

To:
Metrolinx CEO, Phil Verster
Metrolinx Board Chair, Don Wright

Moss Park Coalition Letter - Community Engagement Concerns and Community Benefits Agreement for Moss Park

February 16, 2023

We are writing to you as the Moss Park Coalition, a grassroots group of residents and organizations in the Moss Park area who are extremely concerned and disappointed by Metrolinx's lack of meaningful community engagement on the proposed Ontario Line Moss Park station project plans.

Over the last two years, the Moss Park Coalition has made numerous efforts to engage with Metrolinx and key stakeholders involved in the Ontario Line Moss Park station project and to share important community priorities that were identified through our community outreach and engagement. Our concerns were most recently outlined in a January 13 letter to Metrolinx to which we have yet to receive a response.

Despite our ongoing efforts to ensure the community's priorities are heard, Metrolinx has disregarded these important community concerns and continues forward with its project plans, like the recent removal of trees in Moss Park. While we support good transportation infrastructure, it must also come with equitable transportation planning that includes involvement and transparency with the communities that will be severely impacted by the construction activity and impacts for many years.

The removal of trees and the planned use of the park for a construction staging area were not supported by Moss park residents and were brought up numerous times as concerns to Metrolinx community engagement staff.

Transit Impacts to Local Park and Neighbourhood

The Moss Park Coalition is concerned about the significant short and long term impacts that the Ontario Line project will have on Moss Park park and Moss Park area. We have relayed these concerns numerous times to Metrolinx and all levels of government who have invested significant public taxpayers money in this project.

To date, Metrolinx has not provided transparency on its community engagement in Moss Park and no assessment on short or long term impacts of the project.

A preliminary survey launched by the Moss Park Coalition shows 71% of residents were not aware of any consultation or engagement opportunities as for the Ontario Line Moss Park Station.

Moss Park Community Liaison Committee

In December 2021 Metrolinx convened the Moss Park Station Community Liaison Committee. This came after significant community advocacy efforts and a [request](#) by Toronto City Council for Metrolinx to establish a working group to identify and co-develop solutions on many community focused issues as well as long-term and short-term impacts on the community.

As part of the Terms of Reference (see attached) for the Community Liaison Committee, some of the areas that committee were to focus on include:

- *Identifying local priorities and perspectives from the community and working together to identify solutions that are within the projects' purview.*
- *Working cooperatively to inform and review efforts by the project team and Metrolinx to mitigate the short and long-term impacts of works and activities.*

At the first meeting of the Community Liaison Committee, many issues of community impacts and concerns were brought forward by the Moss Park Coalition representatives. To date, no minutes of the meeting have been shared with the committee and there has been no transparency or process established to work with this committee on identifying and co-developing solutions to the impacts in Moss Park area.

Since the launch of the Community Liaison Committee in December 2021, we have only had two meetings. During critical project planning stages, between March and November 2022, the Moss Park Community Liaison Committee did not meet even though Metrolinx committed in the terms of reference that *“The CLC will meet approximately bi-monthly/or quarterly until construction starts when the frequency will likely increase to monthly”*.

The last meeting held on November 4 was for a site tour where only design related issues were discussed. Also, the committee was informed at the site tour that Metrolinx has made an arbitrary decision to change the group name from a “Community Liaison Committee” to “Construction Liaison Committee” which leaves us even more concerned that many of the community issues raised in this forum will continue to be ignored. We request an immediate reconvening of the Community Liaison Committee to further discuss important community priorities and the promised Community Benefits Agreement.

Ontario Line - Community Benefits Agreement

As part of the May 2021 funding announcement, it was promised that all new Metrolinx transit projects including the Ontario Line would include a Community Benefits Agreement. However, no details on a Community Benefits Agreement for the Ontario Line project has been shared with the community.

We would like to meet with Metrolinx representatives at the earliest opportunity to further discuss and finalize the Community Benefits Agreement for the project. Neighbourhoods like Moss Park, where there is a higher proportion of Indigenous, Black, racialized and low income families, and who will be severely impacted by transit construction, need to be directly involved in co-developing opportunities for community benefits as part of the project with transparency and accountability.

Kais Azad
Moss Park Coalition