



Submitted electronically by:
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Procedural Services Branch
99 Wellesley Street West
Room 1405, Whitney Block
Toronto, ON M7A 1A2

Attn: Clerk of the Standing Committee on Social Policy,

Written Submission from the Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA)

Re: Bill 171, Building Transit Faster Act

We are writing on behalf of the Riverside Business Improvement Area (BIA) to provide comments toward *Bill 171, Building Transit Faster Act*.

Who we Are:

The Riverside BIA is a local Board of the City of Toronto under the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*. For 40 years, the Riverside BIA has been a community-oriented not-for-profit association of local business people and property owners who work in partnership with the City of Toronto to enhance the Riverside business district, located along Queen Street East from Davies Avenue to Empire Avenue. The BIA's mandate is to improve, beautify and promote Riverside as a business and shopping district through marketing, public programming and streetscape improvements. Our members include over 100 business and property owners, a large proportion of which are small independent family businesses.

The Riverside BIA's service area includes Queen Street East and De Grassi Street which is within the catchment area of The Ontario Line (please see Image 1 below).

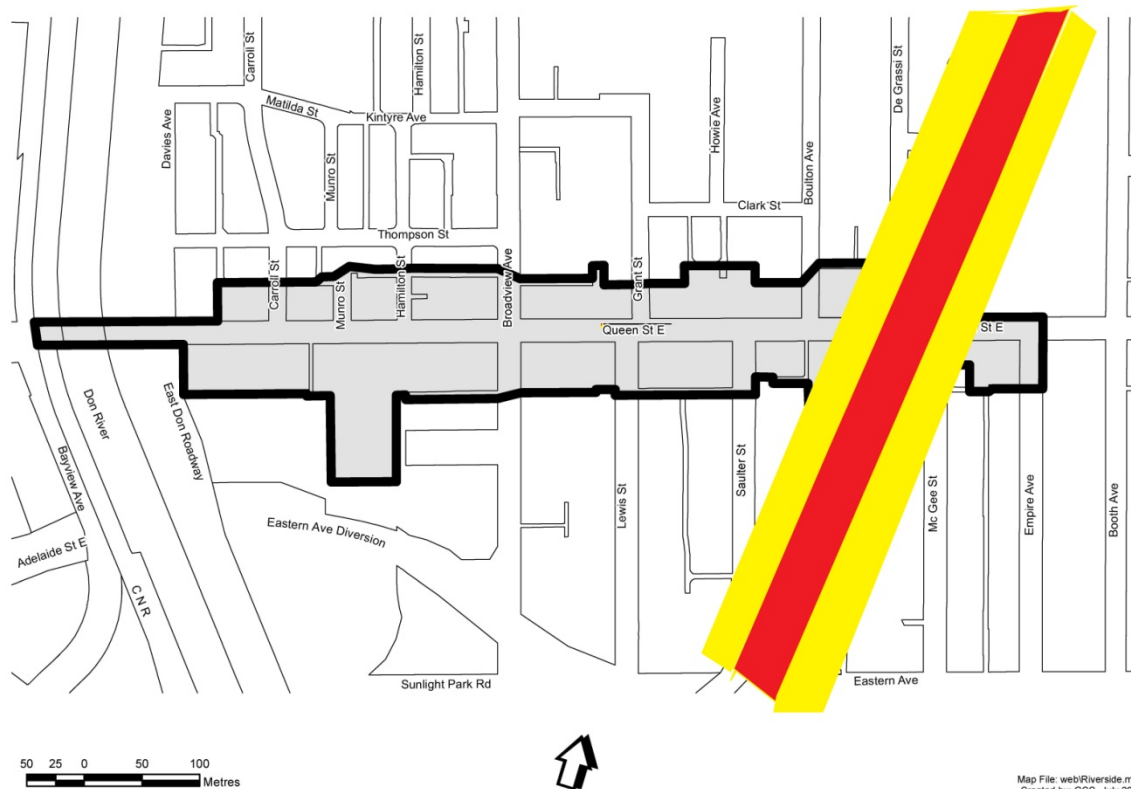


Image 1: Riverside BIA service area with Ontario Line, depicted in red, and potential expropriation areas as we understand it, depicted in yellow

An important part of what we support and depend on as a BIA is fast, convenient public transit to enable customers, employees, visitors and residents to work, shop and play in the Riverside BIA community. We support more transit built faster, however, we want it built right and in a way that ensures our area stays open for business.

Our Concerns about Bill 171:

In February 2020, the Riverside BIA office conducted a members survey regarding the Ontario Line and found that:

- 92% are concerned about construction impacts to their business/commercial property

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- 83% are concerned about potential loss of park and community space or other land expropriation.
- 75% are concerned about potential noise and vibration impacts of trains operating frequently above ground to their commercial property/ business

Over the past five years alone, the Riverside BIA has invested over \$1 million dollars in streetscape assets and marketing and public programming initiatives that have been spent to build up the economy of the area and help make it a destination in Toronto. **Bill 171 must include guarantees to protect local assets in the form of equal or better replacement should these assets be impacted by construction and operation of the Ontario Line transit project.**

We are also concerned that Bill 171 is being brought forward in the context of a design that would have real detrimental effects to our business community. We are concerned that when private partners alone do the design work, there is a real risk that businesses and community centres and spaces will be lost. **It is important to note that the current plan for the Ontario Line puts a number of businesses in Riverside directly out of business due to the footprint of the project, not to mention the potential impacts from construction and operation. We need the Bill to protect our business community.**

Additionally, especially given the current extreme threat posed to our local economy by the COVID-19, additional shocks to our local economy and community posed by prolonged transit construction would be unreasonable, without significant supports in place for the entirety of the construction and beyond. **Bill 171 must ensure that BIAs and their members - local business and property owners - are treated as real partners during all the stages of the Ontario Line project.**



What we are asking from for Bill 171:

We understand the purpose of *Bill 171, Building Faster Transit Act* is to expedite the delivery of transit projects in the Greater Toronto Area, including the Ontario Line. We have reviewed *Bill 171, Building Faster Transit Act* and request the following amendments be added to Bill 171:

- Compensation for BIAs and their members for damages and loss of business caused by construction;
- A Community Benefits Agreement written into the transit contract;
- Agreements on limits to noise, vibration, air pollution, construction timelines, and right of access to businesses during construction are written into the contract;
- The establishment of a working group to coordinate construction with BIAs and the business community and ensure concerns are addressed during planning, design, construction, and operation;
- An agreement with the City of Toronto and other relevant bodies to ensure the movement of utility infrastructure is conducted in coordination with utilities and municipalities and that there is proper notice to BIAs and businesses.

Additionally, we would ask that the following clauses be removed from Bill 171 to continue protections of local commercial property owners, business operators, vital community spaces, and BIAs as a whole, as vibrant commercial areas that are 'open for business':

- Part III Expropriation, 44: that would allow expropriation of land without hearings; and
- Part V Municipal service and right of way access, 52: that would allow Metrolinx to take over a municipality's right of access and services.

Once again, the Riverside BIA is supportive of and depends on fast, convenient public transit to enable customers, employees, visitors and residents to work, shop and play within the Riverside BIA community. We do support more transit built faster; however, we support building that transit in a way

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that ensures our area and businesses are fully supported to 'stay open for business' throughout and beyond the process.

Please contact us directly at 416-466-8167 or office@riverside-to.com should you require further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosemary Jeffares". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Rosemary Jeffares
Riverside BIA Board of Directors Co-Chair

On behalf of the Riverside BIA:

Rosie Little Jeffares, Board of Directors Co-Chair (Owner of Quince Flowers)

Mitchell Korman, Board of Directors Co-Chair (Owner of Korman & Co. Real Estate Lawyers)

David Watson, Board of Directors (Owner of Eastbound Brewing Co)

Athena Ellinas Towers, Board of Directors (Owner of The Opera House)

Dianna Kennedy, Board of Directors (Re/MAX Hallmark Brokerage)

Jamie Zeldin, Board of Directors, Treasurer (Hullmark)

Adrienne McRuvie, Board of Directors (Owner of Oma Chiropractic)

Natasha Varjadic, Board of Directors (Owner of Nell & Natasha's Real Estate Homeward)

Councillor Paula Fletcher , Board of Directors (Ward 14-Toronto Danforth)

c.c. Toronto Association of BIAs (TABIA)

MPP Peter Tabuns, Toronto Danforth