

Ontario Line - Fourth Quarter Construction Update

Date: November 18, 2024

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Executive Director, Transit Expansion Division

Wards: 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 19

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide updates on the status of construction activities on the Ontario Line project within the boundaries of Toronto and East York Community Council (TEYCC). This report includes:

- Updates on key early works and the four major packages of work Metrolinx has procured to deliver the Ontario Line. All four packages have been awarded and work is underway. Construction of the Ontario Line began in December 2021 and according to current schedules from Metrolinx, is expected to be complete by 2031.
- Updates on the resolution of station-specific issues at:
 - Pape Station, including property expropriations, removal of parking, and construction impacts on the community; and
 - Exhibition Station, including a response to City Council direction from TE16.56 - Liberty Village Traffic Action Plan Update¹ to provide an update on plans for delivering Liberty New Street and managing traffic congestion in the area.
- Other construction updates, including general construction impacts and mitigation, business supports and community engagement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Transit Expansion Division, recommends that:

1. Toronto and East York Community Council receive this report for information.

¹ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE16.56>

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial impacts associated with this report. The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

A full decision history is provided in Attachment 1.

COMMENTS

Background

The Province of Ontario is delivering the Ontario Line through Metrolinx. The Ontario Line will be a 15.6-kilometre subway with 15 stops running from Exhibition Place to the Ontario Science Centre. Figure 1 in Attachment 2 shows the full alignment.

Ontario Line Project – Milestone Updates

The following milestone updates are based on the extent of information provided by Metrolinx to the City at this time.

Package of Work	Description & Timing
Key Early Works	<u>Lakeshore East (LSE) Joint Corridor Advanced Works</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">As reported in TE15.42², construction commenced in April 2023 for the LSE Joint Corridor advanced works, located on the rail corridor from Eastern Avenue to Gerrard Street East and Carlaw Avenue. Advanced work includes the reconfiguration of GO tracks, replacement of existing rail bridges, and construction of new bridges, retaining walls, and noise barriers to support future Ontario Line infrastructure.Construction of the retaining and noise walls for the south side of the corridor began in May 2024 and is ongoing, with anticipated completion in March 2025.Construction of the retaining and noise walls on the north side of the corridor is expected to start in December 2024, with an estimated completion date of January 2026. Enabling works commenced on November 11, 2024.

² <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE15.42>

	<p><u>Lower Don Bridge and Don Yard Enabling Works</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enabling works for the Lower Don Bridge and the Don Yard, located at the foot of the Don River by Lakeshore Boulevard, began in 2022. Completed work includes relocating utilities and shifting GO tracks. • Metrolinx is now in the final phase of enabling works. Enabling works includes the construction of a new bridge over the Don Valley Parkway and a cut and cover tunnel and portal south of Corktown Common where the Ontario Line will transition from underground to above-ground. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bridge construction began in April 2024, and is expected to be complete in 2027. ○ Construction of the tunnel and portal began in August 2024 and is expected to be complete in 2028. <p><u>Don Valley Crossings Early Works</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On May 3, 2024, Metrolinx awarded the contract for the Don Valley Crossings Early Works to Leaside Valley Builders GP. • The project scope includes new bridges over the Don Valley and Don River, the Beth Neilson Underpass structure and grade separation, excavation works at the Minton Place Portal and other works to enable construction of the bridges. • Construction began in August 2024. The Don Valley Crossings are expected to be complete in 2028. <p><u>Utility Relocations:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utility relocations are required to accommodate the construction of the Ontario Line. This work is predominantly occurring across the south segment and anticipated to be completed by the end of 2026.
<p>Rolling Stock, Systems, Operations and Maintenance Contract (RSSOM)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrolinx retained Connect 6ix as their contractor for this scope of work in November 2022. • The RSSOM scope is to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the rolling stock (i.e. trains) and systems (e.g., train control systems, Wi-Fi, and closed-circuit television) for a 30-year term. • Construction works to prepare the Thorncliffe Park site of the operations, maintenance and storage facility (OMSF) commenced in August 2023. The OMSF construction is planned to begin in late 2025 with an anticipated completion date of late 2029. • Work on the electrical substation at Exhibition Station started in April 2024 and is anticipated to be complete by late 2027. • City staff continue to work with Metrolinx to refine design plans for the OMSF and the scope of work under this contract to ensure consistency with City requirements.

Southern Civil, Stations and Tunnel Contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrolinx retained Ontario Transit Group (OTG) as their contractor for this scope of work in November 2022. • The South Civil contract covers the southern segment from Exhibition Station/Ontario Place to Corktown Station and includes delivery of two six-kilometre tunnels and associated tunnelling works from Exhibition Station and its portal to the Don Yard portal, ground works for tunnels and stations, guideway structures, and seven stations. • Excavation commenced in September and October 2024 at King-Bathurst, Queen-Spadina, Moss Park and Corktown stations. • Excavation at Osgoode and Exhibition stations is anticipated to begin by December 2024. Queen Station is expected to begin excavations in 2025. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Metrolinx will publicly communicate the start date for the excavations at Osgoode, Exhibition and Queen stations in advance to the community through their Construction Liaison Committees and construction notices³.
Elevated Guideway and Stations contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metrolinx retained Trillium Guideway Partners (TGP) in February 2024 to deliver the Elevated Guideway and Stations Contract. • The scope of work includes three kilometres of an elevated guideway (tracks and bridge structures) and five elevated stations (i.e., Riverside-Leslieville, Gerrard, Thorncliffe Park, Flemingdon Park, and Science Centre), one emergency exit building, interface with the OMSF as well as with the Eglinton Crosstown Station at Eglinton and Don Mills Road. • The development phase is scheduled for approximately 20 months, anticipated to be completed by the end of 2025 and is currently on schedule. • As reported in NY18.30⁴, early works construction has commenced in the Overlea Boulevard (Thorncliffe) and Don Mills Road (Flemingdon) areas to facilitate the construction of the guideway and is anticipated to be completed by late-2025/early-2026, with the guideway and stations anticipated to be complete by late 2020s.
Pape Tunnel and Underground Stations (PTUS) contract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In January 2024 Metrolinx selected Pape North Connect to deliver the PTUS contract. • The scope of work includes three kilometres of twin tunnels underneath Pape Avenue between the Gerrard portal and the Don Valley bridge and two underground stations (Pape and Cosburn). • The development phase is anticipated to take approximately 24 months and is on schedule.

³ <https://www.metrolinx.com/en/projects-and-programs/ontario-line/notices>

⁴ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.NY18.30>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early works and demolition have commenced in the Pape Station area, and it is anticipated that work near Cosburn Avenue will commence in late 2024/early 2025. • Metrolinx is working closely with the TTC to plan construction work and minimize impacts to TTC infrastructure and riders. <p>Two separate packages of work are required to prepare Pape Station for PTUS work to begin as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pape Station Advance Works This work, being delivered by Duron Ontario Ltd., includes modifications to the existing TTC station, tunnel ventilation shaft, and utility relocations. Work began in early 2024 and is anticipated to end in late 2024. 2. Pape Support of Excavation This work, being delivered by Green Infrastructure Partners, includes constructing shafts for the Ontario Line interchange with Pape Station, which requires excavation and building concrete support walls. Work began in late 2023 and is expected to be complete in mid-2026.
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Station Updates

Pape-Danforth

Property Expropriations on Pape Avenue

In August 2024, Metrolinx notified residents along the east side of Pape Avenue approximately between Langley and Riverdale Avenues of their intent to expropriate 25 properties for construction of the Ontario Line tunnels. Metrolinx informed property owners that due to the proximity of the tunnels to their homes and the local soil conditions, a damage assessment was completed on the properties by Metrolinx's structural technical expert. This assessment determined that the properties are vulnerable to structural impacts from the Ontario Line tunnelling. To ensure a safe environment for the residents, these properties need to be expropriated and vacated by November 1, 2025.

Metrolinx is conducting appraisals and fair market valuations and will then enter into formal negotiations with property owners. Metrolinx has informed the City that they are considering options that would enable property owners to return to the property, pending the post-construction assessment of each individual property. Property owners will be reimbursed by Metrolinx for reasonable expenses as part of the acquisition process. Metrolinx is also working with impacted businesses and organizations to determine compensation or relocation options.

Tenant Relocation

As reported in TM2.1⁵ and TE10.40⁶, the City has requested that Metrolinx provide tenant relocation and assistance beyond what is required in the *Ontario Residential Tenancies Act*. The City had also urged Metrolinx to use a community-based model to assist tenants with relocation challenges. The City's Housing Secretariat and Housing Stability Office have since met with Metrolinx to help inform Metrolinx's approaches for rental replacement. As of October 2, 2024, Metrolinx communicated to the local Councillor that they are in the process of developing a community-based program with a social services agency, that will provide wrap around supports along with relocation assistance, accompanied by appropriate compensation from Metrolinx to ensure long-term sustainable housing for any individuals who may be facing challenges securing housing.

Dust Incident

In mid-September 2024, City staff became aware of significant amount of construction related dust adjacent to Metrolinx's construction site at Pape and Danforth. The City visited the site and advised Metrolinx of its concern and requested that Metrolinx investigate the source of the issue, and take corrective action immediately, including to halt activities associated with dust creation. As a result, Metrolinx reduced site activity for less than one week and met with City staff to investigate and review their plans to minimize site dust.

Metrolinx noted there were several contributing factors to the dusty conditions, such as unusually dry weather, trucks being routed on residential streets, and reduced site wetting in efforts to keep catch basins clear. Metrolinx's contractor's investigation of cement and bentonite use found no evidence of spill of these materials; any spill and clean-up would have been visible and required reporting to Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP). Metrolinx provided car wash vouchers to impacted community members and window washing services to impacted businesses. Upon City staff expressing their strong dissatisfaction with the dust conditions on site, Metrolinx's contractor implemented further mitigation measures through the construction process such as increased wetting of the site, paving the entrance and egress points, and other mud mitigation measures such as using mud mats, stones and concrete slabs on unpaved areas. Metrolinx has worked with City staff to perform a weekly review of the construction site and will continue to monitor the air quality and follow provincial reporting requirements. City staff continue to meet with Metrolinx and its contractor on a weekly basis at the site to assess site conditions, identify any issues and ensure mitigation efforts are undertaken and effective.

Parking Impacts

To date, Metrolinx has acquired 114 on-street and off-street parking spaces on the Danforth within the Greektown BIA boundaries for construction purposes, and has

⁵ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.TM2.1>

⁶ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE10.40>

indicated interest in acquiring 121 more parking spaces from three Green P lots at 17 Eaton Avenue, 77 Gough Avenue, and 716 Pape Avenue. Should these lots be provided to Metrolinx, 417 spaces would be left available to the public. The acquisition of these Green P lots requires an executed licence agreement between Metrolinx and the City through the Toronto Parking Authority, which has not been issued to date. The City has asked Metrolinx if there are alternative options instead of using these Green P lots.

The community and businesses have raised concerns that contractor parking for the ongoing works at Pape-Danforth further strains the availability of parking in the local area. Metrolinx determined that approximately 40-60 spaces are used by construction staff for works at Pape and Danforth, which represents 60-70% of all staff working at the site. As such, Metrolinx has requested contractors to reduce street parking where possible. The remainder of construction staff, approximately 30-40% are arriving at the site by public transit, drop-off, or other modes.

At the request of City staff and the local Councillor, Metrolinx is working to find solutions for contractor parking and construction material staging to free up more local parking space. Metrolinx removed flatbed trucks containing rebar cages off of Danforth Avenue and relocated them to 449 Carlaw Avenue, a property they own. This property will continue to be used for construction staging while Metrolinx seeks licence agreements for the previously mentioned Green P lots. Metrolinx also confirmed they have acquired a property at 1052 Pape Avenue which will be utilized for contractor construction staff parking to offset parking loss in the local area. Metrolinx will monitor and provide regular feedback to City staff on the mitigation efforts and other steps they are taking to minimize impacts to parking.

In addition, businesses have also raised concerns with the lack of space in the right of way (ROW) for loading. Currently, the closest loading zones along Danforth are at 625 Danforth Avenue and 801 Danforth Avenue. With the ROW occupied due to construction, businesses between Pape Avenue and Eaton Avenue have had issues with receiving deliveries. At the request of the Greektown BIA, City staff, in coordination with Metrolinx and their contractors, installed temporary loading zone signs at 777 and 764 Danforth Avenue on October 29. The signs will remain in place throughout the construction period. City staff will continue to work with and strongly encourage Metrolinx to improve access to local parking.

Exhibition Station

Pedestrian Access at Exhibition GO Station

The existing sidewalk and footpath to the GO platform from Atlantic Avenue was closed on October 25, 2024, to facilitate excavation work for Exhibition Station, which will be the Ontario Line's terminus station. Passengers can now use the new station entrance to access the Exhibition GO Station, which opened on September 6, 2024, on the north side of the tracks on Atlantic Avenue, south of Liberty Street. On October 18, 2024, the new pedestrian bridge across the rail corridor also opened, linking Atlantic Avenue with Exhibition Place.

Haul Routes

The current trucking route to support pile drilling operations consists of trucks using Hanna and Jefferson Avenues via Liberty Street and Dufferin Street as entry and exit points for the worksite (see Figure 2 in Attachment 2 for a map). In 2025, truck traffic on haul routes will increase as construction activities such as excavation and tunnelling (including for the entrance shaft of the Tunnel Boring Machine) ramp up.

Metrolinx is aware of the existing traffic conditions in Liberty Village, which is experiencing unprecedented congestion as detailed in TE16.56⁷. Metrolinx had originally estimated the potential for days where ~300 trucks would be required during excavation. Upon hearing concerns from the City's Transit Expansion and Transportation Services staff, the local Councillor and the local community on the impact of traffic in this area, Metrolinx assessed options to reduce truck use and now estimates an average of ~126 trucks a day across the entire duration of construction.

In May and July 2024, Metrolinx stated their preferred route is creating an entrance at Strachan Avenue for trucks to enter the worksite, and then using Hanna Avenue to Liberty Street to Dufferin Street as the exit route^{8,9}. The local community and the City requested Metrolinx to seek alternative options, stressing that using Ordinance Street, Liberty Street, East Liberty Street, and Strachan Avenue should be avoided or used minimally by construction trucks. In response, Metrolinx is preparing a new haul route option across the site to Dufferin Street, limiting trucks on East Liberty Street and Liberty Street. This would also require adding a new right turn lane for construction vehicles from the Strachan Avenue bridge, south of East Liberty Street, to the site. This lane will later be part of the future Liberty New Street. Hanna Avenue will be used as an exit route for the portal excavation, while Strachan Avenue will be used for other tunnelling needs, such as machinery delivery. Metrolinx will provide more information on tunnelling operations in the new year.

The City, through Transit Expansion and Transportation Services Divisions, continues to work with Metrolinx with the goal to reduce the overall number of trucks, and minimizing the impact on Liberty Street and focusing primarily on Dufferin Street as the main access point for the construction area.

Liberty New Street

The creation of "Liberty New Street" in Liberty Village has been long considered due to the area's significant redevelopment and densification. The proposed street would be 1.3 km long, running east-west parallel to the rail corridor, from Strachan Avenue to Dufferin Street. This new street will create a new entry and exit point for the neighbourhood.

⁷ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE16.56>

⁸ https://assets.metrolinx.com/image/upload/v1716919246/Images/Metrolinx/Exhibition_May_2024_Presentation_Deck.pdf

⁹ https://assets.metrolinx.com/image/upload/v1726019785/Images/Metrolinx/Exhibition_September_2024_Presentation_Deck.pdf

The construction staging area at Exhibition Station and preferred haul route for trucks presents an opportunity for the City and Metrolinx to coordinate the design and construction of Liberty New Street with the delivery of the Ontario Line. Through TE16.56¹⁰, City staff were directed to expedite the design and coordination with Metrolinx to ensure that Liberty New Street is constructed and opened concurrently with Exhibition Station.

Transit Expansion and Transportation Services staff are currently working with Metrolinx to undertake the design of Liberty New Street. Upon design completion, options and timelines for delivery will be negotiated and established between the City and Metrolinx. City staff have emphasized to Metrolinx that the opening date of Liberty New Street must be aligned with the opening of the Ontario Line. Staff will provide an update to City Council once further details are determined about the delivery of Liberty New Street.

Other Construction Updates

Queen Streetcar Diversion

To minimize disruption to the 501 Queen streetcar service, Metrolinx, TTC, and City staff began overhead work and track restoration on Adelaide, Richmond and York Streets (see Figure 3-4 in Attachment 2) in late 2023. This work allows the 501 streetcar to divert around Ontario Line construction at Queen and Yonge Streets. On November 10, 2024, the 501/301 Queen streetcar began operating along Queen Street, diverting east via Adelaide Street and west via Richmond Street, and connecting to Queen Street at Church Street and York Street. The closure of Queen Street to vehicle traffic from Bay Street to Victoria Street began on May 1, 2023, and is anticipated to last until November 2027.

Construction Mitigation

Excavation is occurring across Ontario Line sites and communities can expect noise from excavation equipment and the installation of new equipment. Trucks will follow designated routes to avoid reversing and the use of backup alarms. While construction crews are allowed to work 24/7, Metrolinx has directed their contractors to make efforts to schedule disruptive activities during the day and avoid disturbing the neighbourhood at night and on weekends with noise.

Metrolinx has installed an acoustic shelter on the north side of King and Bathurst for the King-Bathurst Station (see Figure 5 in Attachment 2 for image) and is currently constructing one at the Simcoe and Queen Street West for Osgoode Station. These structures have been installed to protect the site from the elements, act as a noise and dust barrier, and allow crews to excavate 24/7.

To further mitigate noise and dust impacts to the community, Metrolinx has installed noise and vibration monitoring devices on sites to track noise levels, as well as site hoarding to help reduce noise and dust. Metrolinx has set noise and vibration limits in

¹⁰ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE16.56>

line with Provincial MECP standards, and a monitoring program in place. Contractors are alerted of any exceedances, which are documented, analyzed, and addressed.

Metrolinx also has an air quality monitoring program which has air sensors and monitors installed across sites to measure air quality during construction. This program helps identify and address particulate matter or contaminants that may have been disrupted by construction activities, in accordance with provincial and federal ambient air quality regulations. To reduce dust, Metrolinx has committed to using water suppression by regularly moistening soil and debris to prevent dust particles from becoming airborne and using mud mats to reduce the amount of mud being tracked off site. Site paving, street sweepers and wheel cleaning will also be used, to ensure soil and sediment is kept off city streets and sidewalks.

Business Supports

Metrolinx has established regular monthly meetings with each of the BIAs along the Ontario Line with the City's BIA Office in attendance. Through these meetings, BIAs can raise issues to Metrolinx concerning the construction, including site-specific challenges with accessing businesses, improving wayfinding and signage, and marketing supports.

Metrolinx coordinates directly with the BIAs to deliver additional wayfinding to attract customers, showcasing the various businesses and informing the public about road closures. Currently, Metrolinx is finalizing details for a marketing strategy to support BIAs along the south segment. Metrolinx will be coordinating with BIAs for their input and expects to deliver this in Q2 2025.

The City's BIA Office continues to provide the BIAs with quarterly economic snapshots to track the economic health of their BIA. These snapshots are prepared in collaboration with the Canadian Urban Institute. Economic data from Q3 have been shared and will continue to be shared through 2025.

Following Council direction in TE10.40¹¹, Metrolinx has worked to communicate with potentially impacted live music venues. At the Toronto Music Advisory Committee's (TMAC) May 2024 meeting, Metrolinx shared their online map displaying venues, studios, and other music locations near the Ontario Line. Metrolinx will continue to update this map in coordination with committee members and the City's Music Office. Metrolinx staff are preparing a detailed work schedule to share with TMAC and other live music venues which will be shared shortly.

The City continues to support BIAs and business associations through the Transit Expansion Construction Mitigation Grant Program. To date, the City has committed \$685,000 to BIAs and business associations affected by Ontario Line construction.

¹¹ <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2024.TE10.40>

Community Art Survey

Metrolinx is planning to display artwork on the construction hoarding at Ontario Line sites. Metrolinx launched a Community Artwork Survey in late July 2024 through an online survey, to collect input from the community on what the art should feature. The survey closed in late August 2024 and Metrolinx will work with artists and partners to develop and deliver artwork from October to December 2024, however, timelines may vary depending on the artwork.

Community Engagement

Metrolinx has launched a new Construction Liaison Committee (CLC) for the Pape-Danforth and Sammon Avenue area. The first meeting was on October 2, 2024, and the CLC will continue to meet monthly. The CLC members include Metrolinx, construction partners (Green Infrastructure Partners and Pape North Connect) and local community members, including representatives from WoodGreen Community Services, Nisbet Lodge and the Greektown BIA. As of November 19, 2024, Metrolinx has ten active CLCs and community working groups for the Ontario Line which continue to meet regularly to share information and mitigate issues.

In addition to the regular CLC meetings, the Ontario Line team at Metrolinx holds open houses, pop-ups and attends local events. In 2024, Metrolinx held 20 community open houses and public meetings. There are two community offices for residents to connect with Metrolinx staff at 770 Queen Street East and 45 Overlea Boulevard. Metrolinx has also confirmed they are in the process of opening an additional community office in the Pape Station area, following advocacy by the Pape-Danforth community and local Councillor. Further details will be provided on timelines for the additional community office when provided by Metrolinx.

Next Steps

City staff across multiple divisions are actively engaged with Transit Expansion staff in reviewing Ontario Line designs, facilitating permits and approvals, and generally advocating for and protecting City interests through all stages of Metrolinx's project delivery. City staff are guided by existing agreements between the City and Metrolinx, such as the Council-approved Subway Program Agreement in Principle. Staff will report back to TEYCC on the progress of the Ontario Line in Q2 2025.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Relevant Decision History
Attachment 2 – Ontario Line Toronto-East York Images