



RMRA Meeting March 26, 2013

1. **Attendance and Notes on Attendance:** 60+ people in total

2. **Special Guest**

3. **Community Updates**

a. **West Side Roncesvalles Zoning Study**

City held second public meeting Mar 19 – about 40 people attended

People didn't want to see change in first meeting; consensus of second meeting including Coty staff was that they would not change the zoning except putting a list of uses that would be acceptable that are non-residential uses. These would be used as a guideline for minor variances – no restaurants, no dry cleaner, no stand-alone retail, no high impact. Built form was seen as important to maintain.

More info on Gord Perks' website. City will write a report for Community Council, and RMRA will send out information about when the report goes to Community Council.

b. **383 Sorauren Ave development**

Working group met once. Changed architecture since last presentation and brought down the building by one floor. Density brought down from 4.65 to 4.3.

Taller than Robert Watson Lofts – this is higher in height and density, and number of units (160). Traffic is primary concern, parking on local streets, as well as height (Robert Watson Lofts should be limit).

A positive aspect is that the architect is very good. There will be a couple more meetings.

All units are market condos – about \$510/sf selling price.

Qs: Does the working group advocate for affordable housing? Generally, the RMRA would be in favour, but this is a private site and they are not compelled to provide affordable housing.

S. 37 benefits will be discussed once the building is acceptable.

c. **Electric Train Petition**

Petition from Peggy Nash's office to encourage the federal government to express it preference for electric trains from the beginning of the operation of the Union Pearson Link

d. High Park Cleanup – April 20

e. Wabash – Sorrauren park

Sat April 13 and 20 – painting days for field house, 10 am to 5 pm, all ages

April 17 – public consultation for plans for Town Square – Planning Partnership presentation, 7 pm at Parkdale Community Centre
Sat May 11 – gardening around the field house, 10 am, all ages

Main Event – METROLINX TRAINS AND NOISE WALLS

RMRA are staunch supporters of immediate electrification

Community Wall Advisory Committee – starting in early April, one meeting a month for four months. Electrification is explicitly not a permitted topic for discussion in these committees.

Doug Bennet will become a Director of the Clean Train Coalition

Over 400 trains will be travelling per day on the corridor in our neighbourhood (compared to about 50 today)

Diesel trains rather than electric – dirtier, slower, more expensive, noisier than electric, can't have as many stops because the trains can't accelerate or decelerate as quickly as electric; diesel has been classified by World Health Organization in the same carcinogen category as mustard gas and asbestos. The electric system would decrease greenhouse gases by 94%. All other jurisdictions are switching. Even Metrolinx agrees.

The connectivity with the rest of the transit system is poor. Auditor General has criticized the business plan. The fare will be in the order of \$20-35 – not in keeping with public transit. 1.2M car trips will be taken off the road (estimate). By same formula, Vancouver's system takes 26.4M cars off the road. Vancouver's system also was built for a 2-week event and it was done correctly. This could be a downtown relief line – could serve entire west end of city to downtown and to airport – access to employment for priority neighbourhoods – it is also a social justice issue.

Ontario has excess electricity. Diesel is faster to implement now, but not by that much. Ontario has committed to electrify in 2017. Metrolinx is really not responsible, it has been a failure of the Ontario government. Contracts have been signed (piggybacked on a Californian order, to Californian specs which requires major reworking of GO platforms); Clean Train Coalition launched and lost a legal action regarding the contracts and is now seeking leave to appeal. Canada is a world leader in building and providing electric trains, but the options for electric trains were not considered when contract was signed. Legal action argues that due diligence wasn't done. Tier 4 trains still don't exist, and they still emit particulates. It can be argued that these smaller particulates can settle more deeply in the lungs and are not really an improvement (according to Mark Jacobs, professor at Stanford University).

Walls are proposed to mitigate the noise due to diesels – 16 feet high (Berlin wall was 12 feet). These may be phased. Trees have already been cut along the corridor. Budget for noise walls is \$20M. Walls will likely begin construction in summer 2014). Walls will hide the trains, it'll be a done deal, and we'll have diesels for a long time. Even if we electrify, it is likely that the walls will stay up because it will cost to remove them. We would likely not need them for electric trains. Electric trains will also decrease vibrations. Most groups along the corridor are coordinated and have the following stance on the noise walls:

- We don't want walls.
- Any required walls should be up to each community.
- Walls should wait until the trains are in place to ensure that they are in fact required.

WHAT CAN WE DO??

The community needs to make a lot of noise. We need to activate our networks.

This is a political issue. Metrolinx has been very skillful at divide and conquer, dissipating the anger in communities by “listening”, then going away and not following up or addressing concerns – decision makers are not made aware of the meetings or community sentiment.

Media noise is needed, and we need to be vocal to our MPPs – NDP has lost focus on this issue, they have other priorities. Private members bill for clean trains was not passed.

Doug Bennet’s open letter to Premier Wynne and a flyer as well as info about events, etc. is on the www.soraurenpark.com website which has a rail corridor page. Also look at www.cleantrain.ca.

The Clean Train Coalition is seen by many Liberal politicians as a front for the NDP.

Eight Provincial ridings but the corridor and are in play if an election is called. NDP’s Cheri DiNovo is supportive, but Andrea Horvath has not been vocal. No concrete action has been taken.

Suggestions: OP-ED pieces in large papers, coordinating with Civic Action, Board of Trade campaigns; lawn signs to raise awareness, send list of questions to candidates to get their clear position on the issue.

We need to find a way to make it easy for politicians to change their minds – give them a good reason.

We need a clear positive message. – A. Clean trains now; B. this needs to be part of the transit solution; and C. your vote is in jeopardy.