

Submission on Bill 171 to the Standing Committee on Social Policy, being a summary of the presentation remarks made by BJ Danylchuk on June 9, 2020

Good Afternoon. First, a bit about me, to provide you context for my remarks.

My name is BJ Danylchuk. My home is just off of Pape, just south of the Danforth, so I am part of the catchment area impacted by the proposed Ontario Line. I am also a taxpayer (city, province, country), and so I am interested in and impacted by the whole scope of the initiative, the Bill and the 4 priority projects.

I've spent decades working with senior leadership teams across the globe on major strategic initiatives and large scale change, from initial strategy formulation through the layers of design and implementation. And so, it is no surprise that when a major strategic initiative started ramping up in my very neighbourhood and potentially impacting me, I've attended the public information sessions earlier this year, and listened and asked questions. I know that transit is needed and important, and I want the initiative to succeed. And now, I take this opportunity to share some observations and suggestions.

Let me get right to the point.

It's still near the beginning of a multi-year initiative. There's a general plan developed a year or two ago which has received informal feedback at information meetings in Jan-Feb of this year. And then 3 or 4 months ago, the world literally changed. The pandemic began sweeping the globe, impacting everyone and everything. Globally everyone "sheltered in place" and economies largely closed down.

Now businesses, organizations and individuals are all working through how they might start up again, not "going back" to an Old Normal, but moving forward to a New Normal that includes physical distancing and other public health requirements. And every business is revisiting strategic plans and initiatives, and revising the plans and designs to identify and make whatever adjustments are needed to be able to successfully operate "in the New Normal".

The initiative and projects that are the subject of Bill 171 are not immune to the impacts of the pandemic. I therefore strongly urge that the initiative and plans be revisited and adjustments made to the designs and plans as needed so that the initiative's plans and designs are trued up and optimized for "the New Normal". It's just basic business practice – and since this is about billions of dollars, utilizing basic business practice is expected and required.

Let me give you a few examples of what I'm talking about. These are simply a few "low hanging fruit" that I can see from my vantage point, and examples of what "truing up" could address.

Making it Easy to move through the physical spaces of the transit systems that are built:

Navigation and Way-finding: In these early days of “coping with covid”, we are already becoming used to all the “make do” solutions of stickers, decals, pieces of tape, painted lines and such that are helping us to physically navigate safely in this New Normal. Several years from now, when the first stations open on these transit projects, I sure hope I’m not seeing “make do” stickers, etc being used. Now that we know that we will need to keep ourselves physically separate, how about somehow using an imbedded design element, like patterns on the floors and walls, that would largely help people “see” the spacing needed and the “flow paths” of people movement. And how about making them generic/adaptive, so that the design is not simply covid-19 specific, but more broadly usable? We are told to expect more pandemics; that could also be addressed in the tried up design.

Physical Space Designs: When the design team is reviewing the physical designs and thinking about navigation, I expect they also will be identifying where the “choke points” are in those designs – the things that constrain the overall volume and throughput of the system. We know the current designs of entries, exits, platforms, etc are based on assumptions of how close people can be, how much space is required to pass by, how wide a platform needs to be, etc etc. – none of which have accounted for the pandemic requirements. It would be prudent to consider how the shape of those spaces might impact how usable it might be. E.g. let’s say the original designs, now with pandemic requirements, might be able to generate 40% maximum capacity - - but if parts of the space was redesigned/reshaped to eliminate choke points, it could handle 50, 60, 70% capacity - - gosh, we would want to know that now, wouldn’t we? And make that adjustment to the design/plan? Actually, wouldn’t we want to tell the design team we needed them to figure out how to adjust the designs to handle the capacity we need the transit line to handle – i.e. design to deliver the results we need?

Sanitizing: Here’s an example about designing to minimize if not eliminate certain ongoing (year-on-year) costs. The pandemic has dramatically increased the level and frequency of deep cleaning of everything. Right now there’s people in PPE with machines going through everything the train cars, buses, stations, etc, basically by hand. Lots of time, effort, and PPE – all ongoing costs. Okay for the short term, but a more cost and time effective and efficient solution is needed for these transit projects, and it needs designing now. Many other industries are already using UV and ozone, and I suspect a well-constituted design team could readily craft a design “adjustment” that would largely automate the sanitization task with shorter cycle times, while imbedding much of the needed equipment into the physical structures. Yes, there are probably some specific areas or pieces that might still need hand sanitization, but if even 80% of the sanitization could be automated, the impact on operations turn-arounds and ongoing cost would be significant. And the automated percentage could increase further if there was some adjustment to the physical design of what is being disinfected to ensure the UV

light and/or ozone is able to each reach all surfaces. This is simply an example of a type of “truing up”. I expect the design teams will do much better.

Making it Easy for the City and its residents to be Healthy and Productive

a.k.a. Public Space and Green Space as Strategic Assets

As the weeks passed with everyone “sheltering in place” across the world, what we all started to realize is that simply staying physically safe is insufficient for the overall health of a human, and that some time for a walk and being outside is really important for the emotional and mental health of people, too. And at the same time, what became evident is that, when viewed through the lens of pandemic requirements, many of the world’s cities, including Toronto, have a shortage of public and green space. These world cities, including Toronto, have been taking extraordinary steps to provide more outside public space and green space, to meet the minimum required for the health of the residents.

The pandemic has provided acute clarity as to how public and green space provide a key strategic advantage to a city. Having “enough” makes it far easier for the city residents to stay healthy and be productive, which is reflected in the city’s overall health and productivity. Conversely, having less green and public space than what is needed for this purpose will put the city at an ongoing disadvantage that will act as a drag on overall productivity and performance of the city as a whole.

The current plan is to put sections of the Ontario line above ground which will wipe out most of the scarce public and green space in the section below Gerrard. In Thorncliffe Park, the current plan gobbles up green and public space that is already in short supply and further creates a barrier that divides the community (I understand the Thorncliffe Park community made this point very clear in their consultation session earlier this year). In short, the current plan wipes out rather than preserves public space and green space.

In the pre-pandemic era, wiping out green and public space might have appeared to be a fair tradeoff for some (as yet unquantified) measure of lower cost - but that time is now in the past. It is now clear that the green and public space has far greater strategic value than was appreciated earlier, and that it now needs to be preserved, especially because we now can see that our city actually has a deficit of this type of strategic asset and will have to be doing extra to accommodate for it for the foreseeable future. Why would we make it even harder for the city and its residents to be healthy and productive year after year after year? It goes against all our collective interests. The overall plans therefore need to be changed to move the transit line underground, so as to preserve the strategic advantage represented by the public space and green space.

I understand that the scenario of putting those sections underground hasn't yet been costed, so I would urge you to have these costings done. Just be sure you are getting apples vs apples costings. For example, I would also want comparator costings of the original design (with above ground sections), but be sure that the above ground costing include estimates for all the reparations for lands taken and infringed on and collateral legal and admin costs for same so that it is a fair comparison.

That is the summary of my remarks. There was then some questions and discussion touching on a couple of points that clarified some of my remarks, which I capture in summary below.

Why having costings and comparisons? Because we need context – and data - for good decisions. There are always tradeoffs on the way to optimizing on the best decision in the circumstances. Money is only part of the decision; what you get for your money is the other part. One option may be less money, but longer time, and another may be shorter time, but far less being delivered. A third might balance the key elements in a different ratio, and so on. Having alternatives to compare and contrast enables both good decisions to be made and good decisions to be communicated, understood and ultimately accepted – not just the what, but the why and the how – the logic and operation of the decision – and all that enables implementation.

A win-win-win-win-win-win-win-win outcome is possible. I understand that everyone agrees we need the transit, that there is no constituency or stakeholder group that is saying there's no need. That is great news, because it means that there's exists a potential "solution space" where the needs of all the different constituencies/stakeholder groups can be basically met (and maybe some of the "nice to have's too). It's therefore becomes possible to have a win-win-win-win-win-win-win-win focused solution design process that generates understanding and cooperation and great solutions that actually work and deliver what was asked and designed for.

Thanks you all for your time and attention. I hope this written version is helpful, and I wish the initiative and you all much success. And if there is any further clarification required, the Committee's Clerk can easily reach me.

All Respectfully Submitted,

BJ Danylchuk (Ms)