



2023 TEYCC 5.46 - Report Back on Metrolinx's Ontario Line Construction within the Toronto and East York District

May 24, 2023

The Toronto Community Benefits Network is writing to express deep concerns related to the promised Community Benefits Agreement by the Federal government as part of the Ontario Line project. Nothing in the contracts signed between Metrolinx and Connect 6ix and Ontario Transit Group that is in line with the basic standards for CBAs that have been established over the past 10 years.

Since 2014, the TCBN has worked closely with Metrolinx and provincial ministries to develop an award winning community benefits program as part of the Finch West LRT and Eglinton Crosstown LRT projects which have led to over 500 jobs and opportunities for individuals from local historically disadvantaged communities and equity deserving groups in the construction trades and other professional, administrative and technical opportunities.

Such outcomes were achieved through collaboration with community, labour, government and industry through the inclusion of transparent and accountable mechanisms such as contractual obligations outlined in the TCBN-Metrolinx Community Benefits Framework, project agreements with the contractors and community benefits declarations that emphasized specific equity hiring targets on each project.

Over the past three years, TCBN has been advocating that Metrolinx uphold this standard in maximizing high quality jobs to deliver local economic benefits and social value in neighbourhoods who will be severely impacted by transit construction.

In February 2022, TCBN sent a letter to Metrolinx requesting specific details about its commitment to a Community Benefits Agreement and to enhance the award winning approach developed with TCBN on previous transit projects in Toronto.

In the letter response to the Toronto Community Benefits Network, Metrolinx specifically outlined how Pillar 1 Employment Opportunities will be achieved through "several actions".

In this response letter, Metrolinx included the Ministry of Transportation's Letter of Direction to action the federal directive, Metrolinx stated that *"they will include commercialized requirements such as quantified targets to meet agreed upon hiring targets for historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups in our contracts."*



Additional actions outlined in the letter response to TCBN included:

- 1. Updated RFP and contract requirements for Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Plans (AWDPs) that include quantified targets to meet agreed upon hiring targets for historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups, including 10% Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; 10% Women.*
- 2. Updated RFP and contract requirements to include planned submissions requiring contractors to implement an anti-racism strategy and method of communication with Metrolinx on all issues arising.*
- 3. Enter into an agreement (outside of the PA), between the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development, the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, and the Preferred Proponent, that codifies the targets in contractual commitments that are monitored, mitigated if required, and with transparent data reporting.*
- 4. Establish a working group comprised of Metrolinx, TCBN, Preferred Proponent and other stakeholders to collaborate and share ideas for how to implement these Targets.*
- 5. Project Companies will also be encouraged to establish voluntary apprentice hiring targets through the ITA financial incentive.*

In our review of the Ontario Line Southern Civil and RSSOM project agreements (see table below Table 1), many of the commitments outlined by Metrolinx in the May 2, 2022 letter have not been reflected in the Ontario Line project agreements. As a community-labour coalition committed to ensuring local communities benefit from publicly funded infrastructure investments through transparent and accountable mechanisms, we are deeply disappointed by Metrolinx's attempt to depart from best practices and standards for what constitutes a Community Benefits Agreement.

Metrolinx has demonstrated that it cannot keep its commitments to the community and as such, we encourage Toronto City Council, staff and transit expansion office to take immediate action on this issue of economic and racial justice.

Regards,

Rosemarie Powell
Executive Director
Toronto Community Benefits Network



Table 1 - May 2022 Metrolinx Letter Response comparison with current PA requirements and CBA best practices

Commitments to community (May 2, 2022 letter)	What is included in Ontario Line Project Agreements	What is needed in Ontario Line Project Agreements (informed by CBA best practices)
<p><i>1. Updated RFP and contract requirements for Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Plans (AWDPs) that include quantified targets to meet agreed upon hiring targets for historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups, including 10% Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; 10% Women.</i></p>	<p>Providing opportunities for equity-deserving groups, including Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities</p>	<p>Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Plans informed through community and stakeholder engagement. Such plans should be made publicly available (similarly to the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT plans)</p> <p>Quantified minimum targets including 10% Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; 10% Women in apprenticeships (trade-by-trade basis) and professional, administrative and technical opportunities on the project</p>
<p><i>2. Updated RFP and contract requirements to include planned submissions requiring contractors to implement an anti-racism strategy and method of communication with Metrolinx on all issues arising.</i></p>	<p>Requirements to establish and maintain a corporate commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Anti-Racism, anti-discrimination and anti-harassment practices; b) Eliminating workplace hate and intolerance, 	



<p><i>3. Enter into an agreement (outside of the PA), between the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development, the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, and the Preferred Proponent, that codifies the targets in contractual commitments that are monitored, mitigated if required, and with transparent data reporting.</i></p>	<p>No specifics in project agreement</p>	<p>A community benefits declaration (similarly to the Eglinton and Finch West LRT) should be developed and signed between the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, Preferred Proponent, City of Toronto and TCBN that codifies the targets in contractual commitments that are monitored, mitigated if required, and with transparent public data reporting.</p>
<p><i>4. Establish a working group comprised of Metrolinx, TCBN, Preferred Proponent and other stakeholders to collaborate and share ideas for how to implement these Targets.</i></p>	<p>TCBN has not been invited to participate in any working group</p>	<p>Establish an Ontario Line working group that meets quarterly, at minimum, comprised of Metrolinx, TCBN, Preferred Proponent and other stakeholders to review and finalize Apprenticeship and Workforce Development Plans, and develop a tracking, monitoring, public reporting framework</p>
<p><i>5. Project Companies will also be encouraged to establish voluntary apprentice hiring targets through the ITA financial incentive.</i></p>	<p>No information included</p>	
<p><i>We will track and monitor our progress against contractor plans and outcomes.</i></p>	<p>Project Co shall develop and track a dashboard that is agreed by the Parties to, (i) demonstrate other local employment impacts, including the hiring of professional, administrative and technical staff for the Project by Project Co and Project Co Parties, in order to track economic benefits,</p>	<p>Tracking, monitoring and reporting framework should be developed and reviewed as part of the project specific working group that meets quarterly</p> <p>Tracking, monitoring and reporting framework should include public reporting on apprenticeships and</p>



	including employment benefits, arising from the Project;	professional, administrative and technical opportunities outcomes
<i>We will also report on procuring from social enterprises to assist clarity in understanding the makeup of certain firms in the supply chain, working closely with MTO on any policy objectives for procurements from social enterprises.</i>	Requirement included for Project Co. to demonstrate how it has utilized local businesses for goods and services during the construction of the project, noting: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• business name and location; type(s) of good(s) or service(s) procured• and dollar amount of the contract;• details pertaining to the performance or quality of the work; and• how the contract was sourced.	Requirements should include a plan on how Project Co. intends on disseminating information on social procurement opportunities in the local community and its efforts to purchase from local businesses and social enterprises (similarly to Eglinton Crosstown LRT and Finch West LRT)