

April 26, 2016

Open Letter to Metrolinx Regarding the Davenport Diamond Grade Separation Project

We the undersigned community organizations have been working to advocate on the issues and concerns that many area residents have outlined regarding the Davenport Diamond Grade Separation project. To be clear, our community recognizes and supports the expansion of public transit across Toronto and the GTA to create a stronger region.

However, when this project was announced, we feel that our community was robbed of the opportunity to consider the risks, benefits, and opportunities between a bridge, tunnel, or trench. We have recently met with the City to discuss this project and we have come to the conclusion that we share many of the same issues and concerns including but not limited to:

A Comprehensive Vision: There is a need to create a comprehensive vision for this project which mitigates impacts and improves the local community by establishing a single plan with a separate dedicated budget for public realm improvements. This plan must also take into account Metrolinx's intermodal mandate throughout the project. We also believe that an overarching vision would be best accomplished by conducting an international design competition.

Noise and Vibration: We have serious concerns with the level of noise and vibration that this project will bring to our community and are not satisfied with the lack of detail contained within current studies. While electric trains may be considered quieter, there is no certainty when electrification would take place – resulting in an increased amount of diesel trains travelling through our community. It is our understanding that the City has also outlined a list of concerns that needs to be addressed.

Safety: We also have major safety concerns related to this project and feel that Metrolinx has not been able to explain why an overpass is safer in comparison to the other options considered. The risks of derailments and related crash wall issues have not yet been addressed in a satisfactory manner for us and the City. We also need to think of safety as it pertains to the greenway and how animating the various sections will make it safer.

Multimodal Station: The creation of a multimodal station on the Barrie Line at Bloor St is necessary to provide greater transit access for the community and better connections to the existing TTC network, in accordance with Toronto's Official Plan. Such a station must also protect for a southward multi-use trail connection to the West Toronto Railpath.

Cycling/Walking Connections: The community has established a set of requirements that cycling/walking connections should be established to not only the West Toronto Railpath at Dundas St W at the south end, but also to the Green Line and an elevated connection to EarlsCourt Park at the north end, and other connections to east-west cycling/pedestrian networks throughout.

Dupont Street: There are serious community concerns where the proposed overpass meets Dupont St, including the proximity of existing and future buildings to the overpass, presenting serious questions about what would happen if a derailment were to take place and other noise/vibration impacts on buildings. We also have concerns about the "bridge on bridge" concept at this location and feel that a redesigned pedestrian and cycling bridge would be more appropriate.

Greenway and Parks: A long-term maintenance plan needs to be developed in conjunction with the City and community regarding the proposed greenway and more work needs to be done to ensure that the community's wants and needs are incorporated in the overall design and how the greenway interacts with parks along the route.

The current proposed plans fall short of implementing a city building project that truly benefits all communities along the corridor. As the community groups who have been engaged throughout this process, we strongly feel that these are major issues that must be addressed and we are hoping that Metrolinx staff will be able to provide answers at the April 27, 2016 public meeting.

Sincerely,

Bloordale BIA
Bloordale CIA
Bloor Improvement Group (BIG)
Davenport Village Community Association
DIGIN
Friends of the West Toronto Railpath
Junction Triangle Rail Committee
Options for Davenport