

Hamilton Chamber of Commerce Greater Toronto Area Transportation Authority

Issue:

In January 2003, the Toronto Board of Trade, in co-operation with the Burlington Chamber of Commerce, Markham Board of Trade, and the Mississauga Board of Trade, issued a report calling for the establishment of a Greater Toronto Area Transportation Authority (GTATA). The GTATA would be responsible for forecasting, planning, funding and constructing the required transportation networks within the GTA. The themes of the recommendations in the Toronto Board of Trade's paper are transportation co-ordination and integration. The Hamilton Chamber of Commerce (HCC) has been asked to endorse the establishment of a GTATA. The Toronto Board of Trade sponsored a resolution at the Ontario Chamber of Commerce' Annual General Meeting in May 2003. The resolution was passed, making this the official policy of the OCC.

Background:

The HCC officially supports the creation of a Greater Toronto Area Transportation Authority, recognizing the need for a coordinated approach to transportation planning, funding and construction in the GTA. While Hamilton is not considered a part of the GTA, it is an integral part of the economic fabric of that region:

- A recent Statistics Canada report shows double digit increases in the percentage of Hamiltonian commuting to jobs in the GTA as follows:

Place of Residence	Place of Work	1996 Total	2001 Total	Percentage Increase
Hamilton	Burlington	17350	21875	21%
Hamilton	Oakville	5300	7255	27%
Hamilton	Mississauga	5125	6175	22%
Hamilton	Toronto	5955	6825	14%

- The same study shows a 78% increase in worker commutes from Toronto to destinations outside the city, resulting in traffic congestion equally bad in both directions on all major road arteries connecting GTA with Hamilton.
- Hamilton plays an integral role in the province's Transportation Development Strategy for central Ontario. Specific recommendations in this strategy connecting Hamilton with the GTA include:
 - Working with municipalities, transit operators and other public and private sector agencies to identify and implement expansion to the inter-regional transit system through the Golden Horseshoe Transit Investment Partnerships and Transit Investment Partnerships programs including:
 - Lakeshore Corridor, connecting Niagara, Hamilton, Halton, Peel, Toronto, and Durham.
 - Working with municipalities and key stakeholders on the development of a goods mobility strategy for the Golden Horseshoe area.

- Pursue widening to existing highway corridors including:
 - Sections of Hwy 403, and the QEW near Hamilton
- Planning and development of the Niagara Mid-peninsula Transportation Corridor from Niagara, past Hamilton and connecting with the western GTA.
- The province has recognized Hamilton's connection to the GTA with the City's participation in the Go Transit Board and the Smart Growth Panel.
- The Hamilton International Airport has become the province's third largest passenger airport, ninth largest in Canada, and the secondary airport serving the GTA. A recent study by the City of Burlington identified the Hamilton airport as a prime motivator for businesses locating within the city.
- Population forecasts conducted for the Smart Growth Panel project the major growth in Ontario will be directed west of Toronto. Much of that growth will expand the boundaries of the GTA west towards Hamilton and Niagara.

A holistic approach to transportation issues in central Ontario support the inclusion of Hamilton in a GTATA. Transportation planning for the economic engine of Ontario should include heavily populated municipalities that are connected and contiguous. Hamilton is clearly connected to the GTA – physically and economically.

The Toronto Board of Trade GTATA report recognizes the funding opportunities from partnering “with organizations capable of leveraging their investment and authorizing cross-jurisdictional projects – as part of an integrated transportation strategy.” The inclusion of Hamilton in a GTATA would increase the potential funding partners available to execute its mandate.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Support the creation of a Greater Toronto Area Transportation Authority as outlined in the Throne Speech.
2. Support the inclusion of the City of Hamilton in any GTATA that may be established by provincial statute.
3. Recommend that the City of Hamilton have an appropriate level of representation on the Board of Directors of a GTATA.