

**March 15, 2023**

Via Email: [teycc@toronto.ca](mailto:teycc@toronto.ca)

To: The TEYCC Sub Committee on Metrolinx Ontario Line

**Re: Metrolinx Construction Liaison Committees**

Dear Councillors:

I write to you today as lead representative of the Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee (LSE CAC)<sup>1</sup>, a member group of the Build Ontario Line Differently (BOLD) Community Coalition. The coalition represents resident associations, cultural institutions, professional organizations, and business groups, who are deeply impacted by the Ontario Line. I am writing to express our dissatisfaction with the setup of Metrolinx's Construction Liaison Committee (CLC) meetings and to request a council discussion on the City's role within them.

Members of the Ontario Line Sub-Committee will have heard that construction will soon begin in both the Corktown and Riverside-Leslieville areas and **Ontario Line Construction Liaison Committee**<sup>2</sup> (CLC) meetings<sup>3</sup> will begin for community representatives and City Councillors.

The LSE CAC currently sits on two Metrolinx CLC groups for GO Expansion projects. We have encountered many issues with their current format and anticipate these issues will be on-going if not addressed at the outset of the new Ontario Line CLC meetings. We feel this is the ideal time to discuss the City's role in the CLC and the need for greater accountability and transparency from Metrolinx at these community meetings.

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<sup>1</sup> The **Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee (LSE CAC)** was formed in 2017 to work cooperatively with Metrolinx on behalf of the community, to mitigate coming projects on the Lakeshore East rail corridor through the communities of Riverside and Leslieville. 'The Joint Corridor,' as it is now known as, is where two Metrolinx projects will converge together along 2km of track. The Ontario Line and GO Electrification project will run side by side and will expand our current 3 rail tracks to 6 tracks. The Ontario Line will build 2 stations along the Joint Corridor- Riverside-Leslieville Station at DeGrassi Street, and Gerrard Station, which will have separate platforms for the Ontario Line, and GO Trains. When completed, these projects will bring the number of trains from 170 GO trains to over 1800 GO and Ontario Line trains per day through our community. It is not an understatement to say that the very foundation of our neighbourhoods is changing and requires careful planning and effective and transparent communication with Metrolink to ensure our businesses and the continued livability of our community will survive.

<sup>3</sup> **Background:** The Construction Liaison Committee or CLC, is a Metrolinx group construct. The meetings are 60–90-minute format, and generally held once a month. Metrolinx invites community stakeholder groups from residents' groups, condominium boards, school boards, community groups, and local BIA's and combines them into one meeting. Metrolinx creates each agenda and puts together the meeting content- a PowerPoint presentation, which opens the meeting and informs the discussion, and then, in the remaining time (usually around 20-30 minutes) a brief discussion of Stakeholder's concerns and questions. If Metrolinx cannot answer the questions, they promise to come back with answers. Metrolinx takes very brief minutes of these meetings and circulates them via email to CLC membership only.

We suggest addressing the following:

### **Meeting Format**

With the help of the OL Sub-Committee, we would like to ask Metrolinx to work with member groups to co-create a 'consistent and basic' CLC format that works for all members (Metrolinx, communities and the city). There are currently inconsistencies of accountabilities and reporting within different CLC project areas, which we would like to see standardized across all Ontario Line CLC community groups.

### **Accountability**

Clearly defined accountabilities from Metrolinx to the community. Metrolinx is responsible for the oversight of its contractors. Processes need to be defined and put into place for handling complaints, addressing concerns, and finding resolutions with communities.

### **Transparency**

There must be a mutual commitment to full transparency that ensures information from the CLC is communicated to the wider community and not just to Stakeholders. This may be publicly available minutes or recordings posted on a dedicated CLC Metrolinx web space. Meetings should be held both in person and online (hybrid format).

### **Access**

CLC meeting basic standards should include any community member who is impacted by the construction and not just Stakeholder groups, and meetings should also provide access to Metrolinx project planners, decision makers and managers who should be available at every meeting.

We include a list of some of our suggestions for greater accountability and transparency for discussion below.

### **The City's Role at CLC Meetings:**

Many stakeholders at CLC meetings do not have a depth of information about the project nor understanding of what Metrolinx is accountable for. We believe the City has a key role to fill in: (a) helping community members understand the specific municipal bylaws that are applicable to construction planning and to work that is going on in their community; and (b) helping to escalate community issues and concerns.

We would like to encourage the Sub-Committee today to discuss the role of City officials attending the Metrolinx CLC community meetings. Some of our questions are below.

- a. In what ways can the City's participation in the CLC meetings aid communication and project awareness to our communities?

- b. What specific resources can the city bring to CLC meetings i.e., representatives from municipal Transit Office, Bylaw Enforcement or Parks/Forestry to assist communities?
- c. Can we standardize this municipal role so all communities at CLC meetings understand municipal and provincial accountabilities during OL planning and construction?

**Ideas for Further Transparency and Accountability from Metrolinx at CLC Meetings<sup>4</sup> for Discussion:**

1. A transparent CLC process with a Metrolinx website for each local CLC, with Minutes and recordings of meetings posted soon after. There should be posted information for community members and a website page for community members to ask questions that is regularly monitored by Metrolinx.
2. Community-wide CLC attendance, not just invited Stakeholder groups but individuals who live in the community and are impacted by the construction should be allowed to attend as well.
3. Hybrid meetings held both in person and online. It is important for Metrolinx to meet community members face-to-face and for community members to be able to speak with them.
4. Transparent community complaint process with fines for Metrolinx contractors who are repeat offenders (like leaving trucks and equipment idling all night). Posting a 'complaints & resolution list' updated by Metrolinx, for each meeting.
5. 24-hour construction Hotline to on-site project managers to deal with complaints as they happen - especially during over-night work. Signage with the 24-hour hotline phone number located by the work sites and listed in all community notices. (We have been asking Metrolinx for this for years, and they said they would do it, but we haven't seen it rolled out yet.)
6. Noise and Vibration monitoring process which is transparent. Information which includes location of monitoring equipment and the dates/times and levels posted online weekly. Penalties for contractors going over acceptable decibel levels or vibration levels. A defined Metrolinx procedure for issuing fines for contractors who continually exceed acceptable decibel levels or for other ongoing issues such as garbage being left around staging areas or taking up available on street parking.
7. Special oversight by Metrolinx and City for overnight work which impacts residents in proximity to it. All overnight work must go through a strict approval process, which

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<sup>4</sup> Our LSE CAC has sent these recommendations to Metrolinx in advance our CLC beginning in Riverside-Leslieville for further discussion.

includes the study of alternatives to avoid it altogether. This approval process should be transparent and include the city and community in these decisions.

8. Advance notice for overnight work to surrounding community. Notice of changes to work schedules to residents, with impacts to businesses and residents listed.
9. Community access to Arborist Reports and replanting discussion and plans.
10. Environmental Monitoring – air quality levels posted and monitored weekly. Dust management process which can respond to local complaints.
11. Lists of Toxic and Dangerous Materials on and around worksites with hazardous materials information and safe storage and handling information given to communities who are in close proximity to these sites (often across the street from their homes and playgrounds).
12. Separate CLC meetings for local BIA's or School Boards, from residents/Stakeholder meetings, as they have different issues which require Metrolinx's full attention and should not be lumped all together and pressed for discussion time at the end of each meeting.
13. Metrolinx's contractors and project managers should attend the CLC meetings and answer questions and address and action issues immediately.

We offer these suggestions in hopes the city will also see the need for the standardization of accountabilities at CLC meetings. We look forward to further discussion around these important issues impacting all our Ontario Line communities.

Our LSE CAC is greatly encouraged by the creation of this Sub-Committee for Metrolinx's Ontario Line at the municipal level and hopes it will become a powerful voice and resource for communities all over East York when dealing with Metrolinx and the Province in the building of the Ontario Line through our communities.

Sincerely,

Shelley Kline, *Lead*

*On behalf of the LSE CAC*

