposed switch locations is available on the website.

For additional information on New Track and Facilities, please visit:
[Metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/NewTracks&Facilities](https://metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/NewTracks&Facilities)

Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations TPAP:

To support GO Expansion and increased service along the Stouffville Corridor, the following modifications are proposed (see Figure 2):

- Road-rail grade separations at Denison Street and Kennedy Road in the City of Markham;

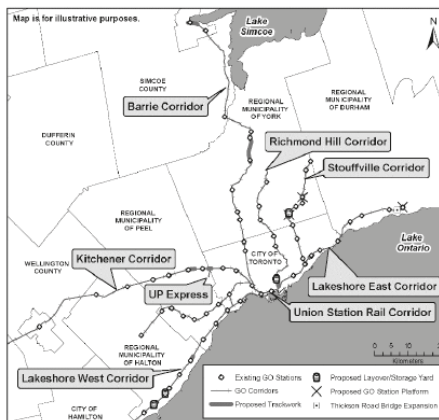


FIGURE 1 NEW TRACK & FACILITIES TPAP KEY MAP

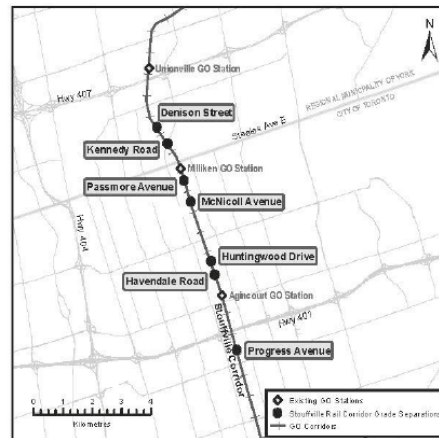


FIGURE 2 STOUFFVILLE RAIL CORRIDOR GRADE SEPARATIONS TPAP KEY MAP

- Road-rail grade separations at Passmore Avenue, McNicoll Avenue, Huntingwood Drive and Progress Avenue in the City of Toronto; and
- Road closure with a grade-separated multi-use crossing at Havendale Road in the City of Toronto.

For additional information on Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations, please visit:

[Metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/StouffvilleRailCorridor](https://metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/StouffvilleRailCorridor)

Scarborough Junction Grade Separation TPAP:

To support GO Expansion and increased service along the Stouffville and Lakeshore East Corridors, a new rail-rail grade separation is proposed at Scarborough Junction in the City of Toronto. Supporting modifications include (see Figure 3):

- New rail-rail separation through a tunnel traveling under the Lakeshore East (LSE) Rail Corridor to accommodate the new second track on the Stouffville Rail Corridor;
- Modification or relocation of the Scarborough GO Station building;
- Expanded rail bridge at St. Clair Avenue East;
- Layover area for train storage (Midland Layover);
- Depressed rail under road grade separation at Danforth Road;
- Depressed rail corridor from St. Clair Avenue East Bridge to Corvette Park; and
- Multi-use crossing to replace the existing at-grade crossing at Corvette Park.

For additional information on Scarborough Junction Grade Separation, please visit:

[Metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/ScarboroughJunction](https://metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/ScarboroughJunction)

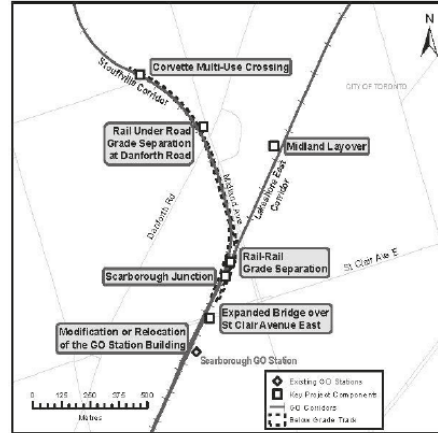


FIGURE 3 SCARBOROUGH JUNCTION GRADE SEPARATION TPAP KEY MAP

The Process

A Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) is a focused impact assessment created specifically for transit projects. The process involves a pre-planning/consultation phase followed by a regulated up to 120-day phase that starts with the Notice of Commencement and ends with the Notice of Completion. The process includes consultation, an assessment of positive and negative impacts, an assessment of measures to mitigate negative impacts and documentation in an Environmental Project Report (EPR). The EPR is made available for a 30 day public and agency review at the Notice of Completion and is followed by a 35-day Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks review.

Consultation

We thank everyone for their feedback to date. Two public open houses have already been held during the pre-planning phase of these TPAPs, including public meetings in February 2020 and a virtual open house in August 2020. As Metrolinx formally commences the three (3) TPAPs, we will continue to get your feedback through a third public virtual open house to be held in the Fall of 2020. To stay informed please visit:

[Metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/oncorridor](https://metrolinxengage.com/goexpansion/oncorridor)

We encourage the public, government agencies, Indigenous communities and other interested parties to actively participate in the TPAPs by visiting the TPAP websites outlined above or contact Metrolinx directly with comments or questions (as outlined below).

Provide Feedback

If you would like to be added to our regional mailing list, submit a comment or question, or receive additional information related to the TPAPs, please call 416-202-0888 or contact the regional address relevant to where your area of interest is located: TorontoEast@metrolinx.com (East of Don River); TorontoWest@metrolinx.com (West of Don River); HaltonRegion@metrolinx.com; DurhamRegion@metrolinx.com; YorkRegion@metrolinx.com; Peel@metrolinx.com; or SimcoeCounty@metrolinx.com.

Comments and information regarding this project are being collected to assist in meeting the requirements of the *Environmental Assessment Act*. All personal information included in a submission - such as name, address, telephone number and property location - is collected, maintained and disclosed by the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for the purpose of transparency and consultation. The information is collected under the authority of the *Environmental Assessment Act* or is collected and maintained for the purpose of creating a record that is available to the general public as described in s. 37 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Personal information you submit will become part of a public record that is available to the general public unless you request that your personal information remain confidential. For more information, please contact the Senior Privacy Officer for Metrolinx at 416-202-5941 or the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Freedom of Information and Privacy Coordinator at 416-314-4075.

Metrolinx is working to provide residents and businesses in the Greater Golden Horseshoe with a transportation system that is modern, efficient and integrated. Find out more about Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan at www.metrolinx.com.

Pour plus de renseignements, veuillez composer le 416 874-5900 ou le 1 888 GET-ON-GO (438-6646).

This Notice was first issued on September 8, 2020.