



June 28, 2022

Donald Wright, Chair  
Metrolinx Board of Directors  
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Delivered via email: chair@metrolinx.com

**Subject: Keep the Eglinton Crosstown West Extension underground in York South-Weston**

To the Chair and Members of the Metrolinx Board of Directors,

York South-Weston residents strongly oppose the construction of a 1.5km elevated guideway through Mount Dennis parkland with massive passenger stations over both Jane Street and Scarlett Road. We request Metrolinx revisit a below grade option from the February 2020 Business Case and continue tunneling the entire Eglinton Crosstown West Extension (ECWE) from Renforth Drive to Mount Dennis station. We respectfully ask that all Request for Proposals for work that impacts this section of the ECWE are immediately paused and revised to facilitate this request.

The proposed LRT expressway would run trains through some of the most valuable parkland in the GTA. Eglinton Flats is a designated greenbelt zone that includes one of the city's largest regional networks of sports facilities and offers an idyllic setting to enjoy nature. The Flats are within close range of the Toronto Carrying Place Trail and an area of Indigenous archeological and cultural significance.

Metrolinx representatives have repeatedly stated that ECWE would not be built in the parks. However, not only are the Jane portal (LRT train tunnel) and elevated guideway proposed to be built in the parks, Pearen Park, the only children's playground in the area, is slated to be a construction staging zone. This priority neighbourhood needs to retain its parks, which are vital to the community. Metrolinx opted to tunnel the line below ground through a neighbouring and more affluent stretch of Etobicoke and this needs to continue through Mount Dennis.

Clear cutting large swaths of mature urban forest to accommodate this elevated proposal would destroy ecologically sensitive areas, wildlife habitat and a critical wildlife corridor that connects the Humber River System to Eglinton Flats, Fergy Brown Park, Pearen Park, Topham Pond and Gladhurst Park. Species at Risk, both Threatened and Endangered, that are protected in Canada under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), have been identified in the project area.

Metrolinx is already talking about restoration plans. Restoration follows destruction. While other cities around the world are undertaking re-naturalization projects in areas destroyed by development, Metrolinx is planning to destroy an established naturalized area in Toronto that took decades to develop. Construction of an elevated guideway would cause irreparable damage to the parkland. With

increased residential developments in the area and the ongoing impacts of climate crisis, it's imperative that Metrolinx stop any plans to destroy mature naturalized parkland and keep the ECWE underground.

In May 2021, the Federal government allocated 4.7 billion dollars to the ECWE. A fully tunnelled LRT line will provide fast speeds, less service disruptions and best cost benefit in the long term. Keeping the LRT underground is both financially viable and technically feasible. Additionally, the most current Environmental Impact studies, arborist report and tree inventory have not yet been made public. Substantive environmental reviews are one of the conditions outlined in the federal funding agreement.

The Picture Mount Dennis Planning Framework (December 7, 2021, Section: 2.4.1 Valleys and Flats) states that our greenspaces are "The green and blue lifeblood of Mount Dennis," and "The valleys and flats will be recognized for the ecological and public health benefits that they bring to the community and will be made accessible to all – including families, youth and seniors – as spaces for ceremony, recreation and connection with nature."

There is a groundswell of opposition to the proposed elevated guideway in our community as people become aware of the devastating and irreversible consequences for our parkland. Metrolinx, as a publicly funded agency, needs to conduct meaningful consultations and demonstrate a genuine willingness to act on concerns of taxpayers in the communities where they plan to build.

In closing, we believe that York South-Weston residents deserve both world-class transit and our essential greenspaces. The current plan to elevate the LRT through Mount Dennis is neither socially equitable nor ecologically responsible. It's comparable to running a Gardiner Expressway for LRT trains through local parks and adjacent to residential buildings. The prospect of an urban oasis of trees becoming an urban blight of steel and concrete is alarming. Metrolinx must revisit the below grade option and continue tunneling the entire LRT line from Renforth Drive to Mount Dennis station.

We strongly urge Metrolinx to build better transit while prioritizing the well-being and livability of our community and the protection of urban green spaces and the environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

Neiland Brissenden, member

On behalf of Stop the Trains in Our Parks (STOP) community group

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