

Mr. Robb Minnes  
Project Manager of 407 Transitway  
Ontario Ministry of Transportation  
4th Floor, Building D  
1201 Wilson Avenue, Downsview, Ontario, M3M 1J8

December 10, 2010

Re. Concord West Residents' Proposal for 407 Transitway Concord Station

Dear Mr. Minnes,

Thank you for your letter of December 8, 2010, and the attached "Alternative Station Layout" analysis – which I presume is an extract of the anticipated environmental and technical assessment coming out in the last week of this month. I thank you also for the offer to further discuss this matter with you, but I regret to see that your analysis turned into a justification of the original Design Concept proposed by your private consultants and entirely rejected by our community. This hardly corresponds to the constructive spirit called forth during our meeting together with MPP Peter Sherman.

**What your station layout analysis actually did**

First off, I would like you to note that your evaluation of the community's Alternative Plan for the transit hub effectively failed to take place. What you call the Red Alternative was preselected, as you say, "where feasible", from our Alternative Plan. This preselection severely misrepresents our Alternative Plan. By way of this distortion you manage to:

1. Keep in the Red Alternative the same route of the rapid bus transitway that you originally had in the Delcan/IBI Design Concept. But that was *not* the case in our Alternative Plan, which kept that route closely parallel to the existing Highway 407 (see figures A and B below, and compare to your Black Alternative).

2. Place the Park-and-ride parking lot - in your Red Alternative - on the lands of the existing Angelo's Garden Center, which will require expropriation of private land. That too is *not* the case in our Alternative Plan, where the parking lot is placed along Highway 7 but north of Centre Street (see location #3 in figures A and B below), and does not require any expropriations. You suggest that our alternative location of the parking lot is not feasible "as this land is (a) protected for a potential future ramp to highway 407 and (b) any access to the lot would be unacceptably close to the existing Highway 7-Centre St. intersection". Regarding your first justification (a), you must know that *our Local Councillor Sandra Racco already expressed the wishes of both our community and the neighbouring communities of Glen Shields, Brownridge and Beverley Glen*, back in a letter of October 1, 2008. There, she refers to the fact that in August 2003, the Vaughan Council "resolved to request the Province and the 407/ETR to remove any plans for construction of an interchange at Highway 407 and

Centre/Dufferin Streets". Councillor Racco then rightly adds that "*the decision was based on an outcry of area residents opposing vehemently against such an interchange*". She also underlines the fact that the Commissioner of Engineering and Public Works agreed with the communities and Council. Regarding your second justification (b), it is apparent that if no 407 interchange were to be placed close to the existing Highway 7-Centre St. intersection, this intersection would be free to be properly widened to accommodate the location for a parking lot of the desired capacity, just north of Centre St. But this question of the parking lot seems to us to be a retrograde red herring used to distort our Alternative Plan into your Red Alternative. Indeed, *why in this day and age do we have to build parking lots as asphalt surfaces that cover a vast area of land?* The parking lot should never be a primary issue. The very idea of placing a parking lot with idling cars and Diesel buses next to a conservation area is preposterous, not to mention the resulting winter run-off of salt and sand to the Don River. *You can easily build the parking lot under the Concord Corporate GO Center slotted for the Concord Floral lands (see location #1 in figures A and B below), or build it in height in exchange for one of the towers planned for these lands. In either case, you can place it right next to the location of the GO station in our Alternative Plan.* Or, as we suggest below, do this and still *build another Park-and-ride next to the Metrolinx station* (see location #2 in figures A and B below).

3. You chose, with your Red Alternative, to place the GO station in a straight line, stating that the curved route (and station) that we proposed "does not meet the Metrolinx/GO alignment and station placement standards". This may well be correct, but, if you read our submission, it was *not the only placement suggested by our Alternative Plan*. We also provided as alternative the simple location of a straight station along the existing straight line tracks and exactly where the old Concord rail station was - as you have in the Red Alternative. But you should also note that a slight eastward curving in of the GO route does *not* imply that the station itself has to be curved! Furthermore, one is also left wondering *why the station platform that you propose is so long*, when the corresponding parking lot proposed by Delcan/IBI was to serve ~1,100 spaces. The existing Rutherford GO station serves nearly the same parking lot area (983+77 spaces), but has a platform length *>4 times smaller* than that which you apparently require for the Concord GO station. Even if the composition of future GO trains will double in size, your projected platform length seems excessive.

4. As a consequence of 1 and 2 above, you also displace the Metrolinx station further south and west than is proposed in our Alternative Plan.

5. You also claim, in the matrix, that our solution would require a raised profile to accommodate the transitway station. This too, is not part of our design, nor do we see it as being necessary.

As a result of these alterations to our Alternative Plan, and after having made the preselections that were of benefit to your argument, what you evaluated in your so-called "alternative analysis" *under the rubric of the Red Alternative was not the Alternative Plan proposed by the community*, but your own substitute. That is, to say the least, disappointing.

But perhaps it is not unexpected. For you proceed as if this matter were merely one of technical considerations, or could even be decided only on the basis of engineering preferences (that would operate like despotic dictates...). So, it is *your preference* to locate the GO/Metrolinx hub on the south side of Highway 7 and immediately adjoining our community to the east. If it *infringes on the traditional common rights of the community's* access to that greenspace, and worse, if it *destroys our community* - as we have argued it will with data from our own governmental services - well, that does not matter. If it *destroys the wildlife that barely survives in the Bartley Smith Greenway/Marita Payne Park Trail*, including *protected habitats in the very land in question*, well, that too does not matter. If it further *chokes this Greenway* at a point where it is already choked, too bad. Not even *the desire expressed by the TRCA to acquire this land* seems to be of any consequence! Yet, you claim that your Black Alternative minimizes adverse effects on the social and natural environments. It must surely be a joke, no?

To placate the concerns of our community and those adjoining it, you tell us that "most natural riverbank vegetation and the adjacent woodlot are preserved" in your Black Alternative. Well, Mr. Minnes, that is just *not true*. Even though you reduced the size of the parking lot by nearly half the number of spaces, your preferred Black Alternative *would still wipe out the western part of the ORC land in question* (black indeed). Moreover, your elevated rapid bus transitway will *cross right over the woodlot in question - not to mention over the existing flood plain*. And even though you substantially changed the access road from the original Delcan/IBI Design Concept (where it cut right through the middle of the woodlot), your new access road that now attaches to the transitway will still cut right through (presumably also above) the woodlot and *very near to the Upper Don River junction*. Effectively, to make the Black Alternative look better, you also altered it from what the published Design Concept shows, even if the alteration overall inflicts no lesser damage on the greenland in question, *since the alteration preserves the route of the transitway that deviates the most from the path of Hwy 407*. Lastly, in your Black Alternative, you make no mention of the elevator complex connecting the GO and transitway stations, as shown in the original Delcan/IBI Design Concept. You limit yourself to state in the matrix that the transitway station has a depressed profile and will require a retaining wall. It was this elevator complex that we replaced by the elevated skyway in our Alternative Plan.

In a similar vein, your letter and analysis also ignores the fact - to which I drew your attention in my email of November 8 - that *all of our local elected government officials have already stated that they fully support the two requests of our community* - that (1) the ORC land in question be transferred to the TRCA, and (2) the GO/Metrolinx hub be located on the north side of Highway 7.

Your assessment also fails to address a most pertinent question - *to whom is this transit hub of greatest use?* It sure as hell is not to our Concord West community. But it should serve (as our Alternative Plan more efficiently does) *the high-density development planned for the Concord Floral lands, and the commerce and industry that presently exist NORTH of Highway 7* -

*not south*, where there is *no* commerce or industry, only an old residential community and an endangered ecosystem. So, why not place the GO station there, on the *north* side of Highway 7, where commerce, industry and high-rise occupants can take ready advantage of it?? *You never once address this question in your alternative analysis.*

Just as medicine is an art and not reducible to science, so are technical and engineering problems secondary to the arts of government and responsible urbanism. What you call the preferred solution (the Black Alternative) cannot be imposed in total disregard of societal, cultural, urban and environmental considerations, as if the governmental and technical services of our open society had acquired stalinist powers to mow down the desires and best interests of the residents-voters-and-taxpayers, as well as the legal frameworks that protect human and wildlife communities. Our community is aware of the sad track record of GO/Metrolinx in smashing local communities and destroying lives. You are hereby put on notice that our community will fight against your Black Alternative with all the means at its disposal. Maybe you will then realize that *the choice of the preference that matters is always and first of all a political decision, and only secondarily a technical one*; or, put in other words, that the technical services of the government should serve the interests of the people, not their own - or worse still, those of private consultants hired by developers. In this context, I would like you to note that in your 4 alternatives (which do not include our Alternative Plan!), only the Red Alternative places *part of the hub* on the north side of Highway 7. *Your private consultants could not come up with any other alternative that located the hub on the north side of Highway 7.* That is a remarkable lack of imagination. But it makes one wonder about the legitimacy of having a provincial ministry be advised on a technical assessment by a private consultant (IBI) that was/is hired for the development of the Concord Floral lands. We may as well assume that your pending environmental assessment also produced by your private consultants will be equally lopsided.

Lastly, you do realize that while the ORC land in question was retained for possible use for transportation infrastructure, abandonment of this purpose will at last permit other proposals for its use - such as that put forth by our community, friends of the Bartley Smith Greenway and the TRCA - to move forward. While freeing the land in question is a matter of a political decision that may well be forced by environmental and wildlife protection of the existing ecological niche, the technical solution depends solely on the willingness of GO/Metrolinx and Viva/YRRT to give proper attention to relocation of their infrastructures, as our community has suggested they should do.

#### **What the analysis of the Alternative Plan actually is**

Attached below, you will find two figures (numbered A and B) that accurately represent the community's Alternative Plan, that is, the **Real Red Alternative**. For comparison purposes, we reproduced in the same page the figure of your Black Alternative. Also attached is a *correct evaluation matrix* that compares your Black Alternative with the Real Red Alternative.

The two figures A and B are equal embodiments of the Alternative Plan proposed by the Concord West community, one showing a straight-line GO station and the other a GO station displaced to the east by a slight track indentation (chosen angle of displacement is arbitrary). The transitway distance to the GO platform is shorter by over 200m compared to your falsified Red Alternative. It is not 560m, but as short as 330m (a 330m scale is shown by the white line in both figures), or as long as ~380m (if the GO track is kept straight).

Since we suggest three possible locations for Park-and-ride and PPUDO/Viva facilities (numbered 1, 2 and 3 in both figures A and B, with the PPUDOs being shaded in red lines), the distances of these facilities to either the GO platform or to the transitway station are effectively *even lower* than those of your Black Alternative. *There are, therefore, no excessive walk-in distances anywhere in the two embodiments of our Alternative Plan.* Moreover, the three locations easily permit a greater number of park-and-ride spaces - as required by the long GO platform and the number of spaces in the original Delcan/IBI Concept Design. However, if the GO platform does not have to be as long as in the original Delcan/IBI Concept Design - which was intended to serve a parking lot of 1,100 cars, and not the decreased parking lot of 700 cars that you now have in the matrix for your Black Alternative - then the problem of displacing the GO station eastward inside of the Corporate GO Centre is really another red herring. For you can then easily do so, especially if the displacement is relatively small (and it could easily be greater than we show in figure B).

Lastly, you should note that we do not believe that it is accurate to suggest, as you do in your matrix, that the cost of our solution will be moderately higher than baseline cost. The advantages conferred - in our Alternative Plan - to the developer of the Concord Floral lands by placing the hub under their Corporate GO Centre, could easily be traded off in exchange for the developer's partial defraying of the costs of construction of the hub and parking lot.

It is therefore evident that the Alternative Plan that we proposed:

- preserves the integrity of the Concord West community
- preserves the local ecosystem
- complies with the rights and aspirations of the Concord West community and adjoining communities
  - complies with the desire of the TRCA to acquire the ORC greenland
  - does not interfere with the West Don River flood plains
  - better serves the Concord Go Centre and commerce and industry located on the north side of Highway 7
  - fully complies with the GO/Metrolinx objectives
  - minimizes walking distances between stations and Park-and-ride or PPUDO
  - proposes acceptable distances between GO and Metrolinx platforms
  - does not require mitigation of noise and visual effects
  - does not place idling cars and Diesel buses near the Bartley Smith Greenway or near the Concord West residential community

In light of the preceding, we ask that you reject your Black Alternative in favor of the community's Alternative Plan in either of its two embodiments. We also ask that you publish this response, as is, in the form of an Appendix to the report you are planning to release in the last week of December.

Thank you for your attention to this matter of grave concern to our community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Paulo N. Correa

Chair, Concord West Residents Ad Hoc Committee

also per: Josephine Mastrodicasa, President, Concord West Seniors Club

Maria Bacchin, President, Concord West Ratepayers Association

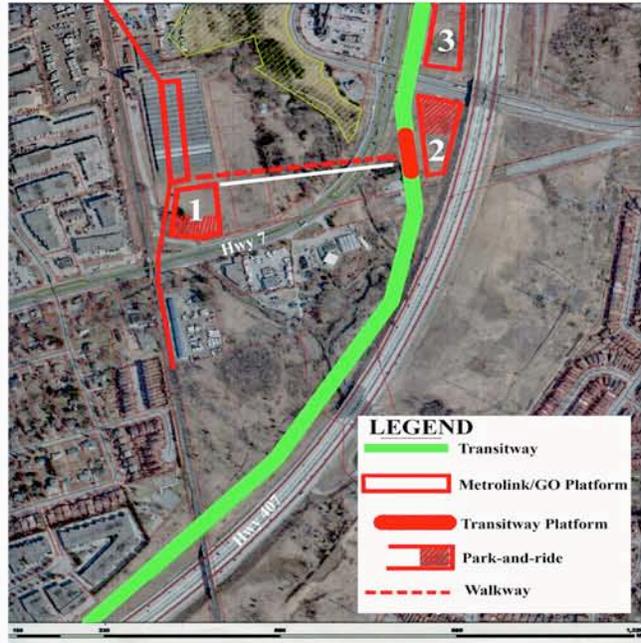
cc. Premier of Ontario D. McGuinty  
M. Bevilacqua, Mayor of Vaughan  
G. Rosati, Vaughan Regional Councillor  
D. Schulte, Vaughan Regional Councillor  
M. DiBiase, Vaughan Regional Councillor  
S. Racco, Vaughan Regional Councillor  
Robert Chiarelli, Minister, OMI  
Brian Denney, CAO, TRCA  
Kathleen Wynne, Minister, OMT  
George Ivanoff, OMT  
Leslie Woo, GO/Metrolinx  
Khaled El-Dalati, Delcan VP

# REAL RED ALTERNATIVE

**A**



**B**



# YOUR BLACK ALTERNATIVE



OBJECTIVE	INDICATORS	Black Alternative GO platform South of Highway 7 Transitway Station adjacent to GO Rail Row	Real Red Alternative Plan GO platform North of Highway 7 Transitway Station south of Centre Street Overpass
<b>Improve Mobility</b>	<b>Transfer Walking Distances (m)</b>		
	Transitway platform to GO platform: Centre-Centre Minimum	275 130	390 (straight station) to 330 (indented station) ~ 350 or less
	Park & Ride to GO platform: Centre-Centre Minimum	55 25	30 (contiguous, location #1) 25
	Park & Ride to Transitway platform: Centre lot-Centre platform Minimum	275 130	25 (contiguous, location #2) 25
	Viva stops on Hwy 7 to end of GO platform	250	215, if VIVA locates on south side of Hwy 7 25, if VIVA locates on north side of Hwy 7
	Viva Hwy 7 stops to Transitway platform (Viva platforms at proposed intersection)	100	25
	Number of park-and-ride spaces available	650-700	3 locations: #1 - 300, #2 - 200, #3 - >300 Total: 800 -900
	Access to Park & Ride	35 m. long bridge over West Don R. tributary is required.	Elevated skyway (<200m) that resolves pedestrian crossing at Hwy 7/Centre St. Skyway contiguous with walkway through park
	Convenience of passenger pick-up/dropoff (PPUDO)	Location very convenient	Location most convenient to business and high-rise development
	Convenience of local community shuttle bus access	Transfer platform adjacent to stations	Viva & GO can be adjacent on north side of Hwy 7; VIVA & transitway adjacent on south side
<b>Minimize adverse effects on social environment</b>	Area of publicly-owned vacant table land property occupied	55%	>20%
	Proximity of GO platform to publiclyowned table land property	260 metres alongside	< 200 metres east
	Proximity of GO platform to residential land use south of Hwy 7	Full length adjacent to residential community. Mitigation of visual and sound effects required.	Full length within new northern development remote from residential community. No mitigations needed.
	Effect of GO Station on planned mixed-use development north of Hwy 7	No effects as station is south of Hwy 7	Allows planned, but not yet approved, mixed use development north of Hwy 7
	Effect on access to valley lands/trails	Walkway through station site to valley and existing trail will be provided in site layout	Preserves existing greenspace and permits direct access to it by Concord West Community
<b>Minimize adverse effects on natural environment</b>	Effect on West Don River and tributary flood plain/valley lands	Flood plain generally preserved. Single new crossing combining transitway and access road.	Flood plain preserved. Transitway hugs Hwy 407
<b>Offer a cost-effective way of moving people</b>	Effect of Transitway station location on transitway profile	Current profile; depressed Station with some retaining wall	No elevated or depressed transitway station needed.
	Highway 7 pedestrian bridge requirements	Bridge over highway for Viva to GO platform transfer requested by York Region	Protected walkway and bridge over Hwy 7 required between GO and Transitway platforms
	Effect on station area infrastructure costs	Assumed as baseline infrastructure cost	No Park-and-Ride property acquisition. GO station and parking lot #1 can be built into Corporate GO centre. Likely lower cost than baseline.