

CONVERGENCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND ACTION



INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS HADFIELD

MATTHEW TONG

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

As an astronaut, you've led in environments where uncertainty is constant and decisions carry immediate consequences. How would you say leaders should think about uncertainty and risk when the consequences are so large-scale?

Everything worth doing in life has risk. It's a fact. If you really want to get something done, you've got risk. So the question you have to answer is, why am I taking this risk? Like, I would never bungee jump because to me it's a high risk that serves zero purpose. So, why would I do it? And there's very poor quality control. I did spacewalks and I've flown a rocket ship and I fly an airplane.

Everyone has their own particular definition of what risks are worth taking. Some of those are private and some of those are professional. So, as soon as you have identified something that is worth taking a risk for, your role changes, and you are now a risk manager. Let's just say that I'm going to bungee jump, well, the risk of a bungee jump going wrong is you're going to die. It's going to be ugly. So, how can you then manage the risks so that you improve your chances of getting the experience you want with low consequence?

Space flight is just like really complicated bungee jumping with complex machinery. So, rather than just looking at the track record, inspecting all of the hardware, looking at the regulatory environment, talking to the people that are running the bungee jump, watching a bunch of people doing it, and then watching how the knots are tied around your ankles and all the rest of that, the process to successfully fly in space takes decades to do all those same processes. But, there are still lots of things I would never do because the risk-benefit just doesn't make sense. I'm not going to take that risk because I don't think the benefit is worth me taking the risk. And you can apply it right now to sending people to Mars: we could send people to Mars this year if we decided that it was worth it, but it's almost guaranteed that they'd die. Our technology is not good enough, we haven't tested enough,



we haven't proven it enough, but if we knew that Earth was about to become uninhabitable for whatever reason then it might be worth sending people to Mars, even though the risk is extremely high. But, the position we're in right now is that eventually we'll send people to Mars, but our rocket ships are still really primitive, and we don't know how to build all the systems that will keep people alive for six months all the way to Mars. And how do you slow down and land on Mars? It's really hard: the atmosphere is too thin to trust and too thick to ignore. So, we have decided that that risk is not yet worth taking. We'll take the risk with robots, but we won't take it with people yet, because if a robot dies we lose some money, but so what? But if people die, then it's a consequence. So we have collectively decided that, yes, we will take people to Mars, but not yet, because the risk-benefit tradeoff isn't there yet. We don't have a compelling reason.

As more countries and private companies enter space and competition increases, how important is international cooperation to the future of exploration and what risks do you see if nations stop working together?

Private individuals aren't going to do much of the exploring. They'll mostly do the exploiting

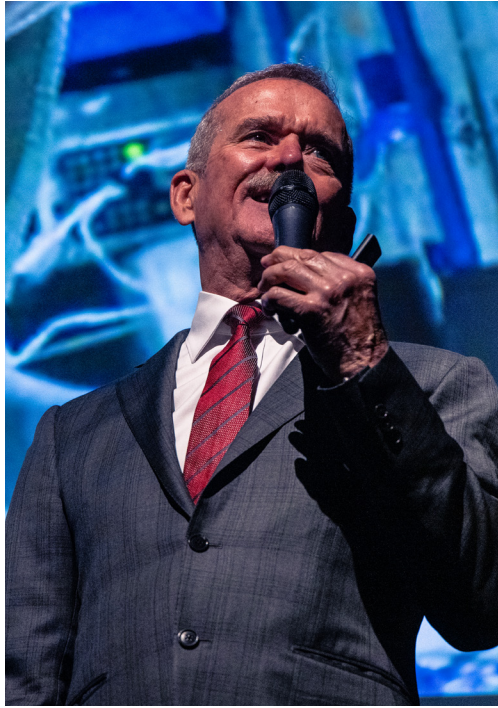
because they can get a return for it. It's extremely expensive to explore space: only the very wealthiest people in the world can currently do it. And most of them aren't exploring space, they're developing technology so they can exploit space, which makes sense. It's like any other business, and that's fine. But in terms of exploration, no private individual is going to fund the James Webb Telescope; you can't make any money off of it. Exploration is the thing for governments and institutions to do. Webb telescopes, and some of the others, are a good example of international cooperation, because it's just too hard to do it all by yourself. The Americans and the Soviets cooperated in a lot of lunar work because they didn't have enough technology to get it done independently. So, there was Russian hardware on American ships and vice versa, because they needed to cooperate in order to be able to get it done. And so, that will continue. There's always going to be international agendas, cooperation, and competition. And every organization has to answer to their own shareholders: if you're Canada, you've got to answer to the electorate; if you're SpaceX, you've got to answer to whoever's funding you; if you're a publicly owned company, you've got to do that. I think SpaceX is about to IPO, so they're going to have to answer to all their shareholders.

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INTERVIEW WITH CHRIS HADFIELD



They have to do things that are going to make money. But, there's nothing mystical or magic about space. You could apply the same thing to whatever: any business on earth; medical research - who should pay for medical research, and who should the subjects of medical research be? And a lot of it should be the government because there's no immediate way to make a profit, and someone needs to get into the regulatory side of things. That's why we have the FAA and all the regulatory bodies, because we need that in order to help put up an environment where people can develop technologies. But, once the technology gets developed, then, within a regulated environment, we can allow private companies and individuals to develop it, hopefully for the general public good (i.e., look at Ozempic). There are all sorts of technologies that were allowed to be developed by governments. And then, a private company could specialize and turn this particular product out, and now this product can help eliminate obesity. So, to me, we tend to view space as if it's separate, but it's exactly the same: we just need cooperation between government, regulation and private enterprise.

Outside of your work as an astronaut, you've also been important in helping communicate scientific information. How have you approached building bridges between experts and the public and what have you learned about trust and misinformation?

Part of the reason why I'm interested in being an astronaut is because someone previous to me did a great job of sharing it. I wasn't inspired by the cosmonauts because they did a terrible job of sharing it. I was inspired by NASA because they did a magnificent job of sharing what was happening in real time. So, you could imprint it on yourself and go, well, if they can do it, maybe I can do it. And therefore, it was enabling. So, I think my natural desire to flip that around and do the same thing when I got to a position of doing these things was obvious - why would you keep this to yourself?

But then, there are still lots of people who, rather than actually research or understand something, just jump to conclusions. And normally those conclusions are wrong; we've always been that way. Most people don't really understand how anything works: everybody turns the lights on, but nobody really understands how a light bulb works, where the power comes from, or how the switch on the wall even works. People, they're just users of science, not scientists. And they don't want to be scientists, otherwise they would be. They just want to be able to use this thing. And they might have a completely inaccurate perception of how a light bulb or a microwave oven works. They have no idea. It doesn't matter. And there's nothing wrong with that (I think that's a Will Rogers quote). There's all kinds of stuff I have no idea about, and I don't worry about it. There's a current sort of fascination with public ignorance. There's nothing new about public ignorance at all. Zero. It's just that, now, because of the improvement of communications, it's much more difficult to only hear from an authoritative source. If you go to the Midway at the exhibition in late August, and you're walking through the Midway,

it's just a cacophony of noise, right? It's just so much noise. You're hardly learning anything just because everybody's yelling and there's all that stuff. And if you really wanted to learn something, you wouldn't go to the Midway at the exhibition just because there's all of this babble, right? That's because in that particular environment, your communication capability is overwhelmed. However, if you wanted to research something, you'd probably go to a library, where everybody isn't yelling at you. Or you would go to an expert, and go to Geoffrey Hinton and ask about artificial intelligence. You're not going to ask the carny at the exhibition about artificial intelligence. Why would you?

Modern technology has tremendous advantages, but also gives the false impression that everyone has an equal voice on every topic, which is silly. Most people are ignorant, and so it becomes harder and harder to actually know who you can trust with information. So, if you are an expert in something, which everybody is, you're an expert in something, then you have to decide: what am I going to do with my expertise? And how hard am I going to try and use my particular communication ability to share that expertise so that it's as influential in a good way as possible. And since I'm technically trained, operationally experienced, and have a public position, I feel a certain level of responsibility to have an authoritative, technically correct, and substantiated influence on society. But, I can only yell so loud, and for so long. If people are ignorant on a subject, I don't mind at all. If they truly don't know, that's fine. But, if someone is being deliberately ignorant, then I think that's destructive. I try to counter it as much as I can, but I don't despair about it either.

INSIDE ARAMARK'S OPERATION AT UCC

HAOYUN ZHAO & ALEXANDER ZHANG
BLUE PAGE REPORTER & JUNIOR EDITOR



Every weekday, roughly 300 Upper School students walk through the Upper Dining Hall without a second thought about what it took to get that food onto their tray. But behind every sandwich, bowl of soup, and bubble tea is a logistics operation that runs around the clock - one that's been quietly feeding this school for over two decades.

Davina Chong, the Food Service Director at Aramark, has been at the helm of that operation since December 2013. Before coming here, she worked at the York School and the University of Toronto, but UCC's scale is something else entirely. On any given day, her team of roughly 70 staff across Food Service and Housekeeping is serving around 300 Upper Dining Hall students, 100 to 160 students in the Lower Dining Hall, 60 students in the Student Centre, 190 staff and faculty, and another 400 Prep lunches, not to mention breakfast and dinner for 88 boarders and their 12 boarding staff. The numbers add up fast.

Planning Three Weeks at a Time

The backbone of the whole operation is the rotational menu, a three-week cycle that changes three times a year. On the surface, it sounds straightforward enough, but the planning behind it is surprisingly intricate. Chong and her team don't just decide what's for lunch and call it a day. They

dig into production sheets from past years to figure out exactly how much of everything they'll need. If records show that 1,000 pieces of chicken went out on a particular day last year, that number becomes a reference point for the next time that meal rolls around.

It doesn't stop at historical data, either. The team actively tracks school events and meal popularity to adjust their orders accordingly. A grade going on a trip that week? Stock goes down. A particularly popular meal coming up? They order more. It's a level of precision that most students probably never consider, but it's what keeps waste in check and makes sure there's always enough food without an excess sitting around at the end of the day.

Nutrition also plays a bigger role than you might expect. Aramark works with a nutritionist, and that input genuinely shapes the menu. Fish and seafood, for instance, aren't the most popular options. Chong acknowledges that freely. But they still appear on the menu once a week because the nutritionist recommends it. It's one of the more interesting tensions in the job: balancing what students actually want to eat with what they should be eating. The Student Centre and Lower Dining Hall snacks and beverages go through a similar screening process, with items checked for excess sugar and overall nutritional quality before they make it onto the shelves.

Where the Food Actually Comes From

A lot of people assume institutional food means everything arrives pre-packaged from some massive warehouse far away. At UCC, the reality is more nuanced. While Sysco, the largest food supplier in North America, handles the bulk of orders, Chong and her team make a point of working with local vendors wherever they can.

The meat and fish come from The Butcher Shop, which supplies fresh, never-frozen product. Pastries come from a local bakery. Sushi is brought in through Bento. The bubble tea station, a student favorite, is run by Ah-So, an outside vendor that operates with its own staff as the specialized service demands a specific technical skillset. Most of these vendors deliver almost every day on a next-day

turnaround, which keeps ingredients fresh and reduces the need for large stockpiles.

Despite the scale of the operation, a striking amount of the food is made from scratch at UCC. Hot food is cooked on-site. Soups and dressings are homemade. Sandwiches and wraps are assembled fresh. It's not quite the reheated, industrial cafeteria food that the word "Aramark" might conjure for some students.

Dealing with Leftovers

Running a kitchen that feeds hundreds of people every day means waste is an inevitable reality, but it's one the team takes seriously. Aramark operates with a full recycling and composting system, and food scraps go into what are called "piggy bins" - compost containers whose contents often end up at local farms to feed livestock. It's a small detail, but it reflects a broader mindset: nothing goes to waste if it doesn't have to.

A Bigger Machine Than You'd Think

Behind Chong, the organizational structure runs deep. There's a general manager above her, then a catering manager, an executive chef, two sous chefs, and a layer of operations managers and supervisors underneath. Coordinating deliveries with Security, managing catering for school events, and aligning with Facilities involves a web of communication and third-party contracts that most students never see.

The next time you grab lunch, it's worth remembering that the meal in front of you is the end result of a system that's been refined over 20 years, one that tracks chicken counts, consults nutritionists, sources fresh meat from local butchers, and composts its scraps at a farm somewhere outside the city. It's a lot more than just lunch.



IB PERSONAL PROJECT OVERVIEW

ALEXANDER ZHANG & DY AUS PAN
JUNIOR EDITORS



On February 5, 2026, all Year 10s gathered at the Personal Project Showcase in the Student Centre to show off their months of hard work to faculty, alumni, and the whole UCC community. Trifolds depicted projects ranging from founding a charity for underprivileged children to learning to play hockey or making a protein powder from scratch. Students passionately described their process to eager audiences, explaining their journey from ideation to creation. Yet, many listeners, particularly younger students, left knowing more about the incredible AI, fitness, and writing products than the Personal Project itself. As the Year 8s and 9s approach this culminating project, it is important that they have guidance.

So, what is the MYP Personal Project? *Convergence* reached out to Ms. Martin, UCC's MYP and Personal Project coordinator, to answer this simple, yet largely unanswered question.

For students who aren't in Grade 10 yet, what exactly is the MYP Personal Project?

Think of it as the grand finale or capstone of the Middle Years Programme. It is an independent, year-long inquiry where students choose a topic they are genuinely passionate about and create something tangible, a product or an outcome, to demonstrate the skills they built over the years.

What makes the Personal Project different from a normal class assignment?

The biggest difference is agency. In a typical class, the teacher sets the prompt, the rubric, and the deadline. In the Personal Project, *the student* is the architect. You define the goal, you manage your own time, and you decide what "success" looks like.

What do students in Grades 8–9 often misunderstand about the Personal Project?

Many students in Grades 8–9 fall into the trap of thinking the project is only about the "product," the robot, the painting, or the app. In reality, the IB is far more interested in the **process**. It's a story of how you researched, how you pivoted when things went wrong, and how you grew as a learner.

Furthermore, students often overlook the importance of the **supervisor relationship**. The Personal Project essentially forces you to step out of your comfort zone and build a professional working relationship with an adult in the building you might not otherwise know. This is a vital piece of social development; learning to navigate these adult-student dynamics and advocate for your ideas is exactly what prepares you for the rigour (and the mentorship) of the Extended Essay (EE) later on.

What are the biggest mistakes Year 10 students make once they start?

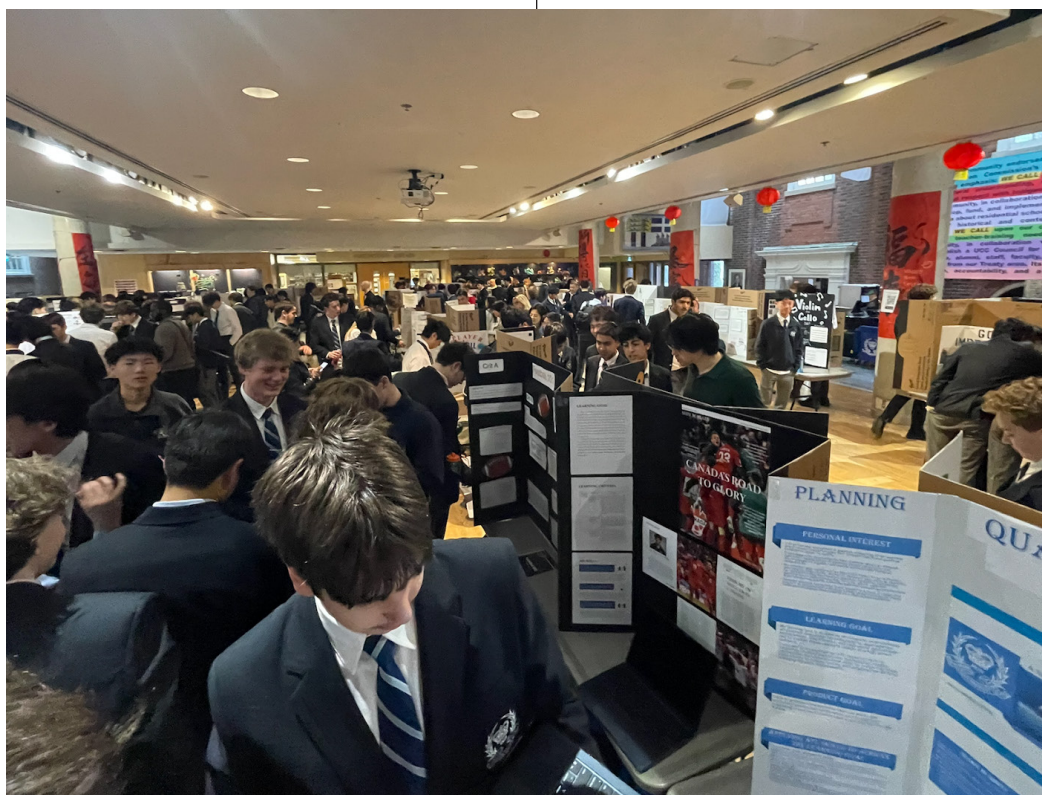
- 1. Procrastination:** Trying to "cram" a year-long project into the final month.
- 2. Being too broad:** Choosing a goal that is so big it becomes impossible to finish.
- 3. Neglecting the Process Journal:** Forgetting to document the "why" behind their decisions.

What separates a good project from an outstanding one? What do students ultimately gain from the Personal Project?

A **good** project meets the criteria. An **outstanding** project shows deep, critical reflection and a willingness to pivot when things go wrong. Ultimately, students gain self-management and learn how to learn; these skills are far more valuable for the DP and university than for the project itself.

If you could give one piece of advice to younger students now, what would it be?

Choose something you love, not something you think looks "academic." You're going to be living with this project for months; make sure it's something that actually excites you when you wake up.



WEF 2026: MARK CARNEY AND CANADA'S ECONOMIC FUTURE

MATHIS LEVESON

STAFF REPORTER



Every January, the small alpine town of Davos, Switzerland, becomes a summit of global power. Billionaires, economists, central bankers, and political leaders from across the world gather for an annual meeting called the World Economic Forum (WEF), a not-for-profit event dedicated to improving the state of the world by bringing together leaders in various fields. Here, big ideas about the global economy are discussed, debated, and shaped.

More recently, in late January of this year, two very important and polar voices were broadcast from the WEF stage; those of Mark Carney, the Canadian Prime Minister, and Donald Trump, the American President. Their speeches at the WEF represented both their personal styles, as well as their two competing visions of globalization; visions that would shape the economic future of both Canada and the world.

Carney's Speech: Rupture of the World Order

On January 20th, 2026, Carney delivered a major speech at Davos that quickly became one of the most widely discussed moments of the forum. The Prime Minister's speech was fundamentally framed around what he described as a "rupture" in the rules-based international order - the system of treaties, institutions and norms that have dictated international relations since the end of the Cold War. He warned that, in following with recent events, this system could no longer be relied upon, and that the world was entering a tougher era dictated by rivalry between great-powers and unpredictable policies. Although President Trump was not named explicitly in his speech, Carney indirectly yet bluntly addressed the aims of new U.S. policy under Trump's administration. He said that middle powers, or countries that are not superpowers like the U.S,

must move to protect their own interests, rather than depending on old relationships and frameworks. Carney stated, "[i]f middle powers are not at the table, they are on the menu." Indeed, trade policy has become increasingly politicized. Tariffs are being used not only for economic protection but also as tools of geopolitical leverage. Supply chains are being reorganized for the sake of strategy rather than solely economic efficiency. In this environment, countries that rely too heavily on a single partner risk abrupt disruption, with no lifeline - it would be unwise to hope for a return to predictable stability. In Carney's words, "nostalgia is not a strategy."

Canada is deeply affected by this structural vulnerability, as a large majority of Canadian exports are directed to the United States; automotive manufacturing in Ontario, energy exports from Alberta and steel and aluminum production from across the country all depend on our access to the American market. As such, Carney's message suggested a shift towards resilience and an allyship between middle powers. He called upon diversification of trade relationships, especially among those who depend largely on great powers, and stronger domestic capacity in strategic sectors so that Canada could become more self-sufficient. The economic implication is clear: Canada is actively pursuing policies that will reduce exposure to political shocks, prioritizing long-term sustainability over short-term costs.

Trump's Approach: Economic Nationalism and Political Leverage

Donald Trump's address reflected a very different philosophy - one that emphasised American economic strength. Trump has consistently projected confidence in the United States' ability to shape global economic conditions, prioritizing national leverage and dominance over international coordination.

From Washington's perspective, the sheer size of the American economy is a bargaining chip that can be used to extract concessions from other nations and protect domestic interests. Naturally, this model creates uncertainty for Canada, because although a boost for the American economy is tied with Canada's economy, this assertive "America First" approach can generate (and has generated) sudden policy changes that directly affect cross-border trade. In a speech spanning over an hour, Trump briefly addressed Carney's remarks, arguing that because the United States is

one of Canada's closest allies and trading partners, Canada 'should be grateful'.

Implications: Economic and Geopolitical

Speeches at the WEF carry both symbolic weight and economic signals. Although much of Europe strongly supported Carney's remarks and vision, his veiled critique of America's use of "economic integration as subordination" has received backlash from the Trump administration. His acknowledgement of global fragmentation may reinforce perceptions of heightened volatility, straining Canada-U.S. relations and influencing further action on Trump's part to isolate the Canadian economy from America's. Trump has already threatened an additional 100% tariff on Canadian exports as a response to Carney's speech. Geopolitically, beyond immediate trade effects, this Carney-Trump exchange marks a transformation in global power dynamics. If Canada responds to this by deepening ties with Europe, Asia, and various middle-power nations, the geopolitical landscape could become quite multipolar. Coordination among middle powers is complex and slower than unilateral action by a dominant superpower, which must be considered due to our current ties with, and reliance on, America.

A Delicate Balancing Act for Canada

In essence, the Canadian challenge lies in balancing integration with independence. The United States, despite rising tensions, remains our largest trading partner and closest ally, as they have been for decades. Our geographic proximity and deeply intertwined supply chains will make decoupling a challenge; at the same time, we cannot afford to remain subordinate to the United States, at the beck and call of economic leverage, considering the Trump administration's unpredictable nature when it comes to relations with Canada. Carney's Davos remarks call for preparation to navigate an unpredictable era on our horizon, and Trump's words reinforce his policy of economic nationalism and leverage. Together, their addresses signal the potential for strain on the Canadian-U.S. relationship, long viewed as sustainable and symbiotic. For Canada, adapting to this shift will require careful policy design, balanced and careful diversification, as well as consistent diplomatic engagement. The conversations in Davos were not merely symbolic; they offered a preview of the economic recalibration already underway.

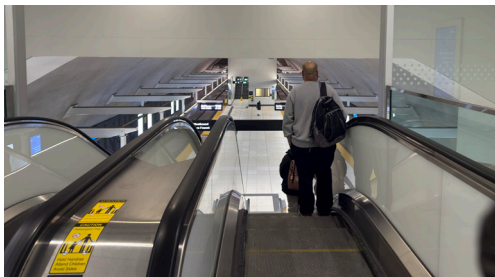
The Blue Page

What Happened to the Eglinton LRT?

ELIJAH PEARSON
STAFF REPORTER

After 15 years of painstakingly-long construction, the Eglinton Crosstown has finally opened. For those who have not followed this project, construction has been incredibly slow, overbudget, and plagued by disastrous private-public partnerships that have lacked forethought and accountability. But where did it all go wrong? Cities all over the world build massive transit projects for a fraction of the cost. For example, the city of Shenyang in China had added 400 kilometers in merely a decade - with the same population as the GTA. Other cities have successfully upgraded transit systems, like Riyadh, Paris, Beijing, and New Delhi. However, Canada continues to lag behind many countries when it comes to transit within cities; our national rail line Via Rail cannot compete with regional air lines including our U.S., Asian, and European counterparts, and we are the only G7 country without high-speed rail. And yet we're surprised that the singular busiest highway in the world is our very own 401.

I rode the LRT on the opening day - and it was fine. I was excited to experience a new piece of transportation infrastructure in the city, and it was definitely interesting. The station interiors are absolutely gigantic, many underground stations are towering underground several stories high and are designed in brutalist modern architecture. Transferring between lines takes a couple of minutes, with lots of walking - I found this fact slightly disappointing considering the modern design of the system, however, it seems excusable considering the track record of Toronto. The line is also decently fast being about a minute between stations (about 40 km/h between stops), but the overground section does not have signal priority at intersections yet - with "planned implementation" to be implemented in early to late summer.

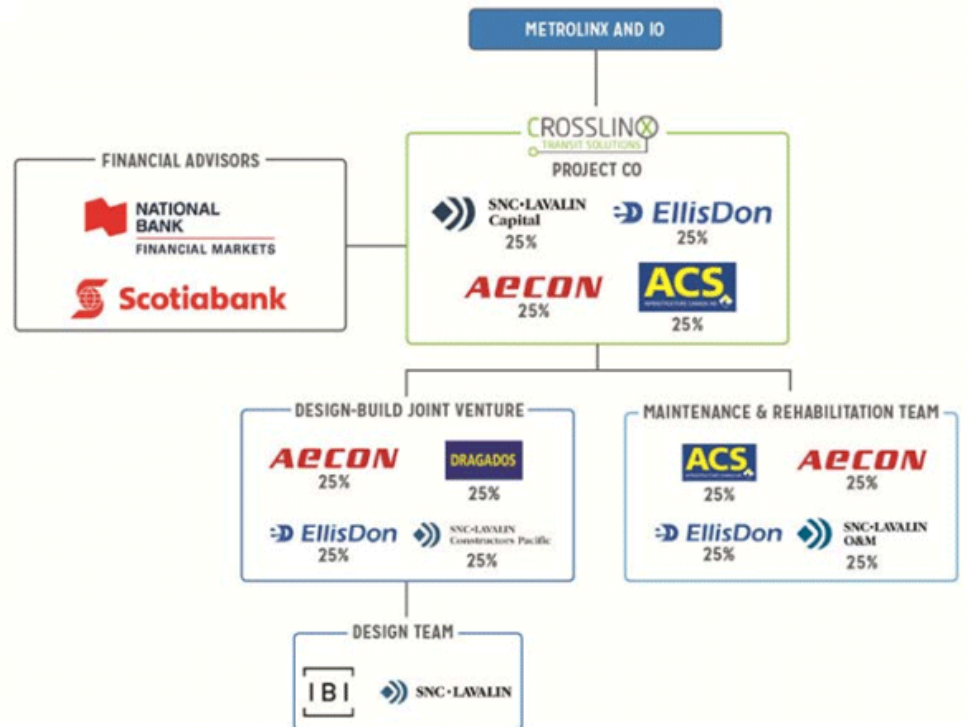


The line itself is made up of Light Rail Transit vehicles - a mix of streetcar and subway - and has the ability to reach high speeds quickly, which serves its large number of close stations. The details and the facts can stretch on and on, I'm not going to bore you with the details of the line - I recommend you try it yourself whenever convenient as it was designed to be. We need to understand why this uninteresting line took a half a decade more than it was supposed to, and doubled its cost.

To understand this project, it's important to name the stake holders: the core leadership behind the construction of the new system is Metrolinx, Ontario's region-wide transit authority in charge of transit projects, and leads the operation of the GO regional rail. So Metrolinx is "leading" the construction of the Eglinton Crosstown, right? Well, not exactly. The project is "managed" by Metrolinx; however, a company called Crosslinx is the actual entity in charge of the construction of the Crosstown, which is a subsidiary of Metrolinx. To complicate things further, Crosslinx isn't actually one company, but a consortium of firms including Dragados and AtkinsRéalis (formerly known as SNC-Lavalin). Once complete, the Crosstown will be under the control and service of the TTC. Currently, Crosslinx maintains the vehicles and the line,



while the TTC supplies the drivers. All of the construction and operations must go through the City in permits, and if we want transit signal priority, we need to coordinate with the City itself with its own traffic lights. Additionally, the original plans were created, designed, and approved by the actual City of Toronto.



The Blue Page

What Happened to the Eglinton LRT?

The complicated structure connects to a larger theme within the Toronto transit ecosystem, a collage of complicated bureaucracy. The Ministry of Transportation should be in charge of transit projects, but the Greater Toronto-Hamilton area is under the control of Metrolinx, as well as the Province. The Province is in charge of Toronto's Transit projects, which are controlled by a collection of companies, while a separate agency, the TTC, runs the networks. But the TTC isn't a separate company; it is actually a collection that maintains transit vehicles that all follow a plan paid for by the City and the Ontario government, who need to approve every step of a construction project. See the problem? There's a fundamental breakdown in the organisational structure. Too many organizations and too much bureaucracy has plagued our infrastructure, and we're feeling the consequences.

Now here's a fun exercise. Let's say we need to adjust the size of a station due to some unforeseen issues - maybe a water main is in the way? Well, first we need to consult one of the hired contractors, under one of the companies, Spanish Dragados and AtkinsRéalis, which will need to be approved by Crosslinx, which will need to be approved in turn by Metrolinx. But wait - Metrolinx doesn't have the organization to actually approve quickly because it has other jobs running a half a million ridership daily regional network, so it takes a while to be approved. Well, now the city has to approve it because they made the plans, and wait, they don't approve - this change will



conflict with a new art installation. So now, we need to go back down the chain, the contractors, then the first company, then the second, then the third, and finally the city approves - but now the permit has to be changed to a totally different department of the city, and now the TTC has to approve the change as it needs to fit its operating plan. But this entire process costs money, so we need to ask the province for more again. Now, a single mistake - one error or disagreement - can cause this convoluted process to spiral, resulting in weeks or even months in delays for a station, as well as the avoidable waste of taxpayer dollars. The Eglinton Crosstown was billions of dollars over budget and years and years behind because of this failure of leadership.

Every single major Toronto transit project has exponentially increased in cost and time, and we seem to never learn any lessons. So it's time to reflect; with the upcoming transit relief line "The Ontario Line" now under construction within the core of Toronto, it seems like an advisable time. To give some credit where it is due, Metrolinx isn't a transit veteran and is still a "newer" agency; one hopes that experience will result in change. But we need to identify and improve upon the same old transit mistakes. We need less bureaucracy and less red tape; the same level of government shouldn't be conflicted over one issue. Simply, we need a better organization - one company or agency that has sole charge and domain over the construction, operation, and maintenance. We require the ability to identify and adapt our priorities as a growing city. We needed good transportation decades ago, and properly identifying the conflicts of interest as well as structural re-organisation will help future projects run on budget and on time. Global cities just like Toronto have excellent transportation infrastructure. Just because Canada isn't there yet doesn't mean that we can't start. The Ontario Line is on track and under budget, so I'm hopeful - and maybe we can still build world-class projects.

