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Archived - September 2016 Mandate letter: Transportation

Premier's instructions to the Minister on priorities.



September 23, 2016

The Honourable Steven Del Duca
Minister of Transportation
77 Wellesley Street West
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Toronto, Ontario
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Dear Minister Del Duca:

Welcome back to your role as Minister of Transportation. As we mark the mid-point of our mandate, we have a strong and new Cabinet, and are poised to redouble our efforts to deliver on our top priority — creating jobs and growth. Guided by our balanced plan to build Ontario up for everyone, we will continue to work together to deliver real benefits and more inclusive growth that will help people in their everyday lives.

We embark on this important part of our mandate knowing that our four-part economic plan is working — we are making the largest investment in public infrastructure in Ontario's history, making postsecondary education more affordable and accessible, leading the transition to a low-carbon economy and the fight against climate change, and building retirement security for workers.

Building on our ambitious and activist agenda, and with a focus on implementing our economic plan, we will continue to forge partnerships with businesses, educators, labour, communities, the not-for-profit sector and with

all Ontarians to foster economic growth and to make a genuine, positive difference in people's lives. Collaboration and active listening remain at the heart of the work we undertake on behalf of the people of Ontario — these are values that ensure a common purpose, stimulate positive change and help achieve desired outcomes. With this in mind, I ask that you work closely with your Cabinet colleagues to deliver positive results on initiatives that cut across several ministries, such as our Climate Change Action Plan, Business Growth Initiative, and the Highly Skilled Workforce Strategy. I also ask you to collaborate with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government to drive digital transformation across government and modernize public service delivery.

We have made tangible progress and we have achieved the following key results:

- Worked closely with municipalities and local governments to build an integrated transportation network that will strengthen Ontario's economy and build Ontario up.
- Ongoing delivery of \$31.5 billion under Moving Ontario Forward investments in transit, transportation and other priority infrastructure projects across the province, including Regional Express Rail (RER).
- Announced funding for the Hamilton, Hurontario and Ottawa Phase 2 Light Rail Transit (LRT) projects and annual funding of \$15 million for the Connecting Links program.
- Announced Ontario's plans to further expand GO rail service to communities such as Kitchener-Waterloo, Bowmanville and Niagara Falls, and build more GO stations as part of the implementation of RER.
- Announced the extension of Highway 407 and opened Phase 1 in June 2016.
- Launched a pilot project for High Occupancy Toll lanes on the Queen Elizabeth Way.
- Passed the *Making Ontario's Roads Safer Act* to improve safety for all road users through measures including increased penalties for distracted driving, higher fines for dooring and a one-metre passing rule to protect cyclists.
- Launched a distracted driving awareness advertising campaign.
- Announced the \$20 million investment from Ontario's Green Investment Fund to build nearly 500 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at over 250 locations in Ontario by March 2017.
- Modernized the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program to make EVs more affordable and to provide additional incentives for vehicles with larger batteries and greater capacity to carpool.
- Announced a \$10 million investment to help 37 municipalities to build new or improve existing cycling infrastructure through the Ontario Municipal Cycling Infrastructure Program.

Your mandate is to oversee a world-class provincial transit and transportation system that moves people and goods safely, efficiently and sustainably to support a globally competitive economy and a high quality of life. Your specific priorities include:

Building the Next Generation of Transit and Transportation Infrastructure

- Continuing to transform the existing GO Transit rail network into GO RER with electrified, 15-minute service along core segments, and finalizing a procurement strategy in 2017 for the design and construction of the entire GO RER program.
- With Metrolinx, implementing a comprehensive community engagement strategy, ensuring early and easy access to information, and the opportunity to provide feedback throughout the entire process — from project design to end of construction — by the public and all affected stakeholder groups.
- Ensuring greater transparency to the public and GO users in relation to the progress of GO RER and LRT projects through the development of web-based reporting on the status of each project including approvals, planning and construction.
- Continuing discussions with municipalities, local governments and transit riders with a view to create an integrated travel experience in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area through fare integration.
- Initiating discussions with municipalities and the public on what is needed to improve accessible transit within and across municipal borders, and report back by end of 2017.
- Increasing the number of Ontarians using Presto by enhancing the Presto service to make it easier and more convenient for cardholders. Explore opportunities to expand services that can be accessed with

Presto cards and report back by mid-2017.

- Continuing investment in our provincial highway network — in 2016-17, we are committing more than \$2.7 billion to continue to design, repair and expand provincially owned highways and bridges across Ontario.

Modernizing Transportation Policy

- Completing consultations and report on the review of the *Metrolinx Act* by 2017. As part of the review, identify ways to ensure stronger links between transit investments and transit supportive development.
- Working with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, as that ministry completes the Co-ordinated Review of Provincial Plans, to ensure there is policy alignment and support for environmentally sensitive infrastructure between the plans and the Ministry of Transportation's Transit Supportive Guidelines and other policy directives including the Provincial Policy Statement.
- Continuing to support the Special Advisor on High Speed Rail in the development of his report back on the economic development opportunities, financing models and feasibility for delivering high speed rail in Southwestern Ontario, in fall 2016. You will also issue the Request for Proposal for the Environmental Assessment related to this project in 2017.
- Developing recommendations for an improved intercommunity transportation regime by 2017 that also considers options to take advantage of opportunities afforded by the sharing economy with special consideration to the needs of those northern, rural and First Nations communities where currently available intercity bus transport is not in line with demand.
- Continuing work on establishing Ontario as a leader in building multi-modal linkages, connecting roads, rail, air and marine transportation, through work such as the Northern Ontario Multimodal Strategy, to be delivered by 2017 that includes consideration of all-season roads in the Far North, the Greater Golden Horseshoe Multimodal Strategy and Plan to be delivered by 2018 and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Maritime Transportation System Strategy.
- Working with the Minister of Economic Development and Growth, leading the development of a Centre of Excellence for autonomous vehicles by 2018.

Strengthening Road Safety to Maintain Ontario's Ranking as One of the Lowest Fatality Rate Jurisdictions in North America

- Leading the development of measures to ensure safety for all road users, particularly by addressing areas of highest risk including pedestrian, cycling and truck safety, driver distraction and impaired driving.

Supporting Implementation of Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan

- As part of helping to achieve greenhouse gas emission reductions in the transportation sector, supporting implementation of relevant actions in the Climate Change Action Plan including:
 - Increasing the uptake of electric vehicles by annually reviewing the Electric Vehicle Incentive Program for 2017 and delivering additional rounds of the EV Chargers Ontario program to help make Ontario the easiest jurisdiction in North America to charge an electric car.
 - Supporting the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Economic Development and Growth in the deployment of natural gas and hydrogen and fueling stations for commercial vehicles.
 - Working with the Minister of Education and the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change, launch an electric school bus pilot in at least five communities, including urban, suburban, northern and rural, to reduce costs, reduce toxic emissions, and fight climate change.
- Building on the success of the province's first-ever cycling strategy, #CycleON, lead efforts to make commuter cycling easier and safer throughout the province using up to \$225 million being funded through Cap and Trade proceeds, supported by other relevant ministries, including the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport.

In addition to the priority activities above, I ask that you also deliver results for Ontarians by driving progress in the following areas:

- Continue to support priority transportation initiatives through *Moving Ontario Forward*, including local and regional transit, roads, bridges and strategic highway improvements.
- Continue to support the expert panel reviewing the G.T.A. West Corridor project, with the aim to make a decision on the future of the G.T.A. West Corridor by the end of 2016.
- Improve consumer convenience by discounting the price of two-year vehicle validation tags by the end of 2017.
- Implement a modernized Ontario 511 traveler information services program.

As you know, taking action on the recommendations contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission report is a priority for our government. That is why we released *The Journey Together*, a document that serves as a blueprint for making our government's commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples a reality. As we move forward with the implementation of the report, I ask you and your fellow Cabinet members to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities.

Having made significant progress over the past year in implementing our community hubs strategy, I encourage you and your Cabinet colleagues to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.

Responsible fiscal management remains an overarching priority for our government — a priority echoed strongly in our 2016 Budget. Thanks to our disciplined approach to the province's finances over the past two years, we are on track to balance the budget next year, in 2017–18, which will also lower the province's debt-to-GDP ratio. Yet this is not the moment to rest on our past accomplishments: it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

Marathon runners will tell you that an event's halfway mark is an opportunity to reflect on progress made — but they will also tell you that it is the ideal moment to concentrate more intently and to move decisively forward. At this halfway mark of this government's mandate, I encourage you to build on the momentum that we have successfully achieved over the past two years, to work in tandem with your fellow ministers to advance our economic plan and to ensure that Ontario remains a great place to live, work and raise a family.

I look forward to working together with you to build opportunity and prosperity for all Ontarians.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Wynne
Premier

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