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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

Wednesday 6 June 2012

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

Mercredi 6 juin 2012

**Standing Committee on
General Government**

Traffic congestion

**Comité permanent des
affaires gouvernementales**

Congestion routière

Chair: David Oraziotti
Clerk: Sylwia Przedziecki

Président : David Oraziotti
Greffière : Sylwia Przedziecki

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Hansard Reporting and Interpretation Services
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON GENERAL GOVERNMENT

COMITÉ PERMANENT DES AFFAIRES GOUVERNEMENTALES

Wednesday 6 June 2012

Mercredi 6 juin 2012

The committee met at 1623 in room 228.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Okay, folks, let's get started.

RESIDENTIAL AND CIVIL CONSTRUCTION ALLIANCE OF ONTARIO

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Our first presentation: Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. As you're aware, you've got 10 minutes for your presentation. Any time you don't use will be divided among members for questions. We've got about five minutes for questions. You can simply state your name and start when you're ready. Thanks.

Mr. Andy Manahan: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. My name is Andy Manahan. I'm the executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. I don't have a slide show. What I do have, you'll see in front of you, are these blue wristbands. It's a USB and it contains 19 of our major reports. If you want more AV, I guess you can hum in your head your favourite car song—Crosstown Traffic, Baby You Can Drive My Car, Truckin', whatever you want. We'll just leave it at that.

I think most of you know about RCCAO. We were formed in 2005. It's a labour-management alliance. We have five contractor associations and four construction unions, and that's listed in front of you.

A lot of what we have done over the last five to six years is commissioned reports on transportation funding, regional transit governance, environmental assessment for transit projects, optimum levels of public infrastructure investment. Earlier this year, we submitted our response on MTO's transit-supportive guidelines. These reports and a few others are available on our website, as well as this USB.

Beyond studies, we have supported Transport Futures. In fact, there was a Transport Futures event last Thursday at the Metropolitan Hotel in Toronto that addressed goods movement and mobility pricing. Many of these conferences have looked at alternative means to finance transit expansion and manage demand.

We've also supported the University of Toronto Cities Centre to develop better travel demand forecasting models for the GTHA, and very recently we partnered

with the Ministry of Transportation and the Ontario Good Roads Association on a pilot project in Wellington county to look at bundling of bridges to facilitate faster and more cost-effective evaluation and rehabilitation.

Gridlock is very important. I think it's so topical that every time someone mentions it in the media, it elicits all sorts of calls to talk shows and everything else. It does appear to be controversial. People do care about gridlock and their quality of life. I think that job creation is important to our sector, but it's also important to society as a whole in terms of trying to deal with gridlock. There are many global cities around the world that have made major investments in infrastructure, and if we don't keep pace and do even better than they are, I think that's going to put us in the back seat, so to speak, in terms of our economic and social prosperity in the future.

Just to touch on a few of the reasons why this is very important, we're one of the fastest-growing jurisdictions in North America. You've probably heard this already: We have more condominiums under construction in Toronto than the three largest North American cities combined. I think there are approximately 185 cranes in the skyline right now.

We are critically dependent on the movement of goods and services. We're an export-dependent economy in the province. Road links to the border are essential for trade, and so are the links between the cities and the various regions. I know this particular committee is looking at the Toronto region and Ottawa, but of course there are many others: northern Ontario linkages and everything else. It's all connected, so we shouldn't really be focusing on just one area, but this is certainly an important area.

The lost productivity due to gridlock: The Toronto Board of Trade, based on an OECD report, estimates that the cost of reduced productivity due to gridlock is about \$6 billion per year. So unless alternative transportation policies are developed, the losses across the province will rise dramatically in the coming year.

The fourth reason is that health and environmental effects of gridlock are considerable. I don't think I need to go into any great detail, but greenhouse gas emissions as well as the stress of driving and idling, which results in more pollution and slower traffic, are all connected issues.

To a certain degree, road congestion is a sign of success in that the highest-ranked cities in the world all have

this phenomenon, but there comes a tipping point where too much congestion becomes a drag on the provincial economy. When commute times in this region are projected to worsen by 45% in 2031, we are clearly headed for a serious dysfunction unless appropriate investments are made.

I should mention that at the very back of this presentation there are some opinion pieces and other press releases. Our association, I guess, has been writing about how important funding is for at least the last five years. There is a presentation at 5 o'clock by the CAA. This is from November 2009, where I'm talking on the pro side of road tolls. CAA, at that time, was against tolls. I think you'll be hearing in less than an hour that the CAA's position has evolved over that time. I don't want to steal their thunder, but I just thought I'd point you to that.

We have a number of approaches that we would like to see taken. One is a consistent long-term commitment to funding necessary infrastructure. First of all, we would like to commend the government on the steps it has taken to make more strategic infrastructure investments: for example, ReNew Ontario; the linking of Places to Grow and the creation of Metrolinx, which results in better regional land use and transportation planning; the establishment of a 10-year infrastructure plan, which I do know is supported by all parties based on the surveys we've sent to all three main parties and the Green Party last summer before the election. Then, more recently, this year, the 2012 budget recommitted to the three-year, \$35-billion infrastructure plan.

Since the early years of the new millennium, the Ontario government has moved from spending approximately \$2 billion per year on infrastructure to an average of about \$11 billion, and a peak of \$14 billion during the stimulus program a couple of years ago. We believe there is room for improvement, and we do need more detailing of what the projects are to make it more transparent so our industry and others can provide some meaningful feedback to make the programs more accountable.

In December of last year, we released a report, *Public Infrastructure Investment in Ontario: The Importance of Staying the Course*, and I think we were heeded, based on the 2012 budget results. The basic message there is that we are currently spending at about 3% of GDP on infrastructure. If we do not maintain that level, we're going to slip dramatically. This is combining both new investment and maintenance. The optimal target is 5% of GDP. We're not suggesting that we can get there right away, but if you don't have better measurement and benchmarking, you're not going to meet those objectives in the longer term.

What we would like to see is more detailed information on the 10-year plan. What are the annual spending levels in the foreseeable future? Hopefully, we can get back up to \$11 billion to \$12 billion, because I think it's important based on gridlock and other issues like water and sewer infrastructure.

We would like to see an annual release of a list of all infrastructure projects completed to date and those that

are currently in the active development stages. We have some of that with Metrolinx, but we don't have it across the board.

The AFP, or alternate financing and procurement, is the second level of detail I'd like to get into. I think, based on the 10-year plan, there is increasing recognition that there is insufficient funding from traditional sources to support infrastructure investment in the transportation sector, so AFP approaches are required. In fact, earlier this year, Don Drummond and his commission recommended that there be an open, public dialogue on how best to create new revenue sources for future transportation capital needs.

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The gas tax revenue commitment to municipalities is a perfect example of the changes that occurred in attitudes in recent years. But I must point out, I think we should be cognizant around this table that there are trends such as proportionally lower revenues because of more fuel-efficient vehicles or even vehicles that are powered by electricity. We could have a dramatic impact on overall revenues for transportation purposes unless we start thinking of new revenue sources.

I've talked about some that I think are relatively easy to implement such as allowing high-occupancy toll lanes and HOV lanes. This would get people in the practice of paying for driving in a faster lane for a certain amount of money. They could be GPS-based road charges.

Basically, what we're saying is that user-pay principle approach—I think we need that sort of evolution. We do have gas taxes and things like that, but they're very blunt instruments compared to what we have.

With me right now as well is Keagan from Smart Commute—North Toronto, Vaughan. We've done a lot of work on transportation demand management such as employer van pooling. We could look at other areas as well in terms of good movement such as priority lanes for truck traffic. So I think there's a raft of really good solutions and opportunities out there.

I should add that although there seems to be this polarization because of the media portrayal of revenue tools, when you get down and do proper polling and ask people if they'd be willing to pay but point out to them the value proposition or the benefits—the Pembina Institute, and I guess Cherise is here as well, has done some great survey work. Recently, they found that 58% of GTA drivers at least moderately support tolls, sales taxes and parking fees, but that that support rose to close to 70% for pricing policies where there is a dedicated fund for building transit. Leger Marketing's recent poll suggested that half of Canadians would pay \$3 a day to pay for road tolls.

I have a feeling I'm running out of time. I've talked about streamlining of regulations and other things like that, so I'll just go to the conclusion.

Without an increase in investment, the cost to this region, from productivity as well as societal costs, will be too high. We really do need to maintain and increase transportation infrastructure investments in a planned and sustained way over the long term. That is really the only

way to tame the gridlock beast, so to speak. We look forward to working with members of all parties, because I think this is one of those things that has to be non-partisan, and we would like to work with many other organizations across the region to look at realistic solutions. I look forward to your questions.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you very much for your presentation. Good timing. Conservative caucus: Mr. O'Toole, go ahead.

Mr. John O'Toole: I'll try to share my time here. There's a couple of themes that are emerging after the first day that I thought were the argument of the war on cars and the shift to the investment in transit. That's something I'd like you to respond to.

I guess the other part is, the ask so far from Metrolinx was \$2 billion every year of new money which did not include operational increments. As well, we had another request for another \$2 billion from TTC which did not include operational components. So as a minimum, they've sucked up about \$5 billion right there in terms of the projected spending. These investments on the light rail transit and that—St. Clair, I think is an experience—what's your view on the light rail discussion and the general move to transit? Do you think we have it right?

Mr. Andy Manahan: Okay. First question on the war on cars: Our association likes to take a balanced view with respect to roads and transit, so we don't like to polarize that much. I think I made that point with respect to the goods movement piece. I think there are also missing linkages and HOV/HOT lanes across the highway network that we need to move to.

In terms of the financing, I would turn the question around entirely. Rather than the \$2 billion ask, the ask should be, let's get on to the new revenue tools so we can actually fund it. Two billion dollars per year is like a baseline. I think if you talk to the former Metrolinx board member, Paul Bedford—

Mr. John O'Toole: The Big Move is about \$50 billion.

Mr. Andy Manahan: —so \$50 billion. He's talking about \$80 billion to \$90 billion or more. I think without that, we're behind the eight ball.

I was also at a transportation forum held in Mississauga last weekend. It wasn't recorded by the media, but it was Mayor Hazel's suggestion that senior levels of government should be responsible for the capital investment and that the operating and maintenance funding should come entirely from the new revenue tool. So that was a new twist for me, and Hazel is very influential.

Finally, on the LRT versus subways, RCCAO did sign on in early February to the Cities Centre-led initiative—which was primarily academics, but many others signed on to it—saying, "Let's take a long-term, objective approach to it." Politicization in transportation planning is always going to be there, but we need to take it out a little bit.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Okay, I have to stop you there. NDP caucus: Mr. Marchese, go ahead.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Manahan, thank you. Clearly, cities don't have enough money to plan transit in

any way, because they rely on two things: the transit fare and property taxes. So it's just not possible.

Mr. Andy Manahan: Impossible.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And they're all starving for cash. You did speak about the role of provincial and/or federal governments in terms of how they would raise money or could raise money so that they could contribute to a public infrastructure. You seem to speak to the idea of tolls as a way to go. Do you have an opinion on one or the other?

Mr. Andy Manahan: There are others. I guess in passing I referenced sales taxes and the other tools that the Pembina Institute had put forward. There would have to be some sort of permissive legislation for a municipality to implement that from senior levels of government, whether it's HST or what have you. I think that would be one tool in the tool box, but at this stage I don't want to say one is better than the other. I just think we need to have that mature dialogue on it.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sure. You're quite right. Do you worry about how certain people who need to drive may not have the money or the adequate income to be able to pay for certain revenue tools like a toll? Does that worry you, first? And, secondly, if it does, how do you deal with that?

Mr. Andy Manahan: That's certainly a concern, and there's many other concerns as well—privacy and on and on and on. I think part of what we're talking about with dynamic road pricing is how do we shift some of that peak-hour usage. Some people may have a job at their place of work, whatever it is, and they have to be there at a certain time, so some of the things we're doing with respect to transportation demand management is talking to employers to allow more flexibility, so flex time with their work—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Sure, I understand, but a toll, for example, affects everybody equally. Do you worry about those who have modest incomes—\$30,000 or \$40,000—and have to drive to get to work and may not be able to afford it, or someone who has an income of \$100,000, or \$200,000, or \$300,000, or \$400,000, or \$500,000?

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Very briefly. That's time.

Mr. Andy Manahan: With dynamic pricing, in the future you could have systems that would have a lesser rate for people who are in dire need.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Okay, thank you. Liberal caucus?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): That's the time we have. I appreciate you coming in today.

Mr. Andy Manahan: Thank you very much.

CODEREDTO

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Our next presentation is CodeRedTO, Cameron MacLeod. Mr. MacLeod, welcome to the Standing Committee on General Govern-

ment. Thanks for being here today. As you know, you've got 10 minutes for your presentation and five for questions, so simply state your name and you can start.

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: Absolutely. Thanks very much for having me. My name is Cameron MacLeod. I'm one of the cofounders of CodeRedTO. My apologies for having a presentation that many of you can't see.

In getting ready for this, I did a little bit of research into transit systems within some of your ridings, just to learn a little bit more about what your residents are facing. For example, in Mr. Smith's riding, I know that there's a specialized transit system that's been set up since 2007 for some of your physically disabled residents, which I thought was really awesome, and I bet they're pretty strapped for funds quite often.

Mr. Oraziotti, I know there's been some serious detours on Queen Street within the Soo that have actually impacted three of your bus routes. And the size of your bus system really reminded me of being in school in Fredericton. It's small-scale—one hour to wait for a bus—which really impacts those that don't have access to reliable transit or when issues happen, like someone who can't walk very far all of a sudden can't get where they need to go because Queen Street has been shut down. So I'm here to talk a little bit about improving mobility for Ontarians with rapid transit.

First off, CodeRedTO is a Toronto-centric group, and that's why I wanted to make sure I did a little research about other ridings, to learn a little bit more. We are a group of residents that advocate for transit expansion to help the most people, and to happen sooner and faster. We advocate honest, factual discussions of pros and cons and costs, and what we are actually advocating for is increased, stable, predictable funding to build and run better transit. Our website, Twitter and Facebook are on there. I wanted to stress that we are an all-volunteer organization. There are no conflicts of interest. One of our founders is actually involved with a company that is now doing business related to rapid transit, so he has actually removed himself from the group to avoid any sense of conflict of interest. I work in a technology and research company. We don't receive any funds or talking points from any political party, any organization, any group, any individual or city councillor, MPP or anything like that. We're also available to present facts like this in information sessions that you might be holding, so please don't hesitate to invite us.

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I wanted to talk a little bit more zoomed out about how we got here in terms of congestion and transit and things like that. Transit, of course, is our hobby horse. Really, there are three reasons we got here. First, we do have a congestion problem. I decided to focus on Toronto and Ottawa, which are currently suffering the most congestion-related issues around transit. In Toronto, of course, we have one of the longest daily commutes, on average, in all of North America. It's 80 minutes, round trip, these days. We don't have room for new roads, but we will have more commuters as the population grows.

Congestion really is a people thing; it's not a car thing. It's very tempting for us to think about all of those cars stuck in traffic, but really, there's more to it than that. I have some sample ridership here on this slide as well, showing you, for example, the TTC's Sheppard subway line. This actually carries about 47,000 people a day, but we also have the entire Ottawa Transitway, the OC Transpo's Transitway, which actually carries almost 50,000 people per day. We have several other bus lines which are higher and lower, but there's huge congestion in many areas and there's a huge demand. Just for comparison, the Yonge subway here in Toronto carries over 700,000 people per day, just to give you a sense of scale.

The second issue is we have a funding problem. Funding is limited. You know that; we know that. The total provincial and federal funding that was made available recently for the Metrolinx 5 in 10 light rail plan in Toronto was \$8.7 billion; I believe it's costed in 2010 dollars. The Sheppard subway expansion plan, which was rejected by city council, would have cost \$3.7 billion, but would have served a much, much smaller number of residents.

Just for comparison, over four years, Toronto's land transfer tax raises only about \$1.2 billion, and the cancelled vehicle registration tax, which was not really well supported within council and within the city, only raised about \$160 million over four years, if it had been allowed to stay. There's a lot of money there. Subways, for example, cost \$350 million or more per kilometre to build, when we're tunnelling and building stations and things like that. We're talking about big amounts of money.

The third part of the problem—and this is the one that really gets my goat—is we have an approval problem. In 1910, a referendum in Toronto passed on building a subway, and the mayor refused to approve it. He didn't like it. In 1954, the Yonge subway opened; in 1966, the Bloor-Danforth subway opened, but we've seen many problems since then as well. Toronto city council refused to extend the Scarborough RT—the experimental magnetic RT technology that's still in place right now is sort of falling apart—because it required tax increases. In 1995, a new Premier cancelled one of the planned subway developments. In 2006, a new Ottawa mayor cancelled an expansion of the O-Train. Then, of course, in Toronto, we've had all sorts of soap operas recently about how transit should be expanded, where it should go, things like that. This has been something that all levels of government have had the opportunity to help solve, but really, maybe, have not done everything that they could.

How do we fix it? First, we do need to reduce future congestion by increasing mobility for all residents in Ontario, not just in Ottawa and Toronto. Mobility is an issue for every town, for every city. I was looking at St. Thomas, for example. St. Thomas has bus issues and funding issues. I was looking at Kenora–Rainy River, in Ms. Campbell's riding—issues around simply repairing Highway 11, a lot of issues there. We do need to expand transit coverage and increase transit frequency to make it a viable option for those who can use it.

We need to depoliticize transit as well by creating predictable, stable, dedicated funding. Move funding out of general revenue. Create named revenue sources that are targeted at specific needs. We need to stick to our plans and stop waving in the wind.

Ontario has four rapid transit lines in operation today, it has six rapid transit lines in design or under construction, but 10 cancelled rapid transit lines since 1994. That's a big problem. What we're doing now isn't working.

If we had stuck to 1985's Network 2011 plan, in theory, we would have in Toronto a subway system that looked like this today. Of course, other issues might have gotten in the way, but it shows you that there is the potential for great expansion of transit systems, better mobility for residents, if we are able to stick to plans. Plans change, absolutely, but we need to come up with a way to change the politics because too many of the changes are actually due to an election win or specific promises to voters rather than what might make sense for everyone. This isn't shown as a better or worse idea; just an example of past plans that never got off the drawing board.

How do we actually get stuff built? Predictable, stable, dedicated funding. I want to talk to you really quickly about Los Angeles county and Measure R. It was a referendum on a new 0.5% sales tax. It passed with over 67% support. When was the last time anyone in this room got 67% support for a new tax?

Voters were told where the money would go, affected cities were given a guaranteed slice of the pie and the tax was set to expire 30 years later. It generates \$1.3 billion a year and costs the average resident \$25. The county is actually using the long-term revenue as collateral, so that they can build 30 years' worth of transit projects in just 10 years. Twelve rapid transit projects are actually under construction right now. LA is a mess, but at the end of that 10 years they're going to have a huge boost.

Fifteen percent of the revenue is dedicated to the municipality it came from, and 20% to county-wide services. There are also independent audits and reports to taxpayers.

It's a logical conclusion: To grow the economy, we have to grow the population. To grow the population, we have to move more people around, which means we have to have more mobility for them, which means more rapid transit. And if we need more rapid transit, we've got to pay for it.

So here's an idea: a 1% transportation fund tax, equivalent to an HST raise but a separate tax. It's shown on receipts, and voters are actually told where the money is going. It's explained visually before implementation and on an annual tax bill or an annual report.

Just as an example, let's put 50% of it into transit and 50% into roads, bikes and infrastructure. It's not all the money, but it's a help. And it's something that can become part of the furniture to then be useful, predictable and stable for transit systems and for municipalities that need to repair that bridge or fix up that road—whatever it

might be. As an example, I just built a made-up report showing some of the things we might be able to pay for and how we might display that to residents.

Included in the rest of my presentation, which you've got copies of, are some of the other information slides we use to talk to other members of the public, talk to residents about rapid transit expansion, that sort of thing. Please don't hesitate to take a look at that, and we have more information on our website. But this is the big idea that I really wanted to push. Thanks very much.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you very much for your presentation. The NDP caucus is up first. Mr. Schein, go ahead.

Mr. Jonah Schein: That's a great presentation, and I really appreciate the work that CodeRed has been doing in the city, bringing a very reasonable debate, and a badly needed reasonable debate, to transit issues.

Recently there was a report commissioned by the TTC, I believe, showing some problems in the process of building the Eglinton and Sheppard lines, in part, they're suggesting, because of Metrolinx's insistence on using a P3 model. I wonder if you could comment on that model and if you think we could get moving a little bit faster on that if we had some more flexibility there.

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: Very good question. One of the things I really like to focus on is that CodeRedTO is not a transit construction expert, we're not financing experts, we're not even taxation experts. This is as close as we'll ever get.

I would really like us to have better rapid transit sooner. Throughout Europe there have been many successes regarding P3 approaches and AFP approaches. In North America, there have been limited successes. I don't know enough to judge, but if the experts say we should try it, I'm okay with that. CodeRedTO has no position on that officially, because we don't have the expertise.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: The provincial government said they were going to prepare some report two years ago on bicycle infrastructure. Quebec puts in a great deal of money; we don't. Do you have an opinion on that?

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: Absolutely. Increasing mobility requires more options for people. Not everyone has the ability to take transit, not everyone has the ability to ride, not everyone has the ability to drive. If we give more options, we give better mobility for Ontarians. More money toward cycling would be a fantastic approach as well.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you. The Liberal caucus. Mr. Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you for the presentation. It was very clear and a good presentation.

A quick question: I know you said that you—

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Michael, can you just move the mike?

Mr. Michael Coteau: You're a Toronto-centric organization, but have you spoken to anyone outside of any urban centres about the 1% transportation tax mainly

feeding urban centres? Have you got any response from rural Ontario or anywhere outside the cities?

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: I can't honestly speak to how much of a conversation we've had. We've got a very large mailing list, and we've had support expressed by people throughout the province. They have joined up on our mailing list, they have contacted us and they have come into the city to attend some of our presentations. But I can't say honestly that, yes, we've talked to a bunch of people. I know a new tax or a higher tax is a big concern for everyone. One of the things, for me, that really made the Los Angeles referendum successful is that the money being spent in the community was being returned to the community by a specific formula similar to how the gas tax is distributed—

Mr. Michael Coteau: Have there been any alternative solutions outside of the 1% transportation tax fund that has been discussed within the organization?

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Mr. Cameron MacLeod: Oh, absolutely. We're actually interested in a whole pile of different options. There is no silver bullet, in my opinion, to solving funding. We're not going to find one magic tax that makes us suddenly not have to worry about it ever again. If we have multiple tools, that will really help us address multiple needs.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much. Conservative caucus: Mr. Smith, go ahead.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you for a very thoughtful presentation. It's some new material that we have to digest now. Thanks to your organization.

We simply believe that taxes can't be raised again, that there are just too many taxes. The province doesn't have a revenue problem; the province has a spending problem right now. Having said that, we do have money in the bank, and when it comes to fixing the transportation problem, specifically in the city of Toronto, I just simply want to get your thoughts on LRT or subway. What we keep hearing over and over again is that it's got to be subway.

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: The short version is: Toronto is one of the few cities on the planet that only has buses and subways. Every other city that has a successful modern transit system has a mixture of modes that includes light rail. The flexibility of light rail gives us a lot more opportunities in lower-density areas. So we're a strong supporter of the right technology in the right area. That means subways sometimes, and it means light rail sometimes.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much, that's time for your presentation. We appreciate you coming in today.

Mr. Cameron MacLeod: No problem; thank you.

GET TORONTO MOVING

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Our next presentation: Get Toronto Moving committee. Good afternoon,

sir. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. You have 10 minutes for your presentation and five for questions should members choose to ask questions. You can simply state your name and start your presentation when you're ready.

Mr. James Alcock: Okay, good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. My name is James Alcock. I'm the chair of the Get Toronto Moving committee. What we are is a private group of planners and engineers that have pooled all our expertise in various aspects of transportation. My background is urban planning. What we've done is, on a volunteer basis, we've decided to take a look at this gridlock problem and try to come up with ideas in the Toronto area to try to look at ways to ease it and to solve it. We've been going since 1990, so we've been going now for over 20 years, and we've developed proposals by pooling all our resources, looking at infrastructure, looking at technologies and looking at overall planning. We're not on any paid basis; we're all volunteers because we also have careers as well.

I just wanted to roughly go through the plan. We have a website, which is www.gettorontomoving.ca. On the homepage are all the proposals that we recommend would help to ease the traffic gridlock in the Toronto area. Then, we have individual pages that go into more details on each of the proposals. We've looked at it more from a planning and engineering side rather than from a financial side, though we do have ideas for funding as well.

Rapid transit—we have firmly come down on the side of subways. We believe that subways move a lot more people. They move up to 200,000 people a day, whilst an LRT only moves about 40,000 people a day. Toronto is growing. Toronto has had subway plans in the past, and we believe that they should be completed. We very much support a downtown relief subway line that would utilize going through Queen Street or Union Station that would be like a big "U" that would arc up on the east side through Scarborough and on the west side up towards the airport. That initiative is apparently being looked at by the city of Toronto at the moment, but it has been talked about since 1985. A downtown relief line, I think, would be wonderful because it would relieve a lot of congestion on the Yonge and Bloor.

Also, as for Eglinton, we're building the underground LRT line between Black Creek and Laird Drive. I mean, why not make it a full subway? It would carry more people. I think that you're going to have to have the overhead wires so you're going to need the size of tunnel anyway, so why not upgrade it to full subway? It would carry more people on Eglinton. You tried to build a full-scale subway on Eglinton in the 1990s, so I think it would make more sense to do that.

As for Sheppard, it only carries 47,000 because it's only a dead-end little stump; it ends at Don Mills. If it was completed all the way across and linked up with an extended Bloor line on the east side and was part of a connected, linked network, I think more and more people would use it.

I think that what we need to do is get into the idea of building at least two kilometres of subway every year and just keep on going. I know the LRTs have been approved, but I think that it's not too late to consider upgrading them and gradually building subways over years.

Roads are another area that have been sadly neglected in the Toronto area, and that's mostly because of our ideological reasons. We haven't built a major road in the Toronto area south of the 401 since 1971, when the construction of the William Allen expressway was cancelled. Mind you, though, I do not believe in resurrecting that proposal because of the neighbourhood impact in the centre of town. There are other and better ways to do it.

We believe in a Highway 400 extension that could be built in an underground tunnel under the Georgetown rail corridor, coming down on an angle and linking to the Gardiner Expressway at Strachan Avenue. There's a huge rail corridor there that comes off Black Creek Drive. Black Creek Drive actually used to be a provincial road and was downloaded to the city. It could actually be taken back by the province, and then an extension could be built in a tunnel under the Georgetown rail corridor, straight down to the Gardiner.

There's also room on the Gardiner to build an interchange. That could be put entirely underground. I've had a tunnelling expert look at it and say that it could be done for about \$1.9 billion. That would open up the connection to Highway 400, a new connection to the airport. It would also provide trucking going in and out of the industrial areas in the west end, to get off all the local streets and use a route. And it would be entirely underground, under a rail corridor, so it would not affect surrounding neighbourhoods.

We also believe there's a large hydro corridor on the east side, running through Scarborough: the Gatineau hydro corridor, 600 feet wide. It could easily fit a road along there and alleviate the Don Valley Parkway, the 401 and Kingston Road in Scarborough, using a hydro corridor—open space.

Also, this is more of a municipal thing, but little things could be done: for example, synchronizing all our traffic lights so that we get a green wave. What I've noticed when I drive in Toronto is, when the light goes green, going at the speed limit, by the time I get to the next one, it's red. We need to get the traffic lights synchronized so that they're flowing and you get a green flow.

Filling in the gaps in our arterial road system: If you look at the arterial road system in Toronto, there are all kinds of gaps in it, which affect bicycles and buses as well as cars.

One-way streets: The Richmond-Adelaide works really, really well. I am a strong advocate of one-way streets. I think that a network of one-way streets in some parts of downtown Toronto would move the traffic a lot better, using a pair of streets. Richmond-Adelaide works really, really well, and we could do more of that.

Roundabouts: They work very well in Europe. We could start using more and more of those instead of

traffic signals. I think that Canadians can gradually get used to them as they come in. They've just built some huge ones down in Cobourg and they work really, really well.

I do advocate for bicycle trail networks. I think they're very good. But remember, you're limited there because of winter use as well.

As for technologies, there are all kinds of smart technologies that can be used. We need to invest in new technologies that help to guide the traffic—GPS systems, that sort of thing.

Funding: In London, England, they use what they call the PFI, the private finance initiative, which is partnering with private companies to build transit and roads. We can do that here. The Ontario teachers' pension fund and the Canada pension fund have a total of about \$250 billion waiting to invest. They're investing it in Australia, in Britain. Why not invest it here? I think a P3-PFI system is the way to go.

As far as tolls go, I support tolls on new roads but not on existing roads. What's going to end up happening if you put tolls on existing roads is people will just go other ways to avoid it. But on new roads, from scratch, like the 407? Yes.

I think also, like the previous speaker said, we need to have a plan in place and we need to stick to it.

Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation. Liberal caucus, questions? Mr. Dhillon.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you for your presentation. Do you feel the federal government should be doing more than what it's doing presently with respect to supporting transit?

Mr. James Alcock: Yes, I definitely do. I think that they're not doing enough. I think that there should be federal funding, definitely, right across the country.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Conservative caucus? Mr. Smith, go ahead.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thanks; some interesting ideas there, that's for sure. I like the idea of adding more north-south, like a Don Valley Parkway, either to the east or west. Obviously, the DVP is a Don Valley parking lot, and the average speed at times during the day there is 17 kilometres per hour and 16 kilometres per hour at peak periods, so obviously there are some serious issues there.

1700

You had a price tag for the Black Creek Road extension, at \$1.9 billion. Then there was no money for the Kingston Road extension. Do you have any idea what that priced out—

Mr. James Alcock: That would be cheaper because that could be built on the surface, on a hydro corridor. The right-of-way is already there, so you're looking at between \$500 million to \$1 billion.

Mr. Todd Smith: And where would you be able to access that along? Is there an actual drawing that you have that you can provide to—

Mr. James Alcock: Yes. On our website, we've got a detailed drawing. It would actually come off the Don Valley Parkway, just south of where the bottleneck begins. So it would strain off some of the bottleneck.

The problem with the Don Valley is that you're using it to go north and east. It would pull the east traffic off, which would alleviate the Don Valley, and put it along a hydro corridor so that it would branch off before you get into the really congested area north of Eglinton Avenue. It would connect to the 401 at Morningside Avenue. It could even continue on to the 407, and then a couple of access points in between. We'd put them at Kennedy Road and Markham Road.

Mr. Todd Smith: Interesting ideas. Thank you very much.

Mr. James Alcock: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. NDP caucus.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Mr. Alcock, I like subways too; and so do the Conservatives, but they don't want to raise any new taxes. So it's hard to know how we're going to raise that without finding a way to do that. Per kilometre, it takes about \$400 million. The previous speaker said \$350 million; others say \$450 million—

Mr. James Alcock: I say \$200 million. I think those figures are overloaded.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: So the numbers vary from \$200 million to \$400 million, but it's expensive. The Sheppard line: Obviously, the mayor couldn't find enough private sector support to build that line. Pension funds: You need approval. I mean, people need to agree; otherwise it's hard. How do we raise the money?

Mr. James Alcock: I'm sorry, but I believe that if they can do PFIs in Britain, why can't we do them in Canada? The thing is, I think we need to sit down and we need to talk to these funds. If they're investing them in toll roads in Australia and plazas in Great Britain, why on earth aren't they investing them in transportation in Canada?

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And if that doesn't happen, how do we raise the money?

Mr. James Alcock: I think that if that doesn't happen—I'd be pretty disappointed if that doesn't happen, but I think his previous idea of the 1% tax is probably the only way to go. But really, that would be a last resort.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much. That's time for your presentation. We appreciate you coming in.

Mr. James Alcock: Thank you for having me.

TRILLIUM AUTOMOBILE DEALERS ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): The next presentation: Trillium Automobile Dealers Association. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. As you're aware, you have 10 minutes for your presentation, and the remaining time will be left to questions, should members wish to ask you

follow-up questions. Simply state your name and you can start your presentation.

Mr. Frank Notte: Great. Thank you, Mr. Chair, members of the committee. My name is Frank Notte and I'm the director of government relations for the Trillium Automobile Dealers Association, or TADA. TADA was formed earlier this year when the Ontario Automobile Dealer Association and Toronto Automobile Dealers' Association officially merged. TADA is Canada's largest provincial dealer association, representing over 1,100 new car dealers, which equates to one third of all new car dealers in the country. Our dealer members represent every manufacturer's brand and franchise, and operate right across Ontario.

But our members don't just sell cars; they create and sustain over 47,000 well-paying jobs. They also generate \$27.1 billion per year in sales and service at their dealerships. And they support a variety of charitable projects. One major highlight includes a \$2-million contribution towards the construction of the TADA Gift of Life wing at Ronald McDonald House, Toronto. This wing was established specifically in support of organ and tissue donation for children needing transplants.

Every February, TADA is proud to produce the Canadian International AutoShow, Canada's largest consumer show, in Toronto. In 2013, the auto show will celebrate its 40th anniversary.

Traffic congestion in the GTA is famous for all the wrong reasons. Numerous studies consistently rank the GTA's traffic among the worst in North America and the world. The Toronto Board of Trade estimates the average GTA commute is 80 minutes round trip, which is the longest in North America and costs the economy \$6 billion every year. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development said that Toronto's traffic cost the city \$3.3 billion per year. Stats Canada's 2010 Commuting to Work survey found that in Toronto more than one quarter of commuters "had travel times of 45 minutes or more, which is much greater than in any other" metropolitan area. IBM also conducted a worldwide "commuter pain" survey that concluded Toronto had the second-worst commute in the world, behind Johannesburg, South Africa.

It's really no surprise. Toronto has become the poster child of half-built or cancelled highways and decades of inadequate transportation planning. Today's drivers are suffering world-class gridlock, thanks to cancelled highway projects like the Spadina and Scarborough expressways. This has resulted in existing highways being overused for the amount of vehicles they were originally intended to accommodate, resulting in today's traffic congestion.

While transportation and highway projects were delayed or cancelled, the GTA's population was growing rapidly. This lack of foresight meant that while more and more people called the GTA home, transportation infrastructure fell further and further behind. Highway projects need to proceed without delay. We need to learn from past mistakes and act now to break traffic congestion and stop it from getting worse.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Finance's Ontario Population Projections Update released in spring of this year, "Ontario's population is projected to experience healthy growth over the next 26 years, rising 34.4%, or over 4.5 million ... by July 1, 2036." It also goes on to say, the GTA "is projected to be the fastest-growing region of the province, with its population increasing by 3.0 million, or 47.7%, to 2036."

With the GTA's population set to increase by 3 million, adequate transportation is key to supporting economic and population growth and fending off traffic congestion.

For some, the cure-all to relieving the GTA's specific traffic congestion is investing only in public transit at the expense of roadways and drivers. This is an irresponsible policy and fails to recognize that the vast majority of people need and want to drive automobiles. Using Statistics Canada's 2011 census numbers and with the Ministry of Transportation reporting that there are 9.1 million drivers in Ontario, the TADA estimates that 90% of Ontario residents 18 years of age or over are licensed drivers. The TADA is not surprised that almost every adult in Ontario feels they need to have a driver's licence. Automobiles offer families the freedom, flexibility and convenience to run their household as they see fit. In short, whether it's dropping the kids off at school, getting to work or picking up the groceries, the family car is a necessity for nine million Ontarians to run their household.

Before listing the TADA's five recommendations to fight GTA traffic, I want to commend the Ontario government on moving forward with the 407 east extension. This transportation link is vital and will help alleviate future traffic congestion.

Our recommendations are as follows.

(1) Reverse the 2012 Ontario budget cuts of \$229 million over the next six years to previously approved highway expansion and high-occupancy vehicle lane projects. On March 13, 2012, the Minister of Transportation announced higher vehicle and driver fees that will generate an extra \$340 million annually for the province. Clearly, this added revenue covers the \$229-million budget cut.

(2) Move forward on the GTA west corridor study. The Brampton Board of Trade is concerned that a 15- to 20-year timeline to initiate the project is too long for businesses and municipalities to plan accordingly. The TADA supports the board of trade's suggestion to "support early designation and protection" of the GTA west corridor and to move "expeditiously on the GTA west corridor study implementation process within 10 years."

(3) Build a Niagara-to-GTA highway to properly accommodate future population growth, help foster economic growth and prevent traffic congestion. A report done said, "By 2031 ... the existing transportation network within the" Niagara to GTA "study area will not be able to support the additional transportation demands that correspond with the projected growth." The Niagara-to-GTA highway will create a better link for the GTA to

access multi-modal transportation such as the Hamilton international airport, the Welland Canal, the St. Lawrence Seaway, and the largest US consumer market through the Fort Erie-Buffalo international crossing.

(4) Examine how existing infrastructure, mainly in the downtown cores, can be better utilized to increase traffic flow and allow vehicles, cyclists and pedestrians to move more efficiently.

(5) Review the city of Toronto's Downtown Transportation Operations Study upon completion. The study was initiated by Toronto city councillor Denzil Minnan-Wong, chair of the public works and infrastructure committee. The province should consider what best practices or ideas the study contains, help implement them if asked to by the city of Toronto and consider using those principles when planning at a provincial level. I encourage committee members to review our official submission, which was handed out.

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In closing, I just want to say that TADA thanks the Standing Committee on General Government for tackling the important issue of GTA traffic and for allowing Ontario's new car dealers to have their voices heard.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you very much for your presentation. Conservative caucus: Mr. O'Toole, go ahead.

Mr. John O'Toole: Thank you very much, Frank; very reasonable to hear the other side. I said earlier it's something that some would disagree with; it's sort of the war on the car thing. We've described that it pays its way, do you understand, in jobs and other ways. I thank the auto dealers' association for their contribution.

I like the comment you made on the idea of freedom. I live in the country. Most of the people here live in the city. I understand the difference. I can't get there from here without a car. My constituents can't get to Toronto without a car. And if they have a walking or disability problem, they cannot get to transit. Transit doesn't take you where you're going. There has to be another piece to this, do you understand? I have to take a taxi. I walk up from Union Station. At this point, at 69, or almost 69, if I get elected again, I probably won't be able to walk. Anyway, I'll have to take a taxi.

But here's the deal: It's about \$15 billion a year that you get. I'm going to raise one point here that they need to understand. Gas alone—we get a lot of complaints about the price of gas. They increased the price of gas 10 cents a litre with the HST. It was a grab. People didn't really realize the price of gas went up 8 cents to 10 cents per litre thanks to McGuinty. Do you think gas is expensive? Blame these guys right here.

I believe that paying your way is important. Frank, what would you say to people who say, "I think it's balance"?

Mr. Mario Sergio: Well, what do you say to Harper?

Mr. John O'Toole: See, they want to blame the feds for everything. It's just tragic, really. Talk to Bob Chiarelli; he has been both.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Do you have a question to the presenter?

Mr. John O'Toole: I want you to respond in a fair, reasonable way about balance. I can see in some of your recommendations here that you're not totally anti-transit.

Mr. Frank Notte: No. I'm not here to bash public transit. It has its role to play to move people across the GTA and the greater Golden Horseshoe. But nine million Ontarians feel like they need a family car for their own use, and they're going to make the best decisions.

I'm from a little city—Port Colborne, Ontario—and there is no public transit. In fact, it's the family car. My dad was an autobody shop owner—you know, it runs in the family. But if we wanted to get to Toronto, we had to drive. Even if you wanted to get to the GO train in Burlington, you still had to drive to get to the GO train.

Mr. John O'Toole: There's not enough parking, though. Anyway, thanks very much, Frank.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): The NDP caucus. Mr. Schein, go ahead.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thanks for your presentation. My understanding was that we were talking about gridlock in big cities. I assume there's not a gridlock problem in Durham, so this is not a war on cars. I think this is just a conversation about gridlock.

I noticed in most of your recommendations that there's actually no mention of transit. Do you see transit as a part of the war on gridlock? Is transit something we need to invest in?

Mr. Frank Notte: It has a role to play. Transit has a role to play to move people across the GTA. I don't think it has to come at the expense of drivers. I think they both have to work in sync to do that.

Mr. Jonah Schein: With limited space on the roads, though, I did notice that you mentioned a \$229-million cut by the provincial government in the recent budget. Part of that money goes to high-occupancy vehicle lanes, the HOV lanes, is that right? To me, that's a major concern, because you could actually have more people commuting by car in the same amount of space.

Mr. Frank Notte: Or buses.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Yes. Do you know specifically how much money, of that \$229 million, was cut from the HOV lanes?

Mr. Frank Notte: The answer is no. That's the number that was in the addendum to the 2012 Ontario budget—

Mr. Jonah Schein: Any clear rationale from the ministry about why they would cut HOV lanes?

Mr. Frank Notte: No, and we're concerned, because driver and vehicle fees or taxes were raised by \$340. We've asked the minister to clarify and exactly list where those funds are going and what projects they're going toward.

Mr. Jonah Schein: But one thing you've said is that you support more HOV lanes, right?

Mr. Frank Notte: That's part of a transportation mix.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Liberal caucus: Mr. Dhillon.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you very much. That's time. We appreciate you coming in today and answering some questions and providing us with your insight.

Mr. Frank Notte: Thanks.

CANADIAN AUTOMOBILE ASSOCIATION

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): The next presentation is the Canadian Automobile Association. Good afternoon. Welcome to the Standing Committee on General Government. As you know, you have 10 minutes for your presentation and five minutes should members wish to ask questions. Simply state your name, and you can start your presentation.

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: Good afternoon. My name is Elliott Silverstein, and I'm manager of government relations at CAA South Central Ontario. CAA is a not-for-profit auto club that has been advocating for members since 1903. We are the largest club in the federation, serving over 1.8 million members as far as Windsor, north to Sault Ste. Marie and east to Kingston.

Advocacy is the origin of CAA's existence, from lobbying for the construction of the Trans-Canada Highway, installing road signs across the province, introducing seatbelts in all vehicles and advocating for distracted driver legislation. All of these are designed to make roads safer for all users.

Today, CAA continues to advocate on behalf of members and the motoring public at both the provincial and municipal levels, focusing on core programs such as our School Safety Patrol, Bike Assist, Watch for Bikes and Worst Roads programs. Through these, we have the opportunity to work with local communities and governments to educate the public and call for improved transportation infrastructure.

Ontario has consistently been recognized as having some of the safest roads in the country and around the world. While Ontario serves as an excellent model for other jurisdictions to follow, the province is plagued by gridlock and its associated impacts. Commuting times are rising. Last December, CAA conducted a survey of Ontarians and found that when asked if traffic congestion negatively impacts their life—that being work, home, school or social—66% of respondents agreed either strongly or somewhat.

We're pleased that the committee is focusing the study on both the GTA and the national capital region. Today, I'm focusing on the GTA and city of Toronto issues.

While there are considerable issues related to gridlock within the city of Toronto's borders, it is critical to look at the causes and potential solutions from a regional perspective. The conventional wisdom is that traffic flows into the downtown core during morning rush hour and back to suburban areas in the evening, but that's

quickly becoming a misconception. CAA's head office is located in Thornhill, five kilometres north of Toronto, and any drive on the northbound Don Valley Parkway-404 combination on any morning will support that traffic flow is going in more than one direction during peak times. In fact, during Monday's session there was a presentation by Durham region that highlighted that residents from Durham are commuting both to Toronto and York region and vice versa as they receive a number of commuters each day themselves.

The GTA is embarking on its first subway stop in 2015 in York region, when the city of Vaughan will be connected to the Yonge-University-Spadina line, a move that will hopefully alleviate traffic flow from both the city of Vaughan and the neighbouring York University.

While much of the transit discussion has been focused on projects within the city of Toronto, any discussion of gridlock must include addressing and assessing options for expanded and integrated transit services into the further GTA and 905 areas. This includes but is not limited to exploring the potential for an expanded Yonge Street subway into Richmond Hill and exploring comparable options to the east and to the west. Doing so would not only tackle increases in gridlock into the downtown core but also enable, vice versa, Torontonians the ability to commute to work and visit the 905 by way of transit.

The description of the study referenced "investigating innovative and or alternative sustainable approaches to funding, transportation and transit solutions." Back in 2010, CAA unveiled an HST petition to help generate dedicated funds to transportation infrastructure. CAA understands that municipalities need access to a greater source of revenue beyond what they can collect in property tax. Municipalities do not have access to lucrative revenues such as sales or income taxes. Revenue generated from the HST charged on gasoline and diesel presents a predictable funding mechanism that could allow municipalities to make vital investments needed in transportation infrastructure. A lack of sustainable funding has created a situation where many municipalities do not have the financial capability to conduct the maintenance and rehabilitation needed to sustain vital transportation infrastructure. The introduction of the HST in 2010 on gasoline and diesel sales could bring in approximately \$1.8 billion in annual revenue for the government. Since the spring of 2010, CAA has engaged Ontario municipalities and members of the public through the distribution of a resolution and the collection of signatures on a petition. To date, 177 Ontario municipalities, representing six million Ontarians, have endorsed CAA's position, passing the resolution in their local councils. In addition, 10,000 members and non-members of CAA signed CAA's HST petition, which was introduced into the Legislature prior to last fall's election.

CAA has continued to advocate that a portion of the provincial revenue generated from the HST charged on gasoline and diesel sales should be directed by the government to a predictable funding mechanism that would

better enable municipalities to make critical investments to maintain and build transportation infrastructure. This revenue would provide a critical complement to the provincial gas tax funding being directed towards public transit.

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Intelligent transportation systems components are in our everyday travel, also known as ITS. The extent to which ITS we use each day is still relatively limited considering the technology and applications that are currently available and are quite costly. But by its very nature, ITS focuses on improvements to surface transportation, utilizes road capacity more effectively and improves the overall safety and efficiency of transportation-related activities.

Such features include adaptive traffic signals, smart work zones and ramp metering. One example of ITS that could potentially be implemented on a larger scale, where appropriate, is ramp metering. GTA drivers would most likely encounter this on the QEW, where access to the highway is controlled by a light signal to ensure good flow on the highway without backing up access ramps. Ramp metering can achieve a better balance of traffic on and off the highway to allow for faster flow than there would be with natural volume flow onto the highway.

Gridlock is a GTA problem and an integrated GTA solution is required. ITS, much like gridlock, crosses jurisdictions, cities and regions and requires GTA communities to work together and manage connections to ensure uninterrupted service to the end users. However, the potential benefit that ITS brings to a single municipality and the GTA at large are not always clearly understood and, thus, can be a barrier. CAA supports the research and development of ITS and its related applications that improve safety and efficiency of mobility for all road users.

This past April, CAA conducted a survey of its membership within the greater Toronto area. A total of 1,500 members participated in the survey on issues related to transportation, road infrastructure and transit. It provided interesting perspectives into the appetite of CAA members, who, on average, represent one in three households in the province. When asked about increased fees or taxes, 40% of respondents said they would be supportive of additional costs if the revenue generated was allocated exclusively to transportation improvements.

CAA also asked respondents about their opinions on a number of possible tax structures or user fees, including gas taxes, congestion charging, road tolls, high-occupancy toll lanes and parking levies. Our membership indicated that of all the various options available at this time that could be considered to raise additional revenue, high-occupancy toll rates is the most popular option. Our survey noted 60% of respondents said that high-occupancy toll lanes would be something that would be somewhat or very reasonable to them. Comparatively, 63% of survey participants said that congestion charging would either be not very or not at all reasonable.

As other reports have suggested, the concept of road tolls is a polarizing discussion and this is no exception

among CAA members. In a general question on the concept of road tolls, the members were evenly split: 49% in support, 49% in opposition.

Last December, CAA conducted another survey with Ontarians across the province on whether they would support user fees or tolls to help pay for constructing new transportation infrastructure, provided it was removed once it had been paid for. In that survey, 57% of Ontarians said that they would support such an initiative. That figure increases to 63% in the greater Toronto area.

CAA is supportive of exploring a discussion on high-occupancy toll lanes, as it provides motorists the opportunity to drive in a toll lane if they so desire. By doing so, it has the potential to ease congestion, generate new revenue and preserve existing infrastructure in its current form.

Collectively, we need to be innovative in finding current and long-term solutions to this growing challenge. High-occupancy toll lanes, or HOT lanes for short, are commonplace in several cities and, given the infrastructure is already in place, it could help alleviate both some of the gridlock on our roads and help generate additional revenue.

Other aspects include the future discussion on the Niagara-to-GTA corridor. As the corridor does grow over the next 25 to 30 years, it is an area that needs to be discussed and factored in as GTA gridlock discussions continue.

CAA has also partnered with many other key stakeholders over the past year to talk about critical issues with relation to road infrastructure and transit expansion. These coalition meetings have enabled professional, public, private and not-for-profit organizations that share a concern about the impact of gridlock and traffic congestion on our quality of life, economic prosperity and sustainability, to meet.

Traffic congestion has reached critical proportions. It is vital that we improve our transportation infrastructure to meet our escalating demands. In addition, the daily commute is stressful, as gridlock is hurting health, family well-being and productivity.

Lastly, improved mobility and decreased congestion benefits us all. Regardless of which avenue is selected ultimately, the method in which gridlock is tackled will require significant investment in public transit and road infrastructure. Selecting innovative, long-term solutions to our growing problem will help alleviate the challenges across the GTA.

On behalf of CAA, we thank the committee for having us to speak today, and we look forward to working with all three parties to find solutions to this emerging problem. Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Great. Thank you very much for your presentation.

The NDP caucus is up first, if they have any questions. Mr. Marchese.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you very much, Mr. Silverstein. Just as a reminder, the Toronto City Summit Alliance indicated that the Yonge subway extension to Richmond Hill, one of the Big Move's first 15 projects

originally planned to be funded by the provincial \$11.5-billion commitment, is currently underfunded, so it's a problem. I like the idea, but it's underfunded.

That same study shows that the high-occupancy toll lanes, or express lanes, on the GTHA freeways will raise anywhere from \$400 million to \$800 million a year. So even if your members like that, it doesn't raise as much money as governments require. How do we make up the difference, do you think? Do you have a personal view, or do you speak for your members?

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: We have conducted surveys with our membership. We've also worked in terms of our club and looking at the options before us. But \$400 million to \$800 million on an annual basis is definitely a good start. As I mentioned earlier, there was the HST opportunity to take the portion of the revenue from sales on gasoline and diesel and bring that forward as well. While I don't have the answers on the actual funding that's required to bring it forward, I think that any solution to even incrementally bring it to fruition—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Is good.

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: —is great.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But you do accept that we have gridlock—

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: Absolutely.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: —in Toronto and the GTA, and that we need to find other ways to get people moving, other than the car. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: We are definitely supportive of multi-modal transportation, that there are needs for various types of transportation, absolutely.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Liberal caucus: Mr. Dhillon.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you for your presentation. Our government has spent \$75 billion over the past eight years on infrastructure, and we'll be spending another \$13 billion this year and another \$35 billion over the next three years. Do you feel that, with these investments, there has been some improvement with congestion? Where do you think the bulk of the funds should go with respect to future investments?

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: In terms of if we feel that these investments are sufficient—I think that was the first question that you asked—I think that any investment is definitely a positive step, because moving the needle forward is definitely a progressive step.

In terms of where it should be allocated, I think that's a broader discussion, and definitely, as we look at the GTA, I think it has to be investigated on where the core areas are. As I've illustrated, in many cases, in many media reports it's very concentrated on the 416 and the challenges in there. Not taking away from any of the challenges there, but there is a growing suburban community in the peripheral 905 that needs to be explored as well. So I think that to find a healthy balance between the two is probably, if we're focusing on the GTA, the way to go.

The Chair (Mr. David Orazietti): Thank you. Conservative caucus: Mr. Smith, go ahead.

Mr. Todd Smith: Thank you, Elliott, for your presentation. I can tell you that the member from Brampton just asked you the question and that stats from the MTO 2008 GTA traffic study show that, despite the fact they're putting money into making infrastructure improvements in the city, travel times are actually slower in Peel region, where he's from. From 2008 dating back to 2006, they were faster in 2006 than they were in 2008.

There is a good pocket of tax money that's being collected out there. A lot of taxes are being collected there, but the problem is that the government is collecting these taxes and then not using them where they're intended to go. Look at the health premium, for instance. The largest income tax increase in the history of the province was supposed to go to health care, and it's going to anywhere but health care.

Unpredictability is one of the biggest problems in the GTA. You just never know how long your commute is going to be morning to morning. There are some major North American cities that have tow trucks on standby—you're in the towing business—on the side of the highway to quickly move accidents off the highway. Do you have any thoughts—I believe Chicago uses it—on that type of program? They have seen improvements there in gridlock.

Mr. Elliott Silverstein: In terms of the fact of having towers on the sides of the road, from our perspective that's actually quite a different discussion because there are some of the challenges about chasing on the roads in terms of trying to get to the scene of an accident or scene of a traffic slowdown, but the challenge as well is that the shoulders are also there for emergency vehicles.

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If there was even to be a discussion on that, that's something that I think, as I said, is requiring a broader discussion on many elements and that emergency services would be consulted as well, because those are their entryways of getting to emergency scenes. So if they're being clogged by people sitting there idling their cars or simply sitting there waiting, it could create problems. It could create some challenges.

I think that looking at structures to try to clean up the scenes much quicker is definitely a progressive step for everybody involved, but I think it's to find something that is common ground that actually works for the consumer as well as the industries themselves, including emergency services.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you very much. That's time. I appreciate you coming in today.

TRANSPORT ACTION ONTARIO
FEDERATION OF URBAN
NEIGHBOURHOODS

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): The next presentation: Transport Action Ontario.

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: Good evening. My name is Harry Eaglesham. I actually represent the Federation of

Urban Neighbourhoods of Ontario. We, together with Transport Action Canada, are jointly submitting this material.

Our two organizations, together with three other grassroots organizations, produced a forum called Moving Forward: A Public Forum on Transportation, which took place in Markham on May 12. I'm here today to share with you our findings from that forum.

Transport Action is a 30-year-old non-government organization that advocates for sustainable transportation. My federation is an Ontario umbrella group that's connected with over 500 ratepayer and resident associations across the province. Our other three partners were grassroots groups from Markham, North Toronto and Mississauga.

Our forum focused on the familiar congestion problem, the solutions and the need for new funding tools across the GTHA. We, like this committee, have come to realize that it's a major problem, that there is a solution and it's all about the money. So the purpose of our forum was to find out, what are the alternative ways of raising the money and, equally important, how would the public feel about the introduction of new revenue tools? I think both of these are critical to the study of this committee.

There had been numerous other conferences and workshops on these topics, but they were attended mostly by insiders, and so they did come to the conclusion that we didn't need bold action. But it seemed that the conclusions of the insiders—the experts and those who worked in the transportation field—were not sufficient to motivate politicians to actually take bold action.

We were determined to have a forum that would be different, that would be organized by grassroots organizations and targeted at grassroots organizations. We would focus on funding alternatives, and we would survey them. We used hand-held electronic devices to survey our attendees and find out how, in fact, they felt about the various topics on the subject of congestion.

We were pleased with our forum. We used the database of our various organizations to invite the attendees, and we did have a mix. We had 159 people attend, and 71% of them were in fact the public or members of grassroots associations. We were also pleased that 19 elected officials from various levels of government attended. We put together, really, an all-star cast of speakers and panellists that included Metrolinx, the University of Toronto, the Toronto Board of Trade, transportation and engineering from the town of Markham and the former city of Toronto chief planner. The full agenda is attached.

We had one session that was focused on, what's the problem and what's the solution? Metrolinx presented that.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Sorry, can you just come back a little bit from the microphone, so it's not popping.

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: Yes.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thanks.

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: The second session focused on the funding mechanisms, and there we invited a

University of Toronto professor to talk to us about his research, which was focused specifically on that topic.

Finally, the three speakers from the first two sessions, plus the three additional panellists, formed a panel, and we dialogued with the attendees.

All the material from the forum, by the way, is available on the website, urbanneighbourhoods.ca, the presentation material. We filmed the event, and so videos are available as well as the full survey results.

I'm going to focus specifically on the things that you don't already know. You already know about the problem, and you already know about the solution, the Big Move. I'm going to focus on the discussion of funding tools and how our attendees reacted to that. You'll see in my material quotations of some of the highlights of the presenters.

Professor Matti Siemiatycki is from the University of Toronto, and his research is specifically focused on various funding tools and case studies for the GTA. There is a copy of his full presentation in the material that I've submitted. His observation was, "We are making investments in transit, but what we need is the next generation of investments."

He also pointed out from his research that some tools are clearly insufficient; he put in the category of small and medium revenue tools, and this includes development charges, service efficiencies, vehicle registration fees, and P3s, public-private partnerships. Some people perceive that these are sufficient, and his research reveals that in fact they are not sufficient.

The large revenue generators, each of which is capable of generating \$1 billion annually towards transportation investment, include a regional parking surcharge on non-residential spaces, a regional sales tax, a gas tax, road tolls and congestion taxes. He discussed evaluation criteria. He thought it was important to consider how much money is generated, how easy each of these tools are to be implemented, what their impact is on policy and are they fair to everyone—the equity issue.

During the Q&A, of course, he was asked—he called it the moment of truth—what was his personal preference. After all of his research, he felt that a combination of a regional parking tax and regional sales tax was appropriate.

I mentioned that one of our panellists was Paul Bedford. I want to specifically go over some of his comments. As I think you probably know, he's a former Metrolinx board member and former city of Toronto chief planner.

He indicated that it was important to look not only at the capital side but also the operating and maintenance side. He felt it was important that everyone should pay something. He said, "Let's be honest. The true cost is probably \$75 to \$80 billion," if you consider all three elements of the equation.

He also spoke about the leadership—I think others have spoken about that today—for example, in LA, where they not only implemented a funding tool after a referendum but in fact are doing 30 years' worth of

investment in 10 years. He spoke of Atlanta, New York, Seattle and Vancouver as examples that have all implemented dedicated transportation tools.

Okay, I'm going to skip to our survey and the results. We asked a total of nine questions throughout the forum. I'll just share with you some of those results. First of all, 86% of attendees felt that major investments were justified to improve greater Toronto and Hamilton area transportation systems, 79% agreed that the Big Move adequately responded to problems of congestion in the GTHA, and 90%-plus supported additional public investment through the introduction of new revenue tools. When we asked them whether they preferred user fees or general taxes, it was a 61%-39% split in favour of user fees. On the question, "How much are you willing to pay?", 17% said nothing, 50% said they would pay up to \$2 a day, 21% said up to \$4 a day, 3% said up to \$6 a day, and 10% said greater than \$6 a day. The full survey results are included.

Our conclusions, the conclusions of the organizers, which were easy to arrive at, were really twofold: first of all, that the views of the grassroots people, when informed, after a couple of hours of presentations from those who are intimately involved with the subject, are not that different from the insiders, that clearly our attendees—the grassroots, the public—did want major investments and they do support the introduction of new revenue tools to fund these investments.

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Earlier this week, on Monday—

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): I'm sorry, sir. I need to get you to wrap up.

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: Okay. Metrolinx in fact is moving forward with this public consultation on new funding in the fall. We urge all provincial parties to embrace this process, and we urge the provincial government to act promptly upon receipt of Metrolinx's recommendations, which will be submitted no later than June 2013, hopefully sooner.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you very much. Questions: Liberal caucus first.

Mr. Vic Dhillon: No questions.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Okay. Conservative caucus, questions.

Mr. John O'Toole: I just want to thank you for your work. Obviously, your forums, out of frustration, try to find solutions. That's the purpose of this committee, and I thank you for the work you've submitted here today.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you. NDP caucus.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I was curious to hear the feedback from participants at your conference, that they were more interested in user fees than general tax revenue to pay for transit. Is that accurate? You said 60-40.

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: Yes, 61-39; that's correct.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I'm just curious. Do you think if we had lower transit user fees, lower fares, more people would ride public transit?

Mr. Harry Eaglesham: My understanding, from the information available to me, is that in fact the greater Toronto area is pretty competitive when you compare region-wide. Certainly there are supply-demand considerations. I'm from Markham. We have fare integration issues; if you're going a relatively short distance but you happen to cross Steeles Avenue, then you end up paying a double fare. That has come up frequently as an area of concern. The single fare price is probably very reasonable, but some of the double fare integration system-wide—the lack of integration—is an issue.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you. We appreciate you coming in today. That's time for your presentation.

SHARE THE ROAD

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Next presentation is from the Share the Road Cycling Coalition.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Hi, David. This nice young man is going to help me connect my laptop. Just bear with me; sorry for the delay.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): That's fine. If you want to start your presentation—or it's on the computer.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Sorry. It's like a bit of a dance here.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): No problem. You're welcome to start your presentation if you want to make initial comments or anything while that's being prepared.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Sure. Look at that. We're on.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): There you go. Just state your name for the purposes of our recording Hansard, and maybe you could turn the microphone in front of you just a bit towards you.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Absolutely. It's not often I am told I can't be heard. That's an absolute pleasure.

Thank you, Mr. Chair, for being here. It's nice to be here. It may strike some of you as odd that a cycling organization would be here for a conversation about congestion, but I don't think it's odd at all. I think it's where we belong, and so consequently we're happy to be here.

I want to talk a little bit about our organization for those of you who don't know. Because I am the near-to-last speaker, I thought I should inject a bit of humour just to make that everybody's paying attention, so my first slide is meant to be humorous. A bike rides on fat and saves you money, and the other one runs on money and makes you fat. If we're going to have a conversation about cars versus bikes or bikes and cars, that's kind of a fun slide.

Our mission is on our website. We're an organization that represents countless thousands of stakeholders across the province, of course. These are some of our partners. I'm happy to say that some of them are in the room today, CAA in particular. We have a close working relationship with them.

We have a strategic approach to cycling advocacy in the province of Ontario, and of course many of you know that. I think it's important to talk about the benefits of cycling in the context of congestion mitigation. Most of you know this, but it's worth noting that improved personal health, quality of life, livable communities, climate change and air pollution are just some of the benefits to more cycling.

Certainly one of the drivers in Ontario right now is cycling tourism. We know that cycling tourism is an economic development initiative. It creates jobs. In the United States, it's a \$49-billion economic item. Here in Ontario, there is great potential. In Quebec, they net \$134 million in tourism revenue. So there is certainly great potential for our province to create jobs.

Transportation solutions include reduced costs for everyone, of course, and less congestion. I'm going to talk in a moment about the opportunities of equality when it comes to cycling and transportation.

A recent study in the United States, in fact, released about two weeks ago, from the League of American Bicyclists talked about how Americans are saving money through cycling: at least \$4.6 billion a year by riding instead of driving. Cycling is cheap. The average annual cost in the United States to operate a bike is \$308 versus a car at over \$8,000. In the United States, cycling—as it is here in Canada and in Ontario—is growing at a phenomenal rate, bike commuters in particular, an interesting statistic when we think about the potential to reduce congestion.

An interesting comment, I thought, from the leading transportation official in the United States: “Making it easier and safer for people to walk or bicycle is a matter of fairness. Many Americans cannot afford to drive a car or are physically unable to drive.” Upwards of “10% of Americans not only don't own a car, but don't even have access to one. In our cities, that number is even higher.”

I don't have the figures for Canada on this item, but it intrigued me because when we think about the growing numbers of seniors and when we think about people who can't drive, I think that's an important imperative. Cycling and transit are answers to these equations, and certainly I think it's a powerful argument for making cycling more prevalent.

Some Canadian numbers: The cost of owning a car is a little bit less, and certainly owning a bike, by comparison, is dramatically less expensive. The social cost of driving is really high: stress, congestion, pollution, collisions. All of these are part of the conversation. Of course, when we think about investing in active transportation and cycling, we not only reduce air pollution, but we save the planet and save money.

What else do we know? A number of figures to share with you: 20% of greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector, so cycling is a major solution for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and cleaner air. When we think about congestion, most of you know the figures from the OECD report: that congestion costs the greater Toronto area over \$3 billion a year. Of course,

you all know that cycling is good for you and that we have an epidemic of obesity in our province, especially when it comes to children.

I want to talk a little bit about our partners to the south. In the United States, they've invested over \$5 billion in cycling since 1990. By comparison, I think that's a fairly dramatic contrast. There are a number of legislative constructs in the United States that provide for this investment, including multi-modal grants, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, of course, congestion measurement and research funding. On Safe Routes to School they passed a bill in 2005; that was \$612 million. That's a fairly significant number. The state of Texas alone has spent over \$250 million on getting children to school by active means, so walking or cycling.

In Ontario, we spend over \$800 million a year in busing—that's a fairly big number. When you think about the greater Toronto area, Metrolinx recently did a study, and the average commute for children is about two kilometres, ultimately and absolutely doable by bicycle; walkable certainly. When you think that cyclists travel an average of 18 kilometres an hour, two kilometres is not very far and certainly doable for children. We should be investing in active and safe routes to school programs and working with communities to give them the tools that they need to make them more bicycle-friendly.

Another important statistic: Over the last 15 years, Portland has become one of the most, if not the most, bicycle-friendly cities in the United States and has a growing reputation worldwide. They did it all for less than the cost of a mile of freeway—fairly impressive. Cycling adds \$1 billion to the economies of both Wisconsin and Minnesota, according to recent research studies. I mentioned the tourism figure—impressive indeed.

When you compare Ontario to Quebec and British Columbia, it's important to note that the province of Quebec has spent considerable monies and made considerable investments in cycling. It has left them with a legacy of a powerful route system that is 40% on-road. That means, especially if you live in Montreal, you become a cycling commuter by virtue of the fact that they've invested in infrastructure. If any of you have been to Montreal, you've seen the benefits of that investment, and it certainly nets them the tourism revenue that I've already mentioned. In British Columbia, they have Bike BC, which has grown and is now more than \$31 million a year. Actually, I learned yesterday that they've increased that number coincident with Velo-city, the global cycling conference, which is coming to Vancouver later this month.

When you think about the opportunities for Ontario, the Big Move has already been mentioned as part of the Metrolinx consultation. I think that's an important opportunity for us to all think about how we can fund cycling projects. There's already a number of them in place. I think Metrolinx can do more. I think we need to think carefully about connections to transit. Certainly, in Durham region, I know they are. I know also that in York

region they're building bus rapid transit using Metrolinx funding. We need to do more of this, certainly. If we focus on those utilitarian cycling trips, 40% of them are under five kilometres—again, ultimately doable by bike. So we should be thinking about these opportunities as we move forward, especially since they contribute to congestion mitigation.

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When you think about MTO and the amounts of monies that are invested in other areas, they are fairly considerable, and yet active transportation pales by comparison. Another important reason to think about investing in cycling is that it is completely in line with existing legislation. Ontario has climate change objectives. We have health promotion and healthy communities objectives. Recent announcements on obesity mitigation in our children is another important reason.

Our solution: If we could divert \$25 million of existing infrastructure investment to cycling, it would give our communities not only powerful tools but it is only 1% of the Ontario transportation budget. So the 1% solution is a fairly fair and small amount, we think. Also of importance—of critical importance—developing in Ontario, bicycle policy. For all the reasons I've mentioned, it's an important framework in an overarching vision for the province. It doesn't exist. We absolutely need one. We haven't had an update in this important and burgeoning area since 1992. I think we would all agree that 20 years is enough time for us to be thinking about modernizing a long-overdue policy change.

I'm going to close with a quote from the deputy mayor of Seville. I was in Brussels for the Velo-city conference. At the European Parliament, they signed the Charter of Brussels, which now applies to the European Union, which talked about goals for increasing cycling, primarily because of congestion mitigation, interestingly enough.

"Increasing the number of cyclists, making cycling a preferred mode of transport is consistent with cities across the globe that are modern, developed and advanced...."

"In broader terms, cycling must be on the political agenda.

"We must be ambitious—there is no turning back."

Better words were never spoken. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Coteau): Thank you very much. We'll start with the PC caucus.

Mr. John O'Toole: Eleanor, thank you very much for the hard work that you've done. I seem to be meeting you every time I turn around in the last while. I do admire the work that you're doing. You're right, in your concluding remark: Let's get it on the agenda. You are pushing a bit on the tourism component of cycling, and I commend you for that.

This thing is dealing with congestion. When I went down to the forum that I participated in with Share the Road, I took a taxi down—I should say that—because I was a bit late. It was quite a warm day, as you recall. The

other member of the panel here was there—my point being that I asked the taxi driver what he thought of cycling in Toronto. He said it's very dangerous. Now, that's not your fault. I know your argument is to this. When we talk about congestion, if you give up any more road space—the light rail transit solution is going to be an issue. Even when I look in a practical sense in Durham—and I do watch very carefully. They do have bike racks on the fronts of the GO buses. For the GO bus that gets me from where I live to the actual GO train, the bus driver has to get out often and move the cycle on to the front, and there's only room for two. So, the duty to accommodate comes into this. I just put that out there. There are a lot of challenges. In Toronto, in the city, I see a lot more cycling. I come across Wellesley if I happen to drive, and it's very popular.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It is.

Mr. John O'Toole: It's 10 times what it was a year or two ago. So you're doing good work in that respect, raising awareness. How is it going to apply in the broader sense, for the province, outside of the city of Toronto? I'll leave it at that if you want to respond.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thanks, John. There was a lot in there. It was helpful, but I'm going to try to reach back. It's not just the city of Toronto, in fact. It's interesting: There's a lot of work that needs to be done in the city of Toronto, I will agree with you, to make cycling safer and to get people who aren't riding now cycling. Toronto has an enviable cycling culture, there's no question. If you see the number of cyclists out there now—I ride as much as I can. When I come to the city, I get on a Bixi bike and away I go. It saves me money, it's less polluting and it's faster. I'm going to say, tongue-in-cheek, that if you rode your Bixi bike that day, you might have made it before the other member who's here who joined you on the panel, and you would have gotten some exercise at the same time.

When I look at other cities around the world, John, all I have to do is look at Washington, Chicago and New York City and follow their lead. These solutions are absolutely and eminently possible. New York City is becoming the envy of the United States in terms of the investments that they're making in cycling. The old saying applies here: "If they can do it in New York, if they can do it there, we can do it anywhere." They've had significant consultation, neighbourhood by neighbourhood. The commissioner of transportation is committed. She has the mayor's full support.

I think it's a question of making it a priority, John. You know what happens when you politically make things a priority, when you dedicate funding to them. The two main reasons that they did this in New York were for congestion and safety.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Coteau): I'm going to move on to the NDP caucus.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Thank you. Two quick points, Eleanor—good to see you—or three, actually: I ride my bike in the city in the summer and I never, ever feel unsafe. I don't know why—some people do, but I don't, and I don't have a helmet, by the way.

Two: The province has been talking about bicycle infrastructure—a report that they've been preparing for two years. It was supposed to have been released last year. This year, they're saying, "Soon," two years later. Do you know something that we don't?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: I don't think so. What Minister Chiarelli has told me, and I think he said it publicly, is that he is committed to the bicycle policy. I've tried to urge him to move faster, primarily for two reasons, if I may, Rosario.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: No, no, because we won't have time—

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: It needs to happen—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: But you're waiting as well, like we are.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes, I'm waiting too.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: And you're pushing.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: And the bureaucrats in the department are waiting, because they need some ministerial guidance about what to do.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: God bless. So the bureaucrats are waiting too.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes, they are.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Okay. Bill 99: Are you familiar with it? Make June bicycle month—

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes, forgive me. I knew that was Bill 99. Thank you.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Davenport.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Yes.

Mr. Rosario Marchese: Do you like it?

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Love it—

Mr. Rosario Marchese: We'll keep pushing.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: —and so do Ontarians.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Coteau): Okay, let's move on. Liberal caucus?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much for your presentation.

Ms. Eleanor McMahon: Thank you.

The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Coteau): Thank you very much.

TTCRIDERS

The Acting Chair (Mr. Michael Coteau): Next we have a presentation from TTCriders. Welcome. You have 10 minutes for your presentation, and five minutes for questions after. Please state your name for the record, and please begin.

Ms. Wendy Baskerville: My name is Wendy Baskerville. I represent the TTCriders group. This is Joell Vanderwagen, who is also a member of TTCriders and has probably got the answers to the questions you may or may not ask after I give you this.

TTCriders is a public transit advocacy group that gives transit riders a voice. We're transit users who want more and better public transit in Toronto and its surrounding regions. We are another Toronto-centred group—I will point that out—but the things we need for Toronto I think we need for every city in the province.

We're dedicated to raising awareness of the necessity of establishing a comprehensive rapid transit network in the GTA, including buses, LRTs and subways where appropriate, our buzzwords being, "Above ground where we can, below ground only when we have to."

Ladies and gentlemen, we don't need more study about the effects of congestion. Any further study should be concentrated on solutions in the context of the province's existing smart growth policies. That there is growing gridlock in the GTA is simply a fact. Confirmation can come from any one of the million people who drive through this city every day, myself included.

The only solution to congestion is a complete transportation system that includes public transit, pedestrians, bicycles as well as motorized vehicles. The foundation for such a complete system is a land development pattern that clusters growth in mixed nodes and corridors, designed at ground level to provide good pedestrian access to all citizens to get to both local destinations and anywhere else in the city they might like to go.

Older areas of our communities, built before the 1950s, are already designed for transit and pedestrians. When I was young, we lived in Don Mills. I could take the Lawrence 54 bus to Eglinton station from Underhill and Lawrence, and I could get there in 25 minutes. Now it takes an hour, if you're lucky. In the 1980s, I commuted from Warden and Finch to school at Spadina and College. Door to door, it was about an hour and five minutes. If you can get there in two hours now, you're doing very well.

1800

Newer areas built since the 1950s are characterized by a scattered, low-density development pattern built for access by automobiles and trucks. These are the areas that generate the most traffic and have the greatest congestion problems. So the main issue is providing good transit service and better pedestrian access to that service from the mazes we have allowed to grow and multiply in these communities. To create a complete transportation system for these areas will require deliberate, coordinated efforts, but we don't see an alternative. There simply isn't an alternative.

A transportation system based mainly on cars and trucks will always be congested. Witness the Dallas-Fort Worth area, which has a huge and comprehensive network of expressways, as well as arterial roads that function exactly like expressways. These are now frozen in gridlock most of the time. I speak from experience. I've done business in Dallas; it's hell to drive there.

Adding more road space for cars will never solve the problem, because it is mathematically impossible. If we measure the space occupied by a car and multiply it by the number of drivers by the number of trips, there will never be enough space in a car-dependent system. For comparison, the Yonge Street subway carries over 700,000 riders a day, the equivalent of seven Don Valley Parkways, and considerably faster.

We acknowledge the many people who need to drive: tradespeople carrying their tools; delivery people;

couriers servicing businesses of all varieties, large and small; utility service providers as well as emergency vehicles; and various other business people who must travel to multiple destinations. These necessary trips are paralyzed by this congestion. The only way to free up the roads for these people is to get everyone else onto alternate forms of travel, with public transit being the obvious priority for a city spread so far and wide.

To do that, however, requires a comprehensive transit network that serves multiple origins and destinations. Public transit should function as a pyramid of complete, integrated systems at local, crosstown and regional levels, and that is accessible to pedestrians at both ends of a trip. Thus, we must always think in terms of networks rather than separate projects.

On yet another front, if we were to implement new charges on drivers, we would need to have a positive alternative in place. Both London and Paris spent considerable time and money improving their already far-reaching systems before placing a premium on the right to drive a vehicle into the city core. It costs 30 Euros to drive in the city core in Paris. I know because I've paid it. Drivers need to feel comfortable with either leaving their car at home or paying for congestion-free travel.

However, congestion will only diminish when there is a large-scale shift to transit. This large-scale shift can only happen when a full transit network has been established that provides for many different destinations and kinds of trips. The only practical way to set up a full network quickly is to use the most available and economical means. Thus, we need to stop thinking of rapid transit in terms of huge construction projects. We must begin looking at interlinking smaller projects as well as making use of existing rail lines and road space.

For example, the Stouffville GO Transit line could be adapted to provide all-day, two-way service for eastern Toronto and the city of Markham, connecting people to both downtowns, as well as other destinations in between, with the use of surface feeder routes. The Georgetown corridor could do the same for the western part of Toronto and the airport district.

If the new air-rail link were electrified from the beginning, it could quickly stop and start at a series of stations along the way to the airport. By giving many more people access to that service, there will be ample revenue to charge lower fares, more in keeping with the current GO service. As simply an express service from downtown, it will price itself out of the market and fail to fulfill its vast potential as a link in a regional transit network. We will find ourselves right back here in five or 10 years discussing what to do about it, and the cost by then can only be horrendous. I offer you the example of the subway to nowhere: the Sheppard line.

The northern part of the GTA desperately needs an east-west rapid transit line. Highway 7, we think, is the obvious solution. The multi-billion dollars spent tunnelling an underground subway line to the Vaughan town centre could have been better spent putting a light rail service straight across Highway 7 from one end to the other. We cannot and would not want to stop that subway

line now, but we suggest looking at the possibility of using LRT on Highway 7 as a priority.

To implement low-cost alternatives will require that, in some places, road space be used as dedicated lanes, as it will be on Sheppard, for buses or light rail. If designed as part of a full network, these new services will attract many riders and thereby free up road space. Ultimately, they do not take away road space; they create it. That is the key to reducing congestion.

Where new infrastructure is required, we need to be aware that big capital expenditures attract special interests like a swarm of flies. There is new technology that wants to be promoted, parcels of land that want to be developed, construction companies that need work, and special events that need a showcase. While all of these may be legitimate objectives at certain times and places, they tend to distort the planning process. Thus, scarce resources are used to create projects instead of networks. This has the effect of displacing the real purpose of transit: to carry as many riders as effectively as possible. We do not have the luxury to be doing business this way anymore.

It is this point which leads me to mention the proposed turnover of TTC projects to Metrolinx. Why do we need two transit agencies and two levels of government involved in the detailed implementation of a local project? Why invade this arena of municipal jurisdiction and responsibility? Can we even imagine how much valuable staff time will be consumed as provincial and city officials have to negotiate the resolution of practical problems on a block-by-block basis, especially on a project of such extraordinary complexity as the underground portion of the Eglinton line?

These are steps the TTC has already worked through. They are already working on and preparing for these projects to be implemented. What will be the cost in time and money to duplicate what has already been done? Is this a forerunner to yet another St. Clair disaster? The city of Toronto learned some very valuable lessons from that admitted debacle. The TTC will not make those mistakes again. Can Metrolinx even understand what happened there, without more time wasted?

In the face of declining oil reserves and increasing gas prices—

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Excuse me. Sorry, I need you to wind it up. That's your time.

Ms. Wendy Baskerville: Sure, I'm just about done.

Let me jump to here: I took part in multiple ride-alongs on various bus and subway routes out in Scarborough and North York before the epic March transit vote of Toronto city council. I heard the same thing over and over and over from your constituents: "Please get me to work faster."

Currently, a rider coming in from Sheppard and Morningside with a job in the downtown core can count on 1.5 hours each way, if he's lucky. Generally, it's a two-hour ride.

We are robbing a citizen of four hours out of his day—four hours. We have to find a way to give that time back to our citizens.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you for your presentation. We appreciate that. The NDP caucus is up first. Mr. Schein, go ahead.

Mr. Jonah Schein: Thank you for the presentation and for the work that TTCriders have done.

It's my recollection—was TTCriders actually formed after the broken promise of \$4 billion in transit investment from the province a few years ago? Was that the origins of the group?

Ms. Wendy Baskerville: I can't speak to that. I'm not sure how long ago it was formed. I know that it has become extremely active since we've begun to have the transit issues that we have in Toronto.

Mr. Jonah Schein: I agree with almost everything that you said here. For folks who don't know, in Toronto—you mentioned the rail line to the airport. If we put basically a subway on that line, that would not take up any road space, would it?

Ms. Joell Vanderwagen: The air-rail link, the tracks, right now are being built parallel to the existing Georgetown line, so there's no conflict. In other words, it's already-existing open space, so there's no problem with the surface route.

The thing about it is, because there's that surface route that exists, there's a unique opportunity for an inexpensive, major link in the regional transit surface network. It's a terrible shame to pass up that opportunity by putting in diesel. You see, the diesel engines take a long time to start and stop. If you put in electricity from the beginning, then you can have multiple stops—not like the Yonge subway, but sufficient stops that people who work at the airport can use it, and people throughout Toronto can have access to the service. Anyway, it would become a good link.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): Thank you for your response. Liberal caucus?

Mr. Vic Dhillon: Thank you very much for your presentation.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): The Conservative caucus: Mr. O'Toole.

Mr. John O'Toole: I do appreciate the time, Wendy and Joell. Obviously you're very passionate and committed, and I don't want to be a contrarian, but I do support transit. Where there's density, it certainly is the solution, and you've described it in the example of the Don Valley and the Yonge subway system. We've had some interesting presentations, and where there's density, transit certainly works. I'd be agreeable to that. Most of us here on this side are from east of Toronto, and we believe in handy transit, stuff like that—efficiency.

But I want to disagree with you, and I want this on the record. This is an article in the Sun recently: "TTC, Metrolinx: Give Us Transit, Not Excuses." I'm just going to, for the record here—it's really about Transit City:

"Like all giant transit projects, it's going to cost more and will take longer to build than we've been told and it's going to cause more traffic congestion....

"Torontonians know from bitter experience this is what happens with every major transit project they're promised.

“In fairness, it wouldn’t have been any different” with Ford’s solution with transit.

“The only way Transit City has a hope of success is if Metrolinx and the TTC genuinely work together.”

It’s a governance model. When they first formed Metrolinx, the governance model was a complete failure. I was a transit critic at the time, and a transportation critic. They designed it so that it was all run by the minister directly. They gave five seats to Toronto, and they gave the other regions between York and Durham and that five seats, and the chair and the vice-chair were provincial appointees. They ran the whole thing. They couldn’t solve one problem. They couldn’t get the transit pass, like the Presto card—none of that. It was called the Oyster card, what they first looked at. They couldn’t make a single decision. Now, the TTC has what I would

consider a culture issue internally; it doesn’t function properly. No disrespect—it doesn’t function properly. It needs to be blown up.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): That’s time.

Mr. John O’Toole: I would give it all to Metrolinx. There’s such scarce money; let’s fix the problem in Toronto, give Metrolinx the whole ballgame. Yes, they’ll use the same people as the TTC; they’ll all transfer over—they’re transportation experts. I don’t disagree with that. There’s too much political interference, wards and all that kind of stuff. It’s a mess.

The Chair (Mr. David Oraziotti): That’s time. Thank you very much for your presentation. Thanks for coming in today.

The committee is adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1813.

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