



FUTURE SHOP
CORRECTION NOTICE
Wii Yamaha Supercross 10099331. Due to a manufacturer's delay this item will not be available as advertised on page 9 of the July 18th flyer and there is no current release date.
We sincerely apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our valued customers.

Ontarians must reduce reliance on autos

As mentioned in my previous column, rising gas prices, a rapidly growing Golden Horseshoe and the need to cut GHGs— make our communities in Ontario vulnerable.



Michael Chong

These vulnerabilities are amplified due to low-density sprawl and the lack of public transit. As also mentioned, the world is running out of oil and the remaining oil is increasingly difficult and expensive to extract. As a result, oil and gas prices are going up in the long-term. Furthermore, there is little, if anything, governments can do to reduce the price at the pumps. So if governments can do little about the price at the pumps, what else can be done?

for greater intensification in Toronto and Mississauga and less sprawl in Guelph-Wellington and Halton.

Greater action is also needed on the public transit front, both in terms of regional transit (such as extending GO Transit to Acton and Guelph) and rapid transit (such as expanding the TTC and building a light rapid transit (LRT) in Waterloo Region).

The real solutions lie in weaning ourselves off our reliance on the automobile by expanding public transit and intensifying urban areas in the Golden Horseshoe. Without greater density, the transit ridership needed to justify the operational costs of public transit will not exist. Without greater public transit investments, people and goods will not be able to get from A to B.

The province has already acted to intensify urban areas through the Places to Grow and Greenbelt legislation. These are first good steps, but more needs to be done on this front.

Some of my colleagues and I have proposed a National Public Transit Act, that would set aside the monies for public transit investments and create a framework for spending those monies. A \$30 billion federal investment, matched by \$30 billion in provincial/municipal monies, and amortized 15 years would allow us to build somewhere in the neighbourhood of a thousand kilometres of track for urban rapid transit across Canada (it can cost up to \$80 million to build a kilometre of subway, somewhat less for above-grade LRT). This would cost the federal treasury \$2 billion a year, less than 1 per cent of total federal tax revenues. It would also boost our manufacturing industries, particularly in Ontario, where most of these trains and track could be manufactured.

Most importantly, this public transit expansion would truly combat high gas prices by providing an alternative to the automobile.

Some might say this is all too ambitious and too costly. However, Spain, not even a G-8 economic heavyweight as Canada is, successfully expanded public transit in Madrid in a short period of time by building close to 120 km of rapid transit in a decade, with still more on the way. Madrid now has close to 300 kilometres of rapid transit. This compares to 70 kilometres of rapid transit in Toronto and 69 in Montreal. If they can do it, so can we.

Others might say that this has nothing to do with rural Ontario. Yet what happens in cities like Toronto, Mississauga or K-W has a profound impact on rural Ontario, whether it concerns the loss of farmland, the destruction of habitat for species at risk, or the vitality of the rural economy. We are not an island and the decisions concerning cities like Toronto profoundly affects us in rural Ontario. Just ask those long-time residents of Chinguacousy Township in Peel County (which no longer exists) or those residents of Southwold Township in Elgin County, which now will be receiving Toronto's garbage at the Green Lane Landfill site.

Some say it takes 20 years to reshape a city. The next 20 years will be critical for the future of cities in Canada and critical for rural residents, for we are all interconnected. The time to prepare for a high-cost energy environment is now.

—Michael Chong is the MP for Wellington-Halton Hills.

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