



November 12, 2008

Rob MacIsaac
Chair
Metrolinx
20 Bay Street, Suite 901
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2N8

Dear Mr. MacIsaac:

On behalf of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, I would like to thank you for inviting Policy Committee members to attend various stakeholder meetings to review the Draft Regional Transportation Plan and Investment Strategy. We appreciated the opportunity to discuss these draft documents and to provide these comments.

Established in 1986, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession and provides vision and leadership on key planning issues. Our 2,700 practising planners are employed by government, private industry, agencies, and academic institutions. Members work in a wide variety of fields including urban and rural community development, urban design, environment, transportation, health and social services, housing, and economic development.

Here are our comments:

1. OPPI believes the Regional Transportation Plan is well researched and thorough. It reads clearly, engages the issues it needs to address and is based on a comprehensive analysis with impressive supporting background research. OPPI supports the Draft Regional Transportation Plan.
2. In the past 30 years, we have neglected to build major public transportation systems for communities and balance public transit with automobile use while incorporating other modes such as walking and cycling to create sustainable communities. We encourage Metrolinx to move ahead to conclude this important planning effort.
3. Our issues address contextual concerns and implementation. Based upon OPPI's Healthy Communities Initiative, the Institute believes there are three critical elements to planning more active communities:



- Design at the regional level to ensure uses are distributed regionally so people can walk, cycle and take public transit to work, recreate, shop and do all the things that make for a rich and varied lifestyle;
- Design at the local level to make active lifestyles more inviting and possible; and
- Subordination of the automobile so other modes of transportation such as walking, cycling and public transit have equal opportunity.

In terms of higher order intra-regional public transportation facilities, the Regional Transportation Plan will help develop the higher order intra-regional facilities necessary to create more active communities.

4. Additional thought and attention is required on how to integrate these planned facilities with local infrastructure and land use, existing and proposed, especially where more active transportation objectives are sought. We recommend this integration be addressed in the planning and design of individual projects. Upper and lower tier municipalities can revise their transportation and land use plans while Metrolinx can offer design and implementation measures that achieve integration as implementation proceeds.
5. OPPI agrees with the Plan recommendations on Land Use Planning found on page 85 of the Draft Regional Transportation Plan. The Regional Transportation Plan will provide the transportation plan that conforms to Provincial direction. Integration between land use and transportation planning is critical to the success of this Plan. Land use planning decisions, whether made by the Province, municipalities or the Ontario Municipal Board, will need to be consistent with the Regional Transportation Plan. Municipalities and their planning staff also need a legislative and policy framework that enables municipalities to impose conditions necessary to ensure land use applications and decisions are transit supportive. OPPI is prepared to attend any consultative meetings to further explore mechanisms that accomplish this.
6. Local public transit system improvements and operational changes will be needed to integrate and support Metrolinx projects. We recommend that provision should be made in the Plan's implementation for project design to address existing systems and coordinate with local system improvements and operational changes (see point #4 above).



7. Municipal land use decisions, especially around proposed mobility centres and high order public transit facility stations, will be critical to the success of these facilities. We believe Metrolinx should be actively involved in the planning of these lands to ensure transit supportive development.
8. These Plan's recommended projects will create substantial land value, especially in the vicinity of mobility centres. We recommend additional research be undertaken to find ways in which that value may be captured to help pay for these transportation projects.
9. The Plan's support for active lifestyles is welcomed but limited support for local active transportation facilities and supportive design work hampers implementation. Metrolinx facilities will provide supportive facilities within their projects but, if there are no walkways, cycling lanes and trails and local public transit facilities and supportive land uses to connect to, local achievement will be constrained. We recommend that one or more projects be delayed and that the monies be re-allocated to ensure active transportation facilities are in place around mobility centres and transit stations.

If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Policy & Communications, OPPI at 416-483-1873, ex. 226.

Sincerely,

George McKibbon, MCIP, RPP
Chair, Policy Development Committee
Ontario Professional Planners Institute

Copy: Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Policy & Communications, OPPI