

Submission to the Committee on Social Policy of the Ontario Legislature, relating to Bill 171

I live at 466 Pape Avenue, one block north of Pape School. I am going to try to use multimedia in my presentation.

My thanks to the Chair and Committee for hearing me.

It seems as if the issues embodied in Bill 171 are divisive, but I submit that everybody here and almost everybody involved agrees on the basics.

Everybody wants:

- more transit for Toronto
- we want it to happen as quickly as possible, and
- we want costs to be contained.

For Metrolinx to accomplish these three things in the building of the Ontario Line, it must be:

- 1) Accountable,
- 2) Responsible, and
- 3) Fair.

I will explain these in more detail in a moment, but first I want to say that based on my own direct experience, Metrolinx **cannot be trusted** to achieve any of these things.

I lived within three blocks of Yonge & Eglinton from the start of the Eglinton LRT until 2016, when my wife and I moved to Pape Avenue. I saw first-hand that Metrolinx needs more effective oversight than the McGuinty government provided at the start of the project.

I'm going to use video to illustrate my point:

[CTV interview]

And to show that this was not just an isolated interview:

- blogto.com
- blogto.com – Note that it was the CAA that designated Eglinton East as the worst road in Ontario in 2019
- cbc.ca

➤ cbc.ca

You may have noticed during the CTV clip the narrow sidewalk, hemmed in by construction. It's clear that this is terribly harmful to the businesses next to it.

Moreover, this was Eglinton on the east side of Yonge. During the winter of 2015-16, Eglinton on the west side was even worse. The south sidewalk was completely closed. Meanwhile, the sidewalk on the north side was open, but there was no paving – we had to walk over dirt or mud – the “walkway” was less than 6 feet wide, and the only thing separating us from traffic was a line of orange cones.

So, Metrolinx has made this whole project a much prolonged nightmare for anyone unfortunate enough to be in its path.

Now let's look at their cost overruns.

In December of 2018, Ontario Auditor-General Bonnie Lysek “... cited Metrolinx's decision to sign what's called an Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP) contract with the consortium tasked with building the Eglinton LRT. Such contracts typically include a premium for the private-sector partners assuming the risks of cost overruns and delays. But according to Lysyk, under this contract, Metrolinx had to pay the consortium \$237 million more in 2018 to ensure the project still meets its September 2021 target date.”

That \$237 million is money that should have been spent on other transit projects in Toronto, or on worthwhile projects elsewhere in the Province. Instead, taxpayers had to bail Metrolinx out because of its inability to monitor and manage its contractors.

Worse, Metrolinx agreed to pay this extortion to ensure the project was completed by the already-delayed September, 2021 date. And yet, the completion date has again been pushed back, this time to May of 2022.

Meanwhile, Metrolinx has alienated the surrounding community with its high-handed, arrogant behavior, to the point that the community fights it at every turn, and regularly petitions for provincial and city elected representatives to intervene.

This is embarrassing for elected officials from both the Province and the City as it represents a failure of government oversight and planning.

So it is clear that Metrolinx **cannot** be trusted to deliver the Ontario Line in a responsible and timely fashion.

Here is what I would recommend we do about it:

Metrolinx must be **required** to be:

✓ **Accountable**

- It must be held accountable on a day-to-day basis for time, cost, and damage:
 - It should be monitored by a full-time auditing team that reports directly to the Auditor-General of Ontario.

And as an aside, this would also mean there wouldn't be all those big, nasty stories and surprises coming out of Metrolinx during the Auditor-General's report to the legislature.

- All contractors must be required to cooperate fully with the auditing team as one of the terms of any agreement.
- On-site auditors would produce regular public reviews of what's happening in clear, accessible language instead of the bafflegab that Metrolinx comes out with.

✓ **Metrolinx must be Responsible**

- Businesses & residents will have to accept inconvenience and disruption during the construction, but in turn, Metrolinx must be **required** to make one of its **top two or three priorities** to **minimize** damage and inconvenience to the neighbourhood
- Metrolinx must also plan and prepare to finish construction in the shortest possible period.

✓ **Metrolinx must be Fair**

- Fair to businesses & residents along and around the route
 - If local businesses and residents are being asked to put up with inconvenience, noise, and mess during construction, then Metrolinx must make good on any damage it does to offices, dwellings, public buildings, parks, or streets, **and** make restitution for loss of business due to construction, as determined by the on-site auditors in consultation with local BIA's

- Fair to Ontario taxpayers inside and **outside** of Toronto, who get tired of hearing that even more money is being funnelled into the city because of Metrolinx incompetence
- Fair to MPPs and city councilors, who wind up holding the bag for screw-ups not of their making

As a businessman Metrolinx offends me because:

- They seem unable to stay on time and within budget
- They have lost control over their contractors and subcontractors
- They inflict unnecessary harm on the businesses & residents in their path
- They don't take responsibility for problems they create

As a resident, they offend me because:

- They don't care about the damage and inconvenience they cause
- And they view residents & local businesses as nuisances, and brush off their legitimate concerns

As a taxpayer and voter, they offend me because:

- They squander money that could be used more profitably elsewhere, either inside or outside Toronto
- And they don't seem to care how much money they waste

To sum up, Metrolinx must be accountable, responsible, and fair, but it has shown that it will not be **any** of these three things if **you** do not force them to be so. The result will be the kind of mess that the Eglinton LRT has been and remains.

This completes my presentation. I will be happy to take any questions the Committee might have.

**Presentation Slides for
Submission by
Richard Worzel, C.F.A.
10:30 A.M.
9 June 2020**

Metrolinx Must Be Required to Be:

✓ Accountable

✓ Responsible

✓ Fair

Metrolinx Has Proven that It Cannot Be Trusted

'It's truly an apocalypse': Eglinton Avenue business owner blames LRT construction for restaurant closure



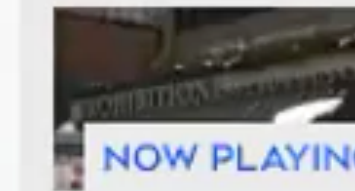
Nick Dixon Anchor & Reporter, CP24 & CTV News Toronto
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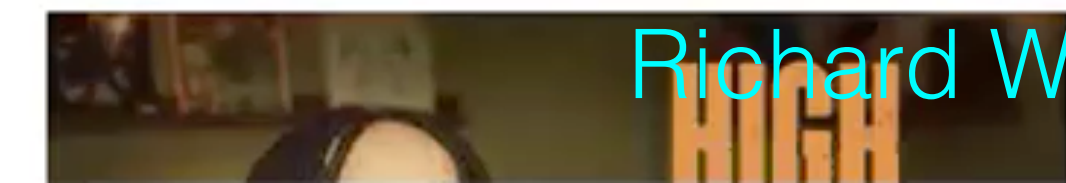
Business blames LRT construction for closures



NOW PLAYING

A frustrated business owner is blaming the ongoing LRT construction for the closure of his pub near Eglinton Avenue and Yonge Street.

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Richard Worzel, C.F.A.
2020-06-08 11:5

Toronto

'It's a mess': Scarborough businesses struggling as Eglinton LRT construction drags on



Construction moves to the Golden Mile and shops say they're already seeing a drop in sales

CBC News · Posted: Feb 07, 2019 6:00 AM ET | Last Updated: February 7, 2019



One of the entrances to Paul Lenneard's dealership is closed off due to construction of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT. (Keith Burgess/CBC NEWS)

Source: [cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca)
7 Feb 2019

Richard Worzel, C.F.A.

Toronto neighbourhood has had enough of construction causing pedestrian nightmare



Source:
blogto.com
Sept., 2019

Richard Worzel, C.F.A.



Our opinions may differ on who in town has the best coffee, ice cream or Jamaican patties, but one thing almost everyone in Toronto can agree upon is that drawn-out, disruptive construction projects suck.

Chief among the offenders in that regard at present (with the exception of Union Station) is **the Eglinton Crosstown LRT**.

Metrolinx crews have had the busy east-west thoroughfare ripped up in some place or another now **for at least six years**, forcing constant, **brutal traffic jams**, negatively **impacting local businesses** and damaging the street itself.

In fact, Eglinton Avenue East has been named **the worst road in Ontario** thanks exclusively to its ongoing transit construction nightmare.

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Sign up for our free email newsletter.

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Source: blogto.com
September, 2019

Richard Worzel, C.F.A.

Councillors call on province, Metrolinx to provide financial compensation to businesses, residents

CBC News · Posted: Feb 18, 2020 8:44 AM ET | Last Updated: February 18



Coun. Mike Colle, Ward 8, Eglinton-Lawrence, and Coun. Josh Matlow, Ward 12, Toronto-St. Paul's, told reporters that the delay announced on Tuesday is the 'breaking point' for residents and businesses along the 19 kilometre route. Colle said it has been nine years of 'construction hell.' (CBC)

[52 comments](#) 

Transit users in Toronto will have to wait until "well into 2022" before they can ride the Eglinton Crosstown, Metrolinx says.

The 19-km light rail line was previously scheduled to open to the public in September 2021.

In a statement released Tuesday, Metrolinx president and CEO Phil Verster attributed much of the delay to the group of private companies building the \$5.3-billion project in partnership with the province, Crosslinx Transit Solutions (CTS).

Verster says that CTS has "faced a number of challenges," including starting construction nine months later than initially planned. Further, he says, the consortium was "slow to finalize" design elements.

Source: [cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca)
18 Feb 2020

Richard Worzel, C.F.A.



[Ontario Auditor-General Bonnie Lysyk] "...also cited Metrolinx's decision to sign what's called an Alternative Financing and Procurement (AFP) contract with the consortium tasked with building Toronto's Eglinton Crosstown LRT. Such contracts typically include a premium for the private-sector partners assuming the risks of cost overruns and delays. But according to Lysyk, under this contract, Metrolinx had to pay the consortium \$237 million in 2018 to ensure the project still meets its September 2021 target date."

— [cbc.ca](https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/eglinton-crosstown-lrt-audit-1.4844444) website, December 5th, 2018

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