

August 27, 2021

An Open Letter to Prime Minister Trudeau

For too long, crucial decisions about the development of public transit in Toronto have been negatively influenced by narrow, short-term political considerations and private self-interest.

A glaring example is the proposed Ontario Line. The provincial government's plan for the 16km line is supposed to be a "subway" and will indeed run underground for most of its length. However, despite the feasibility of underground alternatives, Metrolinx is determined to bulldoze an above-ground route through the historic, densely-populated Riverside and Leslieville neighbourhoods thus significantly expanding the existing rail corridor. If allowed to proceed, this plan will eventually see as many as 900 trains passing through these communities – day and night. The impact will be devastating on the health and safety of those in the area, who include lots of children and seniors, while simultaneously destroying parks and wildlife habitats.

As the main financial backer of the project, the Federal government has laid out important conditions for funding. These conditions are being brazenly flouted by Metrolinx and the government of Ontario. Despite this, our local Member of Parliament, Julie Dabrusin, has consistently refused to consider this to be a federal issue. Since Federal funding and its conditions were announced, we have again written to her, most recently on July 14, 2021, but have received no response.

Canada will be ill-served by a rushed and poorly planned infrastructure project that has not been evaluated as environmentally sound. We ask you the following urgent questions:

- Who makes the determination on whether the federal funding conditions have been met?
- Does it concern you that Metrolinx is pursuing an above ground route which is not supported by the City of Toronto?
- In the face of the Ford government's relentless attack on the environment, what safeguards can the federal government provide to ensure that no construction – including premature tree removal – occurs before a thorough environmental review and real public consultation?

As Metrolinx refuses to study potential health risks, Save Jimmie Simpson, in partnership with South Riverdale Community Health Centre, has commissioned a Health Impact Assessment (HIA). The fact that this assessment is funded through community donations puts governments to shame.

We and other Torontonians negatively affected by the high-handed unaccountable way in which transit is being planned expect your government to heed the findings of our study before committing funds. Public transit must not compromise public health.

We invite you and Julie Dabrusin to visit Riverside and Leslieville so you can see for yourself why large-scale transit like the Ontario Line must be built underground through an old, compact and busy neighbourhood such as ours where some people live within a few meters of the existing GO-train and VIA Rail tracks.

Sincerely,



Maggi Redmonds
Save Jimmie Simpson



Eon Song
Save Jimmie Simpson

Save Jimmie Simpson! is a grass-roots community group, fighting to have the Ontario Line buried in order to save our community's parks, health & well-being. We are 700+ community members who support public transit that is evidence-based, environmentally responsible and planned with genuine input from the neighbourhoods in which it is built.

