

Legislative  
Assembly  
of Ontario



Assemblée  
législative  
de l'Ontario

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**Official Report  
of Debates  
(Hansard)**

HE-31

**Journal  
des débats  
(Hansard)**

HE-31

**Standing Committee  
on Heritage, Infrastructure  
and Cultural Policy**

Transportation  
for the Future Act, 2023

1<sup>st</sup> Session  
43<sup>rd</sup> Parliament

Wednesday 18 October 2023

**Comité permanent du  
patrimoine, de l'infrastructure  
et de la culture**

Loi de 2023  
pour un réseau de transport  
orienté vers l'avenir

1<sup>re</sup> session  
43<sup>e</sup> législature

Mercredi 18 octobre 2023

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Chair: Laurie Scott  
Clerk: Isaiah Thorning

Présidente : Laurie Scott  
Greffier : Isaiah Thorning

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111 Wellesley Street West, Queen's Park  
Toronto ON M7A 1A2  
Telephone 416-325-7400; fax 416-325-7430  
Published by the Legislative Assembly of Ontario



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Publié par l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario

ISSN 2816-7252

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF ONTARIO

ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

**STANDING COMMITTEE ON HERITAGE,  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND CULTURAL POLICY**

**COMITÉ PERMANENT DU PATRIMOINE,  
DE L'INFRASTRUCTURE  
ET DE LA CULTURE**

Wednesday 18 October 2023

Mercredi 18 octobre 2023

*The committee met at 0900 in committee room 1.*

**TRANSPORTATION  
FOR THE FUTURE ACT, 2023  
LOI DE 2023  
POUR UN RÉSEAU DE TRANSPORT  
ORIENTÉ VERS L'AVENIR**

Consideration of the following bill:

Bill 131, An Act to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006 / Projet de loi 131, Loi édictant la Loi de 2023 sur le financement des stations du réseau GO et modifiant la Loi de 2006 sur la cité de Toronto.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Good morning, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order. We are here to conduct public hearings on Bill 131, An Act to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006. We are joined by staff from legislative research, Hansard, and broadcast and recording.

Please wait until I recognize you before starting to speak. As always, all comments should go through the Chair. Are there any questions before we begin?

**STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER  
AND RESPONSES**

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Our first presenter is the Minister of Infrastructure, the Honourable Kinga Surma. She will have 20 minutes to make an opening statement, followed by 40 minutes for questions and answers, divided into two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the government members, two rounds of seven and a half minutes for the official opposition members, and two rounds of five minutes for the independent member. Are there any questions?

Seeing none, I will now call Minister Surma. You have 20 minutes for your presentation. You may begin.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I thank the members for having me here at the committee this morning. Thank you so much.

I am pleased to have this opportunity to speak to all of you about Bill 131, the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023. Infrastructure is the backbone of a strong and healthy economy and is essential for the quality of life of all On-

tarians, both today and into the future. Our government is moving forward with the most ambitious capital plan in Ontario's history by investing more than \$184 billion over the next decade, investments that are fundamental to the province's plan for growth and long-term prosperity.

As part of our plan, Ontario is seizing a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build vibrant mixed-use communities around transit stations across the greater Golden Horseshoe. These transit-oriented communities, also known as TOCs, will bring more housing, jobs, retail and public amenities closer to transit. By building transit where people live and work we are increasing ridership, reducing gridlock, stimulating economic growth, increasing much-needed housing supply and lowering the cost of building infrastructure for taxpayers.

Through TOCs we are taking a bold and innovative approach to city building. But it's time our province takes another bold approach. It's time for us to think creatively. It's time for us to propose an innovative new tool to help build much-needed infrastructure, because the truth is we cannot afford to wait any longer.

According to Statistics Canada, our province could see an increase of more than four million residents in the next two decades, and that's just their medium-growth scenario. Their high-growth scenario sees Ontario growing by more than six million residents in that same time frame. That's like adding the entire population of Denmark to our existing population in just two decades. This growth is good news. More people are moving to our beautiful province to build a better life for their families. We know that population growth has traditionally been higher in our province because of our strong economic base, our attractive talent pool and diversity and the vast opportunities that Ontario offers.

But while population increases could bring more economic growth, Ontario needs to have the proper infrastructure in place to prepare for that projected growth. We need to continue to invest in infrastructure to ensure that it continues to support the delivery of modern services for the people of Ontario now and well into the future, including more housing options and affordable housing, and we need to ensure our transit and transportation networks meet existing and growing demands and support Ontario as the best place in the world to live and work. We need to build transportation for the future.

As many of you know, our government has committed to a historic, multi-billion-dollar expansion of the transit network across the greater Golden Horseshoe. The province is making investments in subways, LRTs and, of course, our GO Transit network. Building essential infrastructure to keep up with the demands of a rapidly growing population is more important than ever to create jobs and keep people and goods moving.

Our Transit-Oriented Communities Program allows us to leverage third-party investment, to explore new funding avenues and opportunities to deliver cost-efficient transit solutions, but this approach often relies on one single landowner or building partner, and it could mean years before a new station is built as builders wait for what they consider the right market conditions. We need to move forward now with municipalities and others to build infrastructure that will not only address the needs of today but the population of tomorrow.

Our proposed legislation would, if passed, create a station contribution fee as an innovative new tool that municipalities can use to help spur the construction of new GO Transit stations, leading to accelerated transit expansion and vibrant, complete mixed-use communities with much-needed housing. If adopted, our legislation would allow municipalities to recover costs from funding the design and construction of new GO Transit stations. This station contribution fee would be charged on new developments within areas surrounding these new GO stations identified by municipalities with revenue collected over time as transit-oriented communities are built around them. The municipality would only collect the fee until full station costs are recovered.

Municipalities proposing to use this tool would be expected to show a reduction in other development costs to help offset the fee and ensure it does not add to the cost of housing. For example, municipalities could reduce parking requirements, which is a huge development-related expense. Such a reduction would be made possible because of the introduction of new transit, which would reduce reliance on single-occupancy vehicles and the number of required parking spaces.

It's a win-win for all parties involved. It will not only spur more transit stations but more housing and jobs around those stations.

Also, it is important to note that this would be an optional tool that could only be used in places where the province has determined a new GO station is warranted.

If passed, our proposed legislation would help municipalities take an active role in transit expansion and delivery while serving as a catalyst for unlocking new transit-oriented communities without burdening taxpayers. The proposal would give municipalities an additional revenue tool to bring a regional transit connection into their cities and their towns, spurring economic growth and bringing vital housing to their residents.

It means new stations will be delivered sooner in many communities at little cost to the province and the taxpayer. Meanwhile, residents and local businesses would clearly benefit from a new transit station that connects to jobs,

opportunities and destinations throughout the region, as well as the increased housing options that are built around them.

It would be especially beneficial for less-densely populated areas that currently have limited or no access to regional transit as rural and urban areas are further connected. It would help boost local economies, such as construction and engineering businesses that benefit from the design and construction of new stations.

It would mean people can better access services in their communities and across the region, such as education, health care, a local library or a community centre. It would benefit those who may not have access to a car, levelling the playing field for many residents across the region, not to mention helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging more transit use.

Everyone benefits from better transit infrastructure and greater regional transit connections. This would be another tool in a municipality's development tool kit to accelerate the building of GO stations and bring much-needed housing into their communities.

This is an important point to make: The tool is completely voluntary. Should municipalities choose not to use it, we will continue with the market-driven approach for a third party to build and deliver the station, an approach that has worked well in many cases across the greater Golden Horseshoe.

#### **0910**

The Transportation for the Future Act, if passed, would, as my colleague the Associate Minister of Transportation has said, also make it more convenient to travel across the GTA. Due to legislative barriers present in the City of Toronto Act, 2006, riders travelling over Toronto's municipal border are faced with limited transit options, all while being forced to transfer between the TTC and local agencies in the 905, which are MiWay, Brampton Transit, Durham Region Transit, York Region Transit, and Peel TransHelp. Currently, transit agencies other than the TTC are limited in being able to pick up or drop off passengers within Toronto. As a result, people from the 905 who work or go to school in Toronto cannot board buses from another transit agency travelling within Toronto destined for their home municipality, even if the bus is empty. This causes unnecessary waiting time for riders, who sit and wait for the next bus, sometimes in the dark or poor weather conditions. I can tell you, those riders do not care about the name or the colour of the bus. They want to get home. This issue has existed and frustrated transit riders for decades.

Transit buses, regardless of the agency, should be able to travel over municipal borders to pick up passengers where agreements are negotiated and agreed to among providers. The TTC and the city of Toronto have made this clear to us, and they have requested these amendments to the City of Toronto Act. The TTC board's adoption from February 10, 2022, and the city of Toronto's resolution from April 7, 2022, requested the ability for the TTC to enter into cross-boundary service integration agreements. In response to these motions, the province initially approved legislative provisions in schedule 1 of the Plan to Build

Act, 2022, which amended COTA by adding two subsections that would come into force upon proclamation. We are now proposing to make a technical legislative change that would enable the different elements of the proposal to come into force at different times. This would give the city of Toronto the ability to enter into cross-boundary service agreements with neighbouring municipalities.

Should the city of Toronto and surrounding municipalities choose cross-boundary service, bus routes could then be established, allowing riders to take the first bus available, regardless of which transit agency provides that service. Cross-boundary service would achieve significant benefits for transit riders when fully implemented, including more frequent and reliable transit service and future improvements to regional service integration, including for riders using specialized transit services.

These amendments would also support Ontario's ongoing efforts to bring about one-fare transit trips between the TTC and connecting agencies. The city of Toronto, TTC and all transit providers in the greater Golden Horseshoe region are essential partners in advancing fare and service integration. The TTC and its connecting systems account for the largest part of the region's transit ridership, so taking steps like these in Bill 131 are critical to ensuring the region's largest transit systems are able to improve service for riders without statutory barriers in the way.

If enacted, the proposed changes will make it easier for people to take transit and will increase ridership. More riders means fewer cars and less congested municipal roads, so people can get from point A to point B that much faster. The changes are a step towards a more integrated transit network.

Ontarians have waited long enough for better transit. We're keeping our promise to provide the people of Ontario with access to better, more reliable and seamless rapid transit to help them get to where they need to go when they need to get there. Taking transit and transferring from one municipality's transit system to another should be simple, convenient and affordable. The province will continue to work closely with partners as we take action to build and improve the region's transit network for the future. With today's challenges, it's time we build a world-class transit system that looks to the future—a future where families and businesses can better access transit and jobs in their neighbourhoods to better participate in the province's economy, and a future with more housing and more vibrant mixed-use communities. These proposed measures will help us get to that future and will help alleviate the housing pressures that we face today. We are taking bold and transformative action now to ensure that we invest in strong infrastructure that will last for many years to come.

I know you all understand the pressing need for better transit, more housing, more vibrant communities, less traffic, and a cleaner environment. So I want to thank you all ahead of time for your consideration of this bill.

I look forward to taking your questions.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much, Minister.

We will now start with questions from the official opposition. MPP Harden, you may begin.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Good morning, Minister. It's nice to see you. I want to get into some of the concerns that have been expressed to me from stakeholders. I've expressed some of these to you privately, and I appreciate you following up, but I do want them—just for the record for our debate on this bill—to be debated here.

Can you confirm if the current leadership of the city of Toronto has requested the proposal that's being put forward in this bill, the schedule which amends the City of Toronto Act, which would have an impact on collective bargaining agreements? I took it, from what you said this morning, that this was a request brought in by Mayor Tory in February 2022—if I was following your remarks correctly there. Can you confirm if the current leadership of the city of Toronto, Mayor Chow, has actually requested this power?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Well, you're right; this was requested by the TTC board and by the city of Toronto for 2022, last year. That being said, service and fare integration was raised when I met with the new mayor. I think that there is a strong desire from all parties to improve service.

As you know, ridership is very important to the city of Toronto—increasing that ridership, getting it back to the levels that it once was, and, of course, safety on the TTC. So it was raised when I spoke to the mayor, yes.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you for that answer, Minister, but what I have yet to confirm from the city of Toronto is that the current leadership of the city of Toronto has asked the province to do this; I know the previous leadership of the city of Toronto and the TTC board has. My understanding is, the current leadership of the city of Toronto—and I think the committee should clarify this work—believes that their collective agreement that exists for the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113, which represents the 13,000 people who operate the TTC and fix it—they don't believe this is necessary.

If it is in fact the case that we can pursue what you are talking about—integration across transit systems—within the collective agreement that exists, why do we want to give this headache to the city of Toronto? Why do we want to open up collective agreements from Queen's Park?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Throughout this process, MTO has been working very closely with the city of Toronto. This does not just pertain to year 2022; there have been ongoing discussions for many years. In fact, I would say that fare and service integration has probably been discussed in Toronto's history for over 30 years, and finally, we're making a step forward to making it a reality.

I would say that what the province cares about is making sure that that nurse who's waiting in the cold for a bus can get on a bus faster. We know that there are cross-boundary challenges. I experience them in my very own riding, in Etobicoke, where my constituents cannot get onto a Mississauga bus to get to work. I think that is completely unacceptable in today's day and age.

We've worked really well with the city of Toronto, the TTC and all the transit agencies that were a part of the FSI table for a number of years, and I think it's time that we do

everything we can to make life a little easier and make transportation more convenient for riders.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Chair, I can tell the minister, through you, that's something we share in common. My concern, though, is if we open up collective agreements from Queen's Park, it poisons the water of the relationships that we have to work with. We have had leadership in the city of Toronto and we've had leadership in this province before that feels the need to intervene in collective bargaining agreements. I can tell you that is never received well from the people who operate and fix the transit system.

So as I've said to the minister privately—and I'll say it on the record today—I think we need to approach the new leadership of the city of Toronto, confirm that they actually want schedule 1 of this bill to pass as it's currently written and if amendments need to be made so that we can avoid headaches down the road. For the reasons you're talking about, let's do that.

How much time is left?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Three minutes.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** There's another thing hanging over this bill, Minister, and I'm wondering if you could clarify it. I'm talking about schedule 1, the City of Toronto Act amendment; now I want to move on to schedule 2, the proposal you're suggesting around GO Transit stations. I actually consider this schedule to be an indictment of Metrolinx itself. I believe Metrolinx is ultimately responsible for building provincial infrastructure; that's its job. As you're saying, there are many communities like Bowmanville—which I had the occasion to visit recently—and others desperately wanting GO stations, and now they're being told through this bill that they can assume the financial risk and responsibility for building them, and I'm thinking that is because Metrolinx has failed to do its job.

0920

I have to say, I just found out this morning by the order-in-council disclosures that Mr. Phil Verster has had his contract renewed. I'm wondering if you have any comments for this committee this morning as to why that decision was made. Mr. Verster has overseen Metrolinx since the former Liberal government hired him in 2017, and I do not see a lot of productivity in new GO stations built. I see a tripling of subway costs under his leadership, I see a growth in management positions—59 vice-presidents, 19 chief executive officers—while the transit systems outside Toronto and inside Toronto are suffering. They have less operating money. And now we're asking the cities, the municipalities, to do a job that Metrolinx is supposed to do.

So could you inform the committee this morning why Mr. Verster's contract was renewed? How much is he going to be paid? Can you work with us, in the opposition, to bring Mr. Verster to this committee to answer questions so we could have confidence that, if this bill passes, Mr. Verster has the competency to make it happen? As I look at it, he's completely incompetent. He has completely failed in his obligations to the province of Ontario, and frankly, I'm disappointed the government has decided to hire him again.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** There's one minute and 10 seconds remaining.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I'll very briefly mention the project you referenced in your comments, the Eglinton Crosstown, and the challenges there. That was a project that this government inherited. That project was led by the Liberal government, and contracts were signed under the Liberal government. Mr. Phil Verster and MTO are doing everything they can to make sure that they open the line, but they will open it when they are 150% confident that it will be safe.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** That being said, though—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I'd like to reclaim my time.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** If I could just finish with my one minute—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Sorry, Minister; I only have 30 seconds more.

Mr. Verster has overseen this project knowing that it was operating in a deficient capacity. There are 260 deficiencies in the Eglinton Crosstown project. It was a project operating at risk, according to the Auditor General, and you've chosen to rehire him. Why?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You've only got 10 seconds left—and less, as I talk. There's another round. You can answer, Minister, if you wish.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I'll answer in the other round.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP McMahon, would you like to do the next five minutes, please?

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you, Minister, for coming in and sharing your ideas and thoughts with us about this bill. There actually are some good things, but first we'll delve into the concerning things—and that is that, as you mentioned, we're giving municipalities an additional revenue tool, which is great, but it's kind of ironic, I would say, because we took away their other revenue tool of development charges previously. So I just kind of find it—one hand grabbing and one hand giving. It's very ironic that way.

I would follow up on my colleague's comments about the complete lack of faith in Metrolinx right now. It's very unfortunate, because we are in a climate emergency and we need to be building transit—which is what I would agree with you on, Minister. It's music to my ears to hear you speak about reducing greenhouse gases and increasing ridership and getting people out of their cars, but also levelling the playing field, as you say, for non-car owners, and seamless transitions amongst different transit agencies. I would agree that riders don't pay attention to the logo or the colour of the train; they just want to get on the bloody train and make sure it works. So I would just say that there is a complete lack of faith in Metrolinx, and for the CEO to have a press conference announcing nothing just irks people and upsets people to no end.

But let's get to the question. Have you spoken to other municipalities about this? Who have you spoken to? What was the reception from them or the feedback from them, if you can enlighten me? Thanks.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much. We have consulted with other municipalities. Durham region, though,



in particular, took a leadership position in terms of supporting this with its station contribution fee and working with us for a number of months as a resolution to helping expedite the building of the stations within their area.

Now, I would like to address a few things that you said, if I may:

(1) Does the city of Toronto continue to collect development charges? They do. So your comments of us taking development charges away are just not accurate; they are collecting development charges as we speak.

(2) I do agree with you in terms of encouraging the use of public transit to be mindful of climate and climate change, which is why our government is expanding the subway system in the city of Toronto by 50% and also making sure that we have two-way, all-day GO and making improvements as well as other transit investments such as in Mississauga—none of which were supported by your party, just to be clear.

In terms of Metrolinx, we are building more transit than, I think, ever in Ontario's history. And if I can speak to the progress that we have made on our subway expansion plan, which we announced back in 2019—2019, and we already have shovels in the ground for the Ontario Line, for the Eglinton Crosstown West, for Scarborough.

Mary, how many years did we talk about expanding the subway system out into Scarborough? It's this government that is getting it done.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. Well, we will continue with the questions. But I will say, there's a complete lack of faith with Metrolinx, and that's on the record. I'm hearing it from my community; I'm hearing it all across Toronto as well as Ontario.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** One minute remaining.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** So again, with regard to feedback from municipalities, it's nice to hear—also, a Conservative minister mention the words “climate change.” I'm thrilled with that—long overdue.

Anyone opposed to this, to Bill 131, whom you've spoken to, any municipalities?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Municipalities had a variety of questions, absolutely. We've worked with them to address those questions. But I would say the overwhelming, or most—there was a very strong support in the room from the municipalities that we spoke to.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. Thank you.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** But just to be clear, this is a voluntary tool; this is not downloaded or enforced on anybody. This is a tool that a municipality can use, if they so choose, for new development in a specific area within the GO rail network. So should there be a municipality not—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you. I'm sorry; we're out of time, but we have another round.

I'll now move to the government side and begin with MPP Singh Grewal.

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister, for being with us here this morning, and thank you to all the staff that's joined us as well. I just want to begin by thanking you all for the great work that you do for providing Ontario with a new life on its infrastructure,

with billions and billions and billions being poured into our system. You guys are all doing a great job building transit and building infrastructure for the people of Ontario for generations to come.

I just want to talk a little bit about the City of Toronto Act and ask a couple of questions on why we're amending it, why this change is necessary and why this benefits transit riders and the general public and people of Ontario. So I'm going to have a couple of questions all loaded into one package, and then we can discuss from there.

As we talk about this—in my particular riding, I border Vaughan and Brampton East and I see a lot of transit buses that take students from my riding all the way down to York University. Most of the time, when I'm commuting here to Queen's Park, along the way I see these buses pass by bus stops which are located just one street or two streets outside of our riding, because it connects between Toronto, Vaughan and Brampton just on that corner. I see the students sometimes on the Toronto side, just one stoplight over, not being picked up, not being taken all the way down. They rely on city of Toronto buses to rely on that service. I just want for you to answer later in the question how that will affect those riders, how that type of integration can ensure that students and people who are working can get to their jobs or their university or college on time.

**0930**

When it comes to fare integration, our government has been doing a lot of work in making sure that transit is more accessible and easier to use for all Ontarians, but there has been one conversation that has been brought up by the members opposite and other people as well, which is, what will this do to the Toronto Transit Commission? Is this something that's mandatory that we're enforcing on the Toronto Transit Commission, or does this allow the Toronto Transit Commission to enter into agreements that are similarly used within the GTA when it comes to MiWay, Oakville, Brampton Transit? All those agencies are able to work together. Does that just open the door? Are they able to negotiate their own contracts, or are those contracts then imposed by us? How would that come into play, and what does this really unlock for transit riders going forward?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you very much for asking that question. Again, this is upon the TTC's and the city of Toronto's request. It would give them the opportunity to enter into those agreements with bordering municipalities for pickup and drop-off, which they have not done in the past. Now, this is really important because, for several years now, because of COVID and coming out of COVID and other challenges that we've had to face, ridership has been down.

We believe that through improving the transit rider experience by making it easier for other buses to be able to transport people from wherever they need to go, whether it's to school, whether it's to a hospital, whether it's to visit a friend—it doesn't matter. We believe that it is ultimately in the best interest of everyone. The transit rider benefits because he gets to get home faster; instead of 40 minutes, he's home in 30 or 20. The transit agencies have another rider, so they'll continue to provide a service.

And the municipality benefits because then it is ultimately providing a better service to the constituents which it serves or to neighbouring constituents from other municipalities.

People will take transit if it is convenient and affordable. Nothing frustrates me more than when I'm stuck at Kipling station and I'm waiting in the cold for 40 minutes and I don't know when this bus is coming after a long, hard day and I need to get home to walk my dog. I could only imagine how difficult that is for a mother or father trying to rush home to pick up their kids or feed their kids.

So this excuse of not being able to pick people up across borders is just not working. Truthfully, it should have been fixed a really long time ago. I actually can't believe that this practice has existed to today. It's something that should have been resolved so very long ago. I think that what we intend on doing here, upon, again, the request of the city and the TTC, is to give them flexibility in order to work with those bordering municipalities to run these different pilots and allow for that pickup and drop-off. But ultimately, this practice should have ended a very long time ago.

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Just a quick question as well: When, let's say, a bordering transit agency can now, with these amendments, go pick up a passenger in Toronto and then deliver them to their end destination, the Toronto Transit Commission might be able to do the same based on the agreements that they get. So they might be able to go into, let's say, Mississauga or Brampton and pick up some of those residents and bring them back to Toronto as well, correct?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** That's correct.

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** I'd like to share the rest of my time with MPP Sabawy.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have two minutes, MPP Sabawy.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Thank you very much, Minister, for the presentation. It has very important amendments which, in my opinion, help the Ontarians using public transit. My opinion is, if we need people to start using public transit, we need to make it lucrative to be used. If we want to encourage people to leave their cars and ride on the buses and streetcars and the LRT, we need to make sure that there's seamless service which can help people from my area in Mississauga—Erin Mills to arrive at their college or work, at Union Station or somewhere in Toronto.

This amendment will allow the TTC to be able to do some collaborative agreements with other transit like MiWay to be able to deliver this service. The question is, all the other jurisdictions have that except TTC—is that correct?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** That's correct.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** So this is like just evening the playground for all of them. It's not like it's something new. It's been known for all the different jurisdictions except TTC.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Except for TTC; that's correct.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** So how will this amendment, in your opinion, enable us to encourage Ontarians to use public transit? That could help us in eliminating some of the congestion on the highways because people are encouraged to not use their private cars.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** There are 30 seconds remaining.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Well, I would say the city of Toronto's here; all of the surrounding municipalities are over here. We know that people go to Toronto and people also travel outside of Toronto, and we just need to make that easier. We just need to make it easier and faster for people. That is the sole intention of this bill today.

Sorry, I tried to be within 30 seconds.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You did great. You've got five seconds left.

We'll now move on to the official opposition, and it will be—who's going first? MPP Harden, do you want to begin?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I do, thank you.

I want to return to where we left off, Minister. I'm not trying to be mean. I'm trying to get some answers for the people of Ontario, to be clear. Mr. Verster is in charge of Metrolinx. Schedule 2 of this bill basically tells municipalities to be doing work that he should be doing, and his contract, as I understand it from disclosures this morning, has just been renewed. Can you clarify for this committee how much Mr. Verster is set to earn and the government's decisions for rehiring him?

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Point of order, Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Yes, MPP Kusendova-Bashta.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Chair, this morning we're discussing Bill 131, and I just fail to see how this is relevant to the bill.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much. The member is correct. I'm just asking that all members direct their question to the content of the bill that we are discussing this morning.

MPP Harden.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Absolutely, Chair.

My understanding is schedule 2 of this bill is asking municipalities to do the work of Metrolinx. Schedule 2 of this bill is empowering municipalities to build provincial infrastructure for which Mr. Verster is responsible. Again, my question to the minister: Why has Mr. Verster been rehired and how much is he set to make for overseeing failure at the Eglinton Crosstown?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I repeat: Eglinton Crosstown was a project led by the previous government that this one inherited.

But what I will say is that Mr. Verster is responsible for overseeing the largest transit expansion in Ontario's history. We are expanding the subway system by 50%, a subway system which the NDP and Liberals didn't support, by the way—which people stopped believing was possible because no one could get the job done. He's overseeing that work. We have proof of how much and how far we've come along since April of 2019—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I'd like to reclaim my time, please.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Go ahead. You don't have to ask me.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Oh, thank you. I want to follow up on what the minister just said. We do indeed have proof.

We know that the private consortium building the Eglinton Crosstown has been suing Metrolinx, and the cost to the taxpayer right now exceeds \$500 million. We know that Mr. Verster has hired private consultants to build the Eglinton Crosstown that failed in my city, that failed the city of Ottawa with our failing LRT—the same consultants. So I'm asking you plaintively, why are you rehiring him? How much is he going to be paid?

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Point of order.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Rae has a point of order. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** The line of questioning from my colleague from Ottawa Centre is not pertaining to what we are debating today, and I'd like it ruled out of order, Chair, respectfully.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Harden, I'd like to ask you again to please keep your line of questioning to the bill that's before us now.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I am believing, Chair, that I am doing precisely that. Schedule 2 of this bill is asking municipalities to do the work that Metrolinx is doing which, to me, is an indication that Metrolinx is failing in its work, and the people leading that agency are the purview of this committee.

Again, the question to the minister: Why is Mr. Verster being rehired? How much will he be paid for his failure for the people of Ontario?

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Point of order.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Mr. Grewal has a point of order. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** Point of order, Chair. The schedule of the bill actually talks about the funding aspect and the funding stream and how the finances will be covered, not how the construction's going to be done, not who's going to put the shovel in the ground, not how all of that's going to be done. So my point of order is to bring the conversation back to the scope of the bill, which, if we are looking at that particular section, is how all of this is going to be funded and, if the municipality has the option to fund that, that determination for it.

0940

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, Chair. What I would say to—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Again, I will say that I encourage all members in the committee to bring this conversation and the questions back to the bill that's before us now.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I think that's exactly what we're doing, Chair. What we're doing is talk about a failing provincial agency that is being bailed out by schedule 2 of this bill, a failing provincial agency led by perhaps the most incompetent public official in the province of Ontario, who just had—one of the highest paid; indeed, a million-dollar man, the rumours have it. I want that confirmed this morning.

We are asking municipalities to take on the risk, my friend from Brampton East. We are asking them to take on the risk. We are asking the—

**Mr. Hardeep Singh Grewal:** It's voluntary.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** It's not voluntary. That is like asking an asthmatic if their puffers are voluntary. We need public transit. That's what the minister was saying—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'll just say that the questions and answers are not—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** No, I understand. The government is doing its job—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** —between each other at the moment. There are points of order that are made. I've asked the—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I get it. The government is doing its job to protect a failing public official. It's really too bad—your three points of order.

I've asked a simple question that is pertaining to schedule 2 of this bill. This is Metrolinx's job to build this GO station infrastructure. They are failing in their job. How much is Mr. Verster going to be paid? Why was he rehired—my question to the minister again.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Minister, go ahead.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Well, what I would just say is what this bill demonstrates is really all parties working together: the builder, the municipality, the province of Ontario, other municipalities surrounding Toronto, the city of Toronto, transit agencies, the TTC. What this bill actually demonstrates is the fact that all parties—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I would like to take my time back.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** —are willing to work together to build transit.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Chair, I would like to take my time back. I'm sorry, Minister. I'm sorry; I only have a certain amount of time.

I would like to throw it to my colleague, because there are real hurting impacts to her community because of Metrolinx's failure, which is being bailed out by this bill.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have a minute and 30 seconds left.

**MPP Jill Andrew:** Thank you, Chair. Thank you, Minister.

The folks of Toronto—St. Paul's, especially our midtown community and our Little Jamaica community, have suffered disproportionately because of the lack of competence, frankly, from Metrolinx and from this province. I mean, Metrolinx is a provincial agency run by Mr. Phil Verster, who I have personally asked—through him and through his team—to meet with our community to answer our community's questions. It's very difficult to understand how an agency with 75 or more six-figure-salary executives—a random person on the street of Eglinton cannot get through to ask a question about when this construction is going to be done. We have lost hundreds of small businesses in Toronto—St. Paul's along Eglinton West and further west, east and out of our riding because of the delays of this construction.

So my question is—I mean, the provincial government downloading housing to municipalities, for instance, did not work. When you download the responsibility of transportation to municipalities that are already struggling to meet municipal infrastructure courtesy of this government's

Bill 23, what message are you sending to community members who simply want an answer? They want to be able to travel from point A to B and not have to worry and wait hours upon hours because this government is investing—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you, MPP Andrew. You're out of time.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Thank you, Madam Chair—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you. There's no more time.

Moving on to MPP McMahon for your last round of five minutes. Please go ahead.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Just following back up on where we were speaking before: Minister, you mentioned that the tool is voluntary for municipalities. And you have Durham that is very keen on taking a leadership role, which is great—to see municipalities doing that. But I still would like to know about other municipalities, anyone else who's keen. You mentioned that it's completely voluntary, but otherwise you will look at third parties. I'm wondering if you can explain that a bit more: who you've looked at, who's interested, or your ideas on that should the municipality not be keen.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** I believe representatives from Durham region will be here to speak to the committee about this bill and all of the work that they have done with us, with the Ministry of Infrastructure. Again, other municipalities that either have GO rail stations or have an interest in building new GO rail stations were consulted. Again, the feedback was predominantly very supportive. But again, I'd just remind the member that it is a voluntary tool that they can choose whether to use or not. This will give them an opportunity to then go back to their respective councils and determine whether or not this is a tool that they would like to use.

I think what we're trying to achieve here, just to be clear, is to expedite the building of GO rail stations. We have many communities in the province of Ontario that really want to build it faster. As we all know in this committee, GO rail stations are an expensive asset. So, therefore, this tool will help them achieve something that they want for their community that we want them to have too. We are doing our role in terms of making sure that we have two-way, all-day GO on key segments of our line to improve that public transit.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. Thanks.

Now switching gears, just picking your brain on your thoughts on the housing—because we've talked about and you've spoken about shovels in the ground. I'm a big action woman, so I like to see that. But what is your thought on the housing? We've seen in my area at 8 Dawes Road, Metrolinx sold off some land to a developer and there's no requirement for affordable housing in that sale. So what is your thinking about affordable housing components and also rental housing components?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** This would allow municipalities to be more proactive and ultimately to have more control over the TOCs within the GO rail network.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Would you be encouraging that, mandating that?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** By the use of the tool, they will work with Metrolinx and of course the province—

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** But we saw that Metrolinx did not. They sold this land without having—I mean, it's provincial land and we're in a housing crisis and we don't even have affordable housing mandated in that sale. It's ridiculous.

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** How the process would work is that Metrolinx would determine that, based on their cost assessments of what the station costs would be. The municipality would then do an analysis and a study as to where the new TOC could be built, what area that would be. They would do an assessment over what the station contribution fee would look like. They would pass a bylaw for the station contribution fee. Of course, we would be working with the municipality, but this ultimately gives the municipality a say, an ability to be proactive in order to build the TOCs around GO rail stations.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Do you feel we should have affordable units mandated—to be building affordable units on provincial lands?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Not relevant to this bill, but we have a program where we do look at government surplus properties to build long-term-care homes and affordable and attainable homes. That program exists within MOI. But what we're also doing is we're ensuring that there's affordable, attainable and affordable rental along our subway system through our TOCs there. Of course we are doing our best to make sure that we are building as many affordable, attainable and affordable rentals where possible.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** Thank you, Minister, for that response. I appreciate it.

MPP McMahon, that concludes your time. We'll now move to the government and MPP Kusendova-Bashta, please.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Good morning, Minister. Thank you for your presentation. I also want to thank you on behalf of my community of Mississauga for the incredible, historic investment into our infrastructure; for example, the brand new hospital to the tune of \$9 billion—for the first time, we will have a tower focusing just on women's and children's health; it's absolutely phenomenal—the long-term-care investments; two brand new schools in my riding of Mississauga Centre; and of course the Hurontario LRT. My community is very grateful for these necessary infrastructure investments.

I do want to say that I'm quite disappointed in the characterization of the opposition this morning. To call the hard work that our government is doing for service and fare integration a “headache” I think is simply disappointing, and it shows how out of touch the opposition is with the people of Ontario.

**0950**

This morning, my colleagues and I were actually exchanging stories about commuting from Whitby, Brampton, Mississauga, and how a 32-kilometre trajectory takes over two hours to get here on time. We have to be in our car by 7 a.m. or we can actually be late. And so, I know that transit-

oriented communities are something that you're very passionate about and that you worked very hard at over the last five years, and you talked about increasing ridership and decreasing gridlock. I know that our government, in fact, is investing \$3 into transit for every \$1 that we're investing into building highways and roads.

Can you expand on that and the importance of transit-oriented communities and how we will actually reduce gridlock through the work of Bill 131?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Yes, thank you very much and thank you for raising that. Before I do that—the schools, that was all Stephen Lecce, so please don't give me any credit for that one. But I think that we're in a situation where people need a place to live. People want to live near transit. It's where they want to live, because, ultimately, it means that they can get around. They can get to work, they can go do their shopping, they can see their friends—easy, affordable access without being forced to buy a car.

Now, if you live further out in the suburbs or even further out in 905 communities and you work in Toronto or you work elsewhere, you almost have to get a car in order to provide an income for your family. But now we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity where we're building new subway lines; we're also building housing and communities where the stations will be. It's not just going to be a station box that you walk into and then hop on the subway. We will have residential units. We may have child care spaces, affordable housing units, retail and other things that you may need so that when you're leaving your home in the morning, you could go down, get a lunch for work, hop on the subway and go home, or when you're coming back, you can pick up your child and go home and spend the rest of the evening with your family.

So we're helping address the housing crisis by building housing, but what we're doing is we're building housing where the people actually want. People need to get around, but I think the easiest way is always public transit if it's, again, convenient and affordable and reliable. That's what we're hoping to achieve.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Absolutely. Just to follow up on that, when I was a student commuting downtown from Mississauga, I remember I would have to wake up at 5 in the morning, stand in the cold at Eglinton and Hurontario, catch the 34 bus to Islington station, pay another fare, get on the TTC and get downtown to my university. It would take sometimes over two hours, and the same for the commute back home. So I'm just really excited about the idea of service and fare integration, because for students like I was several years ago, I think this will be a lot of savings, but also saving time.

So can you expand on that, Minister? Why is it so important that, after 30 years of inaction, we are doing that now?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Yes, it is saving—well, time is, I think, the most important thing to an individual: time with your parents, time with your children, time at home. We spend so much time in a car driving or on public transit. We need to do things to improve the transit experience and reduce the time to get to places so that we can be a health-

ier and more productive society. So much time is wasted in the car, and so much time is wasted at that bus stop. That time could be used to study more, to work more, to be with your family, to actually go out and enjoy and do what you enjoy doing. I just feel that people will want to take public transit, again, if the service is reliable, convenient and affordable. This bill makes it more convenient, and with fare integration and the work that we've done at the round table, it will make it more affordable. So it doesn't just benefit students; it benefits everybody.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Absolutely. I wanted to shift gears now and ask about station contribution fees, which are voluntary tools for municipalities. Can you talk about some of the key design elements of the station contribution fees?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Sure. Again, thank you for referencing that it's voluntary. It will be a voluntary tool. It will be applicable to only new development adjacent to GO rail. It will be area-specific, and it will be in effect until the full costs of this station are recovered. And then, of course, we hope that municipalities would work with the builder to also reduce costs as well. Because the city is essentially upfronting the cost of the station, we want them to work hand in hand with the builder to get the TOC built as quickly as possible.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you, Minister.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** MPP Rae, please. You have one minute and three seconds, sir.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you, Chair—very precise.

Thank you, Minister, for your comments today. As you know very well as a younger member of our caucus, we're in a housing crisis and many of our colleagues are renting still or trying to get into the market, while, obviously, as a government we're trying to reduce fees, which you touched on a bit with my colleague's question. I was just wondering if you would expand a little on some of the reductions you would hope to see with these new stations—the station fee, potentially, if they choose to levy that. But what other reductions would you like to see on other fees or other items?

**Hon. Kinga Surma:** Since the municipality is up-fronting the cost I think it gives the municipality an ability to review the cost of a TOC development around GO. Parking requirements is something, for example, that's extremely costly to a builder that the city could reduce, at minimum, to help keep the costs down of the overall project. But what I am most excited about—

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** Minister, I'm going to need to interrupt you. That concludes our time. Thank you so much.

Committee members, that concludes our business for this morning. The committee is now recessed until 1 o'clock today.

*The committee recessed from 0957 to 1300.*

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** Good afternoon, everyone. The Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy will now come to order, please.

We are here to resume public hearings on Bill 131, An Act to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and to amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006

Today's remaining presenters have been scheduled in groups of three for each one-hour time slot, with each presenter allotted seven minutes for an opening statement, followed by 39 minutes of questioning for all three witnesses, divided in to two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the government members, two rounds of 7.5 minutes for the official opposition members and two rounds of 4.5 minutes for the independent member of this committee.

Committee members, are there any questions?

MS. NINA DEEB

REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF DURHAM

N. BARRY LYON CONSULTANTS LTD.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** I will now call on Nina Deeb; Mark Conway, who's the president of N. Barry Lyon Consultants Ltd.; and the regional chair of the regional municipality of Durham, John Henry, who is also chief executive officer. And I think we are joined by—yes, I see Lorraine Huinink, who is the director of rapid transit and transitive-oriented development for the region of Durham, is joining us by Zoom. Welcome, everyone.

Our first presenter is going to be Nina Deeb. You will have seven minutes for your presentation, and you will be speaking directly to me, not to committee members. You may begin. Thank you.

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** Good afternoon, Chair and committee members. Thank you for hearing me today. My name is Nina Deeb. I have been a real estate broker and a full-time realtor in this province since 1996, and I would like to point out a few things on this bill.

One of the things that I have noticed is there is a new financial tool that is being created that diverts transit development costs to others—the others are not being consulted, the others are the ones that are going to be paying for these costs.

The funding of transit projects must not be at the expense of local taxpayers. Provincial transit development plans must not be diverted for payment by anyone else. Enabling municipalities to volunteer municipal taxpayers to pay for these projects is inappropriate. The local taxpayers must be consulted on such a plan.

I would like to see this deleted: "withholding of building permit if charge due but not paid". This adds red tape and restricts the development of housing and runs contradictory to building homes faster.

I would also like to see deleted in the regulations "municipality to establish a reserve fund for transit station charges." These reserve funds that are being held throughout our province are holding billions and billions of dollars, and this reserve fund should not be set up.

Also, I would like to see schedule 2 be deleted. A funding diversion is not in the best interest of the people of Ontario.

It is impossible to measure the number of homes needed when we are not in a position to measure the number of homes that we are losing to short-term rental platforms.

The new definition of housing affordability is unaffordable. It is not affordable to the people of this province.

As-of-right zoning should not be limited to transit areas only because we are trying to build housing fast, so to have this restriction of transit areas only is not helpful. Ontario must build housing first so our new residents can find a new home and so that our new residents stay. We need this immigration. The lack of housing is forcing the people that come to Ontario to look elsewhere for an environment that is better for their families. They think like families; the people of Ontario think like a family, they don't think like just a resident of Ontario. They must be able to live here.

The other thing that I've noticed is the City of Toronto Act. I would like to delete this loophole of section 6, which says "may and may not grant tax exemptions ... development charges exemptions." When we exempt taxes and we still have a transit station, it was paid for somehow. So that transit station, which is a real asset—it was really built—who paid to build that transit station? That's the local taxpayers. This development charge waiver needs to be deleted.

Municipal Act, 2001, the transit station charges exemptions: "may exempt from the payment of all or part of the transit station charges." This is an expansion of services recoverable under development charges. Transit is not housing. I would also quote here as well—this is my own observation. This is a side-load of building costs to the local taxpayers. It is being side-loaded—not downloaded; side-loaded. Metrolinx has this responsibility, and Metrolinx should carry on with this responsibility.

I am watching taxpayer funds being used for private corporations at every level of government. I am watching private corporations be put in a position that they can access public dollars. That is happening locally with the development charges being waived. That is happening provincially. That is even happening through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., through the \$82.5 billion, which we are seeing some of.

Who should we look to? We should look to Quebec. Quebec has done the best job of maintaining their housing stock for the people of Quebec. We don't need to look too far to look at a province that has done better than everyone else in Canada.

I would like to see some positive changes. I'm looking for some positive amendments. But ultimately transit is not housing. I don't want to see housing equity paying for anything other than housing. Housing has been put by the wayside for a long time—I've been asking for money for housing for years—because the responsibility has been downloaded to the municipalities. That's where the money needs to go in order for municipalities to be able to do the job that has been downloaded to them. We are leaving very, very large holes in our finances with the municipalities. This has been done by consecutive legislation changes that have made it very difficult for the municipalities to operate.

The municipalities are having to look at other resources—things like reducing their speed limits to 30 and 40 kilometres. This is throughout the province, and it's in other provinces too that I'm noticing this. Reducing speed limits to incur fines by photo radar—these are being placed next to schools, because the education system is being used as the excuse of why we need to fund this way. This isn't

factual. The facts are the municipalities are needing the money in order to provide the programs that they are trying to provide.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have 30 seconds remaining.

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** The municipalities need assistance, not obstacles in the way.

In order to make housing affordable, we need to get rid of red tape and we need to get rid of—we have a lot of private corporations that have been invited to the table that don't belong here. I can name the 14 delegated authorities for one, and we should be making good changes.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

We'll now move to—which one? Okay. Mark Conway, I guess, is next. I know it's not in the order that's at the desk, but it doesn't matter—whoever wants to go. Your Worship, Mayor Henry? Please.

**Mr. John Henry:** Good afternoon, Chair and committee members. My name is John Henry; I'm the regional chair and CEO of the regional municipality of Durham, and I'm here representing Durham region's council and Durham region. I'm joined by Lorraine Huinink as well.

I am incredibly excited to be here in front of you to express my support for Bill 131 and the future transportation act. As you may be aware, Durham region has been working with many provincial governments for over 30 years to see the GO train service extended to Bowmanville, a 20-kilometre extension involving four proposed new GO stations. We are thrilled that this work is proceeding, and we simply could not be more pleased to see this much-needed extension coming together.

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We have been working in partnership with the province, MOI, Metrolinx and MTO on all aspects of this extension. We know the benefits that rapid transit brings, and we are so excited to be working together to make this change happen in Durham region.

In 2018, when the province shifted to a market-driven approach for new GO stations, we knew that Durham had to innovate to support the four new GO stations. We knew that Toronto's approach to market-driven strategy would not be a cookie-cutter solution for Durham, so we reached out to one of the best consultants in the GTA to help us set up a road map to ensure that Durham region could achieve the benefits of transit-oriented communities and ensure that Durham residents could be connected to the rest of the GTHA.

We quickly pivoted to establish a new rapid transit office and a transit-oriented development office. We have worked very closely with MOI on land value capture strategies that advance the province's existing market-driven strategy into an approach that can be applied outside the more densely populated city core. We believe that the transit station charge achieves this outcome. I know that the other suburban cities looking for a way to harness the potential of TOCs will also be examining the new tool and the tool kit with great interest.

Like the province, we believe that leveraging the value of transit investments so that the beneficiaries pay is always a way forward that respects the taxpayer. And that is why we're here today: to tell you that we support this new legislation, specifically the transit station charge. This is precisely the direction that we believe that the province should be going. We plan to continue to explore how we can use this new tool, because we are 100% behind the principles that underpin it, and we would like to express, again, our sincere belief that this kind of collaboration is a way to advance community building.

In addition to having all of our four GO stations open on day one, this collaboration could unlock 36,000 housing units around these stations and create over 41,000 new jobs, as indicated in the region's official plan.

We know that realizing housing and vibrant TOCs support building complete communities. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak on this innovative approach to funding rapid transit and infrastructure.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much for your presentation.

Okay, now we will move to Mark Conway, please.

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Members of the committee, my name is Mark Conway. I'm the president of N. Barry Lyon Consultants Ltd. here in the city of Toronto. I am a professional urban planner and a professional land economist. I want to thank you for this opportunity to make a presentation in support of Bill 131, the future of transportation act.

Since 1979, my firm, NBLC—most people know us by NBLC, instead of saying N. Barry Lyon Consultants—has been involved in supporting the development community. Primarily, my clients are developers, and primarily, what we do for developers is help them understand the market and economic implications of building very large, very complex, mostly residential developments in the greater Toronto area. We also work across country, but it just so happens that most of the development is here in the city of Toronto.

We have also worked alongside our municipal, provincial and federal partners in devising affordable housing strategies. We provide market and economic guidance on policies that support affordable and diverse communities here in the city and across Canada. We have tested and developed policies and incentive programs that help affordable housing for most major cities, including regeneration strategies for the repurposing of public housing stock in Windsor, in Sudbury, in Hamilton and here in the city of Toronto. We wrote the business plan for the Regent Park revitalization program, and it's one of my proudest professional moments to drive through that community these days.

But I'm here to tell the committee that all these strategies pale in comparison to what public-transit investment does for affordable housing. The economic, social, environmental and cultural benefits that come with well-planned transit-oriented communities are highly valued by today's buyers and renters: 80% of all new housing in the GTA is within 500 metres of a transit station. Even in the market today,

which is quite a bit slower than it has been, we sold about 9,000 condo units, both for—or condo and rental units under construction—excuse me, 9,000 sold; 90% of those sales are within 500 metres of a transit station.

Understanding this, we're routinely engaged by transit providers, including Metrolinx, OC Transpo in Ottawa and the region of Waterloo, all to provide guidance on how to maximize the economic strategies that aim to maximize the broad housing benefits that come with transit investment.

In 2019, we were retained by Durham region to help secure the alignment for the GO extension to Bowmanville that offered the best opportunity for the creation of new transit-oriented communities at the stations. The work recommended an alignment with four new stations that illustrated the best opportunity to attract residential and commercial investment; but how the stations would be funded was a bigger challenge.

The committee is aware that these new stations on the GO train system must be funded by the benefiting landowners. Metrolinx introduced this market-driven strategy in 2018 as a land-value capture mechanism in anticipation of a planned \$100-billion spend. The market-driven strategy is meant to facilitate co-operation between the public sector and developers to finance the construction of new transit stations with the profits from transit-oriented commercial and residential development.

This works really well in downtown Toronto, where there is maybe one landowner and a strong market. Future stations at Park Lawn Road at the former Mr. Christie's site by First Capital and the East Harbour Station at the former Unilever detergent property are all being funded by one developer who could afford to fund the full cost of a station based on the land value uplift that comes from transit investment. These are very big numbers and very powerful developments.

However, the market-driven strategy is less effective in station areas where there are many landowners and the market is not as strong, and where landowners may have different interests. This is the condition in Durham. It is also the condition in many other communities outside of the powerful city of Toronto market.

In each of the four stations proposed for the Bowmanville GO extension, it is unlikely that any of the single owners would have the funds to pay for a station. Even if they could, there should be a mechanism where all benefiting owners should share in the benefit of this transit investment.

The proposed legislation through Bill 131 would offer municipalities and the development community a new tool that could resolve the station-funding issue, and in doing so accelerate the construction of new transit-oriented communities. Bill 131 will allow municipalities to negotiate a long-term strategy for developers both large and small to equitably share the cost of transit stations, as they would typically for any other necessary infrastructure such as new parks, roads, water services, community centres and sanitary services. The transit station charge provided for in Bill 131 is offset by the significant land value increases that a landowner or a developer would experience as a result

of the market-driven demand now for high-density development. Other positive impacts, such as the reduced need for parking and the deferral of the charge until the very moment that the developer intends to build offer additional economic benefits. Our analysis suggests that these and other economic benefits can offset the station charge, and as a result put no upward pressure on home pricing.

In short, the legislation in Bill 131 offers the opportunity to equitably resolve a barrier to development of new transit-oriented communities in Durham region—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'm sorry, you're out of time, but thank you very much. I didn't give you the warning; I was listening so intently. I'm sorry. Thank you very much, all of you, for your presentations.

**1320**

We're now going to move to the question-and-answer part. We'll start off with MPP Harden for seven and a half minutes, and he will tell you who he's going to direct the questions to.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you very much to all presenters for being with us this afternoon. We greatly appreciate it.

Mr. Henry, it's a pleasure to have you here. I will just say at the outset by way of levity that I had the experience to ride through your beautiful community on my bicycle promoting a road safety bill. Stopping along the way, I had the occasion to talk to many neighbours who want that Bowmanville GO station, so you're ably representing those voices that I heard loud and clear.

I did have some questions, though, because our job is to scrutinize legislation at this committee and in the House. It's not a question of entrapment, I'll say that; don't worry. I'm not going to trick you into saying something you don't want to say. But if Metrolinx is, in fact, the provincial agency responsible for building public infrastructure at the provincial level, would you prefer a situation in which the Bowmanville station and the four stations involved in the extension did not have to be financed at the municipal level and were, in fact, financed at the provincial level?

**Mr. John Henry:** Interesting question. I'll start off with what was in my opening comments, that the region of Durham has waited 30 years to get to where we are today and Metrolinx is not going to build any more GO stations. What this plan does is it allows us to use the uplift on the properties around the stations and the increased density within the properties that will be made available because they won't be making parking spots available, and it will increase the amount of housing that will be available. It will support the two-way travel coming in and out of Durham because you know that Durham region is home to Ontario Tech training university, Durham College and now a new campus for Queen's University in our hospital.

What this plan does is the areas around the stations pay for the stations. Durham region is 2,500 square kilometres. The people that will not use transit should not pay for it, not out of regional taxes, and this plan works. The uplift is a good thing, and the amount of housing it will create. We're going to build one of the first transit-oriented villages in Courtice, specifically designed around transit. We have a 10-year master plan for our Durham Region Transit buses



to coordinate along with this plan to make sure that our transit is there for young people and affordability.

Young people are struggling now, but if you have to have two cars and a place to live, and now you have the option of having one place to live with amazing transit, it will allow you to have that life that we all dream about. Young people today deserve to have that opportunity. People that will live around the stations will live there because they want to live there.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I take your point.

How much time do I have, Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Four and a half minutes.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. So I take your point. What concerns me, though—and I guess I'll move on to you, Mr. Conway, because you've been working in this sector for a long time.

Are you familiar with any other instance in your professional work where municipalities are being asked to completely bear the financial risk of provincial infrastructure? Because as the transit critic for the province, that's what I understand these GO stations to be. And I take the points that have been raised. They're critical. But if I were in the region's shoes, I would love it if the province would pay for provincial infrastructure.

It really seems to me as if Metrolinx's plan for transit-oriented communities has failed. They have not produced new GO stations for people in Bowmanville and elsewhere, and they're so desperately needed.

My question to you, then, is, are you familiar with any other instance in this province or in another Canadian province where municipalities are being asked to bear the financial risk for provincial infrastructure?

**Mr. Mark Conway:** No, I'm not. This is a very unusual situation and the risks that come with this have to be balanced against the rewards that come with transit-oriented investment. Of course, these risks get evaluated in much greater detail with the background study. No one is saying with this legislation, "We move forward." What we're moving forward to is the next stage where the risks that you've acknowledged get tightened up as tightly as we can.

But in our analysis, looking at this for Durham region, we think the risks are minimal. We think that Canada will keep growing, investment will keep growing around transit stations, and if you were betting on where to invest in communities, you would invest in transit all the time.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I have no argument to that, sir, whatsoever. However—two minutes? What am I at?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Two and a half.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you, Chair. I'm getting a good acumen of guessing around here.

I take your point. However, what worries me is this is precedent. I've done my own research, and it seems like you're bringing to this table a lot of experience: I have never seen a municipality being asked to bear the financial risk of provincial infrastructure. For me, it just shows how dire the need is.

The other thing we've heard from the Minister of Infrastructure is that, for private sector partners involved in these transit-oriented communities, building housing and

other amenities, there will be an expectation that the municipality will offer incentives of some kind to encourage and offset the investment of those private sector partners. Are you familiar, given discussions with the ministry and given your own experience, with what some of those incentives would be?

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Well, the number one incentive would be, as Chair Henry has already pointed out, that by doing this, developers don't have to build as much parking. In fact, in some of our analyses, the reduction of parking—right now, if you were building a condo in Clarington at the Bowmanville station, you would have to provide one parking space for every unit just because there's no transit. Put transit in place, that comes down to 0.7. So for every space, you only have to build 0.7 spaces. That reduction in parking has a mammoth impact on the value and the profit line. That's not a financial incentive, but it's an incentive that comes with this investment.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Just for the record, in the 40 seconds that I have left—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** One minute.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Oh, wow.

Just for the record, I think a reasonable person could see that trade-off. Where I'm concerned, however, is if there are any other incentives offered to private sector partners at a time when we urgently need to use every dollar to build transit-oriented communities and affordable housing. That's our concern from the official opposition's standpoint.

I also think this has been so kicked down the road. So I want to salute the region for your advocacy in pushing for this and having plans in place, but if I heard correctly, Chair, I really think folks would like the province to play a more active role in the financing of this work, if possible. We certainly are sitting on considerable surpluses at the provincial level.

Thank you for being here this afternoon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much.

I'll move on to the independent. MPP McMahon, when you're ready, you have five minutes—oh, four and a half; I'm sorry. We're back to four and half.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes, I only have four and a half minutes, so we kind of have to do speed conversing. Thank you very much for your time coming in today and your knowledge: Lorraine, online, and everyone else in person, I really appreciate it. And, wow, impressive backgrounds, especially mister Regent Park master plan wizard. That's fantastic—very credible.

You're speaking my language. It's music to my ears to hear anything about investing in transit, reducing greenhouse gases. I'm a big environmentalist here, and I feel that we as the province are not doing enough to attack the climate emergency. So this is great.

I get transit-oriented communities. I lived in Japan a zillion years ago. And, yes, we're nowhere near a zillion years ago in Japan, but this is a step in the right direction. I do have Main Street in beautiful Beaches—East York, where I represent. It's a huge mobility hub, as you would be well aware, with Danforth GO, subways, buses, street-

cars—you name it. We're building up, absolutely, and we need to build up mandatory as-of-right along the avenues in the city of Toronto. That's another story.

But for you, for questions today, first of all, John Henry was speaking about your new office, your rapid-transit office. Did I get the right name? I don't think so.

**Mr. John Henry:** Transit-oriented development office.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Can you explain that office to me, what it all entails, the staffing and whatnot, and how we can replicate it across the province?

**Mr. John Henry:** Thank you. I have Lorraine Huinink with me who is the director of that office.

Lorraine, would you like to answer that question?

**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** Good afternoon. I'd be pleased to answer the question. Thank you for it.

The rapid transit and transit-oriented development office was intended to—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Sorry to interrupt. All you have to do is just state your name for the Hansard.

**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** Oh, my apologies.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** No, no. Please just start again.

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**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** My name is Lorraine Huinink. Thank you for the opportunity to respond. The rapid transit and transit-oriented development office that was established in the region of Durham was intended to coordinate both the planning and funding of rapid transit and then to turn around and leverage that rapid transit in order to ensure appropriate community building in the form of vibrant transit-oriented communities. By putting the functions in one place, you have a more streamlined approach and a greater view on the opportunities coming down the pipeline, because the two hands speak together, so to speak.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Are you the only municipality or one of the only ones that would have this office in place, to your knowledge?

**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** No.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Who else has it?

**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** There are a number of other municipalities. Mark can help me out: Niagara, Mississauga, I believe, Waterloo—Mark, I think I've missed a couple more.

**Mr. Mark Conway:** York region—I think that's it.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. That's great—phenomenal. I think it's fabulous. And then, with—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** One minute remaining.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay.

We heard this morning from the minister that they've spoken to municipalities. Have you spoken to developers at all about Bill 131? Any feedback from that in your communities?

**Mr. John Henry:** In our community, it is exciting. Durham is the fastest-growing region in the province of Ontario. Our developers are excited about the opportunities, especially the opportunity that will come in downtown Oshawa and in Courtice. Both will increase the amount of housing available. In downtown Oshawa, it's a five-minute walk to the train site, and Courtice will be a chance to build a new village around a train station.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Great. Do I—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Twelve seconds.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. I'll save it. Can I bank it?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Next round.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay, thanks.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Moving on to the government side for seven and a half minutes: MPP Coe from Durham region. Go ahead.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Durham region, yes—I'm MPP for Whitby. I've served Whitby for close to eight years now.

Regional Chair Henry, thank you for your leadership in bringing us to today's discussion, and your director of rapid transit. The level of advocacy and the constructive approach of that was informative on one level but, on the other hand, has brought us to a situation where we've been able to, in the region of Durham now, proceed with a significant project that is going to have impacts for, well, the foreseeable future, to begin.

What I'd like you to expand on, Regional Chair Henry, is—talk about what the station contribution fee means to the economic recovery plan that the region, with your leadership, has put in place. How is that going to affect the region of Durham as well going forward?

**Mr. John Henry:** Thank you. I'm not sure I have enough time to really answer that question, but—

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Take all the time you want, sir.

**Mr. John Henry:** Well, what I'm excited to say is that we are leading in a lot of areas. As you're aware, the work that we've done the region is in support of OPG, and the four new small modular reactors will change the world. Not only are we investing in transit, we've invested in hospitals, and we've invested in colleges and universities as a level of government to make sure that the young people in our community have the skill set they need to go forward today. In fact, everyone in this room is benefiting from the programs related to elevators and escalators, to the work that's going on in nuclear engineering. There isn't a job site, I believe, in Ontario that doesn't have somebody from Durham College working there right now as a tradesperson.

So we've been progressive in a lot of areas to really advance our communities and to support our residents. I'm proud to say we have eight municipalities in the region of Durham and we have development going on in all eight municipalities right now, all supported through the great work of the people that work at the region in support of the mayors that make up the eight communities. It is a great time in Durham. It's a time for young people to have hopes and dreams. There are "help wanted" signs everywhere—and we make pickup trucks again.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thank you for that response. I want to transition to another aspect: service integration. This is directed to your director of rapid transit, who has done an outstanding job on the aspects we're talking about and the station contribution fee. I'd like to get an answer with respect to the impacts of what is being proposed in the way of service integration work across the 905 and 416 border, and what the amendments will mean to residents, including

yourself, in the region of Durham, please. Thank you so much for your outstanding work.

**Ms. Lorraine Huinink:** And thank you very much for your kind words. The opportunity for integration that's presented today is quite phenomenal for the region of Durham as a whole. You may be aware that we have, in particular, the Durham-Scarborough Bus Rapid Transit project that is critical to our overall connection to the community. But as was pointed out earlier in the morning, Toronto is in the middle of all of us and we all need to connect through and around. So there's tremendous opportunity here, and it is a very, very big objective for the region of Durham.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** All right. Thank you for that answer.

Chair, through you, I'm going to ask my colleague MPP Sabawy to participate.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Sabawy, you will have three and a half minutes.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** My first question is for Ms. Nina Deeb. You are in real estate, so when you list some property and it's close to the transit, do you mention that in the listing or not?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** Yes, I mention all features.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** So you consider that as a feature?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** Yes.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** And based on that, the pricing or the rent could be different, or the price could be different because it's close to transit?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Not even to the station?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** Not necessarily.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Okay. That's not a common thing, because according to Mississauga, anything a walkable distance from a GO station or a main hub of transit or Square One is usually around more than 10% above the price for the rest of the city. So it is proven to escalate the price or get a better price for the units which has close access, especially if you would like not to have your own private car, anyway.

With that said, don't you think that adding an option, giving the option to the municipalities to accelerate those projects through a different means of funding, either through developers or through even some different property tax arrangements for those close to the transit hubs, would help the municipalities to execute their plans and have more housing available?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** I agree, but the funding should have come from the province. I did request funding from the province, and this funding should be coming—it's the province's idea, and the province's idea should come with the funding, not from someone else. It should come with money attached to this plan, and I don't see that happening. I don't see the province offering money to help with these transit stations. I see the province offering a solution elsewhere.

I'm not against transit stations. I want transit stations, but I want them funded in a way that—we do have money. Like, we're not without. We have money and we can do this, but we need to have the province download some of the money down to the municipalities.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Another question: Are you aware that some of the municipalities already have enough reserve money in their bank accounts that is not in use?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** I have studied the reserve funds of municipalities and that money is spoken for.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thirty seconds left.

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** When we have money in certain reserve funds for certain projects, that money is just not sitting there with no plans. The money is spoken for. The municipalities have plans. We've been planning. We've been planning for a long time.

**Mr. Sheref Sabawy:** Toronto has more than \$320 million. Mississauga has \$270 million in reserve. Just for info and the record.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much.

We'll now move on to the second round of questioning, and we'll begin with the official opposition. MPP Harden, would you like to start, please?

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you very much.

Just returning back, Chair Henry, to you, thank you again for being here. I wonder if you could describe for the committee how important the region's relationships are with the folks who operate and fix public transit in the area. I'm talking about the unionized organizations that represent the employees, those relationships that you have. Could you just describe to us how important those are?

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**Mr. John Henry:** So, as you're aware, we service our own transit system, and our employees are all unionized. We have the ability to work with Metrolinx, they have some rail yards—they have a rail yard in Whitby. So within our communities, transportation and skilled labour already exist in a unionized environment. I'm really proud of what we've been able to do together, and it's always been in partnership. I have some excitement as a grandfather now, that as Durham region grows out—and you are aware that we are a fast-growing region—the next growth there is going to be Northumberland, Port Hope and Cobourg. I see that they'll be in the same situation down the road as we are, where they'll need to come up with a plan to build the stations they need.

So for us in Durham, while we're talking about Bowmanville, I would love to have a conversation five years from now about Newcastle, Newtonville and the continuing of the line because young people need to get to work. And they will live along corridors—they will have their bicycles, they will ride the waterfront trail.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I can confirm Port Hope is a beautiful place to ride a bicycle. I went through there. I saw a lot of people catching very, very big fish—very enormous, big fish.

What I'm taking from what you said is that those relationships with those employee groups are critical to the maintenance and the operation of transit. So I guess what I'm struggling with, looking at schedule 1 of this legislation, which is giving the city of Toronto the power to open up collective agreements that have been negotiated in good faith with those employees—so that's Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113, and it's about—just so you know,

so you understand what I'm hearing—making sure that the work that we are agreed on, on fare integration and service integration, can happen.

Essentially, what we're doing with schedule 1 is we're opening these collective agreements from Queen's Park. We're giving the mayor's office this power. What I can confirm, just so you know, is that Mayor Chow's office has not sought this power, it was a predecessor that had sought this power.

But in the experience of Durham—I guess I'm asking, for your decision-makers that you work with, with those transit employees and those organizations, do you think it would be a productive way to operate in the Durham municipality if someone here in our building decided to open up the agreements that you signed in good faith with those people?

**Mr. John Henry:** I'm not really prepared to talk about what-ifs, but I will talk about our transit and our transit union. If you're not aware, we had a major fire in our transit depot two and half months ago. We lost 19 buses. In a period of less than 24 hours, our teams, both non-union and union, and management, were able to come together and make sure that we had 95% recovery almost immediately and are continuing to deal with that.

Buses aren't something that you can go into a lot and just buy. The lead time for a bus is close to a year and a half to two years. So our relationship with our teams is incredible, and I'm proud of the work that we do. We have an on-demand transit system, and if you're not aware of on-demand, I'm proud to say that we're probably the only region in all of Ontario where every home in Durham region has access to transit. It's an app on your phone. So if you live in an area where there isn't a bus, you'll get a vehicle there to pick you up to and get you to where you need or to a bus stop.

So we've done a lot of great work with our unions to be able to manage all of that—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** So I would—Chair, how much time do we have left?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have three minutes and 15 seconds.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. So if I'm hearing you correctly though—and thank you for reminding me of that; I heard reporting of that—your relationships with those employee groups are critical to the work that happens in transit in your area, maintaining them.

What I'm hearing from employee groups in Toronto is they're very concerned that they weren't consulted on this schedule to the bill. They've written letters to this committee, and we will be hearing that advice, but they weren't consulted on this bill. It's something they have spoken against at the TTC board, both under Mayor Tory and they currently express that opinion under Mayor Chow.

If I'm understanding you correctly, those relationships have helped you respond to emergencies, they've also helped you create a transit network that consumers will like—because we want consumers to use public transit, we want people to be excited about taking the bus or the train, what have you.

Mr. Conway, thinking about the same issue: You've worked in a number of different environments; I'm sure you've seen all the stakeholders come together, and the friction can sometimes be a little challenging. And I guess that's part of your job, trying to resolve those frictions.

Same question: If, in fact—and this is the advice I'm being told: The existing collective agreement that governs the transit employees of the city of Toronto has within it already a provision to allow for service integration, it just requires the employee group to be at the table, to be there when it happens, so they can assure that the vehicles being brought in to the TTC jurisdiction are in great operational condition, that the service hours are going to be the same, that safety concerns are being met. As I understand it from the employee groups here in Toronto, that is what they have pressed for, negotiation after negotiation. If you were involved in a service integration situation here that involved the transit development community and you knew that a party was not at the table who needed to be there for the outcome to be as successful as possible, wouldn't you be advising your client, "Bring that transit employee group, bring that voice to that table so we're not dealing with problems or difficulties or issues in the courts later"? Would that be your approach?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** We have 55 seconds left.

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Through you, Madam Chair, I have zero experience with the operating side of the transit authorities in Ontario. My expertise is solely with land economics and urban planning.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. So what I will just say for the benefit of the committee's hearing into this, Chair, is I have heard loud and clear—I've expressed this view to the minister responsible, I've expressed it to the government. I'm going on record again with the committee—that there are ways to accomplish service integration that don't involve minimizing the standards and the quality that exists within the TTC jurisdiction or another transit jurisdiction. We have to find a way for all those parties to be at the table to have a successful outcome.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Moving on to MPP McMahon for four and a half minutes.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** All right, speedy time again.

Thank you so much for speaking about youth because often they are not at the table for the community consultations. They're not going to come out. They're not getting your electronic newsletter. They don't believe in voicemail, you know, speaking from my own kids. So it's great you're speaking about them, and congrats to John Henry for being a grandpa, I think you just said. That gives you more passion to change the world for the better, I'm sure.

I'm very worried about the housing crisis, especially as it applies to youth and newcomer—and everyone. Do you feel there should be an affordable component to any housing that's built on provincial lands? Anyone?

**Ms. Nina Deeb:** I can answer that.

So the affordability component has been missing. We have lots of money that we have earmarked for housing,

mostly federally, but there is no affordability component at all, so we do need the affordability component to be attached to our monies.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thanks, Nina.

Going down the line?

**Mr. John Henry:** Thank you. That's a very interesting question.

In Durham region, we have two housing corporations, the Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp. and our local housing corporation. So we own housing; we are repurposing housing in Durham region as we speak. We've also had some incredible partnerships with Habitat for Humanity to do some really good builds, and I'm proud of the work that we've done before. We are in negotiations with Infrastructure Ontario on some land that is available and, again, we will come to the table as a partnership and, through the partnership, we will work to get that done.

Affordability for young people is critical, but transit makes it more affordable. When you don't have to have two cars for a couple to go whatever way and you can rely upon transit and then have the choice of using an Uber, or have a delivery service deliver your groceries, or rent a car and take your family some place on the weekend, that additional money comes back into the household. It could be as much as \$1,500 a month if you've got two car payments and insurance. Transit-oriented development is a good plan and it works well.

By the way, just across the road from the train station in Oshawa, there's a building on an old brownfield that will be going up and will house over 5,000 people. There will be 5,000 units there and that's what you want, that kind of development on a transit line.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Gosh, it seems we all should move to Durham. You're doing a good sales pitch.

And then, Mark, your thoughts?

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**Mr. Mark Conway:** Yes, it's a very important point. What we haven't talked about is, what happens with transit and PMTSAs, the designated transit station areas that come along with all this, is it opens the door for inclusionary zoning. So now, not in Durham today, but with a transit station at the new station, we now open this opportunity to extract affordable housing as part of the developer contribution to affordable housing through the legislation that's in play today. So it's new.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Great—and a rental component as well, of course.

I did have, near Main Street, which I talked about, the mobility hub in beautiful Beaches—East York. We did have a sale; Metrolinx sold some land to a developer with no affordability component to it at 8 Dawes Road. It's a prime spot on the Danforth GO and in the area, so it's just tragic.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Forty seconds left.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** We need to ensure that doesn't happen at all, let alone on provincial lands that we can control. So I appreciate that.

How many seconds?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** About 30 now.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thirty?

One quick piece of advice to us as we consider this bill? We'll go with Mark—maybe 10-second advice.

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Pass the bill. This will unplug a very sticky problem that's not just in Durham; it will impact communities in Halton, Niagara, Waterloo. It's a small move, but a very important move, and the devil will be in the details.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes.

And John? Probably three seconds.

**Mr. John Henry:** If you want to create more houses, effective transit routes do that—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you.

**Mr. John Henry:**—this is a good plan.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. Thank you. Sorry, Laurie.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** It's okay.

Moving on to the government side for seven and a half minutes: MPP Rae, please go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** I like that advice, Mark, very much.

Thank you all for your presentations today, as well. Thank you as well, John Henry, for your service to the region of Durham. I know MPP Coe speaks highly of you and the region and his time there.

My question is actually for Mark, though, and he kind of alluded to it. I guess it's non-partisan questioning this afternoon. Sort of building on my Liberal colleague's questions, what are some of the challenges and opportunities you see for home builders as a result of the proposed legislation, building more homes? You mentioned—alluded to—in your last remarks also ensuring that affordability component is in there. How can the province potentially help further that, as well, going forward?

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Well, honestly, I don't see any challenges to the development community. This is all good news. This is no different than when two or three developers get together and have to build a community centre, but one developer only has one acre and the other developer has three and one is not interested in doing anything, so nothing happens. It's exactly the same thing.

So what we're doing is providing a way for developers to move forward on transit stations, except the big deal here is that developers—if you look at the Courtice station, the landowners own land that's all designated, zoned for agriculture. It's designated for some urban uses, but the land value is very low. Put in a transit station and that land value skyrockets. That's that land value increment that we seek to capture. The developers will still enjoy a big jump in their land value, and they'll still be able to pay their transit fees and build the station, and everybody will do better. It's a win-win-win.

We haven't talked about affordable housing, but it's something that's near and close to our company's heart. We do more affordable housing than anything. But this not only triggers supply, which in itself helps affordability; it also triggers opportunities for the region and local municipalities to implement affordable housing policies that leverage inclusionary zoning.

If everybody goes into these things in the early days, these are all affordable and doable for developers. What

hurts developers is when you shock them with legislation and they have to change plans immediately because now their budgets are all screwed up. But we're doing this well in advance. The zoning and the official plans have only just started, so we're at the perfect time to implement this type of legislation

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you for that, Mark.

I'll pass it over to my colleague.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Pang, go ahead. You have four and a half minutes.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you for all your presentations. This question is for Mark. I'm from Hong Kong, with a population of eight million people. I just visited home this summer. When I used transit, I was so impressed by their transit system. I get off one train, I'm lining up for the escalator to the exit, and the next train comes. It's back to back, basically. So I can see that Hong Kong relies on a transit system.

In this bill, when we are looking at the housing crisis, according to Statistics Canada, we are looking at an increase of more than four million in 20 years. Well, Hong Kong has eight million people. We accumulated over hundreds of years. Now we are looking at two decades to increase by four million people. So it is very important that we need to build more TOCs.

According to the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, if passed, it will help build more GO Transit stations, spur more housing and mixed-use communities around transit and help make it more convenient to travel across the GTA. From your perspective, would the proposed new tool help unlock additional TOC opportunities and spur development?

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Yes, it would, absolutely.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Can you expand more? How will this bill and the TOC community and transit work together hand in hand?

**Mr. Mark Conway:** Well, none of this happens unless the developers are interested in working with us. And right now, as I've said, in Durham, the unique situation is that every station has many little developers and some very big ones, but they all have different interests, and they're not moving together. There's no one clear developer or land-owner that can fund a station. The Development Charges Act does not allow municipalities to fund provincial services, so we can't use that. So we have to find a new pathway, which Bill 131 is. Bill 131 brings all these developers together and motivates them to build, and in doing so, that motivation makes it so that Durham region and the local municipalities now all join forces to design and plan these transit-oriented communities, with the economic imperative that the developers have. They are the ones that are going to make this happen, and the trigger. They're going to fund not only transit, but they will be funding the new roads, and they will be funding the community centres and the parks, as they normally do. Bill 131 just sets this in motion in a very positive way.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Rae, please go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** My question is for the regional chair. I was just wondering if you could build on some of the comments Mark was making around—you've already mentioned in your remarks how this is beneficial, and the fee will be voluntary. The municipality has that power to choose to implement that fee, obviously. We're not imposing it from the province; we're just giving you the opportunity in this legislation, if passed.

What other supports would you, in your opinion as regional chair, like to see to further unlock TOCs and the potential development from a regional, municipal perspective?

**Mr. John Henry:** What I really want is to see the housing that needs to be built, built. From that, that will help our economy in Durham continue to grow.

When I talk about the 5,000 units that are across the road from the station in the middle of Oshawa, that's not just the only station; there are 2,200 units just north of there. When you can have almost 8,000 units of transportation built within walking distance in a municipality, that is a game-changer for the downtown of that community.

Our downtowns are vibrant. Every young person going to school in Durham region right now in any one of the universities or colleges already has a transit pass, so our young people are accustomed to utilizing transit. As they continue to go on with their life, they're not going to be running out and buying cars; they're going to rely upon the transit that's there.

So the uplift and the economic benefit to the region is unbelievable in what it will do for all of the businesses along the transit route. We see that now, and it's an exciting time in Durham region. In the mornings, if you get off the train, the reverse commuting that is now occurring within our region is unbelievable. Trains go both ways. People go into Toronto to work, but they come to Durham—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much.  
*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You were very passionate. That's good.

Thank you very much, everyone, for being here today. I appreciate that. I must say that our time has come to an end with your group. I'll give you a moment to exit. Thank you again for coming.

Our next group is a combination of in-person and virtual. I'll announce them all—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you, Chair. Bye.

## TORONTO REGION BOARD OF TRADE

### TTCRIDERS

### HATCH

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Our next group of presenters are the Toronto Region Board of Trade, which is joining us virtually; the TTCriders, who I believe are in person—and I will ask them to come to the table now, if they would not mind. You can come to the table now. And

I believe Michael and Allison are from Hatch, and they are with us virtually.

**1400**

Welcome, everybody. We'll just give a few moments for everyone to settle in again and the previous presenters to exit.

I think you all know you have seven minutes for a presentation. Just state your name before you begin your presentation. I think I'm frozen on the screen, but anyway, the people in the room heard me.

I will ask, if you can hear me, that the Toronto Region Board of Trade—please state your name and begin your presentation. If you want to go ahead, we're ready.

**Mr. David Campbell:** Good afternoon. My name is David Campbell. I'm associate vice-president of policy and research with the Toronto Region Board of Trade. Thanks for having me here. On behalf of our more than 11,000 members, the board really welcomes the opportunity to make a deputation today regarding this bill, Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act.

I should first acknowledge that the bill has two distinct schedules. I'll be focusing my remarks on amendments to the City of Toronto Act aiming to promote service integration. But I would like to be on the record as being supportive of new tools that support smart growth, such as the voluntary transit station charges intended to unlock transit-oriented communities along the GO rail network, as outlined in schedule 2.

But back to schedule 1: The intent of the proposed amendment to the City of Toronto Act is to make transit more convenient for residents across the GTA by removing a legislative barrier for the TTC to enter into cross-boundary service agreements with neighbouring transit agencies. The board has been a strong advocate for fare and service integration across the Toronto region. This included our Erasing the Invisible Line report released in November 2020, as well as a follow-up report released just this year in March with additional fare integration recommendations.

The region is currently suffering from a transit system that is fragmented and a fare structure that punishes riders who cross arbitrary municipal boundaries or who transfer between agencies. Continued collaboration across municipal boundaries and between transit agencies must continue. The current system incentivizes riders to use as few agencies as possible over the course of a trip, leading to slow and less efficient journeys. This also results in network-level ridership imbalances, with some infrastructure, like the subway, experiencing severe overcrowding while other infrastructure like the GO rail corridors are often underused.

A few minutes saved by a transit user each day can translate to millions of minutes across the whole system daily, and those gains multiply over weeks, months, years and decades, making the impetus clear that we must make our system as efficient as possible now, without delay.

At the board, we take the "region" part of our name very seriously. The challenges we face generally don't respect municipal boundaries, whether that be energy, housing, employment lands or, in this case, transit. The Toronto region is a single economic unit, so the transit system must

allow people to travel between municipalities as easily as they may within them. Routes should not end arbitrarily at a municipal boundary, and connections should be seamless between agencies. Truly integrating service would improve our mobility network, renew ridership levels and have a positive impact on the region's business competitiveness.

Any integration across our region must include the TTC. The TTC is at the heart of Toronto's transportation network. With transit ridership still rebounding post-COVID, service integration is also key to attracting and retaining riders and growing operating revenues. But the impacts are even broader than that. An efficient and effective transit system is a key solution to mitigate congestion, to achieve our net-zero goals and to ensure that workers are connected with job opportunities.

Take congestion. MTO approximates that congestion and gridlock across the greater Toronto and Hamilton area result in productivity losses of up to \$11 billion annually. We've also heard loud and clear from our members that prolonged travel times limit job opportunities and employers' access to top talent, which hinders economic growth and development. The Toronto area is welcoming 3,000 new residents each week, a trend that's expected to intensify, and as Toronto's population grows so will the pain of these challenges. But the opportunity is here to be seized.

We're pleased that the government is taking fare integration seriously, eliminating double fares between municipal transit systems and GO Transit. Adding the TTC to this program is key and a top priority for the business community, and we look forward to its timely implementation. A continued focus on fare and service integration will also ensure that we are maximizing the investments being made in transit projects in the GTA right now.

The region needs and deserves a truly world-class system. Our economic competitiveness depends on it, and transit riders deserve nothing less.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** We'll now move on to the TTCriders. Please state your name before you begin, and go ahead.

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Hello, members of the standing committee. My name is August Puranauth. I'm speaking for TTCriders. We're a grassroots non-profit organization fighting for better transit here in the city of Toronto. I'm also an everyday transit rider; I took the subway here to Queen's Park today, and it was quite slow and rough.

I just want to say, right off the bat, our organization supports a single flat fare within the city of Toronto so that transit riders can freely transfer between TTC, GO and UP Express without paying double fares. This would especially help transit riders in Scarborough, where the RT has been shut down recently. Many transit riders cannot afford to pay a double fare. Many transit riders take slower, longer routes to avoid paying a double fare, and this just needs to change.

We're encouraged by your promise to fund a discount and look forward to learning more about the program. We think that free transfers between GO, TTC and UP Express should be subsidized by provincial government so that

cost is not borne by transit riders through the fares we pay. We also support local fare integration that allows free transfers across municipal borders.

Bill 131 proposes service integration, which could make transit easier to use, and travel across the Toronto area, but we have questions about how this legislation could negatively impact transit riders if we are not careful.

(1) I want to ask, will the provincial government guarantee and fund minimum service standards for transit? Toronto transit users do not want to see TTC routes replaced with less frequent routes provided by 905 agencies—the agencies in the other parts of the greater Toronto area. Regardless of which agency provides service along cross-boundary corridors, Toronto service standards must be maintained so that riders can count on their bus arriving frequently and with enough room to board.

The TTC actually plans to reallocate service from areas along Toronto's borders into other areas central to the city as more cross-boundary trips are done by these 905 transit agencies. Even if reallocated TTC trips are replaced by other transit agencies in the GTA, that doesn't mean more room for riders. Many buses entering and leaving Toronto to other parts of the GTA are already crowded.

I used to live in Durham; now I live in the city. But my experiences taking buses from Durham into the city were that they were often very overcrowded. They were already at standing room, and they wouldn't provide much service to Scarborough transit riders unless we saw a service increase broadly.

Many of Toronto's lowest-income, racially diverse and transit-dependent neighbourhoods are near the edge of the city and served by cross-boundary routes. These are Malvern, northern Rexdale, parts of northern Scarborough and North York. It's important that they have transit service protected.

(2) How will transit riders have a say over service? Elected officials and transit agencies in York, Peel and Durham are not accountable to Toronto residents. Adequate funding for guaranteed service standards could help address this, but transit agencies must also be accountable to the residents they serve.

We are also concerned that the legislation could delegate authority to TTC staff or its board and see major decisions about service agreements go forward without debate or input from the public at Toronto city council. This means no input from transit riders. Those are the people who use the system every day, and they should have a voice. This is a major concern if 905 agencies cut service to Toronto transit riders that they depend on.

(3) How will fares work? Would a transit user need to pay twice if they were travelling within Toronto on a cross-boundary service? Transit rides within Toronto should be paid for by a single flat TTC fare—that's what we support—and regardless of its transit agency.

In its five-year policy review, the TTC board affirmed its support for a flat fare in Toronto, with free two-hour transfers. This fare structure ensures that people are not penalized for travelling further, and a time-based transfer, which primarily benefits women, who tend to take shorter, more consecutive trips such as running errands and groceries,

through trip-chaining. Shift workers and low-income people often are faced with longer and longer commutes while living in this deeply unaffordable region. It is unfair to ask them to pay more for transit just because they're riding for longer.

**1410**

(4) Will the provincial government fund transit operations to make up for lost revenue? Because the TTC operating budget relies heavily on fares, we're concerned about the possibility of the TTC losing fare revenue to other agencies. Before the pandemic, two thirds of revenue came from the fare box—the fares that we pay every day for the TTC. This isn't sustainable, and without a source of funding, service could be cut.

Toronto already has one of the lowest subsidies in North America among transit agencies per rider. The province of Ontario used to fund 50% of TTC operations over two decades ago, but that was taken away. They also funded 50% of operations for other local transit agencies. We need this provincial government to step up and properly fund transit operations for the TTC.

Last, I'll talk about the other piece of Bill 131, which is proposing changes to how GO stations are funded. Schedule 2 raises concerns about whether GO stations will be built in areas underserved by transit but where developers are not planning to build. In 2019, Doug Ford pitched the idea of funding new Scarborough subway extension stations through developers, but that didn't happen. The province ended up footing the bill.

This raises a question: If funding from the province doesn't materialize, does this represent a downloading of costs from the province to the municipality? Furthermore, if there is enough development to cover initial construction costs but not cost increases, as often happens with transit projects, or station maintenance, this also downloads a provincial responsibility onto municipalities.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Sixty seconds remaining.

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Once again, we urge this government to commit to fund transit operations to ensure that riders do not foot the bill for service integration, that service is not cut back because of lost fare revenue and to support local transit systems in the long term. We also urge this government to fully fund new GO stations in areas underserved by transit and do not have that much development potential.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you so much.

We will now move on to Hatch. I'll just get you to introduce yourselves and then you may begin.

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Hi. Thank you for the opportunity to deputize. I'm Michael Sutherland. I'm the director for urban solutions and practice leader for urban solutions in Canada at Hatch. Hatch is a company headquartered in Mississauga, founded in Toronto and now a global company of 10,000 people working on all continents. Our urban solutions practice combines economics, city planning, transport mobility planning, and we've worked with governments, public and also private sector around the world on transit-oriented development and helping cities achieve



objectives such as decarbonization, long-term planning, economic government. It's from that perspective that we bring our comments to the committee this afternoon.

My own background is—actually, I used to work for the province of Ontario at the Ministry of Infrastructure, and then I was responsible for the economic analysis practice at Metrolinx, where we developed the business case framework, we did our first initial transit-oriented development deals and we advanced many projects, including the GO regional express rail program. So it's from a background of both public service and consulting to public organizations that I make the following comments.

First off, I just want to express our expression of enthusiasm for Bill 131. We think that, implemented correctly, this bill has the potential to support both the success of the regional transit network and also deliver and distribute costs fairly among beneficiaries and, in doing so, unlock the delivery of transportation infrastructure and needed stations that can anchor housing development and growth in a more sustainable framework that's consistent with the planning that's been recognized in Ontario and the planning elsewhere: the idea of urban growth centres and development clustered around transit stations as critical. That is the consensus around the world how, particularly, large city regions should grow.

We also recognize, working in places like Durham, Halton region, Toronto, we think that this has outstanding application and, applied correctly, could create some great solutions for many communities and could make a contribution to improving the delivery and the shaping of housing and development.

A couple of considerations that we just raised for the committee's consideration are a couple of challenges. One, around market-driven GO stations: Currently the issue that I think that this bill was trying to address is that the weight of financing and funding is overly borne by, in some cases, only one or maybe two providers if they can combine. This makes it easier for multiple parties to come together, and I think that was the original intention of the TOC program. I say that having been at Metrolinx at the time when we initiated the very beginnings of the TOC program that is currently in place today.

I want to make a comment about fare integration, actually. I think fare integration is one of the misses that we have not successfully achieved as a region. I used to own this file at one of my jobs at Metrolinx for a short period of time, and the reality is that if the excellent business case framework which is used to consider these types of policy initiatives had the math properly embedded within the business case framework—the business case framework is the right way to think about it; the math underneath has not yet exposed how fare integration can be implemented in a way that works for all stakeholders. Frankly, if the math had been done, it would have been implemented by now, because it would have been so obvious that fare integration should happen. And fare integration needs to happen in order to make the most of these massively valuable assets that we're creating and spending

so much energy and cost to build—as we should, because this is how we're going to build a successful region.

The other thing I wanted to flag for the committee's consideration is the application of growth is not being considered because of, I think, some agency challenges. Metrolinx, not having the ability or perspective or the mandate to consider growth and housing as it would occur around transit that has not already occurred, is not embedding that growth in its analysis to consider new stations.

I'll make this really simple: If somebody proposes a new station, and you were to go speak to Metrolinx and say, "Metrolinx, does the business case stack up for this station?" in places where the business case will stack up for the station, the analysis is coming out and saying, "No. The business case does not stack up, because we can't include housing which is not already developed and occupied, because housing that is not developed and occupied has an element of risk." Therefore, because there is, in some cases, a very small chance that the housing may not occur—but it is highly likely that it will occur—Metrolinx will make the assertion that that housing is not there and therefore we can't include it, and we can't include it in our modelling.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have 60 seconds left.

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Thank you.

If we were in a very slow-growth jurisdiction, that would make a lot of sense. But we're in a fast-growing region that, over the next two decades, needs over three million housing units. They have to go somewhere, and ideally they go next to transit. So there is a deficiency there in the analysis. Hopefully between the province and its agencies, we can come to an appropriate risk-adjusted way of doing the analysis for these new stations.

But my final comment is, by and large, I think Bill 131 and the opportunity to create more clarity about how we fund new GO stations is a positive contribution and is absolutely a piece of the puzzle in building a more prosperous, better planned and better developed mega-region, which is what the greater Golden Horseshoe is. Thank you for the opportunity to speak. I appreciate your time.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much to all the presenters.

We'll now start with the questions and answers, and we're going to start with MPP Harden for seven and a half minutes. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thanks to all the presenters this afternoon—nice to see you. Thank you for doing the work to be here so we can make the right decisions in this committee on Bill 131.

I wanted to begin with our friends from TTCriders. Thank you so much for being here. I note, just from the latest research I was able to get, that it would seem there are about 50,000 transit riders in the GTA that use both GO Transit and TTC in their daily commute. I know it's been a long campaign of yours to work for fare integration for the exact reasons you mentioned in your presentation. I'm wondering if you could explain to the government, to all members of this committee, why making sure fare in-

tegration and that progressive step forward doesn't happen—I think you said this already, but elaborate, please—at the expense of service quality, at the expense of making sure that the bus, as you said in the Durham example that you cited, isn't full when people try to get on it or that it's not there promptly. Could you elaborate?

1420

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes. Thank you for the question. We want to make sure that fare integration is not borne by transit riders. Riders riding the TTC today are already paying for more than half—two thirds before the pandemic—of the cost to actually run the transit system. Fare integration needs to be funded by the provincial government in order to take that weight off of transit riders.

We don't want to see service cuts happen again. We don't want to see fare hikes happen again. That happened already this year, and that could happen again if we don't have a sustainable source of funding for public transit, especially the TTC. It's the backbone of our city. It's something that workers, students, everyone relies on. Over a million people a day rely on it. It's really, really important, with the fare-integration scheme, that it is funded by the provincial government. Otherwise, we pose the risk of funding being taken away from service, funding being taken away that would result in fare hikes and other kinds of deteriorations to public transit.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I know, previously, in the work you had done with my predecessor, the member for University–Rosedale, that we had uncovered a number of disturbing situations where some transit users who worked up at Pearson airport, for example, were choosing to sleep in cars in parking lots so they could stay and be there for shifts, because making it all the way back home and back—with the service levels, with the extra costs for people on very fixed incomes—was prohibitive. So I want to say for the record that this is a victory. The fare-integration case that you successfully made to this government and them acknowledging it is a victory.

I also just want to say, I've seen two transit ministers for the government acknowledge that they intend to fund fare integration. Former Minister Cho had mentioned this, and current Minister Sarkaria had said this on the record in the House. I think that's important. But if I understand you correctly, what you're saying to my friends in government is if schedule 1 is used to diminish the frequency of transit service, the quality of transit service, that's something TTCriders has a massive concern with. Am I correct?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes, correct.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** How much time do I have left, Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have four minutes and 10 seconds.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** The other thing I note recently, with some good developments here in the city of Toronto, is Mayor Chow has essentially announced that the city of Toronto plans to restore transit service to 91% of pre-pandemic levels. The way that that is happening is that the city of Toronto is utilizing funds it had set aside to operate

a transit system, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, which is not functional, three years late and a billion dollars over budget. I guess my concern to you, to express your reaction to it, is, are you concerned, if service integration was happening with transit agencies that weren't able to maintain that level of service, that the TTC once again, as it's currently doing, is going to be asked to bear additional costs, and that's ultimately going to be passed on to your members?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes, exactly. The current funding that is being used for service increases for the TTC is not a permanent solution. It's not a sustainable solution. It's simply shifting money that was going to be used to operate those new LRT lines to restore service. While it's a good move, we need to make sure that funding is sustainable and provided by the province.

We also are concerned about service getting deteriorated around the borders of the city. We know that a lot of lower-income neighbourhoods, some of the lowest-income neighbourhoods in the city, are along the borders where cross-boundary routes will go through. So it's really critical that we make sure there are service standards for the cross-boundary routes provided by other transit agencies.

I do want to bring up the example of Steeles Avenue, because that's a route that travels right on the border of Toronto and York region, and it's one of the busiest routes in the city. It's moving tens of thousands of riders a day. Most of it's on the TTC right now. It goes through places like north Rexdale, North York, parts of northern Scarborough that are racially diverse, lower income and depend heavily on transit. If more of those users were to depend on York Region Transit routes, for example, what will happen then? Are transit riders going to be able to have a voice to York Region Transit? York Region Transit isn't accountable; they don't have a mandate to really serve Toronto residents, and this bill doesn't really put it in concrete that they do.

That's why it's so important that we must design it to ensure that transit riders in Toronto have a voice to these other agencies and that transit riders continue to have a voice for all transit that serves their area—not just the TTC; every other agency that serves the area—because that currently doesn't exist, and we want to make sure that the service standards are kept up. Otherwise, we can see service cuts, and that could be detrimental to some of the most important corridors in this city. Even though they run along the edge of the city, they transport so many people, so it's really, really important that we have service standards and we make sure people have the room to board these buses and make sure that service is high and wait times are low.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** How much time do we have left, Chair?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** A minute and 25 seconds.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thank you very much for all of that. I think that was really important for the committee to have on the record for consideration.

This is more of a quick question: Was TTCriders ever consulted by the Ministries of Transportation or Infrastructure on Bill 131?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** No.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. That's a concern to me.

I can relay the fact that the Amalgamated Transit Workers' Union Local 113 that represents the TTC and other employee groups who represent other transit agencies were not consulted on this bill—they have submitted written submissions, though, Chair, just for the record, for the committee's record.

Do you think it makes sense, as this bill finds its way through committee and back to the House for third reading, that the Ministry of Transportation and the Ministry of Infrastructure seek out an urgent meeting with your organization to make sure—precisely what you're worried about—that particularly marginalized citizens of Toronto and other neighbouring regions aren't disadvantaged with this incredible victory that you've helped to win?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes, exactly. This change could be improving the lives of people living in these marginalized communities, but their voice has to be at the table. They need to be there when we're talking about how service is going to change in the areas that they live in because it's really important that they shape transit decisions that happen in their areas.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. Thank you. That's it for this round.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** I'll now go to MPP McMahon, please.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Thank you, everyone, for coming in and enlightening and entertaining us with your facts and knowledge. I appreciate it. I appreciate the time.

I'm going to speak to August first, since you're right here in our committee room. I think it's important for you to explain, if you could, a bit about your organization. Not everyone is from Toronto; the MPPs are from different areas. So if you can just explain your membership, what you stand for, accomplishments, that kind of thing, that would be great.

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes, sure. Thank you for your question. TTCriders: We're a grassroots non-profit organization. We're led almost entirely by a large group of volunteers who ride transit and care about transit and want to see transit get better. That includes transit that serves areas on the peripheries of Toronto. That includes people who use GO Transit and the TTC but within Toronto. What riders want to see is integrated fares, a single flat fare in the city. They want to make sure transit is adequate, high service standards, and that we have affordable and reliable transit across the city.

Overall, our organization's main goal is to fix the funding model for transit and ensure that there is reliable transit, low wait times, frequent service across the city and affordable transit that everyone can use.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Great. And then you were mentioning especially about investment in areas

underserved by transit. Did you want to elaborate on that? Did you have any specific areas or just in general?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** We want to make sure that transit operations are invested in by the province. We know that transit operations is one of the best and easiest ways to win riders back, because high wait times present probably one of the biggest barriers to using transit in this region, and lowering those wait times, making sure that more transit service is available, would win so many riders back to transit and bring so many riders back and out of cars and reduce congestion. And it's good for the environment too. So one of our key concerns is making sure the province adequately funds transit operations for local municipalities, just like Toronto and the TTC, and that's something that was done in the past.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Okay. Great. Thank you. Sorry; I have a fraction of the time as everyone else. We had to be quick.

Now, over to Michael Sutherland at Hatch: It seems like we could learn a lot you're your experience and knowledge and just with specifically your suggestions for fare integration. Can you, in a couple of minutes, just give us the Coles Notes of your ideas?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Thank you for the comment. The fare integration conversation could go on, but the short point is that transit systems are fixed assets. Yes, you can adjust the operations up and down, you can change the operations and the costs a little bit here and there, but really, they work best when you can put more—excuse the expression—bums in seats throughout all routes for a greater percentage of the time, so you get your utilization up.

**1430**

Fare integration has the opportunity not only to deliver all the benefits that David and the other deputants have talked about, but also, done properly, it can lift the utilization of a network and make the system more productive.

My short answer is, there could probably be a richer discussion about that, and I think it would work in the favour of the conversation for fare integration. I think, properly considered, fare integration is not just delivering benefits because it makes transit cheaper; it can also make it more productive because it can encourage riders to use parts of the network that they don't use, for example. That speaks to things like David was saying: a combination of TTC and GO trips, or other municipal service providers and TTC. So we can make better use out of what we have and what we will have through fare integration.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** Thank you very much for that response. That concludes the independent's time.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Stay tuned.

**The Acting Chair (Mr. Lorne Coe):** Thank you very much, MPP McMahon.

We'll now turn to the government, and I have MPP Pang, please. Thank you very much, sir.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you, Chair. Through you, I have a question for the Toronto Region Board of Trade. Thank you for your presentation earlier. I'm from Hong Kong, so

I was born and grew up in a transit-oriented city. From 1983 to 2023, in 40 years, the population of Hong Kong has grown by 2.5 million.

Statistics Canada told us that the population of Ontario will grow by four to six million in 20 years. That is very, very fast.

I can still remember that in the 1980s, I witnessed the first subway line that was built, and now Hong Kong has a subway network. So the city has benefited from the fast development of the transit system—and also walking distance to stations that are close to homes and businesses.

The Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, if passed, will help build more GO Transit stations, spur more housing and mixed-use communities around transit, and help make it more convenient to travel across the GTA. From your perspective, would the proposed new tools help unlock additional TOC opportunities and spur development and businesses?

**Mr. David Campbell:** Yes, thank you for the question. As I said, I didn't focus my remarks on that today, but that is something that we really support. To your point, there's a massive need—first of all, there are massive infrastructure investment already under way, and I know one goal we're collectively focused on is delivering those on time and on budget. But the fact is that they are not enough and more is needed, both on the transit side and, as we all know, on the housing side. To the extent that these sorts of measures can marry those two goals and make both more realistic for the regions, that's a definite win and something the board supports.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** So what do you think about how this new tool can help the development and the businesses? That's your expertise.

**Mr. David Campbell:** Michael spoke very eloquently to this, the way that the tool can unlock new financing for these projects that might not otherwise be viable, creating both new transit and new housing. So yes, it will definitely help, and yes, it's badly needed.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Kusendova-Bashta.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I will be asking my question to the Toronto Region Board of Trade. You held a symposium earlier this year on transportation, to address the growth challenges related to congestion management. Earlier this morning, we were discussing, my colleagues and I that are coming in to work in Toronto from various regions—that would be Brampton, Mississauga etc.—how long it takes us to get into work. For many of us, it's more than two hours, and distances that are 30 kilometres or 35 kilometres should be a lot less than that.

You also published a report in November of 2020, *Erasing the Invisible Line: Integrating the Toronto Region's Transit Networks*. I think it speaks to a lot of what we are doing in Bill 131. So can you highlight to us what your report spoke to? And also, how much does the success of the Toronto regional economy depend on commuters, like a lot of us here, coming in from the 905 and other regions,

getting into Toronto each and every day and contributing to Toronto's economy?

**Mr. David Campbell:** Yes, thank you for that. I should say, by the way, for those who don't know, the Toronto Region Board of Trade has just recently moved into a beautiful new office down on Queens Quay East, so on the waterfront, which is an incredible location, a great event space—I actually am lucky to say I can see the water from my office right now—but poorly served by transit, or mostly served by bus routes. And Waterfront East LRT is another project that has been really promoted as an important next step.

That said, when it comes to the reports that we've issued, as I mentioned, we've been advocating on fare and service integration for years. One of those reports that that led to, as you mentioned, is *Erasing the Invisible Line* in November of 2020. That report was really about alternative governance models for the region's transit system, including GO Transit. We proposed a co-operative model for discussion and consideration. We followed up with that report, actually, earlier this year with a report called *Erasing the Lines* about seamless fare integration, where we spoke about some of the topics that have been coming up today around unifying fare systems across the region. We proposed, actually, a method of charging by zone, by distance travelled, instead of by municipality. Both of those reports are out there in the public, and we'd be happy to share them with the committee as well.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you so much for that.

My next question I wanted to ask to the TTCriders. You mentioned in your remarks that one million riders use the TTC every day. Would you know how many of those riders actually live in the city of Toronto and how many are from outside?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Over a million riders a day use the TTC, and a significant number of them are also from regions that border Toronto. So it is important that we do have service integration and fare integration, but we need to make sure it's done right in a way that doesn't take away service from transit riders here in this city and also make sure it's done in a way that creates a fare system that is equitable and does not penalize transit riders from travelling further or across municipal borders.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Certainly. You also mentioned that the lowest-income neighbourhoods are on the boundaries, and so, precisely, those are the neighbourhoods that would stand to benefit from fare integration. Wouldn't you agree?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Neighbourhoods around Toronto's boundaries do stand to benefit from service and fare integration. However, we need to make sure that they do not bear the cost of fare integration through fare increases, for example. We also need to make sure that service does not get cut, true service integration, because currently we do not have any clear mandate for other regional transit agencies to provide the same level or higher service that the TTC currently provides should they be replacing those services.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** We have a lot of commuters coming from outside of Toronto to work in Toronto each and every day, and they pay the double fare when they're using the 905 and from other regions, and they contribute significantly to Toronto's economic prosperity. If we were to, let's say, remove all of those people that are coming in each and every day to contribute to Toronto's economy, it probably wouldn't be sustainable. So don't you think that commuters that are coming from outside of Toronto should also be able to access, in an equitable fashion, the transit system?

**Mr. August Puranauth:** There is a way to make sure that—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Excuse me. I'm sorry; I didn't give you a warning, but we're out of time, so maybe we can save that answer for the next time.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Oh, sorry. Thank you, Chair.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** It's okay. I didn't notice either. Thank you.

Over to the official opposition: MPP Harden.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Just out of respect to MPP Kusendova and our friend, I'll let him answer that question before moving on to my next one. The last question that MPP Kusendova posed—do you think it's important for people to be able to access the transit system through a—you were elaborating on a point there.

**Mr. August Puranauth:** Yes. There is a way to make sure that transit riders across the region have an equitable way to access the city and its opportunities while also protecting the service that transit riders already use here in the city of Toronto, and that is by making sure that we have stringent service mandates, stringent service standards by the TTC; making sure that riders have frequent service and low wait times, and making sure they have room to board buses that are entering the city. This would present a way to also improve the way transit riders in Toronto can access services in regions outside of the borders, and that's an important thing to have.

1440

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Moving along to Mr. Sutherland: I'm glad you're here. It's not often that I get to talk to somebody with expertise from inside of Metrolinx. Given schedule 2 to this bill, I would really benefit from some of your insights around a couple of things here. You mentioned that one of the things you were responsible for at Metrolinx in the past was its transit-oriented communities. That's critical. That's the exact same thing we're talking about here—what the government is proposing with this station administration fee.

How many GO stations were built when you worked at Metrolinx to service this transit-oriented communities agenda that Metrolinx has?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** You have to forgive me—I worked at Metrolinx up until 2016. There were GO stations under construction. They served new communities. They create new ridership. I don't have the answer; I don't have the facts off the top of my head, so I apologize.

The comment I'll make, though, is that we were building new stations at the time, and building new stations at that point in time where the market was—there were some developers that were interested in new stations and the transit-oriented communities that could be built around stations. Now the enthusiasm in the marketplace is much higher, so Toronto has a more mature discussion around industry participants about the need for transit-oriented communities.

Back when I was at Metrolinx—and that was a little while ago, admittedly—it was acknowledged that we needed to do a lot more in the transit-oriented community space, and we wanted to do that more.

There have been major strides that have been made. Some stations have been advanced and planned and are being built, and we need a lot more of this to meet the housing challenges. So Bill 131 can help, for sure.

I don't know if that answers your question.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Well, sort of. You mentioned that your time at Metrolinx stopped in 2016. My experience today, looking through the research that has been made available to me, is, when Metrolinx moved to a market-oriented approach for the construction of new GO stations, a number of municipalities—and this was borne out with some of the earlier things we were hearing from Durham—were having a very challenging time convincing Metrolinx to embark upon new GO stations in their community. And what I'm seeing here, in schedule 2 of this bill—the station administration fee that's being proposed—is municipalities now bearing the role to take on the financial risk to do something, to build something that Metrolinx should be doing.

In your time at Metrolinx up until 2016, sir, were you familiar with any precedent anywhere—it's the question I asked earlier today—of a municipality in our country bearing the responsibility for building provincial infrastructure, like a GO station?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** I'm going to ignore the distinction between what is provincial infrastructure—because I think, working globally and also working across Canada, the general theme is, there is infrastructure that needs to get built to support growing communities, and you see a variety of different funding models used across history and jurisdictions to allocate funds. Some of it depends on who's got the money and who doesn't and who wants to pursue it and who doesn't.

I'll just say that this model of bringing together municipalities with developers was discussed at Metrolinx, when I was there, as something that would ideally happen organically, and I don't think it happened to the degree that we had hoped it would. This bill creates a framework and some structure so that municipalities and market participants can be clearer about the opportunity to come together and work with the province, work with Metrolinx, Infrastructure Ontario and other participants—

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Sorry, Mr. Sutherland; I need my time back, because I only have a limited amount of time—I have two minutes left. What I understood you saying, Mr. Sutherland, is that this was discussed when you were

at Metrolinx. Your time ended there seven years ago. There are not a lot of GO stations that have been built since.

Essentially, this bill is asking municipalities to bear the financial risk of creating provincial infrastructure. GO stations are provincial infrastructure. And they're doing it in a context where the government's proposed other pieces of legislation—Bill 23, which has taken a billion dollars in potential revenue away from them.

So, even though my friends in government have been talking about this new station administration fee as being voluntary—I'm just going to switch to the Toronto board of trade for a final comment. Would you agree, from your Toronto region perspective, the outer-region perspective—these stations aren't voluntary; we absolutely need them. Wouldn't it be better if we had the province playing a better role, a bigger role in financing them?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** A minute and 20 seconds left.

**Mr. David Campbell:** As I say, we're very supportive of the stations getting built. I think the question of who pays is a very important one but gets very into the details. I think more tools—like this bill does—certainly help. I agree with your question, that we need the stations built. The tools of who pays for which part are certainly complex, but more tools helps.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thirty seconds? I'm just going to take the liberty of talking here—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have 45.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Forty-five. I'm sorry we didn't have enough time to dialogue in this round or in the previous round. But I would think that if the province is sitting on a significant surplus—the last testament I heard was \$22 billion. I would like to see the province playing a bigger role in encouraging these GO stations to happen, for them to actually be built and not talked about at Metrolinx.

Thank you so much, all of you, for being here this afternoon.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** We'll now move on to MPP McMahon for 4.5 minutes.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** I wanted to thank Michael, because I didn't get to thank him for his sage advice in my previous question, and then continue along to David about that—if you wanted to add anything for fare integration, for suggestions, with your background.

**Mr. David Campbell:** As I mentioned, we released a report earlier this year that spoke about the possibility of pricing by zone. We proposed eight zones in the region that would allow for fare-cost recovery with fare integration to make it easier for riders, but allow, obviously, the agencies to recover the costs they need to operate and expand. So, yes, I'd be very happy to share that report for more information. That was our proposal.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Yes, it would be great to share that with the committee if they don't already have it. I know I would like to read it.

Since I'm short on time, I'm going to do a very quick speed questioning: One piece of advice to us as we consider Bill 131? We'll start with August.

**Mr. August Puranauth:** One piece of advice is to bring transit riders to the table concerning this bill. We want to make sure their voice is heard. We want to make sure that these changes—there is some accountability to it. We want to make sure that riders have a say in making sure they have a fair fare system and fair service standards, especially in areas along the edges of Toronto.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Michael?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Let's create clearer flexibility for more partners to come to the table and fund these stations. I think Bill 131 does that. If the province wants to come to the table and pay for a station, great. If the municipality wants to work with developers to figure out how to pay for a station, great. Let's make more of this happen.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** David?

**Mr. David Campbell:** I suppose I would add the importance of collaboration, looking ahead to the types of places where these types of measures will be really welcomed. One area that we do a lot of work in is around what we call the Pearson economic zone, around the airport. That's a place where there's a ton of opportunity for this sort of collaboration and integration—four different municipalities, all with some hand in managing an area that's one of the most important economic zones in the country. And currently, transit, among other issues, is fragmented across the zone. So I think looking ahead to those places and trying to design the policy to respond to the needs there as much as possible is going to be important.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** All right. Thank you very much.

1450

Chair, I'm not going to squeeze anything else in my short time, unfortunately.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** No? Okay, sure. Thank you for donating time back.

We'll now move to the government side. MPP Dowie.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** I want to thank all the guests for being here today.

I'll turn it back to Mr. Sutherland. I appreciated your comments just now to member McMahon. In my previous career as a municipal councillor, I saw lots of opportunity for infrastructure. We've got hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars of infrastructure backlog, and some just due to local interest—development charges are rarely raised to help support that. I think, looking at the congestion we have today, that may have been a short-sighted decision a number of years ago, given what we know the consequence to be. So I was very encouraged to hear your support for just getting the job done. It doesn't matter who funds it, because these needs just will come about. People need to travel from point A to point B.

I was hoping you might be able to elaborate as to some of your past experiences on the land-development side and actions municipalities have taken, potentially even outside of the GTA, that don't have Metrolinx or don't have the province to be there to support, and how transformative those projects might have been for those communities.

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Thanks for the comment. There's a lot I could say, and I know the committee doesn't have time for that, so if I can just boil it down, I think what you asked is, "What do we see globally about delivering regional transit?" Maybe just clarify the question.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** It was predominantly that municipalities that don't have the option of provincially funded services would love to have these kinds of tools—or maybe they don't, because they don't necessarily pay more through their property taxes. But how could tools like the development tool here to construct the GO stations—are there similar ways that this method of financing could be leveraged to the benefit of communities? Say it wasn't a GO station; say it was a highway interchange or say it was a multi-use trail system or recreation complex. Have you run into these kinds of investments elsewhere in your dealings?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** In short, yes. I want to go down a track which is aligned with particularly small communities. It's no disrespect to smaller communities, but they often don't have the level of sophistication or capacity to perhaps innovate or have a conversation about a joint funding mechanism or something.

I think what this bill does and the precedent—maybe this is what you're getting at: By giving a little bit of clarity to how the private sector and the public sector might come together to fund something, as long as it works for everyone—for example, the home builder will only have a maximum threshold that they can afford; otherwise, the market won't pay for housing, so that has to be respected. It's the same thing if you're building a bike trail or something else. There should always be an underlying cost-benefit discussion.

But I think in terms of the mechanism of how to pay—yes. And I know a lot of different governments have an unsolicited proposal framework. Some places use it more than others. The idea is that if you put a sign in the window and say, "Hey, we've got this unsolicited proposal process. Feel free to come to us with an idea and we'll consider it in a fair, appropriate way for government to consider things"—that's kind of the very first step. But often, people just don't have enough time to go and invent new funding tools. So if you give a little bit more direction about, "These are the kinds of things that you might do," which I think is what Bill 131 is doing, you might get a better response from the market, and you might get greater innovation among public and private actors to find ways to do things.

I hope that answers your question.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Yes, it does.

Chair, I'll move on, just after this follow-up, to the next member: Fundamentally, I think that some of the criticism I've heard has been, "Hey, this is the provincial responsibility. The province should pay for it." But if the community decides that they would like to see it done sooner than what is reasonable in the big—provincial priorities don't necessarily reflect local priorities. If the local community wants something, is this tool going to be a help to get there if they feel it's of net benefit to their community,

even if they can't find the alignment with the broader provincial priorities?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** Yes. My quick answer is yes. I think it gives a little bit of guidance and a little bit of structure to—a little bit of self-help on the part of the municipalities working with developer partners and figuring out what might work. That's sometimes all it takes.

**Mr. Andrew Dowie:** Thank you very much, Chair. I will pass to member Coe.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Coe, please go ahead. There is a minute and 45 seconds.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Mr. Sutherland, you will know that I served on Durham regional council for seven years and six years on the Whitby town council chairing the planning and development committee. You will know that in the region of Durham, there is an official plan, and that official plan does have directional aspects to it for transit-oriented communities, as do the eight municipalities that comprise the region of Durham in their official plans as well. So there is a very strong structure on the way forward in order to effect what Bill 131 does. I think you would agree with that. Is that correct?

**Mr. Michael Sutherland:** I'm not going to profess to be an expert, but based on what you said and what my reading is, I would say yes.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** All right. So let me just continue. We had the regional chair here earlier, John Henry. He is very supportive of Bill 131, because it's complementary to the long-term and mid-term planning of the region of Durham as it relates to transit going into Bowmanville and the developmental opportunities that will bring as well. So thank you for your submission.

I think I'm finished here, Chair. How much time do I have left?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thirty seconds.

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Thirty seconds—so thank you very much for your perspective, but I think you would agree that the proposed new tool is going to unlock additional transit-oriented communities within the region of Durham, where you currently practise.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much to all the presenters. I will ask everyone to either disconnect or move away from the tables, and the next group will come. Thank you again for being here today.

## CITY OF OSHAWA

## YORK UNIVERSITY

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** We have one in-person and one virtual for the moment. So the city of Oshawa, Mayor Dan Carter, is going to be virtual, and York University is here today. Again, if everyone would just state their name before they start their remarks.

If we could start with you, Mayor Carter, you can begin your seven-minute presentation—or up-to-seven-minute presentation, I should say.

**Mr. Dan Carter:** First of all, Madam Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity to join you today. I hope

that this committee has been an active one, a spirited one, and I hope a lot of questions will be asked and answered.

I can take seven minutes to give you a statement, or I can just basically state where my position is: This project itself is important not only to the great city of Oshawa but to the region of Durham. I fully support Bill 131, of course. The impact that this will have as we come up to our 100th anniversary in 2024 as a city, as the great city of Oshawa—this will play a significant role in the next 100 years.

As you know, our community has changed dramatically, not only in regard to the population base, but the diversity that is happening both in our economy and also in our population, and the significance of where we need to go as a nation and as communities as we look at the complicated issues in regard to the environment and making sure that we move people efficiently, how we build new communities and make sure they're efficient, what kind of innovative ideas and tools will we be part of not only as local municipalities but with our regional partners and our provincial partners and our federal partners will be an asset and will be absolutely necessary as we move forward.

**1500**

This bill gives us the opportunity to be innovative and gives us an opportunity to be able to make sure that we're able to achieve something that will impact not only the liveability and health and well-being of our residents, but will also be a great tool in regard to making sure that we also address the big concern that everyone is concerned about, and that is our environment. Investing in public transit is a good investment not only economically, but also to quality of life, so today I stand in front of you knowing that this will have a significant impact.

We've done some data research about what the impact may be. We estimate that may be an additional 14,000 units and maybe up to 10,000 new jobs. But I also look at it and say to myself, "What will it do with our post-secondary education?" Right at this particular time, our post-secondary educational facilities welcome 142 different nations from around the world. What that opportunity shows is that not only is Ontario leading in education, but it is also open to the world. The great city of Oshawa is part of that partnership and wants to continue to see it grow.

This is an innovative idea, responsible to taxpayers, responsible to local government. It shows a good partnership in regard to all the partners that are at the table. I truly believe that this is one of the innovative ideas that I think all of us are going to have to get comfortable with as we move forward.

Madam Chair, I thank you for the opportunity to have a few remarks, and I'm open to any questions that you believe would be necessary. I wish you the best of the day.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you so much, Mayor Carter.

We're going to go then to York University representatives for their presentation. Please start.

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues. I am the chief of government and community relations and protocol

at York University. On behalf of the university and our president and vice-chancellor, Rhonda Lenton, I would like to thank you for allowing us to speak on Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act.

York University is Ontario's second-largest university. We are home to more than 53,000 students and over 7,000 staff and faculty. We have two campuses in Toronto, and we will open our brand new campus in the city of Markham next September.

Our community members use the TTC to connect to other services to travel within the greater Toronto area. These include GO Transit, York Region Transit, Viva, Brampton Transit, Züm, MiWay, Durham Region Transit and others.

As a long-time member of Metrolinx's Smart Commute program, we encourage our community members to take public transit as an alternative to single-occupant vehicles. In September, we became the first Canadian university to earn the designation of best university for commuters, as many of our sustainable travel options are available to our community. We have two subway stations located on our Keele campus, and we are served by a number of TTC bus routes for our Toronto campuses.

The proposed amendments to the City of Toronto Act in schedule 1 of Bill 131 will have the biggest impact on our community to take a step forward to a more integrated transit system in the greater Toronto area.

A survey of our community members was conducted in 2022 and revealed the following:

- over 75% of our students, staff and faculty use public transit;
- the median average distance travelled is between 21 and 30 kilometres in one trip;
- the average time to travel is up to 60 minutes;
- the TTC is one of the most-used transit systems amongst our community; and
- the use of public transit by our students has significantly increased, from 64% prior to the pandemic to 74% in 2022.

These findings suggest that our community members would benefit from allowing the TTC to enter into agreements with other municipalities to integrate transit services. These changes have the potential to create more options for transit with greater convenience and to increase the frequency of trips. This would contribute to shorter commute times and encourage more people to consider taking transit. This would help to reduce congestion on our roads and improve the movement of goods.

We know that over 70% of our students at York University work part-time while studying at York. Accessible and affordable public transit is critically important to our community. York University students work, on average, 9.3 hours per week, compared to the Ontario average of 5.9 hours per week, so it would be beneficial for our students to have access to a fully integrated transit system so that they can get to work, to campus and to enjoy other activities in an efficient manner.

This is further underscored by our 2019 research project, called StudentMoveTO, which involved 10 GTA universities



and colleges, including York University, looking at the use of public transit by post-secondary students. As part of that project, a large survey of students was conducted, and respondents noted that commuting was found to affect the degree to which they participated in academic and extra-curricular campus life:

—41% of those students reported that their commute discouraged them from coming to campus;

—60% reported that their commute discouraged them from participating in campus activities and events;

—46% reported that they picked their courses based on their commute; and

—lastly, and most importantly, 31% of students reported that their commute was a barrier to their academic success.

It is clear that a more integrated transit system will not only contribute to student well-being and participation in campus life but will support academic success, which will benefit our students but also contribute to addressing the talent needs of the province.

While not directly mentioned in Bill 31, I would be remiss if I did not add that we support the government's intention to eliminate the TTC fares for riders transferring to and from GO Transit by February 2024.

In closing, York University is supportive of the measures that would make travel across the GTA more integrated, efficient, affordable, accessible and convenient. These proposed changes will positively impact the academic success of our students, improve the quality of life for our community members and reduce congestion on our roads. Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on this bill.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you so much to both of the presenters. We appreciate that.

We'll now move to questions and answers, and we're going to start with the official opposition. MPP Harden, please start.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I was very interested in both presentations. Thank you very much for both being here.

Ms. Maxwell Rodrigues, you said a number of things that were eye-popping me to me, but the one that stood out was the notion that 36% of students at York, my alma mater, are having their academic success impacted from transit and community-related issues. I got that right?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** It's 31% of the respondents of all the 10 colleges and universities, so it's actually quite broader. It would be for the entire GTA.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Wow, okay. We heard earlier from TTCriders, the organization in the city representing transit users, that they have a concern with the integration of transit agencies, particularly along avenues near York, like Steeles that borders with York; they're worried that service integration and service frequency may suffer. Is that something you're worried about if people are already having significant academic concerns that are related to transit and commuting? If we pursue this path, which I think is a path we can agree on—that there should be fare integration and service integration—should that come at the expense of service frequency?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** I would say that our community expects that any changes that would be made to the system are really putting the user at the centre and really thinking about ways to encourage transit adoption. So that would be increasing service frequency, looking at fare integration, looking at where there are underserved communities that could benefit from increase transit. But I can't speak to how the implementation of the legislation would impact service delivery. I'm not sure that that's written in that document.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Thanks for the comment. What I can say, just for the record, being familiar with schedule 1 here, is that there hasn't been a lot of consultation to date around neighbouring jurisdictions in specifying these details which are so important. What will happen when Durham Region Transit or when York Region Transit interact with the TTC? Can riders expect the same amount of service?

A number of my friends and government have said several times—and I take the point—that people don't care about the colour of the bus; they just want the bus to be there, and they want to be able to get to school, to get to work and then to get home. Fair enough. But if the bus is coming every hour instead of every half an hour, if the bus is not in the state of repair that is appropriate for one transit agency relative to another, I think—would you agree that it's important for these really critical service operational needs to be ironed out ahead of time with proper consultation between those transit agencies?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** What I can say is that York University has a very good relationship with all the transit providers that connect into York. There is regular conversation about the needs of our community, the frequency, any changes that we might be seeing in transit patterns, and I would say that our transit partners, such as York Region Transit, have been very responsive to any of those types of issues that we might flag for them.

1510

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Well, I think that's a model, quite frankly, for the province that we should be following—making sure that however this legislation rolls out, it's not done at the expense of transit riders and folks working in the system.

Mayor Carter, it's a pleasure to see you here this afternoon. Thank you for making time for us. I want to follow up on something you said. I heard of you as a very enthusiastic person, and you expressed that enthusiasm this afternoon. Thank you for that. I also want to make sure that I understand you correctly, though, because as I've asked other people coming from the perspective which I understand you to be coming from—a borough of Toronto, as it were; a proper city, Oshawa, a great city, but a borough of Toronto—my understanding is that a lot of people would like the province to play a more active role in financing provincial infrastructure. That's not just true of this bill; it's true of a lot of different things.

I understand schedule 2 of this bill to be now asking you, municipalities, to be bearing the risk for the financial cost of GO stations. Do you have any concerns with that? I've done some research in getting ready for today, and

I'm not aware of any other instance in our country where municipalities are being asked to bear the financial costs of building provincial infrastructure. If the province could help you, either with an amendment to this bill or in commitments they're going to make after this bill is passed, if it's passed, to actually help defray the costs that you're now going to bear—that Metrolinx, under the laws that we have, should be bearing—would that be something you would welcome?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** I want to answer this in the very best way I possibly can, and what I'm going to say is, I think that this moment in history—not only in our province, but across this country in every municipality—has to be innovative in regard to what we're going to do to be able to accomplish the task. What this is all about is the regions putting forward a plan to be able to get these stations put in place and then working with the developers to offset the cost. I think it's a fair way of being able to accomplish both.

We believe that public transit plays a significant role in regard to moving people. It's good for the environment. It's good for the local economy. It's good for every aspect of it.

What we do understand is, every government and every taxpayer, at this particular time, is stretched to the limit. We have to find innovative ways of being able to deliver the services that the residents and the taxpayers pay for. I think this is an innovative way. I think it's a first step in regard to a lot of innovations that will happen, and I think that we should not limit ourselves by being a little uncomfortable from being able to find interesting ideas and concepts to be able to move forward; the last point being, I think we have to understand that this is going to be evolutionary. I think that we're going to learn through the process. We're going to learn what works and what doesn't work, how we can apply it, where else we should apply it and how we make sure that this is a true partnership.

The one thing that I'm totally against is, "This is a provincial issue. You guys have to fix it." We're all partners. We all represent our residents, so that means that I have to have a strong partnership with the region, I have to have a strong partnership with the province, and I have to have a strong partnership with the federal government. I refuse to sit here and say, "Province, you must do it." If we want these services and we believe it's the best thing for our residents, then we have to be part of the solution. And that's what this bill does, in my opinion.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Chair, how much time do we have left?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** You have 50 seconds.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Well, I have to tell you, Mr. Carter, your reputation precedes you, but you may be the most enthusiastic booster of the bill this afternoon.

I will say this just for the record, and it will segue into the next round: I do want to see Metrolinx and the province playing a role. I do see significant funds available at the provincial level to help with what you're being allowed to do, and I am aware that you're in a context where revenue-generation tools at the municipal level have diminished significantly. We are happy for your enthusiasm, and I share

it, but I want to make sure that the province is also playing its role to help with the visionary work that you and your colleagues are trying to do.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP McMahon, please, for four and a half minutes.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** If you think he's enthusiastic online, you should meet him in person. Holy firecracker.

Thank you so much, Dan, Your Worship, for being here—or online. I love how you just slipped in an adjective—you probably made it permanent—"the great city of Oshawa"; I don't think you say that without it. It's like me and "beautiful Beaches—East York." I think we all have that for our areas.

I'm going to ask you the same questions I'm going to ask our York University wizard over there. What we've heard to date—because I don't think you have heard all the testimony today—is that people have mentioned fare integration, as my colleague has mentioned, as being important to look at in this bill and seamless transfer between jurisdictions, service standards maintained—and, heaven forbid, improved; I'm a huge transit rider myself, if I'm not on my bike—and addressing areas that are underserved by transit.

I just would love your thoughts on that. Are we missing anything? Is there anything you could add or correct?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** No. I think that all those points are very, very important.

I have a lot of faith in our transit systems and the people that represent each of the services. I think that everybody has been looking at how they modernize their fleet, how they improve on their customer service aspect. What are we looking at in value for dollars? How do we integrate and make sure the connections are working well?

I think, again, that this comes back down to the principles of this bill, and based upon what I believe—I believe that partnerships are going to be necessary in all aspects of whatever we undertake in this province and across this country. I think it's really important that all interested parties are at the table. But I also understand that it has to be evolutionary; we're going to learn as we go through what worked, what didn't work and what we hear back. Making sure that the lines of communication, especially those that are using the services—it's so important as we start embarking in regards to this integration. We've got to make sure that we're open not only to the good news, but also to the criticism that I think we're going to get—but that's okay; that's where our growth and where service enhancements and excellence live. If we don't open ourselves up to understanding this is an evolutionary process and we're so rigid about it, I don't think that we will be doing anybody a service.

That's just my opinion, and I thank you for the question.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** All right, great, and we'll see you again in real life.

And then—I'm sorry, Ms. Maxwell Rodrigues; I didn't get the pronunciation of your first name and I don't want to ruin it.

**Ms. Jade Maxwell Rodrigues:** It's "Jade." The I is silent.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Oh, okay. Great.

So, Ijade, the same kind of question for you: Is anything missing from those? Fare integration, seamless transfer between jurisdictions, service standards maintained and improved, and addressing areas underserved by transit: Is there anything else you would add?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** I think you've covered it. I would say that for our students in particular, fare integration is something that is very important. Many of our community members take more than one transit provider to get to campus. We know from the fact that our students are working hard and doing part-time jobs that we don't want any barriers to have them not complete their post-secondary studies because of increased costs. So we are very much encouraged by efforts to eliminate the TTC fares for those that will be taking GO come February 2024 and any other efforts around fare integration that will encourage adoption of public transit.

I think York is a wonderful example of how in the span of two decades, we went from 75% of our community members taking single-occupancy vehicles to 75% of those community members now taking public transit. So it absolutely can be done. We would love to see that number higher, and we know that any improvements in the creation of an integrated transit system will help to further adoption by the public to take on public transit. So we encourage that.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Awesome. Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much. That's the end of this round.

Over to the government side for seven and a half minutes—

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Oh, competition. Who's up here? You're going first? MPP Pang, please go ahead.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you to Ijade: Thank you for your presentation today. I love to hear that most of your staff and students are looking forward to public transit that can be integrated by different regions.

I'm from Hong Kong. In the year 2000, I witnessed the change of the Hong Kong development and economy. In Hong Kong, last century, there were three pieces of land that were disconnected: Kowloon peninsula, Hong Kong Island and Lantau island. In the 1970s, the first cross-harbour tunnel was built from Hong Kong Island to Kowloon peninsula. The first thing they had to deal with is there were two different companies running the transit, so now they have to work the integration. Now we have three cross-harbour tunnels and another bridge to Lantau Island. That's three major transits they have to integrate together, so they have a lot of negotiation. Now, it's working very well. From point A to point B, they can ride either company A or company B or company C's transit, which is very good.

1520

In this part of the bill, we are introducing the Transportation for the Future Act, 2023. Integration is a must for the economy moving forward. You talked about the benefits a little bit already. Can you expand more from

your perspective about this integration to help your students moving around campus—we have one of your campuses that will be in my riding; I'm so proud of that—moving around the campus and the residents, and in a broader sense, how you think this integration can help the students moving around in the city, and also how this helps post-secondary students? Especially when I was here in the 1990s, last century, as an international student, the first thing I had to look into, once I got off the plane, was “I need to find a car.” Now, if I have the bus, I have transit, maybe I don't need a car at all. So can you expand a little bit from your perspective on how this integration helps?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** For sure. I'll bring you back to one of the stats that I spoke to in the 2019 StudentMoveTO survey where 46% students from those 10 post-secondary institutions pick their courses based on their commute. So we know that students, for example, at York will load all of their courses into one or two days so that they do not have to come to campus five days a week, because if their commute is 60 minutes plus, there is two hours plus per day that they're commuting, and that takes them away from studying; it takes them away from their part-time job or other commitments that they might have outside of school.

Imagine a world in which all of our transit systems are integrated and you can catch the bus or the train or whatever is your mode of transportation on a regular basis, and you're not worrying about, “Is this TTC going to join up with YRT? And do I have to wait an hour at the corner of Rutherford and Jane to get to the campus?” This is what students are calculating when they're thinking through their course selection. Ideally, we want the students to pick their courses based on the courses that they are most interested in, that fit their degree program, that are the ones that they want to take, as opposed to, “I can only take courses that are available on Tuesdays and Wednesdays because that's when I'm trying to condense my time on campus because of my long commute.”

That's just a practical example of how we hope—again, I can't speak to the implementation of this legislation—it would be realized: again, putting the rider at the centre of that experience, thinking through ways to reduce barriers, whether it's around fares or whether it's around waiting in between transfers between various different service providers.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Thank you very much. I think we cannot avoid the time that we take from point A to point B, but lowering the cost and time is very significant. Thank you very much.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, please go ahead.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I will direct my comments to Mayor Carter, but I did want to just state on the record that the government is investing \$70.5 billion over the next decade to build public transit, including our GO expansion. That is a historical investment, and for every \$3 that we are putting into our transit, we're putting \$1 into highways and roads. I think that's also a very important statistical fact for all of us to understand.

Mayor, Oshawa is a beautiful city. I've had the opportunity to visit it a few times. You have a thriving Polish Canadian community at the General Sikorski Hall. They throw a very good party; I'm sure you've been there before. And, yes, Polish Canadians are also commuters. I'm sure they are very thrilled that our government is putting this bill forward to ensure that your municipality does have tools that will help you with needed transit expansion, including a potential GO station. Can you tell us, from your perspective, does the proposed tool support the city in ensuring the funding delivery of the new GO station in your community?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** I guess there are a couple of things. One is that I want to say thank you, and I appreciate the opening statement that you made in regard to the investments that are being made. World-class cities and world-class countries continue to invest in world-class transit systems, and I think that all of us play a role in regard to delivering those services.

It always comes back down to the same piece, and the same piece comes down to this: The reality is that the health and well-being of individuals benefit when we have a great transit system. I know that personally, because my previous partner used to have to travel by car each and every day into her workplace, and that was a three-hour commute back and forth in regard to the full day. So by the end of the week, it was close to 20 hours away from family and friends—about that balance—and I know the impact this played on their lives. My former partner now works locally and has the opportunity to utilize public transit, and the quality-of-life and health indicators are tremendous.

So that's got to be the centre in regard to any type of transit initiative. This transit initiative doesn't stand alone, though. It has to—

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Twenty seconds.

**Mr. Dan Carter:** —in regard to an overall transit strategy, and I believe that Durham Region Transit, along with Metrolinx, is working towards that. I think it's important that we look at it as a whole system, not just a part of a system, and how people will end up benefiting.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much. Two seconds left.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Harden, over to the official opposition for seven and a half minutes, please.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Mayor Carter, back to you again: I know Oshawa to be a labour town, frankly. Oshawa is one of those places where a lot of people physically make the stuff that we appreciate as Canadians. I also know a lot of the transit operators in your community—because I've been through and met with them—the people who drive the buses, who fix the buses, and they tell me they appreciate their relationship with the municipality; that it's a partnership.

My worry about schedule 1 of this bill, the amendment to the City of Toronto Act, is that part of it unilaterally opens up collective agreements signed in good faith between the Amalgamated Transit Workers Union Local

113 and the city of Toronto. My worry about that, Mayor Carter, is that that organization's president has told me they were never consulted on Bill 113 leading up to today, and that that collective agreement—as you know from people in your city, people work hard on these things. There are trade-offs. There are compromises.

There's a letter of understanding to the collective agreement that specifically deals with ATU 113 and the city of Toronto, that specifically deals with this issue of service integration. As you can imagine, the union is very concerned that the standards of service, the quality of vehicles, the frequency of service and the compensation for the people driving and operating the service are maintained across jurisdictions and that this is not a tool used for contracting out.

So my question to you, sir, is, if Queen's Park decided to open up collective agreements that the city of Oshawa negotiated in good faith with people who work for the city, do you think that would be a positive or a not-so-useful development for you?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** The way that I can answer that is that the relationship that not only I have—that stretches over a 25-year period with Unifor and CAW, who represent our Durham Region Transit workers—has always been a very positive one.

As you know, three days before I took the oath of office, of course, we had the announcement from General Motors that they were ceasing production here in the city of Oshawa. That really meant that there had to be leadership on both sides: It had to come from General Motors and it had to come from Unifor, and it also had to come from myself as the chief executive officer of the great city of Oshawa. I have all the respect in the world not only for those men and women who go to work each and every day and commit themselves in regard to great customer service excellence, but also that agreements are made in regards to good faith and that they're negotiated accordingly.

I truly believe that the relationship that we have established with Unifor and the other labour associations that we work with, especially here in the great city of Oshawa—because you're absolutely right; we have a long history in regard to labour and the partnerships—has to be based upon respect, and it also has to be based upon understanding that an obligation is there and that it must be respected at all times. I have all the confidence in the world that we're going to be able to accomplish that. I would be bitterly disappointed if we were unable to find a pathway forward, especially with so many different unions being represented. I think it's an important aspect of this bill. I have great confidence not only in Unifor but also the men and women from all the transit systems. If integration comes and different agreements are addressed, I believe that a fair agreement can be reached. That's just my personal opinion, based upon my experience in the great city of Oshawa.

1530

**Mr. Joel Harden:** I'm going to move over to a York University perspective in a moment on the same theme, but I take your word on that. And this is what I know about

you and your reputation: that the relationship you have with the employees who operate and fix your transit system is critical. I'm going to assume that your advice to this government is that the dialogue we have with those organizations be a direct one and a productive one going forward, with 113. We have to make sure that they're at the table. That's what I understand you to say.

Moving on to a York University perspective: Having worked at York University myself, I know we don't always agree on everything between employee and employer, but the table is always there, the phone is always answered.

The same question, posed to you: Are you concerned with some of the concerns expressed to me, as the critic for transit in this province, that the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 113 that serves York University, the folks who maintain and operate the system, were not consulted on this bill? They've provided advice to this committee and they're providing a written submission, but they were not consulted on this bill. They've also told me that there is a recent arbitration ruling by Justice Kaplan which very much spells out the fact that they would consider that any service integration that happens has to involve the active engagement with the employee group; that if it were to happen with them absent—if we were to mandate it from Queen's Park, for example—that's not in keeping with the collective agreement that's signed. Would you say to my friends in government, given York University's reputation as a progressive employer, that it would be important for the employee groups to be present to make sure that transit riders, people working in the system—all of those interests—were aligned as much as possible?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** We know our transit system does not work without its workers, so our hope would be that any implementation would involve the consultations that would be needed to ensure that the implementation would be successful. As I said, we would want to put the rider at the centre, to ensure that we're thinking about that experience. Obviously, buses do not run if they are not being driven by the bus drivers. It's hard to comment on what is often complex. Labour relations, as we all know, can be complex. One would hope that any type of implementation would consider all of the various different parties that would be impacted by any changes made by implementation of this legislation.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** One minute.

**Mr. Joel Harden:** Okay. Mayor Carter, I'm going to ask you to provide some advice to this government with respect to making sure that this precedent that we're seeing here isn't repeated in other municipalities; that we make sure that when we're entering into legislation that is meant to encourage transit integrations, those employee groups are consulted ahead of time. I just want to make sure, on the record, that's advice you would share for this government.

**Mr. Dan Carter:** I want to make sure that all lines of communication are open. I think that we always benefit when there's a two-way conversation, and I would encourage that. That's the only way that we're going to find solutions in regard to complex issues. I always, always have found

that it's to communicate, over-communicate and communicate again—and I think that what you will find is the parties coming together to find a commonality and a pathway forward. That's my experience.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP McMahon, please go ahead.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** We're well aware that we're in a housing crisis and that transit-oriented communities are the dream, the goal, not only for youth but for newcomers, seniors—everyone. Who wouldn't want to just go downstairs and have a transit station right there or in the neighbourhood?

Having said that, what are your thoughts on affordable housing components to this bill, and rental components to the bill? Just in a sense—I've been telling this story all day, and I'll tell it until I'm blue in the face: I have Main Street in my beautiful Beaches–East York. It's a mobility hub, one of the biggest outside Union Station. We're putting in a second GO entrance further down the street, on Dawes Road. Metrolinx sold the property at 8 Dawes Road, having no mandate for affordable housing units on the property that was provincially owned land.

If we don't have the mandate or be the role models to adding affordable units, rental units or what have you, how can we expect developers to address this issue? Do you not think that this should be part and parcel of Bill 131 and that the province should be always be thinking about affordability in anything that is built in the province, private or public?

I'm just turning sideways; why don't we start with the great city of Oshawa mayor?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** Thank you very much. I was waiting to find out if that was directed at me. What I can say about it is that I believe that municipalities play an important role in regards to the subject matter of affordability, affordable units, looking at those that are economically or geographically challenged. Our municipality is undertaking that right now.

Our dialogue with developers in regard to new development and the opportunity to add affordable units or supportive units has been one that has been very progressive. We want to continue to be able to see that, so I think it has got to be municipally led. I don't think that we should be waiting for somebody else to say it's mandatory. I think that if we believe it's the right thing for our community, it's really important that we lead as a local municipality and make sure that that's done.

Again, as I go back to partnerships with those that are investing in our community, we have to have an honest dialogue in regard to what the economic aspects are that we're facing in our community. How are we going to meet the needs of those individuals that may be challenged in our community? How are we going to help get them housed? I think it's reasonable and it's expected out of municipalities. Don't wait for someone else to lead; we've got to lead.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Awesome.

Ijade, your thoughts?

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** One minute left.

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** I'll just speak briefly. York, especially the Keele campus, is well served by transit, so I would say that we are very much a transit-oriented community now that 75% of our community is taking public transit. And York has made a number of efforts in the last five to six years in terms of building student housing, appreciating the need for our students to have housing that is purpose-built to their needs.

We continue to explore other options as we are starting to see challenges in housing across the GTA, so this is definitely not only a York problem, but it's something that we are actively working on. We agree that affordable housing is something that we and all sectors should be thinking about, and how we address that, whether it's to support our employees or our students.

**Ms. Mary-Margaret McMahon:** Perfect—right on time.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Thank you very much. Moving over to the government side: MPP Kusendova-Bashta, please.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Thank you very much. I just wanted to state on the record that my esteemed colleague from the opposition keeps on bringing up consultations, but I would say that that is exactly what we are doing here. We are consulting with the public. In fact, this committee was under-subscribed, as you all know; we should have had two days of public hearings. So I would kindly suggest to the opposition that if they have unions and other entities that they think should be consulted on the bill, then perhaps they should let them know to come and actually present to the committee, because we were ready to have these consultations today and tomorrow, but because the committee was under subscribed, in fact, we cancelled our public hearings for tomorrow.

I wanted to continue chatting with Mayor Carter. I'm sure you were very excited in June when the government awarded the contract for advance planning to extend GO services to Bowmanville. That includes a \$730-million investment to extend the Lakeshore East GO line into Durham. Can you tell us a little bit how this was received by your community?

1540

**Mr. Dan Carter:** Can I go like this?

*Laughter.*

**Mr. Dan Carter:** You have to know—and I know that MPP Coe is in the room—the reality is we've been waiting for this for a very long time. To be able to see the progression of this project moving forward not only shows a great deal of confidence from the province of Ontario and the great cities of Oshawa and Clarington and the region of Durham, but it is also welcome news in regard to those who have been waiting for 25-plus years.

I think the awarding of the contract, moving forward, seeing activity on the sites and really seeing this project move forward has injected an enthusiasm for not only those who live here but also those who are looking to invest here and to move here. I think it plays such an important role—so don't take away that it's minimized by an announcement. That announcement played a really im-

portant role in regard to inspiring people and seeing what our city is going to look like in the future, why it's going to be progressive, why it's being innovative, why we're going to be able to move people around efficiently and why it's going to be a healthier, safer community for residents. I was ecstatic over it. I'm looking forward to the day that I finally see shovels in the ground.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** Let the record show that the mayor was putting his hands up in the air and waving.

In terms of the transit-oriented communities and the voluntary funding tool that our government is introducing, how will this impact the economic development of your city, knowing that some of your top sectors include advanced manufacturing, health technology, logistics, energy and IT?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** I'm wondering if you might get me a little bit of clarity on that question. I do apologize; I don't want to misunderstand it.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** The transit-oriented communities—where people want to live around transit—will bring economic prosperity to your city, with your top sectors including advanced manufacturing, health technology and logistics. How will those workers benefit from this model of transit-oriented communities?

**Mr. Dan Carter:** When you look at the next generation of leaders and you look at the innovators who are happening, young people want the opportunity to be able to live locally and to utilize public transit in a way to be able to move around.

My son lives in Vancouver. He's 34 years old. He doesn't own a car, and he has never had that desire because he has public transit as something that he could utilize. It is a different world than the world that I grew up in. I think it will play such a significant role in regard to keeping people here—giving them the opportunity to be educated here, giving them the opportunity to live here and giving them an opportunity to be able to start their business or their career here.

By the way, what are we going to learn from those who study public transportation? What are we going to learn about the environment? What are we going to learn about mass transit and how we redesign communities to be more efficient? That's a great opportunity for our post-secondary educational partners and our city. We're going to learn a great deal out of this investment, and that's what excites, I think, those who are in those fields and people like myself who are elected into these roles.

**Ms. Natalia Kusendova-Bashta:** I want to make a comment—not really a question—to York University. I just wanted to congratulate you on your Glendon campus. A lot of people don't know, but this is the bilingual campus 10 kilometres north of here which delivers fully bilingual education in both English and French. The principal is Marco Fiola. Please give him my regards.

I believe my colleague has more questions for York University.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** MPP Pang, please go ahead.

**Mr. Billy Pang:** Madam Chair, through you to York University: I'm so glad that the York University Markham campus will be opening very soon—it takes advantage of that it's right next to the GO station. We didn't have the opportunity to discuss the GO station earlier. The Transportation for the Future Act, 2023, if passed, will help build more GO transit stations. I don't think the Markham campus will be your last campus.

From your perspective, would this proposed new tool help unlock additional TOC opportunities—and also, say, York University, in a future campus?

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** We are very excited about the opening of our Markham campus in September 2024. Actually, the reason we selected that location was because it was close and proximate to a transit hub not only served by GO Transit, but York Region Transit and Viva.

I think we learned our lesson from building the Keele campus. At the time, it really was not well served by transit, and it took us a very long time—and we are grateful for the investment from all three levels of government in terms of looking at bringing the subway to York University and our Keele campus.

What I would say is that the expansion of transit—we know our community lives throughout the 905 and the GTA.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Sixty seconds.

**Ms. Ijade Maxwell Rodrigues:** So, really, any opportunity to provide additional transit that our community members could use to travel to our campuses, wherever they are located—and if we have other ones, I think they would be well served by transit. York University is very supportive of public transit, and so any opportunity to expand service and to allow for community members to take public transit, we would be in support of.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** There's 30 seconds, so whatever you would like—

*Interjection.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Okay. Thank you very much to the presenters for this final round today. We appreciate you coming in person and virtually. Thank you, Your Worship—

**Mr. Lorne Coe:** Bye, Danny.

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Yes, everybody is waving. And thank you to Ijade for coming from York University. I'll allow you to escape, if you would like.

I'll just do a reminder that the deadline for filing written submissions to Bill 131 is 7 p.m. on Thursday, October 19, 2023.

And I will pose the question: Is there any further business today? I believe MPP Rae has some further business. Please go ahead.

**Mr. Matthew Rae:** Thank you, Chair. I do have a few motions.

The first motion is: I move that the committee enter closed session for the purposes of organizing committee business.

*Interjections.*

**The Chair (Ms. Laurie Scott):** Okay. I'll wait until members get back in their seats, basically. Thank you.

MPP Rae has moved a motion to move into closed session for the remainder of the committee. Is there any debate? Seeing none, are the members ready to vote? All those in favour of MPP Rae's motion, please raise your hand. All those opposed, please raise your hand. I declare the motion carried.

We will take a few minutes to prepare the room, so take a few moments if you need to.

*The committee continued in closed session at 1549.*

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Ms. Laurie Scott (Haliburton–Kawartha Lakes–Brock PC)

### **Substitutions / Membres remplaçants**

Mr. Andrew Dowie (Windsor–Tecumseh PC)

### **Clerk / Greffier**

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