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**Official Report
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(Hansard)**

E-9

**Journal
des débats
(Hansard)**

E-9

**Standing Committee on
Estimates**

Ministry of Education

Ministry of Transportation

**Comité permanent des
budgets des dépenses**

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministère des Transports

1st Session
42nd Parliament

Tuesday 19 November 2019

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42^e législature

Mardi 19 novembre 2019

Chair: Peter Tabuns
Clerk: Julia Douglas

Président : Peter Tabuns
Greffière : Julia Douglas

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
ESTIMATESCOMITÉ PERMANENT DES
BUDGETS DES DÉPENSES

Tuesday 19 November 2019

Mardi 19 novembre 2019

The committee met at 0901 in room 151.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Good morning, everyone. We are going to resume consideration of vote 1001 of the estimates of the Ministry of Education. There is a total of 20 minutes remaining.

Before we resume consideration of the estimates, if there are any inquiries from the previous meeting that the minister has responses to, perhaps the information can be distributed by the Clerk. Any items, Minister?

Hon. Stephen Lecce: No, Chair. Not at this time.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Okay. When the committee last adjourned, the official opposition had one minute and 30 seconds remaining in their rotation—

The Clerk of the Committee (Ms. Julia Douglas): Sorry; the government.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The government. Ah.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Almost.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Almost.

My error; my apologies, committee.

The government had one minute and 30 seconds remaining in their rotation, and I will be precise. The remaining time will be split evenly between the two parties. You will each have 9 minutes for the next rotation.

I go then to the government. Mr. Oosterhoff, please proceed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much, Minister, for joining us again. I know it won't be a very long session this morning, but we do appreciate you coming before the committee. Of course, you've been busy for the last few weeks. There has been a lot of different conversations going on in the public and a lot of different conversations going on in the Legislature as well as we work with the ministry to make sure that we're promoting the best future good for our students today and tomorrow.

I just want to hear a little bit more about some of the areas that we've really addressed that weren't being addressed under the former government. I'm thinking about STEM, I'm thinking about career studies, I'm thinking about some of these areas—mental health funding, funding for special needs—that we saw neglected for years and that we've finally taken action on.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Thank you for the question. The big focus, I think, is really focusing our curriculum on labour market needs. We're looking at it through the lens

of ensuring that young people, as they go through the journey of learning, are actually able to acquire skill sets that they can apply both in their life and potentially, for those, it will work in careers.

We're providing compulsory financial literacy for the first time under our government in the grade 10 careers course. It's experiential, hands-on learning in the context of personal budgeting. A student will not graduate in the province of Ontario under this government going forward unless they produce a budget for the first year after high school. This is hands-on material that I think is going to really help them in life, and we feel very confident about that.

Mental health was an area of vulnerability. The former government was spending about \$14 million, and that's an incremental step and it wasn't enough, and that's why this government announced that we'll be more than doubling that allocation to \$40 million.

It's initiatives like this that I think are going to really help children in Ontario.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you, Minister. You're out of time. I go to the official opposition. You have nine minutes. I'll come back to the government. Ms. Stiles.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Thank you, Mr. Chair. As we come to a close of the allotted time that we have for review of the education estimates, I wanted to thank the ministry staff who have been here throughout for their work and their assistance in helping us learn more about the ministry's budget and the way funds are allocated. I also want to thank you for the work you do every day to administer and steward our public education system. Your work is noted and valued by all of us here.

I'd also like to thank the minister for being here to defend these estimates over the last seven or so hours. It might not be the easiest part of your work here, but asking these tough questions is a vital part of our responsibility as legislators. I know you appreciate that.

On the subject of questions, I wanted to go over the list of the outstanding questions, which I appreciate were provided to us this morning. We made a similar list and we wanted to make sure that we do our due diligence here.

The first was that we're looking for information about how much of the attrition protection allocation fund—we call it the teacher elimination fund—has been spent this year to cover the teaching positions that have been eliminated, and what's the breakdown of how the money is being allocated by school board.

We also asked if the government is going to be proceeding with the misguided—we believe—mandatory online learning plan. We hope we will actually see a plan soon, because the students are going to be registering. What success stories, evidence and research exist to support mandatory e-learning as a model going forward?

We also asked if you would provide a list of private sector education technology partners that ministry officials—and by that, we also include the minister and his political staff—have met with.

I know that my colleague the MPP for Scarborough Southwest asked if you would provide a list of current members of the two ministry-level advisory tables and who was removed from the advisory board under this government.

My colleague from Niagara Falls asked what percentage of funding the minister has provided to deal with the violence in schools.

We also asked about special education funding. We were looking for information on what the data is on the incidence of students accessing special education services and programs each year, from 2015-16 to 2018-19. What is the projected need for special education services and programs?

We were also trying to understand—and I know that there was an undertaking to provide us with information on which programs funded by the previously named “education programs—other” funding stream are being funded now through the Priorities and Partnerships Fund or elsewhere, and which have been eliminated.

We also asked what the breakdown of full-time equivalents in the minister’s office is compared to the last three years. Which of those staff are political staff/hires? Within that, of course, we include anybody in the office of the minister responsible for child care and early years, and the parliamentary assistant to the Minister of Education. I believe that there were undertakings for all of these.

We also asked about the minister’s current advertising budget and a comparison to the last five years. What is the detailed breakdown of the advertising campaigns that the ministry is engaged in currently? I do want to add that we include social media campaigns in that request, please.

Those are some of the things that we were hoping to receive. I don’t know how this works. At the end of this, we’ll discuss when we can expect to see those answers. But I do want to get confirmation that that information will be provided, and when.

Over the course of this committee, those of us in the official opposition brought forward the concerns of Ontarians who are genuinely worried about the future of their children’s education with the radical changes being implemented by this government.

We used this time to be a voice for teachers and education workers who are losing their livelihoods. We used this time to be the voice of parents, who are worried that cuts will make life harder for students, that student mental health will suffer, that graduation might be delayed, that graduation rates might actually decline or that doors to post-secondary could be slammed shut.

Most importantly, we brought forward the voices of the students themselves, who are concerned about the loss of their favourite teacher, the courses they will need to graduate and the specialized supports that help them learn.

We wanted to make this about more than just the numbers on the pages but about the lives of the people who are impacted by the decisions of this government.

Sadly, much of what we learned confirms the fears of parents, students and educators that these deep cuts are moving forward, that 10,000 caring adults will be gone from our schools at the end of the government’s first term, that classes will continue to grow and that the risky experiment of mandatory e-learning will proceed—all of this an attempt to balance the budget on the backs of our next generation.

We did get some information out of these meetings. We learned that the minister was looking at some of the weakest education systems in North America in developing the e-learning program.

We learned that the funding for supports for some of the most vulnerable students through the Priorities and Partnerships Fund was going down, while funding for standardized testing agencies, like the EQAO and their new chair, were going up.

We learned that the school repair backlog has grown from the under \$15.9 billion that the Liberals left behind to an astonishing \$16.3 billion under this government in just over a year—that’s a half-billion-dollar increase. This was in the same week that we found out about dangerous levels of lead in the drinking water of our province’s schools.

We end this session with many, many unresolved questions. The minister was unable to tell us how big was too big when it comes to class sizes: 30, 40, 50? He couldn’t explain why his government has decided to cut resources so that many high school students have lost courses in everything from college-level physics to shop class.

0910

We asked about cuts to special education and the appalling failure of our system to meet the growing needs of so many students. Instead, we got more shell games, carrying on the traditions of the Liberals before them, but going further by taking away the flexibility of school boards to support students with complex needs.

And we pressed the minister to commit to maintaining Ontario’s successful full-day kindergarten program, instead of leaving families wondering what is coming in the years ahead. All we received were vague assurances. The minister could not even offer an assurance that the model would remain. On the subject of school closures, we got even less certainty about what the government will do. All this while we were told repeatedly that the government was making the largest investments in education in, I think, human history.

But the numbers tell a very different story, as the teacher elimination fund and the new child care tax credits inflate an education budget where, and I quote the Financial Accountability Office here, spending growth is

“well below the expected growth in core education cost drivers....”

So in my final minutes, I want to ask some very clear questions. Will you, the minister, stop the plan to eliminate 10,000 teaching positions from Ontario’s schools? Will you scrap the plan to impose mandatory online-only learning courses? Will you listen to students and teachers and education workers and their families? Will you reverse course and stop these cuts to education?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you. With that, we will go to the government. Mr. Oosterhoff.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. In direct contrast to, I think, the narrative that the opposition is attempting to lay out—one that I think fails to take into account the significant collaborations and investments that your ministry has made across the province of Ontario—I think it’s important to take a little bit of a step back and talk about some of the accomplishments and, frankly, some of the challenges that you were facing and that Minister Thompson was facing when she came into the portfolio as well.

Let’s not forget, Minister, and I’m sure you’re well aware: You inherited a portfolio, and the former minister inherited a portfolio, that had been, for 15 years, under a Liberal government. That was a Liberal government that saw math scores decline drastically without putting any significant resources into addressing those challenges. That was a government that saw 600 schools close under its watch—the largest amount of schools closed in Ontario’s history under a government. That was a government that saw the deficit, when it came to addressing the backlog in school repairs, substantially increase. This was a government that saw a failure to invest in the classroom and that saw a failure to address increased need in special education funding. It was a government that failed to address the significant challenges of mental health and the impacts that that has on our students, and how those sorts of challenges are, frankly, now coming to the fore and how important it is for us to address those.

So I think it’s important, Minister, to perhaps correct some of the insinuations that I just heard, because I think it’s important to realize the place where we started out from and where we’re going. Where we’re going is investing in front-line supports; I know that’s something you care about very much. That’s doubling mental health funding. That’s increasing, to record levels, the supports for students with special needs in the classroom. It’s increasing our capital budgets to make sure, following the Auditor General’s recommendation, that \$13 billion over the next 10 years is set aside to address the capital backlog.

These are good-news stories, ones that I think the members of the opposition might not always hear. But they’re ones that I think are very important for the people of Ontario, the students of Ontario and, frankly, the parents and the educators of Ontario to hear.

I know you have shown time and time again in your collaborations with stakeholders—listening to stakeholders, reaching out to stakeholders—that you want to be

reasonable, you want to be considerate and you want to act in good faith as minister for this portfolio.

I’m wondering if you could talk a little bit more about the importance of setting the narrative straight and making sure that we have the facts on the table and that those facts are being shared with every person in the province of Ontario.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: If I may, to Ms. Stiles, Mr. Gates and the members of the opposition: I’d express my gratitude for your questions. I really appreciate the opportunity to have a civil exchange on issues that I know matter to all of us.

With respect to what the government is doing going forward, it’s important to note that the fall economic statement provides three important take-aways for me. The first is that there is a significant new expenditure in the social services that matter to families in this province: \$1.9 billion more in the public accounts will be spent for health care and \$1.2 billion more for education. It’s important that the social services are being protected, and the sustainability of those services, so that our children and grandchildren are able to access health care within a timely manner or able to get a good-quality education that is a gold standard in this country.

With respect to the second point, it’s about making sure that we continue to maintain low taxes, make life affordable—even in our child care initiative, through a tax credit that helps provide roughly \$1,200 for every child in the province—for middle-class people in Ontario. It’s helping change the culture of government—by letting folks know that we do not believe we’re the only entity that ought to be spending your hard-earned dollars, but we really want to return it back into the pockets of working families to make the best decisions for their children and for themselves.

The third thing is that we are the only political party with a credible path to balance in 2023-24. For me, the reason that’s important—I know it’s not the headline grabber; maybe it should be. The idea that we’re now expending roughly \$12 billion per annum in interest, when we have to make so many difficult choices in social services, is very frustrating for people. We know that we could be better optimizing tax dollars for programs that matter to people—more long-term care, better schools, improved facilities etc. So the choice for us is about returning to balance—not as an end to a means, but because it enables us to expend more money on services that matter and it allows us to cut more taxes for middle-class people. It allows us to do more things that are important versus literally burning money, paying it to bondholders, as a consequence of massive interest payments that are paid in Ontario, the highest in the country.

So we’re doing a lot. The overarching principle for the government, going forward, is to continue to listen. I think I’ve demonstrated that we will listen to those on the front lines: parents and educators and members opposite. All of us, I think, have important perspectives. That was the impetus for the government’s offer, for example, to OSSTF, the secondary teachers, tabling an offer going from a provincialized average of 28 to 25.

It's why we've doubled the mental health envelope, for example, which we thought was important. There were important investments being made by the former government, but insufficient, which is why we more than doubled it. As I've said before, that's not the end of the journey. We're really just beginning this journey. I was really excited to be joined by many members of the committee who have a passion for this. I was speaking to the member from Burlington yesterday on the matter. Real lives are being touched by this. I think if we, as legislators, can help—in the context of anti-bullying week and every day—champion those causes, we'll make sure students in this province are set up to succeed.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: How much time do I have?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have about two and a half minutes.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: I'm wondering if you could express to the committee some of the areas that you see as priorities moving forward, as a minister in a portfolio that obviously impacts so many people across the province, and some of the areas that you're proudest of right now, and some of the areas where we see there's a real challenge that still needs to be addressed and what your plans are to address those.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: The first principle is, we should be keeping kids in class. I think in the sequencing of what is to be done, let's keep children in class, and then we can discuss how we can improve that experience. Yesterday, I recommended my offer to all the educator unions, teacher unions—an option to consider mediation. I thought that was prudent, because what gives me an element of concern is that the trajectory that some of the teacher unions are on, in the context of some escalation—I think there's a pathway to get a deal. A mediator helped us with CUPE materially, and I'm really hoping we could replicate that by achieving some of the government's objectives and still being able to create wins for all the parties—and I think we want to do that with teachers. That's the first principle.

0920

The second is, while the kids are in class and that continuum remains in place, I think, for me, the big emphasis is really infusing greater knowledge in STEM, in the context of science, technology, engineering and math, and an emphasis on having more women participation in STEM. The disparity that exists in the skilled trades, specifically, which is a sub-element of that, is quite disconcerting. Less than 5%—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have one minute left.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: And so we're going to be emphasizing that in a dramatic way. We're going to continue to make mental health a priority. I think just making sure that when we go through the mathematics curriculum update, that it is reflective of priorities—not just theoretic, but even from a financial literacy perspective that could help young people balance their own budgets and live responsible lives as citizens.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: If I can just—real quickly, Chair. Minister, I also want to thank your staff for coming.

I know that they're all very, very busy. Deputy Minister Naylor and all your ADMs: Thank you very much for taking the time to come and present before the committee. Their skill and expertise are invaluable. I know that it supports you very well, but it's very valuable for the committee, as well, to hear from them. So thank you very much.

Hon. Stephen Lecce: Yes. I will just echo, shamelessly, my gratitude to the professional public servants that work with the Ministry of Education. We're very grateful, Deputy, and to your entire team for what they do. I hope you enjoyed this experience as much as I did.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): And with that—well timed, Minister—we're done.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Can I ask a question?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): No.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Point of order.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): What's your point of order?

Ms. Marit Stiles: I was just wondering how this process works in terms of the undertakings, if you could clarify—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That's not a point of order. I'm happy to answer after the meeting.

With that, this concludes the committee's consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Education. Standing order 66(b) requires that the Chair put, without further amendment or debate, every question necessary to dispose of the estimates.

Are members ready to vote? You're all ready to vote? Shall vote 1001, ministry administration, carry? All in favour? Opposed? It carries.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Can we have a recorded vote on this?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You can request that.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Then can we have a recorded vote, please?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): For the next one, yes.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Shall vote 1002, elementary and secondary education program, carry? Recorded vote.

Ayes

Stan Cho, McKenna, Oosterhoff, Park, Parsa, Pettapiece, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It is carried.

I'm assuming you want a recorded vote?

Ms. Marit Stiles: Yes, can we have a recorded vote on each of the items, please?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Fine. Shall vote 1003, community services information and information technology cluster, carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, McKenna, Oosterhoff, Park, Parsa, Pettapiece, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It carries.

Shall vote 1004, child care and early years program, carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, McKenna, Oosterhoff, Park, Parsa, Pettapiece, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): The motion is carried.

Shall the 2019-20 estimates of the Ministry of Education carry?

Ayes

Stan Cho, McKenna, Oosterhoff, Park, Parsa, Pettapiece, Triantafilopoulos.

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It is carried.

Shall the Chair report the 2019-20 estimates of the Ministry of Education to the House?

Ayes

Stan Cho, McKenna, Oosterhoff, Park, Parsa, Pettapiece, Triantafilopoulos.

Ms. Marit Stiles: Can you read that out again, please?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Shall the Chair report the 2019-20 estimates of the Ministry of Education to the House?

Nays

Gates, Stiles.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): It is carried.

With that, we're complete. I want to take the opportunity, as Chair, just to thank everyone who took part in these hearings. Minister, all of staff, members of the committee: I appreciate your efforts. And everyone at this end: Thanks, folks. You made it work.

With that, we're going to take a break. We're going to start our next ministry at 9:30. Thank you all.

The committee recessed from 0925 to 0931.

MINISTRY OF TRANSPORTATION

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Hello, everyone. The committee is about to begin consideration of the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation for a total of seven hours and 30 minutes.

Since we have some new members with us, I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the purpose of the estimates committee is for members of the Legislature to determine if the government is spending money appropriately, wisely and effectively in the delivery of the services intended.

I would also like to remind everyone that the estimates process has always worked well with a give-and-take approach: On one hand, members of the committee take care to keep their questions relevant to the estimates of the ministry, and the ministry, for its part, demonstrates openness in providing information requested by the committee.

As Chair, I tend to allow members to ask a wide range of questions pertaining to the estimates before the committee to ensure they're confident that the Ministry will spend those dollars appropriately.

In the past, members have asked questions about the delivery of similar programs in previous fiscal years, about the policy framework that supports a ministry approach to a problem or to service delivery or about the competence of a ministry to spend the money wisely and efficiently. However, it must be noted that the onus is on the member asking the question to make the questioning relevant to the estimates under consideration.

The ministry is required to monitor the proceedings for any questions or issues that the ministry undertakes to address. I trust that the deputy minister has made arrangements to have the hearings closely monitored with respect to questions raised so that the ministry can respond accordingly.

If you wish, you may, at the end of your appearance, verify the questions and issues being tracked by the research officer.

Are there any questions before we start? There being none, I'm now required to call vote 2701 of the estimates, which sets the review process in motion.

We will begin with a statement of not more than 30 minutes by the Minister of Transportation—only 30 minutes, Minister—followed by a statement of up to 30 minutes by the official opposition, and then the Minister of Transportation will have 30 minutes for a reply. The remaining time will be apportioned equally amongst the recognized parties.

Minister, the floor is yours.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to all the members of the standing committee. I'm joined at the table here by Shelley Tapp, my deputy minister, and Ramneet Aujla, assistant deputy minister, corporate services division, and CAO.

The work you do in obtaining and reviewing ministry estimates serves an important function in the legislative process. I want to thank you for the opportunity to appear before you for the next seven and a half hours.

Today, we will review the facts and figures of the Ministry of Transportation's core business and we will review the work that we have undertaken since July of last year—work designed to build more public transit faster, to help people get home and to work, get goods to market faster and to keep our roads among the safest in North America.

We will also look at the proposals our government is bringing forward—proposals that will build on the progress we have made over the past 16 months.

Merci, monsieur le Président, et merci à tous les membres du comité permanent. Le travail que vous faites pour obtenir et examiner les prévisions budgétaires des ministères joue un rôle important dans le processus législatif. Je vous remercie de me donner l'occasion de comparaître devant vous au cours des sept heures et demie qui viennent.

Aujourd'hui, nous allons passer en revue les faits et les chiffres concernant les activités principales du ministère des Transports, et nous passerons en revue les travaux que nous avons entrepris depuis juillet de l'an dernier—des travaux visant à construire plus de transport en commun plus rapidement, à aider les gens à rentrer chez eux et à travailler, à amener plus rapidement les marchandises et à maintenir nos routes parmi les plus sûres en Amérique du Nord.

Nous examinerons également les propositions que notre gouvernement présente—des propositions qui s'appuieront sur les progrès que nous avons réalisés au cours des 16 derniers mois.

Before I continue, I would like to address some of the points that were raised in the report from the Financial Accountability Officer issued this week. In particular, as we heard in question period yesterday, the opposition is making an assumption that we have cut \$9.4 billion from our plan. This is not the case.

Regional express rail is now the GO Expansion program, and it will continue. The program plans to provide two-way, all-day service every 15 minutes over core segments of the GO Transit rail network. This vital project will continue under our government. We are investing in it, and infrastructure work to support this expansion is under way. Some funding for this project had been sourced from the previous government's cap-and-trade program, which has been cancelled. So funding that would have been sourced from cap-and-trade is no longer available, but the projects will continue with funding from other streams.

In terms of forecasted spending and actual spending, beginning in 2019-20 the government's infrastructure plan reflects more sustainable levels of investment. It also reflects a more realistic forecast of construction timelines for major projects planned or under way, in keeping with actual expenditure patterns. To be clear, this adjusted investment does not affect the timelines or delivery of any

projects; it only reflects a more realistic forecast of our capital spending.

I'd now like to walk you through my ministry's estimates for the coming fiscal year. Transportation affects everyone in our province every single day. All of us in this province rely on transportation in some way, shape or form. For us as legislators, we relied on that system to get here this morning and to get back home to our ridings. For business, the transportation system is critical to getting goods to market on time. Delays and gridlock affect our quality of life and our standard of living. So it's important that we keep improving on what we do as a ministry because we have a real impact on people's lives. Our discussion over the next few hours will highlight the things that we are doing to make those improvements.

In order to achieve those improvements, it's important that we, as legislators, work together on behalf of the people of Ontario. We have ambitious plans at the Ministry of Transportation, and it's an honour to serve as minister. I took on the job in June of this year with clear direction: to make my ministry a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life. To that end, the Ministry of Transportation is focused on five key priorities. I will go into each one in detail, but let me begin with a brief overview.

Our first priority is to improve the transit experience and make life easier for the people of Ontario. This means building a world-class transit system and delivering more transit services faster. We can achieve this by working with our municipal and federal partners to build the infrastructure that will serve the needs of people in communities all across the province.

Our second priority is promoting a multi-modal transportation network that supports the efficient movement of people and goods. The government that I'm a part of was elected on a promise to get Ontario moving. We believe that the best way to do that is by investing in an integrated transportation system, one that supports the province's economic competitiveness. This will ensure that Ontario meets the needs of travellers and businesses across all modes of transportation. That kind of integration helps boost local economies and create jobs.

Keeping Ontario's roads safe is the third priority, and it's arguably the most important one. When compared with other jurisdictions, Ontario has among the safest roads in North America and, in fact, among the safest in the world. This status has been achieved through years of dedication, legislative action and partnership with many of my ministry's road safety stakeholders. Together, we will ensure that the province's roads and highways continue to be safe for the hundreds of thousands of people who drive them every day.

Our fourth priority is investing in highways. It's about making smart investments in highways, roads and bridges, and expanding the province's highway network. This supports the social and economic well-being of residents and contributes to a higher quality of life.

The fifth priority is driving organizational effectiveness and enabling innovation. Technology is advancing with

ever-increasing speed. This enables us to harness innovation and creativity in the delivery of ministry business. This will enable my ministry to build on its record of delivering an integrated, affordable and modern transportation system that supports our economy and its citizens.

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The establishment of these priorities flows from our desire to make Ontario a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life. Last year, our government was elected on the strength of its promise to make Ontario open for business. “Open for business” doesn’t just mean the balance sheet; it also speaks to quality of life, and the Ministry of Transportation lies at the intersection of both of those considerations.

We are delivering on our commitments. In June, our government kept its promise to put people first by passing the Getting Ontario Moving Act. This legislation will cut red tape for our province’s job creators and help keep our roads among the safest in North America. Changes to increase road safety include the following: We will make learning to drive safer, and reaffirm to new drivers that it is never safe to drive under the influence. Two new offences were introduced for any driving instructor that violates a zero blood alcohol concentration or zero drug presence requirement.

We will improve traffic flow and enhance road safety on our highways by introducing tougher penalties for driving slowly in the left-hand lane. We will protect our children by giving municipalities the tools they need to target drivers who blow by school buses and threaten the safety of children crossing the road. We also strengthened laws to protect front-line, roadside maintenance, construction, tow truck and recovery workers from careless drivers.

The legislation will also make life easier for tourism operators and recreational off-road vehicle drivers by allowing off-road vehicles to operate on municipal roads unless specifically prohibited. This legislation transforms how businesses and people interact with my ministry. We are making our communities safer and ensuring that Ontario is open for business and jobs once again.

What I’d like to do now is to take a more detailed look at the Ministry of Transportation’s five priority areas and the progress we have made over the past year. Better transit options and more efficient service make life easier for the people of Ontario, and Ontario needs those options. In the greater Toronto Horseshoe region, it is estimated that \$11 billion in productivity is lost each year as a result of gridlock. That same gridlock, according to the Toronto Region Board of Trade, adds \$400 million to the cost of goods in the region. Without action, these figures will only worsen as more than one million more people move into this region over the next 10 years.

In April, we announced a historic investment of \$28.5 billion to expand the province’s transit network to support four rapid transit projects:

- the new Ontario Line that will transform Toronto’s subway system;

- the Yonge North subway extension that will connect the subway to one of the GTHA’s largest employment centres;

- the three-stop Scarborough subway extension that will better serve communities in the east end; and

- the Eglinton Crosstown west extension that will bring another connection to Pearson International Airport.

Our partnership with the city of Toronto, announced last month, with support from the government of Canada, makes a significant step forward.

Finally, governments have endorsed one single, unified plan for subway expansion in Toronto. We have entered a new era of co-operation with our federal and municipal partners, and together we will get these transit projects built.

What’s more, ongoing projects are moving forward. The Eglinton Crosstown LRT in Toronto: Tunneling is complete, construction is under way at all stations on the line, and the vehicle maintenance and storage facility is complete.

The Finch West LRT project is also moving forward. A contract has been awarded to design, build, finance and maintain the project. Early utility works are ongoing.

But it is not just in the city of Toronto that progress on transportation is happening. We are continuing to improve GO Rail service, building toward the largest-ever GO Rail expansion in the province’s history, and we are building and procuring new LRT projects that will improve the transportation experience for people across the GTHA.

Since being named Minister of Transportation in June, I oversaw the addition of nearly 150 more GO train trips across the network—84 new trips and the extension of 65 existing trips.

We have introduced daily commuter service to Toronto from Niagara Falls and St. Catharines—four years sooner than had been planned—and we are expanding and increasing GO train service on the Kitchener, Stouffville, Lakeshore East and Lakeshore West lines. In fact, GO rail service has increased by 21% in one year—nearly 2,400 trips per week—up from 2,000 in the year before.

We have also announced many improvements that will make it easier and more affordable to use GO Transit. Here are some, including making it free for children 12 and under to travel on GO Transit trains and buses. And we have reduced GO fares on trips under 10 kilometres. We have also acted on a pledge to work with the private sector to build new GO stations faster and at a lower cost to the taxpayer.

Transit-oriented development will deliver new, modern GO stations at Mimico and Woodbine. The developer will pay all the construction costs for the main station building, platforms, parking and entrances at these stations, in exchange for the right to develop above the station, creating mixed-use communities with a transit station as its hub.

Leveraging third-party investment to reduce the funding required from the province for transit improvement and expansion makes sense. It’s a new kind of partnership and it’s the right kind of partnership. I believe that there is a strong appetite for more partnerships like this.

We are also open to ideas for other opportunities that would create value for transit riders, communities and interested parties. As the province's population grows, our transit systems must expand to meet the demands of that growth in all of our large municipalities.

We will continue to support the implementation of municipally owned rapid transit projects in the GTHA and the newly-in-service systems in Ottawa and Waterloo region.

We continue the implementation of the Presto fare card system. As of today, more than 3.5 million cards have been activated across the GTHA and in Ottawa.

We continued the Ontario Gas Tax Program. In 2018-19, we delivered \$364 million in gas tax funding to 107 municipalities that provide transit service to 144 communities across Ontario. This dedicated funding goes to municipal transit service improvements such as additional buses, expanded routes, longer hours of service, increased accessibility and improved security infrastructure.

We also continued the Community Transportation Grant Program. Last year, this program provided \$30 million over five years to 39 municipalities. This enabled them to partner with community organizations to coordinate local transportation services, providing more rides to more people and to more destinations.

Public transit expansion has been a cornerstone of my ministry's mission, but not at the expense of other modes of travel. The ministry continues to actively consider how to support other modes and new technologies to support a more sustainable and efficient transportation network.

An efficient and integrated transportation network utilizes all modes—road and rail, air and water, cars and buses, bicycles and scooters, and automated and electric vehicles. All of these can support the efficient movement of goods and people. I'd like to highlight a few examples of the actions we have taken to help achieve this end.

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We have continued to work on the development of the greater Golden Horseshoe multi-modal transportation plan. This plan will strive to ensure future mobility for people and goods in this rapidly growing region. It will also guide Metrolinx's transit implementation work to ensure that highway and transit investments are coordinated.

My ministry is also exploring opportunities for inter-community bus services and other transit solutions for southwestern Ontario.

We continue to support airport services in 29 remote northern communities. We also continue to support 11 ferry services around the province.

To help keep traffic flowing on our highways, my ministry is introducing new pre-clearance technology at Ontario truck inspection stations that will reduce delays, promote on-time delivery of goods, and improve road safety.

We've committed to resuming the environmental assessment for the GTA West highway corridor.

As I mentioned earlier, road safety is my ministry's most important responsibility. We support law enforce-

ment and work with police, municipalities and stakeholders to promote road safety and to counter dangerous driving behaviours such as impaired driving and distracted driving, and pedestrian safety.

Commercial vehicle safety is also a priority. In 2018, more than 97,000 safety inspections were conducted on commercial vehicles and drivers. As a result of those inspections, over 21,000 drivers or vehicles were placed out of service, and over 20,000 inspections resulted in charges laid.

Based on the latest available data, our province has a fatality rate of 0.58 for every 10,000 licensed drivers. This ranks Ontario number one in Canada and number two in all of North America, behind only the District of Columbia.

The statistics are positive, but as you all know, one impaired-driving death is too many. Our ultimate goal should be fewer and fewer impaired-driving deaths on Ontario's roads each year. To that effect, Ontario has recently enacted tougher laws against impaired driving, and we support the enforcement of those laws.

Effective as of last year, there is a zero-tolerance law for the presence of drugs and/or alcohol for all commercial vehicle drivers while driving a commercial motor vehicle.

There is also an increased licence suspension period for young and novice drivers who violate the zero-tolerance law for alcohol and/or drugs.

We have also increased the financial penalties for all alcohol- and drug-impaired drivers who fail or refuse to submit to a test.

Zero tolerance means, quite simply, that drivers should not get behind the wheel if they have a detectable presence of alcohol and/or drugs in their system.

My ministry is developing a public education campaign that emphasizes the risks and consequences of drug-impaired driving with a focus on cannabis-impaired driving.

As always, we will continue to work with our road safety partners to share information, support joint initiatives, and develop more awareness campaigns in the name of safety.

I would now like to turn to our investments in highway infrastructure. Over the past year, my ministry continued to invest in upgrades to improve our highway trade corridors, manage congestion, and increase capacity to make Ontario open for business again. In total, we committed \$2.3 billion to repair and expand provincial highways and bridges across Ontario.

Some highlights:

—In southern Ontario, we committed funding to the improvement and expansion of several sections of Highway 401. This included improvements to the 401 between Chatham and Cambridge, Milton and Mississauga, through York region, and in Kingston.

—We completed several highway expansion projects, including HOV lanes on Highways 427 and 401 in Mississauga and Highways 400, 404 and 401 in York region.

—We invested in bridge replacements and rehabilitations in Niagara region, Oakville, Mississauga and Toronto.

—We expanded sections of Highway 417 in Ottawa.

—We completed the design and started construction to rehabilitate the Highway 49 Bay of Quinte bridge.

—We also committed to repaving sections of several highways throughout the province.

The ministry continues to provide funding to municipalities so that they can make repairs to local roads that connect to highways through the Connecting Links Program. Last year, \$30 million in funding was made available to 22 municipalities. This enabled them to proceed with design work, construction, renewal, rehabilitation or replacement of connecting link infrastructure.

To support a sustainable transportation network, my ministry continues to explore and implement improved and more environmentally friendly techniques and materials for asphalt paving, pavement preservation and concrete construction. Specialized testing of materials for use in road and bridge construction continues, and will be supported by a new facility in North York, which will replace the existing labs.

Our final priority area is driving organizational effectiveness and enabling innovation. Earlier, I cited the example of public-private partnerships in transit-oriented development. This kind of market-driven approach will save taxpayer money while building sustainable communities that will have transportation options at their core.

I also cited the pre-clearance technology being introduced at truck inspection stations in Ontario. This will keep commercial vehicles moving on our highways, getting them where they need to go and keeping businesses moving.

We keep an eye to the future, one that includes the potential of autonomous vehicles. My ministry supports the innovation and growth of the autonomous vehicle industry through Ontario's Automated Vehicle Pilot Program. The updated program will allow for more testing of emerging technologies, and to support the next generation of vehicles. As electric motorcycles entered the market, we amended the provincial regulation to allow these vehicles on 400-series highways. We also helped the outdoors industry by expanding the use of service plates for boats, snowmobiles and off-road vehicles when transported by allowing one service plate to be used for multiple deliveries.

One of the things that can boost Ontario's economy is to make government work better for people by promoting growth, not by getting in its way. We do this by making government more efficient, reducing red tape and finding savings. This government's red tape reduction package included three Ministry of Transportation items. We reduced regulatory burdens on the testing of autonomous vehicles in Ontario. We opened the market for electric motorcycles by permitting their use on provincial highways, and we made the regulations on the use of e-bicycles more flexible.

We also helped people out with their pocketbooks, by freezing two proposed rounds of driver and vehicle fee increases that were scheduled for this past year. We also made it easier for people and businesses to check the status of an Ontario driver's licence by modernizing the Ontario

driver's licence check service and by eliminating the fee. We are committed to making government leaner, smarter and more productive. As minister, I am determined to continue on this path and deliver on this direction.

My ministry is bringing forward planned expenditures as follows: an operating budget of \$2.293 billion and a capital budget of \$2.893 billion. The total estimate is \$5.187 billion.

Of the two largest allocations that are proposed, the first is for the ministry's policy and planning division, which oversees the transit files. This makes up approximately 62%. The second is the ministry's provincial highways management division, which would receive approximately 33%. The remaining 5% of the ministry's proposed spending would go towards road-user safety, labour and internal administration.

Through actions both small and large, the Ministry of Transportation has responded to the many issues and challenges that it faces.

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The people of Ontario rely on the ministry almost every day. People look to us. They count on us. They count on us to expand public transit, for both urban cores and growing communities, so that people can get from point A to point B efficiently and affordably.

They count on public transit to be part of an integrated transportation network, one that moves people and goods smoothly and without delay and one that we continue to build.

They count on us to enact legislation and enforce laws to protect them and their loved ones on Ontario's roads and highways, whether they are drivers or passengers.

They count on us to promote safe driving habits and to counteract drinking- and drug-impaired driving.

They count on us to maintain and expand Ontario's highway network, to connect our communities and keep Ontario moving, because that keeps our economy growing.

They count on us to be innovative and to find creative and sustainable solutions to the challenges of tomorrow.

These are no small tasks. It's a considerable challenge, but we have demonstrated that we are up to it, through investment, through partnerships, through actions.

I said at the start that it is an honour to serve as minister. It is also a privilege and a responsibility.

We have been successful as we strive to be a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably. We have been successful in promoting a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life.

I look forward to discussing with you where we have been—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You have a minute left, Minister.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: —where we are and where we are going to further our successes for the people of Ontario.

Nous avons réussi dans nos efforts pour devenir un chef de file mondial dans le transport sécuritaire, efficace et durable des personnes et des marchandises. Nous avons

réussi à promouvoir une économie concurrentielle à l'échelle mondiale et une qualité de vie élevée.

J'ai hâte de discuter avec vous de ce que nous avons fait, de ce que nous sommes en train de faire et de ce que nous allons faire pour améliorer nos réussites pour la population de l'Ontario.

Je vous remercie. Thank you very much.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you very much, Minister. We go to the official opposition. Ms. Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm also joined by MPP French, who is our critic for transportation.

I want to start off just by making an opening statement, and then I'm under the impression that we can just go straight to questions, right?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): That's correct.

Ms. Jessica Bell: There's no doubt that we have a congestion crisis across our region. Public transit is too expensive, it's not reliable enough and we have been waiting decades for new transit lines to be built.

As the transit critic and as a member of the NDP, I believe that transit should remain under public control. It should be affordable, fast, reliable and frequent, and all new transit lines should be built to benefit the public first.

I also believe that agencies, including transit agencies, should be responsible and transparent so that the public knows why decisions are being made and can trust that the right decisions are being made for the public good.

I also feel that this government falls short, on many accounts, to address the kind of transit that we need. I want to focus many of my questions on that today.

The first question I have is around the \$29.2 billion over the next five years that this government is looking at spending on capital investments. That's a lot of money. What concerns me is that, we, at this point, have only very high-level information on what transit projects will be funded, which ones are partially funded, and which ones are not funded at all. We have very little understanding of what projects will be built first, what projects will be built second. At this point, we have only broad brush strokes on when some of these projects will be completed.

I'll give you one example: the \$14 billion that's allocated to GO Transit expansion. We don't know what lines will be electrified first, what lines will see significant improvements in service first, and so on. So my simple request at this point is, I'm asking Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation to provide this committee with a list of transit projects in order of priority, and to identify which projects are funded—to what amount and by who—and which projects are unfunded. Is that something that you can do?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you for the question.

On your overall point, our government supports—and as was very clear during our election, we wanted to see more transparency and more accountability in government. I think we have taken, across government, important steps to improve transparency.

Metrolinx is an independent agency, but we work closely with Metrolinx to advance the priorities of improving transit across the region. We have been very clear

that we have an ambitious plan for building transit. I understand, in general, people's skepticism because it has been a long time that people have heard about transit getting built and have not seen enough movement. So I'm very happy that we've been able to take important steps in partnering with the city of Toronto and with the federal government to finally get transit built.

We've also been clear about the fact that we know that, in addition to getting it built, we need to get it built quickly because the need is there. That's why our plan laid out a series of timelines: the Ontario Line to be open by 2027, and the other three priority lines thereafter. So we've been very clear about what the timelines of our plans involve. We'll be working closely with Metrolinx to ensure that we meet those timelines, because that's what people are looking for.

I'll turn it over to John for a little bit more detail on—

Ms. Jessica Bell: I just want to reiterate my question, because I don't believe it has been answered yet. Metrolinx is a creature of the province, and it's very clear in the fall economic statement that decisions that are made by Metrolinx could be changed, overridden and approved by the ministry, and that you decide their funding. So, yes, it is an independent agency to some extent, but they are wholly accountable to you, and it's taxpayers' money that they're spending. Let's be super clear about that.

Secondly, I just want to be clear about what my question is. It's to have a list of transit projects—many of them are listed in the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan—and to have that list provided to the committee in order of priority, and to identify which projects are funded, by what amount and by who, and which amounts are unfunded. Can you provide that information to this committee?

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Sir, please give your name. Thank you.

Mr. John Lieou: My name is John Lieou. I'm the assistant deputy minister for the policy and planning division.

To answer MPP Bell's question, Metrolinx does have a 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, and last year, in November and December, this Legislature reviewed and passed a new series of changes to the transportation act so that, in the future—because those RTPs are, essentially, at this point, creatures of Metrolinx and so on. The changes will require, in future, that Metrolinx seek and receive minister approval of future plans—to the minister's earlier point—so that the government, which is essentially the funder, as you said, will work closely with the agency to make sure that the plans are not just plans but are actually a collaboration between the funder and the agency, so that they actually are prioritized and so on. As the minister said in her opening remarks, the ministry is actually working on a greater Golden Horseshoe plan right now in order to guide Metrolinx and other transit agencies in the whole region on how to prioritize everything on a go-forward basis. So that's what we're working on right now.

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In the meantime, in terms of your question, the government has this year's plans clearly spelled out in the budget

of 2019-20. That's the subway plan, which the minister spoke about. That's a priority, for sure, for the government.

Also, as the minister said in her opening remarks, GO expansion is a priority for the government. Again, the financing of that is described in the budget.

Ms. Jessica Bell: To be very clear, I will follow up in writing. I'm fully aware that GO expansion and the subway projects are very clearly listed.

However, there are approximately 75 projects in the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan. We have no idea what the prioritization framework is—Metrolinx is keeping that secret—and we have no idea what projects are going to be built first, second, third or fourth and how much they're funded.

So, my request, which I have not received an answer to yet, is to have that list given to the committee so that taxpayers and the public are aware of what is going to be built first, second or third. I'll follow up in writing.

My second question concerns what the Financial Accountability Officer mentioned, which is that the government is assuming that it won't spend approximately \$9.4 billion of the \$29.5 billion it has allocated over the next five years to transit, because of delays.

Now, I get it: Whenever we are building a transit project, it is normal to have some delays, and for the money that is allocated in one year to move on to the next year because there are delays.

What surprises me about this figure is that it is approximately 50% higher than the delay schedule that the Liberal government used. You're anticipating longer-than-usual delays for construction projects. It's also higher than the delay schedule that the TTC typically uses, which is 10% or 11%. Your delay schedule is far higher than that; it's 25%, which is a concern.

So, my question is, why the big delays? Because it does put things like the Ontario Line and this very ambitious goal of 2027—it leads us to question that.

My two questions are: Why the big delays? And what projects are going to be implemented by this \$9.4-billion delay in spending?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm going to turn it over to Ramneet, the CAO, to give a more fulsome answer.

They're not related to delays. It has to do with the timing of the spending with those projects and making sure that we allocate the spending in the right years and in the right periods over the course of the project.

This is not related to delays or changing in timing of the projects. It's just a more realistic schedule for the spending associated with those projects.

But I'll let Ramneet speak to some of the more—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): And you have one minute left.

Ms. Jessica Bell: It is typically called a delay. When spending is allocated later, it affects the construction of the project, and it means a delay.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The project itself is not slowed down. There's no change in the schedule of the

delivery of the project. It's just in the way that the spending is allocated.

Do you want to—

Ms. Ramneet Aujla: Sure. As the minister mentioned, this re-profiling of monies—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm sorry. Could you please introduce yourself?

Ms. Ramneet Aujla: I'm Ramneet Aujla. I'm the chief administrative officer for the Ministry of Transportation.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): Thank you.

Ms. Ramneet Aujla: As per the provincial budget for 2019, the government's planned investments in the transportation sector totalled more than \$90 billion—

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): I'm very sorry to say that we have run out of time.

Interjection.

The Chair (Mr. Peter Tabuns): You were close. You were very close.

Members of the committee, we will reconvene this afternoon after routine proceedings. Thank you all.

The committee recessed from 1015 to 1600.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): Good afternoon, everyone. We're going to resume consideration of vote 2701 of the estimates of the Ministry of Transportation. There is now a total of six hours and 49 minutes remaining. When the committee recessed this morning, the official opposition had 18 minutes and 37 seconds remaining in the rotation. MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Thank you for being here. I want to summarize. So far, I have asked two questions. One was getting a list of projects, the order of priority, if they've been funded or not, and I did not receive an answer on that.

Then the second question I asked was around the \$9.4 billion that is essentially delayed spending over the next five years, and I did not receive a clear answer on that as well. That is concerning because this is taxpayer money and people deserve to know what projects are being built and when.

The question that I'd like to talk about now is the Metrolinx operating subsidy cut. Metrolinx's budget has been slated to be cut from \$505 million to \$321 million in the 2018-19 budget. That's a massive 36% reduction, and we're already seeing the impacts of these cuts. I'll give an example. Metrolinx has cut seven bus routes, buses that help people from Bolton to Oshawa get to work: routes 20, 24, 38, 38A and 60.

We have contacted and talked to a bunch of transit riders on these buses. One of them was Paula Gregoris. She says that now she leaves her house before 6 a.m. because her Bolton bus has been cut. She has to drive to Malton GO. Often she gets to Malton GO and there's no carpark available for her. Then she drives as quickly as she can to King City in the hope of trying to get a GO train there. These kinds of bus cuts are having a very real impact on people's lives, and it's because of this cut in the Metrolinx operating subsidy.

My question is, are you going to restore this bus service, and if so, when?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: First of all, we are working closely with Metrolinx to identify cost savings opportunities and revenue opportunities to help reduce the overall operating subsidy.

The issue of bus service in Bolton is one that obviously I'm very familiar with. I had the chance actually to speak to the mayor of Caledon, just a few days ago, who has been working closely with MTO and Metrolinx on this issue. We want to make sure that we are providing the right service at the right price for taxpayers and to transit riders. I can say that we have been working very closely with the municipality to make sure that transit riders are getting the kind of service they need to get from point A to point B to where they need to go, and also providing—

Ms. Jessica Bell: I do want to clarify. The question is very simple. Are you going to restore that GO bus service or not? I understand that you're talking to the municipal officials there, but it is a very clear question: Are you going to restore it or not?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The answer is that we're continuing to work with the municipality to see how we can provide the service that needs to be provided there.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm saying that that is a no at this point, and we'll wait and see what happens.

My next question is—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, I'm saying we're continuing to work with the municipality.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm under the impression that people need GO bus service now. They've been asking for a long time and they've had very little response, which is concerning.

A second piece that I want to flesh out is that on October 2 I met with a Metrolinx employee, Doug Spooner, who made it clear in that meeting—there was ministry staff there—that it is actually Metrolinx's plan to cut more GO bus service with the goal to have municipalities provide the service instead.

My question is, is that true, that there are additional bus service cuts coming, why hasn't the information been made public and what services are you going to cut?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I can't speak to the conversation that you had. As I said, we are looking across Metrolinx's service delivery to make sure we're providing the right service at the right price for transit riders and for taxpayers.

With respect to the service you were talking about before, I'd just like to point out that Metrolinx did extend service in response to our conversations with the municipality, and I think that speaks to the fact that we are working closely to make sure we're meeting the demands of transit riders and that we're listening and that we are making thoughtful choices with respect to what transit riders need. We're going to continue to do that, and I'm going to turn it over to the department to speak about additional GO bus service.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. So I do want to be very clear. My question is very, very clear. Are you looking at cutting additional municipal bus service, as was stated to me in a

meeting that your staff were at, and when is that information going to be made public, and what services are you going to cut? They are my three very specific questions. People are very concerned about this. I've been having conversations with transit riders all across the region, and they're very concerned about that specific thing. I'd like that question answered.

Mr. James Nowlan: James Nowlan, executive director, MTO. As it relates to any specific proposal from Metrolinx as it relates to bus routes, we haven't seen anything or had any proposal come forward, so I couldn't speak to any specific routes or any decisions, as nothing has been put forward by Metrolinx for consideration by the ministry.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay, so what I'm hearing, then, is that you don't know. That is a concern. I am requesting that you do find that information out.

An additional cut that I know is coming is the plan to cancel the double-discount fare program, which allows people who are riding a GO bus to pay a discount when they get on the TTC. That has had a significant impact on the York University issue, where we've got students who used to go directly into York University on a GO bus and are now being forced to get on a TTC subway car and ride just one stop and pay an extra fare. Now they'll be slated to pay even more because this GO-TTC fare discount is slated to be cancelled in December. Are you going to cancel the GO-TTC fare discount?

Mr. James Nowlan: As it relates to the GO-TTC fare discount, we've indicated in discussions with the TTC and the city that we do not have any intention of cancelling it in December. The program will continue as it relates to the agreement that is in place right now. It was a three-year agreement, and it currently ends in March 2020. We're in discussions—Metrolinx and the ministry—with the TTC and the city of Toronto as it relates to what would follow the agreement end date, which is set as March.

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is news to me. From the TTC chair's office, I've been told that December is the date that the discount fare program funded by Metrolinx will end. Will Metrolinx be funding that GO-TTC fare discount from December to March 2020, or will you be asking the TTC to do it?

Mr. James Nowlan: The ministry and Metrolinx—I think you're probably referring back to as it relates to the discount double fare. Metrolinx had indicated that the funding was going to be used up by earlier this year, or this fall/winter. I think, based on modelling that we have, we understand that there is funding to continue the program, at least in the near term, and we have not indicated to the TTC or started the process of cancellation, which is required under the contract.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay, so I'll summarize it by saying that Metrolinx will be funding that until March 2020, based on your modelling. Would that be a reasonable assessment?

Mr. James Nowlan: I would say that the intent is that funding will continue to the end of the agreement in March 2020.

Ms. Jessica Bell: All right. Thank you.

Some additional questions that I have relate to the Ontario government's new transit plan. As we know, in April this year, the government replaced the current transit plan that was on the books with a new one, which meant that the relief line which was slated to be shovel-ready in 2020 was scrapped for a new plan. I worked at city council. I worked to change city council policy for many years, and I did see the Fords go through the process, when Mayor Ford was mayor, to scrap David Miller's Transit City plan with a new one. Ten years later, we still have seen very little built. So it is concerning to see a transit plan, some of which was shovel-ready in 2020, being scrapped again by a Ford to essentially go back to the drawing board. It is a concern. But that's what we have.

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One of my questions is around the Ontario Line and the plan for it to be built by 2027. What that means is that this government will have to do the EA—the environmental assessment—procurement planning and then construction in seven and a half years. To put that in context, the Hamilton LRT, just to do one phase of that, took four years just to go through procurement. So what evidence are you going to release to convince us that the Ontario Line will be built by 2027?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: With respect to the first part of your question, there's a lot of skepticism about the ability to deliver, and concern about new proposals being brought forward. I know you were very involved, as you said, at the city and in advocating for transit riders in the city of Toronto. You're very close to this file and obviously very frustrated, as someone who lives in downtown Toronto, at the lack of transit that has been built.

The previously proposed downtown relief line: While we're not moving forward with it per se, Metrolinx used a lot of the work that was done on that to build upon that for the Ontario Line. The Ontario Line itself was built and developed by experts at Metrolinx to provide a tremendous amount of transit relief. The city staff has spent a lot of time looking at it, asking questions of MTO officials and Metrolinx officials, who recommended that city council support it.

It is a subway line that has gone through a lot of rigour in terms of review. The work that had been done on the previous line is part of what we've got moving forward on the Ontario Line. There has been a lot of co-operation and partnership, and I think that the desire to get transit built, to answer part of your second question about how we're going to get it done—

Ms. Jessica Bell: The question I had specifically—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney:—we will do it to be in co-operation with levels of government, to understand that it needs to be done in co-operation with different levels of government—

Ms. Jessica Bell: No question it does.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: With respect to the procurement process—

Ms. Jessica Bell: I do want to be very clear. I understand that there are conversations that are happening. My

question is: What evidence are you going to release to convince the public that it will be built by 2027?

For example, at this point the full business case analysis for the Ontario Line has not yet been released. When will the full business case be released for the Ontario Line?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll turn it over to officials to talk about the specifics about the exact details. But I think that the people in the GTA, obviously, as I said, are skeptical and they'll start believing that things will happen when we start getting shovels in the ground. That's why we're trying to move forward with the city, with the federal government. People are skeptical, so they won't believe until they start seeing things happening.

It's part of the job that we have to overcome this great skepticism from people who have been involved in this file for a very long time. Your question is: What are you going to do to convince people? Well, we're going to start getting shovels in the ground.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I just want you to answer the question, really. It's a very simple question: When will you publicly release the full business analysis of the Ontario Line? I just need a date. That's it.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll turn it over to John for the specifics on the timing of the business plans.

Ms. Jessica Bell: My question is very clear, though. I just need a date. If you don't know the date, that's great. Just tell me and I'll move on to my next question. I have many, many questions, because there are many people all across the region who really want answers on this. I just need a date.

Mr. John Lieou: I'll just answer your question—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): Sir, before you—say your name, please. Thank you.

Mr. John Lieou: John Lieou. I'm the assistant deputy minister for the policy and planning division at MTO.

You don't release the full final business case early on. Basically, the whole process or business case has different stages. As you know, Metrolinx released the IBC. The next stage is early next year. They will release the PDBC, and then there will be, as the project—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Can you just clarify that for me?

Mr. John Lieou: Yes. It's called a preliminary design business case.

Ms. Jessica Bell: And that will be released next year by Metrolinx?

Mr. John Lieou: Early next year, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. I'm under the impression that the federal government is asking for the full business case, and their support for the Ontario Line is contingent on that. Have you given the federal government the full business case? It's a simple question: yes or no?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, the federal government has provided funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program to other projects around the country based on initial business cases. We have heard from the party that won, from the federal government, that they will support our four priority projects if they have the support of city council, which they have received—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Have you given them the full business case analysis?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: They have everything that the city had to review.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. I'm asking you a very clear question: Have you given them the full business case?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: They have the full business case, the one that you've reviewed, that has been on Metrolinx's website—

Ms. Jessica Bell: That's the initial business case. Where's the full business case?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As you've heard from John, the next step in the business case process is the preliminary design business case, which comes out sometime in the next year.

With respect to the federal government, we look forward to the new cabinet being appointed so that we can resume our conversations, which had been positive prior to the writ dropping.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. I do want to turn to some of the concerns that came up at the city executive and the city council meeting when we were talking about the Ontario Line. An unprecedented number of people came out to speak about the Ontario Line, because it was the first time that the public had the opportunity to speak to elected officials and planners about their concerns about this project.

Some of the concerns were raised—I'll give you an example—by residents around the Don Valley river area, including Riverdale and Leslieville. One of them was Mark Tessaro. He's a pediatrician who lives in the area. He wanted to make it very clear about what the impact of having an above-ground Ontario Line running through these neighbourhoods will be on communities here. This is a very dense, established community, and they are understandably very concerned. They already have GO expansion happening in that area, and they're very concerned about having an additional project running, essentially, through their backyards.

So, he's a pediatric physician at SickKids and a professor at U of T. He talked about what it would mean to have train lines extended from three to six tracks, and to have a train go by every 45 seconds, very close to his home and many others. He said the noise impacts would be significant, and he's asking that the trains go underground in that area and not the other way around.

To summarize, the city agreed and the city council also agreed to request the province to make significant modifications to the plan to mitigate the impacts of noise and construction. They are also asking, if significant mitigation impacts can't happen, that the line go underground in key sections.

What is your plan to listen to the city's request to mitigate these very real concerns that residents have? And what is your plan to have a portion of this line go underground?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: After city council supported and endorsed our plan, we started to hear more from residents about some of their concerns. We were clear that

we've put forward a preliminary design for the line, and Metrolinx will be working closely with communities that are affected by the Ontario Line, to listen to their concerns, to make sure that those concerns are brought into the process and that we're able to respond to them.

The Ontario Line is going to double the amount of transit that had been previously proposed, and it's going to provide transit relief to communities that previously were not going to get any kinds of connections. So—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister Mulroney, that is not answering the question; you did at the start. I don't doubt that the Ontario Line—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): You have one minute left.

Ms. Jessica Bell:—that there are elements of it that are good.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm going to turn it over, then, to John to give some of the specifics about the above-ground issues in the areas that you're raising.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Right. It's mitigating the concerns around noise and pollution. And then can you commit to having a portion of the line go underground?

Mr. John Lieou: Basically, the next phase for Metrolinx is to go through the environmental planning, basically the EA-type process. I'm sure that that's exactly the kind of thing they will actually look at, both at the macro—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Excuse me. Can you just clarify that for me? So you are looking at doing an environmental assessment process?

Mr. John Lieou: They will go through that, yes, absolutely.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Help me understand that. In the section of the former relief line, I'm hearing mixed reports that it will just be an amended TPAP. Are you looking at doing—

Mr. John Lieou: It's not a TPAP. An amendment to a TPAP is still a—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Are you looking at doing a full TPAP—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): I'm sorry. Your time is up.

We'll go back to the minister for her 30-minute rebuttal. Thank you.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the members of the standing committee for their comments and their questions thus far.

Earlier, I provided you with an overview of the ministry's core business priorities. I reviewed the ministry's focus, which is to make it a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably, to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life.

I also reviewed the many actions that have been taken over the past year to deliver on our commitments. I now want to expand on some of those opening remarks.

Un peu plus tôt, je vous ai donné un aperçu des principales priorités du ministère. J'ai passé en revue l'objectif du ministère, qui est de devenir un chef de file mondial dans le transport sécuritaire, efficace et durable

des personnes et des marchandises afin de soutenir une économie concurrentielle à l'échelle mondiale et une qualité de vie élevée. J'ai également passé en revue les nombreuses mesures qui ont été prises au cours de la dernière année pour respecter nos engagements.

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J'aimerais maintenant m'attarder sur certaines de ces observations préliminaires.

Our belief is that government can and should work better for all Ontarians. We can do this by making government more efficient, by reducing red tape and finding savings where we can so that we can make the investments that are needed most—investments that will improve and expand public transit; maintain the excellent condition of our highways, roads and bridges; build better connections between communities across Ontario; and promote safe practices and safer travel for everyone on our roads and highways.

In order to fund these important investments, actions have been taken on several fronts; for example, through legislation. In April, the Legislature passed the Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act. This act put people first by taking a major step towards cutting red tape and reducing the regulatory burden facing job creators, including those in the transportation industries. It will help cut the cost of doing business, harmonize regulatory requirements with other jurisdictions, end duplication, and reduce barriers to investment. It will help businesses thrive, and create and keep good jobs here in Ontario.

In June, the Legislature passed the Getting Ontario Moving Act. This act took further steps to cut red tape for our province's job creators, help keep our roads safe and focus the discussion on how to finally get more subway lines built in Toronto.

We have seen the results of that focused discussion. We now have, for the first time, a single, unified plan for subway expansion in Toronto, supported by all three levels of government.

I would now like to look at Ontario's economic picture, how it relates to the Ministry of Transportation's priorities, and how this ministry's proposed spending aligns with the government's key priorities.

The government is implementing a balanced and prudent plan to build Ontario together. This plan is critical to our ability to deliver on our transportation commitments. It is a plan that will make life more affordable for individuals and families by putting more money back into people's pockets. It is a plan that will ensure that tax dollars are invested responsibly and critical services are improved not only for those who need them today but also for future generations.

The government's plan harnesses Ontario's tremendous potential to create a more competitive business environment. This will allow the province to compete with the world and win. To that end, the government is committed to building a province where everyone can have the opportunity to share in economic prosperity, and transportation plays a very important role in that.

Over the past 16 months, the government has taken deliberate steps to balance the province's books. It implemented a process to help to modernize government, find efficiencies and focus spending on priorities like health care and transportation.

Progress has been made, and the plan is working. This year, the province is projected to beat the deficit target set out in the 2019 budget by \$1.3 billion. This is an improvement from \$10.3 billion to \$9 billion. This reflects the benefits of a strong economy and revenue stream, and it enables ministries, including the Ministry of Transportation, to plan future expansion with a confident outlook.

I would now like to present the Ministry of Transportation's plan to build Ontario together and connect more people to more places. Our mandate is to make the ministry a world leader in moving people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life.

The government has a plan to build a world-class transportation network where new transit is built faster and at a lower cost, getting people where they want to go when they want to get there. This plan will build high-quality and affordable subway lines, rapid transit networks, community transit networks, and highways.

Ontario commuters can attest to the fact that urgent action is needed, and it is necessary in order to deal with outdated and overcrowded transit systems and gridlock on our roads and highways. Travel times have been increasing, and frustrations spike every time a road or subway shutdown leaves people stuck in traffic, taking away quality time spent with family and friends. The government is fighting gridlock while making public transit an attractive, affordable and low-stress alternative for Ontario workers, students and families.

Each year, GO Transit welcomes more and more riders by being an attractive and affordable alternative to the car. The system now provides train or bus service from Peterborough and Barrie to Kitchener and Niagara Falls, and everywhere in between. The province is moving forward with the next stage of GO rail expansion to improve and provide two-way, all-day service, with trains every 15 minutes on core segments of the GO rail network. Early infrastructure work to support this expansion is under way. It includes the following projects:

- the construction of twin tunnels at Highways 401 and 409, one of the busiest sections of highway in North America, to accommodate two additional tracks, future signalling and communications infrastructure;

- there is also track work being done along rail lines, including Lakeshore East, Lakeshore West, the Stouffville line and the Barrie line;

- there are major station renovations, such as building upgrades and improved pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle access;

- also, the construction of new parking structures is taking place at stations like Cooksville, which will gain 800 new spaces, and the new Bloomington station, which will have about 1,000 new spaces;

—in addition, grade separation work is taking place at the Davenport Diamond in order to improve safety and increase capacity on the Barrie corridor.

In terms of providing more service to more people right now, we took immediate action. As I mentioned earlier, this summer, Metrolinx added 84 more train trips and extended 65 existing train trips. This provided more rush hour, midday and evening service each week and included the following:

—GO added 19 new trips and extended 25 existing trips each week on the Lakeshore West line to double rush hour service to the West Harbour GO station;

—it also improved rush hour service for customers in Burlington, Oakville and Mississauga, and made weekend trains to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines a year-round service;

—GO also added 15 new trips each week to increase midday weekday service along the entire Lakeshore East line. It reinstated and extended 25 evening trips each week on the Stouffville line, from Union Station to Mount Joy; and

—it also added 50 new trips and extended 15 existing trips each week on the Kitchener line.

This will bring new weekday evening train service to Brampton and more midday rush hour and late night service as far as Kitchener.

As GO connects more people to more communities, it will also help people stay connected online. Beginning in 2020, GO Transit commuters will be able to access a free, reliable, high-quality wireless Internet connection. Metrolinx is bringing free WiFi service to the entire GO Transit fleet, including 532 buses and 943 train coaches.

In May of this year, the province issued a request for proposals to pre-qualified teams who will be bidding to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the infrastructure for the largest capital project in the GO rail expansion program, and that is the On-Corridor Works project. This project involves a system-wide plan to improve GO Transit service. The scope covers the construction of new civil infrastructure, tracks, electrification and signalling infrastructure. It also covers improvements to rolling stock, as well as the operation of train services, including train control and dispatch. This project will generate employment opportunities of up to 8,300 annual job equivalents in the first 12 years of construction and delivery. It will also improve service for commuters by saving an average of 10 minutes per trip.

This work is vital in order to meet projected ridership growth as Ontario's population continues to expand. In 2017, GO's annual ridership was about 57 million; by 2055, it is projected to reach 200 million.

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Perhaps nowhere more than on Toronto's subway system are the effects of population growth being felt. Key segments of the system are stretched to capacity, especially at rush hour. We've all seen the images on Twitter of overcrowded platforms and frustrated commuters.

This government has taken action. In the 2019 budget, the province announced its plan to build new transit faster and at a lower cost.

In June, the Legislature passed the Getting Ontario Moving Act. This legislation will enable provincial ownership of the subway extensions and new lines envisioned in our new subway plan. This plan has a total preliminary cost estimate of \$28.5 billion and includes four new subway projects.

The Yonge North subway extension: This will help make the subway a truly regional system, by extending the Yonge line from its existing terminus at Finch station up to Richmond Hill Centre. The extension will link major employment centres in Markham and Richmond Hill to the downtown.

The three-stop Scarborough subway extension: This extension will finally provide commuters in the east end with subway service beyond Kennedy station to Lawrence East, Scarborough Town Centre and the McCowan station.

The Eglinton Crosstown west extension: The province is committed to extending this LRT line further west to increase connections along Eglinton Avenue to Renforth Drive. A large portion of this project will be built underground to keep people and goods moving on the province's roadways.

The Ontario Line: This transformative project will bring rapid transit to new areas in the east, the west and the north ends of Toronto. It will run nearly 16 kilometres from Ontario Place and Exhibition Place, through the downtown and up to the Ontario Science Centre. It includes 15 proposed stations. It will provide 17 potential connections to GO Transit and other TTC subway and streetcar lines.

We put aside the politicking and the delay and reached an agreement on a single, unified plan for subway expansion that would see all three levels of government working together. The province, the government of Canada and the city of Toronto will collaborate and deliver this new subway plan which will benefit commuters in Toronto and throughout the GTHA. In addition, the province is calling on our federal partners to commit at least 40% funding to these critical subway projects.

Our commitments are as follows: \$5.6 billion for the Yonge North subway extension, with an estimated completion date of 2029-30; \$5.5 billion for the Scarborough subway extension, with an estimated completion date of 2029-30; \$4.7 billion for the Eglinton Crosstown west extension, with an estimated completion date of 2030-31; and \$10.9 billion for the Ontario Line, with an estimated completion as early as 2027. With the inclusion of \$1.7 billion for planning, designing and engineering work, our total commitment is \$28.5 billion.

For every person who has ever been stuck on a platform, watching one packed train after another go past, they will say it can't happen soon enough, and we are making it happen.

The province is also committed to moving forward projects around the GTHA that will deliver more rapid transit options for people throughout the region.

Work on the Eglinton Crosstown LRT continues. When completed, it will provide 19 kilometres of new rapid transit across Eglinton from Mount Dennis to Kennedy,

and it features a 10-kilometre portion that will be underground. Stations are being built, the maintenance and storage facility has been completed, and testing is under way on the new LRT vehicles.

There's also the Hurontario LRT. This project will provide 18 kilometres of new rapid transit between Port Credit GO station in Mississauga and the Gateway terminal in Brampton. In October, the province awarded the contract to design, build, finance, operate and maintain the project.

Next is the Finch West LRT. This project will provide 11 kilometres of rapid transit along Finch Avenue West, between Finch West TTC station and Humber College. Preliminary works have begun, including the construction of a new maintenance and storage facility for this line.

In York region, we continue to support the expansion of the Viva bus network. This includes 34 kilometres of dedicated bus lanes along several segments of Highway 7, Yonge Street and Davis Drive. Segments in Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Newmarket are already open.

I would now like to turn to our proposed investments in provincial highways, roads and bridges.

Our plan for an improved and expanded road network will ease congestion and reduce travel times through our highway corridors, critical trade links and international gateways. It also addresses safety concerns, promotes economic development and enhances the quality of life for people in Ontario.

My ministry is proceeding with planning and design work on the following key projects:

- widening a 20-kilometre stretch of Highway 3, between the town of Essex and the municipality of Leamington, from two to four lanes. Construction could start as early as spring 2021;

- widening 31 kilometres of Highway 401, between the city of London and the town of Tilbury, from four to six lanes;

- constructing a twin structure for the Garden City Skyway on the QEW in St. Catharines; and

- widening a 22.5-kilometre stretch of Highway 17, from the town of Arnprior to the town of Renfrew, from two to four lanes. This project includes four new interchanges and eight new bridges.

Two key projects that are further along, with construction under way or about to begin, include the following: twinning a 6.5-kilometre stretch of Highway 17 from the Manitoba border to Highway 673; and expanding an 18-kilometre stretch of Highway 401 from the Credit River Bridge in Mississauga to Regional Road 25 in Milton.

By connecting communities with better transportation options, we give people across the province more power to travel within or between municipalities. In the 2019 budget, the government committed up to \$30 million over five years to 39 different municipalities through the Ontario Community Transportation Grant Program. The funding from this program enables municipalities to partner with community organizations to coordinate local and inter-community transportation services in unserved

or underserved areas. The grants go a long way to helping create those connections between communities, which is one of our priorities.

A multimodal transportation network is one that looks at all modes of travel—road, rail, air and water—as one integrated system. A well-balanced network, one that takes advantage of all travel options, is one that supports communities and helps foster a globally competitive economy.

My ministry is developing regional transportation plans to build these networks, to keep people and goods moving across the province. For example, we are advancing work on the development of the southwestern Ontario transportation plan, and a Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan. Regional planning is also under way in northern and in eastern Ontario. These plans will inform policy and planning decisions of the future, so that every region will have a comprehensive, long-term transportation development strategy.

Over the next few months, the government will explore the feasibility of transferring the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission from the Ministry of Energy, Northern Development and Mines to the Ministry of Transportation. This move could allow the province to centralize ministerial oversight of all government agencies in order to deliver transportation services and create opportunities to improve services.

In parallel with this work, the province will explore options to enhance inter-community bus services that are provided by the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission.

This will ensure that unserved and underserved northern communities are connected, and that people in the north have access to jobs, education and critical services.

I have spent the bulk of my time focused on transit and highways. I have also talked about the multimodal planning that links them with other modes of travel in order to build a fully integrated transportation network.

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The Ministry of Transportation will also continue its important work on road safety. Ontario has among the safest roads in North America. This enviable status has been achieved by many years of work with our partners in legislation, law enforcement, safety groups, municipalities and other stakeholders. We will continue this work, striving to make Ontario's roads more safe each year. We do this by promoting safe driving habits and reminding people of the dangers of drinking- and drug-impaired driving.

This acknowledges the importance of transportation in people's daily lives. People rely on our transportation network for work, school and travel. They want to get from point A to point B safely and on time. They want options that are efficient and affordable. They want to know that more options are coming and that the era of all talk and no action is finally over. The investments we make in transit, highways, road safety and innovation will continue to build on our successes. Ontario's economic picture is getting better, and this lets us make the critical

investments to grow businesses, create jobs and improve the quality of life for everyone.

Ceci reconnaît l'importance du transport dans la vie quotidienne des gens. Les gens comptent sur notre réseau de transport pour leur travail, leurs études et leur déplacement. Ils veulent se rendre du point A au point B en toute sécurité et à temps. Ils veulent des options efficaces et abordables. Ils veulent savoir que d'autres options s'offrent à eux et que l'ère des discussions et de l'inaction est enfin terminée. Les investissements que nous faisons dans les transports en commun, les autoroutes, la sécurité routière et l'innovation continueront de miser sur nos succès. La situation économique de l'Ontario s'améliore, ce qui nous permet de faire les investissements essentiels pour faire croître les entreprises, créer des emplois et améliorer la qualité de vie de tous.

Je remercie le comité de m'avoir donné l'occasion de vous présenter nos plans, et j'ai hâte d'en discuter avec vous. I'd like to thank the committee for this opportunity to present our plans and I look forward to discussing them with you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): Thank you very much. We'll turn it back to MPP Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm just going to summarize for a few minutes before I hand it over to MPP Bourgouin. In response to the answers that you gave in the previous round of questions, I just want to summarize: I'm hearing that a preliminary design business case will come out by Metrolinx next year. I'm under the impression that there is no full business case—that was essentially the summary of what I'm hearing from you—which is a concern.

When it came to the city's very clear requests about the Ontario Line and how we need to move forward from that, Minister, you did mention that Metrolinx will listen to the concerns of residents, but I heard no commitment to mitigate, at this point, the noise and pollution for that plan and no commitment to move forward with an underground option. I do encourage you to very carefully read and listen to residents' concerns and the city's concerns—it is an official request now—and I hope you factor that into your decision-making.

Finally, I think it was made clear that there will be an amended TPAP to the section around the Ontario Line that is covering the former relief line track. I think that's what you mentioned, John Lieou. Our request is that a full TPAP is done as soon as possible so that residents' concerns can be heard.

I'd like to hand it over to MPP Bourgouin.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Bonjour, madame la Ministre. According to the estimates, the funding for service under the provincial Highway Maintenance Program is increasing by 20%, or \$81 million. This program pays for things like privatized highway maintenance. Why are these costs rising so fast?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll turn it over to the department, but as I said today in the House, we take highway maintenance very seriously. We have a great record in the province of Ontario in terms of service and safety.

To speak to that specific number, I will turn it over to Jennifer.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Try to be as brief as possible. I don't need a lengthy—just give me why it's rising so rapidly.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: I'm Jennifer Graham Harkness. I'm the executive director and chief engineer for provincial highways management, Ministry of Transportation.

Thank you for the question. We take our highway maintenance very seriously. As part of that, over the last several years, we have undertaken a number of measures to make changes to the contracts that we currently have and to provide further stabilization to the contracts that we have. As part of those, we have made changes such as increasing service to our passing lanes and truck climbing lanes. There are now over 1,100 pieces of maintenance equipment that are being utilized. There are a number of various activities—again, our service and access to 511—that have resulted in the changes in the costs that you see.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Until recently, Ontario's largest winter road maintenance contractor was Carillion, with nearly half of the province's area maintenance contracts. However, Carillion collapsed last year. The minister at the time said that the government entered into a new arrangement with Carillion to continue providing maintenance services. Could we please get a copy of this arrangement?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: The change in the contracts—those contracts were—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: They entered into a new arrangement with Carillion. They had problems. The minister at the time said there was a new arrangement. Can we get copies of these new arrangements that were agreed upon?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: The contracts that were previously with Carillion Canada are now with different service providers—Emcon, as well as Ferrovial, with tendered contracts.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: But at the time, were there agreements agreed upon? Before Emcon came into—were there arrangements done? If there were, can we get copies of these arrangements?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: I'll have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: But if there were, will you make them available for us?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: I'll have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Eventually, the Carillion contracts were taken over by a new contractor, Emcon. Did the province have to sweeten the deal in order to get Emcon to agree to take over these contracts? Did the province have to increase or make the deal sweeter—or they just took over the contracts?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Again, they made agreements to—the contracts were relative to the Carillion contracts. It was a purchase and sale agreement, I believe, with—again, I'll have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: They didn't just take over, so there had to be new arrangements done?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Carillion sold those contracts to Ontario—so seven ministry contracts—and they went to Emcon Services, which is an experienced highway maintenance contractor from British Columbia.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Can we get a copy of these arrangements? Can you provide them to the committee?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Because of the sale and purchase agreement, I'll have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Minister, can we get copies of this?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As Jennifer said, we'll look into it. They're purchase and sale agreements, so we'll look into it and get back to you.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Could the committee please get summary copies of non-compliance records, including penalties or fines imposed on area maintenance contractors for poor maintenance for each contract area for the last three winters?

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Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Certainly, as part of the contracts, there are conditions in the contracts that the contracts must meet, and so that involves the oversight efforts that we undertake in terms of looking at what happens during the in-storm situations, as well as what happens with the information that the contractors report to us. That information is assessed, and then that leads to being determined whether it's in compliance or not. That information, again, is worked through the contract and oversight.

In terms of providing those materials, again, we would have to—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Look into it.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Yes.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: But is that information accessible to the government? We should at least have some understanding. If they're not in compliance, we should get a record of this. If the government wants to have a record of this, then they should be available to the committee.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Again, I will have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Okay. How much in total fines or penalties are currently owed to the province by its area maintenance contractors? And could we please get that information?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: In terms of the information, I will have to—I just want to pull that up.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: If you have to come back to us, is there a timeline that you can give us, or a date, at least, that the committee can get this information?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Again, I will have to get back to you on that information.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): MPP French?

Ms. Jennifer K. French: Sorry, not to interrupt my colleague's time, but it will be my distinct pleasure to sit here tomorrow afternoon for estimates, and I would be happy to get that information and pass it along to Monsieur Bourgouin if it's available by tomorrow afternoon. Is that a realistic ask?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Again, I will have to look into that.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Okay. Could you please provide data showing the bare pavement performance results for Highways 11 and 17, as compared to the 400-series and QEW highways in southern Ontario?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: For Highways 11 and 17, it certainly depends on the portion of it. For bare pavement results, the information is that it is approximately at least seven hours. Again, in terms of the information that—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Seven hours—

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: To make bare pavement. For a class 1 freeway, time to bare pavement is eight hours; for a class 2 highway, time to bare pavement is greater than 16 hours. Highways 11 and 17 perform at around seven hours, which is a very good—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: An average of seven hours, you're saying?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Again, I would say—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: I don't want to put words in your mouth, but you're saying "seven hours." I just need to know. Is this information available, the seven hours? Where does it come from? Can we also get that data and that information to the committee?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: I will be able to pull that up, the time to bare pavement on average.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Okay. Three northern Ontario ministers have given interviews in the press that seem to imply that bare pavement performance where we're speaking of, on Highways 11 and 17, has already equalled the performance of the 400-series highways. Is this true?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: It has been regained within seven hours, which is better performance than what is expected for freeways, or the eight hours, for a class 1 highway.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So Highways 11 and 17 are equal, the same as the 400s, in being maintained right now?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: What happens during a storm is that when a storm is expected or arrives, winter maintenance equipment is mobilized and brought in, and it's a continuous operation until the storm ends and then it is brought to bare pavement. This section of Highways 11 and 17, based on our information, is at seven hours. It's what we've seen after the storm, which is much sooner than the standard time for a class 2, which is 16 hours, and is around the same as a class 1 highway.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: During the past two weeks, the three northern PC ministers have indicated that MTO is spending about \$40 million on winter maintenance in northern Ontario compared to the 2015-16 winter. Could you please tell me whether there has been an extra \$40 million invested on winter highway maintenance in northern Ontario?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: In terms of the changes that we've made to the contracts, we have added equipment in order to look after increasing our passing-

lane clearance of snow, as well as our truck climbing lanes. A large portion of the effort required for winter maintenance relates to application materials like de-icing materials, such as salt. Again, we have added and enhanced our use of anti-icing agents ahead of a storm and when appropriate.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: So does that mean that the contracts are being renegotiated, or are we going to be paying an extra \$40 million so private contractors fulfill their existing contract? If so, could we please get this information?

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: In terms of material usage, it depends on the materials required for each storm. The severity of storms varies year over year in terms of the materials that are required.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: But where is the \$40 million? They mentioned \$40 million. Is it \$40 million? If it is, we'd like to have that information also.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: I'm not certain of the \$40 million.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: When can we expect some of the information that we requested? We'd like to have the timeline on this information. I believe the committee needs this to be able to understand more of why is it that Highways 17 and 11—you're saying it's seven hours. I beg to differ, because I live up north and I could tell you that a lot of northern communities would say the same as I'm saying here. The average of seven hours—if I could use the term "average"—I've seen the highway closed for two days last year. Right now, winter is not even here, and we've seen the highway closed already two or three times for more than seven hours.

This seven hours is an average of what? Highways 11 and 17? Is it acceptable to say that when it's not, it's okay, and that we accept that we put people at risk? Cochrane is three times more likely to have a fatal accident on the highway; Timiskaming is four times more likely, compared to the south.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: In terms of highway closures, the OPP and the police services make the determination of when a highway would need to be closed—

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: But the highways are closed. They're not unplowed; they're closed because of the snow not being removed.

Ms. Jennifer Graham Harkness: Typically, that's driven by the severity of the storm and what is occurring as the storm is occurring. For winter maintenance activities, when they are expecting a storm, they are mobilized and brought in. They continue operations until the storm is over and then bring it to bare pavement. We know for Highways 11 and 17 that that is around seven hours to bare pavement.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: For most of the questions I asked, we don't have or we don't know if we're going to get this information, which is pretty sad when we're thinking about these communities that are put in harm's way. This committee should get that information. I think it's imperative that we do get it so that, if these numbers are true, at least we can justify the numbers and we can

look it at it and address it appropriately. This is why I say that it should be stated that this information should be given to this committee, and the Clerk should note these questions that I ask. The information should be given to this committee, because I feel that our highway—I can tell you that I live on both Highway 17 and Highway 11, and these highways have been closed more than ever, and I was raised up north. So I question the seven hours, but until I see the data that you're going to provide to us—and hopefully, we'll get this data. I ask the minister to provide this data to this committee. I think it's needed so that we have the right numbers and can answer our constituents accordingly.

1700

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): You're all looking at me. So it's clear for both parties here, is there an undertaking that the minister is agreeing to provide those for the opposition and also for everybody else who is in the room? Is that an undertaking that you're comfortable with to do?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As we said, we will follow up; we'll get back to you on it.

The standards that MTO has stated publicly, about seven hours, are ones that we've got a lot of confidence in.

Mr. Guy Bourgouin: Mr. Chair, that's not a guarantee that we'll get this information. We'd like to have that information. "We'll look into it" doesn't mean we'll get that information. I think this committee deserves that information, and just to say "We'll look into it" is not acceptable to this committee; in fact, I think it's a disservice to this committee. We should get this information.

Again, I ask the minister: Can you commit to give this information that I requested today—I believe it's to go towards the safety of the people who live up north, on Highway 17 and Highway 11.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, I'll reiterate what I said today in the House.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): There's a minute left.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We remain committed to maintaining the best highway clearance standards that we can. We are already achieving high levels of service on highway clearance and on road safety in the north, and we will continue to do that.

With respect to some of the information that's requested: We will take it back, review what is commercially sensitive and what we can provide, and we will follow up once we've had a chance to review that, and then come back to the committee once we've had that chance.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): As the Chair sitting up here, I would think that you're saying yes, that you'll provide that information. I think that's usually how this committee would run. I think that's what you're saying—that you're going to take a look at it—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'm saying that I'm going to review the request and see what we can provide, and then follow up at that time.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): We'll go to the government side. MPP Khanjini.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you, Minister, for joining us here today.

I wanted to just begin by talking about how, in my riding of Barrie–Innisfil, we really see all the work that you and your ministry have done to connect the dots with transit.

As you may be aware—and many of your officials are aware, as well—in Innisfil alone, 82% of our residents commute. So they're either getting into a vehicle, or they're getting on the GO train, or they're taking the GO train to Vaughan and taking the subway. All those different abilities for them to pick different options for transit is very key for them to be able to go to work and then be home with their families.

This summer, it was very exciting for me to announce, with my fellow neighbouring MPP Doug Downey, the fact that we are extending some of the GO train times in Barrie—and the Northland—so that you can take the GO train from Union to Allandale Waterfront station in Barrie and then take the Northland, connecting us to the north, like Bracebridge, Huntsville, Gravenhurst and North Bay. Then, we can also get those individuals coming to Barrie, which actually helps us with our tourism.

On the topic of tourism: We do have a lot of people who will be taking the GO train from Union Station to Barrie to visit the jewel of our area, which is Lake Simcoe. At the same time, there are lots of residents in Barrie and Innisfil who are going to want to explore Toronto. Obviously, a big portion of that would be the Ontario Line—because now it allows them to take their kids for free, which was another announcement this summer that we were able to do thanks to the work of transportation. Eventually, once the Ontario Line comes to fruition—being able to take their children to places like Ontario Place and to the science centre, which I visited when I was growing up, but I remember that we had to drive. Certainly, when you live in the snowbelt—we may not be the buckle, but we certainly live in the snowbelt—alternative levels of transport often help, obviously, in giving us options.

There has been a lot of talk about the subway. In my area, the big significance of the subway is the ability to give more of our residents more options, once they're in the city, of how they get to their office. It's also a big centrepiece of the government's plan—and what we're doing for subways. The Ontario Line has garnered a lot of attention. I like to think, being at the Ministry of the Environment, it's because the Ontario Line alone is going to reduce one million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions. But I know there's more, so I was wondering if you could tell us what really makes the Ontario Line unique as a project.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: We've done a lot of work to plan out our GO rail expansion plan that will impact your riding, of course, and expansion across all seven lines. The subway plan doesn't just benefit the city of Toronto; it also benefits the region, and the Yonge North subway line is a major element to that. Part of my riding is in York region, and I think about 50% of people travel outside of York region for work. So that connection will be important.

Back to the Ontario Line: We call it the crown jewel. It is double the size of the previously proposed downtown relief line. As you said, it connects Ontario Place and Exhibition Place to the Ontario Science Centre. Just the sheer length of that will provide double the transit connections that had previously been proposed. Along the way, it will provide transit connections to people who weren't going to have access to rapid transit. In neighbourhoods like Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park, their residents will be able to have access to rapid transit, which will then provide them access to employment, to education. It will help provide opportunities for them, but it will also provide opportunities for their neighbourhoods because they'll be able to bring people to Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park.

I think it was the University of Toronto that did a study on some of the socio-economic benefits of the Ontario Line. It really did, when I had a chance to read it, reaffirm my confidence in the work that we are doing with the Ontario Line. I'll just share some lines from the report. They wrote, "Overall, access to employment is improved throughout Toronto because of the Ontario Line, with benefits accruing to low-income, visible minority, and recent immigrant groups, more than to the overall population."

They also said, "The benefits are concentrated among low-income, visible minority, and recent immigrant populations, compared to the average benefit received across the entire population."

So we know that for the entire city and for the entire region there will be benefits, but there will be certain areas of the city that will also be able to see opportunities that had not been previously planned. So the benefits are far-reaching for the Ontario Line, and I think it's tremendously exciting.

It will also, as you mentioned—in your portfolio—get more people out of their cars and onto transit.

You're sitting next to my parliamentary assistant—so we'll be able to provide, through our \$28.5-billion plan, a three-stop Scarborough subway extension, which will give the residents of Scarborough the same level of transit as the people in downtown Toronto get. That will also provide a tremendous amount of relief. It's certainly very exciting and overdue.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you for that answer.

It's clear that things are on the right track. It's quite thrilling that the Ontario Line is part of a larger plan that our government has in store for commuters, by connecting all those dots.

I was wondering if you could just elaborate a little bit more on the Ontario Line and let us know exactly what it would look like—for those to get really excited—and the aspirations that are going to come to fruition in Ontario.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, Metrolinx has put forward the preliminary line and there will be, obviously, comments and consultation done along the route, but it will give people the chance to move from one end of the city to the other in ways that they had not been able to imagine before.

1710

Toronto is the economic engine of our province, in a way, and it has a tremendous amount of growth. We'll be getting about a million new residents over the next 10 years. All those people, if we don't provide the transit infrastructure, will be getting onto our roads, clogging our roads, which will make it harder for them to get around. It will also be harder for us to get our goods to market.

But it will provide, in a way, an opportunity to continue to provide growth to our downtown area all along the line, along those stations, and provide great opportunities for the businesses there and for those communities.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Can you maybe elaborate about how this is going to be helping the city and the greater Toronto area as a whole, and then a little bit more about the economic trickle effects on commuters, and what correlation the ridership has with the economic benefits with the surrounding communities and the Ontario Line?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'd like to turn it over to the deputy minister, but her microphone doesn't work—

Ms. Shelley Tapp: Oh, it is. Okay, sorry.

Shelley Tapp, Deputy Minister of Transportation. Just to answer some of your questions on the line itself in a little bit more detail: It would include 15 potential stations, with six interchanges and 17 connections to GO Transit. It's 15.5 kilometres from Ontario Place to the Ontario Science Centre. The plan is to have 40 trains per hour per direction, and when it's mature and operational, 90 seconds apart, and a projected ridership of about 389,000 daily boardings. So, that will take a lot of pressure off the existing lines.

That would provide 154,000 more people within walking distance with access to transit. The estimation is a 14% reduction on the overcrowding that's happening currently on Line 1.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you. It's very exciting to hear about the 90 seconds apart. For those who don't have patience, they can rely on that, that at least transit will be there on time. That's good.

But I was wondering if I could just go back to my other questions about the general effect that the Ontario Line will have on the economic benefits. When we think about any sort of structure, whether it's infrastructure or transit-related infrastructure, they often have rings around them in terms of the effects they have on the economy, the community, and job creation and saving people time, like you were saying. I was wondering if you could sort of touch upon the ridership aspects being an economic benefit to the surrounding communities.

Ms. Shelley Tapp: Currently, the estimation is that we lose \$11 billion each year due to gridlock. The lines, although they are in the city of Toronto, will have regional impacts outside of the GTA as well. I don't have the stat with me—

Interjection: Pass it to James.

Ms. Shelley Tapp: I will pass it to James. But I did want to mention that in terms of economic benefit, the actual construction of the four lines alone will create 8,300 jobs for the city of Toronto.

Mr. James Nowlan: James Nowlan, executive director of transit, MTO. The only thing I think I would add to the deputy, who has identified a number of areas where we'd see benefits, is that the initial business case from Metro-linx identifies that the Ontario Line will have about a \$7.4-billion economic benefit. That's in comparison to the original estimate for the business case for the downtown Relief Line South, which was about \$3.4 billion.

So, as it relates to things like jobs from construction as well as access to new areas, the expansion, and the various kinds of spinoffs one has from allowing people to get to different places in the city, will have a benefit from a development side as well as in terms of new development around those sites. There's really a fairly significant benefit, and that also reflects in the benefit-cost ratio, which has a significant increase in terms of those benefits versus the actual costs of the line.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I was excited to learn that in our region, in Simcoe county, one of our big employers Decast, actually helped provide the inner casting and molding for the Spadina line. So when you were talking about economic benefits, we had seen them first-hand in my community and the surrounding area on previous transit projects and how they affect local workers there. I would have to say to the minister and your team that when it was announced that the Ontario Line was coming to fruition, I got messages from local constituents about how this is going to help them with job creation locally because of, as you were saying, the spinoff effects and how now they can maybe vie for helping out with that subway line.

Another thing I learned this past summer, not so much in my specific riding but out in Elmvale—they were at a big airshow. During that airshow, you're distracted by planes, obviously, but there was a big pile of sand and then there were trucks coming in, delivering piles. It turns out that that is from a lot of the subway construction. So I thought, you look at not only parts of Simcoe county in terms of their ability to contribute to the construction, but also the other aggregates and materials that are being shipped across, and those ripple effects of helping our local economy.

It was really exciting, because a lot of people think it's just a made-in-Toronto, Toronto-centric policy, but I've seen, in my area especially, where there's rural and urban, all the benefits it has across Ontario and how it's going to help local residents.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: There's a C2P3 conference going on on infrastructure; I had the chance to speak there yesterday. People in infrastructure are very excited about the opportunities for employment that it's going to bring. You mentioned one business in your riding, but for workers around the GTA, there's going to be a great opportunity for employment. The province of Ontario is going to need to rely on a great amount of skilled labour. From the construction standpoint, the engineering standpoint, all of the things that we'll need, there will be a tremendous amount of employment opportunity associated with building these four lines.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Great. One thing I was reading in the news, sort of taking a new leaf in questioning but

still about the Ontario Line, is that there's some confusion about the downtown relief line versus the Ontario Line. Could you clarify the difference between the two, just so I understand and the committee understands as well?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Well, the downtown relief line had been proposed in the past by the city. Metrolinx and the province proposed the Ontario Line because it provides twice the amount of transit. As the deputy described, it's 15.5 kilometres long with 15 stations, connecting the science centre to Ontario Place. So by increasing the number of connections, by providing transit to areas that previously did not have any stations, we're providing more access to opportunities to people who hadn't had it.

What is particularly exciting about it is that we were able, through a lot of collaboration with city of Toronto staff, MTO officials and Metrolinx officials, to work together on the proposal that we put forward, and we were able to get a consensus that this was the right way to move forward for the city of Toronto and, we believe, for the province of Ontario, because it will be tremendous for the region. So we got that consensus and that agreement. Throughout the federal campaign, we heard support from all federal leaders for the Ontario Line itself, so we are happy to be moving forward in partnership with different levels of government on this. We see that their support is an endorsement that this line we've proposed is the right one for the city.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Well, I commend you for your work with all levels of government to do something that's for the best for the whole province.

You were talking about how this is going to have twice the amount of connections. That makes me think about cost. When we talk about the deficit and how we went from a projected \$10.3-billion deficit to a \$9-billion deficit, how much are some of these projects going to cost and how will we fund this type of project?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll let James speak to some of the cost aspects and how they relate to the previous line.

Mr. James Nowlan: I think in terms of the Ontario Line, the initial cost estimates in the IBC were around \$10 billion. There's a range within that. That is slightly more than the initial cost-benefit for the business case for the downtown Relief Line South, but as I think both the minister and the deputy have said, the differences that one has between those two are that with the downtown Relief Line South you have a connection from Pape station down to Osgoode, but with the Ontario Line you have a connection from Ontario Place. You're actually connecting to the Lakeshore West Go station all the way up to the Ontario Science Centre, so then you'll actually be connecting to the Eglinton Crosstown. It has a much greater benefit from a network perspective because you're having these interchanges with other forms of rapid transit, which then helps to provide relief off some of our other lines, so it can help in terms of some other investments.

1720

In terms of the approach being taken, there's work under way at Metrolinx and IO to look at the best approach

procurement for all of these projects. We're also working with the city of Toronto and that process is looking at the P3 model as the best approach from a cost certainty perspective as well as a time certainty perspective, to focus on delivering within the estimates that have been developed.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: I bet it's a big relief on the Toronto tax base and their books, for sure, as the province takes the helm and the leadership role under the leadership of the minister.

That leads me to my next question, about the business case and the development of it. We've seen the initial business case, but what are the steps from that initial business case that are being developed?

Mr. James Nowlan: I'll maybe take a few seconds just to give an overview of the business case process that Metrolinx goes through in terms of developing a business case for any transit project. This is all available online on the Metrolinx website. There's a guide to business cases.

It's a multi-step process. The first step is an initial business case. That represents about 10% design. It looks at alignment. It also compares options. For example, in the case of the Ontario Line, it looked at the alignment that we have proposed versus the downtown Relief Line South.

The next step is the preliminary design business case. That is where—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): You have one minute.

Mr. James Nowlan:—additional engineering work continues on, additional work to refine the alignment happens, and then that goes into a full business case development. The full business case then becomes the third step. That supports the development of a reference design concept, which is provided to the bidding industry through the P3 model to develop bids back to the government in terms of how they can deliver on any innovations they would provide to that and to identify costs, timeline and anything else that's associated with that. That full business case does also get updated over time.

It's a multi-phase process with many steps along the way and it gets refined as it goes along, both from a timing perspective and a cost perspective, but also as it relates to things like alignment and technical specifications.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): That's about it. Time's up. We'll turn it back to the official opposition: MPP Jessica Bell.

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is a question to Minister Mulroney. I want to go back to questions around the Ontario Line.

One of the questions I had goes back to what the city of Toronto is saying about the line. It was very interesting being at city executive and city council and hearing the comments from city council. Some reoccurring themes were that in some respects, with the city, they had to negotiate because they essentially had a gun to their head, because the provincial government was threatening to take away the entire subway system from the city, which is a very tough position to be in when you're going into negotiations.

Secondly, an additional thing that came out of the negotiations is that the city doesn't essentially have to pay for any of these new transit lines, which puts a lot more responsibility on the provincial government and it means that a high price had to be paid to get the city's support.

One thing I noticed in the city of Toronto report about the Ontario Line is that it's still at the conceptual stage of design, so we don't actually have a very good understanding of how much exactly it will cost. The report actually said that the estimated cost of the line is between \$9.5 billion and \$11.4 billion, but that that number has a margin of error of 50% to 100%. So the project might actually cost as much as \$22.8 billion.

Would you say this margin of error is accurate?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As James explained, the process for the development of business plans for transit infrastructure projects at Metrolinx follows a path. The IBC, the initial business case, for the preliminary design and proposals are put forward, and estimates are developed, based on those levels of design, and they get refined as they go along.

Our government has been very focused on making sure that we provide services at a good cost for taxpayers, so we are committed to working to stay within the estimates that we have provided.

I'd like to go back to your statements that you made off the top, just because it does go to the cost estimate—

Ms. Jessica Bell: No, I just want to know if this margin of error, in your opinion, is accurate. It's typical at the conceptual stage of design, which is what the Ontario Line is at, to have a margin of error of 50% to 100%. So this project could cost \$22.8 billion. I'm simply asking you: Do you think that margin of error is accurate or not? You get 30 minutes to talk—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: My focus is on making sure that when it comes time for the Ontario taxpayers to pay the bill associated with the Ontario Line—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Right, exactly. They want to know the numbers.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: —that we meet those targets. That's why, as James said, we think Metrolinx will be going with a P3 model, because it will be able to deliver this project. It will have more price certainty associated with that model, as opposed to some other projects that we've had.

But this is the way transit is built around the world. You build based on these initial business cases and then preliminary design cases. You bring bidders in, and the bidders then have a chance to refine their prices.

But it's important to note that, under the partnership that we've developed with the city of Toronto, the province will pay its share, and the city will pay its share and there will be incremental new funding coming from the city of Toronto. Instead of putting it into these new lines, it will be able to invest its portion into the existing infrastructure—

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes. I am actually fully—

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: You said that they don't have to pay, but they do pay—

Ms. Jessica Bell: No, no. I am actually fully aware of what the city has agreed to pay in terms of state of good repair and new transit lines.

What I'm also hearing is that you're not answering the question. You've had 12 sentences to answer the question. It's a simple question: Yes or no? So I'm going to move on to another question, because you didn't answer it.

What I also heard is some enthusiasm about the benefits—the job-creation benefits, the economic benefits—of building new transit projects, and that's certainly something that I also support. But what concerns me is that this government has voted down a bill to require that new transit projects have a made-in-Ontario component so that a portion of jobs that are affiliated with these transit projects are in Ontario. That was voted down a few weeks ago.

Then, in addition, I have heard very little mention about the government's plan to integrate community benefits agreements into new transit projects, with these new specific transit projects. Will there be local benefits—new parks, new schools, and especially local job opportunities—along the routes of these new transit lines?

Those are my two questions. Can you commit to a made-in-Ontario plan for these new transit projects? And will a community benefits agreement be part of these new transit projects as well?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As part of the partnership agreement with the city of Toronto, the city will then be able to allocate the billions of dollars that it would have allocated to the new lines into the existing infrastructure, which will then provide an opportunity for more local suppliers to be able to deliver—

Ms. Jessica Bell: I do want to speak about the new transit projects. I'm fully aware of what the TTC is doing, and I'm aware of state of good repair; that's a city issue.

But I'm very interested in this: Are you committing to some kind of made-in-Ontario plan for the new transit projects? And will there be community benefits agreements affiliated with these new transit projects?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: The ability to deliver the Ontario Line on time and at the cost—as you mentioned, you're very concerned about the cost—depends on being able to go to a global competitive market and to be able to have competitive pricing.

We believe that we will be able to provide that by going to market on a global scale, and we will also be able to stay in line with our obligations under CETA, which requires 25% local content. We are focused on delivering for the taxpayer, delivering for transit riders and not contravening our international trade obligations.

1730

With respect to community benefits, I'll let John or James speak to that. Certainly, we will want to make sure that local communities are involved and see that they understand the benefits of the projects that we're building—and work in a collaborative way with those communities.

James or John will speak to some of the more specific community benefits issues.

Ms. Jessica Bell: This is specifically around legally binding contracts that are set up with construction companies to build the new projects. It's less around the specific community benefits that Metrolinx might provide. They're binding contracts. Is that something that you can commit to?

Mr. John Lieou: We're not there yet. We'll talk to Metrolinx about it, but we're not there yet.

Certainly, the minister talked about the fact that the government is also planning to take a transit-oriented development approach to these new lines as well. Therefore, as part of that, we will work with the city of Toronto to make sure that the communities that are being planned around these will include mixed-use and everything else that goes along with what is good community planning, good community building, along these stations.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. To summarize, community benefits agreements can include inclusionary zoning, it's true, but what I'm hearing from you is that there is no clear commitment at this point for that, and that there is no clear commitment to go beyond a 25% agreement, or very little when it comes to making sure that these transit projects bring local jobs to people in Ontario. That's what I'm summarizing.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: As you heard in my previous answer, there will be a lot of local jobs created as a result of the building of the four new lines.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Good. Then I'm very excited to hear some kind of commitment from you around what that percentage of made-in-Ontario jobs will be. Can you make a commitment around what that percentage would be?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: No, because I've been very clear that our rail procurement process must align with our international obligations.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay, so that is a no.

I also want to talk about some of the other requirements that the city of Toronto put into their agreement when it comes to negotiating with you around the Ontario Line. One thing that the city of Toronto requested was to ensure that there is fair and affordable fare integration, which means one flat fare for the city of Toronto and no fare by distance, which would include these transit lines. Is that something that you can commit to?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: John, do you want to answer that?

Mr. John Lieou: For sure. We have been mandated to work with the city of Toronto on fares, and fare integration in particular, and it's not just for the city. I think it behooves all of us to think about how—and the first line will come into service in 2027. So, of course, we will have to work on a fare system with the city of Toronto on these, which will go along with GO and everybody else in the region as well. Fare integration is certainly part of the work plan.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Yes, 100%. So there are different ways to bring about fare integration. The city of Toronto has made it very clear that they want one flat fare for the city of Toronto and no fare by distance. That is the fare integration that they have incorporated into their documents. Is that something that you can commit to?

Mr. John Lieou: It's certainly their view, MPP Bell. It's not something that we can actually say or commit to before we have even worked out whatever it is with them. We certainly will have a process to actually work all this out with them.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. An additional request that the city of Toronto made, as part of its agreement to support these new lines, is that the maintenance of these lines is retained under the TTC and is not privatized or put in a bid. Is that something that you can commit to: to keep the maintenance of these new transit lines under the TTC?

Mr. John Lieou: The government has been very clear that operations stays with the TTC. There's a whole gradation of maintenance, because we are going to be the owner of these new lines and we have a duty as owners to undertake the major life cycle of maintenance. We will work with the TTC and the city on what should belong with an owner and what should belong with an operator. We will work that out.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. What I'm hearing from you is that there is no clear commitment to have maintenance included under the TTC, even though the city of Toronto has made that request very clear to you that that's something that they want, and that their support for these new lines is contingent on that.

Mr. John Lieou: Actually, MPP Bell, there is a commitment to work with the TTC and Toronto on what maintenance should belong to an operator and what maintenance should belong to an owner.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So it's still not clear? Is that what you're saying? You're still negotiating it?

Mr. John Lieou: We will work that out for sure, yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. Another commitment that the city of Toronto made is to ensure that the ministry respect the city of Toronto's request that all transit-oriented development include inclusionary zoning and affordable housing, so that we're not just building one-bedroom or bachelor apartments, which doesn't necessarily address the affordable housing crisis in our city, but we are also factoring affordability into the equation. Is that something that you're looking into? Is that something that you can commit to?

Mr. John Lieou: My deputy has been very clear in her letter that we are absolutely going to include good community planning in TOD, transit-oriented development. As a matter of fact, to support that, we have agreed to work with Toronto on what the memorandum of understanding should be around joint objectives for TOD purposes. We will, over the next little while, work that out with them, for sure.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So it's unclear, but you're working on it.

Mr. John Lieou: It's not unclear. It's something that we agreed to work with them on—that we have to jointly agree with them on some kind of MOU that guides TOD.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Is affordable housing something that you're wanting to include in that memorandum of understanding?

Mr. John Lieou: For sure. Whatever the desired objective would be for TOD, we would actually establish with the city based on the MOU.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Minister Mulroney?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Absolutely, more affordable housing is part of one of the things our government is working on, under the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As John explained, we have the opportunity, through our conversations and our deliberations with the city of Toronto around TOD, to find ways to include that so that both levels of government have the opportunity to meet their objectives.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I'm requesting that the memorandum of understanding with the city of Toronto around these transit-oriented development projects be made public. Is that something you can do?

Mr. John Lieou: It's not my call to do that, MPP Bell, but anything that we have worked on with Toronto will become public, for sure. The terms of reference under which we discuss these things—that's public. The structural advice that was offered to Toronto—that's public. The minister's offer to the mayor is public. So I don't see a reason why, when this is done, it won't be public.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I want to go to the question around what I would call Metrolinx secrecy. In my view, Metrolinx is a very secretive agency, and most decisions take place behind closed doors. I recently printed out Metrolinx's next board meeting agenda, and you'll find when you look at it that the vast majority of interesting topics are things that happen behind closed doors, such as capital delivery, GO expansion, Presto, and the transit-oriented development pipeline. Then, there are a few public sessions, and then it goes back to the executive committee—audits, governance. All these things go back to behind closed doors, which is a real problem, because what Metrolinx does has a real impact on taxpayer dollars and the experience of riders across the region.

One thing I'm specifically concerned about is that Metrolinx recently informed the legislative library that it has to freedom-of-information-request its 2018-19 business plan. Can you, as the Minister of Transportation, make public Metrolinx's 2018-19 business plan? I don't think a legislative library should be doing a freedom-of-information request to do that. It should be made public.

Mr. John Lieou: MPP Bell, I was not aware of that, but what we can do is that we'll go back today, we'll look into that and then answer you tomorrow. I think we have a session tomorrow.

Ms. Jessica Bell: I would greatly appreciate it if that plan was made public. It seems like a very reasonable thing to do. The Ministry of Transportation's budget is public. Metrolinx is under your auspices. It makes sense that that budget would be public, as well. So thank you for getting back to me on that.

I want to go to GO expansion, which is a topic that we hear a lot about from this government and the previous government. One thing I noticed in the FAO report is that this government is looking at spending about \$14 billion over the next five years on GO. What concerns me is the

plan to privatize the expansion of the GO network in a DBFMO contract—a design-build-finance-maintain-operate contract.

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That's concerning for numerous reasons. One is that we've got the 407 as an example of what happens when you sign extremely long contracts with a private operator to operate a transportation asset. When Mike Harris was in power, he did promise that the tolls would end in 35 years; they haven't. He did promise that tolls wouldn't rise more than 30%, and they have: they've risen over 200% and counting. So it's very concerning when we see privatization of assets like that in this region.

We've also seen two very recent examples of privatization with our transit sector. We've seen the Eglinton Crosstown. Very recently, there was a \$237-million taxpayer handout to the consortium to finish the project late, even though they were already paid a premium to finish the project on time. And then we have Presto, which is also an example of privatization. The Auditor General calls this the most expensive fare card system in the western world, and the technology is already outdated because most transit agencies have moved to open payments.

It's pretty concerning when I see reports of 30-year contracts going to expand and electrify GO, and for these new transit projects to be built using a pretty concerning P3 model, given that the track record in Ontario is not so great.

So these are my questions. When it comes to the GO expansion, will Metrolinx retain the ability to set fares on GO?

Mr. John Lieou: Yes.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So we're not going to have an example of what we had with the 407 on GO?

Mr. John Lieou: Basically, the DBFOM that you just described is very different from other concessions. It's a situation where the province, through Metrolinx, fully retains control of the assets and ownership of the assets, and they're not leased in that sense of the word at all. And for sure, as owners, Metrolinx will retain service level and fare and other decisions like that, to be settled through contracts with the DBFOM project company.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So when it comes to service levels, if Metrolinx decides, for instance, to change the service levels after five years, is that something that will be allowed with the contract that's being negotiated or developed right now?

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): You have one minute.

Mr. John Lieou: We're not there on the contracting yet, for sure, because even in the bidding process, Metrolinx would be clear—and you've seen the public numbers. It tends to double, at least, the service level and so on. It's a very significant stepwise increase in the level of service. I'm sure that in that contracting process, there will be room for further changes, tweaks and adjustments of service levels.

Ms. Jessica Bell: So just to clarify, you're making it clear that fare setting and service setting will be retained under Metrolinx's control for the entire 30-year contract?

Mr. John Lieou: All the rights of ownership will remain with the province through Metrolinx.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. And fares and service?

Mr. John Lieou: Fare included.

Ms. Jessica Bell: Okay. What are you going to do, this minister and the Ministry of Transportation, to ensure that the cost overruns that we've experienced with Presto—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): I'm sorry; your time is up. We'll go back to the government. MPP Khanjin, please.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you. I left off talking about the initial business case and the steps that are required to take there. But I also wanted to know what type of work goes into producing a business case such as this. It was mentioned that a lot of it gets posted online, which I commend for the transparency that is being done. It does align with some of our government's priorities and initiatives on that.

But I just wanted to see if we could get some more information on that in terms of the business case and what goes into a process such as this, because I think about our transit and how long it's taken Ontario to get real lines up and going. We waited more than 15 years to have a state-of-the-art transit system. When you travel to other countries and compare ourselves, it's very exciting now that we're hitting the ground running and that we're finally getting extra lines. But I did want to know what goes into that business case and how that's handled, if you don't mind.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: I'll ask James to speak to it in detail, but, as he said, the process is straightforward and set out on Metrolinx's website and follows one that is used in transit procurement: the development of the initial business case, the political support, the political partnership, and then community engagement, refinement and so on.

I'll let James take it from there.

Mr. James Nowlan: James Nowlan, executive director, transit, MTO.

There are four key elements of the business case process that Metrolinx undertakes. Again, I've talked about the steps and the stages in the business case and how that gets refined over time as you go through each step and more information is developed as you go along, but the general focus of the business case stays the same in terms of the four elements.

I'll start with the first one, which is really the strategic case. That really is looking at the objectives: Why this project? What's the issue we're looking at? What's the problem we're trying to solve? And really focus on what the strategic case is for the development of rapid transit or other transit projects.

The second is the economic case. That really looks at what the economic benefits associated with this are, as well as the costs. This really feeds into that cost-benefit analysis that is undertaken. Again, it's a pretty broad look, but a lot of that is focused on the transit project itself. We don't—I don't want to say "we"; I should say "Metrolinx." They don't tend to get into a lot of other areas that have a

very indirect cost or benefit. They really are looking at those direct benefits, things that we can quantify and direct costs that we can quantify.

The third element is the financial case, and that's really more from a fiscal impact: What's the cost going to be? How does that relate in terms of timing? Looking at it also in terms of budget considerations associated with the work that they're undertaking. It's really kind of that financial case that the government looks at in terms of looking at its capital plan, how that fits in and really provides that information that helps government make decisions on the types of projects and how they fit into the broader plan. Again, transit is one of many things that is being decided in terms of capital investments.

The last one is around deliverability and operations, so really looking at the ability to deliver what's coming, and then the operation side, what is associated with the project that's coming forward. It looks at procurement strategies; it looks at that side of the work.

Those are the four elements. Again, as the business case progresses, work is refined on each of those. At the end, there are conclusions and recommendations, and those conclusions and recommendations, again as the business case is developed, are refined over time as well.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: And as you move towards the other three lines identified as priorities for the government, is that the same process used for the other three priorities?

Mr. James Nowlan: The process for business cases is standard. It's used for all the rapid transit projects that Metrolinx undertakes. It would be the same for the other three lines. For the other lines that we have done previous to this, the same type of process was put in place.

Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Okay. Thank you. My final question, just before I pass it on to my colleague MPP Piccini—we talk about the different pressures that will be relieved on the existing subway network because of the Ontario Line. Are you able to talk about how that will relieve all those pressure points that are occurring, especially for my local residents as well?

Mr. James Nowlan: Sure. The minister and the deputy have both talked about the ridership side, so that's the increase in ridership that we have from those lines, but one of the real benefits is the relief in some of the congestion points that we have on the existing network.

As it relates to the Ontario Line—the initial business case identified on Line 1—in particular, the Yonge side of Line 1 would see a 14% reduction in terms of capacity. That's compared to 7% that was under the downtown relief line. What that means is that there will be more people diverted off Line 1. To conceptually think about this, people would take the Ontario Line from Eglinton as opposed to getting on at Eglinton station and coming down. What that actually means is that there's going to be more room for people to either join the line, to increase capacity or to reduce the amount of time that people maybe have to wait to get on a train in the morning.

If anyone has been in rush hour on the TTC—sometimes you can't always get on the first train; sometimes you can't get on the second one. What this does is, it helps

to relieve some of that capacity, and because it goes north of Bloor, it really does have quite a benefit there.

The other area that it will provide relief on and kind of related to that is around the Bloor-Yonge station. That is a real benefit as well. That is a key interchange point in the network. We have the Bloor line and the Yonge line that meet there, and again this will reduce congestion there. The way that that's designed actually has problems in and of itself just as it exists right now. So this has a benefit from that side as well.

Then the last point of congestion, and relief that will be provided, is as it relates to both Lakeshore East and Lakeshore West. There's an interchange, as I mentioned before, at Exhibition Place. There's also one being looked at at East Harbour, and that will mean that people who are going to the downtown core or to other parts of the city can actually change off GO Transit at those points as opposed to everyone going into Union Station and having that as the central point of focus for a lot of the GO network. It actually allows for relief as it relates to Union Station—increased capacity there. So a number of points of relief as it relates to the Ontario Line from a network perspective.

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Ms. Andrea Khanjin: Thank you. It's great to know that families that might be taking their kids on the subway for free, if they're under 12, won't be competing with the rush hour if they are going to Ontario Place or Exhibition Place. The kids won't be looking at other excursions on the subway; they can get directly to their place of excursion. So thank you.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): MPP Piccini.

Mr. David Piccini: Hi, Minister. Thank you very much for joining the committee today.

Minister, as you know, I'm a MPP in eastern Ontario. I just had a broad question on Lakeshore East. Over the last 15 years, we saw pretty stagnant growth east of the GTA. I know it's been very exciting for a number of my residents to see a real emphasis on transit on Lakeshore East. We've seen increased two-way GO. We've just seen quite a substantial focus for members of Durham and Northumberland county which has been very beneficial for our community, and I've received a lot of feedback in my constituency office and in my mobile pop-ups in Newcastle and Orono.

Given that emphasis, I'm just wondering if you could speak on the emphasis that's been placed on Lakeshore East, the two-way GO. Obviously we've increased services. I know that's going to benefit, with industry coming east—OPG is moving their headquarters again, another decision made under our government—and some of the increased businesses that we're seeing coming to our region. So just speak a bit to that.

And I picked up on a comment that you made earlier on the interchange at Lakeshore East. I know that, aside from businesses, personal enjoyment—obviously children are now going free. But for Blue Jay games and personal enjoyment, I know that a number of people in my community head into the city for that. Speak to the relief that

that is going to provide the residents of Toronto, diverting the significant influx when you see Jays' games, Leafs' games, things like that—personal enjoyment too, which I know is also of importance to residents in my community.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: When we did one announcement on another line, I heard from one MPP that he was very excited that he will be able to go back and forth for Raptors' games, so it immediately went to the personal enjoyment.

I think the enhancements we're making across the GO rail network are about providing different kinds of opportunities that stimulate economic growth but also will improve people's quality of life and allow them to make choices around the activities that they want to participate in, not around the time that the train is leaving and whether it's available or not. That is one of the objectives of the entire GO rail network expansion plan to provide two-way, all-day service across these core segments.

I'll let James speak to some of the more specific ones on that line, but the purpose is to provide more service, more convenience to people who are coming back and forth into the city.

Mr. James Nowlan: I'll speak to two points.

Your first point around Lakeshore East: Over the last year, a 25% increase in train trips along that line, so at 160 new weekly train trips, a fairly significant increase, I think, as it relates—the minister had identified earlier about a 21% increase across the network. Lakeshore East was already one of the busiest lines, but did see a fairly substantial increase in train trips. Again, that increases the number of trips available throughout the day and kind of expands beyond just focus, maybe, on commuter traffic. It enables, as you say, more trips for more activities for things other than just kind of 9-to-5, Monday-to-Friday work.

As it relates to the relief side, I think the main benefit that we would see along Lakeshore East is the proposed interchange at East Harbour, just east of the Don River. The proposal there, again, would see the Ontario Line and the Lakeshore East line both at grade, but an interchange at track level—as opposed to getting off and going underground, in terms of being able to change trains. You'll be able to get off one train and directly onto the other. If folks don't want to go to Union Station or their destination isn't Union Station—if it's potentially the Danforth or the Ontario Science Centre or the Eaton Centre or somewhere in the east end—they would be able to make that switch there, as opposed to going down to Union Station and making a switch. It really allows for a diversion of trips. So you're not sending everyone to one focal point in Union Station and then having them fan out from there. It enables the interchange of trips to happen at different points, which will then relieve pressure—and, of course, Union Station being a key element. As it relates to some of the things that you're talking about in terms of access to the downtown core, it would provide relief in that people who weren't looking to get to the downtown core would be able to get to their locations using other means, by switching onto the Ontario Line.

Mr. David Piccini: Just in layman's terms—forgive me; growing up in eastern Ontario, all I really knew was Union Station—we're taking this transit network and bringing it into the 21st century, where we no longer just have one focal point. We're going to have multiple focal points for a sophisticated transit network that takes us to a world-class level.

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Absolutely. It will create a whole new network of hubs. Instead of just having the one unique hub, Union Station, it will start to create new ones, where the subway lines will intersect with the GO rail network, and new activities may develop along those hubs as a result. It's very exciting.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): Go ahead.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: Thank you, Minister, for answering all the questions from my colleagues and the opposition side as well.

People who know me know that I grew up and went to school and worked in Scarborough, so I know the positive impact the Scarborough subway extension would have on the commuters in Scarborough. The residents of Scarborough have been waiting for this new transit expansion for over three decades.

That's why I take this opportunity as a distinct honour—to ask this question on behalf of the residents of Scarborough. Let's look at the big picture of Toronto transit solutions. When it comes to the big picture, it is

clear that a one-stop subway is simply not enough for the residents of Scarborough.

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): You have one minute.

Mr. Vijay Thanigasalam: There has been a lot of praise for the four priority subway plans. There have also been some misconceptions about what the plans are.

Minister, can you please set the record straight on why a three-stop extension is the right decision for the commuters in Scarborough?

Hon. Caroline Mulroney: Just as a matter of principle, the residents of Scarborough deserve the same level of transit as riders in other parts of the city, which means more transit connections. Three versus one is better. It provides the residents of Scarborough with stops at Lawrence East, Scarborough Town Centre and McCowan stations, as opposed to just one stop.

As you know and as the residents in your riding and across Scarborough know, it's a growing area that is welcoming more and more people. The idea of having three transit stops so that people will walk less and be able to—

The Vice-Chair (Mr. Wayne Gates): Minister, your time is up for today.

This is all the time we have available today. The committee is now adjourned until following routine proceedings tomorrow. Thank you very much.

The committee adjourned at 1800.

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