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Greenbelt Council

Conseil de la
ceinture de verdure

May 26, 2019

Honourable Steve Clark
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
777 Bay Street, 17th Floor
Toronto, ON M5G 2E5

Re. Greenbelt Council Report #5

Dear Minister Clark,

It is my pleasure to send you the Greenbelt Council's fifth progress report as we proceed through our work program.

Sincerely,

David Crombie
Chair, Greenbelt Council

Copies to:

Laurie LeBlanc, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Greenbelt Council Members
Ed McDonnell, CEO, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation
Tamim Raad, Principal, Access Planning
Tija Dirks, Director Transportation Planning Branch, Ministry of Transportation
Leslie Woo, Chief Planning and Development Officer, Metrolinx
Mark Jamieson, Principal, BA Group
Judy Farvolden, Executive Director, University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute
Greater Golden Horseshoe Stakeholders

Greenbelt Council for the Greater Golden Horseshoe Report #5 (May 2019)

Continuing its practice of distributing progress reports after each meeting, this is the fifth report of the Greenbelt Council. It communicates our work in considering matters of public interest with respect to Ontario's Greenbelt and the implementation of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*.

At its meeting April 29, Council met with Tamim Raad (Principal, Access Planning), Tija Dirks (Director, Transportation Planning Branch, Ministry of Transportation), Leslie Woo (Chief Planning and Development Officer, Metrolinx), Judy Farvolden (Executive Director, University of Toronto Transportation Research Institute) and Mark Jamieson (Principal, BA Group). The following highlights what Council heard.

The transportation system in the GGH is in crisis

Congestion on major roads across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) is increasing and will continue to do so as the population grows, people in the region prosper and communities continue to be developed in areas with few transit options.

Congestion is now a phenomenon that no longer occurs only in peak periods, but rather throughout the day and into the evening. And it is increasing in all parts the region, from downtown Toronto, along suburban arterials and throughout the highway network.

The major transit systems in the region have either reached or are reaching capacity. As a result, many people going downtown can no longer get on the subway in the morning and even with service increases to GO Transit, many trains are standing-room only for long distance journeys.

The emergence and growth of disruptive transportation services (such as Uber and other ride hailing services) is also increasing the number of vehicles on the road with corresponding increases to congestion. With autonomous vehicles anticipated on city streets in the near future, the problem of too many vehicles on the road will only increase further as driverless vehicles idle and circulate with *and without* passengers in them.

Resources are being wasted and governance is fragmented

Even with full implementation of all the transit projects proposed in the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, congestion will not be reduced significantly as the key strategy for addressing congestion—alignment of transportation and land use plans and policies—is only marginally addressed in the GGH.

Without alignment of transportation and land use decisions, infrastructure investments, such as transit, roads, and piped services, are not optimized and will not deliver value for money over the long term (e.g., investments are made in areas that are not growing sufficiently to deliver a return on investment and fast growing areas with higher densities have insufficient infrastructure capacity). Today in the GGH, transportation and land use governance is

fragmented—decisions are made across three levels of government (local, regional and provincial) and are not always made at a scale appropriate to achieve the most effective outcomes. A strong regional governance framework is needed to ensure that roles and responsibilities are established at a scale relevant to the problems that need to be addressed.

Today, Metrolinx, the only authority with a region-wide transportation mandate, is not adequately equipped with the tools (i.e., funding, authority, accountability) necessary to ensure that transportation and land use decisions are aligned, and to ensure the effective implementation of the projects, policies and programs in the Regional Transportation Plan. With its limited mandate for transit development, operations and integration, Metrolinx cannot provide effective leadership for decisions requiring the integration of transportation and land use, and the full range of regional transportation decisions needed to ensure that today's transit investments deliver value for money.

The GGH is an economic region. While its land use planning is directed by the Growth Plan, there is no body with a corresponding mandate for regional transportation planning. Decisions about transportation projects—what to build where, when and how—affecting travellers throughout the region are not coordinated at the regional level. Furthermore, there is no policy framework that guides effective implementation of provincial and regional transportation plans.

Poor delineation/definition of roles and responsibilities leads to wasteful investments and stop-and-start projects. While the Province moves to assume greater control of decisions regarding the growth of the Toronto subway network, the operation of the transit system remains a municipal responsibility, as is jurisdiction for most roads and the implementation of land use policy. A much higher level of coordination and integration of all of these elements is necessary for an efficient and effective transportation system.

Other jurisdictions have implemented models that are more efficient and effective

Other jurisdictions have shown that integrated approaches to transit/transportation and land use decision-making lead to positive outcomes.

In the greater Vancouver area, TransLink is the region-wide transit and transportation authority mandated to coordinate with the Metro Vancouver level of government. It is accountable to a Mayor's Council of locally elected officials for ensuring transportation planning, transit operations and land use planning are coordinated. In greater Vancouver today, not only do projects move faster from concept to funding and implementation, but more importantly for decreasing congestion, transit ridership continues to grow more quickly than anywhere else in North America. The largest segment of ridership growth is bus ridership, where growth and revenue have increased as a consequence of bus service expansions that have occurred continuously over the years facilitated by a commitment by municipalities to support priority access for transit services on roads.

In the Montreal area, the new metropolitan transportation agency Autorité Régionale de Transport Métropolitain (ARTM) is responsible for transit planning, funding and fare policy, and

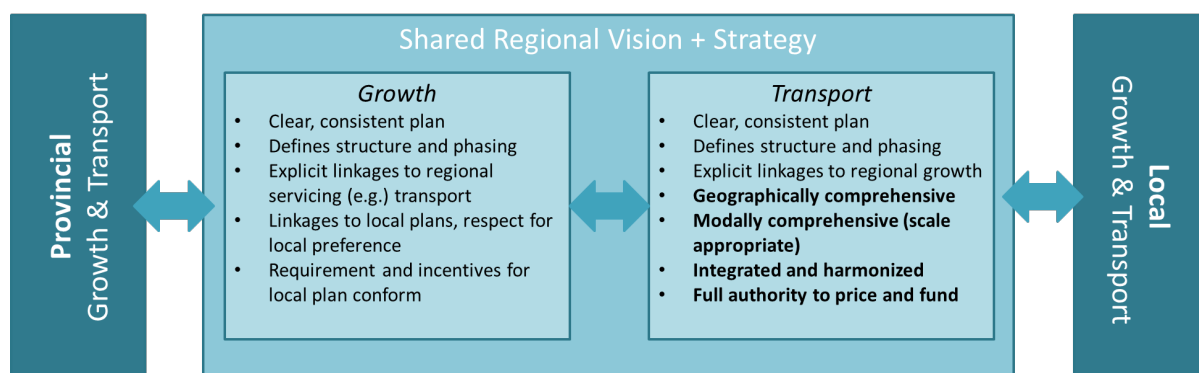
for setting operational performance standards for transit operations, which are today primarily delivered by local operators, with private operation of the new réseau express métropolitain (REM) LRT system anticipated in the coming years.

Need for new approach in the GGH

Council recommends a new approach to the integration of transportation and land use planning and implementation in the GGH. The goals/benefits of such an approach would include quicker implementation of plans and projects, efficiencies in public expenditures (there is only one taxpayer), and clearer accountabilities.

The 2016 report of the Advisory Panel chaired by Council chair David Crombie—*Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe: 2015-2041*—called for a rethink of regional planning governance in the GGH at the onset of the 10-year review of the GGH provincial plans including the Growth Plan. The panel heard from many residents and stakeholders as part of the consultation process and in its final report called for the creation of a body with a unique regional mandate. Council agrees with this recommendation and suggests such a body be created to provide coordination, planning and decision-making at a regional scale.

The GGH functions as a shared and interdependent economic, social and ecological system. It requires a regional vision and strategy that integrates transit / transportation and land use. This can best be achieved through a regional model of governance with an appropriate mandate to ensure effective implementation.



Council recommends the government investigate several successful regional transportation governance models, two which are noted above, to assist in defining the appropriate mandate and authorities for a GGH transportation agency. Such an agency should embody an integrated approach to regional transportation and land use planning, be regionally accountable and be vested with the appropriate tools to achieve its mandate. Council envisions that municipalities would retain their current role for land use planning and implementation but within the context of GGH regional plans, and the Province would continue to be responsible for capital allocation and approval of funding strategies and tools for transportation infrastructure.

Further, Council recommends that as part of this investigation the provincial government undertake a robust program of municipal and public consultation. Such stakeholder engagement is essential for the effective implementation of a governance structure with a unique regional mandate—one which ensures the essential integration of land use and transportation planning across the GGH region.