



The recommendations passed by the executive committee call for the city to be absolved of any capital or new operating costs for the line, considered a low priority for the TTC despite provincial enthusiasm. The project, vigorously supported by local politicians in York Region, goes before Toronto City Council for final approval later this month.

The extension of the Yonge line, which could begin with detailed design work as early as this spring if funding is secured, would follow the delay-plagued \$2.6-billion Spadina subway extension project, where preliminary work to extend the other north-south subway line into York Region has begun.

At the time, city and TTC officials were also reluctant to extend this line north of the Steeles Avenue boundary between Toronto and York Region, concerned that ridership estimates in the sprawling suburbs did not justify the cost of a subway. Mr. Miller said yesterday that dense development plans along the Yonge extension, if realized, would produce enough new riders in the long run.

Councillor Michael Walker (Ward 22, St. Paul's), a frequent critic of the mayor, said the city's demands could kill the project, calling the reluctance to commit any money a parochial move: "We are resisting because of the issues of turf warfare, in my opinion."

Addressing the committee, Mr. Miller later shot back that without the city's requirements, Mr. Walker's subway-riding constituents would be turned into sardines: "Frankly, to people who represent the area around Yonge and Eglinton, they are extremely important, because your residents will never get a seat again, ever, on this subway unless these conditions are met."

The province has already agreed to pay \$360-million for a new automated train control system on the Yonge line, demanded by the mayor and TTC officials as a prerequisite to the line's expansion because it will allow trains to be run more closely together.

Both subway extensions into the vote-rich 905, where both federal and provincial Liberals and Conservatives fight for a number of close seats, were surprise announcements by the province that initially caught TTC officials off guard.

Former TTC chairman Howard Moscoe, who now sits on Mr. Miller's executive committee, said the subway extension was "politics writ big" and that the real decisions would be made by the federal and provincial governments.

"The final shape of the project ... is not going to be determined in this room," Mr. Moscoe said. "It's going to be determined by a lot of tough political negotiations involving two other orders of government and [York Region]."

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### **TTC yes, private manager no**

Mocking the idea of having a private firm manage the construction of a proposed TTC subway line to Richmond Hill, Mayor David Miller seized yesterday on the name of a failed U.S. investment bank.

"I don't believe that Lehman Brothers should be building our public transit," Mr. Miller said. "...This is an extension of a TTC subway. And I think this council would be derelict in its duties if it did not insist the TTC was the project manager."

The quip was prompted by questioning from Councillor Karen Stintz, who has previously raised the idea of looking into having the private sector, or the province's Metrolinx agency, take over Toronto Transit

Commission projects, something she says could save millions of dollars.

In a testy exchange as Ms. Stintz addressed Mr. Miller's hand-picked executive committee yesterday, the left-leaning mayor - no fan of the current enthusiasm among other governments for public-private partnerships - said the subway should be managed by the city's transit agency alone.

Mr. Miller said the TTC is the most experienced subway-builder in Canada, although he pointed out that almost all of the construction will already be done by the private sector.

Citing the TTC's 1995 fatal subway crash, he said only a government agency can ensure the new line is built to exacting safety standards.

The mayor said a public-private partnership to build a transit line in Vancouver has been "fraught with controversy." He argued that auditor KPMG had endorsed the decision to have the TTC manage the extension of its other north-south subway line, Spadina.

Deputy mayor Joe Pantalone later joined in, comparing the notion from Ms. Stintz to the radical privatizations of former British prime minister Margaret Thatcher. *Jeff Gray*

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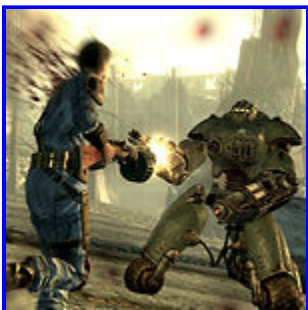
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