

PANELISTS' RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS POSED AT THE TRANSPORT ACTION PRE-ELECTION PUBLIC MEETING, SEPTEMBER 8, 2011

METRO HALL, TORONTO

Cheri DiNovo, NDP MPP for Parkdale-High Park, Frank De Jong, Green Party candidate for

Davenport and Frank Klees, PC MPP for Newmarket-Aurora spelled out their party's positions on various aspects of transportation at a Transport Action Ontario forum on

Sept. 8. All three political representatives made excellent points. The proceedings, attended by about forty people, were recorded and are available in two big mp3 files and are summarized below.

OPENING COMMENTS:

FDJ: Transportation is a dual system: Active affluent adults who drive, and everyone else. The two systems are not mutually compatible. The low incremental cost to users of automobile is what drives automobile use and therefore higher infrastructure requirements. Cars are artificially cheap.

CDN: NDP will upload 50% of transit operating costs in return for a 4 year fare freeze. The four billion dollar cut from Transit City was regrettable. She fought for continuation of Greyhound bus intercity service. Province should develop a biking strategy, for example: highways should have paved shoulders. Proposing a "1 meter rule" , where cars cannot encroach within this distance from a cyclist.

FK: Agrees with the Toronto Board of Trade report that demands a solution to Toronto area gridlock. PC's have committed \$35B to infrastructure investment. Each road/transit proposal will be tested on its ability to move people or goods, and the ones with highest value for money will be funded. Rural areas and all municipalities in the province should share the gas tax.

METROLINX FUNDING AND GOVERNANCE:

FDJ: Capture the uptick in land values that are generated by transit. London's Jubilee (subway) line cost three billion pounds but uptick is thirteen billion pounds. Do not fund transit from the property tax. The Air-Rail link is insane; who goes downtown to downtown?

CDN: Proposing to permanently dedicate the gas tax to transit. Capture land value. Do not support road tolls, as they penalize the poor. Look upon transit funding by government not as a cost, but as an investment. The requirement of Metrolinx Big Move plan to produce an investment strategy by 2013 is too long a wait. These types of decisions normally take about three months. The delay was directed by the provincial government. The AirRail Link (ARL) is an elite project. Metrolinx decisions need to be transparent and accountable.

FK: The wait for a funding strategy until 2013 is too long. There are alternate ways of funding and one is working with the private sector. Capture land value. Review membership of the Metrolinx board based on transportation expertise.

#### LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT NETWORK vs SUBWAYS:

FK: Transportation decisions should be beyond politics. Projects should survive elections.

FDJ: People should remain above ground, not underground. We should have LRT everywhere. Provincial and federal governments have to step in with a solution. Private and public money should be made available. Carbon pricing should be applied to transit.

CDN: Transit City should go forward. Decisions must outlast government changes.

#### HIGH SPEED RAIL:

FDJ: You cannot go from a car culture directly to HSR. Intermediate steps are essential. To help fund, use carbon pricing. Supports electrification of rail transportation (a requisite of HSR). Population densities in Southern Ontario are comparable to Europe.

CDN: The NDP platform supports HSR in the Windsor/Quebec City corridor. Seventeen HSR studies that have been done are enough. First nations have to be at the table in planning for HSR. Supports electrification.

FK: Our pension funds including Teachers' Pension Fund are funding European infrastructure projects. We need a public/private partnership (ppp) to fund HSR.

#### RURAL TRANSIT:

CDN: Fought for continuation of Greyhound intercity service. If rural transit was supported, towns would flourish.

FK: Ontario Government, through GO Transit, has decided to get into competition with private bus operators, creating an unlevel playing field. GO Transit receives less scrutiny on safety than private operators.

FDJ: If autos and petroleum fuels were priced properly, this would inherently support bus operations.

#### SUPPORT FOR ONTARIO NORTHLAND RAILWAY (Question from floor):

All three representatives indicated support for ONR, as an important economic and public service for rural Ontario.

#### SUSTAINABILITY/TRAFFIC CONGESTION:

FK: People have the right to choose between city and suburban living. Province should promote proper planning principles – live, work play. The OMB is bound by provincial legislation to make its decisions based on proper planning principles.

FDJ: Taxing the value of land, not buildings should help control sprawl. Highway traffic management systems should improve sustainability and reduce congestion. Road pricing using GPS-based systems is a powerful congestion reduction approach that also raises revenue. Paying people to not use employer provided parking spaces will reduce traffic.

CDN: Concerned about backroom deals between developers and government that are encroaching on the greenbelt. Feels OMB needs reform.

#### HOW TO GET PEOPLE TO MAKE THE RIGHT TRAVEL CHOICES (Question from floor):

FK: People value choice. Will take transit if reliable, safe and fast.

CDN: Transit needs to be made faster and biking needs to be made safer

FDJ: Need better urban design. Pay-as-you-drive insurance incents people to drive less

#### WILL YOUR PARTY COMMIT 2% OF THE TRANSPORTATION BUDGET TO CYCLING (Question from floor):

CDN: Up to cabinet to decide. The NDP does have a cycling strategy, eg 1 m rule

FDJ: No. This will happen by itself under proper auto pricing.

FK: Cannot commit 2% at this time. Government does need a cycling strategy.

#### FEELINGS ABOUT ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD (OMB) AND ANTI-SLAPP (STRATEGIC LAWSUITS AGAINST PUBLIC PARTICIPATION) LEGISLATION (Question from floor):

FDJ: The OMB should be abolished. Development should be under the authority of local councils.

FK: The OMB is a quasi-judicial body that is governed by planning principles. Planning decisions should not be overridden by politicians and residents. Supports anti-SLAPP legislation.

CDN: OMB should be reformed. The NDP has proposed anti-SLAPP legislation.

## WRAPUP COMMENTS:

In summary Peter Miasek, president of Transport Action Ontario, noted areas where all three party representatives agreed including:

- the importance of cost-effective urban transit systems
- get transit project implementation beyond politics
- capture land value uplift revenues
- support for the Ontario Northland Railway
- people will choose transit or other sustainable travel modes if the choices are reliable, fast and safe