

**Ministry of
the Environment**

Office of the Minister
77 Wellesley Street West
11th Floor, Ferguson Block
Toronto ON M7A 2T5
Tel.: 416 314-6790
Fax: 416 314-6748

**Ministère de
l'Environnement**

Bureau du ministre
77, rue Wellesley Ouest
11^e étage, édifice Ferguson
Toronto ON M7A 2T5
Tél. : 416 314-6790
Télééc. : 416 314-6748



FEB 28 2011

Log: ENV1283MC-2011-414
X-ref: ENV1283MC-2010-168

Dr. Paulo Correa, Chair
Concord West Residents Ad Hoc Committee
42 Rockview Gardens
City of Vaughan ON L4K 2J6
E-mail: drpcorrea@abrisci.com

Dear Dr. Correa:

Thank you for your interest in the Ministry of Transportation's (MTO) proposed 407 Transitway transit project (Project), located in the Region of York. I welcome your comments on this Project.

On January 21, 2011, you submitted an objection to the Project which is following the transit project assessment process under Ontario Regulation 231/08 – Transit Projects and Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Undertakings (Transit Regulation).

I am taking this opportunity to inform you that I have issued a Notice to Proceed with the Project (see attached) in accordance with the Environmental Project Report (EPR).

Prior to issuing this notice, I have given careful consideration to the Project documentation, and to the issues raised in your objection relative to the provisions of the Transit Regulation. Under the Transit Regulation, I am permitted to issue a notice allowing the Project to proceed in accordance with the EPR subject to conditions or a notice requiring further consideration of the transit Project. However, I can only issue one of these two notices, if I am of the opinion that the transit Project may have a negative impact on a matter of provincial importance that relates to the natural environment or has cultural or heritage value or interest, or a negative impact on a constitutionally protected Aboriginal or treaty right. Based on my review of the Project documentation and the issues you raised, I do not hold that opinion.

My consideration of the issues raised in your objection is summarized below.

In your objection you raised a concern related to potential negative impact to the natural environment resulting from the loss of the existing woodlot and loss of wildlife and wildlife habitat at the proposed location of the GO Barrie (Concord) Station. The proponent has advised that the area has not been designated as an Environmental Sensitive Area, Area of Natural Scientific Interest or Provincially Significant Wetland and none of the vegetation communities affected by the Project are considered locally, regionally or provincially rare. Additionally, no species/habitats of conservation concern were identified through field investigations or secondary sources. Further, the MTO has committed that it will confirm during detail design whether any species at risk and their habitats are present. In the event that species at risk and their habitats are confirmed during detail design, the MTO has committed to work with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR). The proponent has committed to maintaining all existing wildlife corridors and will ensure that restrictions to wildlife movement through this area will not occur. The MNR has advised the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) that it has no concerns with the proposed Project.

In addition, the proponent has advised that site specific mitigation measures will be identified during detail design, in consultation with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and its guidelines. I understand that TRCA has been involved in the Project, has reviewed the draft and final EPR and provided comments relating to the natural environment and that the TRCA does not have any outstanding concerns or issues with the Project.

You also raised a concern that the proposed location of the GO Barrie (Concord) Station and the 407 Transitway will negatively impact the social environment of the Concord West community. The proponent has advised that the proposed location was identified as the alternative with the least negative impacts on transit and traffic operations, safety, access to existing trails, and the environment. I understand that the MTO has committed in its EPR to construct a safe pedestrian crossing at the existing GO Barrie rail line, which currently does not exist, to provide continuous access to the Bartley Smith Greenway Trail.

Other concerns you raised in your letter related to inadequate consultation, insufficient review of the proposed location of the GO Barrie (Concord) Station and the 407 Transitway, the quality of studies undertaken and a potential conflict of interest. MOE staff reviewed these concerns and are satisfied that the Project has fulfilled the requirements of the Transit Regulation.

I am satisfied that these issues have been adequately addressed by the work done to date by the MTO, or will be addressed in future work that is required to be carried out.

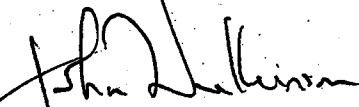
Dr. Paulo Correa

Page 3.

The proponent can now proceed to issue a Statement of Completion to complete the transit project assessment process. The proponent must implement the Project in the manner it was developed and designed, as set out in the EPR. They must also obtain any other permits and approvals required to proceed with the construction and operation of the Project.

Again, I would like to thank you for participating in the transit project assessment process under the Transit Regulation and for bringing your concerns to my attention.

Sincerely,



John Wilkinson
Minister of the Environment

Attachment

- c: R. Minnes, Project Manager, MTO
G. Ivanoff, Senior Environmental Planner, MTO
G. N. Kauffman, Consultant Environmental Planner, LGL Limited