

# METROLINX

## Final Report and Recommendations of the **Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan**

“Among us are students, retirees, cyclists, motorists, transit riders, pedestrians, urbanites, and suburbanites... We volunteered because we are proud and concerned residents of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area who see the potential to make a positive impact on public policy regarding transportation within the region.”

September 2017

Issued by Metrolinx

**Publication information**

Published by MASS LBP on behalf of Metrolinx

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International licence  
(CC BY-NC 4.0)

**METROLINX**

# Contents

<b>Chair's Note</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>What policy makers should know</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>About the Residents' Reference Panel</b>	<b>11</b>
Context	11
Mandate	11
Membership on the Panel	12
The Chair and Panel Team	12
Process	12
<b>Meet the Panelists</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Panel Snapshot</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Panel Proceedings</b>	<b>27</b>
Meeting 1: March 11, 2017	27
Meeting 2: March 25, 2017	29
Meeting 3: April 8, 2017	31
Meeting 4: April 29, 2017	32
Meeting 5: May 13, 2017	35
<b>Panelists' Report and Recommendations</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Our Values</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>41</b>
A. Connectivity, Convenience, and Integration	41
B. Equity and Accessibility	43
C. Health, Comfort, and Safety	43
D. A Well-Planned Region	43
E. Exemplary Environmental Footprint	44
F. Prosperity and Competitiveness	44
G. Public Awareness and Communication	45
<b>Appendix</b>	<b>46</b>
Minority Reports	46
Program development and facilitation	47





*Panelists receive certificates of public service following the completion of their draft report and recommendations.*





**METROLINX**

Certificate of Public Service

*Helen Murtagh*

Resident Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan  
Spring 2017

**METROLINX**

Certificate of Public Service

*Kristy Kastelec*

Resident Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan  
Spring 2017





*During their first meeting, panelists discuss values that should guide the development of the regional transportation system.*

# Chair's Note

I am pleased to provide Metrolinx with the final report of the Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan. This document represents the culmination of some 1,400 hours of volunteer time provided by the 36 randomly selected members of the reference panel.

This Panel was created to provide Metrolinx with a diverse and representative perspective—a truly regional voice—from which to better understand the experiences and concerns of residents living throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

In their report, you will find recommendations concerning fare integration, enhanced communications, and the need to create a more seamless service between and among area transit systems, among other topics.

Importantly, the panelists recognize that progress is being made and that viable transportation options for many residents are gradually increasing. Nevertheless, they also know there is still much more to be done and they look forward to the deployment of faster and more frequent GO services, new busways, and new Light Rail Transit routes.

While strongly endorsing the need for sustained infrastructure investment, the panelists took care to focus on ideas that they believe are overdue and would enhance the experience of all travellers. In this regard, I believe they capture the concerns of many GTHA residents who are frustrated with poor coordination between transit services, the lack of fare integration across systems, and incomplete or inaccurate trip planning tools.

The panelists implicitly challenge everyone to think and act like a region and to recognize how changes to where people live and work are rapidly overtaking the traditional urban-suburban divide.

In this way, the panelists' deliberations are striking and perhaps indicative of changing public sentiments across the region. The struggle between cars and transit may be ebbing as residents begin to routinely access new transportation options, including services such as Uber and car-sharing, and live in denser neighbourhoods with better access to high-frequency transit. In this environment, seamless and careful integration between different modes of transportation is highly prized.

I hope their recommendations will be useful in your work.

Respectfully,



Peter MacLeod  
Chair, Residents' Reference Panel  
on the Regional Transportation Plan

# What policy makers should know

The Residents' Reference Panel is the third long-form deliberative panel commissioned by Metrolinx over the past six years to support the agency's efforts to understand the transportation needs and perspectives of GTHA residents.

This panel is one of a series of initiatives intended to involve stakeholders and members of the public in the development of the next 25-year Regional Transportation Plan.

The members of the Reference Panel authored their section of this report. This overview provides six observations regarding the panelists' recommendations which may be of interest to policy makers and others who are keen to understand the sensibility and priorities of GTHA residents today.

**1. Transportation is getting better... but too slowly.** Panelists were strongly supportive of existing investments in roads and public transit and were broadly aware that major projects like the Eglinton Crosstown, improved VIVA and MiWay services, the expansion of Union Station, and the roll-out of the PRESTO payment system were all underway. However, they also lamented the pace of construction and what they perceived as endless changes to plans that delay improvements and erode public confidence.

**2. Seamless service should be the goal.** As one panelist observed, crossing between transit services should be as easy as using a phone and switching cell towers; when the technology works, it's imperceptible. Instead, the panelists reported that they face a range of barriers when travelling across municipal boundaries. These include ill-timed or considered schedules, costly fare structures, and poor data integration. Panelists were incredulous that legislative barriers currently prevent municipal operators from efficiently running services into neighbouring jurisdictions when this could greatly improve convenience for passengers. The panelists believe the province should insist that all transit operators take a traveller-centred view of their operations, and remove the barriers that prevent enhanced service coordination.

**3. Fare integration is overdue and equity matters.** The panelists were unanimous that fares should be integrated across the region — especially given the roll-out of the PRESTO fare system. They were quick to endorse a fare-by-distance model that would set a low flat fee for short local trips that might be below current fares, and which would increase with distance. They envision a fare structure that preserves existing discounts for children, families, and seniors, but which also introduces discounts for low-income residents. The panelists are concerned that low-income earners often travel further for employment and so would spend



more on public transit. They believe a means-tested discount, applied discreetly through the PRESTO card, could support greater equity.

**4. The first and last mile remain a major barrier.** The panelists acknowledge that outside of the City of Toronto, getting to and from public transit services remains an enormous barrier to transit use. They discussed the incentives of private or publicly subsidized ride-hailing and sharing services as well as better cycling and walking routes, and denser urban planning to address this concern.

**5. Transit should always be cheaper — but still a quality experience.** Panelists believed that while transit should be affordable, this should not come at the expense of a comfortable and enjoyable commute. They valued good design in all aspects of the regional transit system, including aesthetically pleasing stations and clean, well-maintained vehicles. The panelists recommend investing in services that are not only more efficient, but also more friendly.

**6. The message isn't getting out.** The panelists recognize that residents of the GTHA are still reluctant to leave their cars at home and that this is not sustainable if the region is to grow by 110,000 residents every year. They supported a much more comprehensive communications plan that clearly outlines new transit services becoming available, and unashamedly advocates the benefits of public and active transportation to quality of life. The panelists proposed a transportation update to all GTHA residents, released at regular intervals, that would build trust and confidence with even the most skeptical motorists.



*Nubia Baltodano  
(Caledon) agrees with a  
fellow panelist's remarks  
during a presentation of  
their work.*



# About the Residents' Reference Panel

The Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan was an important exercise in local democracy that provided residents with the opportunity to help develop a regional transportation system that responds to the needs of all travellers in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Thirty-six residents from across the region served on the Panel, which met over five days between March and May 2017.

## CONTEXT

Between now and 2041, the GTHA is expected to grow by more than three million people. Managing this growth will require careful planning as well as significant investment in the region's road network, transit services, sidewalks, and cycling infrastructure.

In 2006, the provincial government created Metrolinx, an agency responsible for coordinating and integrating all modes of transportation in the GTHA. In 2008, Metrolinx released the first Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) titled *The Big Move*, which laid out a vision for transportation and infrastructure priorities over 25 years. These priorities now shape how the region develops and the transportation options and services available to residents.

Among other things, *The Big Move* led to the expansion of the PRESTO fare card system; increases in GO train service, including all-day, two-way service on the Lakeshore corridor; construction on the Eglinton Crosstown line; new Bus Rapid Transit service in York Region; the opening of the Union Pearson Express train; and the launch of the regional trip planning tool Triplinx.

Now, almost 10 years later, a review of *The Big Move* is underway. This review provides an opportunity to reconnect with stakeholders, bring the latest thinking and advances in transportation into a new RTP, and clarify policies while continuing to push ahead with previously approved projects. In preparation for drafting the next RTP, Metrolinx has reached out to municipalities and residents across the GTHA to ensure that the updated priorities in the plan will respond to the needs of all users of the transportation system.

## MANDATE

The Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan was a deliberative process intended to provide GTHA residents with an opportunity to become better informed, to actively participate in the review of the existing Regional Transportation Plan, and to advise Metrolinx on the development of the next RTP. The Panel was designed as an impartial, voluntary advisory body that

worked to represent all GTHA residents and exemplify high standards of transparency, accountability, and civic participation. The Panel was tasked by Metrolinx to learn about the region, its residents, and its future growth; consider the impacts of the ongoing expansion of the region's rapid transit system; and ultimately develop recommendations concerning public priorities for the next 25 years of the regional transportation system.

## **MEMBERSHIP ON THE PANEL**

The members of the Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan were selected by civic lottery. In January 2017, 10,000 GTHA households were randomly mailed an invitation to volunteer. Over 280 people responded to the invitation, either volunteering to be a part of the Panel or requesting to be kept informed about the process. Elected municipal, provincial, and federal representatives as well as employees of Metrolinx and other public transit or urban planning agencies were not eligible to volunteer. From the pool of 165 eligible volunteers, 36 panelists were randomly selected to ensure gender parity and broadly represent the population and regions that make up the GTHA — namely, Durham, Halton, Hamilton, Peel, Toronto, and York. The panelists each generously agreed to spend nearly 40 hours serving on the Panel. While their transportation expenses were reimbursed, they did not receive an honorarium or any other compensation.

## **THE CHAIR AND PANEL TEAM**

The Panel was chaired by Peter MacLeod, principal of public engagement firm MASS LBP. This firm won the contract to lead the Panel process following a public tender and is internationally recognized for its work leading deliberative policy processes. The chair was responsible for developing the Panel program and process, leading the facilitation team, and serving as the spokesperson for the Panel. He did not have a vote and was expected to remain neutral throughout the Panel's deliberations.

## **PROCESS**

Members of the Panel met five times between March and May 2017, including once for a tour of transportation facilities important to the regional network. Over the course of these five meetings, the Panel heard from a range of transportation experts about the opportunities and challenges related to transportation planning in the GTHA. The panelists drafted a report outlining their recommendations in their own words, which will be presented to the Board of Directors of Metrolinx. This report will help Metrolinx draft the next Regional Transportation Plan. The draft RTP will then be presented during a series of roundtable meetings hosted in communities across the GTHA this autumn. After incorporating feedback from these community roundtable meetings and other consultations with partners and planners from the GTHA municipalities, the draft final RTP will be released in late 2017, followed by an implementation plan in 2018/2019.



## PRESENTERS AND GUESTS

The Panel benefited from numerous presentations, which represented a range of perspectives and interests. Generally, these presentations lasted approximately 15 minutes and were followed by vigorous question-and-answer sessions. Many presenters participated in thematic discussions with their counterparts from similar organizations.

Welcome and Introduction	Leslie Woo	Chief Planning Officer, Metrolinx
Understanding the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area	Pamela Robinson	Associate Dean, Graduate Studies and Special Projects, Faculty of Community Services; Associate Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
Metrolinx: Past, Present, Future	Lisa Salsberg	Director (Acting), Regional Planning, Metrolinx
<i>The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe: Planning for Ontario's Future</i>	Larry Clay	Assistant Deputy Minister of Ontario Growth Secretariat, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Next Regional Transportation Plan	Lisa Salsberg	Director (Acting), Regional Planning, Metrolinx
	Peter Paz	Manager, Regional Partnerships, Planning and Policy, Metrolinx
Civic Perspectives Panel	Richard Joy	Executive Director, Urban Land Institute Toronto
	Gillian Smith	Chief Marketing Officer, Toronto Region Board of Trade
Planners' Perspectives Panel	James Perttula	Director, Transit and Transportation Planning, City Planning Division, City of Toronto
	Jason Thorne	General Manager, Planning and Economic Development, City of Hamilton
	Mary-Frances Turner	President, York Region Transit Corporation
	Leslie Woo	Chief Planning Officer, Metrolinx
Scenario Planning	Daniel Haufschild	Vice President, Urban Mobility, WSP
GTHA Traveller Personas	Matthew Denomme and Jennifer Yellin	Senior Vice Presidents, Northstar
Mobility Perspectives Panel	Teresa Di Felice	Director, Government & Community Relations, CAA South Central Ontario
	Nancy Smith Lea	Director, Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), Clean Air Partnership
	Christopher Norris	Manager, Customer Service Planning, Durham Region Transit Commission
Fare Integration	Chris Spiering	Senior Advisor, Planning & Policy, Metrolinx
Wayfinding	Helen Kerr and Nigel Smith	Co-Presidents, KerrSmith Design
Appreciation and Next Steps	Judy Pfeifer	Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer, Metrolinx



## The To-Do List

Table  
Adams

### Connectivity, Convenience and Integration

In the next 5 years, MetroLinx should:

- Coordinate routes and schedules between all 15 transit agencies
- Integrate all unconnected information into the Tappan app to help solve the first-mile/last-mile issue (e.g., real-time bus arrival, bike availability, etc.)
- Make queries more convenient to use by some machine, ability to load how anywhere and on mobile app in 10 days (better monthly pass)

*Handwritten:* We envision an integrated fare system that...  
• by that you "travel" for a certain amount from the time of every trip  
• discounts for large mode during off peak times  
• features for low-income residents applied through the Park card

*Handwritten:* In the long-term, MetroLinx should...  
• recommend passengers to destination to receive services to help with...  
• avoid double parking going through some...

Charlene Gallardo (Toronto) works with fellow panelists to refine their recommendations.



# Meet the Panelists

**Adriano Marcoccia, Toronto**

I grew up in North York and have called the GTHA home for the past 27 years. I have immersed myself in public policy issues with the hope of attending law school. I am currently working in the transportation industry and joined the Panel to expand my knowledge of transportation systems. I would like to contribute towards improving the future of regional and local transportation for residents all across the GTHA.

**Aldo Di Felice, Toronto**

I am a foreign-born Canadian and have lived in Toronto for over 50 years. Over that time, certain policies have fuelled my interest in transportation issues. I believe there is potential for improvement, particularly in regard to the downtown-focused thinking of Toronto City Council, and the over 40-year delay to expand the TTC subway north beyond Finch station. I joined the Panel to learn more about how transit works in Toronto and the future developments planned across the GTHA.

**An Kuye, Mississauga**

I grew up in Thunder Bay and moved to Toronto when I got married. Since then, I have had three beautiful and talented children and two cherished grandsons. After taking an early retirement from the Ministry of Education, I have focused on my hobbies of painting, gardening, and travelling. I promote public transit in my community and am pleased to see how much it has improved over the years. By joining the Panel, I hope to help expand and improve the travel experience for my family and our community.

**Annette Wagner, Toronto**

I have experienced the full spectrum of daily commuting: driving for one to two hours, taking the GO train, riding the subway and connecting buses, and walking. Since I use public transpor-

tation frequently, it is a privilege to get a behind-the-scenes look at transportation planning. It has been a pleasure working with the team at Metrolinx, and I hope that my input reflects the needs of those in my community.

**Buelah Adams-Farrell, Oakville**

I live in Oakville, Ontario, which is about a 40-minute GO train ride from downtown Toronto. I've worked in the human-rights field in various capacities for over 40 years and currently work as a mediator with a federal government agency. I joined the Panel because I wanted to contribute my ideas and be part of a productive conversation on how we can improve the Regional Transportation Plan.

**Charlene Gallardo, Toronto**

I am a 21-year-old student at York University studying economics and French with the hope of working within government. I immigrated to Canada from the Philippines at the age of five and have lived in Scarborough ever since. I commute to and from school every day and rely on public transportation. I hope that by joining this Panel, I can use my voice to not only represent the seven million people here today but also those that will live here in the future.

**Courtney Winter, Toronto**

I grew up in Toronto and recently moved back to the city after completing my undergraduate degree in urban planning at the University of Waterloo. Over the past five years, various jobs have taken me across the GTHA, and I have often had to rely on public transit. Being part of this Panel allowed me to speak up on behalf of those who, like myself, rely on transit every day. I truly believe improvements to our transportation infrastructure are long overdue.

**Danielle Lenarcic Biss, Toronto**

I was born and raised in Toronto though I have also lived in Ottawa and the small town of Sackville, New Brunswick. Currently, I am back in Toronto working as a researcher at the Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. I joined the Panel to be more civically engaged and to help shape the GTHA's transportation system that I (and my children!) will inherit.

**Darren Perera, Toronto**

I have always lived in the Upper Beaches area of Toronto. Transportation is essential to me because I am constantly running between school, work, church, sports activities, and jam sessions with my friends around the city. Having completed three years studying business at York University, I am also interested in helping to plan and find new revenue streams for the transit systems in and around my city.

**Fabrizio Calvise, Hamilton**

I was born in the City of Hamilton and am still a resident there today. After high school, I attended Centennial College, where I completed a diploma in recreation and leisure services, and Brock University, where I completed a BA in recreation and leisure studies. For the past 18 years, I have worked for the Hamilton Catholic School Board as an educational assistant. Living across the GTHA has made me interested in transit integration, and I wanted to learn more about this through my participation in the Panel.

**Heather Pierce, Pickering**

I grew up in Niagara Falls but moved to Pickering 33 years ago after living for some time in the United States. As a smaller community just on the edge of Toronto, Pickering provides easy access to the city. I have worked in IT my entire career, which has kept me interested in change and innovation. This interest in innovation led me to join the Panel and contribute to current and future plans for transportation and growth in the GTHA.

**Helen Murtagh, Toronto**

I am a 72-year-old, fifth-generation Torontonians and I have had the privilege of watching Toronto grow, change, and diversify to become the vibrant place that it is today. I spent my entire working career in the insurance and banking industries downtown, so I am a veteran of streetcars, subways, and the GO transit system. Now that I am retired, my car is my preferred method of getting around, though I am careful to stay off the roads during rush hour. The commuters don't need me adding to the congestion! Participating in this Panel was important to me because Toronto is my home and I love it. Learning about the plans and ideas in the works reassures me that the region is in good hands and will continue to be the best place on the planet to live and work.

**Ingrid Allan, Oshawa**

I grew up in Whitby and currently live in Oshawa. I recently changed jobs, which has meant commuting to downtown Toronto by GO train. Public transit is a huge consideration for those of us who find work outside of the community in which we live, so when the opportunity arose to have some input on the transportation plan for the GTHA, I volunteered immediately. I was also curious about plans for the Lakeshore East service that I use. The plus side to my daily commute on the GO train was meeting my current husband a few years ago — he even managed to find a way to propose on the train!

**Janice MacInnis, Toronto**

I am a strategic thinker who looks to optimize results by improving planning and execution today to find opportunities for tomorrow. I have worked at Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola, and Novartis, initially in operations and logistics and now in marketing and sales. This unique perspective motivates me to collaborate to create plans that work for everyone. Participating on the Panel offered me the opportunity to learn more about the public sector. I also wanted to work with new friends, offer my diverse experience to improve productivity for businesses, and enhance the quality of life for individuals in Ontario.



**Jignesh Patel, Mississauga**

I grew up in India and have lived in Peel Region for the last 13 years. For the last 14 years, I have worked as a business consultant. As a consultant, I enjoy analyzing data and coming up with business process recommendations. I joined the Panel to give something back to the community and to be a part of the GTHA's ongoing development journey.

**Jove Chan, Markham**

I grew up in Hong Kong and immigrated to Toronto in 1997. In 2000, my family and I settled in Thornhill while I worked as a property manager in Mississauga. As a property manager, I have had the opportunity to identify and incorporate the needs of individuals into large-scale projects. As Metrolinx plans to develop the future of transportation over the next 25 years, I want to have a say with the long-term interests and quality of life of my family in mind.

**Kelley Prendergast, Dundas**

I grew up in Dundas, Ontario, and moved to Toronto eight years ago to study at the University of Toronto. I recently completed coursework towards a Master of Public Policy degree with a focus on urban and environmental policy. Not surprisingly, I am fascinated by the role of transportation policy and infrastructure. I volunteered for this Panel so that I could continue to learn about these policies and about public perceptions of transportation in general.

**Kooper Nuckchedee, Pickering**

I have always been an active listener and engaged in everything I do. In various management roles during my career, I have enjoyed recognizing others' abilities and helping them to succeed. I lived and worked for many years in Ottawa, where I commuted using the OC Transpo bus. A few years ago, I moved to Pickering and now take the GO train often, which I enjoy for its smooth ride and great customer service. I joined the Panel hoping to make suggestions for how to improve transit rides within the GTHA.

**Kristy Kastelic, Hamilton**

I grew up in Hamilton and recently graduated from Western University with a B.Sc. in geographic information science. After graduation, I lived and worked in Switzerland, where I enjoyed daily use of one of the most efficient transportation systems in the world. I joined the Panel because I am passionate about transportation and believe that small changes to a transit system can lead to increased efficiencies for all users.

**Manav Bajaj, Markham**

I have lived in Markham, "Canada's High-Tech Capital," for 14 years. I am an engineer by profession, but I am currently working in the automotive industry as a program manager. I joined this Panel to gain insight into the relationships among the various organizations involved in *The Big Move* and in transportation planning more generally, a topic I am deeply interested in. Personally, I strive to share out-of-the-box ideas and provide solutions to improve residents' overall quality of life.

**Marianne Clark, Toronto**

I am a true-blue senior Torontonians, and I have lived in Toronto all my life. I taught business and cooperative education at the secondary-school level for the Peel Board of Education. From both a driver's and a pedestrian's point of view, I have seen the traffic get worse over the years. I am interested in learning about the different ways Toronto can get traffic moving again so that it cuts down on the frustration that cyclists, drivers, transit riders, and pedestrians all experience.

**Melanie Liu, Toronto**

I was born and raised in Scarborough, where I continue to reside. I am an avid sports fan, so in my spare time you can catch me at a live sporting event or at a restaurant watching the game.

I currently work in Yorkville, which is typically a commute (barring any delays) of around an hour, split equally by TTC bus and subway. I joined this Residents' Reference Panel out of curiosity, but I also relished the opportunity to provide constructive input to help shape the next Regional Transportation Plan.



*Panelists introduce themselves and share their motivations for joining the Panel.*







**Michael Cochrane, Toronto**

I have lived in the GTHA, in the same house in Lawrence Park, for the last 40 years. I am currently retired, but I used to work in finance and so would drive to downtown Toronto. Now that I am retired, I always take public transportation, whether the subway or the bus. It is easy for me to say that I joined this Panel because I have the time, but I am also very interested in the subject matter. When I received the notice in the mail, I knew this was my opportunity to learn more about public transportation and to help assist with the region's future growth.

**Michael McInnis, Burlington**

I was born, raised, and educated on the West Coast. I graduated from the University of British Columbia with a B.Comm. (transportation and utilities) and an MBA from the University of California, Berkeley. Between my studies, I spent two-and-a-half years working as an economist with CNR's R&D department in Montreal. After completing my MBA in California, I entered the brewing industry as a brand manager with Carling Breweries in Calgary and then Toronto. After 20 years with Labatt, in different cities, I left to become Vice President of Sales and Marketing for Canada Malting Limited in Etobicoke. I then shifted into semi-retirement as a consultant to Sleeman until I became their Director of Purchasing. I have been officially retired since 2007, and glad I can spend my time learning about transportation planning in the GTHA.

**Nubia Baltodano, Caledon**

I grew up in Etobicoke, lived in Mississauga as a teenager, and now live in Caledon with my family. I am a recent graduate in human resources management and I am commencing my professional career. I volunteered for the Panel because I rely on public transit to get to the places I need to be, and currently the closest bus stop to my house is a 45-minute walk away. I wanted to learn why this was the case, and how I could possibly influence change through our recommendations.

**Paul Bozzo, Toronto**

I am from Hamilton, but I moved to Toronto nine years ago and have lived here ever since. I work as a mediator for the Ontario Labour Relations Board and teach negotiation at Osgoode Hall Law School. I've done it all — from commuting an hour on the GO train and subway to walking to work — and I'm passionate about public policy issues in Ontario. I'm thrilled to contribute my ideas to the next Regional Transportation Plan.

**Perci McFarlane, Toronto**

I was born in Cochrane, Ontario, and lived there until my family moved "down south" to Toronto, where I grew up. I later moved to *la belle province*, where I studied and then worked as a translator for 30 years, before returning to Toronto for family reasons. What I especially appreciate about Toronto is that its dense neighbourhoods allow it to be walk-friendly. I find travelling on foot to local businesses and services to be very practical and satisfying, and I wish that more GTHA residents could benefit from this type of lifestyle. By joining the Panel, I hoped to learn about the challenges faced by decision-makers when attempting to discourage car use and promote walking and cycling.

**Ramesh Sharma, Richmond Hill**

I have been a resident of Richmond Hill for over 30 years. I have also been a public servant of the Province of Ontario for over 23 years, working at the Ministry of Transportation, the Management Board Secretariat, and the Financial Services Commission. While in these different roles, I have relied on various transit systems, including the YRT, TTC, and GO. I volunteered for the Panel because I have a keen interest in learning how taxpayers' funds are used. Given that transit investments require extremely high capital expenditures, I believe we should all strive for a system that is reliable and economical. It should also provide taxpayers with value for money and reflect public sector commitments to transparency and accountability.

**Randall Davis, Milton**

I have lived in Milton for the past seven years and currently work in eastern Mississauga as a Director of Project Management Office and Business Solutions. My commute to work takes 35 minutes by personal car. The alternative would be three bus changes, three fares, and crossing one city boundary, which would have a total duration of two hours. Though I relied heavily on GO transit while attending school, and enjoyed the convenience, the schedules and fares now dictate my transportation choices. In my downtime, I enjoy travelling to new places, learning about the environment, and listening to smooth jazz. On weekends, I usually travel to downtown Toronto by GO bus or train. I believe that Ontario is a great place to live with very progressive and bold policies. I saw participating in the Panel as a great privilege. It was an opportunity to learn about Metrolinx, completed and current transportation projects, and how customer needs analyses help drive regional transportation planning. I believe that efficient transportation can support many economic sectors, improve living standards, and help protect the environment.

**Ranjeet Bhangu, Brampton**

Living in Peel Region, I use different modes of transportation to get around. Though I am a long-time resident of Peel Region, I used to live in downtown Toronto and commute to Scarborough, so I have had many different transportation experiences. As a frequent transit user with many suggestions, I joined this Panel to try to be a proactive voice for change.

**Richard Wise, Richmond Hill**

I have been a resident of Toronto and the GTHA for almost nine decades. I studied at the University of Toronto School of Architecture (now the John H. Daniels Faculty of Architecture) and am currently a partner at Zeidler Partnership Architects. I have had a lifelong interest in Toronto and the GTHA, and the invitation to join the Panel seemed like an opportunity for me to learn more about transportation in the region. I also

joined the Panel so that I could lend my professional planning and building experience to discussions about the latest regional transportation planning projects.

**Saishang Jiang, Stouffville**

I immigrated to Canada in 2009. Since then, I have studied and worked in many cities throughout Ontario. Currently, I live in Stouffville with my family and commute daily to Markham for work. I usually drive to work. When I need to travel to downtown Toronto, I take the GO train so I don't have to worry about traffic and parking. I was interested in joining the Panel because I believe that transit can be more convenient and accessible to those in more rural areas.

**Savka Stojanoska, Mississauga**

I grew up in the former Yugoslavia and immigrated to Canada with my two children and husband in 2004. Since then, we have lived in different parts of the GTHA and we have used different modes of transportation, including public transit, bicycles, and our own cars. From my experience, it was much easier and more convenient to travel by public transit in Europe (including the former Yugoslavia) than it is in Canada. I have always wondered about what can be done to improve public transit in the GTHA. When the opportunity to participate in the Residents' Reference Panel arrived in the mail, I was happy to join in. I have learned that a lot of work has been done to improve all modes of transportation, including public transit. However, there is still a lot of room for improvement, especially regarding 24/7 connectivity among different municipalities and affordable, integrated fares.

**Stanley Ngwaba, Mississauga**

I am a self-employed Project Manager and Business Analyst with extensive experience in banking, finance, and the public sector. I have managed complex projects that align people, process, and technology with business strategies. I have been happily married for 21 years and I am a proud father of four children. When I am not reading or discussing politics, I love going on

road trips. My family and I have seen a great deal of the stunning Canadian landscape, largely by rail and car. I volunteered to be a panelist to meet the 35 other panelists, to listen to and understand their perspectives on mass transit, and to learn from their experiences. I am also passionate about the behind-the-scenes operations that ensure efficiency for massive organizations such as Metrolinx, so listening to the operators share their stories was both revealing and educational, and, overall, it was a very rewarding experience.

**Vince Cerullo, Mississauga**

I was born, raised, and went to school in Toronto. Currently, I live with my wife and two daughters in Mississauga, though I work in downtown Toronto as an analyst for a major insurance com-

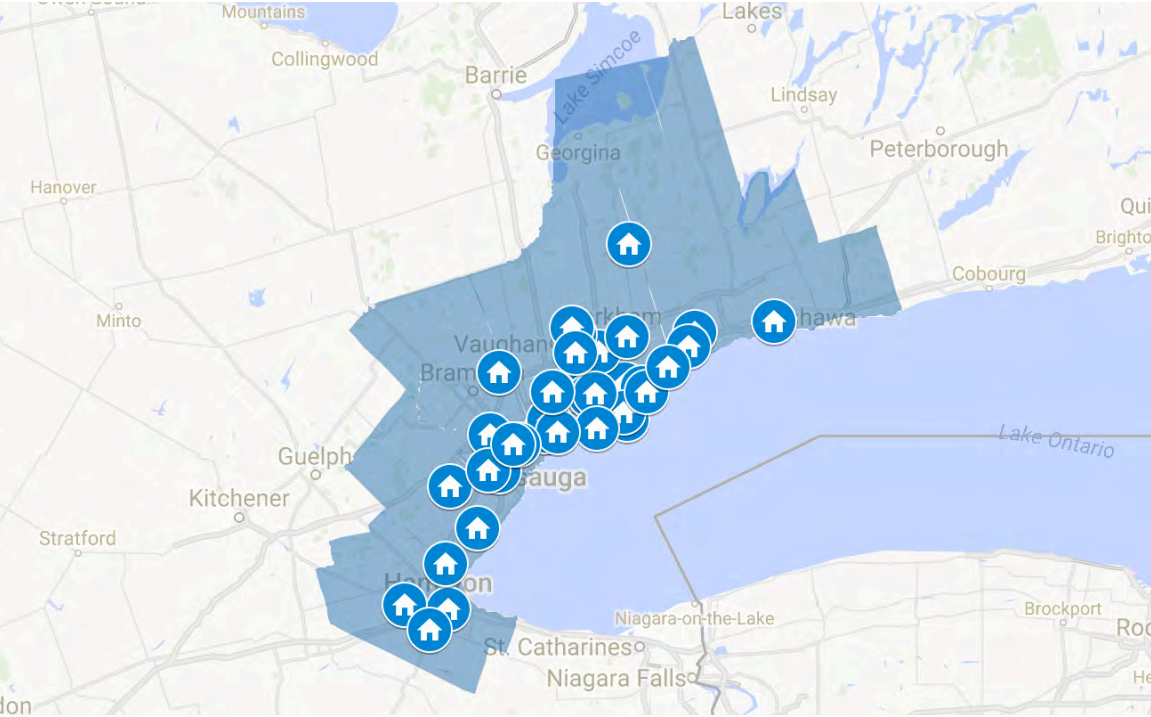
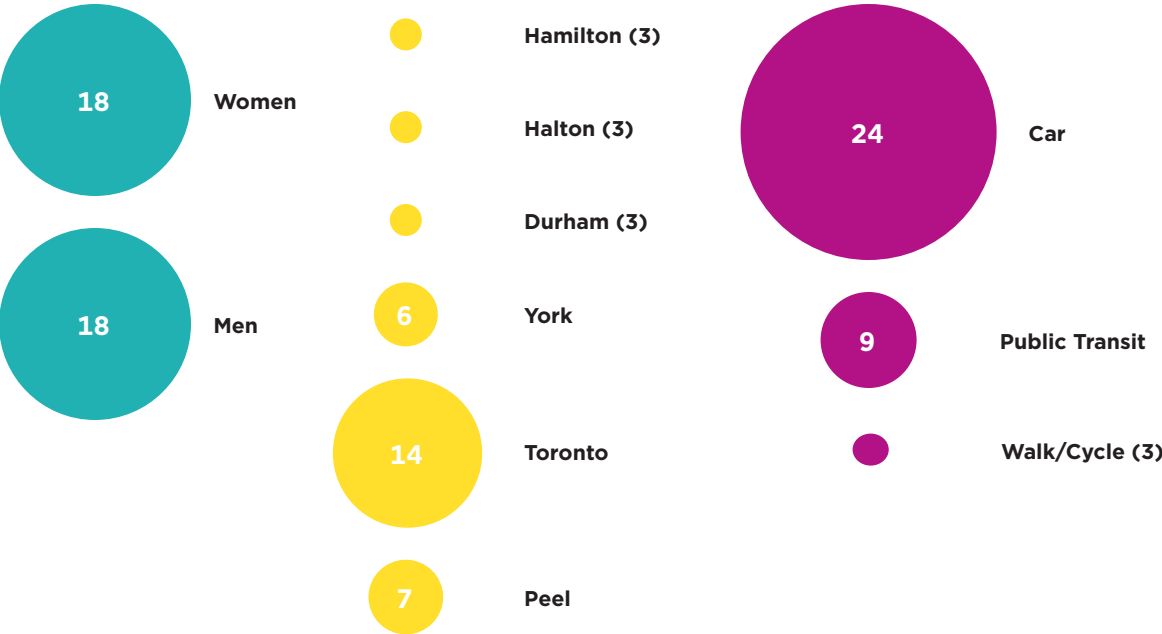
pany. My daily commute involves driving to the Kipling subway station, parking there, and taking the Bloor-Danforth subway to the city core. I joined the Panel to do my part to improve the transportation system in the GTHA.

**Zackary Fridlyand, Vaughan**

I grew up in North York and currently live in Vaughan. I used to live in Ottawa for school, where I studied policy at Carleton University (Go Ravens!). Living and working in the 905, Toronto, and Ottawa may have given me an intimate understanding of the challenges of regional transit, but it has also revealed just how quickly improvements can be made. I am always looking for ways to get involved in the community.



# Panel Snapshot







**WELCOME**

Residents' Reference  
Panel on the Regional  
Transportation Plan

**METROLINX**  
in partnership with the Government of British Columbia







## BIENVENUE

Le groupe consultatif de  
résidents portant sur le  
plan de transport régional

**METROLINX**  
une agence du Gouvernement de l'Ontario







*Ingrid Allan (Oshawa) provides feedback to a fellow panelist during a plenary discussion.*

# Panel Proceedings

## MEETING 1: MARCH 11, 2017

On Saturday, March 11, the 36 members of the Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan gathered for the first time. The chair of the Panel, Peter MacLeod, welcomed everyone and invited the Chief Planning Officer of Metrolinx, Leslie Woo, to formally greet the panelists. Woo thanked the panelists for volunteering their time, and explained the RTP review process and why she looked forward to receiving the Panel's report.

Woo explained how the first RTP, *The Big Move*, had focused on increasing GO train service, building the Eglinton Crosstown LRT line, launching new Bus Rapid Transit services, opening the Union Pearson Express train, and expanding the PRESTO fare system. Now ten years later, she shared that it is time to take stock, review the RTP's progress and identify new priorities.

Next, the chair clarified the Panel's mandate: "to learn about the region, its residents, and future growth; to consider the impact of the largest rapid transit expansion in the region's history currently underway; and ultimately to develop recommendations concerning transportation priorities for the next 25 years, in order to help advise Metrolinx on the development of the next Regional Transportation Plan."

MacLeod explained why panelists had to think beyond their own experience and work to understand the needs and priorities of their neighbours and communities. As a group, they were responsible for representing the different perspectives and concerns of all GTHA residents.

Members then introduced themselves and explained the reasons why they had volunteered to serve on the Panel. Many were motivated by a sense of civic duty. With so many projects in discussion or under development, others wanted to learn about the process of transportation planning. Still others explained they were simply keen to meet new people and hoped they could give something back to their community.

After a short break, the Panel began its learning phase with a presentation by Pamela Robinson, an Associate Professor in the School of Urban and Regional Planning and Associate Dean at Ryerson University.

Robinson shared and explained data that demonstrated the importance of thinking regionally. She explained that, while downtown Toronto has the highest concentration of jobs in the country, there are a handful of other very dense clusters of economic activity in the region, which span across multiple municipalities. Examples include the employment zone around Pearson Airport, Vaughan Metropolitan Centre, and Richmond Hill-Markham, as well as neighbouring regions outside



the GTHA in Kitchener, Waterloo, and Guelph. Robinson also highlighted some important differences in how municipalities develop land. For example, new housing developments in the City of Toronto are primarily dense, multi-story dwellings and towers. Elsewhere in the GTHA, single and semi-detached housing still predominates. Robinson encouraged the Panel to consider these trends in employment and housing, and the impact of transportation options on residents' quality of life.

Next, Lisa Salsberg, Acting Director of Regional Planning at Metrolinx, introduced regional transportation planning and Metrolinx's role, beginning with the history of GO Transit, which was initially a pilot project during Canada's Centennial in 1967. She explained how the Province of Ontario created Metrolinx in 2006 to be the regional transportation agency for the GTHA, with a mandate to plan, build, operate and connect all aspects of the regional transportation system. The agency also absorbed existing GO Transit operations. Salsberg then reviewed the current regional transportation system, including how Metrolinx relies on nine other transit agencies to plan and deliver services.

She outlined some useful statistics that the Panel would often return to, including:

- One in every four trips made in the GTHA crosses a regional boundary;
- There are 3.46 million cars owned in the GTHA;
- The GTHA welcomes 110,000 new residents every year;
- 79 percent of trips made in the GTHA are made by car; and
- Over \$30 billion is being invested in the rapid transit network, which will result in 23 new stations, 74 km of new Light Rail Transit (LRT) and 68 km of new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service, among other improvements.

After lunch, the Panel heard about the provincial policy context for the RTP from Larry Clay, an Assistant Deputy Minister with the Ontario Growth Secretariat in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Clay reiterated some of Robinson's points about the need to plan from a regional perspective. He also spoke about how the GTHA is growing and continues to draw the highest proportion of new immigrants to Canada. Clay then focused on two pieces of provincial legislation that guide land-use decisions in the context of growth. First, he presented the *Greenbelt Plan*, which protects environmentally sensitive land and farmlands from new urban developments in an area encircling the GTHA. Second, he presented the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, which lays out targets for the location and scale of new urban developments. The *Growth Plan* directs growth to certain areas in order to grow denser, complete communities, preserve existing employment lands, and revitalize downtown areas. The Plan also requires minimum density targets for residential and commercial development around major transit stations.

The Panel then spent an hour in small groups drafting two lists: a list of questions about transportation planning in the GTHA that they hoped to have answered over the course of the Panel process, and a list of things they would most like to change about local or regional transportation. These lists were shared in plenary and helped panelists understand their learning objectives and the variety of transportation issues facing residents across the region.



Panelists spent the remaining hour of the first day discussing what they valued in a regional transportation system, again in small groups. They would continue this discussion in their second meeting.

Before adjourning, the chair gave panelists one piece of homework: for each panelist to talk to three friends, neighbours and colleagues about how they use transportation in their daily lives, and to arrive ready to share some of their conversations at the next meeting.

## MEETING 2: MARCH 25, 2017

To begin the Panel's second meeting, the chair welcomed everyone back and invited panelists to share highlights of conversations they had with their friends, neighbours, and colleagues during the previous two weeks. The chair then presented highlights from the previous meeting's guest presentations.

Then Lisa Salsberg returned to the Panel, this time joined by Peter Paz, Manager of Regional Partnerships, Planning and Policy at Metrolinx. They spoke in greater detail about the existing 25-year RTP, titled *The Big Move*, and Metrolinx's mandate to evaluate and update the RTP every 10 years in tandem with the review of Ontario's *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Salsberg discussed ongoing technical work being done to forecast the needs of the GTHA over the next 25 years. She shared data regarding the expected increases in the general and senior populations, as well as in employment and residential density anticipated primarily in Halton, Durham, and York Regions. In addition, Salsberg mentioned that they were consulting with transportation and land-use planners in each of the GTHA municipalities as part of the RTP review.

Salsberg and Paz shared their efforts to simplify the vision, goals, and objectives from *The Big Move*, distilling the original 13 goals to 6 as outlined in the *Discussion Paper for the next Regional Transportation Plan*. The Panel would revisit these six goals in their future meetings.

Next, the Panel heard from the first of three "guest perspective panels" — a "Civic Perspectives Panel" featuring Richard Joy, Executive Director of the Urban Land Institute Toronto, and Gillian Smith, Chief Marketing Officer of the Toronto Region Board of Trade. Each presenter delivered five minutes of remarks before together fielding nearly fifty minutes of questions from the Panel. Joy spoke primarily about the relationship between land use and the location of transportation options, while Smith reminded the Panel to consider the movement of goods in addition to passengers. They both agreed that there is good progress being made across the system, but emphasized that more is needed.

After a break, the Panel heard from a "Planners Perspectives' Panel."

Leslie Woo returned to participate in this session, along with three planners from around the region: Mary-Frances Turner, President of the York Region Transit Corporation; Jason Thorne, General Manager of Planning and Economic Devel

opment at the City of Hamilton; and James Perttula, Director of Transit and Transportation Planning in the City Planning Division at the City of Toronto.

The planners shared their perspectives on the strengths and weaknesses of regional transportation planning over the past decade, as well as the major needs and principles that guide their respective approaches to transportation planning in their own jurisdictions. They shared examples of their efforts to improve the frequency and efficiency of transit services, and to align new residential and commercial growth with transportation infrastructure. They spoke about efforts to better integrate public transit services across municipal boundaries, acknowledging that this often relies on the initiative of individual planners. During the long question-and-answer session that followed, the Panel asked the planners what they hoped to accomplish in the short term and what they hoped to see in the next RTP.

After lunch, the Panel heard from two consultant teams working with Metrolinx to help them prepare for the next RTP.

First, Daniel Haufschild, Vice President of Urban Mobility at WSP, presented his team's work around scenario planning — a method that considers a wide range of trends that could affect the GTHA, in order to develop more resilient plans. He identified a number of potential scenarios including high and low population growth in core areas, the emergence of new technologies, potential changes in commuter and consumer behaviour, and extreme climate change. He also discussed some of the potential impacts of these scenarios on future mobility, however likely or unlikely each scenario might be.

Second, the Panel heard from Matthew Denomme and Jennifer Yellin from Northstar about their research into the “personas” of typical travellers in the GTHA. These personas are intended to be helpful when thinking about the needs and motivations of different commuters. The Panel considered their own needs in relation to these personas, noting that most felt aligned with more than one persona.

After a break, the Panel spent the remainder of the afternoon revisiting the long list of values developed during the previous meeting. First they narrowed this long list to 13 values they believed were most important. After further discussion, the Panel agreed on seven core values: Convenience; Safety; Affordability and Cost-Effectiveness; Reliability and Dependability; Environmental Sustainability; Comfort and Good Design; and Supportive of Economic Growth and Long-Term Planning.

Panelists split into seven small working groups to define each of these values. Each group shared their work with the rest, and received feedback that helped them refine their value statements. In plenary they decided to combine the values of *Convenience* and *Reliability and Dependability* into simply *Convenience and Reliability*. Panelists returned to their small working groups to continue refining these value statements before one final round of feedback.

### MEETING 3: APRIL 8, 2017

On April 8, the Panel reconvened for a half-day tour of some facilities that are important to the regional transportation system. As well as providing further detail about current projects, the tour gave the Panel an opportunity to explore issues related to the current and future growth of the GTHA.

The Panel met in the Great Hall of Toronto's Union Station, where they began the day with a guided tour of the Union Station Revitalization project. They saw the current state of construction scheduled to be completed in 2018, including improvements to signalling systems and the trainshed roof. They also explored the new retail areas and York GO Concourse.

The Panel discussed how Union Station could facilitate not just transfers, but also inter-modal connections through infrastructure such as bicycle parking. They were interested in how travellers currently use these facilities as they move through the station and downtown Toronto more generally.

The Panel also considered the role of Union Station in facilitating the introduction of GO Regional Express Rail service across the GTHA. Several panelists remarked that despite the increased capacity at Union Station, regional growth would require other stations to make complementary enhancements. The Panel began to discuss how the inclusion of retail and other services at Union Station could be a model for other key stations, and how these stations could become more integrated into residents' daily lives.

The tour then continued at the GO Transit Control Centre. This gave the Panel an opportunity to see some of the software used to coordinate vehicle routes and schedules. Panelists also spoke to the Control Centre staff, and got a greater sense of how staff mitigate issues in real time by relying on a range of contractors and suppliers.

Next, the Panel took a bus from the Union GO Bus Terminal to the Streetsville GO Bus Depot in Mississauga, where they toured the maintenance facility. The bus ride gave the Panel a chance to reflect on the morning. In particular, they discussed the issues of governance and ownership of transportation facilities. The Control Centre relies on so many different suppliers and contractors, each of whom plays a role in solving problems that arise. Similarly, the panelists learned that Union Station is used by different organizations, including the City of Toronto, TTC, and GO Transit. These entities work together but own and manage different parts of the actual building infrastructure.

At the Mississauga Streetsville GO Bus Depot, the Panel learned what was involved in procuring new buses, including the rigorous procedure new buses undergo to ensure they are road-ready. Then, the Panel toured the maintenance hall and learned about maintenance schedules, procedures, and costs. Many panelists were surprised to learn that buses are typically refurbished after only five years and retired after ten years.



After a quick ride through the bus wash facility, the Panel had some time over lunch to explore and suggest improvements to the regional trip-planning app, Triplinx.

The Panel returned to Union Station via the Union Pearson Express. While on the train, they discussed its role as both an airport service and a regional connector. Again, the ride provided an opportunity to reflect on the day. Many panelists commented on the scale and scope of the operations they had toured, noting the complexity of public transit. They also felt both tours clarified some of the major costs to providing mass transit, namely the vehicles and the stations. This prompted a discussion about the relative cost and ridership of buses and trains and the continued role of bus service in regional areas.

## MEETING 4: APRIL 29, 2017

The chair began the meeting with a short recap of the three previous sessions. He invited panelists to share some reflections and key learnings from the tour. Several panelists reiterated that they were surprised by the complex governance structure and the general scale of the operations.

The Panel then heard from three guests who formed a “Mobility Perspectives Panel”: Nancy Smith Lea, Director of the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation (TCAT), Teresa Di Felice, Director of Government & Community Relations at CAA South Central Ontario, and Christopher Norris, Manager of Customer Service Planning at the Durham Region Transit Commission. Though the guest presenters brought three different perspectives to the discussion, they agreed the RTP should recognize that many residents rely on multiple modes of transportation and often make inter-modal connections.

Next, the panelists spent an hour drafting a ‘to-do list’ for Metrolinx. The chair reminded the Panel of the six goals proposed in the *Discussion Paper for the next Regional Transportation Plan*: Connectivity; Convenience and Integration; A Well-Planned Region; Exemplary Environmental Footprint; Health, Comfort, and Safety; Prosperity and Competitiveness; and Equity and Accessibility.

At small tables, panelists suggested actions and categorized them according to the six goals, noting any actions that didn’t fit well in any of the six. They also identified which actions should be taken in the short term, i.e. in the next five years, and those that were intended for the long term.

Then, Chris Spiering, a Senior Advisor in Planning & Policy at Metrolinx, presented about opportunities for better fare integration across the regional transportation system. He noted that “creating an integrated travel experience in the region through fare integration” was specifically mentioned in the Minister of Transportation’s September 2016 mandate letter to Metrolinx. Spiering reminded the Panel that each transit service provider in the GTHA sets its own fares and rules, resulting in eleven different ways that fares are calculated. While some providers already coordinate their fares through “transfer rules,” there are notable exceptions, such as the transfer between GO and TTC services. Spiering then presented some of

the different fare structure concepts that could be applied in the GTHA, including: modifying the existing system of “flat fares” by improving transfer rules across municipal boundaries; introducing fare “zones;” implementing a “fare by distance” system which charges travellers an amount directly related to distance travelled; or developing a hybrid system that employs fare-by-distance concepts on higher-order transit and flat fares on lower-order transit such as buses.

The Panel asked several questions about the current fare system and the potential benefits and drawbacks of each alternative system, including the ease of implementation and the impacts on different types of trips.

After a lunch break, the Panel discussed the potential approaches to fare integration by answering the following three questions:

1. Broadly speaking, how satisfied are you with how fares are collected on the transit system you use as well as across the region?
2. How would you improve how fares are collected on the transit system you use as well as across the region?
3. Which approach to fare integration would you endorse? Why?

After some discussion in small groups, panelists shared their responses and discussed their preferred fare system. A large majority of the panelists endorsed a fare-by-distance system as their preferred choice. The chair invited others to discuss their preferred fare structure and primary considerations. Panelists generally agreed that the current system of flat fares penalizes short trips and creates unnecessary barriers to integration at municipal borders. They agreed that the use of fare zones could lead to boundaries equally as arbitrary as the existing municipal and regional boundaries. The Panel did not endorse a hybrid system because they did not want to encourage the use of lower-order transit through pricing. Specifically, panelists were concerned that a two-tier system of fares might divide residents into different classes: those who can afford higher-priced services and those who cannot.

After further deliberation, the Panel supported a fare-by-distance fare structure, with three conditions:

- A low-cost flat fare within a “virtual zone” for a certain radius from the start of every trip;
- Discounts for trips made during off-peak hours; and
- Subsidies for low-income residents, students, seniors, and families traveling together, applied discreetly through the PRESTO card.

The Panel spent the remainder of the day continuing to work on their to-do lists for Metrolinx. Panelists were randomly organized into six groups, with each group focused on developing actions under one of the six goals. They considered the full list of proposed actions and worked towards a short-list of actions for Metrolinx as well as its partners to pursue. These short-lists were





*Annette Wagner (Toronto) and Michael McInnis (Burlington) discuss recommendations in their working group.*



organized in two categories: actions to pursue in the next five years, and actions to pursue in the long term. The Panel as a whole then heard from each working group and provided feedback on the to-do lists before adjourning for the day.

## **MEETING 5: MAY 13, 2017**

The Panel met for its final meeting two weeks after drafting their tentative to-do lists for the Regional Transportation Plan. The chair asked panelists to sit in the same groups from the previous meeting so that they could return to developing the same lists together.

The chair then explained that in the time since the previous meeting, the facilitators had typed up each tables' to-do lists and made some suggestions. In a few instances, they noticed actions that were repeated at multiple tables, and made suggestions about which goal these actions should fit under. The facilitators also suggested that many actions centred on public education, and that these actions could be included under a new, seventh goal. After some discussion in plenary, panelists largely agreed this was an important seventh goal to add, and recommended the goal be titled Public Awareness and Communication.

Panelists then received printed copies of all the tables' to-do lists, including the list for the new seventh goal. They spent the next hour reviewing, discussing, and commenting in detail on all seven to-do lists. Panelists considered whether these items would or would not serve the needs of the GTHA as a whole, whether they needed to be clearer, and what wording would help improve them.

After a short break, each table collected all comments about the to-do list they were responsible for developing and began considering and incorporating the feedback the rest of the panel had provided. Some panelists volunteered to join a new, seventh group to work on refining the actions under the goal of Public Awareness and Communications.

Over the next hour and a half, the groups continued refining their to-do-lists under each goal. During this time, the chair asked each group to also draft text that would help explain the rationale behind their recommendations. The working groups each wrote statements explaining the current experiences of residents, as well as the state of the regional transportation system, in relation to each goal. These statements also identified the potential outcomes of taking the recommended actions.

After lunch, the Panel reconvened to listen to each group read their full set of prioritized recommendations and rationale. After each group read out their recommendations and rationale, the Panel asked clarifying questions, discussed amongst themselves, and provided a final round of feedback to each working group. This back-and-forth editing process continued for the next hour and a half to help ensure that all panelists were comfortable with the recommendations, and that key ideas were preserved during the editing process.

One recommended action sparked a long discussion amongst panelists. Under the goal of an Exemplary Environmental Footprint, panelists discussed at length

whether to recommend both incentives and disincentives that could encourage the use of active and public transportation. The chair asked the Panel to spend 20 minutes specifically discussing this issue.

The Panel recognized the eventual need for disincentives to meet the growing demand in the region, but they suggested that public transit and active transportation modes were not sufficiently available or reliable for them to support disincentives such as fees or tolls. However, the Panel did generally welcome targeted pilots to demonstrate and evaluate the effectiveness of disincentive tools such as High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes.

The working groups continued work on their list of recommendations. During this time, the chair asked two volunteers to draft a preamble for the report that would help future readers understand the Panel and its work. This final round of report writing continued up until 3 p.m.

With the draft of the report complete and a sense of accomplishment building in the room, the Panel enjoyed a short distraction from the core work of their mandate. Helen Kerr and Nigel Smith from KerrSmith Design gave the Panel a sneak peek at some of the preliminary designs for a regional transit wayfinding strategy and a simple, unifying symbol for the regional transportation system. Sharing successful examples from around the world, they emphasized that though a single symbol could help connect the different transit agencies in the GTHA, it should not take over any of their individual identities. The Panel discussed the preliminary design concepts and shared their preferences with the design team. The Panel did not include specific recommendations about wayfinding in their report, though their feedback helped inform the design direction for this symbol. Several panelists also suggested this symbol would serve to better integrate services.

Shortly after, Judy Pfeifer, Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer for Metrolinx, arrived to hear a reading of the Panel's draft report. The chair thanked her for coming and reminded everyone of the extensive Panel process and volunteer commitment. Then, different panelists took turns reading out various sections of the report. Pfeifer shared her appreciation for the Panel's thoughtful recommendations and their commitment to deliberating on behalf of all GTHA residents. She repeated that the Panel's report would be delivered to the Board of Metrolinx at an upcoming meeting, and that the report would be a great help to Metrolinx during the development of the next Regional Transportation Plan.

The chair invited panelists to share reflections about the Panel process and key considerations for Metrolinx staff to remember. A few panelists expressed their optimism about the future of the regional transportation system and reiterated the need to strengthen communications to the public about work already underway.

The chair reminded the panelists that over the next two weeks, they would have the opportunity to edit the entirety of their report and, should they choose, provide a personal minority report. Finally, the chair asked Judy Pfeifer to present each panelist with a Certificate of Public Service to mark the completion of the Panel's work together.

# Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan Panelists' Report

## PREAMBLE

We are 36 individuals selected from different communities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). We are representative of the communities in which we live, and a true reflection of today's GTHA. Among us are students, retirees, cyclists, motorists, transit riders, pedestrians, urbanites, and suburbanites.

We were randomly selected from among almost two hundred volunteers who replied to an invitation to serve on this Residents' Reference Panel, a special body created to advise Metrolinx on the development of the next Regional Transportation Plan.

We volunteered because we are proud and concerned residents of the GTHA who see the potential to make a positive impact on public policy regarding transportation within the region.

We met for five full Saturdays over three months and heard from a range of planners, stakeholders, and advocates who helped us to understand the opportunities and challenges related to our regional transportation system.

## WHAT WE LEARNED

- The GTHA attracts over 100,000 new residents every year, mostly through immigration;
- Transportation planning is complicated and there are no easy solutions;
- Metrolinx cannot do it alone; partnerships with municipal, provincial, and federal governments, as well as private and non-profit entities, are essential to creating and implementing a successful transportation plan;
- A Growth Plan exists for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area, which aims to facilitate the development of healthy and sustainable communities;
- The Regional Transportation Plan must align with and support this Growth Plan; and
- The Greenbelt protects nearly two million acres of land against urban sprawl and development while the Whitebelt includes land available for future generations.





*Stanley Ngwaba (Mississauga) reads a draft of the Panel's recommendations pertaining to Public Awareness and Communication.*

### **WHAT SURPRISED US**

- The governance structures currently in place, and the provision of services by 11 different transit agencies, can make it difficult to plan and implement projects and to undertake new initiatives; and
- Everyone has an opinion on transportation. It is difficult to strike the right balance between the various, and often, competing interests.

# Our Values

During our first two meetings, we identified six values that we believe should guide the development of the region's transportation system.

## **CONVENIENCE AND RELIABILITY**

A convenient, efficient, and reliable transportation system moves people and goods from point A to point B in a predictable amount of time; ensures first- and last-mile options are available with minimal wait times at transfer points; integrates travel among various providers and modes of service seamlessly; and includes user-friendly and customizable trip-planning technology that is easily accessible.

## **SAFETY**

A safe regional transportation system takes a comprehensive approach to safety: people are safe, goods are secure, and equipment is well-maintained. Safety also means that everybody can trust, access, and use the system without feeling vulnerable.

## **AFFORDABILITY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS**

Affordable transportation enables all users to move around the region. Public transportation is priced low enough to attract and retain new users.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY**

An environmentally sustainable regional transportation system is designed to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and minimize air and noise pollution. It maximizes the use of technological innovations and sustainable materials to increase durability and efficiency, and reduce waste.

## **COMFORT AND GOOD DESIGN**

A comfortable and well-designed regional transportation system is one that ensures a positive user experience. The latter is achieved by providing a high level of cleanliness, showing respect for personal space, and meeting the different physical needs of its users. A well-designed system is comfortable in all seasons and aesthetically pleasing.

## **LONG-TERM PLANNING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**

An achievable regional transportation plan is affordable to build and maintain. It should be consistent with the broader regional vision for growth, anticipating the future location of services and residents as well as the movement of goods, but flexible enough to adapt to environmental and economic changes. The plan must also be consistently communicated to stakeholders and constituents.



# Recommendations

Our recommendations are organized according to the six goals proposed by Metrolinx in the Discussion Paper for the next Regional Transportation Plan. In addition, we identified and made recommendations under a seventh goal: Public Awareness and Communication.

## A. CONNECTIVITY, CONVENIENCE, AND INTEGRATION

Today, disconnected transportation services lead to longer, more frustrating commutes that discourage the use of transit.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Actively coordinate routes and schedules among all 11 GTHA transit agencies;
- Integrate all intermodal information into the Triplinx app to help solve the first- and last-mile issue. This should include fares, real-time service and traffic updates, parking availability, bike-share services, cycling facilities, and potential on-demand micro-transit services;
- Make PRESTO more convenient. Possible improvements could include more machines, the ability to purchase and load cards anywhere and on the mobile app with no 24-hour delay, and the ability to pre-load monthly passes; and
- Integrate transit fares across the system. We endorse using a fare-by-distance structure with three conditions:
  1. A low-cost flat fare within a “virtual zone” for a certain radius from the start of every trip;
  2. Discounts for trips made during off-peak hours; and
  3. Maintaining existing discounts for students, seniors, and families travelling together, and applying monthly passes or fare caps through the PRESTO card.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Pursue amendments to legislation such as the City of Toronto Act in order to remove barriers to service integration; and
- Create direct connections between regional hubs so that passengers do not always have to connect at Union Station.

In the future, a seamless travel experience throughout the GTHA, supported by technology like PRESTO and Triplinx, will promote transit as a viable and sensible alternative to driving.



*Saishang Jiang (Stouffville) considers a fellow panelist's comments during a working group discussion.*

## B. EQUITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Today, consistency of accessible infrastructure across the transportation system is lacking, and the system faces increasing pressure with changing demographics, including an aging population and non-English-speaking newcomers.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Improve all facets of the transportation journey to ensure barrier-free access for all populations. This includes support for active transportation users, families with children, non-English speakers, and differently-abled individuals.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Implement new discounts or subsidies for low-income residents in a simple yet discreet manner through the universal PRESTO fare card.

In the future, the regional transportation system will enable barrier-free access for all and meet increased and changing demands.

## C. HEALTH, COMFORT, AND SAFETY

Today, transportation options in the GTHA are not as comfortable or as safe as they could be for all users.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Improve infrastructure for active transportation, including an expanded network of protected bike lanes, particularly to key transit hubs;
- Improve lighting in parking lots and at crosswalks; and
- Increase the availability of washrooms and potable water at transit stations.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Install emergency buttons and/or bus shelters at bus stops where safety is of particular concern; and
- Anticipate the possible need to increase the visibility of security at subway entry points.

In the future, public transit will be more comfortable, more enjoyable, and safer for all users and employees. Active transportation will be encouraged, contributing to healthier lifestyles.

## D. A WELL-PLANNED REGION

Today, our regionally fragmented transportation-planning structure appears to delay decision-making and cause bottlenecks that impede implementation. This frustrates residents who want to see quicker, evidence-based decision-making and action.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Strengthen the regional transportation governance model in order to promote greater alignment between municipal, regional, and provincial priorities.



ities, reinforce the need for greater cooperation and coordination between operators, and expedite the delivery of major transportation projects.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Prioritize transit expansion in areas of high employment and residential density, keeping economic viability in mind.

In the future, the transportation-planning structure will ensure regional coordination through appropriate political and apolitical representation, and allow for stronger, data-driven consensus.

## **E. EXEMPLARY ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT**

Today, it is important for everyone to help meet and exceed emissions reduction targets in accordance with our national goals, and in a manner that enhances current and future residents' quality of life without negatively impacting the environment or deterring investment.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Encourage the use of public transit and active transportation by whatever means are found to be the most effective, including rewards programs, monthly fare caps, and subsidized discounts; and
- Improve air quality inside and around stations and corridors through the increased use of greenery, enhanced ventilation and filtration, and better maintenance of vehicles and stations.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Increase procurement from suppliers with environmental certifications.

In the future, we will keep our planet healthy and contribute to the well-being of current and future generations.

## **F. PROSPERITY AND COMPETITIVENESS**

Today, congestion is a barrier to prosperity and growth. Transportation plans are not fully aligned with economic development outside downtown Toronto. As a result, they fail to leverage the economic activity in these areas.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Identify regional nodes where expanded transit services and a mix of other land uses can be developed, considering partnerships with existing businesses and leasing space to retailers.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Utilize emerging technologies (such as autonomous vehicles) to make the system more efficient where possible; and
- Facilitate the efficient movement of goods and people by better utilizing existing road infrastructure, such as dedicated transit lanes.

In the future, the transportation system will allow for more efficient movement of people and goods within the GTHA.

## G. PUBLIC AWARENESS AND COMMUNICATION

Today, most residents do not understand why they should get out of their cars to use public or active transportation. Residents are insufficiently informed about ongoing or future projects and strategies as well as associated benefits. As a result, those critical of transit have disproportionately shaped public opinion.

*In the next five years, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Enhance the profile of regional transportation planning by promoting user benefits associated with ongoing projects, new investments, and behaviour change;
- “Own its space” and use existing transit and real estate assets to communicate to current users; and
- Launch an annual or biannual update about transit expansion that can be distributed to all GTHA residents.

*In the long term, Metrolinx and its partners should:*

- Create specialized campaigns to promote any new services or plans including fare integration;
- Raise the profile of transit options outside of Toronto; and
- Elevate the status of transportation policy to that of health and education, making it the third pillar in a successful, healthy, and prosperous society.

In the future, improved communication will build trust and confidence among the public. Communications will be coordinated across all agencies in the region and based on two-way, ongoing engagement, with continuous measurement. Ultimately, the user will be at the centre of this communications strategy.

# Appendix

## MINORITY REPORTS

**Ramesh Sharma:** The issue of “A Well-Planned Region” is rooted in a Governance Structure that does not support fully integrated transit. The problem is that regional transportation and transit services are severely fragmented. What is required is a mechanism that would enable policy, planning, and decision-making regarding transit across the GTHA, other regions, and the 27 or so municipalities. The premise is not so different to other regions, and so we have frequently suggested governance structures like those in London, Vienna, and Stockholm, where responsibility and accountability are clearly defined. I do not believe that the recommendations in the report are explicit and unambiguous in this area. I would like to suggest something along the following lines:

In the next five years, a task group should be established with appropriate personnel from Metrolinx and the various GTHA regions and municipalities to:

1. Develop a governance structure comprised of a Board of Directors whose responsibility would include policy, planning, and the stewardship of a single transit authority, such as exists in London, England. Metrolinx would retain responsibility for operationalizing the policy and plans approved by this Board; and
2. Prepare a legal framework that would facilitate the legislative and regulatory changes required for this new governance structure.

I also believe it is crucial to develop a Comprehensive Risk Management Plan, like the one we discussed in our first group discussion but did not revisit. I suggest that in the next five years, a Comprehensive Risk Management Plan should be developed that addresses the impact on the delivery of transit services of major climatic and environmental changes, major failures due to technical and engineering malfunctions, and catastrophic failure of computer systems, including cyber-attacks. In addition, the plan must address financial impacts as well as failure to achieve planned construction programs.

To ensure public accountability, I also suggest the establishment of an audit committee that is comprised of entirely external members. This committee would have the independence to investigate all matters to ensure integrity in financial transactions, procurement procedures and practices, acquisition of consulting services, etc. The committee would operate independently with the authority to hire external counsel, and it would report to the Board of Directors on an annual basis or as necessary.

In the long term, I suggest that Metrolinx should continuously examine ways and means to leverage its assets with a view to achieving efficiency and effectiveness.



**Zackary Fridlyand:** Throughout the process of drafting this report as a Panel, I noticed several themes seemed important to the implementation of our value-based recommendations. These themes related to the increase and improvement of active transportation infrastructure, transit accessibility (both to it and on it), connectivity between regional hubs, communication with stakeholders, promoting and educating the public about the work of Metrolinx, and integrating transit with the most innovative technology of the digital age.

During our discussions, many ideas were brought forward in the hopes of broadening the current scope of transit infrastructure. Some solutions focused on re-purposing existing infrastructure (e.g. establishing high occupancy toll lanes) while others sought to make use of emerging technology to incentivize certain practices (e.g. digital reward programs, among other initiatives, to promote public or active transit).

One idea that gained significant support amongst some Panelists was the development of micro-transit services that would take commuters from their homes to the nearest transit hub. Micro-transit services could either be developed by transit authorities themselves or through partnerships with private sector ride-sharing entities. This service would improve transit accessibility, solve the first-mile/last-mile issue, increase ridership and revenue, reduce congestion, and promote more environmentally-friendly commuting practices.

## **PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITATION**

The Residents' Reference Panel on the Regional Transportation Plan was designed and facilitated by MASS LBP. MASS is Canada's leader in the use of long-form deliberative and participatory processes to shape public policy.

Since 2007, MASS LBP has led some of Canada's most original and ambitious efforts to engage citizens in tackling tough policy options while pioneering the use of Civic Lotteries and Citizens' Reference Panels. To date, more than 300,000 households across the country have received invitations to participate in 30 Citizens' Assemblies and Reference Panels formed by governments to address a wide range of issues.

*To learn more about their work, please visit [www.masslbp.com](http://www.masslbp.com)*



*Panelists depart after their first meeting together.*







# METROLINX

Final Report and Recommendations of the  
**Residents' Reference  
Panel on the Regional  
Transportation Plan**