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Tuesday 28 October 2014

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des débats
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Mardi 28 octobre 2014

**Standing Committee on
Estimates**

Ministry of Transportation

**Comité permanent des
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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 28 October 2014

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The committee met at 0900 in room 151.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Good morning, members. We're here to resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation. There are a total of four hours and 58 minutes remaining. Before we resume consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation, if there are any inquiries from the previous meeting that the ministry or the minister has responses to, perhaps the information can be distributed by the Clerk at the beginning, in order to assist the members with any further questions.

Are there any items, Minister?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes.

Ms. Carol Layton: I could hand out something but I could possibly just give a little bit of context.

One of the questions that came, which was from Mr. Hillier, related to the electric vehicles, and just the vehicle fleet overall. I explained last week that, over the past three years, we've been consolidating all of the government's fleet under one account, and that's at the Ministry of Transportation as a cost centre, in a sense. That's been accumulating and that's why, if you look in the printed estimates briefing book, you would see that increase.

He wanted to have an appreciation of the types of vehicles. There is a list here, and when we think through acquisition of vehicles we're guided by, first, of course, vehicles manufactured in North America, and secondly, if we do look further beyond, it's to make sure that we're also bringing into the fleet vehicles that are energy-efficient, as in electric vehicles and hybrid vehicles. There's a document here that shows the vehicles and their specifications, so we can certainly make sure we table that one.

Another question that was asked related to the Amherst Island ferry. That's actually not a briefing note, but I just have a quick reference here that I can take you through. We have about nine different ferry services in the province of Ontario. We either own and operate them, or we own and fund them, or others own them and we run them—it's quite an interesting mix of them. They are important ferry services, everything from the ferry services that support Pelee Island to the ones in eastern Ontario, like the Wolfe Island and the Glenorra.

The question that was asked last week related to the Amherst Island ferry, and that is one where there is dock work—we're actually modifying the docks, which right now supports the side loading of the ferries, to allow the end loading of the ferries. In the 2014-15 fiscal year—the current fiscal year, of which we're halfway through—there's about \$2.1 million in our allocation for that construction to be happening this year through 2015 and into 2016. There also will be some ferry vessel improvements; they actually were made in 2013. That's just a little handwritten note that I have on that.

I believe another question related to the alternative financing and procurement. That may come up a little bit more throughout the day. This related to value-for-money on the Eglinton Crosstown. That's the 20-kilometre crosstown that is going to basically travel from Keele right over to Kennedy. About half of it—10 kilometres of it—is tunnelled, and that tunnelling is well under way.

The question that was asked was, was value-for-money done for that? Value-for-money, through the Infrastructure Ontario alternative finance and procurement process, is done at three different stages. The initial value-for-money is done, and that's when the Ministry of Transportation goes with our colleagues from Infrastructure Ontario and Metrolinx into our Treasury Board for approval. But the value-for-money that is ultimately released is around financial close, and that is the value-for-money that is posted on Infrastructure Ontario's website. If you went to that website now, you would see other value-for-money reports. They're about 20-page reports, and they're pretty full in the content that they provide.

So the value-for-money that would have been done already for Eglinton, to support that substantial transit initiative, was done internally to support approvals at Treasury Board.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. When the committee adjourned last week, the government had completed its 20-minute rotation, so I will turn the floor over to the official opposition for the next 20 minutes. Mr. Harris.

Mr. Michael Harris: Good morning, Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Good morning.

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, I want to start out today asking questions, and hopefully we'll get some clear answers on your aggressive plans for GO Transit.

My first question is, when can commuters expect two-way, all-day GO service to actually commence along the Kitchener line?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much for the question. This is in keeping with some of the discussion we had last week when I was here at committee. What I said, both to questions from the official opposition and also from the representative here from the third party, was that the Ministry of Transportation is currently working very closely with the team at Metrolinx on what the implementation and the phasing plan will look like.

You know our commitment is that, over the next 10 years, we will be able to deliver on the commitment of two-way, all-day regional express rail across all of the corridors that we have in our network. That work is ongoing. I did mention a number of times last week that we are doing that work in an evidence-based way. We're doing it with respect to a lot of business case analysis. That work is ongoing. I'm not really in a position to talk specifically about what that schedule will look like because the work isn't completed around that technical analysis.

We do know, for example, in the Kitchener-Waterloo community, there will be two additional trains in the morning and in the afternoon in 2016, based on the work that has already taken place.

We're going to continue to do the work, between the ministry and Metrolinx, and hopefully—I'm an optimistic person, as I said last week—in the next few months we'll be able to talk more specifically about what the phasing and the implementation schedule will look like.

Mr. Michael Harris: Back in March, the Premier came to Kitchener-Waterloo, in front of the chamber of commerce, and committed to providing two-way, all-day GO train service. In fact, your predecessor, Minister Murray, said during the election that it could be done within five years. Would you concur with his remarks that, in fact, two-way, all-day GO could be delivered within five years?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: One of the things that I try my best to do at every opportunity, when I have the chance to speak about the overall plan we have for the entire system, is to make sure that everyone understands—it doesn't matter which line or which part of the region we're speaking about—that we are committed to the goal and to the objective. We are going to get the work done.

I also try to explain as best I can—because over the last four months, since becoming Minister of Transportation, I've learned more and more how enormous the task is. There's a significant amount of preparatory work; there's a significant amount of hands-on, logistical infrastructure capacity-building in order to deliver on this. That's why we put the plan in place that will deliver this over the next decade.

It may very well be that on a particular line—including, potentially, the Kitchener line—service will be there within that five-year time frame you've referenced in your question.

Again, the work is ongoing in terms of—

Mr. Michael Harris: What needs to happen—for instance, on the Kitchener line—to get things prepared for two-way, all-day GO?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In a second, the deputy or some of the other team here can perhaps provide a little bit more information around the specifics. But the thing to keep in mind about what we're looking at with respect to all of the lines is that, again, the commitment is two-way, all-day GO, at up to 15-minute intervals, electrified. I'm sure you and others on this committee and people in your community would recognize the enormity of that task.

When I think of the Barrie line that runs through my own community—a line that's 100% owned by Metrolinx, from Union all the way up to Barrie—it's a single track, for example, right now. I'm talking about the Barrie line. It's a single track. To deliver two-way, all-day GO in a corridor where there's essentially one track would require—and I don't say this as any kind of expert; I say this just as a layperson—a second track, of course. You can't run trains both ways with one track, right?

0910

Mr. Michael Harris: Let's hope not.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes. That's just one example of the kind of work that needs to take place when you're building out the electrification, when you literally have to produce and supply the power to a line, when you have to run the catenaries, as they're called—the overhead wires, essentially. You have grade separations. You have a number of bridges. You have a number of places where trains intersect with other forms of transportation—roads, highways etc.—that are currently built for a certain capacity.

We have a relationship, obviously, with CN and CP along a number of our corridors. We've had some very good news recently, of course. I'm pretty sure you're aware of the fact that not that many weeks ago I was really happy to announce the purchase of an additional 53-kilometre section from CN, which will help us in our plan, in our commitment to deliver on the two-way, all-day service.

That's a very, very high-level sketch of some of the work that needs to take place. If you want more detail, we can go into it.

Mr. Michael Harris: Perhaps I'll ask about that later. I think the big question, when I speak to folks in my riding or even across Ontario, is what you would define, actually, as two-way, all-day GO. What would you tell people if asked, "What is two-way, all-day GO?" What does that mean? Lay it out. What does that mean? Define two-way, all-day GO.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Perhaps you can elaborate exactly on the question, because the title itself—two-way, all-day GO—would be somewhat self-explanatory.

Mr. Michael Harris: Define how many trains would be all-day, two-way GO.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: How many trains? So again—

Mr. Michael Harris: Going east and coming west, in a day. What would that look like?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think it's probably helpful for me to talk a little bit, as I answer this question—and perhaps the deputy or others could jump in a little bit after I've said this—think of the Lakeshore line, which is GO's busiest corridor, Lakeshore West and East. Not that many months or years ago, we had a more traditional service running along Lakeshore.

What do we have today? We have trains that run at 30-minute intervals along Lakeshore West and Lakeshore East. We will continue to see, over the course of the next year and in each successive year, with the work that's being undertaken, once that business case analysis is done, once that evidence has been brought to the table, the stuff that I mentioned a second ago that MTO and Metrolinx are working hard on: We will see additional service come online. We will see the two trains in the morning and the two trains in the afternoon that I talked about a second ago in Kitchener. I believe the goal, certainly from my perspective, is that communities will see increased service over a time period until we get to the point at which we're able to deliver fully because we will have completed all of the infrastructure, the technical, literal, physical work that's required to deliver on this. That work is ongoing.

I'm not sure if the deputy wants to jump in and talk a little bit more about some of the specifics.

Ms. Carol Layton: Sure, I'd love to jump in. I go back to what's actually posted on the Metrolinx website from the September board meeting. It's a very rich document. I really would recommend that you take a look at it.

If I could just give you an illustration: The minister spoke about all the road rail separations, the grade rail, the catenary system, the power station and substations—all that has to be considered. Right now, we do have two-way, all-day service on the Lakeshore line—Lakeshore West, Lakeshore East—and that's 30-minute service. What has to now be considered, all on a rigorous business case rationale, is where along that line do you provide all-stop service versus non-stop; so where express is and where it's not.

This is actually up on the website, and they've unpacked it for all seven lines. Just to give you an example, for the Lakeshore West corridor, there is currently a total ridership of 60,000 per weekday. This is based on a 30-minute service and 90 total trips per weekday. That's 177 kilometres of track.

But what they've identified, again, in a public document, is possible rail-to-rail grade separation at Hamilton junction and one new track required along much of the corridor. Right now, Metrolinx does own 80% of its track, but that other 20% is in pretty critical areas.

A good example is actually the Kitchener one. With the 53 kilometres that was bought between Georgetown and Kitchener, there still is a good segment right in the middle, between Bramalea and Georgetown, owned by CN. Often, if you're listening to the radio, you're commuting in and you hear about a delay on the Kitchener line, it's usually because they're waiting for a freight

train for that schedule. That's important as you think about that assurance of reliable express service, and reliable service generally, not just two-way, all-day, because we also have a fare guarantee. So that's a great example where track ownership has to be considered or certainly just really, really good agreements. I guess the point—

Mr. Michael Harris: So just to get clarity, then, on the Kitchener line, for instance, two-way, all-day GO: You're talking about 15 minutes, and that would be defined as a train leaving every 15 minutes eastbound and then a train leaving westbound every 15 minutes from Union?

Ms. Carol Layton: The extent of how this will all be determined, again—and that's a very long line. I take it a lot. It's a two-and-a-half-hour trip right now to Kitchener from Union Station. Again, the phasing of it and what has 15-minute service—just like you've described, meaning trains leaving every 15 minutes from any of the stations. So what set of the lines has that? What stretch of the lines has that as we phase it? Which ones would take a little bit longer because of the issues around things like corridor ownership and extensive infrastructure that has to be required? You can't underestimate a train that has to stop at an intersection. You have to think about all of that.

So, again, that's a pretty good illustration of the scope and the scale of the work that's exactly being worked through right now so that there can be better clarity of exactly what can be expected and when. That will be determined in the coming months, really, as we head through different meetings of the board and, certainly, briefings of the minister.

Mr. Michael Harris: That promise was made by the Premier in March, coming to Kitchener-Waterloo, so we would hope that there has been some information provided to her that would help make her decision to commit to two-way, all-day GO on the Kitchener line within the next 10 years.

You purchased the property that you've just mentioned. What else actually has to happen? You're saying that another track will need to be built entirely. You just spoke to the disruption along the line by CN. So another line will need to be built if you're going to provide trains coming from Toronto to Kitchener in the morning. Is that correct?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In some cases there are, on the Kitchener corridor specifically—and this is the work that is ongoing between the ministry and Metrolinx around determining exactly how much more track needs to be built in every single case. It's a fairly complex process, but there is a lot of other work that needs to happen.

I don't think that there's any way for an individual to sort of sugar-coat this, and I've said this as many times as I can: There is a considerable amount of work, but we have a 10-year horizon. At least in my four months or so since becoming the minister we've seen progress almost monthly around putting some of those really important fundamental pieces into play to make sure that we can

deliver on this, but there is more work that needs to be done. It literally does not matter about which line we're talking about. There is a significant amount of work that needs to take place.

Having said that, there is the capacity and there is the expertise both at the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx, and in both of those organizations, let's call them, or entities, there is work that is taking place right now to make sure that the plan is there based on the technical analysis, based on the business case, the research, all that other stuff that I've talked about, so that we have an implementation plan that makes sense. Over those next few months when we're able or we're in a position to say exactly what the plan will look like, we can literally tell communities, including Kitchener, "This is what we anticipate the future will look like as we roll out more service."

Mr. Michael Harris: Now you talked about all the things you need to do—a business plan etc. You're saying none of that's done as of yet.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No, I'm saying it's ongoing. It's well under way and it is ongoing.

Mr. Michael Harris: Because the Premier did come to town and commit to this. I'm just wondering what information she would have had from the ministry or Metrolinx to make that commitment.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sorry. Was there a question?

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, there is. You talk about a business plan forthcoming to do this, but at the same time, the Premier was in Kitchener-Waterloo back in March to announce that this would happen. I'm just wondering what information she would have had from the ministry or Metrolinx in order to make that commitment to the people of Kitchener-Waterloo.

0920

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think there are a couple of things. This kind of came up in some of the questioning last week from members of both of the opposition parties. I think we have to remember—this is really important—that part of the business we're in, regardless of what party we represent, when we go out to respective communities and we talk about a plan—I think of my own experience over the last two years as the MPP for Vaughan. When I got elected in 2012, there was no provincial commitment, with a firm timeline, to build the Highway 427 extension. Because of, for example, in my community, our government's commitment to infrastructure investments and transportation investments, and because, I'd like to believe, I was successful in advocating as an MPP for our community, I was able to say to people when I ran in 2012 in Vaughan, "I believe in the importance of the 427 extension. I'm going to fight as hard as I can for it because I know it makes sense."

Similarly, you would understand, as a veteran member of this Legislature, that there are a lot of commitments that governments make, that parties make, that individual MPPs make that are aspirational in nature, because there's a strong sense that we need to deliver on these things. When you factor in what the commute must be

like for people living in your community, or people who live in Cambridge—like my parliamentary assistant, my good friend the new member from Cambridge—and others, we know that more work needs to be done.

Mr. Michael Harris: I think people in Kitchener-Waterloo, when you say this is an aspirational commitment—you've got a track record of not delivering out there—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Obviously, we're going to disagree on that point.

You're asking the question: Was all of the work, all of the evidence, and every single thing undertaken to the finest detail, to the most granular level, before the Premier and others may have gone out in the past and said, "If I continue to serve as Minister of Transportation"—my predecessor, I'm speaking of, or local MPPs from the area, including the former member from Kitchener Centre, the current member from Kitchener Centre—"we believe, we're hearing from the community, we have an ambition to deliver on significant investments." That's the information that helped form the basis for our 10-year plan, the \$29 billion that we talked about repeatedly—the \$29-billion plan that the people of Ontario, including many people in Kitchener-Waterloo, endorsed in a significant way on June 12.

It now falls to me, in my responsibility, working with your community and other communities and my colleagues in government, to actually deliver on these commitments. That's the work that we're focused on going forward.

When I'm able to stand and make an announcement that Metrolinx has purchased 53 kilometres of additional track on the Kitchener line, that's a significant milestone that will help us deliver on this commitment.

The genesis of your line of questioning today was, "When can people in my community expect to see this service?" My answer back to you, which is completely consistent with what I said last week, is, that's the work that we're doing right now—not the "if," but the plan around the "when," so that we can say to people in Kitchener-Waterloo and elsewhere, based on all of the work that needs to take place, based on all of the other factors that are in front of us, and based on the evidence, "We expect to deliver increases in service in the following way, and at this point you can expect to see what this will look like." That's the work that's ongoing right now.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Harris, you have two minutes.

Mr. Michael Harris: In 2007, they committed to four trains in, four trains back. In 2010, it was the then transportation minister, who is now Premier, who actually cut that back to two in, two out. So there's a bit of a trend in the fact that the government, the Liberal Party, comes out to Kitchener-Waterloo and makes these promises or commitments and then they don't follow through on it. That's why, repeatedly, your members are asked when they can expect this.

You would think there would be a plan that you're executing. If you're randomly buying property—you

should know what you have to do to get this done. There should be a plan already in place. You've been in government now for 11 years, and you're vague on the definition of two-way, all-day GO. I know people in the region of Waterloo expect two-way, all-day GO to commence a lot sooner than 10 years; in fact, they have Minister Murray on record as saying it should take five.

I was simply trying to get clarity on what is next, what has to be done, and if they're on time, in terms of acquiring properties, building a second track, electrifying, all these things. I'm just trying to get some clarity out of you to explain to folks what the plan is that you're executing. If you're buying land, there must be some sort of plan you're following—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: There is. I sincerely respect your—

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Minister, you only have 30 seconds.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks, Chair.

I sincerely respect the fact that you're doing your best to represent your community here on this committee. I get it. I'd be doing the same thing if I was in your shoes. But, again, your original question here today, which kind of produced a series of subsequent questions, is, "When can people in my community expect to see what you've committed to?" My answer remains the same at the end of this 20-minute session, and it will be repeatedly the same. The commitment is that we're going to do this across the entire network over 10 years. It may very well be in the fifth year; it may be in the seventh year; it may be in the fourth year. Because the work hasn't been completed around the technical analysis and the business case research, I'm not in a position today to give you the exact answer. What I can tell you is that our commitment is to produce or provide two additional trains in the morning and two additional trains in the afternoon by 2016.

We are working in an ongoing, deliberate fashion to be able to deliver on all of these commitments, and I'm extremely confident, knowing the team at MTO and Metrolinx and our government, that we'll get the job done.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you.

Third party: Mr. Cimino, you have 20 minutes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Chair, and good morning, Minister and staff and colleagues.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Good morning.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Minister, I don't think it will be any surprise to you that I'm going to start my first lines of questioning in terms of winter road maintenance, being a representative from northern Ontario, but it definitely affects the entire province.

My first question is in terms of why the government has not—and perhaps they have plans to—improved service levels to remote northern communities, especially when those roads are the only way in and out of a community. I think in particular of Highways 105 and 502, 105 being the only real route in and out of Ear Falls and Red Lake. Are there any plans to increase service

levels to these one-way-in-and-one-way-out types of communities? If not, why not?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: When you ask for increased service levels, can you clarify? Do you mean more winter maintenance for those particular roads? I wasn't sure.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes, I'm referring to more winter maintenance. So in terms of—and I'll get to that in my next line of questioning—right now, we calculate the amount of service levels, whether it's an eight-hour response, a 12-hour response etc., based on vehicle volumes. That doesn't work in some areas, including in what I just described.

So is there a plan, or why haven't you increased service levels to those areas when it's the only way in and out?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Right. Thanks very much for that question. I know that the deputy and some of the other team here will perhaps want to get into some of the specifics.

But if I can just say that I think everyone here recognizes that we had a very difficult experience in northern Ontario and in other parts of the province last year with respect to winter maintenance. There are a variety of opinions about exactly why the experience was perhaps less than satisfactory for some members of the north and some members of the south.

I know, having come into the portfolio relatively recently, not having experienced first-hand as the minister exactly what took place last year but learning very quickly, that the Ministry of Transportation, working with our contractors, those who are actually doing the work, and staying in fairly direct contact with communities like the one that you represent and some of your colleagues represent—that we certainly needed to raise our game, and I don't mind saying that.

I think what you see is, starting last year with the roll-out of additional equipment and resources for northern Ontario and rounding out with the announcement that I made last week around what we plan to do going into this coming winter season, in southern Ontario we have 50—I always get the 50 and the 55 confused.

Ms. Carol Layton: It's 55.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It was 55 new pieces of equipment last year that were rolled out in February, primarily for northern Ontario, 50 new pieces of equipment that are rolled out this year for southern Ontario, specifically for ramps and shoulders, but also the additional 20 new inspectors who will be on the ground working with communities to provide direct feedback.

So I think it's important to recognize that, notwithstanding how severe the weather conditions were last year, there was a recognition on the part of our government and the ministry that we needed to bring additional resources to bear, which I think we've done—

Mr. Joe Cimino: So these extra resources that you talk of, are they—and a majority of the ones that were purchased last year, the combination plows and the tow plows in northern Ontario: Are they being allocated to these rural roads, for example, that are the only way in and out of a community?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The deputy and the—

Ms. Carol Layton: Sure. I'll turn it over to Gerry Chaput, who can speak about that—because what you are actually talking about is the class of highway. With each class of highway, as you know, comes a different performance standard. You know that really well.

But I also just wanted to flag the extension of the season for studded tires, which is another factor certainly for northern Ontario as well, which is in effect now.

I'll turn it over to Gerry Chaput.

Mr. Joe Cimino: With all due respect, studded tires are great, but when we get those winter storms up there, I don't think those will even help you get through—

Ms. Carol Layton: It was an incredible winter last year. No one would deny that either.

0930

Mr. Gerry Chaput: There's lots of questions about the standards—I'm sorry. I'm Gerry Chaput. I'm the assistant deputy minister of highways. Maintenance falls under my envelope.

On Highway 105, I think you'll be seeing that—it's a class 4 for the majority of the highway or almost half of the highway and class 3 as you get closer to Red Lake.

The complement that you're talking about, where the minister has mentioned we added 55 plows—sorry, 55 additional pieces of equipment. It's a mix of plows, spreaders, combinations units and trailer plows. It's possible they have been added there. I don't have the specific details. Those additional pieces of equipment were added to increase the level or improve the level of service on truck-climbing lanes and passing lanes. Indeed, if there are truck-climbing lanes and passing lanes, which I expect there are on those two routes, those plows would have been allocated to those additional lanes.

What we did by increasing those numbers of units was of course allocate to those truck-climbing lanes and passing lanes, but also make them available for other routes along the way and increase the level of service in general. Although we did not change the class of the highway, they actually have an improvement on the level of service of those two highways as well.

The other thing to recognize is that yes, we do base our maintenance practices on volumes. That's consistent with other jurisdictions in North America. Our standards are among the highest in North America. I think you'll find some jurisdictions that actually don't have standards or have very lax standards. In fact, some will have a standard that, "That's a highway I get to charge overtime for. That's a highway I don't."

We've taken a very scientific approach, an approach that's been in place for several decades and which we've been using quite successfully.

Mr. Joe Cimino: And that flows right into a question I was going to have later on, but I'll bring it up now. Coming from municipal government, we use volumes as well, and we have five classes of roads. I'm looking at a presentation—I attended a teleconference on August 26. It was a teleconference of northern MPPs, I believe, at 1 p.m. I had it in my office. I think it as Kevin Bentley—

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, and he's here.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Yes, and Kevin's here today.

Ms. Carol Layton: Kevin's here.

Mr. Joe Cimino: It was a good presentation. Slide 3 shows a chart where you have the classes of roads. In northern Ontario, class 1, more than 10,000 vehicles; class 2, 1,500 to 10,000; class 3 etc.

You just said that service levels might—you're still using this chart, these standards, to respond to, say, Highway 105.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Yes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: It doesn't necessarily mean that the time in which a piece of equipment gets there is going to be increased.

The question I have is, is there any other research in terms of using other standards for which roads get done first? What I mean by that is there are other factors besides volumes of vehicles. There's the amount of transports. In northern Ontario, there are logging trucks, there are slurry trucks, there are trucks carrying nickel pellets. They're massive, and we're talking about extending the length of transports in the next couple of weeks.

The issue is, volumes are one criteria, but what about the width of a road? Highway 144: no shoulders, two lanes pretty well all the way from Dowling to Gogama and beyond. And the southwest bypass in Sudbury, where there are numerous accidents and fatalities: I won't get into naming names—I don't want to dredge up those sad thoughts—but there you have the southwest bypass, where there are two residential streets that intersect. There's been a plan on the books that hasn't happened yet where it's supposed to be four-laned and there are supposed to be two flyovers, one at Southview and one at Fielding. So there's an indication from the government that there is an issue there. There is an issue in terms of the safety of the bypasses. It's dangerous. I don't know what class it is, but the southwest bypass is not plowed as a class 1.

What other criteria—I need some proof that this is the best way to determine which roads get plowed first.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: I think there are two things to consider there. You've mentioned the concerns with safety and the actual road itself—the physical infrastructure, its cross-section, how wide the lanes are etc.

Ontario does have the safest highways in North America, or among the safest highways of North America. We've been ranked either in the top three or two for several years now. A lot of the engineering that we do, the investment we make in our northern highways—it's over \$500 million this year—is to address those issues, to make sure we have truck-climbing lanes and passing lanes in the right places, to ensure that we have intersection improvements and good pavements that we can use.

In terms of the other factors that we consider, yes, volume is primarily the key one. We do have conversations with the local areas. We are understanding of school bus routes, of the economy of northern Ontario and of the chip trucks, or whatever it might be, travelling on those

routes. At times, we'll get into discussions with private industry to see if they wish to supplement the equipment, either financially or through another piece of equipment on their own, and that will ensure that the goods and services are travelled.

I mentioned the additional pieces of equipment, and, yes, we did not change the class. But by increasing the number of pieces of equipment, it increases our availability and the opportunities to have more plows running over the same section without changing the class, but allowing the service to be increased by that—

Mr. Joe Cimino: So when you say it's for the service to be increased, we're not talking about circuit times, though. We're not talking about the time—30 minutes after a snowfall or snow event—that that piece of equipment will get there, and I think that's the issue.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: What I'm looking at is, if you have a section of highway that had a passing lane, before there was only one plow travelling. Now, because there are two or three passing lanes along that section, there will be two plows travelling, one to pick up the passing lane and truck-climbing lane and one to pick up the main line. Now that truck-climbing-lane plow or that passing-lane plow isn't going to be idle or just going out for those lanes; they'll pick up side roads, they'll pick up additional—on the main line, when they're going through, they'll put their blade down.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Can we have information in terms of where these extra pieces of equipment—and I'll ask in a written response or whatnot so we can move on—where the government foresees or the MTO foresees these vehicles—obviously it has a plan—are going to be used?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Sure. Yes, we can take that back and give you a full update as to where those plows and spreaders and tow plows are located or those combination units are.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Excellent. Moving on: I'm looking at an article, Minister, from CBC, and it's the Morning North show out of Sudbury. They published an article online September 29, and it was entitled, "Fines for MTO Winter Road Maintenance Contractors Top \$650,000." I'm sure you know, it was actually \$656,750, and \$392,750 was one contractor that does my area.

I guess the question is, then, has the ministry, when they set these fines—obviously they're pre-set in the contract, I would assume. Are the fines high enough to deter or have people fulfill the obligations of the contract? If they're supposed to be out within 30 minutes of a snowfall—because one of the big fines was \$72,000 for not deploying equipment within 30 minutes after the start of a snowfall. Are the fines big enough to have the companies understand that if they don't follow what's in the contract, they're actually going to lose more than what they would make if they followed the contract?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll start answering the question to give you and the rest of the members of the committee a bit of a sense of my own perspective. Again, not having been in this role during last year's winter season itself but coming into it and having the opportunity to be

briefed by the team at MTO that works on this stuff first-hand, and also having the chance to have spoken with representatives from both individual area maintenance contractors, of course, and the association representing that particular sector, I think what's really important for people to remember is that we, certainly at MTO, understand. This is why we've brought those additional resources forward, both starting last year and again—just last weekend when I announced them between the additional pieces of equipment and the inspectors.

There is an understanding from the conversations that I have had directly with that sector that we all need to do the very best that we can for people right across Ontario. One of the reasons that we are deploying the 20 new inspectors is to make sure, for example, that, among other things, among wanting to have somebody on the ground to see what's taking place in communities, that our area maintenance contractors are fulfilling or meeting their contractual obligations and having that set of eyes close at hand throughout this upcoming winter season. But from my perspective, it's a partnership; right? It's a partnership between the Ministry of Transportation, the contractors themselves, and I also think it's fair to say—and I did say this in my remarks when I made the announcement a number of days ago around what we're doing a little bit differently for this upcoming season. The primary responsibility, yes, or partnership is between the ministry and the area maintenance contractors to make sure the work is getting done according to the contract.

But I also want to make sure that drivers themselves understand that we all have a responsibility, especially as we're preparing for what may or may not be a very tough winter from the perspective of weather conditions, to make sure that we take into account what the conditions are.

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Mr. Joe Cimino: And that's fine; I agree with you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As the minister, it's important for me to remind people to drive according to the road conditions and plan the route in advance. I've certainly had the chance to hear from people in both the north and the south, and they understand that, but I want to make sure—

Mr. Joe Cimino: But are the fines hefty enough to make sure our partners in the private sector fulfill their obligations?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, the deputy or Gerry can speak a little bit more specifically to the fines. What's important to me is to say—you know, fines are one thing. The stick is important, but the fact is that for many, many months now, throughout last season and the end of last season forward to this season, there have been a number of discussions and conversations. I have no doubt, based on a combination of those fines from last year and the work that has taken place between the ministry and our area maintenance contractors, that they have a very clear sense of exactly what the Ministry of Transportation's expectations are, and what their contractual obligations are as well. And the idea that we will have those 20 additional inspectors this coming season means they know—

and rightly so—that they are being watched closely to make sure that they perform according to their contract.

Mr. Joe Cimino: And that brings up a whole thing. Maybe the deputy can respond, because again I ask, are the fines enough? Because it is a stick.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: So your question is, are the fines enough? With the greatest of respect, that's not really an objective question. That's more of a subjective one: Are the fines enough? My answer is that ultimately, if you don't have the additional resources, if you haven't done the work over the last number of months, if you haven't worked hard, as the team at MTO has, to make sure the relationship is where it needs to be, then ultimately I'm not convinced, necessarily, that strictly having the stick is the only way to deal with this. If it was, then there are lots of other issues, cutting across lots of other areas of life, that would be fixed.

What's important to me is that, yes, when contractual obligations are not being met, there are penalties that will be brought to bear. But at the same time, why we took this back, why we are deploying and have deployed additional equipment, why we are taking into account all of the changing circumstances, being prepared for the upcoming winter season—to me, it's the combination of everything. Right?

It doesn't mean we can't keep working on it; it doesn't mean we can't continue to improve it. Everyone should understand—I'm pretty sure you do as well—that we take very seriously at MTO the responsibility to make sure all of our roads and highways are properly maintained through all four seasons. Road safety is one of my most important priorities.

Mr. Joe Cimino: And I—

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Cimino, you have two minutes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Oh, that's it?

I do respect that, and we're here for the same reason.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely.

Mr. Joe Cimino: But there is the issue with—I had a couple of bigger questions but I'll go to this, and maybe if staff wants to respond. I assume that these contracts were issued through an RFP process. So some of the criteria, prices—

Mr. Gerry Chaput: They were tendered competitively. It was not an RFP.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. So lowest price, then, wins out. And there's the issue, because I'm wondering out loud—

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Provided they meet the minimum standards.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Exactly.

Ms. Carol Layton: Performance expectations.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The nice thing about our RFP process, if we went that route, was that price is a factor, but there's also a methodology: How are you going to clear the roads within eight hours? How are you going to clear the roads in 12 hours? What type of equipment are you going to use? So methodology could be a bigger piece of the criteria. There could also be letters of recommendation from municipalities, maybe, that use the con-

tractors etc. That's what I was getting at. If it's just the tender, it's lowest price, and to me that's sometimes not the best way to go.

We've deployed all this extra equipment, 20 new inspectors, 50 new pieces of equipment last year, 55 this year, or vice versa—like you, I can't get them straight—and five new directors. I'm assuming the MTO or the government is paying for that; the taxpayers are paying for that. So is the privatization working? Is this saving us money? That's a big question. You're not going to answer that in 30 seconds.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You have one minute.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: I think it all feeds into the same issue. We want to provide the best services with the best value to the taxpayer. When we're tendering anything, whether it's a construction contract or a maintenance contract, there is allocation of risk, and we want to ensure the risk is allocated to the party that is best able to manage that risk.

If you increase your fines to a level where you're basically transferring 100% of the risk on to them through that fine, you'll pay more money. In other words, we'll lose value to the taxpayers of Ontario by paying more money by having a higher penalty for a contractor.

If you have no penalty for a contractor, you're absolutely correct: There's no incentive for them to improve. There's no incentive for them to change their behaviour.

It's a fine balance between what we want in terms of performance and what we want in terms of value, as well as what the contractor is willing to accept as a level of risk and what they're willing to get paid for that level of risk.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. Government members: Ms. McGarry, 20 minutes.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you very much. Minister, as you are aware, in March 2014 we announced that all-day, two-way GO trains would be coming to Waterloo region, and the work commenced to be able to start that detailed work.

I was really pleased to see our government deliver on bringing GO trains to Waterloo region a few years back and establishing not only the ridership but also giving our area businesses and residents the transit option of being able to get in and out of Toronto.

Certainly, a number of folks who are my colleagues in my former work, and families, are utilizing that service. It has been a really good way of opening up our region, not only for the ability to commute to Toronto but also for area businesses to start looking at really establishing in Waterloo region, to be able to bring employees in.

What's interesting is that during the election and since the election, I have been meeting with a fair number of area companies that are actually picking up, in three different areas in the GTHA, employees who work in their companies in Waterloo region. They don't have the option right now of coming in in the morning, so they pick these employees up by bus.

As you know, we have a lot of IT companies, a lot of younger-employee companies, that have a fairly young

working population that would prefer—like my 20-year-old son would be doing if he was working in that sector—they want to live in Toronto and work in the region. The announcement of the all-day, two-way GO service would indeed allow those businesses to rely on the fact that they'll have a very good way of bringing employees into the region, not just by bus but to be able to have that transit option. I think it's a really great way of not only establishing transit options for all the right reasons, but also to be able to give our area companies the comfort that they will be able to have those transit options. It has certainly strengthened the business case for all-day, two-way GO service.

Interestingly, my daughter is reaching age 30 very shortly, and she's one of that generation that has just been written about that is actually driving less and using green transit. She lives up Avenue Road and cycles to her job at U of T, and she's now setting up for winter cycling. When she comes out to the region, she either rents a car or takes a bus. She's all excited about the all-day, two-way GO because it would be an easy way for her to get to see some of her friends there. So I really am pleased to see the all-day, two-way GO service coming to K-W.

I think that what is important, when I've been meeting with area companies and talking to constituents, is that as we know, any building project, whether it be a deck or sewing clothes or building a house, requires detailed plans. You have to set out those stepping stones to make the plans, get a building permit and gather your building materials, having budgeted when you're going to do that. Any building project takes those steps. I certainly understand that when we've committed to all-day, two-way GO service, it's going to be in a stepwise fashion.

When I am meeting with further companies, what I would like to be able to know is this: What is it going to mean, with this recent purchase of the 53 kilometres of track, in terms of our ability to fully deliver the all-day, two-way GO service?

Mr. Michael Harris: I think she's asking if you have a plan.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sorry?

Mr. Michael Harris: She wants to see the plan.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I appreciate that question. It's a great question. I think there really is no way to overstate exactly what kind of positive impact our 10-year plan will have as it radically transforms not only GO, but as it radically transforms the entire greater Toronto and Hamilton area, including in communities like yours in Cambridge and Kitchener-Waterloo. It's from the perspective, obviously, of improving quality of life, because it will give thousands and thousands of women and men of all ages, in all areas of life—whether they're still working, retired, whatever the case is—that opportunity to travel, giving them so many more options and providing that degree of reliability, accessibility and regularly scheduled service.

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There's also an enormous positive transformative impact around what it will mean for the economy of your communities you referenced a second ago, but also

communities like Milton, Barrie, Newmarket, Aurora—the list goes on. It's a large and exciting opportunity for us to really provide that kind of boost, and that's really what is at the very heart of the commitment we've made, the commitment the Premier has spoken about.

We talk about additional trains, as you well know, that will be running into Kitchener-Waterloo, two more trains in the morning and two more trains in the afternoon, starting in 2016, which is consistent with the commitment that we've made repeatedly. That's something that the team at Metrolinx and MTO are working hard to deliver, and we will deliver on that.

But what's really important for me to repeat—and I apologize to committee members. I think repetition is a bit important when you are helping to make sure that everybody understands exactly what it is that we as a government are going to do in all of these communities, to recognize that is not a small undertaking. Whether you're talking about support for projects like the Waterloo rapid transit project, the ION project, or something in my community, Newmarket, Kingston, or wherever we're talking about, whatever part of Ontario we're speaking about, we here in the GTHA and Kitchener-Waterloo and elsewhere—because of extraordinary population growth, because of the dynamic economic environment that we find ourselves in, which is very positive and very good, when you see the growth, as you mentioned, of IT and all the other stuff, the high-tech stuff, that has occurred, that cluster that has occurred in the Kitchener-Waterloo-Cambridge area, lots of exciting things happening in Milton and elsewhere, by virtue of that population growth, by virtue of that economic evolution or revolution—we are playing a bit of catch-up. There's no doubt about that. That's why it was so important for the Premier to make a very strong, definitive and large commitment to investing \$29 billion over the next decade, \$130 billion when you cut across all forms of infrastructure, but specifically for transit and transportation. That's why it was so important. I really and truly believe that message resonated with individuals—I'm sure in your community; certainly in my own community as well. People understand the enormity of the challenge that we're facing.

There will be over the next number of years—any time you are in a community where there is significant infrastructure work taking place around transit or transportation, there are disruptions. I say this not because I'm looking to be popular. These kinds of disruptions don't make a person popular, but it's the only way for us to deal with it. So whether you're talking about the Eglinton Crosstown or the Viva BRT in York region or the ION project in Waterloo, people are excited because they see progress. But from time to time, I understand and respect that there's a bit of frustration around, "What does this mean? What will the impact be?" I think we all have a responsibility. It's clear to me that not only members of the government caucus, but certainly members from the opposition caucuses who speak so passionately about what's taking place in their communities—we should all be working together to make sure that while we're

delivering on these commitments for people, there's an understanding of exactly how significant the challenge is and that we are finding creative ways to explain what those disruptions will look like to people living and commuting in communities, but with a view to making sure they understand that the end result, the goal and what we will provide to them, to their neighbours, to their friends and families, is better choices, is that opportunity for your daughter or for others like her—for my younger brother or for my daughters, who I referenced in my opening statement last week—who I want to make sure grow up in a region that provides them with multiple choices.

I felt compelled many, many years ago. There was really only one option if you were going to live in the outer 905 and you were going to work and go to school in Toronto. There is only one option—at least there has been for many, many years. Now we have a lot more options. In 10 more years, we're going to have significantly more options, so that a person living in Newmarket–Aurora can say, “You know what? I don't have to own a car. I can live in Newmarket–Aurora,”—a beautiful community with great political representation—“and I can work in downtown Toronto or go to school in downtown Toronto, and I don't have to own a vehicle.” It saves them money, and it's better for the environment and better for the economy.

It's a big challenge, but it's a challenge that certainly the Premier and our team are up to, and we will deliver, incrementally, more service as we get to where we need to be in that decade.

Again, those two additional trains in the morning, two additional trains in the afternoon, the purchase of more track, the grade separations, the railroad separations, the electrification, all of the work, the power supply—this is what the team at MTO and Metrolinx is currently dealing with right now; and I look forward to being able to say more about this in the coming months.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Another quick question as a follow-up: The 53 kilometres of track—what is the importance of having Metrolinx own that versus CN? What does it mean in terms of the actual physical capacity of the trains to be on the line and the wait periods?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Not just with respect to that one particular section of track, but right across the entire network, I think, even as a layperson who's not a transit expert, and very few of us are, it's one of those things to remember that when you're in a situation where Metrolinx isn't the exact owner, you have to deal in the discussion—because when our rail companies are the owners, they obviously have a primary responsibility as corporate organizations to move their goods, to make sure their service is operating in a way that benefits them, their shareholders etc. That's their reason for being, and I respect that.

Metrolinx's reason for being around this particular item, this particular aspect is to make sure that we have a public transit—and that's their priority; it's the movement of the GO trains. When you're talking about CN and CP,

very respectfully, their primary responsibility is to move their goods, as I said a second ago. If you're CP or you're CN, and you own a track or a portion of track and there's an intersection—I don't mean that literally; I mean that sort of figuratively—and there is, let's call it, a gentle clash, a conflict, between what's the most important priority, public transit or the movement of their own goods, the movement of their goods, the scheduling for the movement of their goods will win because they own that piece of track, because they own that section of track and it's important to them.

The fact that Metrolinx currently owns 80% of the entire network is great news. That 20% that's left will be at the heart of an ongoing conversation that will take place between our government and Metrolinx and the rail companies. The more we own, the more we can deliver and avoid conflicts that would be resolved not in favour of the public transit portion, I guess is my roundabout way of answering that question. I hope it was relatively clear.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Yes, and it is. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No problem.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Dong?

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Madam Chair. How much time do I have?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Six minutes left.

Mr. Han Dong: Six minutes, so I'll be quick. I ran into the member from Kitchener–Conestoga this morning, and he asked me if I have any tough questions prepared for the minister. I think previously we've been criticized for asking softball questions, so I'm going to throw him a curveball this morning, a change of topic a little bit. I'm going to be asking you about the Presto system, a bit more detail about the integrated system that we've been talking about.

If you remember, Minister, I spoke to you about this soon after the June 12 election, because I had conversations with a local councillor and that came up, the integrated fare system. I heard that you mentioned it during your opening statement several times and how important it is to our plan to roll out the regional transit system. I learned from the reading material that it's being widely used in Ottawa but not so much in Toronto. I think it's going to help the riding of Trinity–Spadina quite a bit—because we do have a station down at Exhibition Place. Currently, it's not very attractive for the local residents of Liberty Village. It's not a viable option to them right now. If they see quite a bit of congestion on King Street, the streetcars, they'd rather walk than take that option, because they have to pay twice, TTC and the other. I think if rolled out properly, the Presto system will not only help the residents in Trinity–Spadina but also the residents of, perhaps, my colleague the member from Parkdale–High Park, because by the time the streetcars hit Trinity–Spadina, it's quite full.

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I don't have much time, but I think you could appreciate that downtown living is quite attractive, very exciting, but at the same time faces quite a bit of challenges.

Congestion is the main cause, I think—that's what I heard—of stress of the downtown dwellers. I'm going to ask you about the Presto question. When are we going to roll out more aggressively for the GTHA when it comes to Presto, and how are we going to do that? If we have time before, please educate us a bit more about the Presto system.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sure. That's a great question, and even if I don't manage to get through my entire answer, maybe when we cycle back around again I can lead off with this, because it's a great and important part of my own responsibility.

When you were asking the question about Presto and the notion of fare integration or that idea of integrating fare and service, it brought to mind my own mandate letter that I received, of course, from the Premier a number of weeks ago. I took the opportunity to glance down at the second page, and I see near the bottom of the second page one of my specific priorities that is embedded in my mandate letter specifically says that our Ministry-of-Transportation-specific priorities will include “developing customer-focused solutions to integrate fare and service. Your goal is to create a seamless and transparent fare system across the” greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

Really and truly, whether you're talking about residents in your community of Trinity–Spadina or even those who use the GO service along the Barrie line, the commuters in my own community whom I've had the chance on many occasions to not only speak to, but speak to as they're standing alongside the machine where they tap their Presto card, to hear them tell me (a) about how happy they are with that opportunity to tap the card and (b)—I can see the thumbs up from the member from Newmarket–Aurora, because he's probably going to take out his Presto card right now and show, like the member from Mississauga did last week, how important it is and how well it works.

I think the good news is—and I don't want to understate the challenge that lies ahead because there is still significant work that needs to occur in order for us to be at a point where we have that fare and service integration that is in my mandate letter, but just a really quick update. As of September 2014, more than 1.2 million cards have been activated across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and Ottawa—you referenced Ottawa in your question. That means there have been over 240 million taps, as we like to say, since September 2014, meaning also that Presto users to date have paid approximately over \$946 million in fare payments. I'm not sure how many of those fare payments were the member from Newmarket–Aurora, but I suspect a substantial portion.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Two minutes, Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much, Chair. By way of an update, the other thing to keep in mind is that the current rollout of Presto in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area includes municipal transit systems in Hamilton, in Burlington, in Oakville, in Mississauga and

in Brampton, the regions of York and Durham, 14 TTC subway stations and all GO Transit trains and buses. In Ottawa, it's obviously deployed by OC Transpo.

Just so you know, as well, because your question was to some extent focused, as it should be, on what's happening in Toronto specifically, Metrolinx is working to substantially implement Presto on the TTC by 2017. Not that long ago, when I had the wonderful opportunity of being in Trinity–Spadina to roll out the first replacement streetcars—it's also important to note that the first phase of the Presto rollout is beginning with what we call revenue service deployment on the TTC replacement streetcars and platforms starting in November 2014; essentially, starting soon, because we're almost in November.

The last thing I'll mention by way of a general update is that the TTC estimates that once Presto is fully operational, the savings on fare collection could be up to \$10 million per year.

I wanted to throw a bunch of information back to you before my time lapsed for this particular round, but I'm certainly happy to come back in our next round and talk a little bit more about some of the potential that lies ahead with respect to fare integration and Presto. But I really appreciate that question.

Mr. Han Dong: That's great.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. The official opposition: Mr. Harris, you have about 10 minutes.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. Well, just building off where we were last time on GO Transit, I know my colleague from Cambridge's daughter will want to know that within 10 years, she'll actually be able to ride the train from Toronto to Kitchener, and those businesses that she talked about, especially in the high-tech community of the region of Waterloo, will be making plans and, hopefully, will be able to bring people in, aside from riding the bus, within a decade.

The funding for the expansion of GO train to an all-day GO: Is that coming from the policy and planning capital expenses, or is that through the Metrolinx budget?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll ask the deputy to respond to that.

Ms. Carol Layton: In our printed estimates, there's the base funding that we provide for GO. There was also, though, in the 2014 budget, as you know, a \$20-billion announcement for the dedicated funds, of which \$15 billion is for the regional express rail. That \$15 billion is sourced from different revenue sources that are going to come in, and that's actually clearly expressed, I think, around page 48 of the 2014 budget.

The money for the regional express rail—which means everything from, ultimately, electrification right through to new GOs, double-tracking, triple-tracking, whatever you're talking about—is not sitting in our 2014-15 estimates right now. That money is going to be provided through the allocation process. It's built into the fiscal plan, in a sense, on a 10-year basis. But our estimates right now have not been grossed up by that amount because it's exactly that detail that has to be worked

through, exactly what will be the increment this year in the context of regional express rail, and next year and years to go.

Mr. Michael Harris: So how much money is actually being allocated towards the expansion of that pot of money that you just referenced?

Ms. Carol Layton: So the—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If I can actually—sorry—

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, sure.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —just so I can understand clearly what the question is. The \$29 billion that we talk about going forward, that \$29 billion that was included in budget 2014—and this might not have been completely clear in some of the back-and-forth last week—that's a plan to generate the revenues and invest those monies over the next decade. That's not what has already occurred with, notionally, the money is sitting somewhere. That's based on revenues that will be generated over that 10-year horizon from a wide variety of sources, some of which we talked about last week, some of which I know the Minister of Finance has talked about extensively. But the investments will also flow over those 10 years. So I'm not sure; I just seek a bit of clarity around the exact question.

Mr. Michael Harris: If you're talking about a specific expansion along a certain line, you'd allocate a certain portion of that money towards that. I'm just asking if you've done that and how much that would be.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Part of the work that is being undertaken by the ministry and by Metrolinx is exactly what the two-way, all-day regional express rail delivery will look like in terms of all the work we discussed in the first round of questioning today, and also what we anticipate those costs will be, but the funding to put our government in a position to deliver on the commitment is provided throughout that 10-year horizon of \$29 billion.

Mr. Michael Harris: So when the Premier came to the region of Waterloo to make that promise, she actually had no idea as to how much it would cost, because that has not been done yet.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, I'm going to answer that question by saying that my responsibility and what I'm here to talk about a little bit more today is where we were with respect to the 2014-15 printed estimates, but also, because a lot of the questions are prospective in nature, which I respect and I'm happy to answer, we're talking about sort of going forward—

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, no, your Premier, your leader, made a commitment and you're saying to me that—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Right, and she also made a commitment to provide dedicated funding through various revenue-generating tools, for us to be transparent in how we raise and invest those, and that's the work that we're undertaking right now.

Mr. Michael Harris: But you just said that the work is undergoing—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It is.

Mr. Michael Harris: —in terms of how much it will cost. So she made a promise without actually even knowing how much it was going to cost.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No, that's not what I said at all.

Mr. Michael Harris: That's what you've just said. You alluded to the fact that the cost—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No, I haven't said that. You may torque that and put it in a press release in 20 minutes, but that's not what I said.

Mr. Michael Harris: You're telling me that the work is happening in terms of what it costs. I'm asking you, would the Premier have known, and would the ministry have provided through Metrolinx, an estimate as to what that two-way, all-day GO extension would have cost before she made the announcement? I'm just asking a question.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, not being in the position of the Minister of Transportation at the time when—

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, then I'll ask the deputy, because I know you've been around since 2010—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Let me just finish, though.

Mr. Michael Harris: —what information would you have brought to the—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: This is an important point, though, because the team at Metrolinx has been working hard now for a number of weeks, months in fact, on exactly what this will look like. The monies that will flow from the revenue generation that we're going to be doing over the next 10 years—the \$15 billion for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and the \$14 billion or so for areas outside of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area—will provide the support that we need to deliver on two-way, all-day GO service. The exact dollar figure, to the penny, of what it will cost to deliver it across all of our corridors, has that been finalized? No, and one of the reasons it hasn't been finalized is because, going back to what I said in our first round of questioning today, this is a significant transformational infrastructure project that we're talking about. The level of detail is significant. The level of the enormity of the challenge and the opportunity is actually quite breathtaking.

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What it will mean is that people living in your community, when it is fully rolled out, starting with two additional trains in the morning and the afternoon next year, in 2016—I mean next year or the following year—people will see that increased service, and they'll understand that the revenue we're generating and the support they are providing to their provincial government is providing them with tangible and positive benefits in their communities.

Mr. Michael Harris: Those two additional trains are actually six years late, because you promised them in 2007 and then you slashed them in 2010, providing only two—so those trains are six years late. That's why I'm asking you. You've got an array of commitments and promises that you've made, both in your Liberal platform and you reference them in your budget. I'm simply

asking again if you're going to go out and make these commitments and promises—and we all know that you've shortchanged our region in the past. You'd think you'd have some sort of budget. I'm not asking to the penny, but I would expect, and I think Ontarians would expect, that there would have been some sort of budget or plan that you can actually deliver prior to making the announcement.

That goes with the high-speed rail as well. You say that you can get it done within 10 years, and you released a report to justify that, and now we've seen nothing.

You've talked about these dedicated funds, so perhaps we'll go there, because I know you don't like being too repetitious, even though we feel we've really not gotten an answer out of you on a lot of these things.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You have three minutes, Mr. Harris.

Mr. Michael Harris: You have indicated funding for transit projects both in and outside the GTHA will be distributed through two new transit funds. I was hoping you could elaborate on what the two new transit funds will be, perhaps.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: As I said before, what we have committed to and what we are delivering on, by raising these revenues in the transparent way that the Premier committed to, is roughly or up to \$15 billion that will be raised and invested in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, largely for public transit infrastructure projects, and the up to \$14 billion that will be raised and invested in regions outside of the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, for a combination of public transit, transportation infrastructure and other important crucial infrastructure—

Mr. Michael Harris: Who will be administering those funds?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Who will be administering those funds? I just want to make sure we get this part clear.

Ms. Carol Layton: Sure. In government, we're not siloed, so we work closely with our colleague ministry, the Ministry of Finance, and we work closely, also, with our newly constituted Ministry of Economic Development, Employment and Infrastructure. So the infrastructure administering, during the long-range sort of strategic infrastructure planning—the actual dedicated funds themselves will be designed in concert with our colleagues at the Ministry of Finance, because they're sourced largely from tax revenue sources, as well as some—and you'll see that on page 45 of the budget; it gives you all that detail.

But the funds, I would say, will be administered jointly between the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Transportation.

Mr. Michael Harris: So when will the funding for those transit projects actually begin, or have they begun?

Ms. Carol Layton: First of all, the minister did reference the online portal, the fact that there is going to be transparency, so the funds themselves are being established. Those revenue sources are being generated as we

speak, starting this fiscal year. But you can see on page 45—and I know that you've seen this page before—it gives you an estimate based on that \$29 billion over 10 years, an estimate of what would be the amount available this year for the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and that's the \$1.7-billion estimate and \$1.6 billion for areas outside of the GTHA.

As the year progresses and as subsequent years come along, and through the fully transparent public reporting that we're doing both through public accounts as well as through the portal, you will start to see how those funds are going to be distributed on a project-by-project-by-project basis.

Mr. Michael Harris: When do you expect to see those funds commencing?

Ms. Carol Layton: I would say that every provincial budget, which of course is one of the most important documents of an administration in terms of transparency and accountability—

Mr. Michael Harris: Will they be drawn on this fiscal year?

Ms. Carol Layton: Sorry?

Mr. Michael Harris: Will they be drawn on this fiscal year?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You have 20 seconds.

Ms. Carol Layton: We already have sitting in our budget right now about \$2.4 billion for all matters as they relate to urban and regional transportation. That is going to be happening, as well as the setting up of the fund. I can't predict the number; we're only halfway through the fiscal year, and as you can imagine, the budget was just passed in July. So the extent to which they will be drawn on in the fiscal year will be determined as this year continues to progress, certainly through the public reporting in the 2015 budget and, following that, in the public accounts.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. We are recessed until after routine proceedings today.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1600.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Harris, you have 10 minutes in your rotation.

Mr. Michael Harris: Okay. Minister, we were talking about GO train service to the region of Waterloo. You may be aware that the mayor of Cambridge, Doug Craig, has been speaking about the need to bring GO train service to Cambridge for quite some time. In fact, the region recently did a study that I'm sure either you will have seen or you will see in the near future.

I'm wondering if you can tell the committee today if there are any plans by your ministry to perhaps bring GO train service to Cambridge within the next decade.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That's a great question. I appreciate that.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: You're welcome. In my time since first becoming the Minister of Transportation, I've had the opportunity to meet with literally dozens of municipalities and communities, including quite a large

number at AMO over the summer. There is tremendous excitement amongst a number of communities—

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm just asking about Cambridge now. We've got 10 minutes left, so—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes, sure. But I think it's important for me to make sure there's a clear understanding that there are a variety of communities that have spoken to me and to other representatives in our—

Mr. Michael Harris: Let's narrow in on Cambridge for now.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —including the MPP from Cambridge, who you know serves as my parliamentary assistant.

I haven't had the chance to speak directly with the mayor of Cambridge about this. What I have heard clearly from Ms. McGarry is that there's tremendous excitement because of the positive impact that the first phase of the Waterloo LRT, the ION project, as it's known, will have on that community. We—

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, the LRT's not going into Cambridge.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I mentioned phase 1, but I can also tell you that I've heard very clearly from Ms. McGarry that there's a ton of excitement about the fact that that project will actually provide a tangible benefit to her community.

What I was going to say a second ago, and just so we are clear about this, is that phase 1 or stage 1 includes 19 kilometres of LRT from Conestoga Mall in Waterloo to Fairview Park Mall in Kitchener, and 17 kilometres also of adapted bus rapid transit from Fairview Park Mall to the Ainslie Street terminal in Cambridge.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, I know. I'm aware of that.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: So stage 1 of what we've invested and what we were there to break ground on not that many weeks ago does in fact have a direct, tangible, positive benefit for Cambridge as well.

There are a number of communities that have spoken to us about the possibility of expanding GO rail or GO train service. We're not in a position to make any final decisions about that at this point in time. I have conveyed that to Ms. McGarry. She's aware of that. She will continue to advocate, as I'm sure representatives from her community will, as they should—

Mr. Michael Harris: Sure.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That is part of this process, but it is important to underscore from my perspective that all decisions we make regarding the implementation of the existing plan and any future expansions will be done in the context of or through the lens of the business case analysis that I've talked about extensively.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm looking forward to seeing that business case.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know you are.

Mr. Michael Harris: In the May 2013 Metrolinx investment strategy, Metrolinx recommended that the province of Ontario consider adjusting the composition of the Metrolinx board of directors in order to provide municipalities in the GTHA with the opportunity to

nominate up to six citizen appointees to the board. I'm wondering if you can share with the committee today and elaborate on where the province is on actually changing the board of governors at Metrolinx.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm very fortunate in that, again, over the last four months, since June 24, the day that I was sworn in to serve as Minister of Transportation, I've had the great opportunity to work alongside the current chair of the board at Metrolinx, Rob Prichard—

Mr. Michael Harris: Right.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —and of course the senior staff who serve in various capacities at Metrolinx. While I haven't been able to get out, from a scheduling standpoint, to a board meeting to meet the entire group, I've had the chance—in fact, just last week at the Ontario Economic Summit in Niagara-on-the-Lake, I had the chance to sit in a round-table meeting with a couple of individuals who serve on that board. So there's a positive working relationship there and I'm very proud to say—

Mr. Michael Harris: Are there any plans for the government to change the board of governors?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm just going to finish the sentence and pivot exactly to the narrow question that you're asking.

So I'm very happy to have the chance to work alongside this very professional group of individuals.

My understanding of the specific question you're asking is that it is something that is still under active consideration and no final decisions have been made. But regardless of how we go forward with that particular piece, the entire team at Metrolinx is working very hard, as I've said repeatedly, with senior officials and the team at MTO to make sure that, together, working with all of our municipal partners, many of whom are newcomers, some who were elected just last night for the very first time, to make sure that we're in a position to implement the plan—

Mr. Michael Harris: Good, because in that report, Anne Golden made a comment that the Metrolinx governance system continues to foster a lack of accountability and responsiveness to local community needs. So I would hope that you would take that recommendation and act on it, perhaps sooner rather than later.

On to Metrolinx, as I've got a few minutes left here: In January 2014, Metrolinx aired advertisements during the NFL conference championship games. I'm wondering if you could share with the committee how much the total cost of airing those ads was. Or, if it's something you can't give to me now, would you provide that to the committee?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes. We'll take that back.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. Have you had any emails or letters from Ontarians asking you what Metrolinx does and what in fact they're working on?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If you're asking me personally if I've received those, I think that's—

Mr. Michael Harris: Since being minister, have you ever received any letters or emails—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The Ministry of Transportation, or me personally?

Mr. Michael Harris: You, as minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm sure you can appreciate that there is a large volume of correspondence that comes into a minister's office and there are multiple entry points for that. In fact, I would say again that, since June 24, on issues ranging from the possibility of investing in Hamilton LRT to what's taking place in Niagara to issues relating to GO service generally, I have personally received a number of emails from individuals who are very passionate about public transit and what's taking place with respect to how we're planning to go forward. Whether or not there's been a specific request made of me or a specific inquiry via email regarding Metrolinx is something I have to take back.

Mr. Michael Harris: Following up on that, I'm wondering if you could provide a total amount spent on Metrolinx's advertisements during the 2014 general election. I don't expect you to tell me now, but I was hoping that you could provide the committee—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The 2014 general election—provincial general election?

Mr. Michael Harris: That's correct.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We'll take that back.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. How much money has been budgeted this year for Metrolinx's advertisements? Perhaps that's another request of you to bring back to the committee. How much has been budgeted this year for Metrolinx advertising?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We'll also take that back.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. I ask that because obviously Metrolinx's budget has been increased by \$25 million, but they of course need to find additional money for the wage hike for the GO bus operators and the ticket sellers. So I'm wondering if you can also tell us where, within the Metrolinx budget, they will accommodate the wage hike. I don't know if you know that now or if it's something that you can share with the committee. Recently, we know that there was an increase given. There's no new money, and I'm just wondering, from within the Metrolinx budget, where that additional funding will come from.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Minister, you have two minutes.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know that when this issue first arose at some point over the last couple of months—I forget the exact point in time at which the wage settlement was reached—I had the opportunity to learn a little bit more about some of the internal efficiencies that Metrolinx was able to bring to bear so that they were able to provide for the terms that had been negotiated with their representatives—

Mr. Michael Harris: Will you share those efficiencies with the committee?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'll take that back as well.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: There are a number of them, and I just, off the top of my head, don't remember them at this particular moment.

Mr. Michael Harris: Fair enough. Maybe I'll stop there. I know I have a minute—Chair, I'm going to defer

my minute to the next round. I'm going to leave it at that because I've got about a minute left.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Okay.

Mr. Michael Harris: Add it to my back end.

Mr. Grant Crack: You can't do that.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Is the committee agreeable to that suggestion that—

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Harris: Sorry? I'm just going to end my questioning at that because I'm going to move on to a new area of questioning.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): If the committee doesn't agree, then it goes back into the pot.

Mr. Michael Harris: Had they agreed or not?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): No. Have they agreed?

Interjections.

Mr. Michael Harris: Is that an agreement?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Is it agreeable?

Mr. Han Dong: Sure.

Mr. Michael Harris: There we go.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): It's okay?

Mr. Michael Harris: One minute.

Mr. Han Dong: All right, Michael.

Mr. Grant Crack: You'd better be nice.

Mr. Chris Ballard: You're setting a precedent here.

Mr. Michael Harris: That was a tough decision, guys.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Third party? Mr. Cimino? Twenty minutes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister. I'm going to try to get off this winter maintenance section. I've got three questions left. Hopefully we can move through them and get on to some other topics.

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Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sure.

Mr. Joe Cimino: When we ended earlier today, one of the staff from MTO—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Gerry.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Gerry. Thank you. We discussed—and I understand where you came from, Minister. You described it as the big stick: Are the penalties high enough for a contractor that does not meet the commitments under the contract to deter or maybe encourage the contract to be followed? The comment—and it was a good one, because the more risk to a company, i.e., higher penalties, the higher the contract will be. I saw that all the time at city council level.

My question is—and if you can comment on this. The penalties were kept at a reasonable level; MTO decided that this is the place where they should be in order to keep contracts at a lower level. But we've hired 20 more inspectors for oversight, which is good. We've hired some directors, five of them I believe. We had 50 pieces of equipment last year and 55 this year. Has the ministry taken a look at that cost? I'm assuming MTO picked up the entire cost of that expanded oversight and equipment. Where is that money found in the budget?

Ms. Carol Layton: Gerry, do you want to come up? Just to start in on that, the point that I'd make first of all

is that the issue of providing more staff dedicated to the winter maintenance—as you can imagine, it was an exceptional winter last year. We have confidence in the area maintenance contractors, but we certainly felt that we just had to augment our oversight of those contracts. So everything from the equipment—the 55 last year, the 50 this year—as well as the oversight that we’re providing relative to the public safety that it provides was certainly money well spent in our mind. But I’ll get Gerry Chaput to speak to some of the details.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I’m not looking for an expanded—but, yes, I absolutely agree with you: Everything is about the health and safety of our residents. But I’m just wondering about this extra oversight which is required, the extra equipment: That is an extra cost to the government, to the MTO—

Ms. Carol Layton: Which we absorbed within our—

Mr. Joe Cimino: And where is that, and do we know—

Ms. Carol Layton: We did not increase our budget. We did not increase our overall budget. We made sure that we were offsetting from other areas, but we can speak to the cost.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: For the personnel involved—there’s only one director. He was already being paid at a director level and we just moved him over from his existing job to a new one. So we facilitated it from within. The five regional staff, the regional maintenance engineers, were also regional staff already existing that we accommodated or moved or changed their priorities to focus more on the maintenance. We did hire 20 new additional staff and we had budget for that.

Mr. Joe Cimino: You budgeted for that or it was within the budget? Sorry.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: It was in the budget last year—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: —as a component, as well as the additional equipment. So the salaries, the additional equipment, advances to the equipment to improve their visibility, as well as public education campaigns, all of that was included in last year’s budget. I believe the total was \$15.2 million for all of that. That was used province-wide. So it’s not just specifically the equipment; it was salaries, equipment etc.

Mr. Joe Cimino: That \$15.2 million: Has that depleted another service or another program? I’m not a financial person. How flexible is the budget and \$15.2 million relative to billions of dollars in a budget provincially? So that money was just shifted from somewhere else, from another program or—

Ms. Carol Layton: I guess the point I’d make there is that where our budget is growing is where we have our statutory obligations, but when it comes to discretionary expenditures, in a sense—area maintenance contracts are contractual, so those we can’t touch. But when it comes to how we’re accommodating sort of a higher and better use of our staff complement, that, then, is where we try to work through the flexibility, for example, of attrition and other things to try to come up with our salaries and wage

budget to stay relatively flat. The equipment purchase that we accommodated would have been an incremental increase and appreciated by our colleagues at Treasury Board.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. Thank you for that.

Just a quick yes or no answer: As this winter goes by and we take a look at, hopefully, improvements to the health and safety of our residents, is there an openness to the ministry, instead of going through an FOI process, to figure out where there were fines and how much? Is that going to be presented to the public or the critics?

Ms. Carol Layton: You’re talking about the fines in particular?

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes. It would be a good way to—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If there are fines—

Mr. Joe Cimino: If there are fines at the end of this season, it would be good to gauge the improvements, right? So instead of a media outlet going for an FOI and six months later getting these numbers, is the public going to get that information?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think the one thing we have to bear in mind at all times is the potential for commercial sensitivity around some of these contractual arrangements or obligations. I’m not in a position to make a commitment around proactive disclosure of what might take place in the absence of knowing whether or not the commitment that I would make today would potentially violate or in some way negatively impact that commercial sensitivity.

Mr. Joe Cimino: You’ll let us know, if it’s not commercially sensitive, whether we can get those numbers?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We’ll take it back, yes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Last point on winter maintenance, Minister: Can you give us—and if you can’t do it now, maybe in writing—a breakdown of how much money is spent on winter maintenance, say, from 2010 to now? We just heard that there’s \$15.2 million more this year for the oversight and new equipment. Is there a breakdown?

Ms. Carol Layton: We can take that back and—

Interjection.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Last year, we were looking at approximately \$145 million.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Some \$145 million, approximately, from last year.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Yes, \$66 million in the north and \$78 million in the south, and that’s strictly for the winter portion of it. Our maintenance budget is higher than that, but from a winter maintenance perspective, you’re looking at approximately \$150 million.

Mr. Joe Cimino: And we can get back—

Ms. Carol Layton: You want it to go back to 2010—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes, please.

Now, if I’m correct, your ministry is not one of the ministries that has a 6% reduction imposed on your ministry?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: A 6% reduction in—

Mr. Joe Cimino: In your overall budget.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: This conversation came up as part of last week’s questions and answers here at

estimates, and the deputy can clarify this, but it's—well, why don't you just jump in? It is a bit different for the Ministry of Transportation.

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes. Linda can speak to it specifically. But again, as a ministry, because we have such a large capital account, when you look at the numbers year over year, we're actually growing, but when it comes to, in a sense, the overhead of the ministry, we're flat or declining. I can give you the exact figures, if you wanted to see that.

Mr. Joe Cimino: From those meetings last week, I understood that, again, through you, Chair, there was a 4% reduction in core programs, I think they're called—core programming. If there is a reduction in the budget, what's listed underneath those core programs? What services—

Ms. Carol Layton: Linda McAusland, CAO, just jumped up here. She can take you through this.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you.

Ms. Linda McAusland: Good afternoon. So—

Mr. Joe Cimino: And quickly please, because I'd like to get on—

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, happy to do so.

Ms. Linda McAusland: Everything in our operating—those are the five vote items: 2701 is our ministry administration; policy and planning is 2702; road user safety and our IT. That's our core operating program. There's a reduction in those. Where we see growth is in our amortization, so amortization of our highways, as new projects come into service, amortization as our investment in transit goes up. And then our appropriation: As our capital program grows, the appropriation number goes up accordingly.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay, good. We'll move off winter maintenance, Minister, if that's okay with you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Absolutely. Whatever you'd like.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Two quick questions on Highway 69. In I believe it's called the southern highway plan, it lists Highway 69 widening or twinning or four-laning beyond 2016. The original commitment has always been 2017-18 for the completion of that four-laning. Do we have a new end date?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think it's important to recognize—and I suspect you would know this, obviously as someone who is directly impacted by this—of course our government does remain absolutely and firmly committed to ensuring that we complete the four-lane expansion of Highway 69 to Sudbury. Again, just so we're clear and on the record here, 50 kilometres of that project has already been completed, with an additional 20 kilometres currently under construction. The ministry is working very, very hard to make sure that we have the necessary approvals in place so that we can have the remaining 82 kilometres completed to finish off the project and finish the corridor.

There are some complexities to this project with respect to discussions that are ongoing with First Nations, for example—

Mr. Joe Cimino: That's my next question, actually. Are those discussions happening as we speak?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That's one of those examples. Yes, the discussions are ongoing.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Is it dependent on how these negotiations go in terms of the completion date being adjusted?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Gerry is going to come back up.

Ms. Carol Layton: Again, Gerry Chaput could actually—he's closer to the file.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: We've had numerous discussions with the three First Nations: Magnetawan, Shawanaga and Henvey Inlet. We're working on relationship agreements with them that will facilitate the property that we would require for the highway. We do meet with them regularly. We have Jean Beaucage working with us as well. Jean Beaucage is a facilitator between the First Nations and the ministry. We have him on a retainer with us to facilitate those discussions. We have aboriginal relations staff working on the relationship with the First Nations.

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As well, the previous minister went to an event last year at Shawanaga to reopen the negotiations and to move forward. We've made offers on aspects associated with past use of past highways, as well as potential cost-sharing, in terms of the contract, in terms of offering services to First Nation participation, either through commercial requirements in the contract that you hire or use First Nation personnel or businesses, as well as looking for opportunities to include them in the project through employment and other means.

Mr. Joe Cimino: So the 2017-18 date, realistically, is not going to be achieved. And as these negotiations go on, we'll have it in the statement somewhere, or in the long-term plan, of when it's going to be at least budgeted for?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We do have to remember, as Gerry said a second ago, that the work is ongoing with the First Nations. The project cannot proceed and be completed until that work is done.

The team is working very, very hard, and the commitment is there from our government to get this project done. It is a significant amount of money; for example, since 2003, more than \$734 million has been spent or invested on the expansion to four lanes, and to initiate some other safety improvements to Highway 69 between Port Severn and Sudbury. It's also important to note that when fully completed, this particular total construction cost to four-lane Highway 69 from Port Severn to Sudbury will exceed \$2.4 billion.

The design work has been completed. We are dealing, as Gerry said a second ago, with First Nations around property acquisition. We will continue to work as hard as we can to make sure the project moves forward as quickly as it can, because we do recognize the importance.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. So I'll look forward to the new date. Thank you. We'll get off that.

HOT lanes: Is it the government's intention to move forward with high-occupancy toll lanes?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If I'm not mistaken, that was, I believe, an original commitment made in budget 2012, I want to say—2012 or 2013.

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, 2013 and 2014.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In 2013 and 2014. I've been really lucky so far as minister, because when I've been out to announce a number of new HOV lanes that we are building on highways like 427, like 410 and others across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area, as we widen these highways and add in HOV lanes—and I think right now in Ontario we have 83 what I believe they call lane kilometres or kilometre lanes of HOV—that we're actually building in the ability to take the HOV lanes that we'll be building in the short term and transform them into HOT in terms of some of the ductwork that needs to be in place so that we're not completely rebuilding. But the commitment by the government is there to move forward, where practicable, with HOT lanes at some point in the future.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I guess our concern is, according to an FOI document that was received by our party, the government's own briefing book, I guess it's called, stated that "newer road pricing projects in the US and Europe are considered generally successful in managing demand"—and here's the big "but"—"but almost all projects failed to generate the projected revenues. Several projects even failed to cover the operating costs." I'm sure you know that. Then there was a project in Washington, DC, last year which lost, I believe it was—a 14-mile HOT lane in Washington, DC, lost \$11 million in just the first six weeks.

If the government is looking towards preparing ahead of time for potential future HOT lanes down the road, are we not concerned about them being financially viable?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Like in all of my answers that have come up now, from last week as well as this week, regarding how we move forward with all of our transit and transportation infrastructure investments, there will always be the kind of technical analysis that's done to ensure that we're making those investments in a way that delivers not only the positive results, those tangible, positive results—for example, helping people make commuter choices, improving our economic development, all of those things that we talk about a lot and that I've certainly referenced while being here at committee—there will also be that other lens brought to bear around the analysis and discussion about financial viability.

The plan right now is to move forward. When we make the investments in those highway projects that I referenced a second ago—widening highways like 427, 410, 404 and others—to be in a position to accommodate HOV lanes in the shortest term, we are also building in, or roughing in, as I like to say, the ability to make those HOT lanes instead of having to rebuild all of that later on, which I think, from a financial or fiscal standpoint, is a very responsible thing to do.

My expectation is that MTO will continue to do the analysis that's required to put us in a position so that we can decide where HOT lanes that will be financially

beneficial will be best placed, and that's the work that's ongoing right now. It's part of the overall analysis.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Is there a document, a plan, a map that shows where these future potential HOT lanes might go in?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's still part of the analysis that's taking place right now, so we're not in a position to roll out exactly where HOT lanes might be placed, except to say that we remain committed to dealing with that in a way that makes the most sense, provides people with options, and generates revenue for the people of Ontario or for the government of Ontario to invest again in the system.

But I did want to stress that, as we spend money—not insignificant money—to widen some crucial 400-series highways in the GTHA to add in additional HOV lanes, we are taking into account the future possibility of some of those lanes becoming HOTs, which, again, I think is the responsible thing to do.

Mr. Joe Cimino: My concern is whether the revenues will be there, because I did look into the AECOM KPMG report and looked at the cost of \$715,000, I believe, per kilometre. One of the HOT lanes that was mentioned in there was only going to bring in \$20 million per year, potentially, in revenue. So is the cost-benefit analysis taking place?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes, it's ongoing. That's what I was trying to get at. Perhaps I wasn't completely clear in my first answer. But that cost-benefit analysis is the work that is ongoing, not just around transportation infrastructure, like the potential creation or the potential building out of those HOT lanes, but also all of the transit projects that I was referencing in my responses to the member from Kitchener-Conestoga earlier.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The last point on this issue—

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Cimino, two minutes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Two minutes?

The preparation that would happen on a highway that's being built now for potential future HOT lanes: What if the HOT lanes don't get built? Is that money well spent? Is that—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, I think it is, for a couple of reasons. One, what we're primarily talking about, from what I recall, is essentially ducting, or the ability to—like if you're building a brand new house, and you decide, "Hey, at some point in the future, I may want to finish my basement. So what am I going to do? What steps will I take in the first instance while building my house to make sure that I can have the kind of system"—whatever it is, electrical, plumbing etc.—"in my house in 10 years or five years or two years? I'm going to build that in to the plan itself." Now, it's kind of similar to that with respect to the opportunity to have those HOV lanes become HOT lanes, instead of having to go back through to provide the technology you would need for it to be an HOT lane by breaking things apart and starting over, running wires or whatever the case may be.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes. And I'm just hoping the assumption's not there that we're spending this money to

potentially build them in and then that means we're doing a *fait accompli*, in that we are going to do them.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No. We're spending the money to make sure we widen those highways I referenced a second ago—410, 404, 427—to provide people with, again, more options, HOV lanes in the short term. We're building on that 83 lane kilometres I talked about a second ago. At a future point, once that technical business case analysis is done and a decision can be made with all of those facts and figures before us about where to put the HOT lanes, we'll be able to move forward, but in a way that actually makes sense from the standpoint of—there's no point building infrastructure twice, from my perspective. It's about making those decisions so that we have that ability to pivot towards something new as we roll it out.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Do I have another minute, Chair?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. Your time is complete.

Government members: Mr. Dong, 20 minutes.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Minister, this morning I asked a question around Presto cards, and I look forward to hearing the rest of your answer. It's a very exciting initiative that we're taking on.

Before you go into that, I just wanted to mention a couple of things that came to my mind. The member from Kitchener–Conestoga mentioned about advertising Metrolinx. On this side, I think there should be, as we roll out the Presto system, sufficient communication to teach people how to—that the system is getting rolled out. My riding is a very diverse riding, as you know, with first-generation immigrants from China, Korea, Italy, Portuguese Canadians. Especially for seniors, it will be very helpful to teach them, perhaps even in their own native language, how to use this new system. That will help us. So it's just a comment—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you.

Mr. Han Dong: —about the Presto system.

I'm very optimistic about the future of the Presto system, because I know around the world there are other jurisdictions that transformed this card into a transportation card. So people may be able to use it on taxis—I'm not suggesting that we should do that here, but I'm very optimistic. I think it will help us to closely monitor how efficient the system is, as a side benefit, and also maximize the convenience and comfort for the riders.

With all that said, I turn it over to you on the question on Presto.

1630

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sure. Thanks very much for the question. I appreciate your opening comments around making sure that we're in a position, generally speaking, as a government or via Metrolinx as an agency, to ensure that we're communicating effectively with individuals, whether they live in Trinity–Spadina or Kitchener, whatever the case is, around not only the potential upside, from my perspective, of dealing with the concept of fare integration or how we're rolling out or how successful we've been with Presto, or what the mechanics are

around how Presto would work once it's fully rolled out. I think one of the other things we have to keep in mind—I know in some of what I said last week and what I've said, I believe, here this week as well was that we are, over the next decade, going to experience a great deal of very, very significant infrastructure investment that will, throughout the process, and certainly by the end of the process, provide some extraordinary benefits to people living in communities. But there will be a period—and you experience it right now in Toronto with the work that's taking place so far around the Eglinton Crosstown; you experience it in Toronto and York region around the Spadina subway extension; you experience it in York region around the Viva BRT, and this list goes on. The same thing occurs when you're talking about roads, bridges and highways, wherever they are in the province of Ontario.

So from my perspective, it's important to ensure—and Metrolinx does this, and across government we do it to the extent that we're permitted. It is important to make sure that people living in all of these communities, when they see work taking place, have a clear sense of what it is that's taking place, what their money is being spent on. After all, these are revenues that we're generating from the people and the businesses who will ultimately benefit.

I've been to some other parts of North America and some other parts of the world where there is a very clear indication or very clear signage about what's taking place, and I think that, whether it's the team at Metrolinx or folks in some other agencies or the government writ large, we have a responsibility to the people we represent to make sure that we are communicating with them very effectively about the disruptions they may experience so they understand what the benefit will be for them, for their neighbours, for their family and friends. I know that's work that's already ongoing, and I'm sure it's work that will continue to take place.

Beyond traditional advertising, I think there's also a responsibility on the part of government and MPPs of all stripes to help communicate to the people we represent about what they're seeing in their own communities, at a very grassroots level, a very granular level. I know Metrolinx does some great work around what I'll call community offices—perhaps there's a more appropriate technical name—for what's taking place around projects like the Crosstown, around projects like the Union Pearson Express.

That's work that will continue, but I'm glad, in your opening comments this afternoon, that you've raised this as something that's important to people living in your own community of Trinity–Spadina, especially those for whom English might not be their first or primary language.

I mentioned earlier today when we were talking about fare integration—which, as I referenced, is a pretty important part of my own mandate letter that I received from the Premier, a mandate letter that's publicly available. As we've said, this is the first time in Ontario history that any individual with an interest in any one of our responsibilities can check to see, from that standpoint

of ensuring very clear government openness and transparency, that mandate letters are publicly available. I do have a responsibility to be in a position to make significant progress around fare and system integration.

Just really quickly, before the member from Newmarket–Aurora shows us his Presto card again, which I'm sure he will in short order, more than 1.2 million cards have been activated across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area since September 2014, representing more than 240 million taps. Presto users to date have paid out over \$946 million in fare payments.

We talk about Toronto—it's important—and a lot of people are aware of the fact that Presto is also being used in Ottawa. But there are also a number of other municipalities or communities—Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Mississauga, Brampton, the regions of both York and Durham, and 14 TTC subway stations, all GO Transit trains and buses—which are involved in the current rollout of the system.

It doesn't mean that our work is done. We're a long way from our work being completed. The Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx are actually in the process of working on some creative ideas around some potential announceables and projects with respect to fare integration—which I'll probably have more to say about in the coming weeks and months—that I think will demonstrate that when we all work together and when we are creative about this, we can provide residents—whether they're people living in parts of your riding or other parts of the city of Toronto, they can see how fare integration might work. I look forward to having more to say about that.

The work isn't complete. I think we've made some tremendous strides just in the last couple of years alone. I know that the ministry, Metrolinx and all of these municipally owned transit agencies—transit authorities—will keep working hard.

I've certainly heard from the people in my community who use the GO service along the Barrie line about the importance of making sure we have fare integration. It's a convenience issue for many of them. I know that's something that I'll keep working on.

Mr. Han Dong: Thank you very much, Minister. I look forward to those announcements you mentioned. I'll be working very closely with your office and your ministry to effectively communicate these convenience options and perhaps give you the feedback that I get from my constituency, and good suggestions. I look forward to that.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Ballard.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Thank you very much, Madam Chair. Through you to the minister. I'm hearing the same things from my residents who use the GO system and TTC about that need for continued rollout of Presto throughout the TTC system, as well as eventual fare integration. From where we sit, it absolutely makes sense. As an avid Presto card user—it's a fantastic system that has served me well.

Just a comment and a question: I don't have to tell you this—you're the minister—but any comprehensive trans-

portation system requires a lot of integrated types of movement, types of systems. Oftentimes we focus on the multi-billion dollar developments that are tunnelling underground or going above ground or whatever.

In York region, especially at the north end, the need for the rollout of the rapid bus system is very important. I've seen, as a councillor, how that has transformed Highway 7. I'm absolutely gobsmacked at what that has done there.

Although Davis Drive in Newmarket, in my riding of Newmarket–Aurora, seems to take forever, we know it's not. We're very excited about what is to come. I think all of us who live in that riding view it as a transformational project: Once it's done, it really will change the whole tenor of Newmarket, especially when it ties into all-day, two-way electrified GO train service. But we've had those discussions before.

I know that there are big plans to put that rapid busway system north and south on Yonge. I'm just wondering if you can take some time to fill us in on some of the other rapid bus systems that are planned, that are under way, so we get a better sense of—I mean, buses maybe aren't as sexy as subways and LRTs, but where I'm from, that's the way we get around. If you can fill us in on what's happening, what we can expect, I would appreciate it.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much for that question. I'm very lucky to serve as an MPP from York region, like you are. I was elected in a by-election in September 2012. Within a few weeks of that by-election, I was really fortunate because then-Minister of Transportation—and Infrastructure, at that time—Bob Chiarelli came up to my community and announced that there was a contract that was being awarded for somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$130 million, from what I recall, and it was for the construction that was the widening of Highway 7 through that piece of the Viva BRT that runs at the westernmost edge of where it's currently being built, so, roughly from Jane over to Highway 400, that stretch of Highway 7.

Every single day of the week—because this is part of my route that I use to and from this building—I see the work that's ongoing along Highway 7 which, interestingly, at that point, of course, will ultimately intersect with the Spadina subway extension that is currently under construction and should be finished and have trains running on that subway extension in 2016. So what a fascinating opportunity as the subway leaves the 416 for the very first time to come north to York region, and it will intersect with the Viva BRT.

1640

There is a significant, first of all, provincial leadership around the Spadina subway extension. Of course, it was my predecessor, the former MPP from my riding or my community, Mr. Sorbara, who pushed so hard for so many years to make sure that kind of infrastructure investment was made, close to 900 million provincial dollars—

Interjection.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —\$870 million in provincial support. Interestingly as well for that project, all three levels of government were at the table to make it happen. It couldn't have happened, really, without all three levels of government being at the table not only for the discussion but for the funding, which I think is a fantastic lesson to be learned about how we need to go forward over the next decade across this province with respect to securing stable federal funding from our federal counterparts.

But the \$1.4 billion invested provincially in the Viva BRT itself—you said in your opening that buses sometimes aren't sexy. Well, let me tell you something: Not that many weeks ago, I had the chance to go to the official opening of an eastern segment through the community of Markham and to stand alongside our colleague the member from Markham–Unionville while that particular eastern section of the Viva BRT was opened up. They gave us the opportunity to actually ride—both myself and Minister Chan and members of York region council and Markham town council, Markham city council now—to actually get on one of the buses and drive down the middle of the road in a dedicated lane and to hear first-hand from officials from York Region Transit and from Viva about some of the technological marvels that are included in this in terms of dealing with, for example, the signalling and the future potential—again, not that I'm here to make any announcements today, but the future potential around how one day, when sufficient ridership is in place, future governments can look to BRTs and consider whether they should be ultimately transformed into LRTs at some point in the future. So the work is ongoing around projects like the Viva BRT.

I also, interestingly, live in a part of Vaughan, or a part of York region, where along that very same corridor Brampton's Züm project, or Brampton's Züm service, runs right along Highway 7 as well. So it's interesting for people who live either in Brampton or in my community of Vaughan: You see York Region Transit; you see Brampton Transit. You know it's going to be tying into the TTC. We also have the Barrie GO line.

I'm just pointing these out to demonstrate that through a lot of careful work and a lot of planning, but at the same time that almost sort of organic need that needs to be filled in many of our fast-growing communities, we already have a lot of what I would call almost quasi-formal or informal service integration taking place.

So where we are now with respect to my mandate and the potential around fare integration and Presto and everything else is how we take it to and how it evolves to the next level. Then we more formally institute concepts around service integration, system integration, fare integration. It's something I'm very excited about, because I know that when we have fully rolled all of those pieces out, it will greatly benefit the people who live in all of the communities that we represent and make their commuting choices easier and give them more options. So it's a very exciting time to be working with all members of the Legislature on fascinating projects like these.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Absolutely. I know many of us have moved or relocated to areas where the bus rapid transit system will be located simply because it's such a cost saving for us—no need for two or three cars like we used to have to have in suburbia. It certainly makes life a lot better.

As I think one of the members pointed out today, or maybe one of the other days, we have children who are of a generation who really aren't interested, many of them, in getting a licence. I know one of my daughters still doesn't have a driver's licence because she really doesn't need one. Even in its infancy, the Viva Rapid, and the GO bus and that sort of thing, has replaced the need and her desire to own an expensive automobile etc. We can see, when people talk about transformational change, it's not just rhetoric. I actually see it in my family. I see it with my children's friends.

As I've mentioned before, the town of Aurora built its entire Promenade study and its Places to Grow study all around those transportation corridors, and that's paying off now with redevelopment of the town's downtown core and residential development happening in the downtown core, simply because people can walk to really good transportation and not have to get in a car and drive somewhere. I see that happening and look forward to the completion of the Davis Drive bus rapid transit system.

I wanted to mention one other thing about the Davis Drive situation. It's very difficult, as you know, for the small businesses that have been located along Davis Drive, but it's really nice to see, over the past few months, Metrolinx and GO and the region and the town and the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce all really pulling together to work with the small businesses, to make sure there's signage, to make sure there's access to those small businesses, to look at programs to help those small business owners get through the next year or so. There are Twitter accounts; there's Facebook; there are whole websites setting up just to support them. That, by and large, is because of the work that the town and the chamber and the region and Metrolinx are doing to make it so.

I think that when it's complete, as I said at the opening, it's going to be a fantastic system that really will transform my community of Newmarket. I thank the government for having that foresight to build all of those integrated systems.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That's terrific. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You have two minutes left.

Mr. Chris Ballard: Two minutes?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You had five, but now you have two.

Mr. Grant Crack: Am I allowed to have my two minutes later? No, no. Just kidding.

Minister, it's great to see you again. We'll just maybe start by introducing what I want to talk about: the Ottawa LRT. In two minutes it's going to be almost impossible. We, as a government, did invest and make a commitment of up to \$600 million back in December 2009. Pursuant

to that, the agreement was reached with the city of Ottawa in September 2011. I was just going to ask you about where we're at. Are we on budget with that, if you're aware, at this particular point?

I know that the Premier was also down in the riding a couple of months back. We talked about some expansion east-west, because I think I brought to your attention on a number of occasions how important transit is to the people in my riding of Glengarry–Prescott–Russell coming from Clarence–Rockland or in from the 417 East, and trying to alleviate the congestion there. Maybe if you want to have a bit of a discussion about the existing project under way and perhaps phase 2—that's phase 1, but phase 2, which is coming. Enjoy your 30 seconds.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): In 30 seconds or less.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I don't have a lot of time, but it's a great question. It's a very, very important project, of course, and you're 100% right about the provincial government being a very key contributor and a key partner in making sure that this project not only gets under way but that it gets completed and provides people in Ottawa and the Ottawa area with the kind of public transit they need. You mentioned the \$600 million. You are right about that. That is a provincial commitment which represents the single largest investment that has ever been made to the city of Ottawa's public transit system from the provincial government. You also referenced the fact that, not that long ago, the Premier was there, alongside many of our colleagues who represent Ottawa as a community here in this Legislature.

I know that, of course, Mayor Watson, who I gather was successfully elected last night, is someone who is not only a staunch supporter but a very effective advocate, as are all of our MPPs from eastern Ontario, yourself included, around making sure that we continue to invest in very crucial projects like this. I'm sure we'll talk more about this soon.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Harris, the official opposition: You have 21 minutes.

Mr. Michael Harris: Minister, I want to reach back a bit, and it's pertaining to a significant contract that was signed by, actually, Premier Kathleen Wynne when she was transportation minister in 2010. I'm sure you've had an opportunity to be well briefed on this because it is a significant contract in size. It was an agreement between Metrolinx and Bombardier on the purchase of 182 LRT vehicles. I'm just wondering if you're familiar with the agreement.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The specifics of the agreement signed in 2010? No.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right. I want you to help the committee by giving us an update—and perhaps if you can't, the deputy can—on where the 182 LRTs have gone to this date. Have they all been delivered? I'm just wondering if there are specifics as to the commitments. Those 182 LRT vehicles should be—I'm just wondering

if we've met all those commitments and where that's all at.

1650

Ms. Carol Layton: I think what I'll do is ask John Lieou to come up and speak about the reference that you have there to the LRT vehicles, because you're referencing the vehicles in the context of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT principally, and also other LRT initiatives themselves that have not yet started. I think John Lieou is probably the one who could come up and give a bit more detail. If not, we can get back to you.

Mr. Michael Harris: Good enough. Thanks.

Interjection.

Ms. Carol Layton: Actually, we're going to change it to Chris Langford, director of our transit policy branch.

Mr. Michael Harris: Hi, Chris. Welcome.

Mr. Christopher Langford: Thank you. Yes, the original contract was for 182 LRVs from Bombardier. The contract value is \$770 million. We'll have to get you some specifics on that because, in terms of moving forward, some of the vehicles obviously—in light of the Toronto transit plan and some of the projects, as they shake out, there is some further work that needs to be done on that. So we can get you some answers.

Mr. Michael Harris: Of the 182, roughly how many do you feel will be required?

Mr. Christopher Langford: How many will be required? Well, we know that the Scarborough LRT project has been cancelled and changed, so there are some adjustments that need to be there, but we can get you the specifics on that.

Mr. Michael Harris: Roughly how many were destined for that project?

Mr. Christopher Langford: I don't have that answer at my disposal. We'll take it back.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes. Obviously, there were obligations by the government with specific delivery dates throughout that contract. Has the government met all those, or has Bombardier met all those specified delivery dates?

Ms. Carol Layton: Let me just jump in on that one. In terms of delivery dates, as you could appreciate, the Eglinton Crosstown will be the first one to have the use of the LRT or LRV vehicles. Finch and Sheppard, of course, are on a slightly different path. As I recall, Bombardier is also going to be the supplier for the Waterloo LRT.

I guess the point I'd make there is that, in terms of scheduled dates, although Bombardier did have that strike, they are certainly working to fulfill those commitments in the timeline that is required—

Mr. Michael Harris: Will the government or Metrolinx be able to receive those LRT vehicles at the time that Bombardier will be able to deliver them?

Ms. Carol Layton: Based on the information we have, we do not anticipate that there is going to be an impact in terms of, for example, the first project that will be opened, which is the Eglinton Crosstown.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In 2020.

Ms. Carol Layton: In 2020.

Mr. Michael Harris: Are there any penalties under the terms of that contract for, perhaps, any delivery dates that can't be obligated, either by the government or by Bombardier itself?

Ms. Carol Layton: I suspect the contract is about that thick. I can't speak specifically to that particular contract. I do know that when you are working with a large company like that and you have a long-term relationship with many, many different projects—I think Metrolinx certainly works with the organization. If delivery is an issue, and we don't anticipate that it would be an issue at all, there definitely would be contractual implications to that sort of thing.

Mr. Michael Harris: Will you be able to table that contract to the committee?

Ms. Carol Layton: I believe that's probably a very commercially sensitive product.

Mr. Michael Harris: So no.

Ms. Carol Layton: Not that I'm aware of.

Mr. Michael Harris: Okay. I've asked for the contracts; you're likely not to give it to me. Can you find out if there's information that can be provided to this committee on the details of the penalties?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We'll take it back.

Ms. Carol Layton: We'll take it back. Sure.

Mr. Michael Harris: I guess I will ask for clarification on some of those questions I had, particularly with the 182 and Scarborough—the situation around the specific penalties, or what the government's intentions are for dispersing the additional LRT vehicles that they won't need now because they themselves cancelled it to build a subway after they had committed to building an LRT. I'm just wondering if you could provide the committee with the details of the specifics around those vehicles and any penalties that Ontario taxpayers will, in fact, have to incur—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We'll take it back.

Mr. Michael Harris: —and, if there's a supply issue, where they may go. So I've covered that off.

I want to get moving on to Bill 31, a bill you just recently tabled in the Legislature, particularly on section 100.2, "Inspection of vehicles" and the issuance of safety standard certificates. I'm wondering if you can tell me the specifics or if you're leaning towards an annual or semi-annual vehicle inspection. There's not a lot of information in the act on that section. I'm just wondering if you can explain.

Ms. Carol Layton: I'm not going to bring up Heidi Francis because she has a really bad case of laryngitis. She would be closest to that file, but she'd be whispering into the mike. I think I'll do the speaking, if you don't mind.

I'd say that the motor vehicle inspection stations, that section of the bill—we've been in the business of vehicle inspection for a pretty long period of time. If you go to different garages all around in the different cities that you're in, you'll see that they proudly have those signs up there. What we're looking to there is to basically up-

date or modernize, in a sense, a regime that is fairly long-standing.

What we have now with that aspect of that piece of legislation is the flexibility to go and look at it, work with different relevant stakeholders as well and think through exactly those sorts of details in terms of how, first and foremost, we want to make sure that we have an effective vehicle inspection program and hold true to the principles of that. So in terms of annual versus twice annual and all of that, that's the sort of detail that we'll be working out over the coming months.

Mr. Michael Harris: What type of vehicles would this apply to?

Ms. Carol Layton: The motor vehicle inspection program applies to those vehicles that have been sold through the resale program. There's a—

Mr. Michael Harris: So they could be as old as one year?

Ms. Carol Layton: They could be as old as one year. I'm looking to Heidi for a nod—I think so?

Ms. Heidi Francis: Nothing has changed.

Ms. Carol Layton: Nothing has changed in that regard. The policy of the sorts of vehicles that work their way through there—that particular regime won't change.

What we are talking about largely is the delivery model, the governance of that, the oversight of it. That's what we're going to be looking at. In the fullness of time, we'll certainly be able to provide more details, but that's the sort of detail that I wouldn't be able to even work through because we have a small team at the ministry that's going to develop all of that.

Mr. Michael Harris: That will be left up to regulation?

Ms. Carol Layton: I believe that's one that is left up to regulation. As you can appreciate, in that entire piece of legislation, which is very impressive and incredibly massive, there are different proclamation dates yet to be determined, royal assent and other things that are upon regulation. So there's quite a schedule attached to all the aspects.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes. I guess for us, it's a matter of leaving it open-ended and leaving it to regulation and not allowing legislators to have a proper idea as to what you have in mind here. It's pretty open-ended. We all know what happened with Drive Clean, where that went to a program that's—what has been deemed perhaps beyond its time, and it's costing Ontarians \$35 per vehicle. I believe they did lower it, but even the Auditor General spoke highly on that.

Where is this going? Is it going to include commercial passenger vehicles? Is this another revenue-generating scheme by the government on the backs of motorists to basically tax drivers? How do we—

Ms. Carol Layton: If I could just answer that. That's a good question: Is this a revenue-generating scheme on the backs of the taxpayers? We are guided—

Mr. Michael Harris: Drivers, rather.

Ms. Carol Layton: Or drivers. We are guided by a pretty strict policy, actually. It's called the Eurig rule, and

that is, unless we are delivering a tax—and that’s actually under our colleague ministry, the Ministry of Finance—all of our programs that the Ministry of Transportation administers that do generate revenue have to be on a cost-recovery basis, but cannot exceed cost recovery, and that would be the case with—

Mr. Michael Harris: We haven’t seen that to be always the case, though. The Ministry of the Environment operates Drive Clean, but it generates a significant amount of additional revenue—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Sure, but the reference of the deputy was to the Ministry of Transportation—

Mr. Michael Harris: No. You’re saying that all ministries who operate these programs should be cost recovery, yet we all know that Drive Clean generates a significant amount of surplus, which is an actual illegal tax. Drivers are already experiencing that program, and we just see some problems going down the path on this particular section and wanted to get some clarity on what type of vehicles will it be, how old will they be, will they be mandatory, how often they’ll be. That’s not contained within the bill, so there are a lot of unanswered questions to that.

1700

Ms. Carol Layton: You’re right, but all of those aspects of what you’ve talked about won’t change. It’s the passenger vehicles; it’s the same sort of program. What we’re talking about is how we just deliver that program and how we oversee that program.

As I recall, it goes back a few decades. I don’t know whether Heidi can attempt to talk. It’s all about modernizing the delivery of it to make it as effective as possible. But this will be on a cost-recovered basis.

Mr. Michael Harris: I’ve got a question also with regard to your legislation. There was an October 21 news release touting the proposed amendments to the Highway Traffic Act: “To address ambiguous wording, the proposed legislation would also clarify that only school buses can be painted chrome yellow.”

A Star article said, “The bill outlaws painting any vehicles the same chrome yellow as school buses....”

I’ve got a picture of a vehicle that’s chrome yellow. I’m not sure, Minister, if that looks—would you say that looks like a bus?

Ms. Carol Layton: That’s not chrome yellow. That’s lemon yellow.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That’s not chrome yellow.

Mr. Michael Harris: Well, we did a Google search. That’s what came up: chrome yellow. I’m just curious—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I’m not here to testify to the veracity of Google. Sorry. It’s a little outside of my responsibilities.

Mr. Michael Harris: Look, there are a lot of yellow cars out there. I’m just curious about the necessity to have this legislative change. Why is this change—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I didn’t hear the middle part. Sorry.

Mr. Michael Harris: Why is there a necessity for such a legislative change?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Perhaps Heidi can jump in as well, if she’d like to, if she’s able to. It’s actually funny. I have a family member who is a school bus driver in Simcoe. When I saw him over the Thanksgiving weekend or sometime around Thanksgiving, we had this discussion—

Mr. Michael Harris: He asked why he has to paint his car?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No, it was interesting, because he said to me that those who actually work in the industry—and he’s a bus driver himself. He made the comment that they’ve always been under the impression that this was already a requirement in place.

I think what we’re doing with this legislation is making sure that it’s a uniform policy around what is the only recognizable colour—I’m going to get this backwards now—that a school bus should be painted. The Ontario School Bus Association, which joined us for the announcement last week around the legislation—this is something they’ve asked for. I think it’s about providing that uniform standard so that people have a very clear sense of what colour the school bus should be.

Mr. Michael Harris: Will that prevent any vehicles other than school buses in Ontario from being chrome yellow? Yes?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Heidi?

Ms. Heidi Francis: What’s the question?

Ms. Carol Layton: Will it prevent any other school buses from being—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Any other vehicles. The question was about any other vehicle.

Ms. Carol Layton: Any vehicle? No.

Mr. Michael Harris: If I had a car that was chrome yellow, can I continue to operate it under—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Aside from your taste in colours for the car, I mean—

Mr. Michael Harris: I don’t have a car that’s yellow. I’m just saying if I did—

Ms. Carol Layton: Can I just give you a couple of scenarios, actually, where this is so relevant? Buying a used school bus, for example, which you can, and deciding that that’s the bus you’re going to drive your family out to the Maritime provinces in, using it as a camper, is a really good example of the sort of thing that we’re talking about.

The other thing, too, is that uniformity that the minister spoke about. It wasn’t that long ago, for example, that there was a bus company called Cardinal, and their buses were white with a little red cardinal painted on them.

That uniformity, having that very identifiable school bus—there are many, many yellow vehicles out there. We’re not going to be out there pulling yellow vehicles off the road because of what is chrome versus whatever. I think the key thing is the school bus and making sure that that bus is chrome yellow. If you buy a second-hand one, it had better get painted. It had better not be running on the roads.

Mr. Michael Harris: So if you’re the Griswolds and want to go on a family vacation, you’re going to need to paint the bus.

Anyway, so chrome yellow vehicles, other than buses, will still be allowed on Ontario roads, or no?

Ms. Carol Layton: A chrome yellow vehicle that is—I don't know what it is. A Prius, or whatever—

Mr. Michael Harris: Like this car. Just assume that it was chrome yellow. I'm just wondering if this nice Camaro—I don't know if that's chrome yellow, but—

Ms. Carol Layton: Okay, so you've obviously done some really good research here.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Is that your car?

Mr. Michael Harris: It's not.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Okay.

Mr. Michael Harris: I wish.

Ms. Carol Layton: Okay, you've thrown your best at us; we'll throw our best at you. I'm going to bring up Teepu Khawja.

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm just wondering—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: He'll answer.

Ms. Carol Layton: We'll have Teepu Khawja—if you could identify yourself.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: The simple answer is that those types of cars will still—

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Could you identify yourself?

Mr. Teepu Khawja: Sorry. Teepu Khawja, acting director at MTO.

The simple answer is that those types of vehicles will still be allowed. The intent of this is really just a house-keeping, clarifying type of amendment. There was a request by one of our major stakeholders, the Ontario School Bus Association.

Mr. Michael Harris: Right.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: Their concern was that there are these school buses that are bought aftermarket, used.

Mr. Michael Harris: Got you.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: In some cases, they're not kept up. The upkeep isn't where it should be. They're dilapidated. There are concerns among the public that if they're not kept up to par—because they look yellow; they haven't been painted. There might be some spillover effect, unnecessary concerns, that “That's a school bus, but it's not being kept up to par” when in fact—

Mr. Michael Harris: No, that's a fair answer. I'm just curious for folks who ask me, who have vehicles—a truck, a car—that is chrome yellow—

Mr. Teepu Khawja: But any car can be chrome yellow; it won't prevent that.

Mr. Michael Harris: They will still be allowed to drive on Ontario highways.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: Yes.

Mr. Michael Harris: Good enough.

Quickly, because I know I only have four minutes or something like that: Your colleague Mr. Crack brought, back on November 13, a motion that would update regulation 316 under the Highway Traffic Act. It received unanimous consent in the House, but since then really nothing has happened. I'm sure you're aware of that because you were a member then.

Updating the all-terrain vehicle regulation: I also sent you a letter, I believe, in September on this, outlining the issue. You had said that you're organizing a working group to update the regulation. The Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council was told that they would hear back in a few weeks. Has your ministry contacted some of those groups, and can you update the committee as to where that regulation change is at?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes, absolutely.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: Sure. There's an umbrella group known as the Ontario Powersports Working Group and one of the members is COHV, the acronym you just mentioned. I actually called him personally a few weeks ago saying that we've been directed to put forward a working group, and we intend to hold it over the fall and develop a workable solution on this issue, which is exactly that: extending on-road access to additional off-road vehicle types. My branch is leading those consultations, and our intent is to hold them at the end of November or early December, true to being in the fall of 2014.

Mr. Michael Harris: So you've met already with this working group?

Mr. Teepu Khawja: No. We intended to send out invitations in coming weeks and hold the first kickoff meeting at the end of November or early December.

Mr. Michael Harris: What's the intent of the meeting? I suppose—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The intent of the meeting is to reach out to the interested stakeholders. You're right; you did send correspondence on this.

Of course, Mr. Crack had an item before the Legislature. I think you said November 13; that sounds like it's around the right time. I've heard from other MPPs from all three parties on this one, so we understand the importance of dealing with this issue. We wanted to conduct some outreach to the various stakeholders to report back on how best to resolve the issues that still may be of concern so that we can have some kind of response in place.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes, it's a fairly simple reg change. I'm just wondering why hasn't it been done. Just change the reg—why not?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I think we just want to make sure that after we've done the consultation that we move forward in the right way.

Mr. Michael Harris: Because I've got a couple of minutes left, just a couple of housekeeping things: Roundabouts are a pretty big deal in the region of Waterloo. I'm just wondering why any changes to the Highway Traffic Act in this particular bill didn't address any of the roundabout changes that really should be required.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I know that you have a great deal of knowledge and interest—and some would say, perhaps, passion—about roundabouts, which I think is to be commended. As the deputy mentioned in one of her remarks just a second ago, this is a very large bill that contains multiple literally moving parts. This is the consolidation of two previous pieces of legislation, the former Bills 173 and 34, both of which died on the order

paper. There's a lot in this legislation. There are some new items: drug-impaired driving and a handful of others that we talked about a second ago. I don't want you to assume that, because you don't see items relating to roundabouts in this legislation, that means that the ministry is not looking at this, that we're not prepared to have the ongoing discussion about this. I didn't feel that at this point in time, with everything else that we have in this particular legislation, that it was appropriate to move forward with any changes around roundabouts. But we should keep talking about it because I know, as I said earlier, that this is something that you are very passionate about.

Mr. Michael Harris: Yes. Would you say that you would support, perhaps, the common sense initiative to require drivers, when they go to get their G2 or G road exams, to be tested on how to properly enter and exit a roundabout? Would that not make sense to include that on the road test where applicable?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Your time is up.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Time is up.

Mr. Michael Harris: Thirty seconds left.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: For what it's worth, I am led to believe that that's in the driver's handbook currently.

Mr. Michael Harris: Handbook but not the road test.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Right. A fair point but the Chair is—I'll definitely take it back, and we'll keep talking. I'm happy to keep having the conversation. Thank you.

1710

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Mr. Cimino, 20 minutes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you, Chair.

I attended, Minister, a very good briefing by your staff: the making ontario's roads safer act, 2014, stakeholder summary, the debrief. That was on October 22, 2014. On page 9, it does talk about the chrome yellow bus regulation. I did bring up the question there—and it makes sense in another way, Minister, because in a lot of municipalities like Sudbury, for example, school buses are exempt from the no-truck zones. So school buses can drive in residential areas where transports cannot. So if somebody is purchasing a bus and it's yellow, well, then, there's a falsehood there that they might be in a neighbourhood where they're not supposed to be.

I did ask the question, though, and maybe if you can have clarification. I did ask the question because the way it was written, it sounded like only buses could be—in the oral discussion—chrome yellow. Is that the case? Because I know in Sudbury, for example, we see sometimes blue buses or white buses. So do the buses have to be all chrome yellow?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If I understand, from what we said in the earlier round of responses to Mr. Harris, yes, going forward school buses in Ontario will only be permitted to be chrome yellow.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. Thank you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No problem.

Ms. Carol Layton: Did you want to add to that, Teepu?

Mr. Teepu Khawja: No. It's just that they have to be chrome yellow and performing their duties of transporting children. At that point, they have to be chrome yellow.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you for that clarification. It makes sense.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: No problem.

Mr. Joe Cimino: We're going to move on to the Niagara-to-GTA transportation corridor.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Okay.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The Niagara-to-GTA transportation corridor study recommended and said there's a future possibility for expansion of the GO train. I know our member from the area, Wayne Gates, is extremely passionate about getting more GO train service daily—maybe a couple of runs—to Niagara. What does “future possibility” mean? Is the government looking at that now?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: While here at estimates, I'm almost positive the issue of Niagara Falls and GO service for Niagara came up when Ms. DiNovo had the opportunity to ask a question about that. I'll share again with you what we discussed last week and what I'm happy to say. Not only has your colleague Mr. Gates talked about this in the past—in fact I think over the summer he asked me a question in the Legislature about this. Of course our member, Mr. Bradley, from St. Catharines, who has been serving with distinction in this building for many, many years, is also very passionate about this issue with respect to his community. The chair of the region, Mr. Burroughs, who I understand was successfully re-elected last night as councillor for his municipality, and other mayors met with me at AMO back in August. When I was down in Niagara-on-the-Lake just late last week for the economic summit, I also had the chance to speak with him as well.

There's no doubt that there's an extraordinary amount of passion and interest and some really great work that's being done by the municipalities in Niagara not only about the importance and the opportunity for GO train service to their communities—this is over and above what's provided during the summers etc. The request that has been put to us is for two trains in the morning and two trains in the afternoon. The commitment that we have made as a government to the regional chair and the mayors from all of the municipalities is that we will—and I have already relayed this to Metrolinx—work very quickly and very closely with folks from Niagara on the technical analysis and the business case research that needs to be done to determine how best to move forward with what's being requested in Niagara.

I always say there are a lot of moving parts in transportation. People think I'm trying to be funny. I'm not. There are genuinely a lot of moving parts around this. There are questions that have been asked, and I think legitimately so, around exactly what kind of infrastructure work would need to be put in place or completed before we could consistently and reliably provide train service. That is part of the work that needs to be done.

I was really happy to have the chance to meet with representatives from the municipalities last week. I hear about it regularly from my colleague Mr. Bradley. I have no doubt that before we are done this particular session I'm sure I'll hear about it again from Mr. Gates. I'm happy you asked the question here today. I'm happy Ms. DiNovo asked the question last week.

But like everything else I've talked about around our public transit plans, whether we're talking about two-way, all-day GO and how that will be implemented over the next decade—we'll be in a better position to make specific announcements once the technical analysis and business case research has been completed.

Mr. Joe Cimino: So if I heard you right, sir, the business study, the feasibility study, is under way?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Niagara provided us late last week with some additional work. They've done a lot of work on this already, and they provided us with some updated information late last week. Metrolinx is aware of the updated information. There will be an ongoing, intensive discussion taking place in short order around the numbers that are included in this report to make sure that we get it right.

Mr. Joe Cimino: On the same topic, the same corridor study discussed two extra HOV lanes, an expansion of the QEW. Is that project earmarked to happen, or where are we at with that? I know there was some opposition.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Can you ask the last part of the question again? Sorry, Mr. Cimino.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The Niagara-GTA corridor study recommended two more HOV lanes from, I believe, Niagara to Hamilton or thereabouts. Is that under way?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes. What we're looking at now is making sure that we have a comprehensive solution to some of the challenges that are being faced in Niagara region, so—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Because there are challenges brought forward by folks. Is that—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Again, we're not in a position to make a commitment around any of these elements until we actually land in a place that makes the most sense in terms of, will it be GO train service? If it is going to be GO train service, what will it look like and when will that be implemented, versus how would we potentially expand the QEW and provide more lane kilometres of HOVs? These are questions that are still being analyzed, being discussed internally. We'll hopefully have something to say about all of it in fairly short order.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. Some other questions that came forward from some of our members are in terms of, If somebody loses their licence for a medical reason. One of the frequently asked questions is how long does it take to get it back after it has been reviewed by—I guess there's a medical advisory committee, and it's six weeks. So the question is, is six weeks reasonable if some people need their licence to earn an income? Comment on the six-week period.

Ms. Carol Layton: I'm not sure—actually, there's Teepu.

I guess the only point that I'd make just while Teepu is settling in is, what's critical there is that that person truly is determined to be fit to drive versus the income. We appreciate the hardship that can cause. Maybe I'll have Teepu Khawja speak on this.

Mr. Teepu Khawja: Sure, Deputy. I can't really speak to the appropriateness of six weeks. I can say that the medical review section ensures that it does its due diligence to do exactly what the deputy just said in terms of ensuring that the drivers who are on the road who are reported to them are medically fit to do so.

The service standard right now is 30 days. There have been a lot of improvements. It's a section that's constantly under review for improvements, because we know that this is one area of concern from the public that's often raised. They have constantly renewed their program and pursued improvements.

I know there has been an improvement in terms of the response times. I think it's almost up to the high 80s in per cent—I don't have the exact figure in front of me—in terms of meeting the standard time. So there are constant improvements, and they continue to improve it.

Ms. Carol Layton: If I could just add to that, we have actually done a fair amount in response to, obviously, the concerns out there, because we do appreciate the need and how critical it is for people to be able to drive. There has been an organizational change at the Ministry of Transportation, extensive training, the addition of what you'd call, I guess, business process, reengineering, systems improvements, all of that, because we were above the 30-day service standard—that's 30 business days—trying to keep at it. It would be great to someday achieve it 100%, all the time. So there's a fair amount of work in that area.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you.

New topic, Mr. Miller's favourite topic—

Hon. Steven Del Duca: You have to narrow it down for us.

Mr. Joe Cimino: —the Pan/Parapan Am—

Ms. Carol Layton: Okay. Sure.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Oh, okay, sorry. It's the Pan Am one; okay.

Mr. Joe Cimino: That might come up as well.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: He's got a few.

Mr. Joe Cimino: The Pan/Parapan Am Games: In "Policy and planning," 2702-01, page 50, there's a \$35.7-million allocation toward new initiatives for the games. If we could have some clarification of what that money is being used for. Then I believe there is also a directorship staff member allocated.

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, there is.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: If I can just say really quickly at a high level—and I'll try to be very quick, because I know the deputy is going to want to delve into some of these details—I've had the chance to learn over the last four months about not only what will be taking place in Ontario that's very exciting around Pan Am; there is a ton of work that the team at MTO which is responsible for the transportation component has done and will continue

to do. But sort of like when I talk about the transit investments, managing expectations and communicating to the public about what that challenge looks like, we have a similar challenge here. With the number of athletes and coaches and spectators that we anticipate will be coming to Ontario, to the greater Toronto and Hamilton area and, let's hope, for tourist purposes, beyond the GTHA to spend some of their money and help boost our economy as a result of the Pan Am Games, we have a considerable amount of work that has already taken place and will need to take place, including—and I try to take every opportunity to encourage residents and business owners living across our region. We have a number of months until the games actually begin, but I would sincerely hope that we will all do our best to try, wherever we can, wherever it's possible and practical, to modify our own commuting patterns. A number of employers, I think, have a really terrific opportunity over the number of days that the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games are taking place to perhaps look at flexible hours, later start times, earlier start times for employees in a partnership to provide us with the opportunity to reduce some of our pre-existing load, let's call it, on our roads, to help make this happen.

1720

Mr. Joe Cimino: So that's where this money is going?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm going to ask the deputy to delve into the details specifically, but I just want to say I try to take the chance to let people know, "Hey, let's all work on this together," because it's going to be a really spectacular success, but it will definitely involve challenges.

Ms. Carol Layton: We will have an allocation, absolutely, this year, in 2014-15, as well as in 2015-16, as we work toward the July 10 start of the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

As the minister spoke, it's a significant initiative, certainly, for the ministry, because we are charged with working with all the different communities, and the 10 or so different transit authorities as well, and GO, to achieve, in a sense, three objectives.

One is to make sure that the athletes and the officials and the dignitaries get to the games on time; secondly, to make sure that the spectators have a very positive travel experience. But we also have, as you can appreciate, a very large geographic footprint over which the games are being held, and we want to make sure that the region keeps functioning—so things like looking at those large employers and where they can look for flexibility in terms of how their folks come to work and in what modes.

We are very much focused on what we call transportation demand management. The sort of cost that we're talking about, first of all, is working with IBI in particular for the development not just of a significant transportation strategy framework, because we have to identify, among all the different towns—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Sorry. IBI Engineering?

Ms. Carol Layton: IBI Engineering, yes.

So, working through the games route network—where would we have HOV lanes, where would we not—

because we would have to expand that. Where do we have to put signage; where don't we have to? We have to appreciate that people need to know where to go. For example, all of those different venues that we know aren't going to have that name during the holding of the Pan Am and Parapan Am Games—they could have a different one based on sponsorship, so having signage and way-finding is going to be important; having a trip planner both for transit as well as for road so that people can figure out where they're going to go in that context as well; making sure that we're dealing with road incident management, with the shipping community, making sure that we have off-peak delivery pilots, and therefore working with the communities in that context as well.

Planning has a cost to it, especially when you have to do the drill-down not just from the overall strategic framework that we have right now, but right down into the local area plans everywhere. It's Barrie, it's Welland, it's Oshawa, it's Ajax, it's Hamilton. It's extensive work.

How do we change, for example, perhaps the signalization at intersections, everything like that, to support, once again, getting those athletes and those coaches and those officials on time? Because you know that that's going to be a very regrettable above-the-fold if an athlete is disqualified because they did not get to the games on time.

Likewise, we're going to have visitors from many different jurisdictions coming, many of whom won't speak English, and we have to be able to communicate to them so they can get to the games on time.

We also, of course, have to make sure that the region—and let's face it: We know that we're dealing with the largest urban region certainly in the country, and one of the fastest-growing urban regions in North America. We also know that we're dealing with congestion already.

So we have been in that transportation framework—we've talked about it. We've talked about it publicly that we have to work to basically get congestion down by about 20%. So we talk about retiming, remoting, reducing and rerouting. You can almost have a story behind every one of those: rerouting in terms of that games route network that we're identifying, retiming in terms of that off-peak delivery sort of pilot that we're talking about; re-moding, in terms of really shifting as many people as we can from their cars onto transit and focus on that. And then there's a cost to that. For example, in the city of Toronto—and we have some members here—you may appreciate that the subway doesn't start running on Sunday until 9 a.m. So if you want to come downtown for something—I live in the west end of the city—you have to find an alternate way if you want to be there by 8 a.m. or 7 a.m. So we're also going to have to compensate the different transit services for the incremental service they provide. That's an example of one of the costs we're going to be providing as well.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You've got about three minutes, Mr. Cimino.

Interjection.

Mr. Joe Cimino: I'll ask a quick one. If I have another question, I'll come back to this.

In terms of the aviation fuel tax, Minister or Deputy Minister—this should be a quick answer—northern and remote airports, I believe, were to be exempt from the aviation fuel tax. Is this still the case, and are the monies being invested in airport infrastructure—or where is that money being invested?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: My understanding is that there was—I'll call it in my words, and not necessarily the technically correct words, so forgive me if I'm wrong—a mitigation strategy to deal with remote communities and remote airports in communities and the impact it might have, and that work is ongoing, led by the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Sorry. Maybe I didn't understand.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's led by the Ministry of Finance, given that we're talking about a tax. But there is a mitigation strategy we committed to that, as I understand it, we are doing.

Mr. Joe Cimino: And exempt northern and rural airports?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I'm not going to use the word "exempt." That's a question that's best posed to the Ministry of Finance.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. So when they're in front of this committee, it can be asked at that time?

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Okay. Thank you.

Quickly, back to the Pan Am/Parapan Games: Is that director position somebody in-house already? I understand we've hired this consultant, IBI. Is this director already in place, or is it a new position?

Ms. Carol Layton: We have a small team—I think less than 20 people right now—that we've actually moved from different jobs. Again, using what flexibility you can in a budget—for example, from attrition or delayed hirings and all that—we have funded our team from that. So we do have an executive director that we just put in place, dedicated to the job. And we actually have a director, as well as a small complement after that.

I can assure you that these are the folks who are out there talking to the 20 or 30 different communities, talking to the different transit authorities, working with the Toronto 2015 people, working with the many different stakeholders, making sure that those games are not just games that meet the three different goals I talked about, but are also very accessible games. So it's a very hard-working small, little team, time-limited. They are there to deliver, and then it will be a question of phasing them out once the games are incredibly successfully delivered in the greater Toronto and Hamilton area.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You have 30 seconds, if you have anything further.

Mr. Joe Cimino: Can I delay my 30 seconds?

Mr. Michael Harris: Sure.

Mr. Joe Cimino: IBI: Obviously they've been working over the last couple of years; this isn't something that can happen overnight. Their consulting is spread over—is it a two-year budget?

Ms. Carol Layton: We've been working with them probably for the better part of two years. In fact, if you want to see the fruits of their labour—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Yes, please.

Ms. Carol Layton: —it's on our website. The strategic transportation framework for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games was posted, I believe it was—was it March? It's been up there for quite a while now. We're continuing to work with them as we do, as I said, the drilldown from that large framework document right down into roads and streets and local areas and venues. But anyway, we are very public with that document.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you. Government members?

Mr. Crack, 20 minutes.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Madam Chair. We get into a little more depth on the Ottawa LRT. I know, Minister, that you were just about to begin speaking about some of the great work that is under way in Ottawa. But prior to that, I just wanted to talk about the city of Ottawa master transportation plan that they tabled back in, I think it was, February—no, November—2013. It did raise considerable concern from the mayors and councillors in my riding of Glengarry—Prescott—Russell that part of that master plan did not include the widening of 174/17 that we had talked about last time in the previous round of questioning the other day.

1730

Basically, with our commitment to phase 2—and I know you were going to touch on that—of the LRT, and combining that with the plan for phase 1, the upgrades by the province, specifically the widening of the 417 from Nicholas to the split, for those who are familiar with the city of Ottawa—it's important that we actually prepare for future expansion and future light rail, and getting some of that infrastructure in place. There's no use in spending large amounts of money on infrastructure if people are going to be in congestion five kilometres down the road. I know that we've taken a very strategic approach as a government to do it right.

So the concern that is raised, again, is that in the city of Ottawa's master transportation plan, that widening of 174/17 was not taken into consideration. We did meet with the mayor's office, and a number of mayors and officials from the United Counties of Prescott and Russell went to Ottawa. They assured us that it's still a priority project for them, but they want us to continue with the EA and determine a set amount of financing: How is the project going to be financed?

During this environmental assessment, by the way, the city of Ottawa has actually added their plan to bring light rail down to Trim Road from near the split there, so it's all moving forward. Of course, it's not moving forward quickly enough, because for us in the eastern part of the city of Ottawa—I hear a lot of constituents and elected officials indicating that they don't think the east is being treated as fairly as, perhaps, the west of Ottawa is and is not developing as quickly as it should, because there are not four lanes like the 416 coming in, the four lanes from

Carleton Place coming in, the four lanes coming down 17, which goes north up to Renfrew.

Minister, maybe you could just talk to us about the phase 1, where we're at, and the phase 2 that the Premier announced a number of months ago, and keep on the radar the fact that once this environmental assessment is done and a preferred corridor is chosen in the east—and how we could look at potentially funding the expansion of 174/17 so that there's more mobility of traffic, not only from my riding, but the Highway 17 itself runs from the Quebec border and is actually a major thoroughfare as well. I leave it with you.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much for that question. I'm happy to talk, as I was earlier, about the Ottawa LRT project. I just want to make sure, so it is clearly understood—we are committed to phase 1 of that project. We are providing funding along with our other partners on that, the up-to-\$600-million we talked about in the last round. There has been no commitment from the provincial government yet regarding phase 2, and that's largely because, to this point—because phase 1 is under construction—there is still a lot of work and information that needs to be provided to the province and other potential funding partners so that we can make a determination around phase 2.

I have no doubt that when the Premier was in Ottawa and took the tour and stood alongside some of our colleagues and Mayor Watson, there was a very considerable, enthusiastic effort made by those individuals to make sure that the Premier understood how grateful the community is for the up-to-\$600-million for phase 1 but also the potential importance for taking a very serious look at phase 2. I have no doubt that I will continue to hear, as will the Premier and as will all of us who serve in this place, about the importance of completing phase 1 and getting on with phase 2. I certainly do respect that as part of the traditional advocacy process, but I just wanted to make sure we're clear: We haven't actually announced that we will be providing funding to phase 2 at this point because we are awaiting more information and there is more work that needs to be done.

As I was saying earlier in the first round of questioning on this, our government has committed up to \$600 million toward building rapid transit in Ottawa. This does make it the largest single investment that the provincial government has ever made in the city of Ottawa's public transit system. The new, \$2.1-billion LRT project—which is what it is in totality, as you well know and as others do—will span the downtown from Tunney's Pasture in the west to Blair Station in the east. I know I'm providing information to you and the committee members that many of you already know, but I do think it's important that we put this on the record.

Preliminary construction of this line began in April 2013. As of September 11, 2014, the Rideau Transit Group, the entity that's dealing with this, has completed over 50% of tunnelling; and the municipality, the community, the region expects that this project will create approximately 20,000 jobs—not an inconsiderable

number; in fact, a number that's very similar to the number of jobs that will be created because of the Spadina subway extension, for example, that I referenced earlier today, that is coming to York University and up into York region.

There are a lot of other details that I could go into about phase 1 of Ottawa LRT, but I know there was a second part to your very eloquent question about what's taken place in your own community. I hope some of the details that I'll provide right now at a high level will give you a sense of where things stand right now with respect to what you're asking about.

You may know this, and I apologize if I'm providing you with information that you're already aware of, but it is important, I think, for me to say this: In May 2010, the ministry agreed to contribute \$4 million for the environmental assessment of Prescott-Russell Road 17. A total of \$3.75 million is being paid to the United Counties of Prescott and Russell in accordance with the terms of the funding agreement, and the projected completion date is March 31, 2015, according to the information that I have.

In May 2011, the ministry also agreed to contribute \$1 million to the city of Ottawa to add Ottawa Road 174 to the environmental assessment. In August 2007, the province announced a \$40-million commitment to the city of Ottawa towards the future expansion of Ottawa Road 174 and Prescott-Russell Road 17. And the information goes on from there.

It is important, I think, for me to stress as well that the government of Ontario believes that the completion of this project will significantly assist with respect to attracting economic growth—I know you've mentioned this, not only in your comments here today but in some of the other conversations that you and I have had over the last number of weeks—because we'll be able to support the local economy and encourage growth and development.

That gives you a bit of a high-level sketch of where things stand, where they've stood in the past, where they stand right now. I know, as with all other things relating to eastern Ontario and specifically to your own community, that you will continue to be a very effective champion for the kind of infrastructure investments we need.

I should also stress that when we made the commitment at AMO to invest \$29 billion over the next 10 years, that of course included up to \$14 billion for projects that fall outside the greater Toronto and Hamilton area. I believe, if memory serves now, you were at the AMO conference as well this past summer, and you will know that amongst many other requests that have flowed in to Premier Wynne and to our government, the Premier herself and Minister Leal and Minister Duguid were in a position to announce, while we were at that conference, the \$100-million Ontario Community Infrastructure Fund, which was very, very well received by representatives of that community.

So between that \$100 million annually—which over a decade would amount, obviously, to \$1 billion—plus the other monies that are contained in the ambitious plan we

have for transit and transportation infrastructure across the province of Ontario over the next decade, I have no doubt that we'll have a great deal of success continuing to work with you and the communities that you represent on making sure that those really critical road and highway arteries are in the state that they should be in, in order to provide a better quality of life for your residents but also help spur economic development and growth.

Mr. Grant Crack: Thank you, Minister.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Ms. Kiwala?

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: I have to say I'm really glad that today's discussion started out with one of my favourite topics, the ferry system and the Amherst Island ferry, even though that one's out of my riding. I'm delighted that you're speaking to all of the different moving parts of the transportation system. It has been a very interesting process and I've learned an awful lot.

The importance of those intricate projects and responsibilities that you have cannot be better exemplified than by what happened in Howe Island this past winter, when the bubbler system broke and the residents of Howe Island were stranded for three days. It was a very challenging time for them, as I'm sure you can appreciate. I'm very glad that the situation has been resolved and measures have been taken to prevent that kind of thing from happening again in the future.

1740

Minister, you've indicated that the Union Pearson Express—I'm jumping into the next part of the question here—will be ready for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. As PA to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport, part of my mandate is to promote the games, not only to Ontario residents but also internationally and throughout the province.

One of the things I would like to know about is what services the Union Pearson Express will provide. How many stops will there be? Also, can you tell me if this project will be on time for the games?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Thanks very much for that question. You threw me for a bit of a loop because you started talking about Wolfe Island and the ferries, and then literally—because I know we're entertaining people here at committee with all of the metaphors that we're using relating to transportation—you switched gears and you jumped over to the Union Pearson Express and the potential positive impact—

Mr. Joe Cimino: Another moving part.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —another moving part—here at the Ministry of Transportation in terms of dealing with the Union Pearson Express.

I know this came up a little bit last week when Ms. DiNovo was asking questions around a similar topic. It's a very exciting project, and I'm very happy to repeat here at committee today that the Union Pearson Express is a significant infrastructure project that is being delivered on time and on budget. I know there has been a ton of interest and excitement not only in the communities through which this particular service will run, but broadly speaking; because for the first time ever, of course, there

will be a dedicated air-rail link between Pearson airport and Union Station. The commitment that was made was that it would be a service that would be in place and operating in time for the Pan Am/Parapan Am Games. As I said last week and say again today, that's what we are going to deliver.

I know that will provide the spectators and community residents here and tourists coming from around the Americas and, frankly, around the world to witness and participate in these games and experience all that Ontario has to offer—which I think will be not just during that window but, hopefully, before and after and on an on-going basis—a significant boost to the tourism sector here in the province of Ontario.

I think you had asked how many stops in total.

Ms. Carol Layton: From Union, it's four. It's two in between.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: It's four in total. It's Union, two other stations and then Pearson. It's four stops in total, if you're looking at it from that perspective. I think you know what I mean.

As I said a second ago, it is going to provide people who are visiting this community, whether it's for Pan Am/Parapan or generally speaking, with that opportunity, for the first time ever, of having a variety of options.

I look forward to seeing that service go live and be active for us in 2015, and having the opportunity to take it myself, hopefully, in the not-too-distant future. I would encourage everyone here to take that opportunity when the need or that option should arise.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: It's very exciting.

I'm going to just pull back a little bit again to the ferry system now, and ask you some questions about the Wolfe Island ferry to AMO this year. It was certainly one of the big topics of discussion for Kingston and the Islands, and particularly the mayor.

I know that we've got an environmental assessment to do. I'm just wondering if you can talk to me a little bit about timelines on the environmental assessment and when we might be in a position to be breaking a bottle of champagne on that ferry boat.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: The deputy is going to provide some specifics.

Ms. Carol Layton: Sure, and I might get Gerry Chaput as well, because as you know, that's an important service in our east region.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Gerry likes champagne, too.

Laughter.

Ms. Carol Layton: That ferry is a seven-day service: every day of the year, 19 trips to the mainland. The ministry has completed the Wolfe Island transportation study to determine a sustainable plan for that access between Wolfe Island and the mainland. It reviewed solutions within a 20-year frame and recommended a second additional ferry to be considered because of the increase in traffic that is going over to that ferry.

What's following that study is that environmental assessment. I don't believe the EA work itself has started yet. Gerry?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: No, not that I'm aware of.

Ms. Carol Layton: Not that we're aware of, but the planning work to get that under way is, I think, where we are right now for the Wolfe Island ferry improvement that we have to certainly help support.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Okay. Any rough ideas on the time frame of when the environmental assessment might be started and completed? I'm not sure how long it takes.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: We'll be happy to take that back.

Ms. Carol Layton: Yes, we'll take it back.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: But I know that throughout this process, whether it's the timeline around the EA itself or the work that will need to take place, obviously, our ministry, my ministry, and you and your office will be in regular contact and you will continue to be a very effective champion for your community as well.

Ms. Carol Layton: I can be a little more specific. The east region did receive approval to proceed with that EA work—as I was talking about the planning work and all that—just literally a month or so ago. Based on timelines right now, the EA could be completed in 2017, but then the follow-on work around design and construction and all of that, in the context of construction itself, would be commencing in 2019-20. As you know, our east region people—Kathy Moore, no doubt, you know quite well—could provide better detail on that. But that's my understanding.

Ms. Sophie Kiwala: Perfect. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): You've got about three minutes. Is there someone else who has a question? Mrs. McGarry?

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Thank you. Thank you, Minister. As you know, we recently unveiled the new legislation coming forward, Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act. I know that there has been a great deal of interest in these two pieces of legislation coming forward.

The one thing that we noted in the statistics that was very alarming, really, to all members of the House, and probably our road safety users, is the issue of the distracted driving statistics. I was quite surprised to learn that distracted driving is causing more fatalities on the roads, almost, than drinking and driving.

My question is, what initiatives are we undertaking as a government to make sure that distracted driving is adequately addressed?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: That's a great question, obviously. We talked about it earlier today: the significant legislation introduced, the consolidation of two previous bills with some additional pieces that I think will help go a long way towards ensuring that Ontario's roads remain amongst the safest, if not the safest, in North America.

Certainly, I think the reaction from all of our road safety partners, who do an extraordinary job working with the Ministry of Transportation, was a very clear validation that we're moving in the right direction.

You mentioned statistics. Since we first banned the use of cellphones while driving cars, somewhere in the neighbourhood of just a little bit less than 300,000 charges have been laid over that period of time.

You talked about how some law enforcement authorities or agencies have discussed the extent to which distracted driving has become a very serious concern on our roads and highways. Not long after becoming the Minister of Transportation, I witnessed the release of a report—I think it was the CAMH report—that specifically talked about how our youngest drivers seem to have a great deal of difficulty understanding or accepting that distracted driving is a very, very serious problem on our roads.

Of course, with this legislation, as was the case in Bill 173, we've decided to move forward with increasing the fine range for distracted driving. If passed, this legislation will mean that the fine range lands between \$300 and \$1,000. We've added three demerit points to the sanctions.

You mentioned statistics. I'm really proud of the fact—

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thirty seconds, Minister.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: —that we've included provisions or sanctions to deal with drug-impaired driving.

Mrs. Kathryn McGarry: Yes.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: In 2011, for example—and I talked about this on the day the legislation was introduced—somewhere in the neighbourhood of 45% of all fatalities from motor vehicle collisions involved drivers who had a combination of drugs and alcohol or drugs alone in their system. That's a pretty scary number.

Ontario is one of only three jurisdictions in Canada that don't have any sanctions specifically targeting drug-impaired driving. So the notion that we are moving forward with some sanctions around that particular piece, I think, is very important in terms of making sure we remain, as a province, at the leading edge of road safety. Thanks very much for that question.

1750

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you, Minister.

Mr. Harris, 10 minutes; last round for today.

Mr. Michael Harris: All right, thank you. Minister, I'm not sure if you're aware of an incident on Highway 527 up in Thunder Bay that led to a fatal accident. There was a washout at a culvert along Highway 527 that led to a fatal accident. Can you explain to the committee how frequently culverts in Ontario are inspected?

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Between the deputy and Gerry perhaps we can provide specific details around culvert inspection and the frequency thereof, but I would say that I'm not aware specifically of the accident that you're referring to. Of course, it's always very, very serious and of grave concern to me and the rest of our ministry whenever there are significant or any accidents on our roads, frankly.

Mr. Michael Harris: There was a washout.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: I was just going to mention, and something specifically around a washout: I don't know of the details. I'm going to ask Gerry or the deputy to speak to the frequency of the inspections. I just wanted

to say—a serious concern, of course, when that kind of thing takes place.

Mr. Michael Harris: Sure, absolutely.

Ms. Carol Layton: Gerry?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Sure. Gerry Chaput. One of the aspects about culvert inspections is not—we have a requirement in our contracts for contractors to inspect those culverts on a regular basis. One of the best methods of inspection is actually part of the patrolling. So when a person is driving down the highway, which the patrollers are required to do to be aware of the highway conditions, both in the winter and in the summer, they become very familiar with the cross-section of the highway. They become very familiar with where those streams and crossings are located.

One of the things they look for as they're driving is a dip in the pavement, a tilting of the shoulders, a tipping of the guide rail, or potentially a small pothole developing or some sort of sign. It's unusual for them to collapse immediately, which would be more in line with a washout, which you're talking about, but something that would be more gradual or it would provide a symptom of when there would be a collapse.

Mr. Michael Harris: So there's no real frequency as to which they're stipulated to be inspected?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Again, as part of that patrolling they would also notice if there was flooding on one side or a difference of elevation of flow in terms of a lot of water on one side and not as much on the other—it would indicate that there was a plug. That would be something else that they would have to do.

Mr. Michael Harris: So is there not a scientific way you can inspect these things by actually going down to the culvert and taking a sample, perhaps? Are you saying that the ministry's inspection policy is to drive over potentially problematic culverts?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: No. There is also a requirement to get out of the truck in the spring and inspect the culvert. They don't take a sample of it. Sometimes they're under water. Sometimes it's an occupational health and safety hazard. You have to have two people and possibly a boat, depending on the size of the stream and the water. But what they look for is a culvert that might be out of round—if it started to become oval. They look for it to be tipping at the ends, which would mean you may have a problem in the centre. They look for corrosion, if it's a steel pipe. They look for separation, if it's a concrete pipe, where the liner is joining. They look for debris that may have accumulated at the end, and they look for erosion around the end of the pipe where it may mean that water is not going through the pipe but on the outside walls, which would then cause erosion and—

Mr. Michael Harris: So it's my understanding that in reference to the Highway 527 tragedy, out of the 58 culverts inspected in the Thunder Bay area, 29 of them were recommended for replacement. I'm just wondering if you can tell me how many of those 29 have, in fact, been replaced.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: I'm not aware of our plan on replacing them and when they would fall in terms of a schedule. What we would do is continue to monitor the condition of those culverts through drive-by inspections and through regular maintenance inspections that would occur in the spring or the fall.

Mr. Michael Harris: Perhaps that's something you could get back to me on. I believe it's in a specific zone—district 61.

Culvert inspections recently: How many of them were done and how many were recommended to be replaced and what action will the ministry take to replace those culverts?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Just excuse me, but district 61 is quite large. Is there a section on 527? Did it give any limits within the highway itself?

Mr. Michael Harris: I'm not exactly sure where the accident occurred. It was on Highway 527 north of Thunder Bay. I'm not sure if the ministry houses a database of culverts in Ontario that would help them identify when they are inspected, roughly the recommendations in terms of replacement, and a plan—does the ministry have a plan, actually, to periodically or routinely or annually replace these culverts? I'm not sure how many culverts there are in Ontario. I don't know if you have that number, that you actually know where they are and how many there are.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: No, I don't know that number. It's significant. What we do have is an information system. We call it the drainage information management system, or DIMS, which we have been populating over the last few years and continue to populate with data. We have various types of pipe products that are used under our highways that have 25, 50, and 75-year design lives that we put in specific applications, depending on the chemistry of the water, the corrosive aspects of it.

As those culverts are traditionally replaced during our regular rehabilitation projects that we perform on the highway, if they're in need—I mean, obviously we're not going to replace a 75-year pipe at year 20, but when the pavement is being rehabilitated, the culverts are inspected as part of the preliminary design and then they would be scheduled as part of that capital program.

Mr. Michael Harris: So there's no real allotment within the ministry's budgets to replace culverts in Ontario, or is it just through general—

Mr. Gerry Chaput: Well, we try and bundle it with our capital program. If we see a need or a risk of safety for another specific culvert, we will replace that one on an individual basis or group it with several culverts on the highway or in the location or area to be more—

Mr. Michael Harris: Is there an allocation of funds annually for that specific culvert replacement?

Mr. Gerry Chaput: We would take that specifically out of our capital construction budget, but the AMC, the area maintenance contract, has an annual in-scope culvert replacement requirement—or availability of funding to them to use if it's required.

Mr. Michael Harris: Is there a way you can provide to the committee what the ministry spent on culvert replacements, specifically, say, last year or what they feel they'll need to budget for this year?

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Two minutes left.

Mr. Gerry Chaput: It would be very challenging because, as I mentioned, we do most of them through a capital project that includes resurfacing, bridge rehabilitation etc. To go and draw out the actual item costs of what we spent on culverts within that specific project would be very labour-intensive.

I could go back, though, and probably find what we've spent through the maintenance contracts. It may be easier to determine, but I'd have to go back and check.

Mr. Michael Harris: Sure. Quickly, because I know I don't have a whole lot of time, Highway 7, Kitchener to Guelph: Minister, when do you expect construction to start on that project and when do you expect—three questions. When will it start, how much will it cost and when are you going to finish it? Three questions.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Yes, great, three questions.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Ten seconds for each answer.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Ten seconds? Oh, that's not fair.

Mr. Michael Harris: For each. That's 30; you've got 30 total.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Well, I don't know. Do I have 10 or do I have 30? I'm not sure.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thirty in total.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Really, really quickly: As I'm pretty sure you know, the ministry is in the process of carrying out detailed design work on property acquisition in order to begin construction of this new highway in 2015. I was actually thrilled, just the other day, in the fall of 2015, from what I understand—I was really thrilled the other day to read this article, October 27, from the Guelph Mercury, to talk about this particular project. I know it's very exciting for you. I know how hard the former member from Kitchener Centre worked on this, and the new member from Kitchener Centre will continue to advocate for it. Hopefully, when I'm back here tomorrow, we can talk more about it.

Mr. Michael Harris: We'll finish up on those.

Hon. Steven Del Duca: Okay. I hope so.

The Chair (Ms. Cindy Forster): Thank you so much. You'll have the balance of your time when we come back tomorrow after routine proceedings—10 minutes.

We have approximately one hour and 43 minutes remaining on the review of estimates of the Ministry of Transportation after today. I understand that there is some agreement for tomorrow afternoon; that we will not bring in the Ministry of Community and Social Services until the following Tuesday, because they would just really start and not even be able to do their entire 30 minutes. Is there agreement on that? Yes.

Okay, then we're adjourned.

The committee adjourned at 1800.

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