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Attention News Editors:

Greater Toronto Transportation Authority on the Move

TORONTO, July 27 /CNW/ - The Board of the Greater Toronto Transportation

Authority (GTTA) today gave the green light to focus its regional transportation plan on people, the environment and the economy. "We will build our plan on three objectives for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) - improving people's quality of life, protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and ensuring the region's global economic competitiveness," said GTTA Chair Rob MacIsaac.

Broad public participation

The board also agreed that extensive public participation will help build a stronger plan. "Everyone living in the GTHA has an interest in travelling

quicker and smarter - and they all have views from which this plan can benefit," said MacIsaac.

Starting this fall, the GTTA will develop a regional transportation plan with support from technical groups from its network of government and transit

partners. There will also be opportunities for input from the private-sector and the non-profit sector.

The board will also commission an advisory committee of community leaders

from across the GTHA to provide ideas on how better transportation choices and

investments can contribute to a healthier, more prosperous region.

Criteria for quick action

There was agreement by the GTTA board on criteria that will allow the GTTA and its municipal and transit partners to move ahead quickly with transit

and transportation initiatives, as called for by Premier McGuinty's

MoveOntario 2020 vision, announced in June.

"We would like to achieve some early wins as we know how urgent it is to

address the transportation problems in the GTHA," said MacIsaac.

The board determined that projects will have priority if they make a tangible difference in the regional travel experience of the average commuter,

can move ahead quickly, and if they do not prejudice future plans or projects.

The board will review results of that analysis in August.

At the open meeting held at Toronto's Metro Hall, presentations were made

by the GTTA's municipal and transit partners - from Durham, Toronto, York,

Peel, Halton and Hamilton - as well as by GO Transit. The presentations

focused on links to good land-use policy and how their plans relate to, and

could advance, MoveOntario 2020.

"I was impressed by the calibre of their plans and proposals," said MacIsaac. "Our municipal and local transit partners are clearly seeing transportation issues regionally, rather than just locally. That's important, timely leadership."

GTТА on the move

In an agenda packed with items, the board also received the GTТА's \$8.82

2006/07 operating budget and authorized recruiting staff and consulting

resources required to fulfill its transportation improvement mandate.

"We're making great strides," said MacIsaac. "Start-up organizations are

always a challenge but with these decisions behind us, and with the GTТА's

recently announced responsibility for implementing the \$17.5 B MoveOntario

2020 vision, the GTТА is clearly on the move."

BACKGROUND:

For more details go to

www.gtta.com/en/business/Jul27_07agenda.htm.

THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN:

The Greater Toronto Transportation Act 2006 requires that the GTTA create a regional transportation plan. The creation of the plan will provide a strategic, long-term vision and guidance for investment decisions. Input from municipalities, operators, stakeholders and the public will shape the plan, to ensure it brings together the needs of the broader region.

ROLE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE:

The GTTA legislation charges the GTTA with the responsibility to create its regional transportation plan with input from the people who know transportation best - experts in the field and users. A board sub-committee has the responsibility for identifying and appointing a 12-member advisory committee. The four-person sub-committee, led by Chair Rob MacIsaac, will report back to the full board in August.

SUMMARY OF TRANSPORTATION PLANS:

Representatives from the cities of Toronto and Hamilton, and the regions of Halton, Peel, York and Durham and GO Transit presented their transportation plans, highlighting their vision for improving transit and connecting their plans to MoveOntario 2020.

GTТА BUDGET

To complement the work being conducted on its regional transportation plan, the GTTA will move ahead - with its governmental and community partners - to enlist public and stakeholder input and support. In addition to staffing and operational costs, the budget covers development of a regional

transportation plan, including project prioritization framework, transportation modelling, alternative financing and procurement models for operating and capital. Stakeholder and public engagement are key deliverables.

The GTTA will also be introducing a trip planner for the GTHA. All of these efforts have common goals: increase mobility by providing transportation choices, improve air quality and stimulate the GTHA economy.

The board received an \$8.82 M budget to support these and other activities.

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