

# National Post

Who moves and shakes the TTC?; In this occasional feature, the National Post tells you everything you need to know about a complicated issue. Today: Natalie Alcoba explains the makeup of the TTC and how mayor-elect Rob Ford can achieve his plan of stacking it with 'business types'

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Illustrations: Color Photo: /; Color Photo: Brett Gundlock, National Post / The TTC is made up of nine elected members. Under Rob Ford, the structure could change.; Color Photo: / Karen Stintz is mayor-elect Rob Ford's newly appointed TTC chair.;

**Q** What is the the governance structure of the TTC now?

**A** The TTC is made up of nine elected members of council, including a chair and a vice chair. The members of the TTC are recommended by the striking committee, then approved by council. The commission votes on a chair and a vice chair at its first meeting. Usually, it goes with the mayor's preferred pick as chair, which in this case is midtown Councillor Karen Stintz.

**Q** How did the composition of the board come to be?

**A** The TTC used to be composed of two members of council and three "citizen" representatives. But then North York Councillor Howard Moscoe led a movement to replace the citizens with elected officials, arguing that it would make the commission more accountable. The TTC later grew to seven members, and then nine.

**Q** How do you change the composition of the TTC?

**A** Actually, it's pretty straight forward. So says Nancy Autton, manager of governance and corporate performance in the City Manager's Office. A member of council can ask for a report, or directly bring a motion forward to council, which it would then have to approve. It used to be a much more complicated process, back when the TTC reported to the regional municipality of Metropolitan Toronto and any changes to its governance structure required provincial approval. "With the new City of Toronto Act, that authority has been delegated to the city," says Ms. Autton. Implementing the change, however, could take two or three months, she says.

**Q** What kind of support is there for a mixed model?

**A** Etobicoke Councillor Peter Milczyn, who currently sits on the TTC and would like to stay there, confirmed he was asked about rejigging the commission and "I said I support that completely." He says "highly qualified people can add knowledge and expertise to running the TTC, and you have some elected officials to maintain more direct accountability." He suggests keeping the composition as is for the first year as the TTC grapples with such big issues like transit expansion and smart cards. Ward 21 Councillor Joe Mihevc (St. Paul's), also a

current commissioner, believes councillors should outnumber citizens on the commission. Elected officials "bring transparency and public accountability," he argued. "I've been on public boards where there has been a mix. We should not be deceived by the argument that it brings business acumen.

**Q** What about taking the politicians off the board completely?

**A** That's what transportation expert **Richard Soberman** prefers. "What you want to have on a board is people who bring something to the party. That they have skills experience or expertise that is relevant to the decisions," says Mr. Soberman, former chair of the civil engineering department at the University of Toronto. "You do not get objectivity from people who are looking for photo-ops." The board or commission should include a range of professionals, including those in project management, urban planning, transportation operations, and finance, according to Mr. Soberman, and "should conduct themselves in a business-like manner."

**Q** What does the woman who would be the TTC chair think?

**A** Councillor Karen Stintz (Eglinton-Lawrence) agrees with a "skills-based commission" that also gives elected officials "a strong voice." She said "given the challenges we are facing financially" and the transit expansion that is underway, "there are skill sets that are needed in order to make sure the money is well spent and the system grows as we expect it to grow." Ms. Stintz said "political interference" in recent years--she cited the St. Clair Right-of-Way debacle that saw politicians changing their minds about what they wanted--served to derail some projects.