

October 30, 2017

Metrolinx  
Regional Transportation Plan Review  
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Re: Regional Transportation Plan Review

We, the undersigned are pleased to comment on the revised Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). Together with the Growth Plan and the Climate Change Action Plan, the Regional Transportation Plan is the cornerstone of building a sustainable region.

Over the last few years, many transit decisions were plagued with controversy and politics. It is time to shine a light and make decision making more transparent and accountable. With over \$30 billion invested in transportation infrastructure, people need to have confidence that Metrolinx is setting evidence-based priorities that align with Growth Plan policies.

The region will grow to an estimated 9.6 million people by 2041. Prioritizing investment in low carbon transportation options will reduce congestion, air pollution, greenhouse gases and grow the clean economy in our thriving region. For transit to be affordable to both government and the public, it needs to serve dense urban areas and be more convenient than driving for a variety of trip types. Building a network of clean public transit and safe active transportation options within densely populated areas is essential for a sustainable city region.

Current levels of capital investment and operational funding for transit, while significant, will need to grow to implement the Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan and meet the needs of our growing population. At current funding levels, we are not keeping up with the demand for services. New revenue tools that are sustainable, equitable and dedicated to transit are needed.

Our recommendations are:

1. Restore confidence in transit planning

Review the Greater Golden Horseshoe's transit governance model to better balance local and regional interests, and the need for vigorous business case analysis of all proposed major capital investments. Clarify what level of capital investment decisions are decided by the regional transit agency and which by local transit authority or council.

Appointments to Metrolinx board should be a minimum of 50 per cent municipally elected officials.

## 2. Enact the Transportation Planning Policy Statement

We support the action items in the Regional Transportation Plan that propose providing the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) with the legislative status it needs to help deliver on its plan.

Enact the powers available in the Metrolinx Act (2006) to create a Transportation Planning Policy Statement. This action would provide the RTP with the legislative status it needs to achieve regional goals for land use and transportation integration.

Further, enact the powers available in the Metrolinx Act (2006) to formalize the role and status of municipal Transportation Master Plans to align with provincial land use and transportation objectives, including the Draft 2041 RTP.

Conduct business case analyses in a consistent manner and make them available to the public along with the input data and rationale used to arrive at a decision.

## 3. Prioritize investment in healthy, low carbon mobility options

Prioritize investment in low carbon transit and GO Regional Express Rail (RER) to reduce congestion, grow the clean economy, reduce greenhouse gases and improve air quality. Prioritize rail and greener fleets for goods movement and support municipalities and industry in implementing green practices. We support recent actions by the province to stop building new highways and instead optimize existing corridors as building and/or expanding highways just encourages people to drive.

## 4. Align transit with employment and active transportation

Get more people out of their cars; make cycling, walking and using public transit more convenient by connecting public transit and multi-modal options to dense employment areas. Dedicated funding sources and targets are needed to build a GTHA active transportation network.

## 5. Density and transit nexus

Metrolinx needs to work collaboratively with municipalities to get transit planning right by creating transit-oriented zones that focus intensification around "major transit station areas" as identified in the Growth Plan. Metrolinx should only support projects that have the appropriate densities or municipalities have adopted a plan to achieve the appropriate transit-supportive densities.

Public transit operating and maintenance costs are too high to serve low density areas. Avoid the “GO station in a cornfield” approach to transit planning which perpetuates low density, car-dependent sprawl.

#### 6. New revenue tools

Stable, predictable funding is needed to build out the regional transit network including new dedicated revenue tools such as congestion charges. The remaining build out of the RTP plan will cost \$45 billion. Billions of more dollars are needed annually for operations, maintenance and rehabilitation. Municipal, provincial and federal governments need to work together and commit to a 25 year funding plan.

Getting the Regional Transportation Plan right will reduce congestion and air pollution, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, provide accessible mobility and get our economy moving. The health and prosperity of the Greater Golden Horseshoe area is dependent on building an efficient transportation network across the region.

Thank you for considering our recommendations.

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