



Office of the President & Chief Executive Officer

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June 14, 2021

Derrick Toigo
Executive Director, Transit Expansion Division
City Hall
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Dear Mr. Toigo,

Re: City Council agenda item MM32.27

Thank you for your letter dated June 3, 2021, regarding City Council agenda item MM32.27. I write this response to acknowledge City Council's requests. I also write to respond to City Council's concerns by providing information on the process that led to the selection of the site for the Ontario Line Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF), the alternate sites that were considered, as well as our next steps for community consultations.

Selecting a site for an MSF is challenging for a transit line through the heart of Canada's most populous city, where available land is in short supply. We used multiple criteria to evaluate potential sites:

- **Size:** Needs to be able to hold 200 train cars at day one operations with potential to hold an additional 250 train cars as ridership demand increases.
- **Proximity to transit line:** Needs to be close to the Ontario Line for simpler operations and avoiding long connections to the main passenger line.
- **Land use:** Needs to be consistent with planned uses for employment, and avoid residential displacement.
- **Growth considerations:** Avoid areas that have significant proposed growth, such as added residential density.
- **Community impacts:** Try to minimize impacts to local community.
- **Employment and local business/organizations:** Ensure minimum permanent impacts to jobs and local businesses/organizations.
- **Environmental considerations:** Attempt to avoid sensitive ecological areas.

These criteria led us to bring forward nine sites for deeper evaluation, which we then reduced to five and finally three feasible sites: Wicksteed, Overlea, and Leaside.

Based on the initial technical evaluation, Metrolinx carried forward the Wicksteed area as the base location for the project. As we began to discuss this site with our colleagues at the City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario, concerns were raised about displacing the existing industrial businesses on that site, Tremco and Siltech. There were also major road network concerns with the removal of Beth Neilson Dr. that could significantly impact access to the community.

Metrolinx began discussions with Tremco and Siltech in Fall 2020, and through these discussions we learned that a relocation was not feasible for either company and that expropriating the land could lead to the businesses leaving not only the City, but possibly the region or the country entirely. The supply chain and indirect job impact of this would be at least 4-5 times the impact of the direct jobs (estimated impact on direct jobs at 800-900 employees), with very few of the total of the affected direct and indirect jobs retainable or replaceable.

The loss of this much employment led Metrolinx to examine the Overlea option more carefully, as well as hybrid options that combine the southern portion of the Wicksteed site (where relocations were easier than the northern portion) and the northern portion of the Overlea site. This hybrid approach ended up becoming the new reference site.

Property acquisitions on the preferred site will also have an impact on jobs, however we are confident that we can relocate these businesses within the community or nearby, in advance of the acquisition. The hybrid option also had the smallest impact to jobs overall (estimated at 500-700 employees affected, but all/most of these will be retained and locally relocated).

We appreciate that the businesses that will be affected have particular importance to the nearby community. We are therefore committed to a long-term program of consultation with community members to manage impacts and to relocate all impacted local businesses and organizations within the community or nearby, at our cost.

This process is well underway. We began discussions with landowners impacted at the site in early 2021 in advance of planned public engagement on the confirmed location, which began with a virtual town hall on April 15. We also briefed elected officials before we began that public engagement.

More than 500 people attended the town hall, where we heard the concerns raised by many in the community. Since then, we have attended a number of meetings with community members, such as residents' associations, commercial property owners and tenants. The local MPP has also established two tables with us - one for tenant businesses and organizations impacted by the MSF and another for community/resident leaders, which we have been actively participating in.

The discussions with tenants are progressing well and we are in the midst of executing our relocation plan to ensure affected businesses and organizations are moved within the community well before work at the MSF begins. While these are commercial negotiations, I can assure you, we are moving rapidly on these transactions and expect significant progress to occur over the summer.

As we continue to engage with the broader community, we will also advance design solutions that integrate the MSF in the existing neighbourhood. We plan to workshop ideas with the City and community. We also want the community's input on what the end state vision could be for lands available after construction.

We will also work with local organizations to help as many community members as possible take advantage of the 300 new job opportunities the MSF will bring to Thorncliffe Park.

While we understand the impacts to the Thorncliffe Park community are difficult for many, we will work to mitigate any issues as best as possible. These issues, however, must also be viewed in light of the transformative impact the Ontario Line will have on Thorncliffe Park. This is a community that has been underserved by transit and by bringing a subway into the community, it will vastly improve connections in and out of the community. For example, travel times to downtown will be reduced from 40 to 25 minutes, and the community will get improved connections to other transit routes, such as the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, the Line 2 subway, and GO Transit. We are excited to maximize the benefits of this investment by working in partnership with the community, business leaders, and local officials throughout the lifecycle of the project.

We will continue to work closely with the City of Toronto as we advance this critical component of the Ontario Line project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Phil Verster', with a checkmark-like flourish at the end.

Phil Verster
President and CEO