



March 20, 2023

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

Dear Councillors Malik, Moise and Fletcher,

Re: Item TM1.2, Update on Metrolinx's Ontario Line Construction

I am writing as the Director of Campbell House Museum, at the northwest corner of University and Queen. I have been involved in the public process for Metrolinx's Osgoode Station from the beginning and therefore have a detailed knowledge of the agency's engagement activity for this station. From the outset, the Sir William Campbell Foundation has aimed to bring forward positive ideas to help solve the problems at Osgoode Station. I am also co-Chair, with Walied Khogali, of the BOLD (Build Ontario Line Differently) Coalition.

The Sir William Campbell Foundation is grateful that the City commissioned Parsons third-party review of Metrolinx's plan for Osgoode Station and alternative station locations. The Foundation is also grateful to Toronto-East York Community Council for creating this sub-committee as a forum for discussion and carrying forward recommendations for Ontario Line construction.

Metrolinx informed the attendees of a hastily called meeting on February 1, 2023, that it would be proceeding with Parsons Location A, the Osgoode Garden. Parsons found that the Osgoode Garden "would appear to be the best qualified option for the design of the station; ... with a workable design for both the keyhole excavation site and the vertical circulation needed to connect the existing Line 1 concourse level with that of the Ontario Line" (p 34, but noting that the reference material provided by Metrolinx "does not provide sufficient proof of fatal flaws" for the other four alternative locations). On February 23, Metrolinx removed all of the mature trees on its expropriated Osgoode land to prepare for construction – the same day that TEYCC created the Ontario Line sub-committee.

The conditions for the Ontario Line's Osgoode Station have changed and require a new response. All previous comments tried to preserve the trees by moving the keyhole. In a slide deck presentation to the March 22 sub-committee meeting, transit expert Steve Munro and I are proposing a design modification to Metrolinx's current plan. The modification would move the station entrance (the building) into University Park/Osgoode Plaza and connect the entrance below grade to the vertical circulation in the Osgoode Garden keyhole. This modification maintains Metrolinx's keyhole and vertical circulation, while improving the outcome for the environment, heritage, public realm, and street level pedestrian flow. Mr Munro will explain how the station building can move into the future University Park/Osgoode Plaza to connect Line 1 and the Ontario Line.

Below and in my deputation I will comment on: benefits of the design modification beyond what is noted in the slide deck presentation; time considerations; community support; and recommendations arising from the design response. I also have a few revisions to note for the staff Update.

This is an important moment for the community, our elected officials, and City staff to come together with Metrolinx's decision-makers to find a mutually agreeable way forward that accepts the efficiency of the Osgoode keyhole for Metrolinx and results in an overall improvement to the public realm at University and Queen.

Sincerely,

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A. Benefits of the design modification

Moving the station building out of the Osgoode Garden maintains the size and location of Metrolinx's keyhole and results in several benefits:

1. Maintains 100% of the green space in the Garden by moving above-ground infrastructure west of the historic fence (otherwise, green space is lost under the station building's footprint);
2. may increase the area for replanting Osgoode's trees because the concourse level would not extend so far into the Garden;
3. retains the integrity of Osgoode's historic fence (Metrolinx's plan has permanent negative heritage impacts because the plan will either remove some of the historic fence or illogically wrap it around the modern station building);
4. kickstarts University Park at University and Queen by creating Osgoode Plaza and a Performing Arts Plaza, thereby following City Council's July 19, 2022 direction to staff to prioritize University Park as a Downtown Priority Park, with a Work Plan for efficient processing of approvals that would facilitate the relocation of station infrastructure from Osgoode Garden; would also be a benefit for the community to anticipate, after a minimum of 8 years of disruption by Ontario Line construction;
5. creates flexibility for resolving the issue of pedestrian flow at street level by enlarging the pedestrian area west of the historic fence. The issue is flagged in the staff Update, p 14, under construction updates for Osgoode Station: "City staff have also requested that pedestrian access around the North Entrance be improved to address the potential volume of passenger activity at the station and adjacent streets." It is not obvious how Metrolinx could solve the pedestrian flow at street level without Osgoode Plaza; and
6. would coordinate the implementation of University Park with Metrolinx's rehabilitation of the intersection after completion of the Ontario Line; it would be efficient and economical from a City perspective to have Metrolinx re-assemble the South African War Memorial in a location determined by the City to be best for the design of University Park.

B. Time considerations

1. The design modification as it relates to the concourse level needs to be followed up with Metrolinx asap because the agency has stated that it intends to hand over the project to the Project Co on May 1, 2023.
2. There is time for the City to fine-tune the plans for University Park at the intersection, but the City needs to make a commitment to Metrolinx that it will enlarge the pedestrian area to the west of Osgoode's historic fence and that it will work expeditiously with Metrolinx on any revisions to the concourse level connection between Line 1 and the Ontario Line.

C. Community support

I have shared the slide deck presentation with the Law Society of Ontario, the Canadian Opera Company, the Grange Community Association, member groups of the BOLD Coalition, including FoSTRA, the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario (provincial and Toronto branch), Federation of Ontario Law Associations, and interested individuals. All expressed support, either verbally to me or in writing to the subcommittee, for preserving Osgoode's green space and kickstarting University Park. There has been no negative feedback.

D. Recommendations arising from the presentation slide deck and this letter

I recommend that the sub-committee:

1. requests a more frequent staff update than semi-annual;
2. endorses the design modification for Osgoode Station in Mr Munro's and my presentation slide deck;
3. invites Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster and one of the Ontario Line Sponsors to a meeting to discuss the design modification;
4. invites Law Society of Ontario CEO Diana Miles and Canadian Opera Company General Director Perryn Leech to a meeting to discuss University Park and the Plazas;
5. establishes a panel of expert advisors to the sub-committee to assist with the issues at Osgoode and other locations along the Ontario Line; and
6. recommends that Council direct:
 - a) Parks, Forestry and Recreation staff to expedite the planning of University Park between Richmond and Armoury streets (Performing Arts Plaza and Osgoode Plaza) and report back to the sub-committee asap; and
 - b) Transportation Services and TTC staff to liaise with Metrolinx about relocating the station building in University Park and modifications to the concourse level for the relocation.

E. Revisions for staff Update

I request that staff amend the "Decision History" by adding:

1. May 31, 2022 Planning and Housing Committee recommendation for Agenda Item PH34.4, to not approve the rezoning of 130 Queen Street West for transportation purposes to facilitate the Ontario Line; and
2. July 19, 2022 City Council motion for Priority Downtown Parks.

Amend “Public Consultation and Engagement” and “Other Construction Updates” to reflect the following Osgoode community experience:

3. The staff Update refers to “the Osgoode CLC [holding] a meeting in early 2023” (p 13) and an Osgoode “CLC meeting was held on February 1, 2023” (p 14). This was an “information only” meeting hastily called by Metrolinx for February 1, the same day that the Parsons Report was published, and was effectively a pretext for Metrolinx to inform attendees that it would be proceeding with the Osgoode Hall location. The staff Update also states, “Updates will continue to be provided to the community through the Osgoode Station CLC” (p 14).
4. Metrolinx has not yet launched a CLC for Osgoode. There has been no public outreach by Metrolinx to create a CLC for Osgoode. All meetings to date have been invited.
5. There was an April 14, 2022 meeting at the suggestion of the Sir William Campbell Foundation, conceived as a “heritage roundtable,” at which the Foundation proposed the University Park/Plaza location to invited attendees (no outreach by Metrolinx for public participation), The invitation-only July 25, 2022 meeting was to receive Metrolinx’s analysis of various alternative locations. The August 9, 2022 meeting was a follow-up meeting, at which the City announced its intention to commission the third-party review.
6. Metrolinx provided a slide deck “follow up” for the August 9 meeting, in which one of the “Next Steps” is “Convene first official meeting of Osgoode CLC for ongoing, structured engagement” and includes “Determine meeting cadence, logistics, etc.” and “Receive feedback on Draft Terms of Reference.” Almost 8 months has passed without a first official meeting of an Osgoode CLC.

Add an update:

7. Metrolinx is not fulfilling its responsibility to protect City heritage assets from vibration impacts (Campbell House and South African War Memorial during utility relocation), and there are many buildings of heritage significance along the Ontario Line at risk from construction vibration. What strategies is the Transit Expansion Division pursuing to ensure full compliance with standards for protection from vibration damage?