
City Council

Notice of Motion

MM50.5	ACTION			Ward: All
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For an Open, Transparent, and Accountable Metrolinx - by Councillor Davis, seconded by Councillor Carroll

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Davis, seconded by Councillor Carroll, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Ontario Government to amend the governance of Metrolinx to make it open, transparent, and accountable to the public by requiring it to conduct its meetings in public, consistent with the rules governing municipal government; provide advance public notice of meetings; allow public deputations; and publish all reports, agendas, and minutes.
2. City Council forward this Motion to Toronto MPPs and other Greater Toronto Area municipalities for their information.

Summary

In 2006, the Ontario Government created Metrolinx, merging Go Transit into a new organization with a mandate to develop and implement a regional transit plan for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). In March, 2009, the Ontario Government removed all elected officials from the Metrolinx Board, replacing them with unelected appointees.

The Metrolinx Board meets to consider its business largely behind closed doors. While the public is allowed to attend the public sessions, they are not permitted to speak to the Board or present their views on any of the items before it. Any budgetary matters or items related to the development of the Regional Transit Plan are held behind closed doors. According to the Minister responsible at the time, this is to ensure “frank and open” discussion. The Metrolinx board also meets behind closed doors to discuss matters without providing formal notice, publishing agendas, or providing a minuted record of the meeting.

Metrolinx has also developed an approach to consultation on the elements of its regional transit plan that many have criticized as highly streamlined, one-way, and not in any way meaningful or respectful of community input.

On May 19, 2010, Metrolinx approved, once again behind closed doors, a revised and truncated plan for regional transit that included significant reductions in services and lines in Toronto. This plan has been forwarded to the Ontario Government for its consideration.

This behind-closed-doors decision making process for the approval of cuts to Transit City is counter to the principles of open, transparent, and accountable government. The City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission hold meetings in public, and a regional planning body with no elected representatives should be required to meet an equally high standard for openness and accountability, especially when their decisions hold such serious consequences for the provision of public transit in Toronto.

(Submitted to City Council on June 8 and 9, 2010 as MM50.5)