



March 17 2023

To: Sub-committee on Metrolinx's Ontario Line Construction

Re: March 22<sup>nd</sup> meeting, Item TM 1.2

Dear Councillors Fletcher, Malik & Moise

Thank you so much for setting up the Ontario Line Sub-committee. It is long past time for Metrolinx to take local residents' voices into consideration in the planning for this transit line. We are encouraged by this joint effort to make that happen.

Save Jimmie Simpson is a community advocacy & education group in S Riverdale that has been active for 2-1/2 years. As Councillor Fletcher knows, we have worked diligently to address the numerous issues related to the OL in our area & in general; we have greatly benefitted from her support and involvement. Our activities have included webinars, a monthly newsletter, distribution of educational materials in our neighbourhood, petitions, letters to politicians at all levels, deputations, community demonstrations, liaising with other groups across the GTA addressing similar issues, and commissioning 2 Health Impact Assessments regarding the OL in this area. The latter can be found at <https://www.srchc.ca/news/the-ontario-line-building-it-the-better-way/>.

While the train seems to have left the station (so to speak) we must reiterate some of our basic concerns about the planning & design of the Ontario Line:

- Despite Metrolinx assertions to the contrary, no meaningful community consultations have been done. Slick events to present decisions already made and inviting comment on minor details do not constitute consequential consultation.
- In Ward 14 in particular, Metrolinx has been unwilling to address the many concerns regarding the above-ground alignment through this densely populated, socio-economically diverse neighbourhood. Despite a viable underground plan developed in collaboration with Steve Munro and the LSECAC, Metrolinx completely ignored community and city council requests that this option be considered and costed.





- Metrolinx appears to be completely unaccountable. We have been able to find no evidence that the provincial government provides any oversight to their actions. Our various inquiries to the province merely sent us to the Metrolinx website or quoted extensively from it.
- There does not seem to be any answerability in relation to the Metrolinx budget. Indeed it is very difficult to see clearly how huge quantities of public money are being spent. Amounts for public relations (i.e., advertising and so-called ‘community consultation’) and the costs of legal fees and legal settlements are impossible to determine.
- The impacts of “transit-oriented communities” in proximity to OL stations do not seem to have been publicly discussed in any comprehensive way. While individuals or neighbourhood groups may be trying to have impacts on local plans, we have not seen any widespread conversation about how this will affect the city’s affordable housing needs.
- Communities across the GTA that have dealt with Metrolinx over the years can testify that the organization is, frankly, not to be trusted. There have been too many obfuscations, evasions, clandestine decisions, broken promises, and refusals to be held accountable for their actions.

Given these concerns, we hope the Sub-committee can in some way address the following important issues:

- True and robust community engagement must be part of all Metrolinx planning and actions from this point forward. Metrolinx will require assistance to understand what constitutes meaningful consultation, and the city has expertise it can share in that regard.
- Mitigation of construction impacts should be carefully planned (including with community consultation) and very closely monitored by the city. If residents and businesses are to be faced with years of construction, surely it is worth spending the time & money to ensure that it brings the least disruption possible to host neighbourhoods.
- Forceful efforts to reduce tree cutting must continue; city council must bring all its powers to bear on this as Metrolinx seems to have no regard for the importance of trees to our city. Promises of tree replacement must be supervised closely. Proper saplings & larger trees, not just seedlings, must be replaced, as per city guidelines. And this must be done in the communities and on the properties that have had trees decimated.





- Metrolinx must be held more accountable for its decisions and actions. Thus far, the federal government has appeared uninterested in ensuring its own funding conditions are being met; perhaps the Mayor and City Councillors can bring some pressure to bear on their federal counterparts.
- If the city has any possible way to guide the use of funds by Metrolinx, more money could be directed into proper planning and needed mitigation rather than frivolous law suits and excessive public relations.
- Plans for so-called 'transit-oriented communities' must be made to align with the city's *Housing TO 2020-2030 Action Plan* wherever possible.

Wards 10,13, 14 and 15, as well as other locations around the GTA, have had significant local problems with Metrolinx planning & decisions. We hope the OL Sub-committee can address some of those (such as changes to the entrance to Osgoode Station and other feasible, community-suggested modifications) along with the broader issues listed above.

Thank you for your attention to these matters. If we can assist in any way, please don't hesitate to contact us.

*Magg Redmonds*

for Save Jimmie Simpson

C: Liz Driver, BOLD Coalition  
Peter Tabuns, MPP, Toronto Danforth  
Krysten Wong Tam, MPP Toronto Centre  
Chris Glover, MPP, Spadina-Fort York

