



Submission to Provincial Transit Investment Strategy Advisory Panel

November 26, 2013

MOVE the GTHA is a collaboration of almost 40 diverse organizations working together to ensure the necessary funding is raised to implement a sustainable regional transportation system. Each of the organizations involved value investment in regional transportation for the health, economic, environmental and social benefits it brings to their constituencies. We are non-partisan, ready to work with all stakeholders, and determined to achieve the sustainable transportation system our residents, businesses and the planet deserve.

Representatives of our group welcomed the opportunity to meet with the Panel Co-Chairs on November 13th and appreciated the depth of expertise and enthusiasm that the Panel is bringing to their important task. This submission sets out our collective expectations and advice, which reflects our research and analysis of parallel experiences in other jurisdictions, very broad consultations, and an appreciation of the current political/policy landscape.

Clear and specific funding commitment

The core task for the Panel is to outline an ambitious action plan to raise the new revenue required to implement The Big Move, including the infrastructure and operating costs. It is critically important to have a specific commitment for new, predictable revenues to complete implementation and support operation, with the establishment of revenue-generating tools in the provincial Spring 2014 Budget.

While we acknowledge the utility of debt instruments to secure the resources needed for implementation right now, we expect to see new revenue generated for repayment of the capital raised of a minimum of \$2 billion per year.

Guiding principles for funding sources

While individual organizations have their own particular views on specific revenue tools, MOVE the GTHA as a group has refrained from picking specific tools, and we are sure the government will welcome the informed advice from the Panel. Allow us to simply re-iterate the ***criteria that should guide how dollars are raised*** to complete The Big Move; these have been cornerstone of our collective campaigns and endorsed by approximately half of all the region's elected politicians. Specifically, we are calling for new funds that are:

- ***Dedicated:*** Revenues should be dedicated to transportation infrastructure and operations and not go into the general tax pool or be diverted to other priorities.
- ***Efficient:*** Governments should demonstrate that they're spending the public's money wisely and getting the best possible value when investing in our regional transportation system.
- ***Transparent and Accountable:*** Governments should be clear and open when deciding which projects to fund, demonstrating how they're spending our money, and reporting on project results.
- ***Fair and equitable:*** Costs should be distributed among everyone who benefits, either directly or indirectly. The impacts of any new costs for transportation expansion should be distributed as equitably as possible and not increase the burden on people with lower incomes.
- ***Sustainable:*** Funding must be stable and consistent over the 25 years it will take to build out The Big Move.

Demonstrate value for money on day one

As your consultations have no doubt found, everyone agrees that our transportation system needs to be improved and knows it can only get worse, but there is a general aversion to paying more. We feel greater public support will be rallied by demonstrating real benefit from day one. We urge you to craft a “kick-start” strategy that would see ***a solid percentage of funding in the early years invested in immediate operating improvements*** for local and GO transit and to improved active transportation infrastructure as soon as revenue tools are implemented. Investments such as additional buses, extended service, and safe walking and cycling routes to transit will immediately demonstrate the value to Ontarians that investment will bring. However, any “kick-start” investment should be understood as a time-limited enhancement that can achieve quick benefits and not a substitute for the planned allocation to municipalities for local transportation priorities established in the Metrolinx Investment Strategy.

Maintain transparency and accountability

It is important for the Panel to reinforce ***clear criteria for investment***, including how investment would flow to any new/amended elements of our transportation system. We recommend that new funding generated be placed in ***a Transportation Trust*** for use only on projects approved through ***a clear governance process and based on rational analysis and clarity on why, how, and when funds will be spent, and with the broader regional perspective in mind.***

Support for new investment in transportation is building in the region. We will continue to roll up our sleeves to help advance a sustainable transportation system for our region. MOVE the GTHA —individually and collectively—are knocking on doors, building support through the Your32 campaign, working social media channels (a new campaign reaching almost 1 million households launches soon), mobilizing business champions, hosting Town Hall meetings, and generally putting the weight of our constituencies behind this regional vision. We look forward to the Panel's report as a stepping-stone to a more sustainable economic, social and environmental future.

Signed by

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