



December 3, 2014

The Hon. Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario  
The Hon. Steven Del Duca, Minister of Transportation  
Legislative Building  
Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Wynne and Minister Del Duca,

Thank you for meeting with us on October 14th to discuss our shared goals for improving the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)'s transit network. We appreciate the work that your administration is doing on this file, and look forward to continuing to work together to advance an effective, sustainable, efficient, accessible, affordable and fully integrated regional transportation system.

We are taking this opportunity to reinforce the priorities raised by Move the GTHA and the insights and proposed next steps from our conversation, including seeking a number of follow-up meetings with the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure, and Metrolinx. The backgrounder that follows provides further information regarding these key priorities:

1. **Follow-through on committed projects:** We urge you to publicly reaffirm and advance your government's commitment to complete previously committed projects such as the Finch West and Sheppard East LRTs to demonstrate to residents of the GTHA that you are committed to keeping the fully-funded First Wave projects of The Big Move on schedule.
2. **Funding for service improvements and active transportation:** The Metrolinx Investment Strategy and the Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel recommended allocating 25% of annual transit funds to local transit, active transportation, fare integration and other initiatives. We recommend the Province allocate a similar proportion of the \$1.7 billion annual commitment to these items. These are fast and inexpensive investments that will yield near-term improvements for commuters throughout the region and provide quick wins to demonstrate how investments can lead to immediate improvements.
3. **A clear mechanism for project prioritization:** It is vitally important that prioritization of future transit projects in the GTHA be done through transparent, consistent and objective analysis to build public trust and demonstrate wise, high-impact use of public funds.
4. **Safeguarding commitments:** It is important to protect project prioritization, the dedication of funds, and funding principles by enshrining them either through existing legislation or a new act.
5. **Securing federal involvement:** We agree on the importance of having federal investment in sustainable transportation and would like to work together to develop a shared approach to achieving sustained federal contributions to transportation and infrastructure in Ontario.

The backgrounder that follows on the next page provides further detail on these priorities. We look forward to discussing these issues further with you.

Sincerely,

John Brodhead, Executive Director  
**Evergreen CityWorks**

Cameron MacLeod, Executive Director  
**CodeRedTO**

John Cartwright, President  
**Toronto & York Region Labour Council**

Peter Miasek, President  
**Transport Action Ontario**

Juan Gomez, Acting Vice President, Policy and  
Government Relations  
**Toronto Region Board of Trade**

Dr. Faisal Moola, PhD, Director General Ontario  
and Northern Canada  
**David Suzuki Foundation**

Doris Grinspun, CEO  
**Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario**

Sevaun Palvetzian, CEO  
**CivicAction**

Franz Hartmann, Executive Director  
**Toronto Environmental Alliance**

Nancy Smith Lea, Director  
**Toronto Centre for Active Transportation**

Julia Langer, CEO  
**Toronto Atmospheric Fund**

## BACKGROUNDER

### 1. Follow-through on Committed Projects

We urge the Province to publicly reaffirm and advance its commitment to complete the Finch West LRT by 2020 and the Sheppard East LRT by 2021 and make it clear to GTHA residents that the Province is committed to keeping the fully-funded First Wave projects of The Big Move on schedule.

Numerous expert agencies have recommended LRT for these corridors versus other technologies, including Metrolinx Benefit Case Analysis (2009), Pembina Institute (2011, 2012), Sheppard Transit Expert Advisory Panel (2012) and the TTC (2013).

The 2015-2020 Metrolinx Five Year Strategy shows the Finch and Sheppard LRT projects entering service in 2020 and 2021 respectively. We are pleased to see signs that the Finch West LRT is tracking on schedule, with the 2014-15 Metrolinx Business Plan showing that the RFQ for the Finch West LRT project is expected to be issued in Fall 2014, reference concept designs are expected to be complete in January 2015, project specifications by Spring 2015 and selection of pre-qualified bidders by April 2015.

However, the Business Plan is silent on the Sheppard LRT project. Similar actions to those for Finch need to start promptly to keep the project on schedule.

This is a priority for Move the GTHA because we are concerned that erosion of commitment to these projects will send a signal that the established regional plan is up for discussion. This would open us to piece-meal rather than integrated planning for our regional system, and lead to further delay and public expense in establishing adequate new service for regional residents.

The Finch West LRT and the Sheppard East LRT are integral components of the full-system design presented in The Big Move, and are fully funded. Delays in progress on these fronts will further erode public confidence in our ability to deliver planned solutions to local congestion.

### 2. Funding for service improvements and active transportation

We urge the Province to invest 25% (or \$425 million) of the \$1.7 billion allocated annually for GTHA transit infrastructure in the 2014 Budget to local transit and active transportation.

As noted in the Province's budget documents, the annual \$1.7 billion is designed to implement key recommendations from the Metrolinx Investment Strategy and the Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel. Both bodies recommended allocating 25% of annual transit funds to local transit, active transportation, fare integration and other initiatives. For example, the Golden Panel recommended a 2-year Kick-Start Program designed specifically to "deliver noticeable results to transit riders across the GTHA in the immediate-term..." People need to see a tangible, near-term improvement in transit in order to support the ongoing implementation of the regional transportation plan.

As an example, the recent Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 report “A Better Future for Public Transit in Toronto”, as well as an earlier TTC report in August 2014 identified many short- and medium-term transit improvement ideas in Toronto, including more buses, all-door boarding/proof of payment on busy surface routes, transit signal priority, queue-jump lanes, expanded off-peak service, time-based transfers, expansion of the Next Vehicle Arrival system, and more bus shelters.

These actions will contribute to building public confidence by making immediate, visible improvements, sending a clear signal to GTHA residents that this Government is serious about investing in transit.

### 3. Project prioritization

Move the GTHA applauds the Province’s commitment to provide substantial, long-term and dedicated funding (\$15 billion over 10 years) to support transportation infrastructure expansion in the Toronto region. However, this generational opportunity should not be squandered by having finite transportation infrastructure dollars directed towards projects that fail to deliver full value for money. It is critical that there be a robust project prioritization process in place that ensures funding goes to those projects that generate the greatest benefits to the region’s residents.

In considering which transportation projects to prioritize as part of the province’s \$15 billion, there needs to be a consistent and objective analysis to screen and score projects according to what are the region’s most critical transportation needs.

The government and its residents will be best served by a prioritization and project selection process that is transparent, user friendly, and open to the public and businesses in the region.

On this basis, we recommend key prioritization criteria include:

- Congestion mitigation – to what extent does a project contribute to reducing gridlock?
- Projected ridership – is the projected ridership sufficient and does the projected operating subsidy required warrant investment in the project?
- Economic development – how will the construction of the project and addition of service contribute to positive labour market impacts such as better connecting people to major employment districts and the potential for driving high-value commercial and industrial development?
- Environmental and community impacts/benefits – to what extent does the project produce positive environmental outcomes both in terms of the physical (e.g., co2 emissions) and human health and community impacts (e.g., supporting pedestrian and bike friendly development, local jobs, neighbourhood revitalization)?
- Regional network connectivity impacts – how will the project contribute to better commuting across regional boundaries in the GTHA and the creation of a more integrated regional transportation system?
- Alignment with existing provincial/regional/municipal needs – how will the project address current transportation demand?

- Alignment with provincial/regional/municipal growth plans – how will the project support provincial and local growth plans including the development of growth hubs for new residential, commercial and industrial development?

#### 4. Safeguarding Commitments

We believe that there is merit in enshrining in legislation the principles for transportation funding, project planning/prioritization, and strengthened governance/regional leadership.

There is the potential to incorporate these principles in existing and upcoming legislation:

- The reintroduction of Bill 6 (Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act) offers one option for enshrining planning principles for GTHA rapid transit. The previous 2013 version of this Act included good concepts such as “long-term view”, “applicable budget”, “priorities clearly identified”, “evidence based”, “transparent” and “mindful of provincial or municipal plans”. However, the 2013 version excludes new rapid transit, as it excluded any prescribed physical structure or facility. For Bill 6 to protect the principles above, the rapid transit projects would need to be included.
- The review of the current Metrolinx Act in 2016 is another option for enshrining the principles of the Transportation Fund for the GTHA in legislation, e.g. dedicated, transparent, accountable, types of eligible projects. The review of the Metrolinx Act could also be an opportunity to consider governance changes that facilitate better and timelier decision-making and more integrated regional transit service delivery.

It is essential that there be clear line accountability for political, strategic and operational responsibilities. It is essential we knit our currently fragmented transportation system into one that more clearly serves the need of the region as a whole. Various studies and recommendations have been completed on this topic, including the Metrolinx Investment Strategy Recommendation #3 and #16 (May, 2013), Transit Panel Recommendation #7 (December, 2013), Anne Golden’s Report “Governance of Regional Transit Systems” (June, 2014), and Toronto Region Board of Trade “Discussion Paper: Build Regional Transportation Now” (September, 2014).

#### 5. Federal investment in and commitment to transit and Intercity Rail

Both the Metrolinx Investment Strategy (Recommendation #8) and the Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel (Recommendation #9) recommended that “the federal government contribute up to 1/3 of the capital costs of the Next Wave transit and transportation infrastructure”. Both reports indicate that current federal funding is ad-hoc and does not support long-term planning, which is key to quality investment decisions.

The 2013 Federal Budget announced a 10-year \$53B new Building Canada Plan to support provincial, territorial and municipal infrastructure. Much of this is money under existing programs, such as the Federal Gas Tax Fund, Federal GST Public Services Bodies’ Rebate and other existing infrastructure

programs. What remains is \$14B for the New Building Canada Fund directed at national, provincial and territorial projects of “significance”. It is too early to tell how much of this federal investment will be for transit in the GTHA, or whether project selection will continue to be ad-hoc.

A recent paper by the Mowat Centre at University of Toronto (Rebuilding Canada: A New Framework for Renewing Canada’s Infrastructure, August, 2014) demonstrates that the federal government infrastructure spending is well below other countries and below provincial spending.

Canada remains the only G8 country without a coordinated national framework of policies and programs for transit funding (i.e. a National Transit Strategy). The Panel report (pg 23) provides a comparison of National Transit Policy Frameworks across 11 leading countries using about 30 metrics. Canada falls far short of virtually all other countries. There has been little to no progress on this matter, despite advocacy from numerous bodies such as Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA). In 2012, a private member’s bill “National Public Transit Strategy” was defeated in Ottawa.

Move the GTHA agrees on the importance of having federal investment in sustainable transportation. We agree that now is the time, with an upcoming federal election in 2015, to seek out alignment with others on a focused proposition that could be widely advocated.

Given the range of stakeholders – including MTGTHA members and other non-profit advocates, cities through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and provincial leaders – and the range of ideas each may have, it would be helpful to convene a discussion/consultation with the Ontario government to ensure we are all as informed and aligned as possible on this shared objective and to explore a common “ask”.