

# Debate over Scarborough subways heats up again this week

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## Mayor John Tory at Kennedy subway station on Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2017. (Shawn Jeffords/Toronto Sun)

Another debate over the fate of the Scarborough subway pulls into station this week.

City council will vote to determine the route on which the \$3.3 billion subway extension will sit and to decide whether or not to also build a \$187-million underground bus terminal with it. While the debate is about those two pieces of the overall picture, inevitably the vote provides the councillors with opportunity to change course or kill the controversial project.

Here are the main players on council to watch when the three-day session starts Tuesday:

### FOR

**Mayor John Tory** - Mayor Tory has waged an aggressive campaign to build the Scarborough subway since he launched his bid for the city's top job in 2014. Despite changes to the subway design, dropping from three-stop to an one-stop extension in January 2016, Tory has always stressed the need to build the project, and the 17-stop Eglinton East light-rail line, which remains unfunded.

"It is scandalous that people playing politics against the will of every democratic test that we've had have slowed the city down from getting Scarborough the modern transit that it needs," he said.

**TTC Chairman Josh Colle** - Colle has advocated for the subway as a way to bring transit to Scarborough and replace the aging SRT line. At this week's TTC meeting, Colle argued that in 1989 – five years after the SRT line was built – the transit commission was already thinking of replacing it with a subway – at a cost of \$440 million.

"If we ever need a lesson in what continued dithering, debate and discussion does, I think that's a perfect example of it," he said.

**Scarborough councillors** - Nine of 10 Scarborough councillors support the subway project and sent an open letter to residents of the suburb this week advocating for the it. The letter was co-signed by Deputy Mayor Glenn De Baeremaeker and Councillors Michelle Holland, Gary Crawford, Michael Thompson, Jim Karygiannis, Norm Kelly, Chin Lee, Neethan Shan and Ron Moeser.

"The subway will transform the Scarborough Town Centre into a modern, urban hub, attracting people and businesses to Scarborough from all over the city," says the letter from the group.

### AGAINST

**SUN+** **Councillor Gord Perks** - opposes the Scarborough subway, saying its costs will certainly to escalate. He has also argued that the current version of the project has not been voted on by this council or be the subject of a wider vote like a municipal election, as the three-stop subway was during the 2014 vote.

“One claim we should dispense with is that city council has somehow already decided on this. We absolutely have not. Staff have never been directed to go issue a tender and build a subway. We’ve never had that vote,” he said.

**Councillor Josh Matlow** - is a vocal opponent of the subway and last year, urged council to switch back to a plan to build a seven-stop LRT. That plan, he contended, was still funded under a Master Agreement signed with the province in 2012. Matlow has said council is ignoring facts and figures around the subway project in favour of political considerations.

“It’s important to advocate for what you know is the right thing to do. I’ve formed my opinion based on the evidence in front of us,” he said.

**Councillor Paul Ainslie** - is the lone Scarborough city councillor who does not support the Scarborough subway. Ainslie, who is part of Mayor Tory’s powerful Executive Committee, was the sole member of that group to vote against this latest proposal when it came before them earlier this month. Ainslie has supported building an LRT over a subway since then-Mayor Rob Ford changed the plan in 2013.

“I’m now faced with a subway project that is close to \$3.5 billion and climbing. I have a lot of trouble with my residents, trying to explain to them why I would vote for a project like this and I can’t get a community bus route for them,” he said.

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