



Donald Wright, Chair
Board Members
Metrolinx
By e-mail to: chair@metrolinx.com.

March 15 2021

Dear Mr. Wright and Board members

Save Jimmie Simpson (SJS) is a grass-roots group in the South Riverdale area of downtown Toronto that is concerned about the numerous negative impacts an above-ground Ontario Line section will have on our neighbourhood's health & well-being. We are community members who support public transit that is environmentally responsible and planned with genuine input from the neighbourhoods in which it is built.

SJS focusses on public education, engagement and advocacy. We have strong support from many residents of our neighbourhood, a well-visited [website](#), an active presence on social media, and a monthly newsletter that goes to over 600 people.

We advocate on behalf of community members who have many well-founded concerns about the current plan for the Ontario Line and the fact that the health and needs of our neighbourhood seem to be of no concern to your organization. (This letter will not detail the nature of these concerns as they have been made explicit to your staff many times and are also detailed in SJS material accessible on our website.) Your printed communication circulated to us repeatedly says that our neighbourhood is important to you and is "at the heart" of your planning processes. This has definitely not been the experience of those who live here. Metrolinx staff, including CEO Phil Verster, publicly claim that considerable consultation has taken place. There have indeed been open houses, on-line meetings and the website page for comments & questions, but none of this has amounted to meaningful engagement. (In our view meaningful engagement is a multi-stage process which includes consulting with communities at the outset, before any preliminary designs are prepared.) Residents feel that our concerns are minimized, obscured in public relations jargon, or just ignored. We expect better from a publicly-funded agency!

In order to get a thorough & objective review of the Ontario Line plan, SJS has, in collaboration with the LSECAC, sought a federal environmental impact assessment of the project. The request, which is being considered now, received over 140 comments





in support on the [federal registry](#) including from local politicians and key community groups and agencies. It is regrettable that Metrolinx itself has never initiated a proper impact assessment.

We hope that you, as the Board of Directors of the organization, presumably those ultimately responsible for its performance, will hear our issues and ensure they are appropriately addressed. In particular at this time, we would like to get unambiguous answers to the following:

- Why has there not been serious, transparent consideration of a below-ground alignment? When and how might this take place? Will it seriously consider a route other than below the Metrolinx right-of-way?
- From where did the estimate of an \$800 M cost to put the line underground arise? Is this figure based on anything substantive?
- What is the rationale for Metrolinx to plan to spend an additional \$1.8B to put 9.2 km of the Eglinton line underground in Etobicoke, in an area of open spaces and a divided road, admirably suited to above-ground transit? Why is it thought to be too difficult and expensive to consider underground alignment in a densely populated, inner city area where the line is immediately adjacent to homes, businesses and parks?

Thank you for your attention to these matters. We look forward to hearing your answers to both our hope expressed above and to our specific queries.

Regards,

Maggi Redmonds
Organizing Group Member

