



Residential & Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario

Constructing Ontario's Future

Congestion Mitigation Technologies offer Solutions for the Greater Toronto, Hamilton Area

TORONTO - April 3, 2013 - When and where the volume of commuters exceeds the capacity of infrastructure, traffic congestion is the inevitable result. Ask any driver in Southern Ontario and they are sure to have traffic nightmare stories to tell.

Transportation failure is gradual and it becomes worse with time at an increasing rate. More demand and less capacity, due to volume, accidents or construction means more spread of congestion over wider spaces and longer times. This results in lower service quality, as well as rising economic and social costs in this region.

These findings come from the report entitled, "Congestion Management in the GTHA: Balancing the Inverted Pendulum." It was prepared for the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario and authored by a team from the University of Toronto's Intelligent Transportation Systems Centre, led by its Director, Professor Baher Abdulhai.

"Transit expansion and road improvements are clearly required in this region, but we must also address congestion in smarter ways. This report makes a strong case for investing in technology to improve the capacity of both existing and new infrastructure," said Andy Manahan, Executive Director of the RCCAO.

Among Abdulhai's recommendations:

- Introduce Intelligent Transportation Systems to maximize infrastructure efficiency. For example, smart, self-learning traffic lights will cut down intersection delay and improve traffic flow across the whole road network.
- Manage congestion using road pricing to reduce capacity loss, moderate road use and generate revenues for reinvestment in the transportation system. Solutions are being developed to implement "dynamic congestion pricing" as a way to influence travel behaviour and spread travel demand more evenly across modes (e.g., transit, bike, walk, carpool), over time and along alternative routes.

- Encourage an open service innovation model to harness the collective intelligence of the community, including the public, private and academic sectors as well as the travellers. Open innovation can create an eco-system of solution providers that creates innovative solutions faster, at less cost and lower risk.
- Optimize large-scale emergency evacuation that could cut down evacuation time by as much as 75%.

RCCAO and the Canadian Automobile Association are part of a coalition that has been providing input to Metrolinx, an agency of the Government of Ontario, created to improve the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Metrolinx will be delivering an investment strategy by June 1, 2013 and it is hoped that this report will be used by the Province of Ontario and municipalities to expand the range of transportation solutions.

"While cost and ability to implement may vary, recommendations such as Intelligent Transportation Systems and an expansion of our transportation infrastructure network are important to alleviate congestion. Professor Abdulhai and his team are commended for their locally developed research and solutions, some of which can help tackle gridlock and improve the quality of life for commuters," said Teresa Di Felice, Director of Government and Community Relations and Driver Training for CAA, South Central Ontario.

The RCCAO is an alliance composed of management and labour groups that represent all facets of the construction industry. Its goal is to work in cooperation with governments and related stakeholders to offer realistic solutions to a variety of challenges facing the construction industry. This is the sixth report that the RCCAO has commissioned on transportation issues in the GTHA since 2007.

For more information, a copy of the report and the Executive Summary and to arrange interviews with Abdulhai, Manahan or Di Felice, please contact:

Dena Fehir
905-923-2462
denafehir@yahoo.ca