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[This Tuesday: Budgeting for the RTP, plus public rail access to Pearson](#)

Posted on November 21, 2008 at 3:54 pm by [eddrass](#)

Tick, tock. There's now just a week until the Regional Transportation Plan goes to the Metrolinx board of directors for approval.

Before next Friday's [meeting](#), please consider joining me and other interested GTA residents for another "[Metro Hall Meeting](#)" this Tuesday November 25, at 7pm. In anticipation of this informal public session and my upcoming column in [Metro](#) on Monday, I asked the province to explain how it would proceed with the RTP, once approved.

It might also be useful to understand how the federal government will deal with funding requests for projects included in the "Big Move". I've included those questions at bottom, although the economic situation has Ottawa quite engaged right now. As of Friday afternoon there has been no confirmation my questions were received. I'll post any reply in the comments below.

I am also hoping to get VIA Rail's perspective on how their services fit into the planning process for the GTHA, including the future of intercity rail service connections with Pearson airport. VIA has yet to acknowledge my phone calls or email message.

Here are my questions for the province with replies, via the Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

Q1: As the lead funder of the Big Move, how does the province envisage the construction timeline for projects in the 15-year plan? How are recent economic changes affecting this forecast?

MTO: Metrolinx has the responsibility of developing a roll-out plan for the Regional Transportation Plan. The Province is awaiting the approval of the Plan and this advice from Metrolinx which will be considered as part of the provincial budget process.

Q2: Which projects in the 15-year plan are expected to proceed in their current form, regardless of the results of Benefits Case testing by Metrolinx?

Metrolinx has not yet finalized the Regional Transportation Plan or the benefits case analysis. The Province will consider this advice from Metrolinx in deciding how to proceed.

Q3: Is the province of Ontario obligated to negotiate with the successful bidder of the federal airport rail link process? If so, how did this obligation come about?

Yes, under the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund (CSIF) agreement signed by Ontario and the federal government for the \$1 billion GO-TRIP initiative, Ontario committed to supporting the Air Rail Link.

Q4: How does the province envisage access to Pearson from stations along the Georgetown corridor, including transit hubs such as Brampton, Bramalea and Weston? Should there be an exclusive contract to provide premium service to YYZ from Union station, will users of other stations along the Georgetown corridor be required to go out of their way to

reach the airport, or to use alternate transit service?

The Regional Transportation Plan, being developed by Metrolinx is addressing travel across the region, including access to Pearson airport. Any further stops either on the GO Georgetown service or Air Rail Link will be addressed in the detailed planning stages.

Q5: How is Ontario coordinating the planning and funding of the RTP with the federal government? I note that in a [recent column](#), federal finance minister Jim Flaherty said: *“This has to be worked out between the levels of government co-operatively. It isn’t up to one level of government to say, ‘Here’s a shopping list of 50 billion or 100 billion dollars ... and here’s what you get to pay.’ That isn’t the way it works.”*

MTO: Once the RTP is finalized, Ontario and the federal government will review opportunities for funding RTP projects through the Building Canada Fund under the terms of the BCF framework agreement. Beyond that, it is Ontario’s intention to engage the federal government in further discussions on potential federal support for implementation of the Plan based on national interests affected and addressed by the Plan.

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QUESTIONS POSED TO FEDERAL MINISTRY OF FINANCE:

Q1: How is the federal government coordinating with the planning and funding process of the Metrolinx RTP, known as “The Big Move”?

Q2: How does the RTP planning process fit with federal procedures for identifying new expenditures, i.e. funding for projects not already allocated within existing agreements?

Q3: Noting the current financial situation, is the federal government considering the possibility of additional, new funding for projects outlined in the RTP?

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[Criminal carpooling? Ontario vs. PickupPal](#)

Adam King October 27, 2008

[Have you heard the ongoing story of PickupPal yet? PickupPal is a Google Maps-based networking site with about 15,000 registered users in Ontario that helps people find carpool buddies. Sounds pretty useful, right? Only problem is... most of the carpooling going on at PickupPal is illegal. You see, in Ontario it is illegal to carpool \[...\]](#)

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