

TCBN Letter - EX15.2 Priorities in Transit Expansion and Transit-Oriented Communities Projects

June 18, 2024

Dear Members of Executive Committee and Toronto City Council,

The Toronto Community Benefits Network is writing in support of the City of Toronto recommendations and priorities in this report. Specifically, the TCBN is pleased to see Community Benefits outlined as one of the priority areas for transit expansion and Transit Oriented Communities by the City of Toronto.

Below, we share a few of our key concerns in regards to community benefits on new transit expansion projects:

1. **Minimum Local and Equity Hiring Targets:** Minimum targets for equity hiring in local communities as outlined in Pillar 1 of the Metrolinx Community Benefits and Supports Program. To date, we have not seen such language reflected in the publicly available project agreements and Metrolinx has yet to share language that specifies minimum equity hiring and apprenticeship training requirements in its contracts.
2. **Community Benefits Working Group:** A project level community benefits working group with TCBN and community stakeholders to monitor the implementation on a project by project basis. The TCBN continues to await a response from Metrolinx to complete the terms of reference and convene a Community Benefits Working Group to support and monitor the implementation of community benefits commitments outlined in the Metrolinx Four Pillar program.
3. **Tracking, Monitoring and Public Reporting:** Quarterly reporting and annual public reports for each project, outlining progress to date as it relates to community outreach, outcomes for local and equity hiring in apprenticeship training and professional, administrative and technical positions, local procurement and social procurement outcomes and other community benefits achieved through neighbourhood improvements and environmental protections. To date, Metrolinx has not reported on any community benefits outcomes.

Metrolinx, in coordination with TCBN and its community and labour partners has developed and implemented an award-winning community benefits program for the Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West LRT projects. However, its performance has significantly regressed on the new transit projects including Ontario Line

Through our advocacy, Toronto City Council motions and federal funding conditions and the eventual Metrolinx's Four Pillar Community Benefits program, Black, Indigenous and equity deserving groups have been promised opportunities to participate in the jobs and opportunities



stemming from the over \$28B in public taxpayers dollars towards the four new priority transit projects.

Despite these promises, many qualified and skilled graduates of TCBNs Black Youth Academy who live and come from these affected communities, are finding it very difficult to find an opportunity on these projects and are struggling to make ends meet, often having to resort to precarious employment like Uber or other means to provide for themselves and their families.

This lack of meaningful engagement in local communities and limited transparency surrounding the implementation of Community Benefits demonstrates that Metrolinx is not living up to our expectations and leaves many communities impacted by Metrolinx's new transit projects feeling sidelined

We welcome the recommendations from the City and we know that there is still time to get Community Benefits back on track, but we must emphasize the urgency. Metrolinx and its development partners have already reached several significant milestones on some of its projects and every delay reduces the positive impact that these programs can have in local communities.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R Powell".

Rosemarie Powell
Executive Director
Toronto Community Benefits Network