



Toronto Community Benefits Network

April 22, 2015.

The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) is a network of community and labour organizations formed to bring the Community Benefits model to economic development in Toronto. TCBN promotes inclusive and equitable economic development that delivers employment, career opportunities and neighbourhood improvement to historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups.

Report after report has documented the difficulties faced by Toronto's diverse communities and neighbourhoods. Each report has recommended access to good jobs as being a key to bringing positive change to neighbourhoods. The Community Benefits model, widely used by cities in the United States to leverage better social economic value from city contracts, will allow the City to ensure that money it is going to spend on roads, transit buildings and other construction projects delivers jobs to neighbourhoods that need it most. This is done by using community based outreach to recruit at-risk youth and others into existing apprentice programs, and placed onto publically funded infrastructure projects.

The TCBN was initially funded in 2013 by a two year grant from the Metcalf Foundation, since renewed for two years. The Atkinson Foundation and the United Way also provide funding. In 2014 the TCBN was engaged as a resident engagement consultant to a MTCU funded Labour Market Partnership project administered by the United Way, and working closely with the Social Development and Demonstration Corporation (SRDC)

In April 2014 the TCBN negotiated the Metrolinx Community Benefits Framework agreement with Metrolinx, the provincial agency that funds and build transit in the GTHA. This ground breaking agreement is to apply to all Metrolinx Toronto Transit Projects, the Eglinton Crosstown, Etobicoke-Finch and the Sheppard East lines.

Two large construction consortia have been formed to bid for the Eglinton Crosstown contract, which is expected to cost about \$4 billion. Each had to commit to specific clauses in the Request for Proposals that outline commitments to apprentice hiring and community engagement. It is expected that about 800 apprentices will be needed among all trades to build the Eglinton Crosstown. The winner is expected to be announced in "summer"2015. The winning bidder will have 6 months to submit a detailed workplan, before construction begins. The line is supposed to be completed in December 2020.

The Framework enables a Community Benefits Working Group to monitor and evaluate implementation of the community benefits. The Working Group is made up of Metrolinx, the winning construction firm, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU), and the Toronto Community Benefits Network.

The process to get to the Framework was respectful, collaborative and innovative. Community and labour did not get everything they had pushed for, but there is enough in the Framework to move forward.

The Metrolinx Framework and associated clauses in the RFP can serve as a model as to how the City of Toronto can easily adopt the Community Benefits model.

The suggestion from Councillor Wong-Tam to initiate a similar Working Group within the City is a very good one. I note she has suggested including MTCU, which would be beneficial to co-ordinate Workforce development efforts at both levels of government, something the Metrolinx Framework does not do. The TCBN would bring its experience to date to the table with the same “work towards success” approach.

What has been that success? Last Fall the TCBN conducted two resident engagement outreach meetings in the west end, in the Mount Dennis/Weston area. The goal was to reach into communities with high unemployment rates, and low participation in society. At one meeting we had over 90 mainly Somali men, of which 83 filled out a registration form. Of those only 1 said they were registered at an Employment Ontario employment agency. (18% said they were receiving Ontario Works). By working with community based groups the TCBN has demonstrated that it reach deep into Neighbourhood Improvement Areas.

Labour and community are committed to the Community Benefits model. So is the province, which recently added \$55 million new money to its apprentice programs. Some of this money will be used for pre-apprentice programs in the City of Toronto. If the City were to ensure that large construction contractors hired apprentices recruited through a community based recruitment campaign, these jobs can go to the communities across the City that need them most. By doing so, the City can build diversity in Toronto construction workforce so that it better reflects the diversity of the City as a whole.

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METROLINX

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METROLINX COMMUNITY BENEFITS FRAMEWORK

Introduction

Metrolinx

Metrolinx, an agency of the Government of Ontario, was created in 2006 to improve the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx is planning and building a transportation system that allows residents to travel across the region more quickly and efficiently, while enhancing the region's prosperity, sustainability and quality of life. Currently, \$16B of transit projects are underway across the GTHA, including; bus rapid transit in York Region and Mississauga, York-Spadina subway extension, light-rail in Toronto, an expanded and improved GO Transit system.

Metrolinx recognizes that its major infrastructure investments should also provide benefits for the communities in which it works, including employment, training, apprenticeship, local supplier and social procurement opportunities where possible. Metrolinx has therefore committed to include a community benefits program for the Toronto Transit Projects (defined as the LRT projects planned for Finch, Sheppard and Eglinton Avenues), beginning with the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line (the "Crosstown", or the "Project"). The Crosstown will run across Eglinton Avenue between Mount Dennis (Weston Road) and Kennedy Station. This 19-kilometre corridor will include a 10-kilometre underground portion, between Keele Street and Laird Drive.

The Crosstown will be delivered through an Alternative Financing and Procurement mechanism. A Request for Proposals has been issued and two qualified consortia are expected to bid on the project. Delivery of the community benefits program will ultimately be included as part of the final contract between Metrolinx, its procurement agent Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and the winning bidder ("ProjectCo") (jointly, the "Parties").

Principles

Metrolinx's approach to community benefits programs will be:

- a. **Inclusive**, offering a range of employment, training, and apprenticeship opportunities for historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups, as well as encouraging the provision of goods and services from local suppliers and social enterprises.
- b. **Accessible**, ensuring that information about employment, training, apprenticeship, and procurement opportunities are made readily available to residents, businesses and social enterprises.
- c. **Transparent**, making the community benefits plan in the final agreement with ProjectCo public, and publishing quarterly reports on progress.
- d. **Collaborative**, by working together with community, labour, business, government, and other stakeholders to share information, resources and learnings, and maximize the impact of the program



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Toronto Transit Projects: Roles and Responsibilities

The information below describes the general roles and responsibilities of the primary partners involved in the community benefits program. This has been developed for the Crosstown, and the partners, roles and responsibilities may vary for the other Toronto Transit projects.

Metrolinx

As the owner of the Project, Metrolinx is responsible for:

- a. ensuring that the community benefits commitments made by ProjectCo in the agreement between the Parties maximize employment, training and apprenticeship opportunities as well as opportunities for the provision of goods and services from local suppliers and social enterprises
- b. monitoring and enforcing the agreement with ProjectCo., including provisions respecting the community benefits program.
- c. hiring a dedicated liaison who will work with the various business units at Metrolinx, ProjectCo, community partners and stakeholders to support the implementation of the community benefits program
- d. providing timely information about professional, administrative and technical employment opportunities at Metrolinx to workforce development and community partners and stakeholders for dissemination to local communities and other target employment groups

ProjectCo

As the implementer of the Project, ProjectCo is responsible for:

- a. submitting a plan six months after financial close of the RFP which outlines its commitments to apprenticeships, employment and local procurement for review and approval by Metrolinx. Once approved, this plan will form part of the project agreement.
- b. implementing the plan as approved unless any changes are made by mutual agreement with the other parties to the agreement (i.e. Metrolinx and IO)
- c. including a community liaison person or team as part of its plan
- d. reporting on its activities on a regular basis.

MTCU

As a key government partner, the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) will play an important role in helping coordinate workforce training and apprenticeship opportunities, distributing employment opportunities through its networks and agencies (including Employment Ontario and others), and ensuring prospective employees are ready for the opportunities to come. Specifically, MCTU will:

- a. fund and conduct a Labour Market Partnership (LMP) project to identify skills gaps, required neighbourhood outreach and other areas that will work to facilitate the employment pipeline for the Eglinton Crosstown line.
- b. Through its work force development service providers network (Employment Ontario) and partnerships, help create a streamlined mechanism through which prospective employees and ProjectCo can access employment services during the project.

- c. Link Employment Ontario training service providers with identified community training needs to prepare residents, when required for Metrolinx job opportunities

Community Partners

Metrolinx is committed to working with community groups and agencies along the Crosstown project, and welcomes input from a wide variety of stakeholders.

The Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) has come forward as a key partner in this initiative. The TCBN was created by labour and community groups in January 2013 to bring the Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) concept to the building of Toronto's Light Rail Transit system, and advocates using legally binding CBAs in all major public infrastructure projects.

The Network envisions Toronto as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a prospering economy.

The Network believes that a priority for a thriving and inclusive city is the continued expansion of transit infrastructure and neighbourhood improvement to meet the needs of all residents. Accessible transit is critical for the social, environmental and economic wellbeing of our city today and into the future.

The expansion of transit that is envisioned for Toronto will result in opportunities for good jobs. It is crucial that all Torontonians have access to economic opportunities stemming from infrastructure investments. As such, the TCBN believes that the diversity of the workers on the LRT project should reflect the diversity of residents of Toronto.

As members of Toronto's communities the TCBN commits to working in partnership with Metrolinx and all other partners on a Community Benefits program that can advance our vision for an inclusive, accountable thriving City.

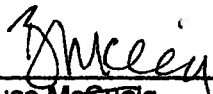
- a. Working together with MTCU, in assisting with outreach to and recruitment of prospective apprentices and employees where appropriate and able, providing training and/or mentorship for prospective apprentices and/or employees
- b. Developing and retaining a registry of social enterprises in the City of Toronto that can be shared with ProjectCo to encourage procurement of goods and services from social enterprises
- c. Working with Metrolinx, ProjectCo and MTCU as applicable to support events and initiatives designed to disseminate information about employment, training apprenticeship and social opportunities for the Eglinton Crosstown line.
- d. Acting as a resource for community information and feedback to Metrolinx on an ongoing basis.
- e. Participating in an ongoing working group as described below

Communications and Coordination

Metrolinx shall host regular meetings of a Community Benefits Working Group with the designated ProjectCo liaison, representatives from MTCU and from the TCBN (and other community partners as appropriate) to ensure smooth coordination of the activities identified as part of the community benefits program. This group will serve as a forum for dialogue for any issues that may arise and will work collaboratively to support and promote the community


benefits program. This group may also be invited to participate in discussions about other areas relevant to the Crosstown project, including but not limited to development on Metrolinx-owned property such as mobility hubs.

This group will also participate in the creation of the monitoring and evaluation framework for the community benefits program, review progress reports supplied by ProjectCo, suggest refinements and improvements to the program on an ongoing basis, and provide input into the quarterly reports published by Metrolinx which will summarize the relevant activities of all of the partners involved.



Bruce McCuaig
President & Chief Executive Officer
Metrolinx

April 23, 2014
Date



Steve Shallhorn
Community Benefits Network

April 28, 2014
Date

Excerpts from the Eglinton-Crosstown Request for Proposals (RFP)

1.1 Apprenticeship Plan and Program

(a) No later than six months after Financial Close, Project Co shall provide a plan setting out Project Co's Project-specific approach to maximizing apprenticeship opportunities on the Project (the "**Apprenticeship Plan**") for review and approval by the Sponsors. The Apprenticeship Plan shall include,

(i) specific objectives for apprenticeship opportunities for the Project on a trade-by-trade basis;

(ii) apprenticeship opportunities for each trade required on the Project;

(iii) a confirmation that apprenticeships will be registered with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ontario College of Trades, as applicable;

(iv) a program to ensure the required supply of apprentices to meet Project Co's Apprenticeship Plan objectives and requirements;

(v) a program to support apprentices on the Project to complete their apprenticeships during the Project Term and, for those whose apprenticeships are not complete by the end of the Project Term, a program to support apprentices to complete their apprenticeships after the end of the Project Term; and

(vi) a focused program for youth-at-risk, historically disadvantaged groups in local communities including low-income, racialized and immigrant populations, and military veterans.

(b) Project Co shall implement the approved Apprenticeship Plan.

(c) Project Co shall provide an annual report to HMQ Agencies on the implementation of the Apprenticeship Plan which report shall include,

(i) statistics on the number of apprentices involved in the Project relative to the number of journeypersons, for each month of the Project; and

(ii) detailed information setting out Project Co's progress toward achieving the objectives set out in the Apprenticeship Plan, including an identification of any barriers that prevented Project Co from achieving its objectives.

(d) HMQ Agencies may require Project Co to amend its Apprenticeship Plan if, in the HMQ Agencies' opinion, acting reasonably, Project Co is failing to maximize apprenticeship opportunities on the Project pursuant to the then current Apprenticeship Plan.

(e) HMQ Agencies may, in their sole discretion, release Project Co's Apprenticeship Plan to the public. Project Co's Apprenticeship Plan shall not be Confidential Information.

20.15 Community Benefits and Liaison Plan

(a) No later than six months after Financial Close, Project Co will provide to the HMQ Agencies, for review and approval, a plan setting out Project Co's Project-specific approach to,

(i) providing community liaison to the communities impacted by the Works; and

(ii) events it plans to undertake to enhance community awareness of employment opportunities and opportunities for the provision of goods and services to Project Co,

(the "Community Benefits and Liaison Plan").

(b) The Community Benefits and Liaison Plan shall include,

(i) a description of Project Co's planned initiatives to enhance community awareness of employment opportunities that are available as a result of the Project;

(ii) a description of Project Co's plans to liaise with local workforce agencies;

(iii) a description of Project's planned events to disseminate information about employment opportunities that are available to local workforces;

(iv) a description of Project Co's plans to disseminate information about goods and services that will be required for the Project from the community in the vicinity of the Project and supplier opportunities that exist; and

(v) the identification of Project Co's liaison person or team whose role it will be to liaise with local community groups during the Works.

(c) Project Co shall implement the approved Community Benefits and Liaison Plan.

(d) Project Co shall provide an annual report to HMQ Agencies on the implementation of the Community Benefits and Liaison Plan which report shall include detailed information on Project Co's success in implementing the Community Benefits and Liaison Plan.

(e) HMQ Agencies may require Project Co to amend its Community Benefits and Liaison Plan from time to time if, in the HMQ Agencies' opinion, acting reasonably, Project Co is failing to successfully implement the Community Benefits and Liaison Plan.

(f) HMQ Agencies may, in their sole discretion, release Project Co's Community Benefits and Liaison Plan to the public. Project Co's Community Benefits and Liaison Plan shall not be Confidential Information.

The plan: train and hire Toronto's neediest for six-figure jobs. The catch: how to find them

JOHN LORINC

Special to The Globe and Mail

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Ahmed Abbi, an apprentice with the Carpenters Union Local 27, is seen at their training centre in Vaughan, Ont., Wednesday, March 4, 2015. (Photos by Tim Fraser for The Globe and Mail)

Earlier this spring, Ahmed Abbi, a 27-year-old Weston resident, was at a North York golf club, building lockers.

On its face, that modest job may not seem noteworthy. But for Mr. Abbi – who was born in Somalia, grew up in a Kenyan refugee camp and came here 14 years ago – the five-day gig marked two firsts:

As a novice carpenter's apprentice, he was earning \$18.50 an hour – "the most I ever got in Toronto," he says. Mr. Abbi was also the first Somali-Canadian to work in the Carpenters Union Local 27.

His position, however, was also early evidence of a much more ambitious plan by Metrolinx and a network of labour and community groups to train people from high-needs neighbourhoods to work in construction, and then compel the contractors building mega-projects like the Eglinton Crosstown to hire them.

That strategy, known as a community benefits agreement (CBA), is also generating interest at City Hall. On Monday, the executive committee will consider a motion by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam to have city officials look at using CBAs on all large infrastructure and development projects as a means of creating better economic opportunities for low-income residents, and especially young people, like Mr. Abbi. Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne publicly endorsed CBAs last year.

In theory, the idea of leveraging huge works contracts to produce social benefits seems appealing. But in practice, it's hardly a straightforward proposition.

The objective is to make sure that the construction work force better reflects the diversity of the city of Toronto.

Steve Shallhorn, Toronto Community Benefits Network

The story of how Mr. Abbi connected with that carpentry training program traces to the aftermath of the gang-related Danzig Street shootings in 2012. At that time, a network of trade-union officials and community workers began to talk about getting unemployed youth into construction jobs on the city's transit projects. Such opportunities, they reckoned, could counter the lure of crime in priority neighbourhoods, like Kingston Galloway.

"The objective is to make sure that the construction work force better reflects the diversity of the city of Toronto," says organizer Steve Shallhorn, who is also executive director of the Labour Education Centre.

After two years of negotiations, that group, now known as the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN), persuaded Metrolinx to formally require firms bidding for the \$4-billion Eglinton Crosstown project, as well as the Sheppard and Finch LRTs, to hire in the city's neediest areas. With a decade of work ahead, these transit mega-projects will yield hundreds of jobs.

The winning consortia will have to develop an "apprenticeship plan," including "a focused program for youth-at-risk, historically disadvantaged groups in local communities including low-income, racialized and immigrant populations, and military veterans," say RFP documents obtained by The Globe and Mail. The builders must target their recruitment efforts in communities affected by the transit construction and provide annual updates.

The tricky part, as Mr. Shallhorn acknowledges, is identifying the young people who'd benefit, training them and then persuading construction unions to take on minorities, women and newcomers – in short, individuals like Mr. Abbi, who traditionally have had little presence on work sites.

The social stakes are high: While CBAs have delivered thousands of stable construction jobs to minorities in U.S. cities, it remains to be seen whether the TCBN's efforts will yield similar results here.



Like thousands of Somali-Canadians, Mr. Abbi has struggled to gain a foothold in Toronto's labour force. Some turned to drug-dealing and gangs, while most subsist on a diet of low-wage jobs.

Though Mr. Abbi got into an international-relations program at the University of Toronto, he couldn't stay in school because he had to support his family, both here and in Somalia. He cycled through menial jobs, then went to Fort McMurray. The money was good, but the work didn't last. He came back last year.

"You've got to make ends meet," muses Mr. Abbi, whose best job before the golf-club contract was a two-month, \$14-an-hour stint as a telemarketer.

At the same time, TCBN members were searching for community organizers in four priority neighbourhoods, including Mt. Dennis-Weston. The search took them to Women for Change, a shoestring parenting organization on Jane Street.

TCBN hired Nasteeha Dirie, a volunteer for the group, and asked her to drum up prospective candidates. Ms. Dirie came from Somalia 23 years ago and studied accounting, but has spent her career in community work.

After asking women who drop by her agency if their husbands or sons needed work, she collected lots of names, among them Mr. Abbi's.

The one thing we learned is that these people are hungry for work.

Nasteeha Dirie, TCBN

Last fall, TCBN invited them to information sessions. Ms. Dirie's candidates were screened for education and credentials. They met with trade union reps, who explained how journeymen could earn \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year – many times more than someone working for \$18.50 an hour. Drawing on provincial funding, TCBN arranged upgrading courses, training programs and apprenticeships.

Of the hundred who turned up to one session, almost none had registered with provincial agencies, meaning they didn't even appear in local unemployment stats. They were, says Mr. Shallhorn, exactly the population TCBN wanted to reach: able-bodied individuals trapped in a cycle of marginal, temporary jobs.

Mr. Abbi attended another such session at a restaurant on Dixon Road. There, he met Chris Campbell, a business agent for the Carpenters who was helping TCBN. Impressed with Mr. Abbi, Mr. Campbell urged him to enroll in courses offered through the union's Vaughan training centre and forge connections with other carpenters and contractors who can provide leads.

Mr. Campbell also gave Mr. Abbi advice. He'd been the only African-Canadian in his training class, and came in for racist taunting. (Mr. Abbi has faced harsh remarks about Somali pirates or Islamic extremism.) But, as he told Mr. Abbi, he also had mentors. Mr. Campbell is paying it forward. "Guys opened doors for me."

Mr. Abbi has followed Mr. Campbell's counsel: "You've got to network, and smile for everybody. You've got to push it better than anyone else because you already stand out."

But TCBN organizers know that Mr. Abbi, and others like him, have to make ends meet while completing their training so they can have a shot at those Crosstown jobs. Since the golf club gig ended, Mr. Abbi has taken on two other short-term carpentry/construction gigs, including one he got through connections he'd made while on the job.

Ms. Dirie says the city and the province should provide support by offering recruits from low-income areas with Metropasses or short-term assistance during their training. "The one thing we learned is that these people are hungry for work."



In Toronto, the only major project to date that involved a CBA was the Regent Park redevelopment. Toronto Community Housing Corp. made local hiring a requirement, resulting in 600 jobs for area residents. Ms. Wong-Tam says the tactic has huge potential and cites multibillion-dollar projects in cities like Los Angeles and San Francisco that involved CBAs and generated thousands of jobs for residents of economically deprived communities.

Mr. Abbi, who stays in touch with Mr. Campbell, is "really appreciative" as he continues his apprenticeships and waits for the real Metrolinx construction jobs to start rolling out. "I'm lucky because I found this guy," he says of Mr. Campbell. "Basically, I'm just hoping for the best. I have my fingers crossed that it works out."

