

Building a Greener Region

David Jang, Chief Communications Officer
Kelly Hagan, VP Community Engagement

December 2, 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines how Metrolinx is supporting a sustainable transit network by creating a greener region, more environmentally friendly communities and reducing gridlock.

We do this through:

Meaningful engagement with the communities we serve that puts communities first

Enhancing parks and creating **new green spaces**

Beautification of communities through **artwork, greenery, and graffiti management**

Expert decision making through each Environmental Assessment

Greening the region through **tree replanting** initiatives that are 3:1, providing **tree compensation** and donating cut wood from the trees removed

More transit service **reduces gridlock** and leads to a reduction in carbon gas emissions

Reducing construction impacts, like noise and vibration, wherever possible

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESOLVED:

THAT as described in the Chief Communications Officer and Vice President, Community Engagement's December 2, 2021 report, Metrolinx continue to advance programs and sustainability strategies that provide enhanced benefits to communities from the implementation of Metrolinx's capital program and services, including meaningful engagement with communities, enhancing parks and green spaces as well as other community beautification initiatives, as described.

COMMUNITIES ARE AT THE ROOT OF OUR SUSTAINABLE DECISION MAKING

We understand construction is impactful, but at its core is the delivery of a connected region, but also one that will be greener as transit becomes a better and more environmentally friendly option.

Infrastructure Design

Ensuring our designs are integrated seamlessly into the fabric of your community.

- Parks & recreational spaces
- Vegetation removal
- Public realm enhancements
- Noise & vibration
- Graffiti management

3:1 Ratio

Sometimes, trees need to be removed to expand and enhance transit networks

When that happens, we plant **three times** as many trees

To date, Metrolinx has planted **24,000** native and non-invasive trees.

Localized Community Enhancement

- Park enhancement & creating new green spaces, like the **2,908m²** of added park space in Riverside/ Leslieville
- Tree compensation and replanting
- Expanding active transportation, like bike lanes, including 4,200+ bike rack additions
- 25+ new walking and cycling bridges and underpasses

Expert Decision Making

Project decisions are guided by industry experts, including:

- Ecologists
- Arborists

687KM
Electrified
Track on
GO
Expansion

700K
more transit
trips during the
daily peak
periods

-40%
GHG
emissions
per capita
from auto
driver trips

DRAFT
STANDARDIZED
APPROACH TO
COMMUNITY
IMPACTS:
Noise & Vibration
Mitigation
Version 1.0
July 2021

GO METROLINX

DESIGN
STANDARDS



Protect existing trees



Start planting early to
accelerate benefits



Maximize vegetative
screening with layers
of vegetation



Minimize sound
impact of passing
trains



Minimize visual
impacts of noise and
retaining walls



Implement
CPTED
principles



Enhance existing
context



Establish a visually
cohesive identity for
the Ontario line



Focus on low-
maintenance, all-
season vegetation



Consider transitions

 **METROLINX**

ENGAGING WITH COMMUNITY PARTNERS & ORGANIZATIONS

Metrolinx has partnered with Parks Canada and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to plant over **24,000 trees and shrubs** in preparation for the GO Expansion program, partnerships that will be expanded to include the subway program.



Metrolinx partners with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Parks Canada to plant more than 12,000 trees and shrubs at Rouge National Urban Park

OCTOBER 30, 2020

This investment kicks off Metrolinx's extensive ecological compensation effort to offset the planned changes to rail corridors in preparation for GO Expansion infrastructure.

Metrolinx is growing transit across the region.

With the massive GO Expansion project on the horizon, rail corridors across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area will be changing over the coming years as faster and more frequent GO service will operate on a lot of brand new infrastructure.

Metrolinx provides update on fall reforestation work in advance of GO Expansion construction

NOVEMBER 12, 2021

Metrolinx is sowing the seeds of future transit expansion. The transit agency is planting thousands of trees and shrubs in advance of major construction for GO Expansion. Get an update on the tree planting and check out photos of saplings going into the dirt.

The idea that Metrolinx is making the region greener while removing trees may seem like a paradox.

But between much needed new transit, new trees, and the removal of invasive species, GO Expansion will make the region greener.

Reforestation efforts in action – get a drone video view of work Metrolinx is doing to increase tree cover


JANUARY 15, 2021

A new bird's eye view shows a 3.5-hectare planting site at Rouge National Urban Park. We take you over it all.

Let's go higher than the trees.

Metrolinx recently partnered with Parks Canada and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to plant over 12,000 trees and shrubs at Rouge National Urban Park in preparation for the GO Expansion program. And new drone footage shows an interesting perspective on the work.

The video shows the sheer size of the planting site.



VEGETATION COMPENSATION STRATEGY

In partnership with local conservation authorities Metrolinx has implemented a vegetation compensation strategy for its sustainable transit delivery.



**24,000
new shrubs
and trees
funded by
MX**

New Metrolinx video explains why removing trees is necessary to unlock a greener GO transit network

AUGUST 26, 2021

Across the region, work has already begun to make room for more GO Transit. Check out a new video explaining the ‘what, why and how’ of tree and vegetation removal and management in preparation for the GO Expansion program. Plus, information on how the transit agency is replacing trees and shrubs across the region.

The grass often seems greener on the other side.

As GO Transit branches out – Finding balance between nature’s vegetation and space for transit (with images of how much damage a tree limb can do to a train)

FEBRUARY 18, 2020

There’s an art to giving vegetation its space to flourish, while making sure routes are safe and reliable for GO Transit vehicles to travel on. This is especially true as lines and services continue to expand to meet a growing need. We take you inside the decision process that goes into compensation for greenery that needs to be removed, as well as an overall question as old as transportation itself – how do you best clear the path ahead?

**Metrolinx
Vegetation
Guideline
2020**

CASE STUDY: ADDING MORE GREEN SPACE IN LESLIEVILLE-RIVERSIDE

Ontario Line construction will be leveraged to enhance four surrounding parks, including the Gerrard Carlaw Parkette. The combined expansion will total **2,908 square meters** of added green space.

Ontario Line east segment update looks at how noise walls will make communities quieter

APRIL 22, 2021

As Metrolinx prepares to host another Ontario Line open house tonight (April 22) for the eastern stretch of the new Toronto route, details have emerged about how noise walls proposed in the neighbourhoods of Riverside and Leslieville will make things noticeably quieter than they are today. This feature gives a sneak peek of some of ... [Continue reading](#)

Metrolinx announces more park space for Ontario Line east

JUNE 24, 2021

Metrolinx is releasing updated details for the eastern stretch of the Ontario Line, with refined plans that reveal the opportunity to create even more green space alongside existing community parks. As plans progress for the Ontario Line, it's clear that almost all of the above-ground section through Riverside and Leslieville will fit inside the property boundaries of the existing rail corridor, owned by Metrolinx - and in some places, sections of the existing rail corridor will be released to make parks in

Jimmie Simpson Park, Bruce Mackey Park, McCleary Playground and the Gerrard-Carlaw Parkette and dog park will be larger when the Ontario Line opens because of new green space the project will unlock. The transit agency announced this today (June 24) alongside plans to replace aging infrastructure in the area and updated details for three stations along the Ontario Line's eastern segment.



Simulating sound from Ontario Line and GO trains in Riverside and Leslieville

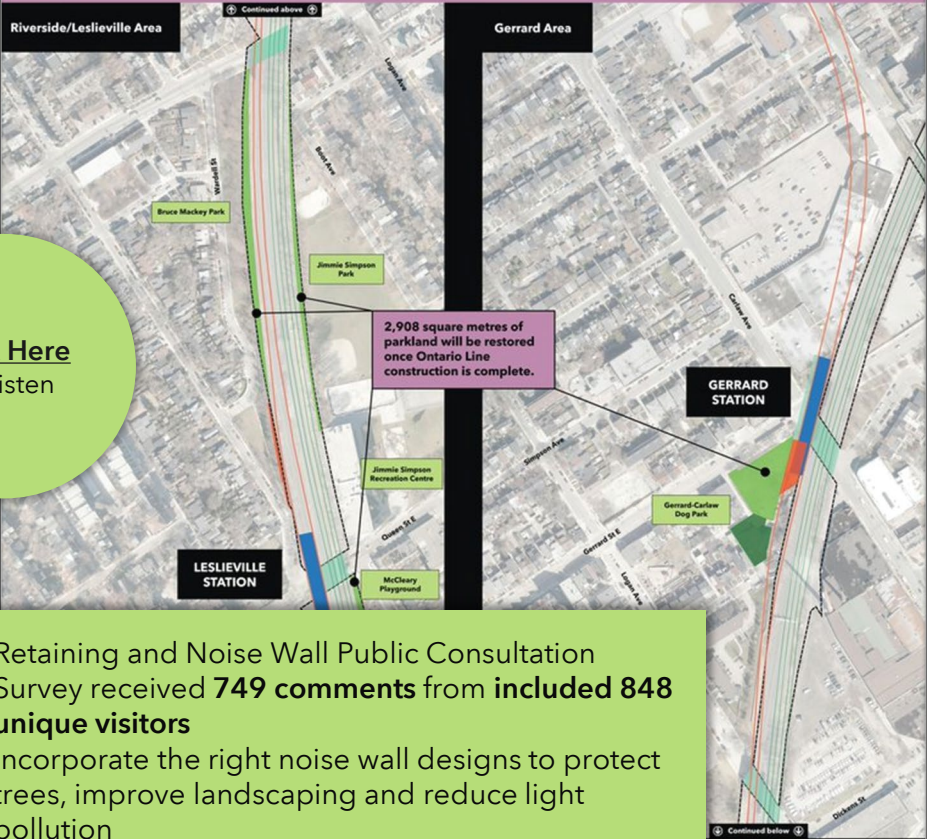
Technology can answer two questions on the minds of Riverside and Leslieville residents: How much noise will come from passing trains once the Ontario Line opens? And how will this compare to the sound of today's GO trains, currently passing through the neighbourhood? Metrolinx commissioned an interactive sound demonstration to give people an opportunity to ... [Continue reading](#)

Metrolinx News

ENGAGE: Immersive Sound Studio

Home Listen Engage

Lakeshore East Parkland Restoration



Click Here
To listen

- Retaining and Noise Wall Public Consultation Survey received **749 comments** from **included 848 unique visitors**
- Incorporate the right noise wall designs to protect trees, improve landscaping and reduce light pollution
- Reducing the number of construction work zones by streamlining Ontario Line and Go Expansion projects



2,908
Square
metres of
parkland to
be restored

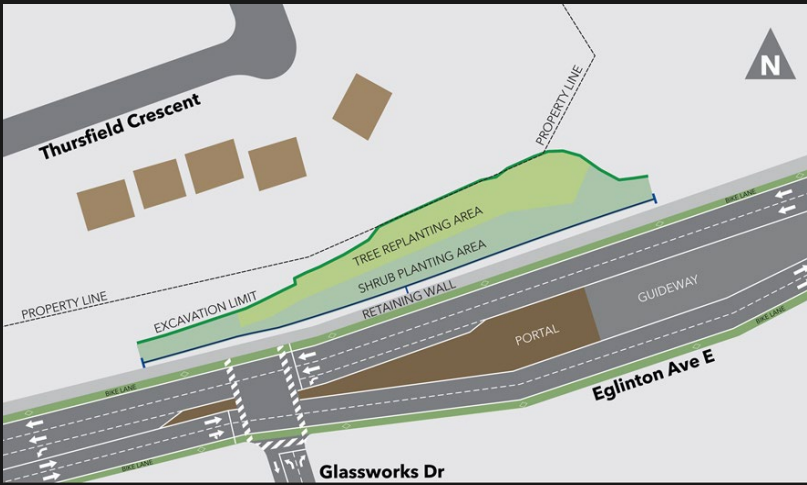
CASE STUDY: REPLANTING TREES WHEN CONSTRUCTION CAUSES IMPACTS

Once trees were removed from this slope along Eglinton Ave. E., we were uncertain they could be replanted. With the help of Crosslinx Transit Solutions, the City of Toronto's Urban Forestry, and with the feedback of Thursfield Crescent residents, a restoration plan was developed, which included the **safe** planting of **native and non-invasive trees** for an even greener slope.

Retaining Wall Construction and Tree Removal at Brentcliffe Portal Brings Neighbours Grief

June 1, 2020 Geoff Kettel Development

Residents of Thursfield Crescent, whose homes sit on the top of the ravine slope above Eglinton Avenue east of Brentcliffe, awoke on Tuesday, March 24th to the sound of chain saws clear-cutting trees just below their properties. Neighbours rushed to investigate the tree removals on the ravine slope, some of which went right up to their fences, and physically intervened to try to stop the work. Before cutting stopped later that day, at least 25 trees were removed.



CASE STUDY: GREENING OUR FACILITIES AND TRACK

We are choosing green options for our track, facility and station roofs as well as our infrastructure. These design decisions improve the overall look and feel of new construction.

92
Square
Metres of
Green
Track

Sustainable station design nets Guildwood GO station two new awards

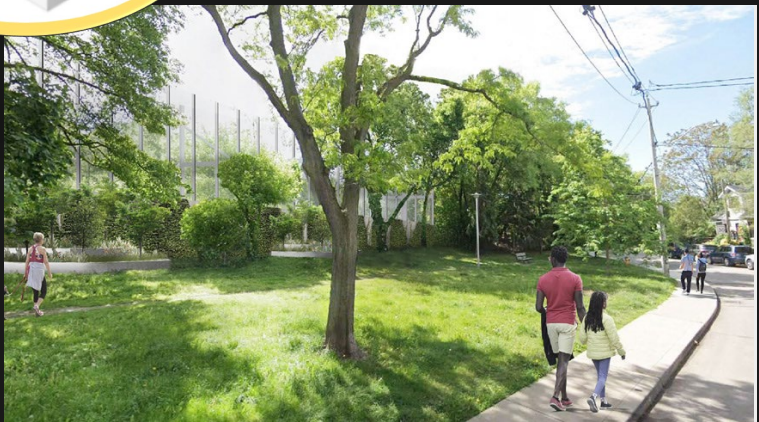
OCTOBER 6, 2021

One of Toronto's oldest train stations is also one of the greenest. Find out how protecting pollinators plays a big part in the station's recent accolades.

GO trains aren't the only green things at Guildwood GO station.

Guildwood is one of the oldest stations in the GO network – first opened in 1977 – but now boasts some of the most modern and sustainable amenities.

Not only has the station recently achieved Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver Certification, Guildwood GO also recently won a 2021 Toronto Urban Design Award of Merit.



The partially installed green track mock-up at Warden Avenue's Golden Mile stop looking east. (Metrolinx photo)

CASE STUDY: PROTECTING OLD ELM

Community engagement allowed for the preservation of a 200-year-old elm tree, a staple of the community. Old Elm was incorporated into the station design, and the station was renamed in its honour.

Metrolinx renaming Lincolnville GO Station to honour 200 year old elm tree

SEPTEMBER 29, 2021

The centuries-old tree that stands on the site of the new Lincolnville GO Station will now have the station renamed in its honour.

Lincolnville's oldest resident is being honoured in a big way.

Effective Oct. 16, Lincolnville GO Station will be re-named Old Elm GO Station to acknowledge a historic 200-year-old elm tree.



CASE STUDY: SMALL'S CREEK TREE REMOVAL

Metrolinx's tree replanting goes above and beyond regulatory requirements. We are committed to minimizing tree removals wherever possible and replacing the trees and shrubs removed during construction.

Lakeshore East rail corridor construction gets underway – with some green additions

MARCH 8, 2021

During a recent town hall with residents of Toronto's Woodbine-Danforth neighbourhood, Metrolinx asked the community about their priorities for the restoration of the local ravine after construction. The community responded – their top priorities are to retain as many trees as possible and to plant more trees in compensation.

Metrolinx has heard the community loud and clear.

The transit agency says it wants to find a balance between what needs to be removed for the addition of a fourth track and future electrification infrastructure, and what can be done to restore the natural ecological footp

[Click Here](#)

To watch the Q&A

Funding planting of 2000 in collaboration with the City, TRCA & local communities.

60 trees protected

Watching over environmental integrity of Toronto's Small's Creek a personal mission for Metrolinx ecologist: See the video

APRIL 16, 2021

As Metrolinx works on the GO Expansion project, which includes engaging with community members around Toronto's Small's Creek ravine, Gretel Green, manager of Environmental Programs and Assessment for Metrolinx, offers up a perspective born from trekking in Toronto's important green spaces with her family.

As a recent transplant to Toronto's east end, it's been a treat to explore the city's ravines, and alongside my husband and daughter. We frequently hike them and remove invasive plants wherever we travel.

LAKESHORE EAST GO EXPANSION: SMALL'S CREEK

2000 Trees



Community Input



Construction Start: October 2021



Exploring Options for Connection



