

To: The Metrolinx Board of Directors

Via Email: chair@metrolinx.com; board@metrolinx.com

Dear Members of the Metrolinx Board of Directors,

I am writing to urge you to take time during your March 25, 2021 meeting to reconsider the flawed plan to run the Ontario Line on the elevated rail corridor between the Don River and Gerrard Street.

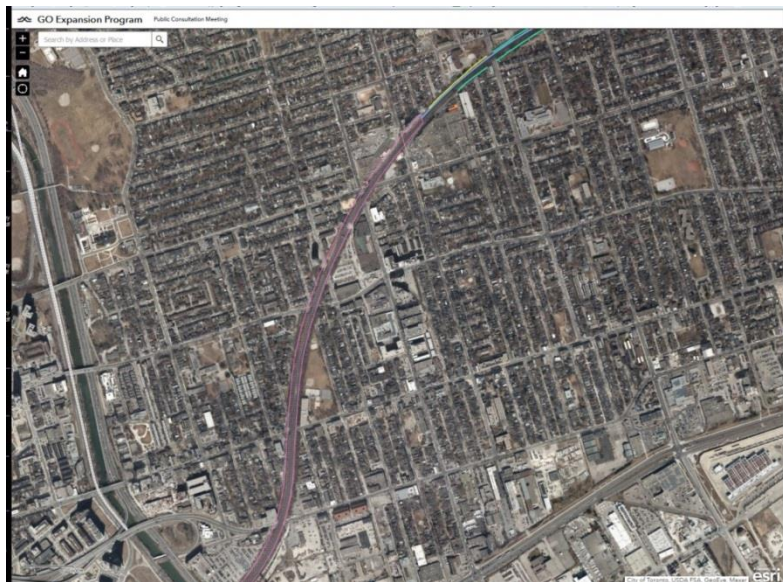
Members of our Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee have worked with Metrolinx on the RER GO expansion project since 2017. We believe in transit and are committed to helping Metrolinx mitigate negative effects caused by adding a fourth GO line through the Leslieville/Riverside neighbourhood. However, we are convinced that adding two kilometers of the Ontario Line to this elevated rail corridor from East Harbour to Gerrard Station (the green "Joint OL-GO corridor" on the map below) is a terrible plan that should be changed.



Merging the RER and OL projects would require doubling the number of tracks from three to six on the elevated rail corridor that goes through the densely-populated Leslieville/Riverside neighbourhood east of the Don River. Quadrupling the number of trains on this corridor would mean that instead of a train every 15 minutes, a train will pass every 90 seconds with some running 24 hours a day. This plan ignores obvious human health impacts (e.g., noise, vibration, public safety) and environmental costs. If the current plan goes ahead six city parks will be destroyed or reduced and hundred-year old trees will be removed - this in an area in the second-lowest parkland per person category in Toronto.

Metrolinx's mapping tool

<https://maps.metrolinx.com/arcgis/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=199ded6da5e746c08f4742df9c921f8c> shows the width needed to accommodate the GO expansion (4th RER track) and two Ontario Line tracks. The pink highlighting on the image below shows the very close distance to homes and businesses, less than a 10-metre setback in some cases. As well as destroying precious parkland, it is important to note that the existing corridor tracks are elevated to between 5 and 6.5 metres – aligned with the second floor of most of homes. And, of course, the construction phase would be horrendous because it would all happen in the middle of the night since the GO and VIA traffic would continue throughout. The impact from running six lanes of mixed heavy and passenger rail, including two lines running 24 hours a day, so close to homes and parks is an Ontario Government train wreck in the making.



After taking control of the project away from the city, the Provincial Government has ignored motions by Toronto City Council requesting that this two-kilometer section be built underground.^{*} Metrolinx has not consulted in a meaningful way with the community nor considered alternative routes, most notable, the route down Carlaw Avenue that both city and community support after a thorough EA as part of the Downtown Relief Line.

We agree with the Globe and Mail's editorial comment on March 12, 2021 that seems to squarely apply to the Federal government's contribution to Ontario Line:

*"When it comes to investments, such as in public transit... If it can figure out how to minimize cost overruns **and poorly chosen projects** (both growing problems in public infrastructure), investment here makes sense."*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-a-budget-for-building-back-better-thats-an-excellent-idea/>

Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee
Toronto, Ontario

Metrolinx Board members should be aware that [Save Jimmie Simpson!](#) and [Lakeshore East Community Advisory Committee](#) have explained to the Federal Government that the Ontario Line plan doesn't make sense. We have requested that the Ontario Line be designated for a Federal Impact Assessment.
<https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/81350>

There is overwhelming support from local residents and businesses for this federal impact assessment. The request to designate the Ontario Line project has received over 150 supportive public comments and endorsements from [Riverside BIA](#), [Ralph Thornton Community Centre](#), [Animal Alliance of Canada](#), [Agincourt Village Community Association](#), [ABC Residents Association](#), [Pape Area Concerned Citizens for Transit](#), [York Quay Neighbourhood Association](#), [Riverdale Historical Society](#), [Small's Creek](#), the [South Riverdale Community Health Centre](#), Councillor [Paula Fletcher](#) and MPP [Peter Tabuns](#).

The Metrolinx Board of Directors has a responsibility to ensure the plans made by Metrolinx staff are the best possible ones. The Ontario Line is most important transit project in Toronto for decades. Let's get it right. There's no shame in recognizing that a better idea exists and changing the plan before time and money is wasted. Before it is too late, send the Ontario Line plan back to staff for an important revision: bury the two-kilometer section of the OL between the Don River and Gerrard Street.

Sincerely,

Rosemary Waterston, member
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** Toronto City Council motion MM28.17 on February 2, 2021 asked Metrolinx to put the Ontario Line underground in Riverside and Leslieville:*

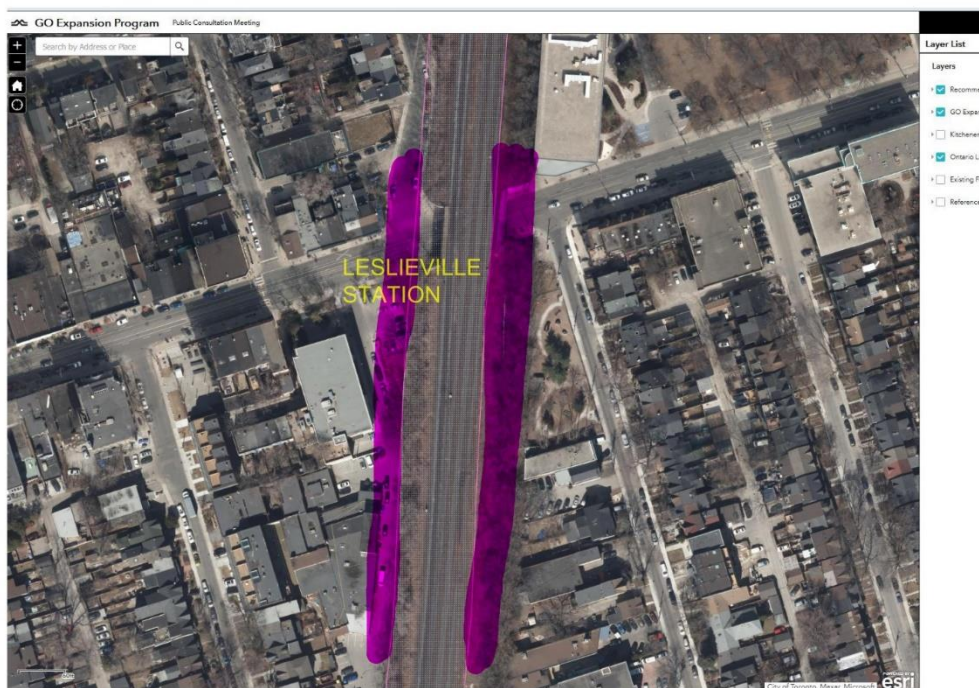
<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM28.17>

Below are more maps showing the proximity of this section of the Ontario Line to houses, a school and parks:

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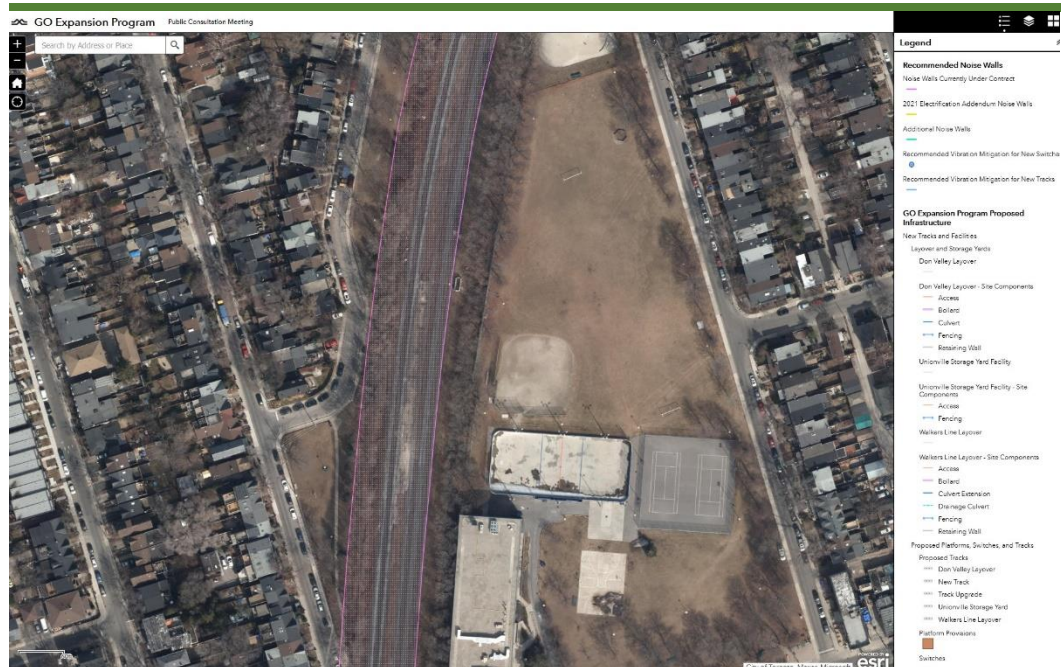


Above: The OL tunnel portal behind Pape Avenue Junior School and surrounded by homes to the north.



Above: Proposed Leslieville station in pink lines.

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Above: View of Ontario Line boundaries on Jimmie Simpson Community Centre & park