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September 8, 2004

Mr. Shawn Carey  
Ministry of the Environment  
Environmental Assessment Coordinator  
5775 Yonge Street, 8th Fl.  
North York ON M2M 4J1

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Dear Mr. Carey:

**Subject: West Toronto Diamond Rail-to-Rail Grade Separation**

GO Transit is in the initial stages of undertaking the preliminary design and environmental assessment for a grade separation project at the West Toronto Diamond that will allow increased GO train service between Georgetown, Brampton, Bramalea and Toronto. The broader objective of the project is to facilitate and encourage the use of public transit in this corridor. Attached is an information package that provides further details of the project and its environmental assessment requirements.

We encourage you to advise us of any concerns or information that you have in connection with the project. Your prompt response will assist us in identifying key issues at an early stage in the planning process. If you have no comments at this time, we would appreciate, nevertheless, an indication of your interest in remaining on the project mailing list. If you have no interest in this study, please indicate as such. Please complete the Expression of Interest form included in the information package and return it to us by September 28, 2004

In order to encourage public input into the process, a Public Information Centre will be held on the West Toronto Diamond Rail-to-Rail Grade Separation Project at Saint Josaphat School (55 Pelham Street, Toronto) on Tuesday, September 28, 2004 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. A Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre will be published in the Toronto Star, Metro, and Bloor West Villager newspapers during the week of September 13<sup>th</sup>. A copy of the notice is included in the attached information package.

At the completion of the environmental study, and Environmental Study Report (ESR) and a Federal Screening Report will be prepared to document the EA planning process, the federal screening requirements, the preliminary design details and the public and agency consultation process. The report will be filed for public and agency review prior to construction of the grade separation, and notices of viewing locations will be published at that time.

If you require further information about this project, please contact the undersigned. We look forward to an early response from your office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'J. Greg Ashbee'.

J. Greg Ashbee  
Senior Project Engineer

encl.

**GO TRANSIT**  
**WEST TORONTO DIAMOND RAIL-TO-RAIL GRADE SEPARATION**  
**INFORMATION PACKAGE**

Attachment A – Project Brief

Attachment B – Plan of the Study Area

Attachment C – Expression of Interest Form

Attachment D – Notice of Study Commencement and Public Information Centre

## **ATTACHMENT A – PROJECT BRIEF**

### **WEST TORONTO DIAMOND RAIL-TO-RAIL GRADE SEPARATION**

#### **Background**

The presence of railways was one of the main reasons for the growth of the Village of West Toronto Junction in the 1880s. The "Junction" in the village name refers to the complex intersection of railway tracks just north of Dupont Street at Old Weston Road. Two railways, the Ontario, Simcoe & Huron (later the Northern) and the Western Grand Trunk, built lines through the area between 1853 and 1873. The third, Credit Valley Railway, created a junction in 1879 when its line branched to the west. The Ontario and Quebec Railway completed the final link by constructing a railway parallel to and just north of Dupont Street.

The railway lines through the Junction are now owned by CN, CP and GO Transit. The CN rail line (the Weston Subdivision) consists of two tracks, and runs northwest through the junction, crossing over the Dupont Street and St Clair Avenue West underpasses. It carries freight traffic, VIA passenger trains and GO Transit commuter trains from Union Station through Bloor and Weston Stations, to Bramalea, Brampton and Georgetown. GO Transit itself owns two additional tracks that carry commuter trains from Union station to the Junction, where they turn westwards to Milton. The two east-west tracks of the CP railway (the North Toronto Subdivision) carry freight traffic through mid-town Toronto, and a CP branch off this line (the MacTier Subdivision) heads northwards parallel to the CN tracks. The two railways' main lines (the CN Weston and CP North Toronto Subdivisions) cross each other at the "West Toronto Diamond" (see Attachment B).

#### **West Toronto Diamond**

The West Toronto Diamond crossing poses a severe limitation on the number of trains that GO Transit can run on the CN tracks between Georgetown and Union station. Each train on the CN line has to wait for a "window" in the east-west CP freight traffic to allow it to cross the diamond safely. GO Transit recognized this deficiency many years ago and, for the last ten years, has proposed replacing the diamond crossing with a grade separation of the two rail lines. Previous studies by GO Transit had indicated that the CN rail lines should drop down just north of the Dupont Street underpass, pass under the CP rail tracks, and rise up again to pass over the St. Clair West underpass.

The recently committed Federal, Provincial and Municipal funding for the GO Transit Rail Improvement Program (GO TRIP) has made the construction of the grade separation not only a possibility but a priority for GO Transit. The project will be subject to both GO Transit Class B provincial assessment and CEAA federal environmental screening process (triggered by the federal funding). The process has started with the notification of City of Toronto Councillors and Staff, and will continue with the issuing of a public Notice of Study Commencement, combined with a notice of a Public Information Centre. (See Attachment D.)

Preliminary work on the project has indicated that dropping the CN rail line to pass under the CP tracks remains the only feasible solution. Lowering the CN rail lines will have the added benefit of removing the existing at-grade crossing of Old Weston Road and the CN tracks. (Note, however, that the at-grade crossing of the CP MacTier Subdivision tracks will remain.) The

proposed arrangement will have only a minimal impact on the existing Dupont Street and St. Clair Avenue West underpasses. The main issues appear to be the following:

- relocation of utilities
- temporary closure of Old Weston Road to allow for construction
- potential for some disruption to adjacent business and residents during construction.

In other ways, the project will benefit the local community by:

- eliminating the at-grade crossing of Old Weston Road and the two CN tracks,
- eliminating the noise caused by trains stopping and starting as they wait to cross the diamond
- masking the sound of all trains on the CN tracks by lowering the tracks below the existing ground

It should be noted that the current Environmental Assessment is associated with the implementation of the West Toronto Diamond Grade Separation project as a necessary part of GO Transit's plans for expanded and improved service in the Georgetown Corridor. The grade separation will also accommodate the requirements of the proposed Airport Rail Link. The service to be provided by the Airport Rail Link, from Toronto Lester B. Pearson International Airport to Union Station, is a separate standalone project, which will be subject to a separate Environmental Assessment.

**ATTACHMENT B – PLAN OF THE STUDY AREA**

