

Metrolinx Ontario Line Downtown Stations - Review of Vulnerable Road User Safety, Transit Priority and Communication to Local Community

Date: March 16, 2022

To: Executive Committee

From: General Manager - Transportation Services

Wards: Ward 10 - Spadina-Fort York and Ward 13 - Toronto Centre

SUMMARY

As part of the approval for Item EX28.14, City Council requested a report on vulnerable road user safety, transit priority and timely communication to the local community during construction of the Ontario Line downtown stations. This report responds to those requests.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The General Manager, Transportation Services recommends that:

1. The Executive Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the City. Metrolinx and the Project Co. are responsible for all costs, including payment of fees to the City for the occupancy of the right-of-way. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

City Council at its meeting on December 15, 2021 approved temporary long-term road closures for construction of Ontario Line Corktown, Moss Park, Queen, Osgoode, Queen-Spadina and King-Bathurst Stations and associated transit structures.

[Agenda Item History - 2021.EX28.14 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

City Council at its meeting on February 2, 2021, delegated the General Manager, Transportation Services, the authority to temporarily close to pedestrians and vehicular traffic highways or portion of highways for a period up to and including 365 consecutive days, until December 2030, inclusive, with the exception of those highways listed in Section 937-4 of Chapter 937, as required for the purpose of the construction of Ontario Line, excluding the proposed above ground section of the Ontario Line, between the Don River and Gerrard Street, and City Council exempt the General Manager, Transportation Services, in carrying out this delegated authority from Section 937-5 of Chapter 937, that being the requirement to notify the local Ward Councillor of the pending closure and the requirement to report on the proposed closure if so requested by the local Ward Councillor

[Agenda Item History - 2021.IE19.10 \(toronto.ca\)](#)

COMMENTS

On December 15, 2021, City Council approved Item EX28.14 detailing the temporary long-term road closures required to construct the Ontario Line (OL) King-Bathurst, Queen-Spadina, Osgoode, Queen, Moss Park and Corktown Stations and associated transit structures. As part of the approval, City Council requested a report on road safety impacts for vulnerable road users, transit priority, and engagement with the local community during construction of the OL Enabling works and the downtown stations. This report addresses the City Council requests by providing project-specific details on these items.

Road Safety Impacts on Vulnerable Road Users

The Vision Zero approach to road safety is to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries in our transportation system, because no loss of life is acceptable. A Vision Zero approach is based on the principle that people make mistakes and the transportation system needs to be designed and operated in a way that caters to human error in order to eliminate fatalities and serious injuries.

In 2019, City Council adopted Vision Zero 2.0, the first major update to the Vision Zero Road Safety Plan. Vision Zero 2.0 proposed a set of key initiatives and infrastructure improvements to achieve meaningful reductions in serious injury and fatal collisions in the next five years (2020-2024).

In addition to the infrastructure enhancements and network changes that the City continues to progress to advance Vision Zero objectives, City staff also work to ensure that works in the public right of way, by both the private and public sector, contribute to these objectives and enable safe movement for all users. In the context of the Ontario Line, and the other major projects that Metrolinx are advancing in the City, the safety of public right of way users, is a paramount consideration. City staff work closely with Metrolinx, their contractors and consultants to ensure that proposed site sets ups and

temporary arrangements for all modes are safe. This approach and focus on safety was reflected in the details that came forward as part of report EX28.14.

As reported in EX28.14, except for the OL Queen Station, Metrolinx and its contractor (the Project Co.) will maintain existing bicycle connectivity at all the OL downtown station locations.

With the curb lane closures in place, people cycling at the OL King-Bathurst, Queen-Spadina, Moss Park and Corktown Stations will continue to share the available streetcar lane with the general traffic. Metrolinx through its Project Co. will install shared lane pavement markings and "Share the Road" advisory signage along with advance signage, strategically located for maximum visibility, to provide guidance to road users as they approach the work zones.

People cycling will continue to utilize the protected bicycle lanes on University Avenue and Simcoe Street in the vicinity of the OL Osgoode Station.

With the full closure of Queen Street, between Bay Street and Victoria Street, to enable construction of the OL Queen St. Station, people cycling on Queen Street will need to bypass the closed portion by diverting to alternative parallel routes, specifically major east-west bikeways on Richmond Street and Adelaide Street. To facilitate a connection between Queen Street and the major bikeways on Richmond Street and Adelaide Street, Metrolinx through an enabling works project, will install a new cycle track on York Street, between Richmond Street West and King Street West.

Throughout the Ontario Line construction Metrolinx and the Project Co. will manage the safety of people cycling in the construction zone by implementing safe work zone accommodations based on site-specific conditions and applicable guidelines contained in the Ontario Traffic Manual Books 7 and 18. The Project Co. will prepare traffic control plans showing site-specific bicycle safety measures and submit them to City staff for review as part of the permit application. In addition, the Project Co. will also maintain the bicycle detours in the work zones to ensure they remain free of dust, debris, snow, ice and construction material.

The requirement for pedestrian safety will be identified in the Project Requirements that will be issued to all bidders. Pedestrian safety will also be assured in the work zones by providing separation from the construction site and traffic. As reported in EX 28.14, the Project Co. will accommodate pedestrian connectivity in the work zones by either installing a protected temporary walkway in the curb lane adjacent to the closed portion of the sidewalk or safely directing pedestrians to an alternative sidewalk at the nearest signalized crossing. The specific detail of the pedestrian provision at each location will be set out in the traffic management plans that will accompany permit applications and will be reviewed by City staff, ensuring pedestrian safety, prior to permit issuance.

The Project Co. will provide accessible, detectable temporary pedestrian walkways in conformance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA). The pedestrians will be directed to these walkways by clearly placed temporary traffic signage. The majority of the temporary walkways will be provided with a clear width of 2.1 metres, thus meeting or exceeding the AODA required minimum width of 1.8

metres. The Project Co. will provide temporary curb ramps to ensure easy access for people with mobility challenges. The temporary walkways will be well lit, made with a stable and slip resistant surface, covered where required to protect pedestrians from falling debris or overhead hazards and kept free of dust, dirt, loose material, snow and ice. The temporary walkways will maintain access to existing transit stops, or enable accessible access in the case of relocated transit stops.

Where a temporary pedestrian walkway cannot be provided due to space constraints, pedestrians will be directed to the alternative sidewalk at the nearest signalized crossing. As reported in EX28.14, there are four locations where a portion of the sidewalk will need to be closed and pedestrians will be directed to an alternative sidewalk on the other side of the street:

- Closure of a portion of the south sidewalk on Bulwer Street for approximately 3 months;
- Closure of a portion of the west sidewalk on Simcoe Street for approximately 7 years;
- Closure of a portion of the east sidewalk on James Street for approximately 2 years; and
- Closure of a portion of the south sidewalk on King Street East for approximately 2 years.

The Project Co. will install temporary traffic signage at the nearest signalized crossing to inform the pedestrians of the sidewalk closure and guide them to the alternative sidewalk on the other side of the street.

To avoid conflicts between construction vehicles and vulnerable road users, the Project Co. will actively manage safety at site accesses and egresses. The site accesses and egresses will be well lit and hoarding will be designed to ensure sufficient sight lines are available for both the vehicle drivers and pedestrians. Additionally, trained traffic control persons will be deployed to actively manage the inbound and outbound movements of construction vehicles and ensure the safety of vulnerable road users. Temporary traffic control devices and warning signage will be installed to ensure that pedestrians and other road users are fully aware of the construction site accesses.

The construction of the OL Stations will generate a significant number of truck trips to haul excavated soils and deliver construction material to various sites. The safety of people cycling and pedestrians along the haul routes needs to be assured and will be specified in the Project Requirements issued to bidders. Once the Project Co. has been appointed they will be required to develop a vulnerable road user strategy to ensure that pedestrians and people cycling are protected. This strategy, along with the proposed haul routes will be reviewed by City staff to minimize impacts on road user safety, congestion, noise and air quality.

City staff will establish a Construction Hub in this area to provide a high level of oversight and ensure coordination in logistical planning between Metrolinx work sites, City-led project work sites, developer work sites and any other works taking place on or adjacent to the public right of way. The Construction Hub Coordinator will also be a

"single point of contact" for these parties, as well as for business and the public/residents. Metrolinx have appointed Bechtel to provide coordination and oversight of OL construction. Bechtel are one of the world's most respected engineering, construction and project management companies and will direct, and coordinate a broad range of construction management, field representation and monitoring services to support the OL works on behalf of Metrolinx. All measures implemented by Project Co. at each of the work sites and on the haul routes will be monitored and kept under review by Bechtel and Project Co., in coordination with City staff, to ensure the ongoing safety of all road users, but especially vulnerable road users. Where required, changes and additional safety measures will be implemented.

The Project Co. will be responsible for maintaining work zone safety, quality and its conformance to the approved permit conditions. Additionally, Metrolinx's Traffic-Transportation, Health and Safety and Field Service Teams will regularly audit the construction sites to ensure compliance with the Project Agreement, which requires the Project Co. to follow the City's permit process and conditions. In case any irregularities are discovered during the audit, the Project Co. will be immediately notified for correction. City staff in coordination with Metrolinx will also patrol the construction site interfaces with the public right of way to ensure compliance with permit approved work zone areas and set up, ensure the safety of all road users and look for opportunities to optimize the work zone footprint.

Transit and Transit Priority

Continuation of transit service during construction of the OL stations was considered vital in order to reduce auto trips in the downtown area and encourage alternative modes of travel.

Except for the Queen Station, all transit lines including buses, streetcars and subway service will be maintained during the construction of the OL downtown stations. The full closure of Queen Street, between Bay Street and Victoria Street, will result in detour of the TTC 501 Queen streetcar service. Metrolinx will install new streetcar tracks on York Street, between Queen Street West and Adelaide Street West, to facilitate the detour. Metrolinx and TTC will coordinate to ensure accessible transit stops are available on the streetcar detour and all existing transit signal priority intersection locations will be maintained. Additionally, Metrolinx, TTC and City staff will revisit transit priority in the downtown, along with signal timings in general, to try and ensure the transit network and general traffic movements can operate as efficiently and effectively as possible and that competing demands are managed. This work will also include transit diversion routes and investigation of priority for the movements that those diversions require.

Ensuring a Timely Response to Local Residents and the Community

As part of its ongoing project planning Metrolinx has organized regular meetings, virtual open houses and consultation with local communities, community advocacy groups, stakeholders, BIAs and elected officials to present information on project construction, road closures, transit and traffic diversions, as well as design surveys in the north

alignment and joint corridor to get public input into design and landscaping elements within these communities. Metrolinx has recently established the Joint Corridor Design Excellence Working Group in collaboration with elected officials, community groups and City of Toronto staff from Parks and Recreation and Planning to ensure the community is informed of project plans pertaining to key infrastructure elements, including retaining walls, noise barriers and landscaping elements to ensure direct input from working group members and the broader community.

To date, Metrolinx has hosted 20 Virtual Open Houses (VOHs) with more than 3,000 live attendees and over 20,000 people visiting the event pages and have responded to more than 2,000 questions asked at the virtual open houses. Metrolinx has held more than 130 meetings and dozens of community outreach pop-up events along the project alignment with more than 800 interactions with residents. Metrolinx continues to issue construction notices across communities to keep them informed of projected related activities taking place.

Metrolinx will continue with its community outreach\engagement during the ongoing planning and construction of the OL. Metrolinx and the Project Co. will organize monthly Construction Liaison Committee (CLC) meetings where the project updates and advanced information on upcoming project activities including road closures will be provided and any stakeholder concerns will be identified and addressed. Metrolinx and the Project Co. will issue advanced public notifications prior to any significant change in traffic staging. The advanced notifications will be posted on the project website and delivered door-to-door. Metrolinx project communication team will broadcast the major project-related changes on television, radio and social media platforms.

Additionally Metrolinx has actively been engaging with residents and stakeholders through community events and meetings and will continue to use every opportunity to ensure awareness and receive feedback on the impending closures.

Consistent with the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT projects, Metrolinx has established a community office for the OL project at 770 Queen Street East. This office will serve residents, BIAs and other stakeholders by addressing their project-related questions or concerns in a timely manner. Metrolinx is working to open a second community office at 45 Thorncliffe Park Drive this spring, to ensure the community has easy access to the community relations team. Community offices are open six days per week, with emails and telephone calls monitored seven days a week. Additionally, community office contact information will be posted on the project website and at the station construction sites.

In addition to ensuring comprehensive awareness of the project and ongoing and upcoming activities, Metrolinx recognise that providing an accessible, responsive complaints process is an integral part of effectively managing construction, noise and vibration issues. Metrolinx will establish a strict complaints communication protocol in its project agreement with Project Co. Agreements will outline specific contractual obligations that must be adhered to, including protocols and escalation details for all public enquiries, issues and complaints related to noise, vibration, and construction matters. This includes an appropriately staffed telephone complaints line which will be

accessible to the public 24/7/365. Metrolinx will also establish appropriate oversight measures to ensure all complaints are reviewed and handled promptly and effectively.

Metrolinx continues to engage with City of Toronto staff to provide project updates and develop consensus on approaches to project details to ensure alignment when providing timely updates to the public, elected officials and stakeholders.

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS
