

YSW Economic Employment Working Group - Eglinton Crosstown West Extension LRT

On behalf of the York South Weston Economic Working Group, we are writing to the Board of Metrolinx as it relates to the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension project and Metrolinx's commitments to include community benefits commitments on the project.

While we welcome and support new transit infrastructure in the community, we also want to ensure that it is done right and that the local community and businesses who are most impacted benefit from this significant public investment. This includes ensuring Metrolinx has direct and meaningful engagement with the local community on issues such as the outstanding project design concerns that have been voiced by local groups like Save the Park.

One of the areas that we are encouraged to see Metrolinx move forward with is the Community benefits approach which will ensure equity groups like women, Black, Indigenous and people of colour have a share of the good jobs and employment opportunities this project will provide.

Community benefits is not new in the area, as the Mount Dennis and York South Weston community were one of the initial collaborators with labour and community organizations from across the City to support the development of the Toronto Community Benefits Network (TCBN) who were key in negotiating the initial [Community Benefits Framework with Metrolinx in 2015](#).

Through this collaborative approach of working closely with the TCBN, local agencies, community groups and businesses, the Metrolinx [Eglinton Crosstown LRT community benefits](#) program has led to over 162 apprenticeships and journeypersons positions and 200 professional, administrative and technical opportunities for people from historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups. \$7M+ was also been spent procuring goods and services from local businesses and additional \$700,000 has been spent on procuring from local social enterprises like Building Up.

A similar community benefits approach has been approved on other Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario transit projects including the Finch West LRT and [West Park Healthcare Centre](#) (also located in the York South Weston area)

Similarly to the initial Eglinton Crosstown project we see the new West Extension project as another opportunity for a local public transit project to support a growing, healthy and diverse community of York South Weston.

Our committee has identified recommendations that could help strengthen good jobs and local economic opportunities, local business supports and neighbourhood improvements especially as it relates to the York South Weston area. These recommendations include:

Good jobs and local economic opportunities

- Ensure minimum diversity hiring targets for historically disadvantaged communities and equity seeking groups including 10% Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; 10% Women

- Ensure local residents of Mount Dennis and Weston are prioritized for the good jobs and career opportunities as part of the Eglinton Crosstown West LRT project
- Ensure good jobs that pay living wages with benefits and pension
- Ensure minimum diversity targets apply specifically to each of the following: skilled trades apprenticeships, journeypersons, professional, administrative and technical careers, paid internships/co-ops, operations and maintenance of the LRT
- Ensure specific local outreach activities to underrepresented groups including individuals identifying as Indigenous, Black, racialized and/or women
- Anti racism strategy in place by all contractors and subcontractors with reporting requirements including mandatory training for all workers on-site
- Tracking and monitoring of outcomes including local hiring, disaggregated race based data for meeting equity hiring targets. Annual reports on outcomes must be made publicly available
- Eglinton West Crosstown LRT should include a project specific Community Benefits Working Group that meets quarterly (at minimum) to support the implementation plan and monitoring of community benefits commitments. The working group must include representatives from the project contractor, unions, Metrolinx, Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development, Ministry of Infrastructure, Ministry of Transportation, TCBN and local community stakeholders, agencies and/or representatives
- Each project team should have a dedicated Community Benefits Liaison to help support the implementation of community benefits commitments

Local Business supports

- Procurement of goods and services from local businesses, diverse owned businesses and/or social enterprises in the Mount Dennis/Weston area

Neighbourhood Improvements

- Support and procure local art projects, initiatives, murals and photography that reflect local history and culture with an emphasis on supporting local indigineous artists
- Meaningful community engagement and negotiations in good faith as part of the planning and design of the Eglinton Crosstown West LRT
- Any surplus land should undergo a community engagement process to identify local community needs and deeply affordable housing should be a condition as part of any sale of surplus land

From the York South Weston Economic Working Group