



News Release

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Selection of GO Stations Lacked Transparency and Accountability: Auditor General

(TORONTO) The Metrolinx decision in 2016 to recommend GO train stations at Kirby and Lawrence East lacked transparency and clouded accountability, Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk concludes in her *2018 Annual Report*, released today.

“The then Minister of Transportation and the City of Toronto influenced Metrolinx’s decision-making process leading up to the selection of the two stations,” Lysyk said after her Report was tabled. “As a consequence, Metrolinx undermined its own decision-making process and inappropriately changed its recommendations on the Kirby and Lawrence East stations.

“Metrolinx’s initial business cases concluded that the costs and disadvantages of the two stations significantly outweighed their benefits, but Metrolinx overrode that conclusion because the then Minister of Transportation and the City of Toronto had made it clear they wanted these stations.”

Lysyk said the audit was done following a motion passed on September 27, 2017, by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts (Committee) that “the Auditor General conduct a value-for-money audit on the proposed Metrolinx GO stations at Kirby and Lawrence East.”

The stations were two of 12 proposed GO stations that Metrolinx in June 2016 recommended be built. The building of new GO stations became part of an initiative that the Province had already begun to improve the regional rail network of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The Committee’s motion arose from controversy around the Kirby and Lawrence East stations highlighted by news reports between March and August 2017.

The audit found that the publicly available information included in the June 2016 Metrolinx staff report to the Board of Directors to justify the approval of the two stations did not highlight important details, especially that Metrolinx planning staff believed the Kirby and Lawrence East GO stations should not be considered for the next 10 years.

Metrolinx’s updated analysis of the new stations, published in February 2018, presented a best-case scenario that assumed future changes to the GO system that, to varying degrees, are not certain to be fully implemented as planned when the stations are completed.

The following are two of our specific findings:

- The then Minister did not use the legislated channels available to him under the Metrolinx Act, 2006, which allows him to give written directives to Metrolinx regarding any matter under the Act. A written directive to Metrolinx from the Minister to add the Kirby and Lawrence East stations would have demonstrated greater transparency and accountability.

- Metrolinx’s lack of a rigorous transit-planning process that weighs all costs and benefits against established criteria enabled Metrolinx to remove Kirby and Lawrence East from the original list of “not recommended” stations and put them into a new category it created of “low” performing stations. It put the remaining “not recommended” stations into another new category it created of “very low” performing stations. These new categories were used in Metrolinx’s June 28, 2016, report to the Board, which recommended building all but the “very low” performing stations.

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Read the [Metrolinx–GO Station Selection](#) audit report at www.auditor.on.ca

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