

November 18, 2011

Regional Councillor Gord Landon
Chair of Transportation Committee
Town of Markham

Accelerating Development of Integrated Transit Fares between Toronto and York Region

We are writing to you in your capacity as chair of Markham's Transportation Committee. Recently MAGIC, the umbrella group for 40+ ratepayer associations, held an executive meeting to discuss the draft Markham Transportation Strategic Plan. One item that came through loud and clear is the frustration that transit passengers have to pay a double fare when crossing Steeles.

It was agreed that we would write you a letter to be ultimately taken to Markham and York Region Councils. If supported by the Councils, Metrolinx would be asked to provide a status report and schedule for their work on fare integration.

As you know, Markham is slated for huge growth in the next few years, much of it within a few kilometers of Steeles. Examples include massive developments such as World on Yonge, Markham Centre and Langstaff. These are intended to be transit-oriented communities. Indeed, if the transit mode share falls below planned, there will be large-scale transportation gridlock. The double fare boundary is a major disincentive to transit use in this area.

In the Metrolinx plan "The Big Move", Strategy #6 is "Implement an Integrated Transit Fare System". The timing is cited as "by 2012". To date, Metrolinx has focussed on the hardware aspects, by introducing the Presto Card. **However, the hard work is still to be done.** This is to decide on the integrated fare structure (ie time-based, distance-based, zone-based, flat fare, etc) and then to facilitate negotiations on the actual fare levels and revenue sharing between the various local transit agencies. To our knowledge, this work has not started. The negotiations can be lengthy as each agency seeks to protect its revenue sources.

Fare integration also has the potential to induce service coordination for better use of infrastructure, eg VIVA/YRT buses being able to pick up south of Steeles. This is also challenging to negotiate.

Recent discussions with a member of the Metrolinx advisory committee suggest that Metrolinx is postponing work on fare integration until 2013, when their proposals on new funding instruments are due for finalization. Such slippage in the date for fare integration would be very problematic.

We request that this matter be raised with the Markham and York Councils, and that an urgent request then be sent to Metrolinx on fare integration.

Yours truly,

Peter Miasek
Nirmala Armstrong
on behalf of MAGIC

cc. Kimberley Kitteringham, Clerk