

Ontario Line Subcommittee – Best Practices Report Back

Transit Expansion Division
July 10, 2023

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to:

- Respond to Recommendation 18 of [TE4.70](#): 18. *City Council request the Executive Director, Transit Expansion, using reports generated by the City of Toronto staff as a result of the Ontario Line Subcommittee, to develop recommendations which can be forwarded to Metrolinx and the Ontario Government by City Council (as it relates to the Toronto-East York Community Council area) and report back to the next meeting of the Subcommittee on Metrolinx's Ontario Line Construction.*
- Ensure that the City clearly articulates recommendations for Metrolinx to implement in the delivery of this major construction project that:
 - Reflects feedback received through deputations as well as City Council directions;
 - Provides methods to achieve the best outcomes for residents and businesses in Toronto;
 - Minimizes negative impacts of long-term construction; and
 - Enables the Province, the Government of Canada and the City to achieve mutually-beneficial goals of advancing transit, increasing housing, and protecting the interests of residents and businesses.

City Recommended Best Practice Areas

- This report recommends best practices regarding:
 - Community benefits;
 - **Equitable Opportunities for Employment and Procurement**
 - Business supports;
 - Community engagement;
 - Traffic and construction management;
 - Affordable housing and rental replacement;
 - **Housing and Rental Replacement** and,
 - Parks and neighbourhood investments.
 - Real Estate Management
 - Accountability

ONTARIO LINE BEST PRACTICES – HIGH-LEVEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Equitable Opportunities for Employment and Procurement

- Implement minimum thresholds and hard targets for local hiring and all equity-deserving groups, including in construction, professional, administrative and technical positions.
- Utilize local and social procurement opportunities including with social enterprises and Indigenous and Black-owned businesses.
- Develop public reporting schedule on achievements and success at meeting thresholds and targets.
- Provide neighbourhood investments including upgrades to public facilities such as parks, playgrounds, wading pools, community centres.

Housing and Rental Replacement

- Ensure new affordable housing, in particular affordable rental housing, is provided in all Transit Oriented Community (TOC) proposals consistent with the City's Official Plan Inclusionary Zoning policy framework and apply best practices from the Housing Now program.
- Apply Official Plan policies regarding the demolition of existing rental housing units and dwelling by requiring replacement rental dwelling units and/or dwelling rooms with similar rents, and that tenant relocation and assistance, beyond the requirements of the Residential tenancies Act, be provided to impacted tenants to lessen hardship.

ONTARIO LINE BEST PRACTICES – HIGH-LEVEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Business Supports

- Consult with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and the City's BIA Office.
- Develop communication and marketing strategies to support local businesses, and enhance public visibility and access.
- Initiate and publish studies and benchmarks to track the economic impacts of the Ontario Line construction.
- Provide direct support to businesses and proactively develop plans for business recovery and rebuild initiatives.

Traffic Management

- Work proactively with Transportation Services to identify potential opportunities to optimize and minimize the size of staging areas and/or the duration of road closures.
- Proactively provide updates and engage with local Councillors on traffic impacts.
- Review and implement best practices in comparable cities on construction zone management, construction coordination and traffic mitigation.
- Minimize construction impact and maintain transit access, while ensuring safety for all road users.

ONTARIO LINE BEST PRACTICES – HIGH-LEVEL REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

Community Engagement

- Provide inclusive and meaningful two-way communication within Community Liaison Committees (CLCs).
- Promptly share project information and mitigations to community impacts and clear and accessible to the public timelines for engagement (2 month lookahead calendar for engagement) and cadence for meetings.
- Extend CLC membership to a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to local businesses, community associations and community service providers.
- Provide a regular update on the status of the schedule for the various project segments

Forestry and Parks

- Protect trees and parks from construction and minimize vegetation removal.
- Comply with applicable municipal by-laws and associated compensation requirements.
- Proactively engage with City staff and the community on park restoration plan.

Real Estate

- Provide public detailed overview of all City lands impacted by Ontario Line.
- Provide dedication of parkland as a priority instead of cash-in-lieu.

Accountability

- At every CLC meeting, require Metrolinx to provide an update on how it is addressing the recommendations contained within this report in the delivery of the Ontario Line.

Sample Recommendation

City Council direct the Executive Director, Transit Expansion Division to recommend that the Province of Ontario and Metrolinx implement the following best practices in the construction of the Ontario Line:

1. In consultation with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and the City's BIA Office, develop business support solutions based on lessons learned from the Eglinton Crosstown LRT to mitigate construction impacts on businesses from the Ontario Line including to:
 - a) Develop a communication and marketing strategy to support businesses;
 - b) Install improved signage and wayfinding for customers and visitors to the area;
 - c) Ensure any future planning along the alignment is coordinated with a strategy to manage traffic impacts and appropriately plan for parking, in consultation with City staff;
 - d) Maintain public access to businesses for the full length of the Ontario Line during construction and continually identify opportunities to improve access and visibility for businesses;
 - e) Undertake regular site inspections, provide 24 hour/7 day a week site contacts and require contractors to keep construction areas clean and orderly;
 - f) Initiate and publish studies and benchmarks to track the economic impacts of Ontario Line construction;
 - g) Provide direct supports to businesses, including direct financial compensation, subsidies, and business development supports; and
 - h) Proactively develop plans for recovery and rebuild initiatives.