

# Transportation Infrastructure Funding & Planning Policies

2009 - 2010



As the most diverse and most influential business group in the province, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce works closely with governments, labour, academia and various other groups to create a stronger and more vibrant economy in Ontario and the surrounding regions.

The OCC represents 60,000 members through 160 independent chambers of commerce and boards of trade throughout the province. The OCC has worked on behalf of business since 1911.



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# I. Transportation Infrastructure Funding & Planning Policies

## Transportation Infrastructure – An Economic Enabler

Ontario's economy is currently undergoing a significant structural shift. With many sectors facing transitory challenges, this economic climate presents an ideal opportunity to ensure that all businesses, especially within the transitioning industries have adequate, safe and efficient infrastructure to support their current and future operations. By leveraging existing infrastructure assets and developing long term strategies to address deficiencies, Ontario can fulfill its potential of being a global leader in attracting investment.

Ontario's highly integrated network of transportation assets is a major component of the province's overall infrastructure system and should be viewed as an economic enabler. Some areas in Northern Ontario require additional transportation infrastructure to help attract business investment and to help diversify their economies. Areas such as the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) face challenges related to rapid growth and crippling congestion. By developing a long term transportation infrastructure strategy, the province will help address the mounting congestion, gridlock, and border delays that have already

resulted in lost competitiveness and quality of life across the province over the past few decades.

This impact is most noticeable in Ontario's busiest region, GTHA. Transport Canada estimates the cost of congestion in Toronto alone is \$1.6 billion annually. By 2021, commute times within the GTHA could increase by more than 50 per cent, increasing the cost of congestion by \$7 billion a year. Gridlock results in lost trade opportunities, jeopardizes employee recruitment, retention, and reduces the province's overall economic competitiveness.

While recent provincial transportation initiatives under the MoveOntario 2020 strategy are a positive step forward, the many systemic challenges within the policy planning framework have delayed or prevented implementation of key transportation projects. By addressing these challenges, Ontario will build a safe, efficient and reliable transportation network that will effectively facilitate the movement of goods and people across the province.

### GOODS AND PEOPLE MOVEMENT STUDY

Every year, \$1.2 trillion in goods are transported on Ontario's highways and \$627 billion is shipped across 14 Ontario/US land border crossings. In addition, hundreds of thousands of vehicles every month, and millions of vehicles every year, traverse our major border crossings at Windsor, Sarnia,

Sault Ste. Marie, and Niagara. And these statistics are expected to rise exponentially in the future.

Key to optimizing existing corridors and planning future transportation capacity is to accurately assess the existing flow of goods and the movement of people within the province and across the border.

(see Appendix 1, page 26) However, a significant challenge in developing an effective long range multi-modal transportation strategy is the lack of data available that is necessary to track commodity flows across Ontario's transportation network.

While the Ontario-Quebec Continental Gateway and Trade Corridor initiative is currently working towards producing such a study, major challenges in data collection have prevented the progress of a comprehensive provincial goods movement study.

A comprehensive provincial goods movement study also focusing on the vital US trade regions of Detroit-Windsor, Port Huron-Sarnia, Buffalo-Fort Erie and Niagara will facilitate the coordinated efforts of the Ontario, Quebec and the federal governments. (see Appendix 1, page 26)

As a component of the goods movement study, the province should enact legislation to record and maintain a comprehensive inventory of all transportation infrastructure held by Ontario municipalities and the province. (see Appendix 1, page 13) This will allow an accurate assessment

of current transportation assets to occur. The legislation should require that both quantity and the condition of the infrastructure be recorded.

(see Appendix 1, page 13) This will enable the province to develop and implement policies which better utilize Ontario's extensive network of well-developed road, rail, marine and airport facilities prior to investing in new infrastructure.

This study should also identify the present and future issues and challenges to commercial and passenger travel. (see Appendix 1, page 26)

As this initiative aims to optimize infrastructure and streamline the policy environment between Windsor and Quebec City, conducting and completing the goods movement study in the timeliest fashion possible is of utmost importance to the provincial economy.

## LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (LRTP)

Business competitiveness is heavily dependent on access to sustainable stock of reliable, safe and efficient infrastructure. For example, a determining factor for a future plant location could be a newly constructed controlled-access highway. Additional infrastructure capacity can increase a manufacturer's competitiveness by reducing

transport costs (with regard to both the number of trucks required and vehicle maintenance costs).

By assessing the information gathered from the goods and people movement study, the province will be able to develop an effective long range transportation plan (LRTP). (see Appendix 1, page 22)

This plan is urgently needed as it will effectively coordinate infrastructure investments. The province's piecemeal approach to planning over the years has resulted in disjointed transportation infrastructure with costly implications to the tax base.

Developing and implementing a LRTP will place Ontario on a level playing field with key competing US jurisdictions. Since 2001, most populous US states including California, Texas, New York and Florida have completed state-wide LRTPs with a vision spanning over 20 to 30 years. Since then, these state plans have been consistently updated every five years.

MoveOntario 2020, the Southern Highway Plan (SHP) and the Northern Highway Plan (NHP) are transit and highway investment strategies that begin to address Ontario's infrastructure capacity deficiencies. These plans are instrumental in developing an integrated multi-modal transportation system. However, the timeframes

included in these initiatives outline plans over the next five years. For example the 2008-2012 SHP only lists major highway projects already under construction and projects planned through to 2012.

## PREDICTABLE & SUSTAINABLE FUNDING SOURCES

These plans can indeed be strengthened, through predictable and sustainable funding sources and planning timeframes for highway preservation, rehabilitation and expansion projects, within the context of a provincial long-range transportation plan (LRTP) (i.e. 30 years). (See Appendix 1, page 22) This will help businesses assess if adequate infrastructure is available to support their operations.

Long term strategic planning can be a vital instrument in helping stimulate economic development in Northern Ontario. A commitment of funds over the long term to create a four-lane divided highway through Northern Ontario in a provincial LRTP will help enhance and grow the economies of the North. Providing investment in much needed transportation corridors in Northern Ontario will improve linkages with the rest of the province.

In regards to provincial strategic growth plans, all existing and future planning document(s)

must identify predictable and dedicated funding sources. Allocated funding for transportation infrastructure projects within these documents must also be implemented within a given timeframe. (see Appendix 1, page 26)

For example, Metrolinx's regional transportation plan (RTP), The Big Move, does not adequately address multi-year sustainable revenue sources critical for implementation of the 25 year integrated multi-modal transportation strategy.

While recognizing that the 15 priority transit projects within the 2009 to 2015 timeframe will be funded through the MoveOntario 2020 initiative, funding sources beyond this timeframe has yet to be declared. Metrolinx must address the \$32 to \$39 billion funding gap between what has been allocated and what it has estimated will cost to fully implement its regional transportation plan.

Therefore, Metrolinx must be provided with adequate predictable and sustainable funding sources from general revenues in order for it to effectively plan, prioritize, finance and most importantly execute transportation investment across the region. (see Appendix 1, page 7) Further, the province has recently given Metrolinx until 2013 to create an effective investment strategy. This timeframe should be shortened and the province should direct Metrolinx to, within a year, unveil a long-term financing plan that will satisfy

the regional transportation plan's capital and operational requirements. (see Appendix 1, page 7)

## LEGISLATIVE & REGULATORY REFORM

### Transportation Corridors

Reforms to the legislative framework for infrastructure planning will also help the province develop an LRTP. For example, enacting legislation to protect key corridors is critical to ensure the availability of adequate land for future vital transportation assets. (see Appendix 1, page 26)

For example, available land surrounding intermodal terminals have already been encroached upon. Although the Canadian Pacific Rail (CP) terminal in Vaughan at present has sufficient land available for future growth, there is concern that the situation will change as this facility was built 10 years ago and the surrounding area has evolved from green-field to virtually built-out. The Canadian National Railway's (CN) intermodal facility in Brampton faces a different scenario at present, as there is currently no land available for future expansion. Any excess demand of services provided by the intermodal facility will indeed contribute to congestion in the surrounding area.

The province must also pay close attention to the possible impact on transportation and gridlock of selling blocks of land such as hydro corridors. By working in partnership with business and

municipalities, the province must actively review blocks of land, designated for alternate purposes as potential transportation and service corridors. (see Appendix 1, page 15)

## Environmental Assessment Process

The current EA process is another element within the legislative framework that has often unnecessarily delayed or prevented construction of critical transportation infrastructure projects for purely ‘not-in-my-backyard’ and other reasons.

For example, the EA for the Niagara-to-GTA corridor - an essential economic link between the GTA and other urban growth centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe - is expected to be completed in 2015. Given that this is the second EA undertaken for this project, the OCC believes that this timeframe is excessive. Other major transportation projects that have been delayed include:

- \* eastward extension of Hwy 407 from Brock Road in Pickering to Clarington
- \* extension of Highway 427 to the intermodal facility in Vaughan
- \* GTA west corridor
- \* Pearson Airport – Union Station link

While recognizing these initiatives are included in Metrolinx’s RTP, there is significant concern that these projects will be threatened by further delay under the current EA process. It is therefore vital that province to extend the amendments streamlining the EA process for transit project to include all transportation infrastructure initiatives. (see Appendix 1, page 8)

## II. Appendix: Policy Resolutions

## Metrolink: Addressing Outstanding Issues

(Submitted by the Toronto Board of Trade)

### ISSUES

To be able to successfully and effectively implement a regional transportation plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), Metrolinx must address the following issues:

1. Immediately deal with how to bridge the gap between existing funding commitments and the overall cost of fully implementing the regional transportation plan for the GTHA;
2. Create and implement a goods movement strategy that effectively balances cost-efficiency, convenience, safety and environmental stewardship.

### BACKGROUND:

Metrolinx must move quickly to get shovels in the ground. It must also immediately address the \$32 to \$39 billion gap between what has been allocated and what it has estimated will be required to fully implement its regional transportation plan. Metrolinx needs a more robust funding model to be effective and to undertake the long-term transportation planning and expansion required to support the

economic and population growth of the region and province. There is a vital need for all levels of government to commit dedicated, predictable funding for transportation infrastructure.

Metrolinx must immediately consult with business leaders on the development of a comprehensive goods movement strategy. Simply put, congestion costs Ontario billions of dollars each year. The safe and efficient movement of goods is paramount to the competitiveness and survivability of Ontario businesses. Metrolinx must involve Chamber members in the development of a goods movement strategy. This strategy must create a wider variety of cost-effective, safe, environmentally responsible and highly flexible options for moving goods.

### RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the government of Ontario to:

1. Provide Metrolinx with dedicated and sustainable funding from their general revenues.
2. Direct Metrolinx to, within a year, unveil a long-term financing plan that will satisfy the regional transportation plan's capital and operational requirements and to immediately implement this plan.

3. Instruct Metrolinx to accelerate its work on a comprehensive goods movement strategy, with a view to finalizing this strategy within twelve months.
4. Ensure that the Metrolinx board members, respecting its private sector composition, reflect the municipalities that they serve.

## Streamline and Delivery of Infrastructure Projects

(Submitted by the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce)

### ISSUE:

The current Environmental Assessment Act needs to be reviewed to streamline the delivery of infrastructure projects in Ontario by speeding up the planning, design and implementation process associated with infrastructure projects, including highways.

### BACKGROUND:

Gridlock results in lost trade opportunities, jeopardizes employee recruitment and retention, and reduces economic competitiveness in the GTA. Reducing gridlock, congestion and integrating the transportation network are policy priorities for the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC). An adequate and updated highway system is an important link to

the economic success of all of Ontario. It is vital for the movement of goods and service and tourism.

The Chamber submits that highway safety and the easing of traffic congestion in the GTA require increased transportation capabilities. Going uncorrected within less than 12 years congestion could cost the GTA region \$3 billion per year.

The provincial government must continue to place an increased emphasis on the impact any policy or regulation changes has on the Ontario environment and economy. Long-term planning should be a priority to ensure the transportation needs of those living and working east of Toronto are met.

The OCC does not wish to see projects like the Highway 407 extension unduly delayed if environmental concerns can be mitigated through proper design. As the business community, we expect due diligence and adherence to proper processes in reviewing environmental, safety and other concerns.

The current Environmental Assessment Process to be followed by proponents of infrastructure improvements, such as Highway 407 East Completion, takes too long and the legislated process requirements should be revisited by the Government to speed up the planning, design and implementation process. Currently the process caters to objectors and other interest groups who

use the EA Act, not to participate in a project in a meaningful way but to confuse and delay the planning and implementation of projects that are critical to provincial economic sustainability.

In May 2008 the OCC wrote to the Ministry of the Environment, Integrated Environmental Planning Division, Strategic Policy Branch providing comment on the draft regulation aiming to streamline the environmental assessment (EA) process for critical public transit projects. (Proposed Regulation under the Environmental Assessment Act for Accelerating the Environmental Assessment Process for Public Transit Projects (EBR Registry No. 010-2760) The OCC welcomed this decision stating it would lead to a more transparent and predictable decision-making process, while ensuring public consultation and sound environmental planning.

By establishing set timeframes for both public consultations and the project's approval process, this regulation will remove a high degree of uncertainty and costly delays often associated with provincial transit developments. Further, the OCC was pleased that with the approval of this new regulation, the scope of concerns raised in the EA process for transit initiatives will be exclusively limited to environmental issues.

This new regulation is a step in the right direction as the OCC views expansion of transit infrastructure as a critical element to the provincial

transportation network. The OCC believes that the province can go further to strengthen and improve Ontario's transportation system by broadening the scope of this policy to include all transportation infrastructure initiatives.

The current EA process has often unnecessarily delayed or prevented construction of critical transportation infrastructure projects such as additional highway capacity and improvement initiatives "for purely 'not-in-my-backyard' reasons". For example, major transportation projects that have been delayed include:

- \* the EA for the eastward extension of Hwy 407 from Brock Road in Pickering to Clarington is expected to be completed in 2013. Other Niagara-to-GTA corridor, an essential economic link between the GTA and other urban growth centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- \* extension of Highway 427 to the inter-modal facility in Vaughan
- \* expansion of Highway 402 by two westbound lanes to the Blue Water Bridge
- \* four laning of Highway 69 from Parry Sound to Sudbury
- \* extension of Highway 406 onward south to Fort Erie and beyond to the Peace Bridge

These initiatives, in conjunction with transit expansion projects, play a vital role by developing effective linkages throughout the province as well as developing trade routes between Ontario and the US. Further, these initiatives are needed to enhance environmental sustainability as well as enhance the safety of Ontario residents.

The current process permits individuals an opportunity to delay the process especially when their views/positions are not consistent with the views of the community as large. These individuals, and in some cases, other special interest groups, are currently utilizing a disproportionate amount of provincial staff resources and time to pursue issues and positions that are not supported by the broader community.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes that the current Environmental Assessment Act needs to be reviewed to streamline the delivery of infrastructure projects in Ontario by speeding up the planning, design and implementation process associated with infrastructure projects, including highways.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. **Streamline the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA) Process**
  - a. Permit the “focusing” of all projects undertaken under the class or individual processes (i.e. recent provincial legislation has accelerated the EA process for transit projects).
  - b. Ensure that existing policies and guidelines regarding the approval of EA submissions are adhered to by MOE. “Time-outs” on project assessments should be eliminated unless agreed to by the proponent.
- \* Ensure that projects that have a long history of previous work including need and justification, background environmental work etc. should not be required to re-visit the same material time and time again unless there is a compelling reason to re-visit this work.
- \* Ensure that the public involvement process is not confused and derailed by a few individuals and/or special interest groups.

### 3. Improve the coordination of the provincial and federal EA processes

- \* Immediately re-initiate discussions with the Federal Government to better coordinate the OEAA process with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency(CEAA) There needs to be greater harmonization between the two processes in order to fast track completion of projects and to eliminate process duplication.

- \* Ensure co-coordinating the federal and provincial processes at the beginning of the project and ensure that this co-ordination continues through the course of the study. This would also assume the holding of a “joint” public consultation process.

### 4. Improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination

- \* Negotiate the assignment of jurisdiction for the review of the CEA components of any project, where appropriate.

- \* Ensure that all provincial ministries and Government agencies (including Conservation Authorities) are informed of Government policy and objectives with respect to infrastructure initiatives and have due regard for this policy when

reviewing and commenting on infrastructure proposals, and that Staff be directed to give priority to major projects that are supportive of government policy.

- \* Facilitate the development of an Inter-Governmental Infrastructure Panel involving the Federal Government and the Province of Ontario to accelerate the delivery/ transfer of funds to the appropriate delivery agencies or municipalities.

- \* Ensuring the rules for the conduct of major infrastructure projects are established at the beginning of the process and provincial and federal agencies and ministries and that they should not be allowed to change the rules as the project progresses, unless there is a major change in project scope or a new science developed that would have an impact on the outcome of the EA.

## New Highway Construction

(Submitted by the Burlington Chamber of Commerce)

### ISSUE:

Efficient transportation of both goods and people is a key concern of Ontario’s business community. A fundamental principle of Ontario’s transportation

system is that the construction, operation and maintenance of highways are a public good. The provincial government, on behalf of all Ontarians, is responsible for the safe, reliable and economically efficient operation of Ontario's highways.

Failure of the provincial government to maintain control and ownership of transportation infrastructure will result in higher costs for users and higher costs for business.

### BACKGROUND:

In June 1997 the Ontario government opened the 407 ETR Highway. After only 23 months of operation, in May of 1999 the Ontario government leased the newly constructed 407 ETR Highway to 407 International Inc. This resulted in the loss of a long-term revenue generator for the province. It has also resulted in higher end-user costs due to a loss of provincial control over rates paid by highway users. Since the sale of the 407 ETR highway rates have risen by 39.5% (based on peak time rates). This has the result of increased transportation costs for Ontario businesses reliant on Ontario's highways to transport goods.

The provincial government sold the 407 to a private company as a way to recover the high construction cost of the new highway. Alternate, business-friendly methods of cost recovery include short-term toll collection. An example of this is the

construction of the Burlington Skyway bridge. After construction of the bridge, tolls were collected for a period of 15 years and were then eliminated.

### RECOMMENDATION:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Ensure that if the construction of new 400 series highways in Southern Ontario and the extensions of existing highways is paid for with tolls that those tolls are removed when the cost of construction is recovered and, in the case of public private partnerships, any changes in tolls be subject to approval by the Ontario government.

Effective Date: Feb 8, 2007

Sunset Date: Feb 8, 2010

## Better Understanding the State of Transportation Infrastructure in Ontario

(Submitted by the Brampton Board of Trade)

### ISSUE:

Ontario faces a staggering transportation infrastructure deficit in terms of rehabilitating existing roads and bridges and expanding capacity where required to meet population growth and ensuring efficient mobility of goods and people. In

order to achieve the best use of our public financial resources to make wise investment decisions, the Ontario government and its municipal government partners need adequate information to be able to plan for and prioritize spending. The creation and management of a “knowledge base” of information about transportation infrastructure in Ontario is a critical element of this process. Without reliable, current and accurate information we can not ensure “best use” of our resources.

## BACKGROUND:

Ontario has always prided itself on having a safe and efficient transportation system and network that is important to business for the movement of goods and people. Economic prosperity has been proven time and time again to be directly correlated to the transportation infrastructure that we have.

In 1996 a portion of the Ontario Provincial Highway network was transferred to municipal governments and with that transfer came the end of direct municipal road subsidies and the overall consistent and centralized management of the information about the municipal road network in Ontario. Without that information transportation infrastructure investment planning has become difficult.

Various sources have estimated the overall extent of the infrastructure deficit in Ontario; however,

the precise number is difficult to calculate due to inadequate information. Rather than focus on the number, businesses want to see an effective strategy put into action that will address the deterioration and decay of the transportation infrastructure and over time improve its overall condition.

A key element of the strategy is understanding the condition and extent of the transportation infrastructure that exists in Ontario and exposing that information publicly so that all stakeholders are able to see the state of transportation infrastructure, guide the related investments and monitor progress.

Recently, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) issued a reported called “Danger Ahead: The Coming Collapse of Canada’s Municipal Infrastructure”, which cites: “a comprehensive, national inventory of infrastructure assets is required to properly determine the size, scale and geographic character of the municipal infrastructure deficit”. This report confirms the existence of a problem but does not adequately address effective and sustainable solutions.

A similar report was issued by the consortium of organizations represented through the Infrastructure Investment Coalition, called “Ontario Bridges, Bridging the Gap”. In this report the members recommend a Province-wide inventory of bridge information to assist with making investment

decisions. Again, a recognition of the problem with a limited ability to act on the solution.

In summary, most groups and stakeholders acknowledge a problem and some even recommend solutions. The extent and condition of our public transportation assets and the plans to maintain them are important public information and the impact of poorly informed decisions or delays has a negative impact on Ontario's business community.

Recently, an existing partnership has been created between the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and the Ontario Good Roads Association (OGRA) to begin the process of quantifying the infrastructure deficit. However some further recommendations related to advancing the file on Transportation Infrastructure Investment and Financing are warranted.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Legislate the recording and maintaining of a comprehensive inventory of all transportation infrastructure held by Ontario municipalities and the province.
2. Include in the legislation that not only quantity, but also condition (state)

of infrastructure be recorded.

3. Make these inventories transparent to the public and facilitate periodic audits of both inventory and infrastructure state.
4. Work with the federal government and municipalities to ensure that investments in transportation infrastructure are adequately funded by all levels. Furthermore, the Ontario government should work to ensure that all levels of government are active participants in the process of rehabilitation, improvements and expansion of transportation infrastructure.
5. Maintain a provincial database of outstanding transportation infrastructure rehabilitation, improvement, expansion and new projects for each municipality (transportation infrastructure deficits) and implement a plan to address the province's share of the financial burden. This should be done in partnership with the municipalities to ensure that there are no redundancies in the gathering and maintaining (database) of this information.

## Hydro Corridors and the Future of Transportation

(Submitted by Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce)

### ISSUE:

The sale of Hydro One's vast network of hydro corridors (transmission towers) throughout Ontario and the GTA. These blocks of land could be used for future Transportation Corridors.

### BACKGROUND:

In 2002 there was an impending threat of the sale of Hydro One lands, and in particular the vast network of hydro corridors, by the government of the day.

It is indicated, by urban planners that if you have the possibility of some interconnected linear swaths of publicly owned land in the GTA and throughout Ontario designated for services, the absolutely last thing you would do is break them up and sell them.

In the GTA for example there are approximately 4,050 hectares of mostly open space running like an array of green ribbons across the GTA.

Studies have consistently identified hydro corridors throughout the GTA as places to build transit. Construction can be done without causing a great deal of disruption to

the area where they are located and in most cases the EA's have been completed.

The corridors are one of a kind and not only cross the GTA but also all of Ontario and go to and through major urban centres. Corridors are ideal for not only transit but possibly pipelines and other utility uses.

For example the Finch Hydro Corridor, running from Pickering to the western edge of Etobicoke, connecting with other corridors throughout the GTA. The corridor intersects the Yonge Street subway and four Go Transit routes going into the city from the north and northwest. It could provide a strong potential to ease some of the gridlock facing the GTA. Given these facts and the ever-increasing transportation problems facing Ontario and gridlock in the GTA considering the hydro corridors as potential transportation and service corridors could have a positive impact on the future competitiveness of business in Ontario.

The Ontario government should place an increased emphasis on the impact any policy or change to Hydro corridor lands could have on the Ontario economy, and understand that such

a change could leave Ontario and businesses at a competitive disadvantage to world markets.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Work in partnership with the Ontario business community and municipal governments to actively review the active, inactive or retired corridors as potential transportation and service corridors.
2. Pay close attention to the possible impact that the decision to sell the active, inactive or retired Hydro corridors might have on transportation and gridlock and review the results with the Ontario business community.

Effective Date: May 5, 2008

Sunset Date: May 5, 2011

## Land Use Planning and Development

(Submitted by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce)

### ISSUE:

The Province of Ontario has responsibility for establishing a broad framework for land use planning and development. However, lately, the province has been intervening too much

in the details of local planning matters. It is important that the proper balance be maintained between the needs of a broad provincial policy framework and the need to allow for proper implementation of that plan to accommodate unique local needs which respect the special context of individual municipalities.

### BACKGROUND:

Traditionally, the Province has assumed an important role in land use planning and development through the guidance and direction on broad planning-related issues through such documents approved in the 1970s and 1980s, including the Parkway Belt West Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and more recently through the approval of the Oakridge's Moraine Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Growth Plan. These initiatives have been primarily focused on the GTA to deal with growth pressures competing with the protection of natural features, and the need to establish a logical evolution in the development of distinct, identifiable communities.

With the implementation of the Growth Plan, the Province is now beginning to cross the line in controlling matters that more appropriately should remain the responsibility of local municipal governments. The implementation of the Plan not only identifies growth areas but also allocates how much growth municipalities must accept.

Rather than providing specific targets, the Province is now dictating the precise number of hectares that have to be set aside to accommodate provincially driven growth projections.

This approach fails to recognize the specific needs and characteristics of each municipality. For example, it is assumed that each hectare of land has the same characteristics and the same potential to accommodate future growth. This does not take into account land ownership patterns in some municipalities that hinder the land assembly required to accommodate new communities. Nor does it take into account the presence of natural features, the ability to create new communities as opposed to extensions of existing subdivisions, and the extent to which natural physical boundaries already exist. The Provincial approach does not even take into account the developability of land (i.e., pipelines and hydro corridors are included in net developable land calculations). This truly represents an unrealistic approach to community planning.

Clearly, these are local matters that do not have any broad provincial interest beyond their consistency with provincial growth directives and provincial infrastructure investment.

A 20-year time frame should be the minimum consideration for development for any community within the GTA. The possibility to consider growth

options for 30 years or more is necessary to allow for the proper development of new communities, the planning implementation of appropriate infrastructure, and to allow for the consideration of special characteristics of each municipality.

Depending upon local circumstances, a more logical urban boundary could result in a longer build-out time. The appropriateness of the boundary should be determined more within the context of local situations than as a result of a mathematical calculation.

On the other hand, a truly provincial issue - the Niagara-to-GTA corridor, it appears that the Province is taking a less active role and has backed away from the proactive strategy that is required to bring this project forward in a timely manner. This is a clear example of a legitimate provincial interest that requires greater provincial initiative to link the GTA with the Niagara Region and the US border to take full advantage of the economic development potential of establishing greater connections to the US border. This is consistent with the provision for the Places to

Grow plan that recognizes the importance of cross-border trade with the United States.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Limit its role in long-term land use planning to adopt broad strategies and a framework for development for at least the next 30 years. These strategies should include accelerating the planning and implementation of the Niagara-to-GTA Corridor to take full advantage of future economic opportunities that would be created with this infrastructure.
2. Encourage municipalities to adopt plans that are based on a minimum 20-year planning horizon, subject to the adoption of appropriate intensification policies which could include implementation through the adoption of phasing policies. Plans should be based on criteria which define a logical boundary for urban development based more upon local needs and opportunities than on mathematical land area calculations.
3. Avoid interfering with land allocation or distribution of land areas or uses within municipalities.

## Streamline and Delivery of Infrastructure Projects

(Submitted by the Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce)

## ISSUE:

The current Environmental Assessment Act needs to be reviewed to streamline the delivery of infrastructure projects in Ontario by speeding up the planning, design and implementation process associated with infrastructure projects, including highways.

## BACKGROUND:

Gridlock results in lost trade opportunities, jeopardizes employee recruitment and retention, and reduces economic competitiveness in the GTA. Reducing gridlock, congestion and integrating the transportation network are policy priorities for the Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC). An adequate and updated highway system is an important link to the economic success of all of Ontario. It is vital for the movement of goods and service and tourism.

The Chamber submits that highway safety and the easing of traffic congestion in the GTA require increased transportation capabilities. Going

uncorrected within less than 12 years congestion could cost the GTA region \$3 billion per year.

The provincial government must continue to place an increased emphasis on the impact any policy or regulation changes has on the Ontario environment and economy. Long-term planning should be a priority to ensure the transportation needs of those living and working east of Toronto are met.

The OCC does not wish to see projects like the Highway 407 extension unduly delayed if environmental concerns can be mitigated through proper design. As the business community, we expect due diligence and adherence to proper processes in reviewing environmental, safety and other concerns.

The current Environmental Assessment Process to be followed by proponents of infrastructure improvements, such as Highway 407 East Completion, takes too long and the legislated process requirements should be revisited by the Government to speed up the planning, design and implementation process. Currently the process caters to objectors and other interest groups who use the EA Act, not to participate in a project in a meaningful way but to confuse and delay the

planning and implementation of projects that are critical to provincial economic sustainability.

In May 2008 the OCC wrote to the Ministry of the Environment, Integrated Environmental Planning Division, Strategic Policy Branch providing comment on the draft regulation aiming to streamline the environmental assessment (EA) process for critical public transit projects. (Proposed Regulation under the Environmental Assessment Act for Accelerating the Environmental Assessment Process for Public Transit Projects (EBR Registry No. 010-2760) The OCC welcomed this decision stating it would lead to a more transparent and predictable decision-making process, while ensuring public consultation and sound environmental planning.

By establishing set timeframes for both public consultations and the project's approval process, this regulation will remove a high degree of uncertainty and costly delays often associated with provincial transit developments. Further, the OCC was pleased that with the approval of this new regulation, the scope of concerns raised in the EA process for transit initiatives will be exclusively limited to environmental issues.

This new regulation is a step in the right direction as the OCC views expansion of transit infrastructure as a critical element to the provincial transportation network. The OCC believes that the province can go further to strengthen and

improve Ontario's transportation system by broadening the scope of this policy to include all transportation infrastructure initiatives.

The current EA process has often unnecessarily delayed or prevented construction of critical transportation infrastructure projects such as additional highway capacity and improvement initiatives "for purely 'not-in-my-backyard' reasons". For example, major transportation projects that have been delayed include:

- \* the EA for the eastward extension of Hwy 407 from Brock Road in Pickering to Clarington is expected to be completed in 2013. Other Niagara-to-GTA corridor, an essential economic link between the GTA and other urban growth centres in the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- \* extension of Highway 427 to the inter-modal facility in Vaughan
- \* expansion of Highway 402 by two westbound lanes to the Blue Water Bridge
- \* four laning of Highway 69 from Parry Sound to Sudbury
- \* extension of Highway 406 onward south to Fort Erie and beyond to the Peace Bridge

These initiatives, in conjunction with transit expansion projects, play a vital role by developing effective linkages throughout the province as well as developing trade routes between Ontario and the US. Further, these initiatives are needed to enhance environmental sustainability as well as enhance the safety of Ontario residents.

The current process permits individuals an opportunity to delay the process especially when their views/positions are not consistent with the views of the community as large.

These individuals, and in some cases, other special interest groups, are currently utilizing a disproportionate amount of provincial staff resources and time to pursue issues and positions that are not supported by the broader community.

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce believes that the current Environmental Assessment Act needs to be reviewed to streamline the delivery of infrastructure projects in Ontario by speeding up the planning, design and implementation process associated with infrastructure projects, including highways.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

### 1. Streamline the Ontario Environmental Assessment Act (OEAA) Process

- a. Permit the “focusing” of all projects undertaken under the class or individual processes (i.e. recent provincial legislation has accelerated the EA process for transit projects).
- b. Ensure that existing policies and guidelines regarding the approval of EA submissions are adhered to by MOE. “Time-outs” on project assessments should be eliminated unless agreed to by the proponent.

- \* Ensure that projects that have a long history of previous work including need and justification, background environmental work etc. should not be required to re-visit the same material time and time again unless there is a compelling reason to re-visit this work.
- \* Ensure that the public involvement process is not confused and derailed by a few individuals and/or special interest groups.

### 3. Improve the coordination of the provincial and federal EA processes

- \* Immediately re-initiate discussions with the Federal Government to better coordinate the OEAA process with the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA). There needs to be greater harmonization between the two processes in order to fast track completion of projects and to eliminate process duplication.

- \* Ensure co-coordinating the federal and provincial processes at the beginning of the project and ensure that this co-ordination continues through the course of the study. This would also assume the holding of a “joint” public consultation process.

### 4. Improve inter-agency cooperation and coordination

- \* Negotiate the assignment of jurisdiction for the review of the CEA components of any project, where appropriate.
- \* Ensure that all provincial ministries and Government agencies (including Conservation Authorities) are informed of Government policy and objectives with respect to infrastructure initiatives and have due regard for this policy when

reviewing and commenting on infrastructure proposals, and that Staff be directed to give priority to major projects that are supportive of government policy.

- \* Facilitate the development of an Inter-Governmental Infrastructure Panel involving the Federal Government and the Province of Ontario to accelerate the delivery/transfer of funds to the appropriate delivery agencies or municipalities.
- \* Ensuring the rules for the conduct of major infrastructure projects are established at the beginning of the process and provincial and federal agencies and ministries and that they should not be allowed to change the rules as the project progresses, unless there is a major change in project scope or a new science developed that would have an impact on the outcome of the EA.

## Long Range Transportation Plan

(Submitted by the OCC Borders and Transportation Infrastructure Committee)

### ISSUE:

A province-wide long-range transportation plan (LRTP) which includes both investment and planning initiatives is critical to Ontario's future economic

success. While documents have been developed identifying short term (e.g. 5 year) initiatives, Ontario does not have an integrated LRTP which provides an overall vision and framework to allow the coordination of actions by all levels of government and the private sector in addressing the transportation challenges in the province.

### BACKGROUND:

Ontario is a vast province with diverse urban and rural communities that face a variety of transportation challenges related to population levels, economic activity, growth rate and physical and natural conditions. Some areas in Northern Ontario require additional transportation capacity to attract business investment and to help diversify their economy. Alternatively, areas such as the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) face challenges related to rapid growth and crippling congestion.

Between the years 1986-2001 GTA's population grew by 1,416,000 people while employment grew by 451,000 jobs. The region's population is projected to grow from 5.8 million in 2005 to 8.1 million in 2031, which representing almost one-half of Ontario's population. International immigration is also seen a very significant factor in the projected increase in the GTA's population and congestion

levels. Average commute times for this region is projected to increase on average of 45 per cent.

These demographic trends place enormous pressure on the existing provincial transportation infrastructure which already carries approximately \$1.2 trillion of goods every year. Over 33.7 million cars and 42.1 million vehicles, including eight million trucks, crossed the Ontario-New York State and the Ontario-Michigan border check points in 2005.

Decades of sporadic provincial planning and funding has resulted in an estimated \$100 billion provincial infrastructure deficit, taking a significant toll on Ontario's economy. Transport Canada estimates the cost of congestion in Toronto alone is \$1.6 billion annually. By 2021, commute times within the GTA could increase by more than 50 per cent, increasing the cost of congestion by \$7 billion a year. This congestion results in lost trade opportunities, jeopardizes employee recruitment/retention, and reduces the province's overall economic competitiveness.

Prior to additional infrastructure investment of the development of a LRTP the province must accurately assess transportation infrastructure deficiencies. Undertaking a comprehensive provincial goods and people movement study, taking into consideration projected demographic

and economic factors will help assess current and future transportation infrastructure needs.

Integrating the goods and people movement study's finding into provincial multi-modal LRTP will contribute towards placing Ontario on a level playing field with key competing jurisdictions especially those located in the United States. Since 2001, most populous U.S. states including California, Texas, New York and Florida have completed a state-wide LRTP with a vision spanning over 20 to 30 years. Since then, these state plans have been consistently updated every five years.

In contrast, the limited extent of Ontario's long range transportation planning is illustrated in the final Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, released in June 2006. This plan embraces the concept of long term growth planning by focusing on future growth in existing and emerging urban centres, emphasizing public transit as the primary means of moving people, the protection of green space, agricultural and source water lands. It also recognizes the importance of transportation planning in the province's growth strategy. However little detail has been provided as to how and when the province plans to develop an Ontario wide long-range transportation plan.

Further, while initiatives such as the five year 2005 Renew Ontario were announced as instrumental to the planning and development

of an integrated and efficient transportation system; mechanisms to ensure consistency of infrastructure investments with planning direction are not evident. The act establishing the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA), the agency responsible for developing a seamless long term integrated transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, also falls short of implementation mechanisms such as fiscal tools.

In order to be truly effective in managing the province's growth, the existing strategy must go further to:

include a comprehensive multi-modal long term transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area and improve the connectivity of Ontario communities beyond this region;

connect transportation planning with land-use patterns, as these two elements are seen as inseparable and promote the improvement of modal coordination and integration amongst transportations stakeholders.

While it is important to recognize that all transportation modes play an essential role in the movement of people and the flow of goods across Ontario, certain modes, such as highways, are currently at or over capacity. By conducting an extensive inventory study of existing transportation infrastructure, the province will be

able to accurately assess current transportation assets. This will enable the province to effectively develop and implement polices which better utilize Ontario's extensive network of well-developed road, rail, marine and airport facilities prior to investing in new infrastructure. The primary objective of LRTP polices essentially is to improve linkages between all transportation modes.

Integrating increased usage of initiatives such as intelligent transportation systems (ITS) and transportation demand management (e.g. Smart Commute and high occupancy vehicle lanes) in to the LRTP will help increase efficiency and safety of provincial highways and at Ontario/US border crossings.

Increased investment in public transit in urban centres, will help enable this mode become a viable alternative to automobiles. If public transportation offered greater convenience, comfort and competitive commuters travel behaviours will surly shift.

Municipal transit services can increase its ridership through additional services and efficiencies. The OCC urges the province to provide long-term predictable funding for municipal and regional

transit systems by sharing a larger portion of the current gas tax revenues with municipalities.

The OCC recognizes tight budgetary restrictions of all levels government has made it difficult for the province's infrastructure challenges to be solved exclusively through public financial sources. Utilizing alternative financing options, such as private investment for public transportation infrastructure projects will help address Ontario's critical transportation challenges. This entails the province to immediately expand Infrastructure Ontario's priority areas to include transportation infrastructure projects. Further, to ensure consistent province-wide application of private investment, the province must include utilizing Infrastructure Ontario in its LRTP.

A final critical element to be included in an Ontario LRTP is a measure to ensure that allocated funding for transportation infrastructure projects is implemented within a given timeframe. Over the past two years, the province has allocated significant funding for transportation initiatives which include:

- \* May 2005 ReNew Ontario initiative references \$3.1 billion in direct provincial transit funding 2005-2010 in addition to gaso-line tax dedication (estimated to total \$1.4 billion 2005-2010).
- \* 2006 Budget includes one time

"Move Ontario" commitment of \$838 million transit projects in the GTA

- \* 2006 Budget references five year ReNew Ontario commitment of \$5.2 billion for highway improvements, in addition to \$400 million one-time "Move Ontario" commitments in budget.
- \* ReNew Ontario reference suggests approximately the same level of highways capital budget over the previous five years (\$1 billion per year).
- \* While these investments are significant, to ensure Ontario's future transportation system, assurances must be made that announced project funding are implemented and programs effectively coordinated.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the province to:

1. Enact legislation to protect key corridors for transportation infrastructure.
2. Expeditiously develop a provincial long run transportation plan to be integrated with regional grow plans (e.g. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area)

developed through the Places to Grow Act.

3. Include in the provincial LRTP short, medium and long-term planning and investment objectives spanning over 30 years.
4. Use the LRTP to promote co-ordination and consistency among land-use and transportation planning and investment by all levels of government and other transportation stakeholders.
5. Incorporate the following guiding principles into the provincial LRTP:
6. Support the economic well being of the all areas of the province, especially by increasing global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency;
7. Increase the safety and security of the transportation system
8. Increase the accessibility and mobility options available for people and for freight
9. Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation and improve quality of life;
10. Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the

province, for people and freight

11. Promote efficient system management and operation
12. Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system

## Goods and People Movement Study

(Submitted by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce & OCC Borders and Transportation Infrastructure Committee)

### ISSUE:

Ontario's transportation system plays a major role in building strong communities and a strong economy for the province. The efficient movement of goods and people within the province and into the United States directly affects Ontario businesses and impacts the province's ability to better compete with other jurisdictions. A comprehensive multi-modal study of goods and people movement for the entire province and border crossings is required to determine what is needed for present and future transportation growth.

### BACKGROUND:

Every year, \$1.2 trillion in goods are transported on Ontario's highways and \$627 billion is shipped across 14 Ontario/U.S land border

crossings. Three hundred million dollars worth of just-in-time deliveries pass through the Detroit-Windsor alone every day. In addition, hundreds of thousands of vehicles every month, and millions of vehicles every year, traverse our major border crossings at Windsor, Sarnia, Sault Ste. Marie, and Niagara. And these statistics are expected to rise exponentially in the future.

Ensuring Ontario's infrastructure is prepared to handle this growth must be a top priority for the province. The ability to move goods and people easily across the province and across the Ontario/U.S. border plays a critical role in a business decisions to invest and grow in Ontario. Efficient and integrated commercial and passenger travel translates directly to economic prosperity for the province and a high standard of living for Ontario residents.

The key to optimizing existing corridors and planning future transportation capacity is to accurately assess the existing flow of goods and the movement of people with in the province and across the border. To date, an integrated, province-wide assessment of this magnitude has never been done. In the context of the intense global competition our business face today, it is

more critical now than ever for the province to assess Ontario's overall transportation system.

To date, the province has conducted several focused transportation studies in specific regions such as Niagara (December 2005) Central Ontario (December 2004), Hamilton (June 2005), Peel (August 2004) and Sarnia (January 2007). In addition, several corridor studies of cross-border regions have been conducted in New York-Quebec (Interstate 87, April 2006) and British Columbia-Washington State (West Kootenay-Northeast Washington, March 2005). But no province-wide, integrated, multi-modal study has been done to date that assesses demographics and economies, freight and traffic movements, highway performance, border crossing conditions.

Not until a single comprehensive and integrated report is conducted, will the province of Ontario be able to devise policy options and a strategy for ensuring an efficient and effective infrastructure system that benefits the north, south, east, west, central and golden horseshoe regions.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Commence a comprehensive goods movement study for all of Ontario as well

as the vital U.S. trade regions of Detroit-Windsor, Port Huron-Sarnia, Buffalo-Fort Erie and Niagara. As the first step in the creation of an integrated goods and people movement strategy, this study must:

- \* Coordinate with federal, provincial and local government agencies in Canada and the U.S. as well as other key stakeholders;
- \* Evaluate the goods and people movement in 10, 20 and 30-year timeframes, translating into short, medium and long-term objectives;
- \* Review the work of existing relevant goods and people movement studies and initiatives;
- \* Review existing and proposed border crossing processing techniques;
- \* Focus on present and future trade and travel trends;
- \* Evaluate regional demographics, economies, freight and traffic movements, highway performance and border crossing conditions for all modes of transportation—air, truck, rail marine and multi-modal terminals;
- \* Quantitatively identify the regions of significant importance to obtain an overview of the businesses that generate freight flows;

- \* Identify the present and future issues and challenges to commercial and passenger travel;
- \* Evaluation and presentation of recommendations of appropriate performance indicators and monitoring process for the movement of goods by air, examining all options for a key intermodal air gateway for international trade to service northeastern North America.
- \* Consider the recommendations put forth by the North American Competitive Council;
- \* Identify options for sustained government funding and investment; and
- \* Develop policy options and recommendations to address needs.

## Addressing Long-Term Highway Infrastructure

(Submitted by the OCC Borders and Transportation Infrastructure Committee)

### ISSUE:

Decades of under-investment combined with disjointed and sporadic policy initiatives have resulted in an estimated \$100 billion transportation infrastructure deficit. In particular, provincial

highways and roads have suffered greatly from a lack of long-range planning and unsustainable funding. In short, the cumulative effects of limited highway and road planning are not cost efficient for the taxpayer and is detrimental to long-term business development.

## BACKGROUND:

Ontario's integrated highway and roadway network is the foundation of the provincial transportation system. This network is essential for the movement of both automobile traffic and the transport of goods and services across the province as well as to Ontario/US border crossings. Highways and roads also support alternative forms of transit, carpools, bicycle and pedestrian travel and provide critical linkages between urban and rural communities.

Significant pressures mainly from congestion and population growth, however threaten the viability of Ontario's highway system. The province's projected population growth rate from 2005 to 2031 is 30.7 per cent or 3.9 million people. Transport Canada estimates the cost of congestion in Toronto alone is \$1.6 billion annually. By 2021, commute times within the Greater Toronto Area alone could increase by more than 50 per cent, increasing the cost of congestion by \$7 billion a year. Further,

the OCC estimates that border delays cost the provincial economy more than \$5 billion per year.

The province has begun to address Ontario's highway capacity deficiencies through short-term highway and road policy initiatives such as the five-year Southern Ontario Highway Plan (SOHP) and the Northern Highway Plan (NHP). However these plans have been made in response to individual transportation demands and only provide detail for highway projects for the very near term. This piecemeal approach will continue to result in disjointed transportation infrastructure with costly implications to the tax base. Further, the province has yet to clarify, how these short-term plans fit into the broader context of the Places to Grow strategy, the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA).

The SOHP, NHP, and other plans should include project start and completion targets beyond a five to six year planning horizon. This will enable municipalities to develop their own long-term transportation planning strategies and as well as be able to assure potential investors adequate access to major highway corridors.

Congestion costs combined with short-term highway and road policy initiatives create a difficult environment to attract and promote business investment. Systemic challenges within the provincial regulatory framework and

decision making process (e.g. environmental assessment (EA) process) have resulted in the delay or in some instances the prevention of construction of strategic highways. These impediments to additional highway capacity and improvement initiatives threaten provincial economic and environmental sustainability and most important, the safety of Ontario residents.

For example major projects that have been delayed or prevented include:

- \* Construction of the Niagara-to-GTA corridor
- \* Eastward extension of Highway 407 from Brock Rd. in Pickering to Clarington
- \* Extension of Highway 427 to the inter-modal facility in Vaughan
- \* Expansion of Highway 402 by two westbound lanes to the Blue Water Bridge
- \* Four-laning of Highway 69 from Parry Sound to Sudbury

It is important for the provincial government to adopt a long term approach to review and plan for the construction and completion of such projects. These corridors are essential for developing effective trade and transportation routes between Ontario and the US and are important economic

links between the urban growth centres within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Further, provincial delays to projects threaten federal funding grants. For example delays of the provincial EA for the Highway 402 process risks this project losing the \$23 million in federal government investment granted under the Border Infrastructure Fund (BIF).

## LONG-TERM PLANNING:

Determining and identifying predictable and sustainable funding sources and planning timeframes for highway preservation, rehabilitation and expansion projects, within the context of provincial long-range transportation plan (LRTP) (i.e. 30 years), will provide a more desirable climate for businesses.

In developing a long term highway plan, the province's first priority is to conduct a comprehensive highway needs analysis over a 20-30 year period. This analysis must examine both the backlog and future provincial roads and highway requirements. It is expected with the current existing shortfall in highway capacity, most investments will be made towards meeting backlog requirements.

Once determining short, mid and long term priorities, prior to adding new highway capacity, the province must implement policies for new and existing highway infrastructure focusing on

asset preservation, reconstruction, maintenance and efficiency. Effective long-term highway planning entails optimizing the province's existing transportation assets and modes. The province must develop policies promoting greater efficiency of existing highway infrastructure.

Long-term highway planning strategies must include developing and implementing initiatives which make greater use of Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures to help reduce the increasing pressure on Ontario highways. Increased support of TDM initiatives such as the Smart Commute Initiative and increased application of High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes to 400 series highways will reduce pressure on existing highways by shifting people from single occupancy vehicular travel.

Complementing TDM measures with greater usage of Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) will enhance all aspects of transportation. ITS will improve safety and highway efficiency through increased communication, cooperation and coordination.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Expand timeframes of existing highway

plans (i.e. 30 year) and integrate them into a provincial Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

2. Include in highway planning document(s) predictable and dedicated funding sources.
3. Legislate to establish regulations that will provide long term protection of key transportation corridors and supporting lands.
4. Streamline the Environmental Assessment Process for the construction of necessary highway projects.
5. Ensure that existing transportation corridors are utilized more effectively (i.e. Increase use of TDM measures and ITS).

## Places to Grow. Better Choices. Brighter Future

(Submitted by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce)

### ISSUE:

In 2004, the Province of Ontario released a discussion paper entitled "Places to Grow, Better Choices, Brighter Future". On June 16, 2006, the Province approved the Places to Grow Plan, outlining the Province's growth management strategy for the Greater Golden Horseshoe over a 30-year period. This legislation will now govern land

use planning decisions in all municipal jurisdictions throughout the Golden Horseshoe Area.

## BACKGROUND:

After a thirty-year absence, the Province of Ontario has once again taken a leadership role in managing Ontario's growth. It is projected that over the next thirty years the province's population will increase by 4 million people with 3 million locating within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The growth management strategy concentrates on four key areas; intensification and compact urban form, priority urban centres and future growth areas, economic strength, and rural communities.

The province is to be commended for its efforts in attempting to ease the liability issues associated with brownfield redevelopment and providing financial incentives for remediation and redevelopment. Unfortunately, it does not adequately address the civil liability issue associated with cross-boundary contamination. This is still a major disincentive for brownfield redevelopment.

The province must also assist the development community and municipalities in changing the attitudes of both the insurance and financial industries which have not supported re-investment in existing downtowns and have

become a major impediment to brownfield redevelopment and downtown revitalization.

The province is to be commended for its identification of Priority Urban Centres and Future Growth Areas. This will provide municipalities and the business community with certainty as to where capital investments will be made. Municipalities will require the province's support through infrastructure investment in order to fully capitalize on redevelopment of its brownfields and greyfields. The required upgrades to municipal sanitary, water and road infrastructure is beyond the realm of many municipal capital budgets and will require provincial assistance. Greater Provincial investment in transit infrastructure will also allow municipalities to accommodate projected growth targets.

The province must ensure that there is enough land allocated for future growth which will be unaffected by the proposed Greenbelt. In order to reverse commuter deficits and provide a wide range of housing to meet consumer demand, municipalities must have the ability to expand in a responsible manner without having to amend provincial legislation to adjust the greenbelt boundary.

A key component of the province's economic strategy is to ease the movement of goods to/from the Greater Golden Horseshoe to the key markets in the United States. We commend the province for specifically identifying the

Hamilton International Airport as a top economic priority and its importance to the economy of the entire Greater Golden Horseshoe.

With its integrated network of shipping, rail, road and airport infrastructure, the province's economic plan has a strong foundation for economic prosperity that will require proper investment of provincial infrastructure dollars to reach its potential. In this regard, it is critical that the planning and construction of the Mid-Peninsula Transportation Corridor be completed as soon as possible. The expeditious completion of the Environmental Assessment will not only to ease congestion on the QEW but to also relieve development pressure on tender fruit areas adjacent the QEW corridor.

Agri-business and the farming community are integral to Ontario's future. We support the province's commitment to rural communities in order to preserve their unique characteristics, cultural heritage and economy. It was made abundantly clear to the province through the Greenbelt Taskforce consultation process, that the best way to preserve rural communities is by ensuring the viability of Ontario's agricultural economy. If there is not adequate room to accommodate new growth in the area between the existing urban area and the "inside" limit of the Greenbelt Plan, the Plan will severely affect housing affordability, and will encourage "leap frogging" into

rural communities that are unable and unprepared to handle the increase in growth pressure.

## RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Demonstrate its commitment to "Priority Urban Centres" and "Provincial Growth Areas" through the allocation of provincial infrastructure funding for the revitalization of downtown cores and for future employment lands.
2. Allow municipalities to designate sufficient land for future growth through their Official Plans in the area between existing urban areas and the "inside" limit of the Greenbelt Plan, in order to:
  - \* accommodate the employment and residential needs of the province to at least the year 2037
  - \* allow for the design and implementation of complete communities as opposed to simply accommodating incremental extension of existing subdivision
  - \* provide reasonable long-term expectations for those lands located

between the existing urban boundary  
and the limits of the Greenbelt Plan.

- \* allow for the proper planning and design  
of long-term infrastructure needs
- \* and implement appropriate phasing strategies

3. Commit to the construction of the  
Niagara-to-GTA Transportation Corridor  
and a timetable for its completion.

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