

The **TORONTO PARTY**

LEADING THE WAY

**TTP UPDATE
OCTOBER 2008**

This is the official newsletter of The Toronto Party.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

2009 promises to be a watershed year for The Toronto Party. In order to help us develop a platform for our candidates in the 2010 election, we need your feedback on various policy issues.

Here are two issues for consideration:

1. Should the TTC be declared an essential service?
2. Should the costs of the TTC be uploaded to the province?

We look forward to hearing from you on these and other issues on November 29, 2008.

Website:
www.thetorontoparty.com

E-mail:
thetorontoparty@yahoo.ca

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN FAILS TORONTO

By James Alcock, Chair, The Toronto Party Transportation Committee

In September, Metrolinx, the provincial body created to examine and deal with transportation issues in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton areas, unveiled a \$50 billion plan to improve transportation in the region. Although the report identifies the addition of extensions to some 400 series highways out from the GTA and asks that business and industry leaders get involved in discussions on how to improve transportation, the priorities are an expansion of public transportation and bicycle trails and lanes.

The priorities set out in the plan have angered many groups and individuals, including Metrolinx board member and Durham Region Chairman Roger Anderson because the plan has made the extension of highways, such as the eastern extension of Highway 407 a bottom priority. This is a political plan and not a transportation needs plan.

Furthermore, although the plan originally called for a full scale subway along Eglinton Avenue – a subway that is supported by The Toronto Party – Metrolinx's proposal now calls for a partly-underground LRT along Eglinton with tunnels built wide enough to accommodate a full subway later in the future, and has fully adopted Mayor David Miller's "Transit City" plan which calls for additional LRTs along already congested roadways such as Jane Street, Don Mills Road, Sheppard and Finch Avenues and Lake Shore Boulevard. LRTs are not the answer to Toronto's transportation gridlock. They move fewer people than subways and will take up needed road space. St. Clair Avenue residents have already felt the negative effects of dedicated transit lanes along busy streets, with businesses closing and residents moving out of Toronto as a result.

The only subway extensions supported by the Metrolinx plan are the ones which will see the Spadina subway extended into Vaughan and the Yonge subway extended further north. The Toronto Party supported these subway extensions when it was first created.

The Metrolinx plan and its priorities do not match the view that automobile transportation is necessary and dominant in the region and will continue to be the preferred mode of transportation of the region's residents. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the plan has been attacked as crazy and irresponsible.

Transportation plan must promote all modes of transportation...

West-end city councillor Doug Holyday believes that the plan will go nowhere due to the high costs to fund it and the disagreement over its priorities.

In my view, the Metrolinx Plan fails to balance the needs of all modes of transportation and fails to encourage the construction of a public transportation system that will effectively move people from point A to point B, particularly in Toronto. As car manufacturers are enlightened to the need to convert their new models to more environmentally friendly engine systems, it is clear that roadways to accommodate cars will still be needed and will need to be expanded. In addition, Torontonians should be demanding that instead of building surface LRTs on existing roadways, our governments, municipal, provincial and federal, should be allocating capital to the expansion and creation of new subway lines in the city. Subways are less disruptive and will have the greater potential of moving more people in less time than surface level LRTs. The Toronto Party proposes full subways along Eglinton, Sheppard and Queen, and eastern and western extensions of the Bloor-Danforth line, plus a northern Yonge-Spadina subway loop.

Additionally, for auto drivers, the Toronto Party proposes two new expressways in Toronto – one in the northwest along the Black Creek route and one in the east along the Gatineau Hydro Corridor and new ITS technology to keep traffic flowing. We also propose to totally rebuild the elevated Gardiner Expressway (with the Toronto Waterfront Viaduct) and fill in gaps in the arterial street system grid. Finally, for cyclists, we propose a network of continuous off-road bicycle trails throughout the City.

Lastly, it is interesting to note that the Metrolinx plan did not recommend the implementation of any road tolls.

The Toronto Party agrees that new road tolls are unnecessary for existing roadways, but that the introduction of tolls on new highways to pay for their construction is acceptable. These would be removed once the construction is paid for.

Public consultation on the Metrolinx plan is scheduled to start in October. The Toronto Party will provide its view on its plan, although like most other consultations that have taken place on these and other issues, it does not expect that the public consultations will be able to persuade Metrolinx to change its plan. The only way to get change will be to elect a new Mayor and a new City Council in 2010 that will have the power to propose amendments to the Metrolinx plan to make it more balanced and more workable to meet the growing transportation needs of the Toronto area.

Letter to The Toronto Party

Why has Metrolinx chosen to ignore car drivers?

I was stunned to hear Metrolinx's transportation plan for the future. It is nothing but a political document meant to appease Mayor David Miller and the anti-car advocates. The plan, which is heavily focused on public transit, ignores 80% of the people who drive cars. When will our politicians get it right? Instead of giving the people more of what they don't want, they should be giving us more of what we do want. We want better roads, improved infrastructure and subways, instead of congestion causing LRTs and other plans that will cause cars to idle and increase pollution. Instead of serving their self-interests, politicians should start serving the interests of the people first.

Donald