

APPENDIX D

Overview of Comments Received on Green Papers

This Appendix contains a summary of the Green Paper consultation process, input received to date and emerging themes of interest identified during this, the first of three stages, of the Regional Transportation Plan's development.

The Green Paper Consultation Process

The seven Green Papers were available for comment through the Metrolinx on-line consultation portal, as well as through the Environmental Bill of Rights Environmental Registry. Copies were distributed to all municipalities in the GTHA and provincial ministries, and Metrolinx staff met with municipalities, ministries and stakeholder groups to discuss the papers and receive feedback. In addition, feedback on the Green Papers was received at the Metronauts "un-conference" sponsored by Metrolinx on April 5, 2008, and Metrolinx staff and Chair Rob Maclsaac made presentations at more than a dozen conferences and events during the consultation period. Notice of the opportunity to comment on the Green Papers was provided to over 1,000 stakeholder organizations in the Metrolinx database.

Metrolinx's events and consultation process have also resulted in media coverage, including commentary on numerous blogs that have highlighted Metrolinx's consultation process and encouraged members of the public to get involved.

In all, just under 500 people registered on the Metrolinx on-line consultation portal, over 100 people participated in the Metronauts Transit Camp, and approximately 200 submissions were received, either through the on-line portal or in writing.

Municipal submissions were received from Hamilton, Halton, Peel, Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon, Durham and Oshawa.

Metrolinx will continue to receive and analyze all input received on the Green Papers throughout the remaining two stages of development: the release of the White Papers and the release of the Draft RTP. There will be upcoming stakeholder workshops, as well as public events in a number of communities as outlined in the Board Report COM 08-001. Interested parties can also continue to post comments on-line.

Major Themes of the Comments Received

Green Paper #1 – Towards Sustainable Transportation (December 2007)

The actions suggested need to survive varying levels of financial support, as well as changes in government. Lack of committed funding to transit and active transportation infrastructure has caused programs in these areas to fall behind.

The link to climate change and energy risks cannot be understated. The RTP needs to be able to address peak oil. Energy constraints will have a huge impact on the economy and available resources presenting a challenge to maintain the current level of mobility. Both energy efficiency and consumption must be addressed in order to make improvements.

The coordination of transportation and land use planning is important. A regional planning agency with authority in land use is important. Sustainable, walkable communities are important for improving the transportation system. Both suburban communities and central Toronto neighbourhoods need more infrastructure to move people more efficiently and comfortably.

Overall, there is support to move forward and to act efficiently.

Green Paper #2: Mobility Hubs (February 2008)

Mobility hubs should prioritize access for pedestrians and cyclists. Suggested measures include:

- pedestrian-friendly entrances
- bike parking and lockers
- integrating hubs into surrounding neighbourhoods
- making stations accessible from all sides

Mobility hubs need to include amenities for travellers. The most popular amenities that were suggested include:

- convenience stores
- weather protection
- washrooms
- convenient links to local transit
- high density residential and employment
- coffee shops and restaurants
- real-time transit information and signage

A number of suggestions were made for potential mobility hubs. Union Station was the most frequently suggested hub. Others that were frequently cited

include Yonge/Finch, Kennedy/Scarborough Centre, Kipling Station, Don Mills/Eglinton East, Oakville GO station, Richmond Hill/Langstaff, Square One, York University and Mount Pleasant GO station.

There was a general recognition that not all mobility hubs serve the same function or exhibit the same future development potential, and that different approaches would be necessary for different types of hubs. There was strong support for identifying a few larger hubs as demonstration projects.

Several submissions suggested that coordination would be needed between transit operators and different levels of government for development around mobility hubs to happen.

Green Paper #3: Active Transportation (February 2008)

The primary factors affecting active transportation as a modal choice are safety and convenience.

A number of barriers to active transportation were identified. General barriers cited included:

- a perception of a lack of political will to prioritize active transportation
- lack of technical expertise among city staff
- lack of snow clearing on sidewalks and bicycle lanes during the winter

A number of cycling-specific barriers were also identified, including:

- the perception that cycling is a dangerous activity
- the network of cycling infrastructure is sparse and poorly connected
- motorists and cyclists need to be better educated about the rules of the road

Communities need to be designed in a way that encourages active transportation. Suggested improvements were:

- orienting shopping areas with main entrances to the street and sidewalk, with parking in the rear
- connecting cycling infrastructure to overcome gaps, including underpasses and overpasses over busy roads
- completing sidewalk networks and widening sidewalks
- separating bike lanes from vehicular traffic
- providing secure and sheltered bicycle parking at schools
- reducing the parking supply at schools and other trip generators

Many comments indicated that improvements should be focused on high profile projects to start. Suggested projects included physically separated cycling lanes on major roads and to major destinations, a large scale public bicycle or bike-

share program, and the creation of pedestrian-only zones to create extended public squares in municipal cores.

A number of comments highlighted the need to focus primarily on providing appropriate and safe infrastructure, and to follow with education and promotion of active transportation later. Related to this, there was support for the development of standards for infrastructure planning and design. There was also support for a transportation hierarchy, and the inclusion of active transportation in Transportation Impact Studies.

Green Paper #4: Transportation Demand Management (February 2008)

The need to engage employers in TDM programs was seen as critical to the success of TDM. Employers' decisions on office location, the availability of parking and transit passes, and transit access are important. These elements work hand-in-hand with outreach and marketing to motivate commuters to take alternative transportation.

Flexible work hours and the ability to telecommute were also identified as important factors in a TDM program's success.

Many comments indicated that the use of automobiles should be priced, especially in areas that are well-served by transit or during peak travel times. However, comments were emphatic about the need for improved transit service and increased capacity prior to the implementation of any road tolls. There was broad support for putting revenues from road tolls back in to improving active transportation and transit programs.

Improvements in infrastructure and service delivery were seen as a key way to enhance the appeal of non-auto based travel:

- more flexible transit fares, varying by distance or zone, as well as by day of travel
- separated facilities for cycling and secure parking
- wider sidewalks with landscaping and amenities
- real-time information for transit, available by internet, telephone, or mobile phone
- improved integration of transit systems
- alternate route information and estimated travel times available on highways

The integration of GTHA transit systems was seen by some as a prime opportunity to improve service to suburban municipalities.

Green Paper #5: Moving Goods and Delivering Services (February 2008)

Comments received were sometimes in conflict – there was some support to focus rail capacity on passenger trips and leave road capacity to goods movement, some comments preferred that priority be given to reducing trucks on highways.

There was support to increase goods movement capacity by:

- increasing the use of rail and marine
- developing limited truck-only lanes
- reducing passenger car trips to facilitate the movement of trucks on roads
- discouraging goods movement during peak travel times

In order to fund the infrastructure, increased charges and tolls were suggested for trucks and goods movement. Financial tools suggested included user fees and vehicle registrations, as well as charging for highway use per kilometre to price it more closely to shipping by rail.

Localized distribution centres, lock boxes for parcel pick-up, and community-rail proximity studies were well-supported as best practices that could be implemented in the GTHA.

There was support for increasing the information available to consumers about how goods have been shipped and the distances goods have travelled, to help consumers make responsible choices.

Overall, the need for improved research and data was recognized as a barrier to improving efficiency and understanding cost-benefit analyses of alternative modes for goods movement.

Green Paper #6: Roads and Highways (March 2007)

Different opinions were expressed with respect to road tolls and other user fees, suggesting the importance of carefully weighing and justifying their implementation. For example, whether it is reasonable to charge users according to their use of roads and highways, and whether it is reasonable to convert existing road lanes to high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) or bus-only lanes.

Several examples were cited for good design and planning of major arterial roads and highways. Most examples cited the need to better accommodate multiple modes of transportation – LRT or HOV, wide sidewalks, bicycle lanes and enhanced streetscaping. There was strong support for giving priority to transit.

There was a great deal of interest in using technology to manage road congestion, such as:

- lane reversals for commuter traffic
- information available in real-time about delays and traffic conditions – on radio, by GPS, or by overhead electronic signs
- transit priority measures
- trip-tracking for all vehicles
- efficient incident management to respond to collisions

Green Paper #7: Transit (March 2007)

To become a more viable option, transit needs to have improved speed, frequency, reliability and comfort. There is latent interest in a more extensive subway network, a regional express network, and for improved coordination between transit operators.

There are a variety of barriers that are affecting the use of transit today:

- fragmented provision, especially across municipal and regional boundaries and between systems
- supply lagging behind demand in many areas
- slow implementation of infrastructure improvements
- lack of priority given to transit and in the decision-making processes
- widespread availability of cheap/free parking
- negative image of transit as a social service for those who have no other choice

Many other jurisdictions are implementing programs and technologies that could be implemented in the GTHA. Most suggestions were related to improving the coverage and efficiency of the transit system. More equitable fare structures, and advanced fare payment systems were well-supported. Real-time information was cited several times as an important improvement. Improved customer service and clean stations are other ways to improve the image of transit.

Major gaps to be addressed include:

- a regional express network
- increased east-west linkages – both north and south of Bloor-Danforth
- increased two-way service on all GO rail lines
- rapid transit to Pearson airport

The link between land use and transit is important. Transit-supportive zoning near stations, developer incentives and community support are critical.