

Statement from Move the GTHA on the Gardiner Expressway Removal

June 2nd, 2015 – Members of Move the GTHA, a group of leading organizations working on transportation issues in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Region, released the following statement today:

On June 10th Toronto City Council will debate what to do with the future of the Gardiner – either removing the eastern elevated portion of the Gardiner Expressway and replacing with a “Grand Boulevard”, or maintaining the existing elevated structure with new off-ramps (“Hybrid” Option). The organizations who have signed onto this statement all agree that there are strong transportation, economic, fiscal and environmental reasons to remove the eastern section and move forward with the Boulevard plan.

This is not a transportation issue – it is a fiscal, environmental and health issue. Any serious analysis of the plan shows that paying an additional \$458 million to implement the hybrid option, forgoing the unlocking of about \$140M in additional public land sales, and forgoing 2,000 additional new jobs is a misdirection of capital funds away from higher priorities, in particular public transit and active transportation.

At a time where public transit operations and capital projects are massively underfunded in the City, spending nearly half a billion additional dollars to reduce the commute of drivers to downtown at peak hour by an average of 52 seconds is simply unjustifiable. This funding should be put into transit to improve conditions for all Torontonians.

We urge councillors to use taxpayer funds wisely and not squander them on unneeded projects when so many other needs go unmet.

The expert consultant’s report commissioned by the City supports this view:

(The report can be viewed [here](#))

- The Remove (Boulevard) alternative, under its optimized configuration, is able to process the same volume of traffic as the Hybrid option. Pg 8
- When all vehicle movements in the downtown traffic area are analyzed, the total delay for drivers with the Grand Boulevard option is only 52 seconds more than the Hybrid option. Pg 28
- 72% of people travelling into downtown Toronto come by TTC, GO Transit, walk or cycle. The consultant study projects that 95% of all new future commuter trips into the downtown will be made by transit. Pg 4-5
- The Grand Boulevard scenario’s lifecycle costs are \$461 million, versus \$919 million for the Hybrid. The Grand Boulevard costs \$458 million less than the Hybrid. Pg 33
- The Grand Boulevard provides about \$140M (2013\$) higher revenues from public land sales (Appendix C)
- The Consultant’s Report identifies that the Grand Boulevard option will accommodate 2,800 new jobs. The Hybrid accommodates only 770. Pg 22
- The Grand Boulevard option has lower local emissions, 12% lower GHG emissions, and achieves a 52% canopy coverage by accommodating 1,237 new trees (versus 326 trees / 12% coverage in Hybrid). Pg 42

The Boulevard alternative is also supported by a health impact assessment undertaken by Toronto Public Health and the The Alternative Solutions Evaluation Interim Report which determined that the Boulevard is

preferred for road safety (including increased safety for pedestrians and cyclists), and for social, environmental and health reasons.

We hope the Toronto City Council will make the right decision for our city and support the boulevard alternative for the Gardiner East and invest the cost savings in much needed transit improvements in our city.

Signed:



The above signed organizations are members of [Move the GTHA](#). Move the GTHA is a collaboration of organizations working together to build awareness and engagement to support investment in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area's (GTHA's) transportation system. The group has been active since 2012 and represents a diversity of constituents and perspectives – health, labour, business, policy, environment, and citizen advocacy – unanimous in the understanding that new investment is urgently needed. Specifically, Move the GTHA is advocating for long-term dedicated funding for an efficient, accessible, affordable and fully integrated regional transportation system, with accountable and effective regional governance mechanisms for that transportation system.

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