

PROVINCIAL ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION: PRIORITY SUBWAY PROJECTS

October 2019

Purpose:

To provide a high-level overview of the approach to engagement/consultation that the Province of Ontario intends to deploy for the priority projects included in Ontario's "New Subway Transit Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)" (i.e., the Ontario Line, the three-stop Scarborough Subway Extension, the Yonge North Subway Extension and the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension).

Note: The province and its agencies – namely, Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario – continue to develop and refine detailed public/stakeholder engagement plans comprising activities that reflect the principles and general methods outlined below.

Background & Context:

In February 2019, the Province of Ontario, the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) agreed to a "Realignment of Transit Responsibilities Review Terms of Reference" (ToR), which is governing the Ontario-Toronto engagement process to "*pursue alternative approaches to the planning, funding, decision-making and delivery of transit in Toronto.*"

Through the ToR, the parties, "*... acknowledge that meaningful public consultation is a required input to effective decision-making*", and further commit that "*... during the process, the parties will conduct consultation with the public, including other key stakeholders.*"

The *Getting Ontario Moving Act, 2019* received Royal Assent on June 6, 2019. This legislation, through amendments to the *Metrolinx Act, 2006*, granted the province the ability to prescribe a rapid transit project as the "sole responsibility" of the province (through Metrolinx), and the ability to transfer – from the city to the province – assets related to that prescribed project.

A regulation issued under these new legislative provisions (i.e., O. Reg 248/19) was filed on July 23, 2019. This regulation prescribes three priority subway projects – that is, the Relief Line/Ontario Line, the Scarborough Subway Extension and the Yonge North Subway Extension – as the "sole responsibility" of Metrolinx. The province has also committed to deliver the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension as part of Ontario's "New Subway Transit Plan for the GTHA."

Provincial Commitment to Public Engagement/Consultation:

(i) Principles-Based Approach

With the above-noted priority subway projects under provincial responsibility, the province has reaffirmed both its commitment to engage the public/stakeholders on the projects, and its commitment, through the ToR, to continue working with the city and the TTC in the spirit of collaboration and partnership.

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As these projects are delivered using the public-private partnership (P3) model (please see below for additional information), the province intends to pursue public engagement activities that reflect, where possible, principles that are similar to those identified by the city in its consultation plan for the (former) Relief Line project. For reference, these principles are: inclusiveness, timeliness, transparency, balance, flexibility and traceability.

(ii) Role of Metrolinx

As part of its leadership role in implementing the priority subway projects, Metrolinx will lead engagement of the public, communities and other stakeholders, while working closely with Infrastructure Ontario, the city, the TTC and other partners.

Metrolinx has a dedicated team of Community Relations experts, who have extensive and recent engagement experience on the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, GO expansion projects and other LRT/rapid transit projects being built throughout the region. Moreover, Metrolinx will continue to develop detailed consultation plans and activities – working with its partners – as the respective alignments and delivery models are determined for the priority subway projects.

In addition, Metrolinx continues to review the existing project-based consultation plans designed by the city and the TTC. In doing so, Metrolinx's objective is to leverage and build upon, to the degree possible, the previous work undertaken, in order to finalize a set of engagement plans specifically tailored to the priority subway projects.

Key Questions – Engagement/Consultation Approach:

(i) What is the “P3 model,” and what does it mean for public consultation?

Under the public-private partnership (“P3”) model for project delivery, the public sector establishes the scope and purpose of the project, while the design and construction work are financed and carried out by the private sector. The P3 model has allowed the province to deliver more infrastructure projects sooner and to maximize private sector innovation in design and construction. Infrastructure Ontario's P3 model has a proven track record of successfully delivering large, complex infrastructure projects on time and on budget.

Under more traditional project delivery models, such as Design-Bid-Build (i.e., the conventional TTC delivery model), designs and specifications are typically developed by the project owner, which then tenders the construction to a private sector contractor.

As a result of the distinctions in these project delivery methods, public engagement/consultation activities generally function differently under P3 projects than under Design-Bid-Build projects, as design decisions are made at different points in the process. Through the P3 model, the province seeks market innovations, which are

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expected to continue even after a consortium is brought on-board to deliver a project.

As the province deploys the P3 model for the priority subway projects, the communities that these projects will serve will have opportunities for meaningful input throughout the delivery cycle. Over the coming months, Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario will continue to gather input from the city and the TTC to develop detailed engagement/consultation plans for each of these projects.

(ii) At what points in the project delivery process will communities be engaged?

The province, through Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario, is committed to public, community and stakeholder engagement as it works with the City of Toronto, the TTC, the Regional Municipality of York and the York Region Rapid Transit Corporation to build a modern, integrated transit system.

Opportunities for meaningful consultation/engagement will arise at several points throughout the project delivery process. In general, these may include (but will not be limited to):

- Project Planning & Development: The project is introduced to the community, and initial feedback is sought. Metrolinx works with residents to establish why the project is needed and to outline the proposed delivery approach.
- Environmental Considerations: Under the *Environmental Assessment Act's* Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), the project is subject to a defined process to ensure that consultation occurs and to incorporate environmental factors into decision making. Environmental approvals and authorizations are also put in place to ensure the environment is protected.
- Design & Procurement: Metrolinx works with the communities to: inform them of the details of the project; address design concerns; and, build momentum for delivery.
- Construction: The focus of this stage of the process is to: minimize impacts to residents and local businesses; keep the community informed during construction; and, manage/respond to issues as they arise.
- Operations: Once the project is in service, communications will continue to: identify new and recurring issues; and, ensure that the public and communities are aware of these issues, and how they are being managed.

(iii) How will communities be consulted?

Metrolinx will continue to develop detailed consultation plans and activities – working with its partners – as the respective alignments and delivery models are determined for the priority subway projects.

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The engagement methods that Metrolinx has applied successfully for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project – and that it may employ again in the future – include (but are not limited to):

- Open houses;
- Regular meetings with local Business Improvement Areas, elected officials and residents' associations;
- Newsletters;
- Online consultations and surveys;
- Social media engagement and dedicated websites;
- Appearances at special events (e.g., food festivals, concerts, etc.), and,
- Direct engagement with property owners, as needed.