

DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

December 5, 2008

The Big Move: Transforming Transportation

Metrolinx's first two projects could create 17,000 construction jobs in first year

VINCE VERSACE

staff writer

The first two projects in the Metrolinx regional transportation plan could deliver 17,000 construction jobs just in its first year, the transportation agency says.

"We are confident that the plan's construction program will generate almost 430,000 jobs in Ontario," said Rob MacIsaac, Chair of Metrolinx. "This launches the regional transportation plan's 15 priority projects and sets The Big Move in motion."

Construction stands to benefit throughout Metrolinx's \$7-billion, five-year capital plan, the agency says. The plan will deliver an estimated \$33.9 billion in business revenue impact on construction, engineering and transit and \$20.9 billion of "indirect impacts" for companies that supply goods and services.

The recently approved five-year capital plan is part of the larger \$50-billion, 25-year Metrolinx plan called The Big Move: Transforming Transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Metrolinx has recommended construction funding for the Sheppard East LRT and York Region's VIVA system to launch the regional plan. The agency also approved a list of 15 top transit priorities for its five-year capital plan.

"There is greater certainty as to what projects will roll out and when (with the capital plan)," said Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario and a Metrolinx advisory committee member.

"That is good from a construction perspective because as an industry we have to prepare the workforce for the projects."

Having the appropriately trained and available construction labour to tackle the Metrolinx projects is important, said Manahan. With a properly trained and readily available workforce it

helps keep “bottom line” project costs down.

Over the 25 years of the Metrolinx plan, an estimated 154,000 jobs in transit and construction will be created, along with about 116,000 jobs for companies supplying goods to construction.

Metrolinx also outlined a three-phase plan to finance its proposed transit expansions. The first phase is already underway through the \$750 million commitment to Quick-Win projects announced in the 2008 Ontario Budget.

The second phase, which begins next year with the Sheppard LRT and VIVA projects, is funded through the Ontario’s \$11.5 billion commitment to rapid transit in the GTHA. Metrolinx will report to the province by 2013 with options for funding the balance of the plan in its third phase.

Manahan said it is encouraging to see that Metrolinx has committed to starting discussions to explore funding options to meet requirements beyond 2013.

Also, Metrolinx has decided to establish a task force to look into land-value revenue capture around possible transit infrastructure.