

April 9, 2013
Committee of the Whole

Item 15.

**CONCORD GO CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN
DIRECTION TO PROCEED WITH STUDY AREA EXPANSION AND
ADDITIONAL FUNDING FILE 26.3 WARDS 4 & 5**

Concord West Ratepayers Association: Deputation by Dr. Paulo Correa

Dr. Paulo Correa: Good afternoon, Members of Council, Mayor Bevilacqua and Chair. I would like to address Item Number 15. First, I would like to express my thanks. I understand your commitment to excellence, and I think you have been doing a very good job on this matter. So, I would like to encourage you to continue. I think without your political direction, this issue would long ago have floundered. But, even though I think all of us - certainly in our community, the association that I represent, the Concord West Ratepayers Association (I'm sorry, I didn't say my name, I'm Dr. Paulo Correa, and I represent the CWRA, the Concord West Ratepayers Association, as a Director) - are extremely gratified to see that you have widened the Study Area, and that you are considering placing the hub on the north side of [Highway] Number 7, as well as that you see one powerful argument for this which we have made years ago to Minister Wilkinson, the Minister of the Environment at the time, that this would provide a better connection to buses and the YRT routes, I do however, want to bring out a couple of problems that are not being considered by the private planner in here, and which you should be aware of, because this can torpedo the articulation or the consistency of the plan that you're trying to develop.

But before I mention these problems, I would like to emphasize what Councillor Shulte mentioned last time when she was acting as Chair. What she suggested, and I believe, actually, all of you unanimously agreed, we would like to see the private planner putting up the results of the last public meeting [the Public Meeting of January 30], where four out of five tables very clearly voted for location of the hub on the north side. This was attended by a lot of the public and I think it was extraordinary for most public meetings that you have. All of you asked, and Councillor Shulte at the time asked, that this would be put up by the private planner [the Planning Alliance, on their website] – and this has not happened. In contrast with the first meeting - you know, there were even comments written on napkins that made it up to the [projection] slides. I think it would have been important for you to have seen those four alternatives, and how people voted and the comments that they made. And, in fact, since that was asked of the private planner, that should have happened already on their website.

Aside from that, I would like to point out the following problems that you have right now. First of all there's an issue, which we discussed at the last Committee meeting: Metrolinx; in fact, Metrolinx sent a statement about three weeks ago* [see note at end of document] to our Secretary saying, at the time - that they had no plans to widen or place a second track. Well, just recently [March 27, 2013] - and I'll put this up [on the projection screen] so you can see - there's a notification of a project by Metrolinx saying that since November... Oh, our man

[the projector operator] is not there... saying that since November of 2012, they've actually been considering such an enlargement. Could we get someone [to turn on the overhead projector]...? I mean, I don't know if you've seen this notice – but since it was discussed, and I even sent a note to Councillor Racco saying that they have told us "no – they have no plans" – suddenly, they have plans for the enlargement of the tracks. It's a terrible map, but you can see that it goes from Steeles to just a little north of Langstaff. Now, I figure that's about 15 to 17 kilometers. I don't see why they need a track that long for a double track and, if you permit me, you can see in there it covers precisely the zone on the back of our neighbourhood. Now, I want to stress, this is the only residential zone in this entire area that is affected by this move of Metrolinx, and it certainly was sprung on us out of the blue. I don't see how else you can deal with this, other than to direct the private planner to actually work with Metrolinx and make sure that this double tracking only starts *north* of Highway 7. Otherwise, all the struggles we have had to protect the greenspace - as well as the park system associated with it – will be lost. I mean we will have been just wasting our time in these conversations in here. So, if you want complete and consistent planning, you have to address this question. I understand Metrolinx has a lot of powers, they work a lot like Robert Moses used to work in New York City. We all know how that ended – with Jane Jacobs and the communities fighting against him. Even though Metrolinx has a lot of power, I think you also do – even as the private planners state - you know, ultimately, it may not be your decision, but it's important - and you have voted unanimously on all of these matters so far - it's important that you direct this planner to consider this *and to have that track terminate, at the very least, north of Highway 7*. I'm sorry to be taking up your time, and I'm asking the Chair to just be a bit kind, I've been here for three hours without working, putting up with a good deal of discussions that are not particularly relevant to me, but, I would like to say the next thing. It was very important to see, in particular, in Paragraphs 3 and 4 –

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: Uh, sir, I will ask you to wrap up in the next thirty seconds.

Dr. Paulo Correa: Three seconds?

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: Thirty. Three zero.

Dr. Paulo Correa: ...to see that locations [of the hub] to the north are being considered. I also see the location across Highway 7 is being considered. Well, our community has sent two letters over the past two years to the Region of York regarding the request to stop the advance of the HOVs in center lanes at Keele Street. The reason is because the alignment on Number 7 passing through that tunnel and through the region of interest and concern here - especially now that you have widened it – just may not be the final alignment and in fact, most likely is *not* the desirable alignment. Now this depends on the Region and not on you, but we have the Mayor and Councillors –

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: I am going to ask you to wrap up now. You're now at 6:42, we only allow 5 minutes, so we've been quite generous with the time. So, if you could just conclude now, that would be appropriate, please.

Dr. Paulo Correa: Well, the conclusion is simple. There are other problems that are affected to this study and right now are not being considered.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: One second. Councillor Di Biase.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: With your indulgence, Mr. Chairman, I'll move an extension of time.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: That's fine, you don't have to move it. OK. You have one more minute sir. One more minute.

Dr. Paulo Correa: All right. So, it's very important, as I'm saying that you consider the problem of this alignment [of Highway 7 to the east of Keele Street]. And our association would like to see an answer with respect to that problem. And you should include that as part of your study. Because it's not possible to make a study and to have already decided on an alignment for Number 7 that matches and comes to meet this zone without that alignment being the alignment throughout the entire structure of the Concord GO and the area that you have now considered. So the last point that I would like to make is that this matter must be resolved before this Council goes back to elections. This Council has done a very good job but we would like to see this Council *not* defer this. So, I'll finish there. If you have any questions – please –

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: OK. Thank you very much. Appreciate that. Are there any questions for the deputant? Councillor Di Biase.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Just to follow up, I just wanted to ask, through you, Mr. Chairman, to our Commissioner, Mr. MacKenzie; in fact, I do remember our colleague Councillor Shulte did mention about the 4 Options that were submitted... have we dealt – have you considered them? Just so that we can get that information...

Commissioner of Planning John MacKenzie: Thank you. Through the Chair: We have been looking at the 4 Options and they are the subject of continued dialogue/discussion with Metrolinx, and our experts are looking at them and conducting further work. And part of the justification for this, and this was Committee directed as well, there was a lot of input and issues received in terms of looking at the scope of the study area and so, we've responded to that, in part, through this report. And so, we have been examining those 4 Options that came out of those public consultations.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: OK. Now, has there been discussion with the residents in the area? Has there been discussions, dialogue with the residents in the area?

Commissioner of Planning John MacKenzie: Through the Chair: There's been a great deal of discussion. There is a working group that the Concord West Ratepayers are represented on, and the discussion on the options on the EA, the discussion of the options that have arisen through our public discussion hearings, those have all been discussed in those consultations.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: OK. And lastly, did some of the requests that have been made right now – will you be looking at them? Will you be considering them?

Commissioner of Planning John MacKenzie: Through the Chair: It may be helpful to have a bit more clarity on what is meant related to the Highway 7 issue. We are actively looking at this issue of the double-tracking and what may be entailed with the double-tracking related to the corridor. We've been in discussions with Metrolinx on that. It may be helpful to have a little bit more clarity about the Highway 7 issue that was raised by the deputant.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: Could you kindly explain it so that ...

[unclear voices]

Dr. Paulo Correa: Could you connect it [the microphone]? Could I have some juice? OK. Thank you. We were a bit surprised – and I can submit this [Metrolinx document]. You can photocopy it, but I would like to hold on to it – but it says not only that they are considering a passing track that will begin at Steeles Avenue in the City of Toronto and will extend northwards to a point slightly south of Rutherford GO Station in the City of Vaughan (I'm quoting verbatim) – but also stating that *they have no intention to actually build a station anywhere between Rutherford and the station south of it*. Now, this is important, because if you are doing all sorts of logistics and strategic calculations and planning calculations about a hub that has connections to three different transportation services – here is Metrolinx, the major cause of all this upheaval regarding the Concord GO Station, and they are saying they don't even want a station in there - which Commissioner MacKenzie had already warned us about and several times stated that that might happen. And I'm not saying one should happen in there. Perhaps we'll be very happy – even though that was not our attitude, 'not in my back yard' kind of thing – but the point is, now they have moved. Three weeks ago they had no plans for the foreseeable future to put two tracks* [see note at end of document]. Suddenly they drop this [notice] and are stating that they don't even want any station. So, I don't know how Council should deal with this, but I think you need clarification from the Province. You need clarification from Metrolinx and you need to include this item in the Secondary Plan. How else can you do it? You cannot make a plan on thin air.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: OK. Mr. MacKenzie.

Commissioner of Planning John MacKenzie: Through the Chair to Councillor Di Biase: I think additional clarity is needed and I know that Commissioner Jankowski [Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works] and I have ongoing discussions with Metrolinx about a number of issues. We'll continue to have those discussions and, as well, what I think we're recommending with this report is some more expert engagement between the experts involved for the Metrolinx side and for the City, to try to get some more clarity on these issues so we can have the best plan before Committee and Council.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: OK. And perhaps maybe we can get some report for Council when this item comes forward?

Commissioner of Planning John MacKenzie: Through the Chair: At this point in time, we would be reporting back to Committee of the Whole, at a later stage of the study. We

would be looking at a public hearing, probably in the fall on this, depending on how much work we can get done with Metrolinx over the summer.

Councillor Michael Di Biase: All right. Thank you. Thank you sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: Thank you Councillor. Councillor Rosati.

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati: Thank you Councillor. Dr. Correa, you said that you don't want this item deferred – so, it's going to go to Council and I'm not sure that Staff can make the changes that you requested. You leave the information they requested and they may be able to include something. What I'm hearing from Staff is that there will be further studies after this report goes through. Is that OK with you, or do you want to see the changes now or is it better to work on it in a more systemic way?

Dr. Paulo Correa: As we talked about this in the last two meetings, our position is the same. We would like to see this Council go ahead with the process and come up with a viable plan. What I'm stressing, or what I'm stressing right now is that you cannot create a viable plan unless you have all the coordinates and all the variables that are part of that plan under your belt. And so, this is, you know, something you have to deal directly with, as Commissioner MacKenzie said, with Metrolinx – especially now that they have made a statement that they are looking at a double track – I think you should be able to force them to come clean. Do they want a station in there, or not. And since they have released this public information regarding the double track I think it's perfectly all right, and is your prerogative, and that you should indicate to your private planners that that is the case, that *you don't want to see that double track go south of Highway 7*, and put across to them that this is the only residential neighbourhood that is affected by this double-tracking.

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati: OK.

Dr. Paulo Correa: ...as well as destroy the greenspace – which is the inevitable consequence.

Regional Councillor Gino Rosati: OK. Thank you.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: Thank you very much sir. You may have a seat.

Dr. Paulo Correa: Would you like to have a copy of this [Metrolinx communications to the CWRA]

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: If you would like to leave it, that's fine.

Dr. Paulo Correa: I need it back.

[laughter]

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: The clerk will give it back. Are there any more deputants? Thank you. There doesn't seem to be. OK, then we're dealing with Item number 15. One motion – Councillor?

Ward 4 Councillor Sandra Yeung Racco: Thank you. I will move the recommendations that's on the report and asking that Staff take into consideration the comments that have been made by the deputant.

Chair – Ward 5 Councillor Alan Shefman: Seconded by Councillor Di Biase. Any further discussion? All in favor? Opposed? Carried. Thank you very much. Thank you, sir, for your deputation.

* Dr. Correa misspoke on the basis of an inaccurate report from the first meeting the Steering Committee on October 3, 2013. In the meeting it was stated that GO Transit had currently no timeline or plan for a GO station, and a station in this area was not a priority project. The report that Dr. Correa had received interpreted this statement to extend to the installation of a second track on the GO-Barrie line. As Dr. Correa has learned since, however, the statement that was made at the October 3 meeting was accompanied by the qualification that "in the short term GO transit may *only be making improvements* to the GO-Barrie line itself". We suppose it is up for grabs whether adding a second track falls in the rubric of "improvements only"...