

Remarks for the

Honourable Jim Bradley
Minister of Transportation

At the
Metrolinx Board of Directors meeting

Monday, November 16, 2009

Check Against Delivery

- Thank you Rob...(Chair Rob Maclsaac)
- Good afternoon everybody.
- It is a privilege for me to be here today, to speak with the new Board of Directors, and to honour the many accomplishments of Rob Maclsaac as Chair of Metrolinx.
- It is hard to believe that three years have passed since the creation of Metrolinx.
- Thanks to the tireless efforts of Rob Maclsaac, Rob Prichard and the Board of Directors, and the staff of Metrolinx, we **not only** have a vision but a **concrete** plan to address the long-term transportation needs of our region.
- But it was not always this way.
- Back in the 1970s and 1980s, the region of Toronto and Hamilton emerged as one of the largest and fastest growing urban areas in North America – spurred in part by a regional transportation network that was ahead of its time.

- In the 1990's and beyond, continued growth was not matched by investment in public transit.
- Congested roads, overtaxed transit systems, and wasted energy and dirty air were the consequence of inaction, all of which resulted in billions of dollars lost from our regions' economy.
- Recognizing that change was needed, the McGuinty government adopted a new vision for the future of public transit.
- We built on the work of the *Greenbelt* – which protects more than 1.8 million acres of environmentally sensitive and agricultural lands in the heart of the region – and *Places to Grow*, a plan that rationally coordinates growth and public investment in infrastructure.
- We created Metrolinx to develop and implement an integrated and inclusive Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to complement the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- We could not have found a better champion for this vision than Rob Maclsaac and his team.

- When he became Chair of Metrolinx in 2006, and throughout his tenure, Rob challenged the status quo. He built a hard-working and dedicated team, who frequently put in long hours to get the transportation agency up and running.
- The list of achievements is lengthy and laudable.
- Under his stewardship, Metrolinx developed policy and process to guide the agency in its mandate.
- They undertook extensive public consultation including public opinion surveys, advisory committees and meetings with the public. They created a website to provide people with timely and relevant information on the progress of the RTP.
- They also engaged in consultations with municipalities located outside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area, who might also be affected by the RTP.
- Rob can count, among his notable successes, a significant milestone when the Metrolinx Board of Directors voted unanimously to adopt the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – aptly named *The Big Move*.

- This landmark achievement brought together provincial and municipal leaders, stakeholders and residents, speaking together in one voice, thinking like a single region.
- The RTP is an ambitious plan to create a world class transportation system for the GTHA. It addresses the region's key transportation issues, tackling such items as congestion, coordination and improvement of transit systems, and creating a more sustainable economy, environment and quality of life for the residents of the region.
- In May of this year, we moved forward with our commitment to merge Metrolinx and GO Transit to form a strong regional transportation authority for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.
- Under Rob's leadership, the new Metrolinx is well-positioned to do the important work of implementing the RTP, especially on the major rapid transit projects announced for the region last spring.
- Through all the challenges of merging these two organizations, GO Transit services have continued to be delivered effectively and efficiently, with an ever stronger focus on customer service and reliability.

- But as Rob Maclsaac aptly stated in his Message as Chair of Metrolinx, “The Big Move is about values as much as it is about vehicles”. And with this statement, Rob captured what the RTP is all about.

- In June 2007, the McGuinty government committed \$11.5 billion to support transit investments in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area – the largest public transit investment of its kind in Canadian history.

- Earlier this year, Premier McGuinty announced in the 2009 Budget that Ontario will move ahead with a nine billion dollar funding commitment for five priority transit projects, as identified in the Metrolinx RTP:
 - More buses and stations and dedicated bus lanes for York VIVA BRT
 - Upgrading and extending the Scarborough Rapid Transit Line
 - A new RT line on Eglinton Avenue from Kennedy Station to Pearson Airport
 - A new rapid transit line for Finch West, and a
 - Feasibility study for Hamilton (RT)

- This May, the McGuinty government announced a funding partnership with the federal government, to build the Sheppard East LRT.
- In July, we partnered with the federal government and the City of Toronto to fund a major overhaul and service expansion at Union Station.
- These are the first, of what we hope will be many more partnerships with our federal colleagues, on priority transportation projects for the GTHA.
- We are moving forward with scores of GO projects, big and small.
- The new, third track on the Lakeshore West line will improve service significantly.
- We need the federal government at the table with us, with an ongoing financial commitment to the RTP and the residents of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

- With the RTP expected to create more than 429,000 jobs, this initiative provides an ideal opportunity for federal infrastructure investment. Along with job growth, benefits of the RTP are widespread.
- With more than 1,200 new or improved kilometres of rapid transit lines – more than triple what exists now – over 80 per cent of residents in the region will live within two kilometres of rapid transit, compared to the only 42 per cent of today.
- With this increase in access to public transit, we will see less people driving their cars, which will translate into a substantial decrease in green-house-gas emissions.
- Not only is the RTP about public transportation, it is about revitalizing our communities. The RTP also includes plans for thousands of kilometres of new lanes, trails and pathways for pedestrians and cyclists, thus providing improved lifestyle choices for the residents of the GTHA.
- Rob, in large part, we have you to thank for the realization of this vision. Your efforts, alongside those of your colleagues and friends, turned concept into reality, making Metrolinx the efficient and influential provincial government Agency we see before us today.

- I would like to express my appreciation to each member of the new Board. Thank you for accepting the challenge of bringing a seamless transportation network to the GTHA.
- You bring an array of valuable skills to the Board.
- Our government is excited about the PanAm Games coming to Southern Ontario. We are counting on you to deliver the transit projects that will support the Games, on time and on budget.
- You will need to work in partnership with municipalities on these and your other projects.
- At the same time, you will need to provide a steady hand at the helm of GO Transit. I know you will be working hard to continuously improve customer service, and to work with the community on projects that impact their neighbourhoods.
- Gary McNeil, along with his staff, has provided excellent advice and leadership in the improvements to GO.
- Millions of GO trips are taken each year.

- This is a service that Ontarians rely on to get to work, play and school. GO delivers tens of thousands of people to downtown Toronto's workplace each day.
- Before I conclude, I would like to acknowledge Rob Prichard's leadership over these past several months.
- Rob, you are bringing together a planning and operating organization impeccably. We need that kind of leadership to be successful.
- I have high hopes that the future of Metrolinx is bright, a future where people choose a more sustainable transportation option, one that's better for our economy, our environment, and our quality of life.
- To the Board, thank you for what you do. You have a big task ahead of you.
- The GTHA is watching and we are confident you will be able to deliver.

- In closing, I would like to offer a final thanks to Rob Maclsaac
- Rob, the Government of Ontario is appreciative of your service to the Board of Directors of Metrolinx these last three years. We thank you for all that you've done to advance the vision of the regional transportation plan and to ensure the environmental sustainability of its projects. The effects of which will be seen throughout the 25-year life span of the RTP.
- And on a personal note, I would also like to thank you for your service, as well as for your strength of character and your unwavering support. And, though you will be missed as Chair, I am pleased that you will remain on the Metrolinx Board as a Director.
- Finally, I wish you much success and happiness as you embark on this new journey as President of Mohawk College of Applied Arts and Technology in Hamilton. They are fortunate to have you.
- Thank you everyone -- and best wishes.

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