



TRANSPORT 2000 ONTARIO

Advocating Environmentally, Socially & Economically Sustainable Transportation
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Dear Sirs/Mesdames:

The following is a submission from Transport 2000 Ontario and the Sustainable Transportation Coalition on the two White Papers issued by Metrolinx for comment.

A. About Transport 2000 Ontario and the Sustainable Transportation Coalition

Transport 2000 Ontario is a non-profit public advocacy organization supported entirely by our membership. We promote environmental, economic and socially sustainable transportation. Incorporated in 1992, we have functioned as an advocate for sustainable transportation since the 1970's. Transport 2000 Ontario is one of five regional organizations across Canada with a national office in Ottawa.

The Sustainable Transportation Coalition (STC) is an alliance of organizations working to redirect funds from unsustainable transportation infrastructure, specifically roads and highways, towards the sustainable modes of public transit, walking and cycling. Members of the Coalition are:

Ontario Smart Growth Network
Transport 2000 Ontario
Earthroots
Friends of the Farewell
Citizens Environmental Alliance
GreenTrans
Preservation of Agricultural Lands Society
Preserve 16th (Markham)
Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment
Protect Our Water and Environmental Resources
Rouge Duffins Greenspace Coalition

B. Comments on White Paper 1: Vision, Goals and Objectives

We agree with the Vision.

We agree with the Goals and Objectives and Possible Indicators. It is noted that there are 41 objectives. These need to be sorted and prioritized. These priorities need to be established in order to properly assess different transportation network alternatives and components.

It is recognized that prioritization is not easy, but some initial steps can be taken. The objectives where the transportation system is the most significant contributor (approximately 35) should be separated from those largely dependent on other societal initiatives (approximately 6). Within the group of 35, a qualitative ranking by one of our members showed about 16 High, 15 Medium and 4 Low. For a more rigorous prioritization, Metrolinx could explore monetizing and assigning societal value, even on a rough basis, to as many objectives as possible, to aid in priority setting.

For example, the following priorities would likely rate high when monetized:

- Creating a seamless region-wide transit system and improving service on existing transit systems
- Gradually implementing transportation user fees, first in areas where good transit is readily available
- Using revenue from these fees to improve regional transit service as per Regional Transportation Plan and local transit in less-well serviced areas that have met minimum population density requirements

C. Comments on White Paper 2: Preliminary Directions and Concepts

This white paper is well written, and has good lists of ideas, options and other measures. Our comments will identify the section of the paper that they relate to. *Where we have not commented on a specific point in the paper, this means we are in agreement with it.*

1. Background - no comments

2. Preliminary Directions

Section 2.1 - A System for Complete Mobility

- Direction 1 (Transportation Hierarchy): The hierarchy as presented relates to people mobility. We support this hierarchy. However, considering that more than 1/3 of the traffic on our freeways is goods movement, we need to develop a hierarchy for goods movement also.
- Direction 3 (Active Transportation): Two additional options need to be identified:
 - Maximize off-road opportunities for bicycles, eg off-road trails, lanes protected with barriers
 - Create pedestrian malls in communities that have a downtown
- Direction 6 (Goods Movement): After long and careful thought, we cannot support option v, which proposes planning and designing new controlled-access highways to give priority to goods movement. We believe that this is not necessary in the era of increasing energy prices (reduced mobility demand), the availability of transportation demand management measures for goods such as road/peak-time pricing, and the availability of rail and water infrastructure. It is also possible to use some of the concepts identified in Green Papers #5 and #6, such as consolidation centres and barrier-separated managed lanes (allows "train" of trucks). Alternatively, development of new rail transportation

capacity or corridors could be an option (eg emulate Chicago or Vancouver per Green Paper #5 pg 19 and 31). In the meantime, the RTP must include preserving and upgrading existing rail corridors to speed up freight by rail. These approaches can free up enough freeway existing capacity for efficient goods movement. The freight railways must be consulted on the entire subject of goods movement.

High-speed rail is a distinct possibility for the future in the Quebec/Windsor corridor. Those hsr tracks will be available for fast goods movement.

The improved rail alternative and peak oil will obviate the need for new controlled-access highways for goods movement.

- Direction 7 (Long Range Land Protection for Transportation): We support this direction. See also our comments under Section 5.2 Land Use Coordination, where we encourage strategic land use assembly around mobility hubs and stations.
- Direction 8 (Design and Operate Roads): An additional option should be identified, namely
 - Use intermittent bus lanes (per Green Paper #7, pg 11) to provide dedicated bus lane-type service for 4 lane arterial roads.

The disruptive widening of 4 lane arterial roads to 6 lanes should rarely, if ever, be considered. We strongly favour conversion of existing lanes to HOV/transit and cycling lanes over road widenings.

An additional possible option to consider is

- Reduce speed limits to 50 km/h on arterial roads which must be used by cyclists, where no alternative lower traffic parallel route exists
- Direction 10 (New Markets for Transit): The White Paper should discuss tourist transportation versus strictly utilitarian passenger transportation, where the journey is part of the experience. This would include locating hotels at mobility hubs, waterfront ferry service, historic train stations, tourist appealing rolling stock, hiking connections to stations, bike rental and tourist train service to recreation areas such as Oak Ridges Moraine, Niagara Escarpment and Rouge Park.
- Another Direction to consider, all-be-it less important than the 11 cited in this section, is to encourage the use of scooters and motorcycles. These have a lower physical and environmental footprint than automobiles, and are extensively used in Europe.

Section 2.2 - Placemaking and Mobility Hubs

- Direction 1 (Build Complete Communities....Transit-Supportive): This is an absolutely vital direction. For example, a trip though the outer reaches of the GTA reveals a disorderly scene of sprawling subdivisions, deserted farmland, and miles of highways and snaking interchanges.

This type of suburban form renders the goals of the White Papers close to unachievable. It is impossible to create a complete and integrated system that reduces transportation's impact on the environment when a good portion of the region is too low-density to be anything but car-dependent. To address this

“Business as Usual” type of development, we offer the following for your consideration:

- Offer rapid transit connections to the rapid transit grid initially to municipalities that meet a minimum standard of density together with a minimum standard of transit-supportive urban form and adequate local transit.
- Encourage sprawl-type municipalities to work towards meeting those standards in the future. Offer Park-and-Ride facilities until they can be integrated into the RTP.
- Encourage municipalities to offer innovative local transit options in low density/off peak situations, such as dial-a-bus.
- New subdivisions and communities need to include collector roads that are through-streets, in order to facilitate local transit roads.
- School catchment areas can increase walking and cycling by posting guards not only at intersections, but along elementary school routes as well (Option iii)

Section 2.3 - Excellent Customer Service

- Direction 3 (New Transit Lifestyle...Simplifying Payment of Transit Fares and Rewarding Regular Users): The Presto fare smart card should not be considered a fait accompli (Option i). As cited in STC’s comments to the Green Papers, the fare structure needs to be decided before fare technology. It appears that the decision to use the smart card has pushed the decision to use fare by distance. A zone fare is much simpler to implement and does not require a major technological investment. Many European cities have used zone systems successfully for decades. In Madrid, a low-cost zone fare system led to a dramatic increase in ridership. For further details and suggestions, please refer to the STC comments on the Green Papers.

Section 2.4 - Sustainable Financing

- It is recognized that sustainable financing to pay for capital construction costs, maintenance costs and operating costs are absolutely key to the success of the RTP. Plus, of course, investment is needed to supply the new/enhanced feeder bus system, as well as maintain the existing base operation. We await release of the Draft Investment Strategy with great interest. To protect funding of the RTP from political manipulation, consistent funding, both capital and operating should be protected in legislation.
- Direction 6 (Leverage Private Sector Resources): Metrolinx should reject Alternative Financing and Procurement strategies. Since the province can borrow at the lowest interest rate available, adding a private sector partner that provides costly short or long term financing is not a public benefit. The private sector is already used for consulting, supplies and construction.
- Another financing option to identify and explore is directed taxes, eg higher gasoline tax or carbon tax, with the funds that are raised being directed to transportation, particularly public transit. A portion of the gas tax currently goes to public infrastructure, including

transit. It would be better if infrastructure and transit were separated with increased gasoline tax (but revenue neutral) going to transit.

Section 2.5 - Innovation Through Research

- Direction 6 (Research on Clean Fuel Technologies and Green Vehicles), while laudable, is really beyond the mandate of Metrolinx and should be left to other agencies
- Direction 7 (Pilot and Demo Projects): Other pilot and demo projects that could be easily tried include
 - Testing intermittent bus lanes (Green Paper #7, pg 11)
 - Parking fees at a test mall, combined with a shopper's rebate for transit use, to ensure the exercise is revenue neutral
 - Parking fees at a major employer, combined with a cash bonus or transit allowance to reward non-drivers

3. Test Concepts

We recognize that the test concepts were developed to test ideas and draw general conclusions. Hence we will not comment on the detailed cases.

We support the plan to use a variety of transportation modes, including both Bus Rapid Transit and Light Rail Rapid Transit. Viva is a good example of BRT as part of a varied system of transit alternatives. Ottawa is a good example of BRT overdone. Ottawa is struggling to correct its reliance on a system that creates rather than relieves congestion.

The RTP should aim high. Compromises and settling for cheaper transit options will not be effective in luring drivers out of their cars. Rail-based transit is a much more attractive mode than bus rapid transit as well as being safer and greener. Building bus rapid transit as a temporary mode until funds are available for rail is unrealistic, as temporary infrastructure has a way of becoming permanent.

There is also the attractive possibility of linking LRT electrical infrastructure to electric trolley buses for key feeder routes. As pointed out in STC's Green Paper comments, some trolley buses have the flexibility for extensive off-wire operation.

We also note that the current freight line rails were not considered in the analyses. Many of these such as CN's York Subdivision parallel to Steeles Avenue may have capacity to provide passenger service much more cheaply than building entirely new transit corridors.

We also note that high-speed rail is likely in our future, and that the RTP should fit with hsr when it comes.

Section 3.4 - Limitations of the Model

- The discussion on modal bias too narrowly written. In addition to the factors mentioned, we believe attitudes to public transit are becoming more positive due to increased environmental and health awareness by the public, as well as an evolving positive impression fostered by seeing hi tech, clean, reliable vehicles elsewhere.

- Appendix E identifies that the model does not account for any potential induced traffic demand. More discussion on this important point is needed. Furthermore, induced traffic should be defined in the Glossary.

4. Test Concept Performance - Preliminary Findings

Section 4.1 - Introduction

- The discussion on modeling is well written. However, more information is needed on when and how the model was calibrated. We understand the model was largely calibrated from the 2001 Transportation Tomorrow Survey. There are some significant shifts occurring in society that may not be reflected in the 2001 data, eg
 - we believe that public attitudes to non-auto modes of travel are becoming more positive due to increased environmental and health awareness by the public
 - a dramatic shift to home offices and teleworking

Section 4.2 - Preliminary Cost Estimates

- In Table 4.2, the "continued substantial operational spending on roads and highways", ie road operating and maintenance costs, should be included to allow a proper apples-to-apples comparison of the test cases and derive the most learnings. Discussions with Metrolinx staff has identified that these costs are hard to identify, as different municipalities place them in different parts of their budgets. Nevertheless, some estimates of these costs, possibly based on professional judgment, need to be made and included.

Section 4.5 - Further Testing and Analysis

As part of the RTP development, we feel **that much more analysis** via modeling is needed.

- Each major transit line or roadway needs a projected demand figure, in order to verify that it is justified and the selected technology is appropriate (eg Metro vs LRT vs Bus in Mixed Traffic) and cost-effective . Funding to build, operate and maintain local and regional transit lines and roadways must be deployed in the most **cost-effective manner**.
- It is particularly important to study and justify any cases where two major lines are in close proximity--for example:
 - 401 REX versus Sheppard Subway/LRT--are both needed? Only one? Will demand from one siphon demand from the other?
 - 407 REX (plus shuttle buses to Hwy 7) versus Highway 7 BRT lines --are both needed? Only one? Will demand from one siphon demand from the other?
- One case that needs specific study is the proposed expansion of the SRT to Malvern. This is an expensive project, largely because of the need to build an exclusive ROW. A more cost effective project may be to boost GO service to reduce demand on the SRT and convert the entire SRT to LRT (non exclusive ROW in new areas)
- There is considerable citizen interest in extending the Yonge St Subway beyond the proposed Richmond Hill Centre (Hwy 7) to either Major Mackenzie Drive or Elgin Mills Road. This case should be studied if only to put the matter to rest, ie to confirm if BRT or LRT can handle the demand.

- The modeling needs to run numerous cases on the same network with different assumptions about such factors as cost of auto travel, reduced headways, higher densities than Official Plans, different technologies, more park-and-ride lots.

5. Implementing the Plan

Section 5.2 - Key Implementation Activities

- Land Use Coordination - Metrolinx should have a much stronger role than "coordination", especially with regard to the creation of mobility hubs. Either Metrolinx or a separate government agency should be established to assemble land for development around mobility hubs and stations. Waiting for the private sector to do this will take too long and discourage the use of these hubs by pedestrians and cyclists

Current land uses adjacent to mobility hubs such as retail parking lots, drive throughs, car dealerships and repair shops and other auto related uses should be priority candidates for acquisition and redevelopment. An additional priority should be acquiring land to improve pedestrian and cycling access to transit stations from all directions (eg acquiring a house to enable a shortcut to a residential community, or a right of way through an industrial lot to allow access to an industrial park - example: east side of York University GO station currently has no pedestrian access to adjacent employment lands)

A provincial land acquisition fund should be established for this purpose and spent strategically acquiring properties as they come up for sale, quietly approaching key landowners and ramping up acquisitions during economic downturns when land prices are lower.

- Government Involvement - We believe it is very important that the RTP, when finalized, be given stature in legislation. This is analogous to what was done in the Places to Grow Act. With a legislated plan in place, this will require municipalities to be consistent with the RTP during their planning activities
- Rough In Construction - The implementation plan should also discuss this important strategy. It refers to designing the potential for future expansion into new infrastructure. See STC's comments on the Green Papers for further details and examples.

Section 5.3 - Investment Strategy

- Regarding the principle of "addressing the true cost of transportation, including external economic, environmental and social costs we refer you to the landmark, but little known report by the MTO in 1994 "The Social Cost of Motor Vehicle Crashes in Ontario".

Appendix A - Glossary

- "Induced Traffic" should be defined

Appendix C - Maps

- A map of the BAU Case would be helpful

Appendix E -Sensitivity Testing on Impact of Road Capacity

- We find the sensitivity cases B2 and C2 very interesting and are appreciative that the Metrolinx Board requested their inclusion at the last minute.

- The conclusions from B2 (expanded roads) are dramatic - a 10% increase in arterial road capacity (over the base expansions already assumed in the initial cases) and extension/construction of many 400 series highways has dramatic effects. It decimates transit modal share, especially in York Region (-30%). It increases GHG emissions by 10%. And, as stated, it likely would induce more greenfield development, contributing to urban sprawl. In our view, these effects are counter to the RTP objectives.
- The conclusions from C2 (reduced roads, ie stop arterial expansions and 400 series extensions) are more subtle. Although transit modal share does not increase much, implying higher auto congestion, we believe that other non-modeled effects will come into play. We believe that many people will institute their own demand management practices, eg teleworking, moving closer to work shifting work hours. We believe the positive impacts of reducing highway and arterial road expansions below those in the initial cases warrants strong consideration.

D. Final Comments

In conclusion, we support a RTP that will significantly support the quality of life of our region's residents while protecting air quality and ensuring that our region remains economically competitive. As Professor George Hazel pointed out in his presentation at "Mobility Without Borders" on June 23, at present Toronto is ranked as an "at risk" city with respect to our transportation system. As a region, we simply cannot afford to continue down the business as usual path.

We thank you for the opportunity to comment on these White Papers, and look forward to consideration of our comments in the Regional Transportation Plan and Investment Strategy. Should you require more information about our submission, please contact Peter Miasek at 905-477-8636.

Yours truly,
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