

January 7, 2010

**ACTION REQUIRED**

To: The Board of Governors of Exhibition Place

From: Dianne Young, Chief Executive Officer

Subject: **Metrolinx - Liberty Village / King West Rail Stop**

Summary:

In the latter part of 2009, Metrolinx indicated that a commuter station would not be constructed at the Liberty Village/King West station stop for the GO Georgetown Line or the Union-Person rail link. Following this announcement, Mr. Reid Henry, Chair of the Liberty Village BIA, wrote a letter dated December 16, 2009, to Colleen Bell, General Manager, Metrolinx, requesting that the Liberty Village/King West station stop be included in any expansion plan. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix "A".

Exhibition Place staff support the Liberty Village BIA's position on the Liberty Village/King West station stop. Direct transportation links such as this Liberty Village/King West station stop on the Union-Pearson Rail Link are essential for major trade and conference facilities that are attracting international and national attendees and visitors and the requirement will only increase as Exhibition Place expands with the new hotel.

**Recommendations:**

**It is recommended that the Board approve that a letter be sent to Metrolinx supporting the need to have a Liberty Village / King West station stop in the expansion plans for the commuter line from Union Station to the International Airport.**

Financial Impact:

There are no financial impacts resulting from this report.

Decision History:

City Council at its meeting of December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008, approved the Staff Report entitled "Strachan Avenue and the Georgetown / Milton Rail Corridor Grade Separation Design Concept Study". As its meeting dated April 15, 2009, the Board approved of the City's position with respect to the road / rail separation issues at Strachan Avenue.

Issue Background:

On May 26, 2009, Exhibition Place received correspondence from Deputy Mayor Pantalone announcing that Metrolinx had listened to the residents, businesses and other organizations regarding the rail grade separation at Strachan Avenue and had agreed to separate the road and

rail line. More recently, Metrolinx has indicated that it will not be building in the first phase a Liberty Village/King West station stop. As indicated in the Liberty Village BIA letter, it is their position that this stop is imperative to their businesses and it is also an extremely important transportation link for Exhibition Place and the CNE

Comments:

Exhibition Place staff are recommending that the Board write a letter to Metrolinx and to the Minister of Transportation to bring to their attention the importance of a Liberty Village/King West station stop specifically as noted below:

- Supports the position of the Liberty Village BIA and the businesses around Exhibition Place which are key to the vitality of this entire area
- Since Metrolinx announced its decision not to include a Liberty Village/King West station stop there have been many fundamental changes to the grounds which would suggest that it is vital that Metrolinx reconsider its decision:
  - i) The Board and the City approved of a 225-suite hotel for Exhibition Place.
  - ii) Allstream Centre opened and has a focus on bringing international and national attendees to this conference centre
  - iii) Exhibition Place is a major site of the 2015 Pan Am Games

Certainly, for major international trade and conference show facilities, a link from the international airport to the trade facility is a crucial transportation hub. It would be very frustrating for international visitors to our facility to have to go to Union Station and then double-back to Exhibition Place rather than just getting off the train at the Liberty Village/King West station stop just minutes from our doorstep. This would be not only frustrating but time consuming, creating extra expense for our patrons - possibly enough for them to make the decision to by-pass our events completely. With the number of attractions between our neighbourhood and the downtown core increasing, there will be more tourist traffic back and forth between the two neighbourhoods and ease of movement will become even more critical. It is very short-sighted for Metrolinx not to proceed with the Liberty Village/King West station stop immediately.