

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JULY 6, 2010**

### **FOR AN OPEN, TRANSPARENT AND ACCOUNTABLE METROLINX**

#### **Recommendation**

Councillor Alan Shefman recommends that:

1. Council request the Ontario Government to amend the governance of Metrolinx to make it open, transparent, and accountable to the public by requiring it to conduct its meetings in public, consistent with the rules governing municipal government; provide advance public notice of meetings; allow public deputations; and publish all reports, agendas, and minutes, and
2. The Clerk forward this motion to Vaughan MPPs and other Greater Toronto Area municipalities for their information.

#### **Contribution to Sustainability**

The establishment of an open and accountable process at Metrolinx will help to support the planning of rapid transit in York Region and ultimately assist in achieving the environmental goals related to quality rapid transit in the Region.

#### **Economic Impact**

none

#### **Communications Plan**

A media release should be distributed outlining Council's position. All GTA municipalities should be informed of Council's decision. The Premier, appropriate members of his government and Metrolinx should also be written to inform them of Vaughan's position.

#### **Purpose**

In 2006, the Ontario Government created Metrolinx, merging Go Transit into a new organization with a mandate to develop and implement a regional transit plan for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In March, 2009, the Ontario Government removed all elected officials from the Metrolinx Board, replacing them with unelected appointees.

The Metrolinx Board meets to consider its business largely behind closed doors. While the public is allowed to attend the public sessions, they are not permitted to speak to the Board or present their views on any of the items before it. Any budgetary matters or items related to the development of the Regional Transit Plan are held behind closed doors. The Metrolinx Board also meets behind closed doors to discuss matters without providing formal notice, publishing agendas, or providing a minuted record if the meeting.

Metrolinx has also developed an approach to consultation on the elements of its regional transit plan that many have criticized as highly streamlined, one-way, and not in any way meaningful or respectful of community input.

At a certain point in Metrolinx's closed door deliberations a funding scheme for GTA rapid transit was decided upon that excluded funding for the extension of the Yonge Street subway through

Vaughan and Markham to Richmond Hill, even though this project had been designated as a funding priority at an earlier date.

This, and other behind-closed-doors decision making process is counter to the principles of open, transparent, and accountable government. The City of Vaughan and VIVA, the York Region transportation authority hold extensive public consultation on all matters. A regional planning body with no elected representatives should be required to meet in an equally high standard for openness and accountability, especially when their decisions hold such serious consequences for the provision of public transit in the GTA.

### **Background - Analysis and Options**

Since the new, closed-door model of Metrolinx has been established, municipalities and concerned residents have been confronted with significant limitations in fully understanding the agency's decision-making process nor have they had the required breadth of opportunity to make their concerns known.

### **Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan**

This report supports the Strategic priorities established by Vaughan Vision 2020, in particular "Demonstrate Leadership and Promote Effective Governance" – To advocate and influence policies and programs at all levels of government, promoting accountability, civic engagement and transparency.

### **Regional Implications**

The re-establishment of an open and accountable process at Metrolinx will allow the impacted municipalities as well as VIVA to have a greater opportunity to understand and have input into the planning of rapid transit in York Region.

### **Conclusion**

The Provincial Government should require Metrolinx to establish an open and accountable planning and decision-making process from this point forward.

### **Attachments**

none

### **Report prepared by:**

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Respectfully submitted,

Alan Shefman  
Councillor, Ward 5