



Agincourt Village Community Association

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Re: Provincial Budget Sub-Committee Meeting on Monday, January 29, 2024

As a 47-year resident of Scarborough and the President of the Agincourt Village Community Association - since 1986 I have heard about, attended Sheppard Subway meetings, attended Sheppard LRT meetings, listened to Election promises of a Sheppard Subway, been hopeful that there were plans and funding for a Sheppard LRT, been disappointed that the Sheppard LRT was cancelled, and now attend Metrolinx meetings to discuss a Business Case for the Sheppard Subway Extension. Wow! How much longer will Scarborough residents wait for much need public transit on Sheppard Avenue?

As I am sure that you have heard from others, Scarborough is vastly underserved in many ways by government, but today I am going to focus on the need for the Sheppard Subway Extension.

After decades of stops, starts, broken promises and lots of talk by your predecessors at City Hall and Queen's Park, the Ford Government recently directed Metrolinx to initiate the business case analyses required to extend the Sheppard subway. We welcome this effort, but stress that it needs to be fast-tracked without further delay and provided with a funding plan for the years of pre-construction work that needs to get done. We would like to see that line-item start appearing with the 2024 Budget so we all know that it is real.

I am confident that your government will stand by the commitments made during the elections of 2018 and 2022 to advance this project, but based on past history, I am rightfully paranoid that some future government won't follow through, or that other transit priorities might leapfrog to the front of the line. Sheppard was promised long before anyone ever contemplated extending the subway to suburban Vaughan or Richmond Hill. We have been overlooked many times before and implore you to make sure that can't happen again – we are very tired of being a political football.

Residents in this part of the city have long been severely underserved and desperate for an alternative to driving in gridlock or suffering long lousy bus rides on increasingly congested roads for a half hour or 45 minutes just to get to a higher order transit station. Commuting by any means in Scarborough and parts of North York is punishing and only getting worse.

Extending Sheppard will generate significant returns from investments already made on Sheppard and more recently in the upgrades being made to several north south transit corridors that need an east-west connection in the northern half of the city. I am referring to the Spadina Subway and Barrie GO Lines at Downsview, the Richmond Hill GO Line at Leslie, the Stouffville GO Line at Agincourt and the Scarborough Subway Extension at McCowan. The Sheppard extension has the potential to capture massive new ridership numbers because it will facilitate a network that can take people to multiple destinations and make transit an attractive option instead of the dreaded option it is today.

The rapidly increasing density of the Sheppard corridor is critical to addressing the desperate need for new homes and your government's housing objectives. New condo and apartment buildings are springing up all along Sheppard and several large mixed-use developments have emerged at the existing stations and tens of thousands of new units are approved or in the pipeline at future station locations— from Downsview to McCowan. These new residential communities and businesses require significantly better transit connections if they are to actually get built, be livable and productively contribute to sustainable growth in this large swath of the city.

For example, if you draw an 800m radius around the 5 likely station locations east of Don Mills, the 2021 population at those 5 intersections average 11,561. If you add in the number of units under construction and in the current development pipeline, that average jumps to over 18,000 at each node. If you look at the population at each of the 5 existing locations and add in two more for the westerly extension, there is an average of 15,000 people living within 800m of those intersections and that number climbs to over 20,000 if you add in units under construction and in the pipeline.

Those numbers are happening without any firm commitment to a subway – just imagine those areas if the subway does not get built? If we want to intensify and build more housing in the city – more higher-order transit is absolutely necessary.

The growth along Sheppard is already happening. The extension of the Sheppard Subway is already decades long overdue – please be the government that makes sure that this project finally happens.

Rhoda Potter
President Agincourt Village Community Association
Member Scarborough United Neighbourhoods