



Report to: Development Services Committee

Meeting Date: January 29, 2018

SUBJECT: Re-routing of Rail Freight Traffic - Missing Rail Link Update

PREPARED BY: Loy Cheah, Senior Manager, Transportation, x 4838

REVIEWED BY: Brian Lee, Director, Engineering, x 7507

RECOMMENDATION:

- 1) That the staff report entitled “Re-routing of Rail Freight Traffic - Missing Rail Link Update” dated January 29, 2018 be received;
- 2) Metrolinx be advised that the City strongly objects to the Missing Rail Link proposal;
- 3) Metrolinx be requested to consult with York Region, the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill as part of their Freight By-Pass environmental assessment study;
- 4) That the Prime Minister, the Premier, Federal and Provincial Transportation Ministers, Metrolinx, York Region, City of Vaughan and Town of Richmond Hill be so advised;
- 5) That Staff be authorized and directed to do all things necessary to give effect to this resolution.

PURPOSE:

At the December 5, 2017 Development Services Committee meeting, staff was directed to “report back on the “missing link” for further discussions and prepare a motion for Council, reiterating the City of Markham’s position regarding the transport of dangerous goods.” This report addresses this direction from Council and provides an update on recent developments regarding the planning of this rail link.

BACKGROUND:

A March 2016 staff memorandum informed Council of the “Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link”, a study jointly commissioned by the Cities of Cambridge, Mississauga, Toronto and the Town of Milton.

Figure 1 shows the current rail network in the Greater Toronto Hamilton area (GTHA). The “Missing Rail Link” proposal consists of eight rail improvement components that would establish a new east-west rail network link starting from the CP Galt subdivision in Milton and running alongside the CN Halton and CN York subdivisions that traverses through the southern part of York Region and the City of Markham (see Figure 2). One of the objectives of this new rail link is to facilitate Metrolinx’s plan to separate through freight traffic flows from passenger services on the Milton and Kitchener GO lines. For

example, 19 km of the rail tracks on the Kitchener GO service is owned by CN and almost the entire length of the rail tracks used by the Milton GO service is owned by CP. These segments of tracks are therefore also used for freight services operated by CN and CP respectively.

The Feasibility Study identified that the Missing Rail Link will benefit Metrolinx and the railway companies (CN and CP) in different ways. For Metrolinx, the benefits include:

- Providing an easier path forward for Metrolinx to increase GO train service frequency and implement Regional Express Rail services on the Kitchener and Milton GO lines;
- Operating cost savings on the Kitchener and Milton GO lines;
- Making it feasible for a less circuitous routing and service improvement of the Richmond Hill GO line; and
- Making it feasible to introduce new GO rail services identified in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan including services to Bolton and the mid-town Toronto area on the existing CP North Toronto-Belleville line.

For the railway companies (CN and CP), the benefits include:

- Removing heavy through freight flows from the central areas of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Georgetown and their associated dangerous goods movement risks and nuisance impacts;
- Reduced operating costs through reduced train mileage, removal of interference between freight and passenger trains, removal of passenger train impact on track design and maintenance; and
- Opportunities to make better, cooperative use of their combined networks.

While the Feasibility Study enumerated the key benefits of the Missing Rail Link including removing through freight traffic from the central areas of Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton and Georgetown, it did not identify or analyse the transfer of negative impacts or risks to affected communities impacted by the rerouting of the same through freight traffic through York Region and the City of Markham.

OPTIONS/ DISCUSSION:

Joint Brief with York Region, Richmond Hill and Vaughan

As a result of the Feasibility Study, Markham staff worked with York Region, City of Vaughan and Town of Richmond Hill staff to prepare a brief, *Potential Increase of Freight Rail Traffic in York Region (May 2017)*, that summarized the collective concerns and objections of the four municipalities to the Missing Rail Link proposal.

As noted in the joint brief, the Missing Rail Link proposal will create a new rail corridor that:

- Can potentially double the amount of dangerous and hazardous goods transported through York Region (and therefore, the City of Markham);
- Is within two kilometres of the three provincially designated Urban Growth Centres of Markham Centre, Richmond Hill/Langstaff Gateway Centre and Vaughan Metropolitan Centre; and

-
- Will, within a two kilometre radius of the corridor, traverse through the most populated area of York Region that accommodates 558,000 residents and workers today and planned for 714,000 residents and workers by 2041.

The joint brief recommends that:

- The Province acknowledge that the rerouting of freight rail traffic through York Region (as depicted in Figure 2 below) is strongly opposed by the Councils of The Regional Municipality of York, the Cities of Markham and Vaughan;
- The Province consider other rail and non-rail options which do not increase the movement of dangerous goods through York Region; and
- The Province direct Metrolinx to undertake consultation with York Region, the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill before proceeding with additional detailed studies relating to the proposed rerouting of a freight rail.

York Region communicated the joint brief to the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx and Transport Canada in September 2017 and presented this brief to York Region Council through an information memorandum in October 2017 (Attachment 1 contains an extract of the York Region memorandum). Town of Richmond Hill staff has also presented this joint brief to their Council in October 2017 where the recommendations of the joint brief were [adopted](#).

Recent Metrolinx Actions

A news release from the Province on June 14, 2016 announced that “*the Province has secured an agreement-in-principle with CN that will allow GO Regional Express Rail to be built along the Kitchener GO corridor.*”

Related to that agreement, Metrolinx has initiated the Freight By-Pass environmental assessment study to define a new 30 km rail link from Milton to Bramalea (see Figure 3). As shown in Figure 2, the Metrolinx Freight By-Pass project, once constructed, appears to represent component #5 of the overall missing rail link proposal. Based on the knowledge of an agreement-in-principle between the Province and CN to allow GO Regional Express Rail to be built along the Kitchener GO corridor, it could be surmised that as a likely outcome, this new rail network connection will allow CN freight trains to be diverted from the section of CN Halton subdivision previously shared with the Kitchener GO line. With this change, the entire length of railway track that carries the Kitchener GO service could be dedicated to passenger service only, thus freeing it from interference from freight services and CN operational and maintenance requirements.

Staff is of the opinion that this Metrolinx Freight By-Pass project is a key component of the overall Missing Rail Link proposal as it is the only component that is currently not already part of an existing rail corridor.

Public statements by Metrolinx staff at a Region of Waterloo Council presentation in September 2017 indicate that Metrolinx is pursuing an aggressive schedule to implement this new rail link in or less than seven years.

Beyond the Metrolinx Freight By-Pass project, further rail network improvements (components 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 in Figure 2) will be needed to reach the full potential of this overall Missing Rail Link proposal. At that point, CP rail freight service could be diverted onto the new rail corridor initiated by Metrolinx, bypassing the central areas of the City of Toronto and City of Mississauga but instead running through the southern part of York Region and the City of Markham.

Conclusion and Next Steps

As noted above, Council received a memorandum in March 2016 on this issue and resolved, in part:

“That Metrolinx be advised that rerouting of freight rail traffic through the City of Markham is not supported by Markham Council; and

That the City of Markham strongly objects to the addition of rerouted freight traffic through our community, and further, that the Prime Minister, the Premier, Federal and Provincial Transportation Ministers, local MPs and MPPs, Region of York, the Cities of Cambridge, Mississauga, Toronto and Vaughan, the Towns of Milton and Richmond Hill, Metrolinx, CN Rail and CP Rail, be so advised.”

With the steps taken by the Province and Metrolinx, staff is concerned that the Missing Rail Link proposal is still moving forward. Therefore, staff recommends that Council reiterate the City’s strong objections to the Missing Rail Link proposal and future increases in freight traffic and transport of dangerous and hazardous goods through the City of Markham, and further request that Metrolinx consult with the affected municipalities in York Region as part of their Freight By-Pass EA.

In the meantime, staff will continue to monitor the progress of the Metrolinx Freight By-Pass EA project and any public information on further improvements to the rail network in the GTHA that could lead to the completion of the rest of the Missing Rail Link proposal.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

HUMAN RESOURCES CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

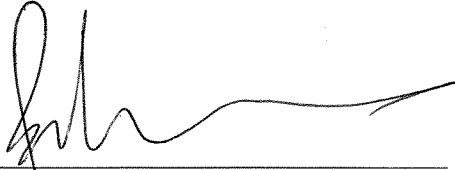
ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The Missing Rail Link proposal could have long term implications on all aspects of life for those living or working within the area of influence of the CN York rail subdivision. Therefore, it is of strategic importance to the City in terms of public safety, the environment and growth management.

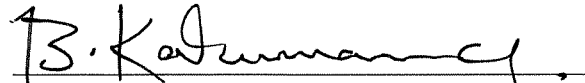
BUSINESS UNITS CONSULTED AND AFFECTED:

Not applicable.

RECOMMENDED BY:



Brian Lee, P. Eng.
Director of Engineering

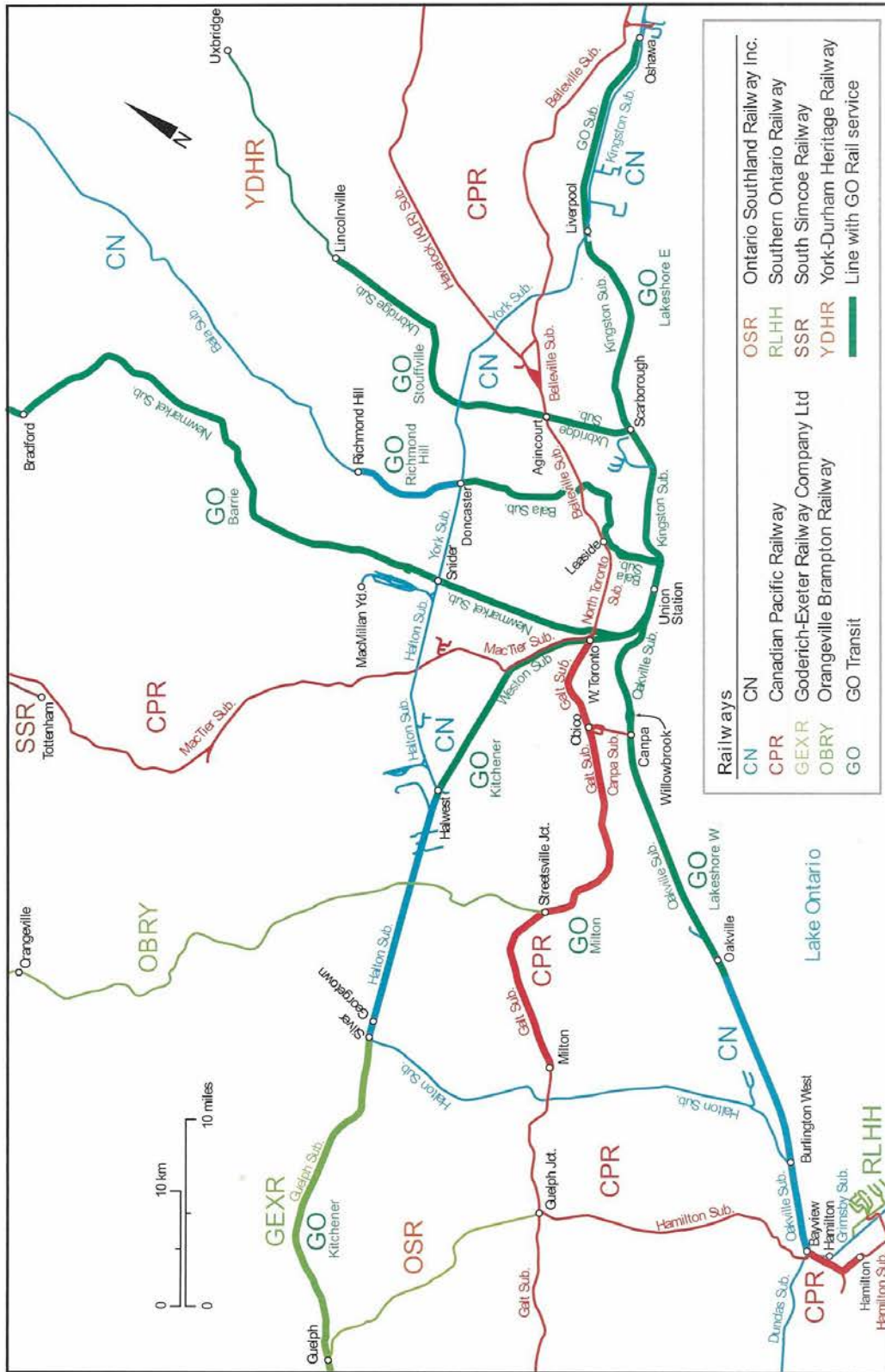


Biju Karumanchery
Acting Commissioner, Development Services

ATTACHMENT:

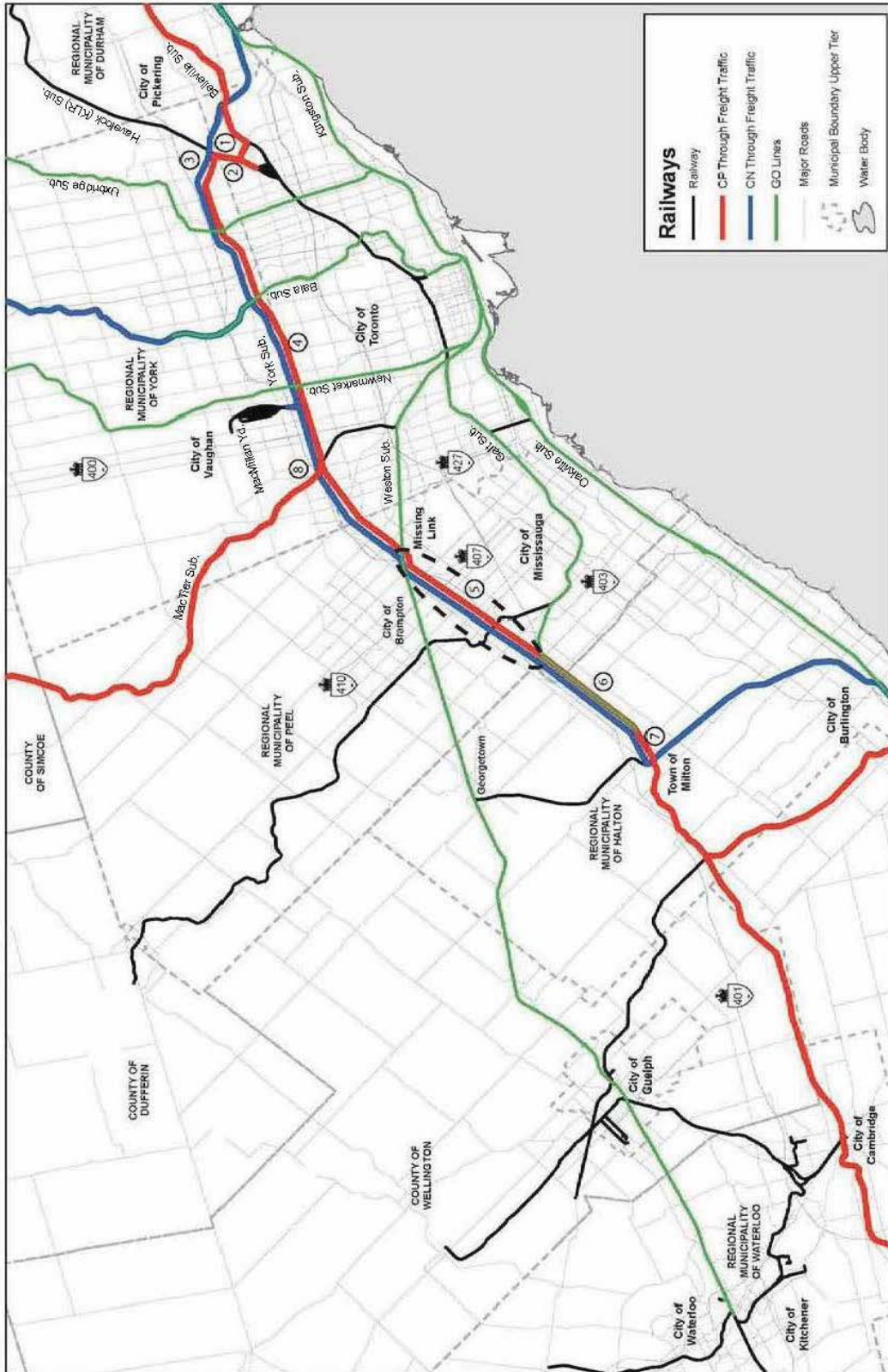
1 – Excerpt of York Region memorandum

Figure 1: Current Rail Network and Ownership



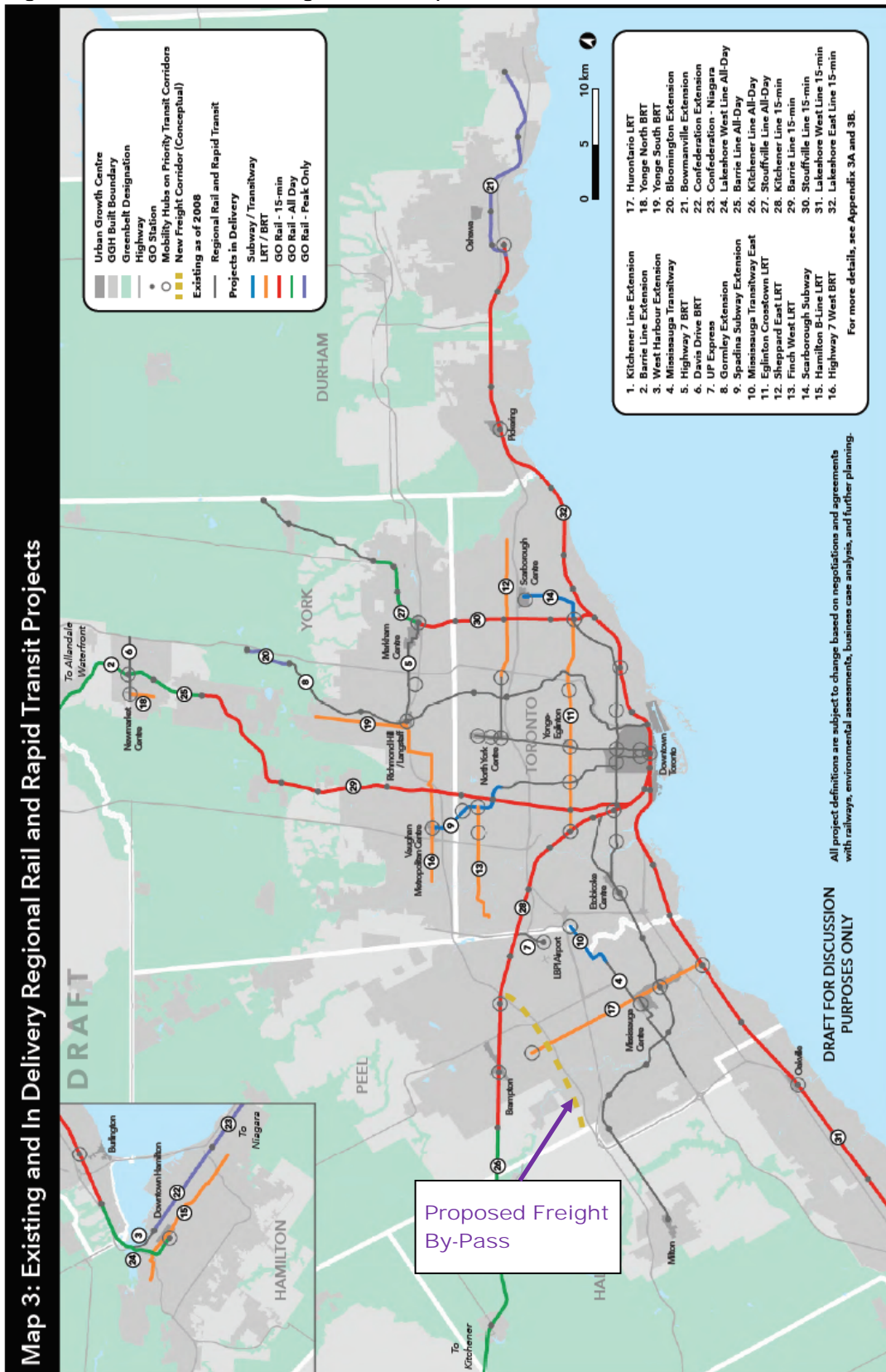
Source: Railway Association of Canada, 2012

Figure 2: Proposed Missing Rail Link Components



Source: Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing Link, IBI Group, August 2015

Figure 3: Metrolinx Draft Regional Transportation Plan



Source: Metrolinx Draft Regional Transportation Plan, 2017

Attachment 1

Excerpt of York Region Memo

Office of the Commissioner
Transportation Services**Memorandum**

To: Regional Chair and Members of Council

From: Paul Jankowski, Commissioner

Date: September 22, 2017

Re: **Proposed Rerouting of Greater Toronto Rail Network**

Background

In 2016, Council was updated on a report titled *Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing [Rail] Link* (Feasibility Study). The Feasibility Study was commissioned by the City of Mississauga, in partnership with the Cities of Toronto, Cambridge and the Town of Milton in August 2015.

Council recommendations on the Feasibility Study are documented in the minutes from the [January 21, 2016](#) and [April 21, 2016](#) Council meetings. Council had strong concerns regarding potential increases of hazardous freight rail traffic through the Region.

As part of the recommendations from April 2016, Committee of the Whole directed Regional staff to work in conjunction with staff at the Cities of Markham and Vaughan and the Town of Richmond Hill, to prepare a brief for the Federal and Provincial Ministries and Metrolinx.

The brief was completed in collaboration with Regional and local municipal staff and includes:

1. Background on the Feasibility Study
2. Regional and local Council resolutions that do not support the rerouting of freight rail traffic
3. An overview on:
 - a) Potential impact to York Region
 - b) Emergency management and preparedness
 - c) Requirements of the Transport Canada Act

Proposed Rerouting of Greater Toronto Rail Network

Actions Taken

The attached brief and covering letter were forwarded to the federal Ministry of Transport, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx in September 2017. Digital copies of the brief have also been distributed to local municipal staff for their use.

Next Steps

Staff will continue to track this issue with Metrolinx and report to Council on any actions that may increase freight rail traffic through the Region.

Paul Jankowski, Commissioner

PJ/mh

Attachments (2)

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**Attachment 1**

Transportation Services

September 22, 2017

Stephen Rhodes
Deputy Minister of Transportation
Queen's Park: Minister's Office
77 Wellesley Street West
Ferguson Block Third Floor
Toronto ON M7A 1Z8

Dear Deputy Minister:

Re: Proposed Rerouting of Greater Toronto Freight Rail Network

The letter reiterates the strong concerns of York Region Council with respect to potential increases to Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) freight rail traffic through the Regional Municipality of York.

York Region Council passed resolutions on January 21, 2016 and April 21, 2016 advising that the rerouting of CPR freight rail traffic through York Region is not supported by York Region Council. Copies of these resolutions are attached and were circulated in April 2016 to the Prime Minister, the Premier, Federal and Provincial Ministries of Transport, Local MP's and MPP's, and the cities of Markham, Vaughan, Cambridge, Mississauga, Toronto and Towns of Richmond Hill and Milton, Metrolinx, CN Rail and CP Rail.

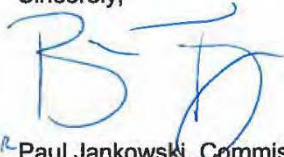
To assist in consultation and discussions with all levels of government, Council further directed Regional staff to work in conjunction with the City of Markham, City of Vaughan and Town of Richmond Hill to prepare a brief for the Federal and Provincial Ministries and Metrolinx. A copy of this brief is included with this letter for your review.

York Region continues to support multi-modal investments in both transit and highway infrastructure across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. It is important that continued communication and coordination between all municipalities and levels of government be achieved to ensure that local, regional, provincial and federal objectives are understood for all capital projects.

York Region requests that the Regional Municipality of York and the cities of Markham and Vaughan, and the Town of Richmond Hill be consulted on any initiatives that may significantly impact the movement of rail freight through our municipalities.

York Region and its local municipalities look forward to our ongoing partnership and collaboration in the development of the Greater Toronto Area transit, road, and freight and passenger rail networks, and are available to meet with your staff.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'P. Jankowski', written over a faint background.

for Paul Jankowski, Commissioner
Transportation Services

Attachment (1)



Transportation Services

September 22, 2017

Leslie Woo
Chief Planning Officer
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto ON M5J 1E6

Dear Ms. Woo:

Re: Proposed Rerouting of Greater Toronto Freight Rail Network

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Sincerely,


For Paul Jankowski, Commissioner
Transportation Services

Attachment (1)



Transportation Services

September 22, 2017

Brian Jeans
Regional Director
Transport Canada
4900 Yonge Street
North York ON M2N 6A5

Dear Mr. Jeans:

Re: Proposed Rerouting of Greater Toronto Freight Rail Network

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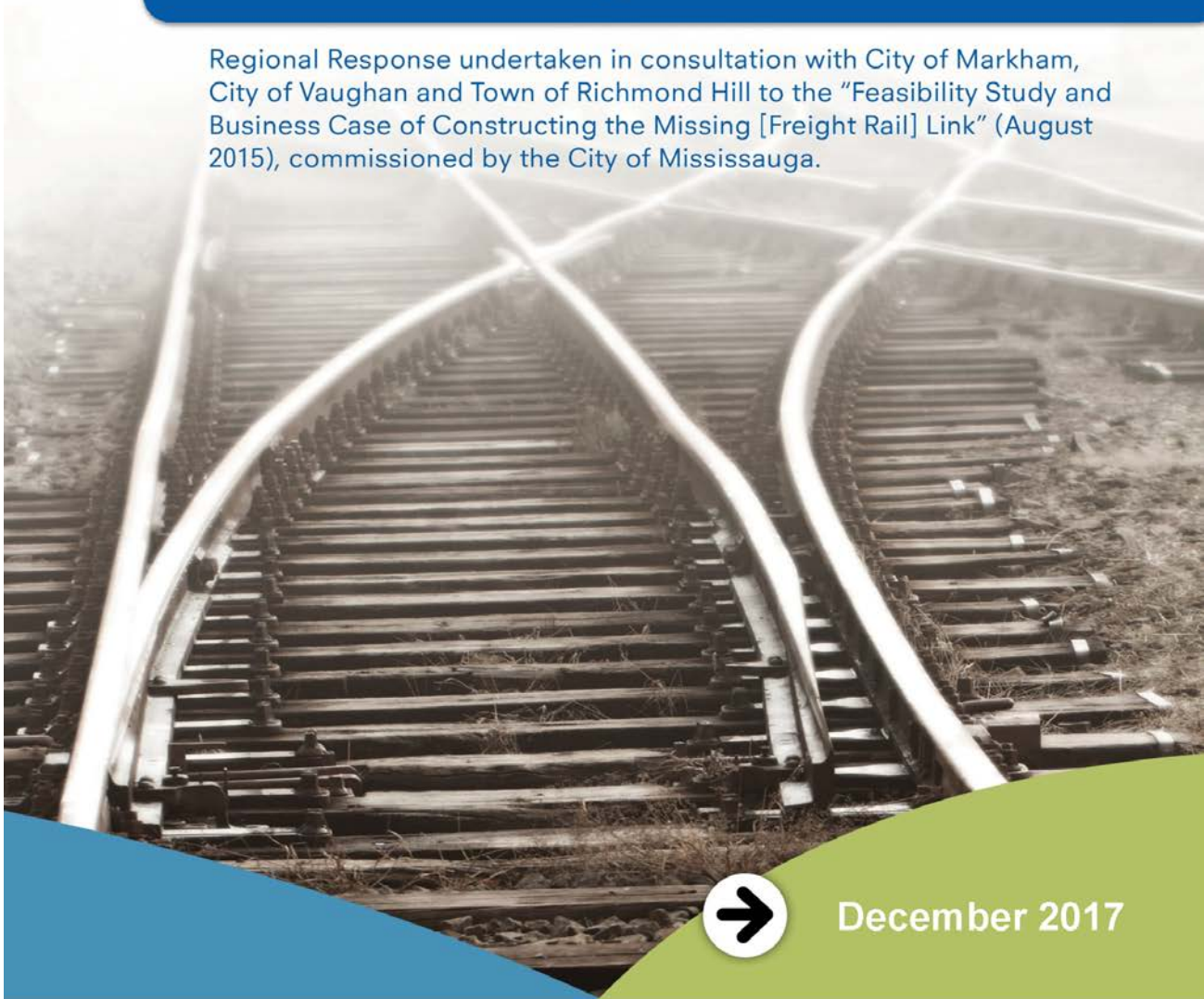

For Paul Jankowski, Commissioner
Transportation Services

Attachment (1)

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Potential Increase of Freight Rail Traffic in York Region

Regional Response undertaken in consultation with City of Markham, City of Vaughan and Town of Richmond Hill to the "Feasibility Study and Business Case of Constructing the Missing [Freight Rail] Link" (August 2015), commissioned by the City of Mississauga.



December 2017



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THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK