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City Councillor | Ward 10, Spadina-Fort York

September 27, 2021

Toronto Board of Health

Re: Request for a Review of the Health Impact Assessment for the Ontario Line

Colleagues,

I am introducing this item on behalf of Councillor Paula Fletcher.

At its meeting of August 2010, the Toronto Board of Health considered a [report](#) on Metrolinx' noise and vibration assessments for the Georgetown Rail Expansion and Air-Rail Link, now known the Union Pearson Express. The report, from the then Medical Officer of Health Dr. David McKeown, revealed several shortcomings in Metrolinx's work. For example, the report noted:

A review of the consultants' report identified several limitations in the noise and vibration assessments. In particular, noise impacts at City parks in the vicinity of the Georgetown Corridor were not evaluated and could be significant.

This report, over ten years old, underscores the historical issues that Metrolinx has had with building trust with local communities around issues like health impacts, noise, and vibration. With the proposed Ontario Line many residents in Toronto-Danforth are concerned that future Metrolinx assessments for the upcoming Ontario Line and GO Expansion could suffer from similar deficiencies.

When asked by community members, Metrolinx stated publicly that "it is not standard Metrolinx practice to conduct health impact assessments." So South Riverdale Community Health Centre (SRCHC) and Save Jimmie Simpson (SJS) have worked together to produce a Health Impact Assessment regarding the Ontario Line in Riverside/Leslieville. This HIA compares the proposed 1.5 km of above-ground subway in this neighbourhood to a community-supported below ground option based partially on the approved TTC Relief Line proposal. It was conducted by a former Toronto Public Health specialist and is almost near completion.

Just this past week Metrolinx released their Early Works Report for the Joint Corridor and set a commenting deadline of October 24th. The documents are over a thousand pages and contain many technical studies that the community is keen to digest and respond to properly. This leaves little time to review the Metrolinx documents against the HIA.

Recommendations:

1. The Board of Health request the Medical Officer of Health to review the local Health Impact Assessment, produced by the South Riverdale Community Health Centre and Save Jimmie Simpson regarding the Ontario Line in Riverside/Leslieville, once completed.
2. The Board of Health request Metrolinx to extend the commenting period for the Draft Lakeshore East Joint Corridor Early Works Report beyond the October 24, 2021 deadline in order to allow the Medical Officer of Health to review the local Health Impact Assessment, produced by the South Riverdale Community Health Centre and Save Jimmie Simpson regarding the Ontario Line in Riverside/Leslieville, and provide proper comment.

Sincerely,

Joe Cressy
Chair, Toronto Board of Health