



**J. Robert S. Prichard**  
Chair, Metrolinx

## **TRANSFORMING THE WAY THE REGION MOVES: METROLINX'S CURRENT AND FUTURE PLANS**

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Chairman: **Noble Chummar**  
President, The Empire Club of Canada

### **Head Table Guests**

Thomas McKaig, Adjunct Professor, University of Guelph, Author for McGraw-Hill Publishers, and Director, The Empire Club of Canada; Capt. Rev. Neil Thomson, Pastor, Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Reformation, Kitchener, and Regimental Chaplain, Royal Highland Fusiliers of Canada, Cambridge; Sevaun Palvetzian, CEO, Greater Toronto Civic Action Alliance; James McKellar, Associate Dean and Director, Programme in Real Estate and Infrastructure, Schulich School of Business, York University; Robert Noronha, Partner, Mergers and Acquisitions, Deloitte; Michael Wolff, Infrastructure from the Debt Capital Markets Group, TD Securities; Dr. Gordon K. McIvor, Executive Director, National Executive Forum on Public Property, and 3rd Vice-President, The Empire Club of Canada; Marni S. Dicker, Executive Vice-President, General Counsel and Corporate Secretary, Infrastructure Ontario; David Peterson, Chair, Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP, and Former Premier of Ontario; and Doug Turnbull, Deputy Chairman, TD Securities.

### **Introduction by Noble Chummar**

Today's speech is about moving millions of people from their homes to their offices, airports, universities and to our loved ones. It's about managing urban sprawl and optimizing land at appropriate densities. It's also about empowering people to live and work in communities without depending on unreasonable times of travelling to do so. It's about tackling gridlock and investing in public infrastructure. Today's speech is about the environment and our quality of life as much as it is about the economy.

To introduce our guest speaker today, please welcome Mr. Doug Turnbull, Vice-Chairman of the TD Bank.

### **Introduction by Doug Turnbull**

Thank you very much. I've always wanted to welcome Rob Prichard to the podium so today it gives me great pleasure to do that. Many of you know Rob from his exceptional work in this city and across Canada. Rob's a pretty unique guy. His long and illustrious career includes the world of business, government and academia and, in every case, he's operated at the very highest level of performance.

Rob earned an Honours Degree in Economics at Swarthmore College, his MBA at the University of Chicago and law degrees at U of T and Yale. He was a distinguished law professor and then became the youngest dean ever at Osgoode Law School. He then went on to become president of the University of Toronto for 10 years during which he presided over the most successful capital campaign ever, raising a record \$1.4 billion and changing the way universities in this country raise money.

After his term at U of T, Rob became president and CEO of Torstar. He was on the Board of Directors of Four Seasons and advised on its going-private transaction. He is on the Board of Onyx, George Weston Limited, Penguin Canada and the Toronto Community Foundation. He's a trustee of the Hospital for Sick Children. He's on the boards of Canada's Economic Advisory Council and Ontario's Economic Advisory Panel and he's a trustee of Ontario's Innovation Trust. Rob is chairman of the Visiting Committee at Harvard Law School. He chairs the Board of Tories and acts as an advisor to CEOs, boards, and I suspect many, many lawyers in that fine firm. He's chairman of the Board of Canada's oldest bank, the Bank of Montreal, and here's one of my favourites and the reason why we're all here today.

Rob chairs the Board of Metrolinx and also served as CEO of that organization. This is a board that I'm enormously privileged to also be a member of where I get the benefit of Rob's leadership as one of the most widely recognized corporate governance experts in the world. In fact, the Institute of Corporate Directors program

at Rotman School regularly highlights Rob's accomplishments and influence as the leading director in this country. Rob is a member of the Order of Ontario. He's an officer of the Order of Canada and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. Now you know why Toronto Life calls him the "busiest man in Toronto."

I should also add that Rob is the single most effective fundraiser in Canada. Rob, I probably shouldn't have said that because you'll get lots of calls now for help. Rob acts for a variety of worthwhile causes and has a very big heart. It kind of makes me wonder what I've been doing the last 40 years in my career when I look at Rob's. I can't do justice to all of Rob's accomplishments in these few brief comments. What I can say is that there's no better contributor to civic and corporate life in this country than Rob Prichard and I'm enormously proud to call him a friend.

Please join me in welcoming him to the podium.

### **Robert Prichard**

Douglas, thank you for those very, very generous, wildly exaggerated, but welcome remarks. Thank you very much. I want to thank Noble, you and the Empire Club for having me. This is not the first time I've spoken at the Empire Club. I consider it a highly honourable platform and I'm grateful because there are some things I'd like to say.

At the same time, at the risk of singling out one among many friends, I do want to say it's so appropriate to have David Peterson sitting at the head table because it was David who first got me involved a long time ago in provincial public policy and provincial politics and I'm grateful to him for that and for the example he set.

Greater Toronto is a terrific success story. Our city and our region are booming. We're growing and we're thriving and we're the envy of cities almost everywhere. Toronto's become a magnet for people from across Canada and from around the world. Greater Toronto is already the fifth-largest urban agglomeration in North America, behind only Mexico City, New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago. We're adding about 100,000 people a year as one of the fastest growing regions in the western world. In 20 years, we will have added the equivalent of the entire city of Montreal to our

population, Montreal being Canada's second-largest city.

We're also one of the most diverse, wealthiest, healthiest, safest and most tolerant societies the world has ever seen. Toronto is regularly ranked as one of the world's most livable cities, fourth in the Economist's 2013 rankings.

This success of Toronto must be the starting point for any discussion of transit and transportation. Our challenge is a direct consequence of our success. Put differently, we have a high-class problem. Our success as a city region has outstripped our infrastructure to accommodate our growth. What was adequate in the 1960s and '70s and even '80s is not adequate for Greater Toronto in the 21st century. We're playing catch-up. We have a lot to do. If we fix it, we can keep growing and become even stronger. If we fail to fix it, our future will be constrained and we'll have missed a great opportunity. Congestion, not growth, will become our dominant symbol.

It falls to Metrolinx to lead the fixing of all of this to ensure that Greater Toronto has transit and transportation infrastructure worthy of the great urban region we have become, to transform the way people move within the region, and to enhance both the quality of life and economic prosperity of the region.

What a privilege it is to have this assignment. It's so personal. We can all relate to the issues. Take my family, for example. We have a home in the centre of Toronto and a farm in Durham, near Uxbridge. To get to work depending on the weather and my schedule for the day, I ride my bike as I did today, or I take the Spadina subway, or the St. Clair streetcar, or drive my car. To go to the farm on Friday evenings, I skip the traffic and take the GO train to Whitby, followed by the GO bus to Port Perry, or I take the train to Lincolnville, followed by the bus to Uxbridge where my wife, Ann, picks me up, or I drive up the DVP and then the 404, with, I hope, one or more of my sons in the car so I can use the fast high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and when I get

caught in the rain in the city, I jump on the Bay Street bus, or I take my bike on the subway to avoid getting drenched.

No one mode of transit could possibly meet my needs and no transit in a single part of the region could possibly meet my needs. I depend on the whole pallet; an integrated network of different modes for different needs at different times for work and for play across the region and I have this in common with every other resident in the region. We need to get around easily, quickly and reliably. It makes all the difference. We all know how frustrating it is when caught in traffic or on a train or a subway that isn't moving. Good mobility makes our lives better. It's as simple as that and the same is true for the movement of goods.

We're not alone in needing to close the gap between the city's needs and its current reality. Most fast-growing urban regions experience a lag between their needs and the infrastructure with rising congestion the result. Indeed, if we go back in the history of Toronto, that was the case here. As we came of age in the early 20th century and began to grow, it became clear that strength in public transit would be essential for our continued growth, but the original proposal for a Yonge Street subway was rejected by the people in a referendum in 1912, deferring the project for over 30 years. It was only in the development boom that followed the Second World War in Toronto that the project regained traction and was finally approved by referendum in 1946.

We now take our subway for granted, but it was a long time coming. In the United Kingdom, London presents much the same story. London is now properly celebrated for its transportation governance with Transport for London and its current massive Crossrail Project. But it's worth remembering that Transport for London was created only in the year 2000, borne of heavy congestion as London boomed, and the Crossrail Project, which was first imagined in the 19th century, was revived in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was named in 1974 and only broke ground in 2009.

It's a great success now, but it took time, sustained effort and major investments to make it so and we'll need the same here in Toronto.

Transit projects are inherently difficult. They're expensive. They're measured not in millions of dollars, but in billions of dollars. They typically require financial support from multiple levels of government. They're technically environmentally demanding and they take years to plan and to build. The planning cycle usually extends well beyond the life of any one government. Elections intervene and new governments can mean new plans. Transit projects affect citizens directly—where they live and where they work and, as a result, they're intuitively understood by citizens and evoke a high level of welcome citizen engagement and interest.

Everyone I meet on the subway, in the boardroom, or at the dinner table has an opinion, often strongly held, about what needs to be done about transit. Polling in Toronto today reflects intense citizen engagement with transit issues. They usually rank first among voter concerns, but these same voters are often divided on the right way forward. There are honest differences of opinion among good people, disagreeing on the best solutions.

The Scarborough LRT versus Scarborough subway debate is an excellent example of this phenomenon with competing views, not always well-grounded in evidence and analysis, but strongly held and nearly equally divided. Not surprisingly, our politics reflect this same phenomenon.

Excellent planning and analysis based on evidence are essential to resolving these issues, but they alone are not enough. In the end the choices must be shaped and secured by a strong, public and political consensus that we are on the right track and it's in this context that we at Metrolinx do our work.

Metrolinx is an organization of transportation professionals—experts who have made their careers in getting people and goods

to where they need to be. They deal in analysis and evidence, benefits and costs, alternative technologies and capacities, innovation, network effects and the like.

At Metrolinx, we're measured by the quality and clarity of our work. We are not partisan. We're not elected. We serve and we serve best by giving the best advice we can and implementing our plans as effectively and as efficiently as possible. We're not the ultimate decision makers. That is the responsibility of the governments we serve, but the better our analysis and advice, the more persuasive we will be in making sure the right choices are made.

This month at Metrolinx we celebrate our fifth anniversary of the new Metrolinx. Today, I want to report to you on the progress to date and set out the path ahead. We have made major progress and we're poised for much more. We have had some disappointments, but they pale relative to our successes. We have tangible achievements and positive momentum. I'm absolutely confident that the future of transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) will be better than the past.

The original Metrolinx was created by the Province of Ontario in 2006, led by Rob MacIsaac and Michael Fenn and guided by a board made up principally of mayors and chairs from the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas. Metrolinx was charged with developing a regional transportation plan, responsive to the growing regions' needs. In 2008, with a unanimous vote of its board, Metrolinx produced the Big Move, a bold, 25-year, \$50-billion plan to transform our transit infrastructure. It was good work. The plan won the Canadian Institute of Planners Award of Excellence. The province embraced the plan and made a multi-billion dollar commitment to it of almost \$11 billion, the largest single financial commitment to transit in the history of Canada.

To implement the Big Move, in early 2009, just five years ago, the province merged the original Metrolinx with GO Transit and reconstituted the board of directors at Metrolinx, replacing elected

officials with a lay board under the continued leadership of Rob MacIsaac.

I had the very good fortune to be appointed as the first president and CEO of the new Metrolinx, tasked with helping to assemble the board and recruit a permanent CEO to lead the organization. On both counts we did really well. We were fortunate to attract an outstanding board of directors, which is every bit as strong and as committed as the boards of our leading institutions and corporations in Canada.

Then Bruce McCuaig, previously Deputy Minister of Transportation, agreed to join us as our president. He's doing an absolutely outstanding job recruiting and leading a very strong staff of transportation and planning professionals totally dedicated to our mission. It's a privilege to work with all of them. They are absolutely terrific people.

We took as our vision working together to transform the way the region moves and we made it our mission to champion and deliver mobility solutions for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas and then we got down to work.

We were given a five-fold mandate. First, improve and grow GO Transit as the backbone of regional transit. Second, build new infrastructure both for GO Transit and with our partner transit agencies starting with the first funded projects under the Big Move. Third, develop PRESTO as an electronic fare card for all transit systems in the region as an essential foundation for seamless fare integration across the region. Fourth, prioritize the next waves of projects, keep implementing the Big Move and do a full review of the Big Move by 2016 to ensure we're still on the right track. And fifth, make recommendations for sustained funding of the Big Move.

We've made important progress on all elements, all five elements of this mandate. Let me start with GO Transit. I'm so proud of what that GO Team has achieved. Created in 1967, GO Transit now delivers over 65 million rides a year and is one of the

most successful urban rail systems in the world. Where service quality was once unreliable, it's now exemplary. Guided by a passenger charter and backed by an on-time guarantee, GO Transit delivers a first-class passenger experience. Last year, GO Transit was winner of the outstanding Public Transportation Achievement Award from the American Public Transportation Association. This is the Oscar for transit systems in North America, a major achievement for GO.

GO is delivering more service and more riders every year. We're expanding GO train service and bus service across the region, including now to Kitchener/Waterloo. More communities want us to reach them as well and, resources permitting, we'll keep growing. We're revamping Union Station to triple the GO Transit concourses and improve the platform environment. On our seven corridors, we have over 100 projects underway to increase capacity and this past summer, we've launched 30-minute, all-day, two-way service on the Lakeshore corridors, the largest expansion in the history of GO. We're receiving rave reviews for this new service level and have grown off-peak ridership by 30 per cent.

GO is critical to relieving and reducing congestion in the GTHA. Our congestion challenge is not an issue limited to the city core in Toronto. It can be found across the region, on the QEW, the DVP, the 401 and other highways. We need regional solutions to regional congestion and GO is an extraordinary asset on which we can build, and now that it's firing on all cylinders, we can and will do much more.

Our second mandate was to get going with new transit projects and we have. The biggest complaint I hear about Metrolinx is nothing's happening. That's dead wrong. We have over 200 projects planned and underway as part of the first wave of fully funded projects under the Big Move. Let me cite some highlights.

First, we're building the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, which will run from Weston Road in the west to Kennedy in the east with

an 11-kilometre tunnel in the middle where the street is narrow and the traffic is heaviest. The Crosstown will have 25 stations and stops. It will have links to 54 different TTC bus routes, three subway stations and three GO Transit lines. It will be a transformative addition to Toronto's transit network. It's a big project with a \$5.3-billion budget. We're digging the tunnels now and will complete the project for service in 2020.

Second, in York and Peel regions we have dedicated bus/rapid transit lines under construction with our municipal partners. The first section of York's Viva Rapidway opened last summer and it's an outstanding success. More sections will open every year until we're done and the same will be true for the Transit Way in Mississauga.

Third, the Union/Pearson Express, our dedicated fast rail service from Union Station to Pearson International Airport linking Canada's two busiest transportation hubs, is largely built now and will be open for service in the first half of next year, well in time for the PanAm Games. This project has been talked about for 20 years. Metrolinx was given the task to deliver it only three years ago. We will deliver it on time and on budget. There will be a train every 15 minutes all day, both ways offering a reliable and comfortable ride in 25 minutes and it's right into Terminal 1 or right into Union Station; and you can get on and off the train at Bloor West or Weston as well if you wish.

Fourth, a TTC project and not Metrolinx's. The province is the largest financial contributor to the Spadina subway extension, which will take the subway past York University all the way up to Highway 7 in Vaughan. The extension will open in 2016.

We've made less progress than we hoped on our plans for LRTs on Sheppard and Finch and our plan to replace the Scarborough RT. We believe LRTs are an excellent solution for routes that need more than bus service, but lack the ridership demand that warrant a much more expensive subway. We have had difficulty maintaining the necessary political and public consensus to

allow these projects, apart from the Crosstown, to proceed on the original timetable. We continue with essential preparatory work but we don't yet have shovels in the ground.

I won't rehash the full Scarborough debate here. Suffice it to say we will likely only know Toronto's lasting intentions after the new city council is elected this fall. We cannot proceed with any project even though the Scarborough RT is in urgent need of replacement.

Metrolinx has been consistent in its analysis and recommendations from a transit perspective. The Scarborough LRT was and is the right solution. At that same time, we respect the ultimate decision is for governments, not for us, and when all three levels of government landed on a subway as the preferred approach and the federal and city governments brought their cheque books with them, we acted to ensure the additional cost would not be borne by Metrolinx or the province, that some costs would be recovered from the city and our other projects would be protected.

Some wish that we had resisted the subway more vigorously. Others wish we would recommend the subway. We did neither. We did our analysis. We made our views public. We did our job and we respected the ultimate authority of political decision makers to make the choice. We remain committed to the three Toronto projects and have the funds committed to ensure they can go forward. The need is clear. We will get there, but it's taking longer than we would like.

In total, however, this is an unprecedented level of investment and building. We really are on the move.

Let me turn to PRESTO. The Big Move identified an electronic fare card as an essential building block of our integrated regional transportation system. It's not just about convenience. It will facilitate true fare integration. We have 10 transit systems in the GTHA. TTC and GO are the best known of the 10, but we also have them in Mississauga, York, Durham, Oakville and others. Passengers travel across the boundaries of these different systems

from York to Toronto, or from Toronto to Mississauga, or Durham to Toronto, or Hamilton to Burlington. These passengers expect an integrated experience and fare, something we can only deliver with an electronic payment system. To this end, we have built PRESTO. We now have over one million PRESTO card holders and our users love it. It makes their travel easier and better. It elevates their experience, bringing it into the 21st century. Once PRESTO is fully deployed on TTC in about three years, we will have more than two million cardholders and the entire region will be using the same card. The City of Ottawa has also embraced PRESTO where it's up and running well.

To integrate 10 transit systems and service over six million people makes PRESTO one of the most complex fare card projects in the world. Not a surprise given the size, growth and complexity of the GTHA. With PRESTO, we're ahead of New York, we're ahead of Los Angeles, we're ahead of Chicago and we're closing the gap on the acknowledged world leaders like London and Hong Kong. Recently, Washington DC, following a competitive process, chose PRESTO technology for its transit system as it tries to catch up. Some say we should have chosen an off-the-shelf product instead of building PRESTO, but there wasn't one and there isn't one that could meet the complex needs of our region. Some systems might meet the needs of a single transit agency, but none could meet the integrated needs of our 10 transit agencies.

Others argue that PRESTO costs too much, but then simultaneously they usually point to London's Oyster card and say, "Why can't we have a card like that?" The reality is London's card costs more than PRESTO's cost. Adjusted for the size and complexity of our region, the cost of PRESTO, while certainly substantial, is very much in line. We're confident, once we have PRESTO fully implemented, the case for true fare integration across the region will become irresistible. We will have the electronic fare card to make it possible and the improvement in regional transit system

will be palpable.

Planning and prioritizing the next wave of projects to implement and keep the Big Move up-to-date is the fourth dimension of our mandate. We're the custodians of the Big Move and we must constantly give life to it, not just by building projects but by updating the plan based on the best evidence available. We need to ensure that the plan we inherited remains the right plan with the right priorities for tomorrow. The Big Move is a living document, a clear guide to all we do, but open to change, to new evidence and needs that emerge.

Our planning responsibilities are unique. We are the only regional authority. That's not to detract from the importance of each of the 31 municipalities that constitute the GTHA, or the work of the other nine transit agencies that are partners within the GTHA. But it is to recognize that none of those cities and none of those agencies have the same focus as we do on the region as a whole and all the ways in which the many parts of the region come together and interact.

Greater Toronto has no single government spanning the region short of the provincial government itself. Contrast that with London where the Greater London Authority spans over the 32 boroughs that constitute London, creating a government squarely focused on the needs of the entire region and not just the individual boroughs. The Greater London Authority includes transport for London. The London-wide superagency is charged with all forms of transit and transportation planning. Ontario has not chosen this path for Greater Toronto preferring the autonomy and local control inherent in our approach.

We do, in Ontario, have a regional growth plan, but there is no regional institution concerned with land use, or growth, nor for water and wastewater infrastructure, or for economic development, waste management, or any other policy area. Metrolinx is the only regional institutional mechanism to support the single economic region of the GTHA. This underlines the centrality of

our work and doubles the importance of our planning role given that transit and transportation infrastructure must both shape and serve the region.

To do our work well we must work with all the municipalities in the region, all 31 of them. It's through this work that we gain local insight and input and learn about the priorities of the elected officials and public servants in each municipality. But in the end, we must always ask what will serve the region best?

Our distinctive regional role and perspective is well illustrated by the current discussion about the relief line in Toronto. Within the City of Toronto most of the focus has been on a proposed new subway line to run from an eastern point on the Bloor subway southwest to downtown Toronto providing relief for the Yonge Street subway and potentially permitting its subsequent extension north to Richmond Hill. Our good friend and partner, Andy Byford of the TTC, who is here today and many others including more mayoralty candidates have identified this subway as a top priority for Toronto.

Metrolinx brings a complementary, but different perspective to the issue seeing the Yonge corridor crowding as a regional issue, needing a regional solution, providing relief not just to the Yonge Street subway, but to the need to move more people in and out of downtown from the north and northeast of the GTHA. As a result, we're doing our study of the issue in full partnership with the TTC, the City of Toronto and York Region. Our broader regional lens looks at how a number of solutions may help, including more fully utilizing the GO corridors through that part of the region and relying on fare integration to remove price disincentives, arising from different TTC and GO fare policies. Working together with the TTC, we'll get to a good multi-faceted solution that will serve the city and the region well.

This joint regionally focused effort is the value-added that Metrolinx brings to the planning table transcending the perspective of any one municipality or transit provider and focusing on the

region as a whole. By working collaboratively with our partners, we can develop the most effective and efficient solutions that will serve the most people, at the least cost. We can also ensure that the prospect of relief is not held hostage to the 10- or 20-year timeframe for planning, funding and building a new subway by acting earlier and faster.

Let me return to the Big Move. The Metrolinx Act requires that our plan be reviewed not later than 2016. We've already started. We're asking how we can make a good plan better. We're consulting widely. We welcome advice. We've made public our proposed next-wave projects. These are excellent projects that call out for action—GO expansion, Hurontario LRT, subway expansion, Durham/Scarborough BRT, Hamilton LRT and numerous more. We'll continue to listen, to learn and to put forward the strongest analyses and evaluations we can, not only of the individual projects, but of their network impacts to ensure we capture their contributions to strengthening the regional transit and transportation solutions. We recognize that governments, not Metrolinx, will make the ultimate decisions, but we're confident our work will lead to better and more informed decisions.

Paying for the infrastructure and the need to keep pace with our booming region is essential. Transit and transportation infrastructure is, as I said, expensive. In the short run, it's easy to put off and avoid these costs with delay and deferral, but in the long run we all suffer from the economic, environmental, and quality of life costs that arise from underinvestment in infrastructure. One needs only to observe the overcrowded roads, trains, subways, streetcars and buses in Greater Toronto to see the consequence today of our neglect. It's simply not worthy of us as a community. It shortchanges all of us and those that will follow us. The annual economic cost in the GTHA is over \$6 billion a year and growing. It's intolerable and, worse still, an unnecessary burden for our region. Our statute required us to make recommendations by June of 2013 on how to sustain in-



vestments in transit infrastructure to complete the Big Move. Our report was followed by Anne Golden's Transit Investment Panel Report. Our reports emphasize the need for sustained financial support, specifically dedicated to the projects within the Big Move. Sustained means being insulated from the ups and downs of annual budgeting, avoiding the on-again, off again pattern of earlier times that is so inconsistent with the multi-year nature of building transit infrastructure. Dedicated means being protected from the other demands for funds no matter how compelling.

Our reports were thorough and we comprehensively reviewed best practices globally. Our numbers and analyses have not been challenged. It was good work done by our staff.

We recommended potential new revenue sources, including increased sales and gas taxes, but these recommendations did not find favour in the current political climate deeply resistant to such increases. So be it.

These are the judgments politicians must make and I, for one, respect them fully for it. From Metrolinx's perspective, the critical issue is that we have the sustained dedicated funds to keep moving forward. How these funds are raised or reallocated from other purposes is not ultimately our concern. That is for governments to decide, not for us. Our concern is to be able to keep building, keep moving forward and keep moving people through the region better, and it's from this perspective that we so warmly welcome Premier Wynne's announcement last week at the Toronto Region Board of Trade. She released the Ontario Government's Moving Ontario Forward Plan, an ambitious plan to build new infrastructure across the province. These funds would be sustained over 10 years and dedicated, just as we recommended. The Premier's plan outlined major infrastructure improvements across the province, with an investment in transit in the GTHA of \$15 billion over 10 years and an emphasis on projects we've already identified through the Big Move and Next Wave priorities.

Some tough choices will still be required but this is a great

step forward, exactly what we need to keep moving forward. I'm enormously encouraged by the announcement. These funds are on top of the funds previously committed, which amount to about \$16 billion. Together this means we'll have over \$30 billion committed to the Big Move.

A key priority initiative the Premier outlined is what we call Regional Express Rail—a 15-minute electric train service across the GO rail network. This is vitally important to the region. It would move the most people at the least cost. It would help us alleviate highway congestion across the GTHA. The project contemplates making the GO train corridors virtual surface subways, with service so frequent and fast that the trains become an irresistible substitute for driving, thus significantly mitigating traffic congestion as well. Imagine going to the GO station confident that the next train will be along soon, just like when we go to the subway station. How liberating and convenient will that be?

The GO Regional Express Rail initiative is the next natural step in our progression from an original commuter service to two-way, all-day service on the Lakeshore to electrified express rail on all seven corridors within a decade. For us at Metrolinx, it's the realization of a central element of our vision reflected in the Big Move. It will transform the way the region moves—fast, convenient, safe and reliable, building on our passenger charter and customer-centric approach to service.

We'll build on the work we've already done on electrification and on the environmental assessment for electrification of the Union/Pearson Express. We'll deliver a plan in the coming weeks to implement our express rail vision. It will be another big step forward, the kind of step that reflects our full possibilities as a region and as an agency.

I'll acknowledge we have a decade of work ahead of us to make this vision a reality, but with sustained and dedicated funding in hand, we can and we will do it and it will transform the way we move. Despite all of our progress, some cynics may suggest

that our vision and plan will be merely ephemeral, part of the electoral posturing and subject to evaporating following municipal and provincial elections to come.

That is not my view. I don't doubt elections matter and will make a difference. They should. That's why we have them, but our greatest asset is the broad public and political consensus that is developed across the region that our congestion is unacceptable, that major new infrastructure is required, that it requires significant new, sustained and dedicated investment and that the time to act is now. There's lots of room for debate on the details, but not on the agenda and the direction. Regardless of political persuasion, congestion, traffic and transit are at the top of the public's concerns. Woe to any government at any level that ignores this reality for Canada's largest city, region and economic engine. Deferring, yet again, is not an option.

We at Metrolinx must not engage in politics or harbor political preferences, and we don't. We are public servants in a public agency. We are public advocates as well. It's right for us to speak out about the region's needs and to applaud when positive announcements are made. We'll keep doing that and we hope to have reason to applaud often in the years ahead.

We'd also like to have more to applaud from Ottawa. We have received important support from Ottawa for Union Station, for parking garages for GO and the Sheppard LRT among other projects, but we need more. We need sustained, systematic and dedicated support for urban transit in Canada's major cities. There's no investment Ottawa could make that would do more to increase productivity and enhance economic growth than to reduce congestion and improve the movement of people and goods in our most important urban areas. It is good economics. It's good policy and it should be good politics.

The province and the city cannot bear this load alone. The infrastructure deficit is simply too great. We need an active and committed partner in Ottawa. The late, and now much missed,

Jim Flaherty understood this well. Jim regularly rode the GO trains from Whitby and he knew what a difference they made to his community. He invested in GO and Union Station and made a real difference with those investments, and I hope Ottawa will build on that legacy. It could make a powerful difference to our prospects and our pace of work.

Let me finish with a comment on governance. A persistent question I get is why don't we have elected politicians on the board of Metrolinx to ensure public accountability and responsiveness to the 31 municipalities that constitute the GTHA? Given the importance of these issues, don't we need politicians governing the agency and making the calls?

The short answer is that our statute prohibits it. No elected official or government employee from any level of government can serve on the board. All members of the board must be lay citizens. This was a deliberate choice made by the province in 2009 when the new Metrolinx was created.

Personally, I think it was the right choice. In my view, we don't need more politics in transit planning and implementation. We are politically accountable to the province and report to the Minister of Transportation. We have an important partnership and working relationship with the province. We also work with all the municipalities within the region. We accept without qualification that these governments make the final decisions and these are ultimately political choices that are made. Would it be better if some municipalities were represented on our board by elected officials from the municipalities? It could not be all of them given there would be 31 municipalities vying for seats on the board. A representative of any one municipality would be inherently conflicted; balancing her duty to her municipality with her duty to our regional mandate, bound never to favour her municipality over the interests of others. It would be a difficult assignment for sure and even more difficult to enjoy the full confidence of those municipalities not represented.

In my view it is better to clearly delineate and distinguish our role as public servants from the ultimate decision-making authority of our municipal and provincial political masters. Let us focus with our staff on planning, analysis, evidence, operations and implementation. Let uniquely mandated and skilled to do.

That said, we have recommended a change in our board, not to add elected officials but to draw closer ties with our municipal partners. We have recommended that our board be increased from 15 members to 18 and that six of those directors be appointed by the province on the nomination of the municipalities that make up the GTHA; one from each of the six regions—Toronto, York, Durham, Hamilton, Peel and Halton.

We believe these nominees would underline our regional mandate while bringing a deep knowledge of parts of the region from which they would be drawn making our strong governance even better.

Many have advice on how we can do better. Indeed, I don't know many people who don't have advice on how we can do better. We welcome that advice. We seek out that advice, but the one argument I never hear now from serious commentators is that we don't need Metrolinx— an agency with a comprehensive regional mandate to improve how people move and to reduce congestion in the region. No one could seriously imagine the GTHA today without Metrolinx and without the Big Move.

We need a strong and effective Metrolinx helping drive the region forward. We are making progress. We have great momentum. We have an amazingly good staff and board. We're excited about what lies ahead and we have the public championing our cause at every turn. We feel privileged to be able to serve and confident that an even more successful GTHA lies ahead.

Thank you very much for your attention.

The appreciation of the meeting was expressed by Dr. Gordon K. McIvor, Executive Director, National Executive Forum on Public Property, and 3rd Vice-President, The Empire Club of Canada.