



Malcolm Mackay  
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August 11, 2021

Dear SaveTPARK,

**Re: SaveTPARK: Response to Metrolinx MSF Site Selection Document**

Thank you for the time and effort your group put into its response to our presentation on the site selection for the Maintenance and Storage Facility (MSF) for the Ontario Line. Despite the different position we hold with respect to the suitability of the MSF location in Thorncliffe Park, we genuinely appreciate the opportunity to answer the thoughtful and respectful questions SaveTPARK submitted on this matter.

I know we have discussed your group's submission on a call with members at the community table, but we also wanted to ensure you had a more substantive response in writing. Please find the summary of our response in this letter and more comprehensive answers to each of the questions appended to this letter. Recognizing that the broader community has similar questions to those we have heard at the table, we are also sending an open letter to Thorncliffe Park residents that outlines the history of site selection, key issues raised by the community, and proposed next steps.

While the substantive answers to questions are appended, I do want to address a few of the statements and opinions expressed in the submission:

**1. Facts and questions** - SaveTPARK's submission expresses many opinions but does not contain new information or substantive facts that affect or change the selection of an MSF site. Many questions were raised to better understand our process and, though many of them have already been answered in the site selection analysis and at the community table, we want to provide further clarity in this letter.

**2. Surface area of sites** - We note that members disagree with the "factors" Metrolinx used in the site selection. It appears that the most substantive question from the group is related to the surface area of the site and the use of employment data.

In fact, nearly a third of the questions appended to your submission are about how the surface area and the selection criteria was used to determine the viability of a site. To confirm, the indicative size of 175,000 square metres did not alone determine acceptance/rejection of sites on the long list. All the site selection criteria are considered

together. This is demonstrated through our selection of both the Ontario Science Centre (low square metres) and Leaside (high square metres) sites. The most important consideration related to surface area or land size is ensuring we can technically configure the site to accommodate the different operations, maintenance activities and storage of 44 trains from the start of operations, with the potential to hold an additional 10 trains as ridership increases in the future.

There were several questions about whether the 175,000 square metres was used to rule out sites elsewhere on the alignment. It was not.

Comments also seemed to infer that no sites were considered on the western portion of the Ontario Line alignment, when in fact, options were investigated but no viable site exists within five kilometres of the western part of the Ontario Line alignment. Exhibition Place satisfied the criteria for size, but for reasons related to growth, development, land use and community impacts, this site was excluded.

**3. Process** - We also note the opinion that Metrolinx followed a “flawed process” and another opinion that there was “absence of effective site selection analysis.” Metrolinx has publicly shared the site selection criteria that was used during the site selection analysis and has shared, publicly, the conclusions of the site selection analysis. No facts or analysis were provided that would substantiate a flaw in the site selection process. Through this letter and appended answers to your group’s questions, we are trying to provide clarity where there may have been a misunderstanding about how criteria were applied.

**4. Community impacts** - We note SaveTPARK’s opinion that “community impacts” can be assessed and determined differently by different people. This theme was also present in a substantial number of the questions we received. We have been clear about how community impacts are assessed for site selection, namely by the publicly shared site selection criteria. These contain four criteria (land use, growth considerations, community impacts, and environmental considerations) that specifically refer to community-related impacts and how those are to be minimized and mitigated.

As for wider community impacts, it is important to recognize that one of the significant objectives of the Ontario Line business case was to bring transit connectivity and new subway services to the Thorncliffe Park community. The existing rapid transit network currently underserves priority communities in and adjacent to downtown Toronto. Lower-income communities and priority neighbourhoods are not directly served by Line 1 or Line 2, which limits opportunities for these communities to connect to jobs as well as cultural, social service, and recreational destinations.

Building the Ontario Line will mean that residents of Thorncliffe Park can connect to downtown Toronto by fast, frequent and reliable rapid transit that will cut commute times by 30 minutes each day for a return trip and provide vital connections to Line 1 and Line 2 to the south, and to the Eglinton Crosstown LRT to the north. For those who elect to drive or walk, they will experience less traffic congestion and cleaner air as a result of the 28,000 fewer car trips per day along the Ontario Line.

As for mitigating the impacts of our project, Metrolinx has already implemented changes to the alignment through Thorncliffe Park (e.g. moving it to north of Overlea) and we provide regular updates to the community on our work to relocate local businesses and organizations within the community.

Metrolinx has also expressly offered to work with residents to explore creative design solutions that will integrate the MSF and elevated sections of the alignment into the neighbourhood, and to invest in community benefits. We are inviting the community to make proposals in this regard.

**5. Community consultation** - We note SaveTPARK's opinion that "this community was not consulted." Further, the way comments made by the Metrolinx CEO were paraphrased shows that there may have been a misunderstanding with regard to our approach to consultation. For clarity, I can again articulate the facts about the nature of the consultation process.

Metrolinx is responsible for identifying the location that best meets the site selection criteria. We then consult with the community on how to implement the MSF at that site. This consultation can include challenges and questions about the site selection and serves as an important process for us to hear community advice and proposals on how to implement the project. It would have been confusing and ineffective to consult with the community on sites that cannot be selected for the MSF, either because these may not be technically feasible or may not meet policy objectives.

For the last four months, we have consulted with the community to explain the site selection rationale and the route, and your response is an example of such a challenge we expect during the consultation process. We take a challenge such as the one submitted by Save TPark and we assess any new facts (from that challenge) against the site selection criteria so to ascertain whether there are sufficient new facts to justify a change in the site selection decision. We have not found such from your group's submission.

**6. Relationships** - We cannot comment on the opinion that there may be strained relationships between parties in the community. We can confirm that this type of circumstance was not considered in the site selection.

**7. Economic impacts** - To the question of whether Metrolinx "studied the impact the placement would have on the economic and social foundation," we can confirm that Metrolinx did assess the economic and social impact of the placement of the MSF as "community impacts" is in the site selection criteria.

The businesses and organizations affected by the MSF site choice can all be relocated within the Thorncliffe Park community, should they choose to, including Iqbal Halal Foods. The relocation packages are generous and ensure continued and uninterrupted economic activity of those businesses and organizations. The new MSF will bring up to 300 new employment opportunities to the community through long-term operations and even more through construction. Given our tenant relocation plans, this will not result in the loss of

other jobs from the local area, as could be the case with a different site choice. These additional jobs will further contribute to the community.

**8. Employment data** - Nearly a quarter of the questions in the submission are about employment data relative to surface areas of sites. This has been answered before, but we would like to provide further clarification. The City of Toronto Employment Survey was central to all the employment comparisons, while other sources such as the City of Toronto Official Plan and the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS) were also used when appropriate. Throughout, the City of Toronto's Economic Development team was consulted.

SaveTPARK's statement and opinion that an "apples to apples comparison of job numbers...was not applied" is not substantiated. We note the group's opinion that employment should somehow be related to surface area of a site, however, the jobs-per-square-metre comparison that was included in the submission is not based on real jobs nor is it reflective of the actual employment survey results that Metrolinx used. For this reason, it is not evident how it can be used in the site selection analysis.

For greater clarity, had Leaside been chosen as the MSF location, we found that job displacement would have been up to 1,900 jobs, recognizing that the site is large enough that you could optimize to have a smaller impact than the upper limit. However, the types of jobs likely to be impacted at Leaside have a higher supply chain impact. That is even before factoring in construction and operational risks of trying to locate the MSF on the west side of the CP tracks.

The hybrid option has the fewest job impacts and impacted businesses and organizations can be entirely relocated while the remaining technical criteria also favours the hybrid option - much more so than Leaside.

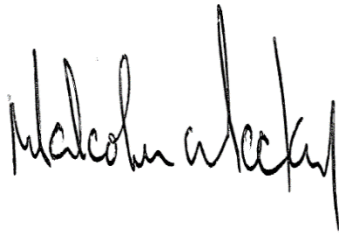
**9. Design data** - Lastly, the submission included several questions about the CP line, the Hydro One Corridor, Beth Neilson Drive, and the design of the MSF itself. It presented no new facts about any of these topics that would change the site selection.

The Metrolinx site selection incorporated technical elements such as "ease of operability" and "ease of construction" insofar as those factors can significantly affect schedule, cost and customer benefits. For those reasons, as mentioned above, a site on the west side of the CP line is problematic. Metrolinx's selection for a MSF site straddles the hydro corridor and we are confident that we can avoid impacts and operational conflicts with Hydro One. It also avoids the closure of Beth Neilson Drive. We will also listen carefully to advice from the community about design options that could better blend the MSF into the new built environment.

In conclusion, we also append a list of specific answers to the questions SaveTPARK asked in its submission. Having considered the submission, no substantive facts were presented that can affect or change the selection of an MSF site.

I welcome a further opportunity to discuss your group's responses and questions, should you want to do so.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malcolm MacKay". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'M'.

**Malcolm MacKay**  
**Program Sponsor, Ontario Line**  
**Metrolinx**