



London  
CANADA

## BRIEFING NOTE ON PROVINCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

### Meeting of Corporate Services Committee with MPPs

May 22, 2013

#### ISSUES/SUBJECT:

Municipalities need to have sustainable and predictable funding to support their infrastructure needs. London and the Province of Ontario have recently concluded an agreement to deliver improved access through a new interchange at Wonderland Road and improved interchanges at Veterans Memorial Parkway, Highbury Avenue and Colonel Talbot Road. However, to take advantage of this opportunity, London needs additional revenue generating tools and the support of further funding through an Infrastructure Investment Fund to fulfill its industrial land strategy and its infrastructure and transportation needs.

Metrolinx will be making recommendations in June on how to fund *The Big Move*. Municipalities outside the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) also have transit needs that must be addressed.

#### KEY MESSAGES:

- London is pleased with the Government's intention to make Gas Tax funding permanent. This provides us with a predictable source of long-term funding allocated specifically to public transit which over the last three years has provided an average of \$9.3 million.
- Provide a commitment to the long-term sustainable funding of transportation infrastructure needs. The Province should review opportunities for new revenue generating tools that may be used to address local transportation infrastructure needs.
- Maintain the commitment in the Southern Highway Plan for 401 interchange improvements in the London area and support further investment through an Infrastructure Investment Fund for leveraging economic opportunities.
- Metrolinx serves the GTHA. The rest of the province needs access to sustainable transportation and transit infrastructure funding.

#### BACKGROUND:

An integral component of London's Economic Strategy is establishing the City as the trade and transportation hub of Southwestern Ontario. Improved access to the key highway NAFTA trade corridor will stimulate proposed Highway 401/402 industrial land development and will further enhance London's ability to attract businesses, jobs and prosperity. The partnership between the Ministry of Transportation and City of London in delivering improved access through a new interchange at Wonderland Road and improved interchanges at Veterans Memorial Parkway, Highbury Avenue and Colonel Talbot Road as identified in the provincial Southern Highways Program was reaffirmed through an Ontario-London agreement related to cost sharing, timing of improvements and responsibilities. These projects are supportive of the City's Industrial Land Development Strategy and will provide London with continued growth opportunities and take advantage of its strategic location on the 401/402 corridor.

The City's new Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is based on expanding options for London commuters through enhanced mobility choices and public transit service improvements providing a better balance between all modes of transportation and supporting the cost effectiveness of transportation infrastructure. The implementation of the plan is a critical strategic priority. The TMP calls for the implementation of a nodes and corridors strategy for public transit employing a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) platform. To meet the objectives in the Strategic Plan and the TMP in a manner that provides transportation mobility choices while ensuring that roads and bridges remain safe and in good repair, an investment of \$800 M in transportation and \$380 M in the BRT system have been identified.

The TMP will make a significant contribution to London and Southwest Ontario's growth prospects and economic competitiveness while providing broader public mobility, quality of life and environmental benefits. The City and the London Transit Commission are working on the completion of the business case that will be submitted to the Provincial and Federal governments for the BRT.

In the 2013 Provincial budget, the Government of Ontario announced that it will make the gas tax funding for transit permanent.

The cost of transforming and expanding London's public transit system is beyond the capacity of property taxes and transit fare revenues alone. Additional government support and targeted, cost-shared infrastructure funding is required given that there is no long-term, predictable transit investment program.

Metrolinx is the regional transit system for the GTHA. The Big Move is Metrolinx's regional transit expansion plan that has a projected cost of \$50 billion over 25 years. Metrolinx's report, expected to be released this spring will make recommendations on the transit needs of the GTHA. Municipalities outside the GTHA also have transit needs that must be addressed.