

RCCAO calls for TTC action on relief line

Don Wall February 28, 2018



The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) is launching a campaign calling for immediate action towards the start of construction of a downtown Toronto subway relief line.

The first step of the initiative was a full-page newspaper ad. It follows a problem-plagued day, Jan. 30, when system breakdowns and signal problems caused commuters to become packed into the Yonge-Bloor station, with social and traditional media afterwards suggesting the slightest shoving incident could have caused panic.

Downtown Toronto is currently served by two north-south subway arteries. A relief line, possibly going east from the downtown and north through the Danforth community, suggests the RCCAO, would enable the growing number of commuters taking transit from the suburbs into downtown to avoid the critical Yonge-Bloor station.

“We normally don’t advocate for specific projects but all of the transit gurus we have been talking to for many years said that is the lynchpin project and if you don’t do that one all of the other ones that the politicians are talking about will just add to the woes in terms of congested pinch points at Bloor-Yonge and on lines one and two,” said RCCAO executive director Andy Manahan.

The alliance noted a Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) report first called for a relief line in 1969 but there currently is only planning funding in place and no commitment to allocations for construction. The TTC timeline calls for a relief line to be completed by 2031.

“Extending overcapacity subway lines into the low-density suburbs make no sense until the several capacity problems on the Yonge line and at Bloor-Yonge station have been addressed,” the RCCAO message said. “These are the major factors that are limiting the potential for increased transit use from Toronto into the downtown. This impacts residents in all parts of the city.”

Commented Manahan about recent RCCAO board discussions, “A lot of us felt this is more than just an accident waiting to happen, it is congestion on a regular basis and this was a crisis situation and all the politicians do is provide lip service and say this is an important project but there is absolutely no funding for it yet. Whether this has any traction, we thought, let’s do something bold for a change.”

He said there will probably be other steps as a campaign is contemplated by the RCCAO.