

# West Don Lands Committee

Citizens for the Old Town  
Corktown Residents & Business Association  
Distillery Historic District  
Dixon Hall  
Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation  
Friends of Corktown Common  
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association  
Little Trinity Anglican Church  
St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA  
St. Lawrence Neighbourhood Association

Mayor Tory  
Members of the Executive Committee  
All members of City Council

March 29, 2022  
By email: [exc@toronto.ca](mailto:exc@toronto.ca)

## **RE.: EX31.9 – Metrolinx Ontario Line Downtown Stations – Review of Vulnerable Road User Safety, Transit Priority and Communication to Local Community**

Mayor and Councillors:

The West Don Lands Committee wishes to thank city staff for their major effort over the past two years to develop strategies to contain the impacts of the province's top-down imposition of its Ontario Line vision. City staff, in intense negotiation with provincial staff, drawing upon Council direction, and considering broadly-based community concerns, have created a roadmap that may help to deliver the much-needed transit expansion in the city centre with less disruption of life for residents and businesses in the vicinity of the construction.

While residents and businesses in the central core have shown remarkable resilience in the face of the existing constant construction environment, the cumulative effect of the Ontario Line along with a massive growth in private development threatens to push our communities past the limit of endurance. We see the need for concerted and innovative solutions to ensure that the east downtown core is not made uninhabitable during this intense construction period.

What we have learned from experience is that construction impacts can drive residents and businesses away. We need to do better than in the past. In that light we offer several considerations to strengthen this review.

First, *engagement with local resident and business groups before finalizing construction contracts will be essential to minimize project risks and disruption.*

The Construction Hub is a necessary component for Metrolinx, its Project Co., private development and city-led infrastructure works to be organized through an effective single point of contact that overcomes bureaucratic silos, coordinates activity, reduces risks to the public, and communicates essential safety information to businesses, residents and the public. Response to public concerns as they arise is essential.

But proactive, in-depth engagement with resident and business representatives would address disruptive activities before they become unbearable. Proactive engagement obviously should not take the place of ongoing public engagement during construction, but rather should be a kick-off of a robust construction management framework. West Don Lands Committee and our coalition members (above-noted) are ready and eager to participate in construction liaison from early works planning to completion of Ontario line – and T.O.C.

The West Don Lands and nearby neighbourhoods in the southeast central core have experienced unnecessary, unbearable disruption on two projects recently: Metrolinx's Union Station Rail Corridor East (USRCE) expansion projects; and the city's rehabilitation of the Gardiner Expressway east of Jarvis. In both cases, unnecessary disruption occurred when contracts with construction firms were finalized that "baked in" conditions of project delivery, hours of operation, machinery permissions and logistical considerations that led to weeks on end, repeated, again and again, of overnight noise, bright lights, vibration and other disruption. Movements of construction equipment, trucks idling before dawn, improper routing of truck traffic have all conspired to make life unsafe, to unnecessarily snuff out lives, and to affect emotional and mental well-being. *Community review of terms of engagement with contractors before contracts are finalized can alleviate problems by incorporating local knowledge and experience.*

Second, consideration should be given to extending the current transit priority configuration farther east on King Street through the Corktown Station construction site at King and Parliament. This location is identified in the staff report as one of the locations for sidewalk closure during construction, and it will no doubt be a traffic pinch-point. Prioritizing transit and reducing avoidable vehicular trips through this area will keep transit running more smoothly and help protect vulnerable users. *Additional review may also be necessary on Front Street, west of Parliament, where demolition hoardings, construction entrance/egress, transit and vehicular traffic all may conflict with vulnerable user safety.*

Third, accessible, on-line maps of changing pedestrian and cycling closures and redirections, identifying universally accessible routes when they are limited, will help all road users, especially the most vulnerable. This should be a standard part of construction management.

Yours truly,



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