

DEEP TRANSIT

ARI GOLDKIND
on what a
better transit network
can really mean to
YOUR CITY,
what we need to do
and how we can
GET THERE.

ARI GOLDKIND
FOR MAYOR OF TORONTO

ariformayor.com



DEEP TRANSIT: THE REAL PLACE OF TRANSIT IN THE FABRIC OF OUR CITY

The first section of my transit plan, *More Than A Map*, outlines my plan to build what you care about most: a transit network that connects the entire city with a focus on bringing rapid transit to underserved parts of Toronto; how long it will take and how much it will cost; and how we will find the money to pay for one of the largest urban infrastructure plans in Canadian history.

I have also come to deeply appreciate, from conversations with residents, experts, and my campaign team, that there are thousands of Torontonians who are truly passionate about transit beyond its fundamental purpose of getting you from A to B, C and D in the course of your day. You see transit as part of a bigger picture, as a unifying link between the movement of people, public space, the environment and energy, jobs and innovation and so many other threads in the fabric of our city. You care about the conversation we have around transit with various levels of government and other partners, and you want to get a great deal more involved in that conversation. This is the essence of Deep Transit. This section is meant to jump-start the dialogue Toronto needs to be having. It discusses four themes:

- Solving political gridlock, so that the political will and the funding we need to build a transit network that is scalable to future growth is possible
- The place of transit in our broader environment and ecosystem, public spaces and our energy system that is facing profound challenges that can be innovatively addressed by transit
- Transit as an economic and social catalyst that can create more jobs, affordable housing, address income equality proactively, and even lead to a groundbreaking educational facility that will in turn create made-in-Toronto solutions designed by our own citizens
- Transit's potential to transform our economy and overall infrastructure through technological innovation

DEEP TRANSIT: SOLVING POLITICAL GRIDLOCK

Right now, the political reality of Toronto transit building is akin to the Don Valley Parking Lot or 401 at rush hour -- a lot of frustrated people honking their horns, moving at a snail's pace, and too often bumping into each other. Or, if you prefer, it's like Bloor/Yonge, Union or Kennedy stations and the King streetcar at rush hour -- a dangerously congested mass of people pushing and shoving their way up stairs and escalators onto crowded and uncomfortable subways, buses or streetcars. Until we address this, nothing is going to get any better. As of right now, there are only two things we really know: that the current provincial government has already made a long-term commitment, the feds will invest if the business case is made, and that we have an opportunity on October 27 to bring in new city leadership that doesn't treat transit as an obstacle to their SUV.

I believe there are six key parts to solving political gridlock on the transit file and that I am the ideal candidate to address them as your mayor:

- We need to engage and actively listen to transit experts, who don't have political agendas and have spent their careers studying not only Toronto transit but systems around the world that work including many in cities far more densely populated than ours. They know what needs to be done, when it can be done, and how much it will cost.
- Several experts have commented to me that City Council and our ward system are systemic barriers to transit progress. City councillors default to the lowest common denominator of getting re-elected, and are forced to fold their tents on key issues like upzoning for increasing density as soon as they encounter NIMBYism. This is not to discount the natural fear Torontonians have of being overwhelmed by higher density, and it is not meant to cast aspersions on hard-working councillors who are elected to respond to their constituents' expressed desires and needs. I believe the keys to overcoming this issue is ensuring that councillors and residents alike have all the facts and benefits (and risks) at their disposal when they have those community-level dialogues. At its essence, this is a matter of communication and planning to ensure residents' needs are met while their neighbourhoods are being transformed by transit-based development. We are capable of both to a far greater extent than we are doing now. Leadership matters.

DEEP TRANSIT: SOLVING POLITICAL GRIDLOCK

- The Office of the Mayor of Toronto must demonstrate leadership in uniting the city's political and departmental leaders -- from all functions that directly relate to transit from housing to parks and recreation -- around a common transit vision. On the council side, this includes (among others) the chairs of the TTC, budget, parks and rec, housing and public health committees. Departmental leads are the Executive Transportation Director, Chief Planner, the City Manager, Toronto Community Housing Director, the Public Health Officer, and others whose portfolios are tied into transit -- or more to the point, those whose jobs should be more integrated with transit. One level up, this needs to happen on a regional basis with the City of Toronto as the lead stakeholder by virtue of its size. The ultimate goal is to eliminate departmental fiefdoms and to stop treating individual portfolios as silos, while still giving politicians and experts the authority they need to execute mandates.
- On a regional level, The City of Toronto must lead by example on the transit file without taking a "Toronto is the centre of the universe" approach to the dialogue. The fact of the matter is that Toronto represents only roughly half of the GTA's population, yet the overwhelming majority of transportation infrastructure is within city borders with the exception of highways, which we all share and are provincial jurisdiction, and the airport which straddles Mississauga and Toronto and is mostly a federal responsibility. We know from projects like the proposed Hurontario LRT in Mississauga and York Region's bus network (plus the extension of the subway into Vaughan) that suburban cities want more transit; in fact, they're making more progress than the city right now.
- They are also working under different physical and financial realities, because density is so much lower (although that is changing) and the extent to which they subsidize transit is so much higher on a per-resident basis. Metrolinx was created to harmonize key regional transit initiatives under provincial auspices and streamline the funding responsibility. I believe Toronto must take the lead in bringing the entire region together, so that we can bring projects to Metrolinx and say to them, "We are ready to build, and we're not going to pull the rug out from under you like we did with Transit City."
- We must make a constructive, outcome-driven dialogue with provincial and federal governments a priority because without their ongoing support for an initiative of this scope, everything else is a weather report. 1 in 10 Canadians lives in the City of Toronto, and one in four lives in the Greater Toronto Area. Stable, long-term transit funding not just for the city but the entire region needs to be commensurate with that demographic reality. Funding mechanisms such as the gas tax, HST etc. require a lifelong negotiation to ensure we can get our fair share, particularly if we make the business case that every government stakeholder will recoup their investment and then some if More Than a Map is properly executed. I believe this can be done in a way that secures long-term funding yet also accounts for political shifts.



DEEP TRANSIT: A CATALYST FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC SPACE & RENEWABLE ENERGY

The environment is the greater space in which all things live. Public space is that which we share. The weather is the most critical factor that drives our relationship to both of them. Transit is the unifying link as it relates to people. How people move around based on the realities of space, weather and their survival needs has defined human progress for several million years. It's about so much more than "less driving means cleaner air".

With respect to our urban environment, we need to dispel the myths about the suburbs being all subdivisions, sprawl, and driving and the core being all congestion, vertical sprawl and streetcars. Neither is true. The suburbs are a treasure trove of green space, with many densely-populated parts and a whole lot of underserved transit riders. Our downtown and midtown areas still have a lot of space we could better use, their dense single-family neighborhoods are famous around the world, and a lot of people drive rather than use transit. The common denominator is that we need to do more with less space, all across the city. My plan is designed to accommodate all of those realities, and it's fundamentally about giving people the means to travel around the city faster, get to know it better and use all the wonderful space we have.

By definition, public space is ours to do with as the broadest possible consensus believes is best. The most obvious role transit plays in that discussion is getting people to public spaces -- like Nathan Phillips Square, the Scarborough Civic Centre, High Park and the Humber parks network to use four examples. My transit plan is the only one that truly considers transit -- corridors and routes, stations and stops -- as true public space. We need to maximize how we use public transit space, as places where people can eat and shop, experience the culture of the city and indeed house themselves -- in the context of moving around.

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Our transit stations have an enormous amounts of underutilized space we can and must better utilize to create energy that can power TTC lines and may also provide at least somewhat of a larger scale backup option for our aging grid. Solar arrays on the rooftops of subway stations along Allen Road are an example of what we could integrate into current infrastructure. I propose that this idea be adopted for any future station builds. On a micro-generation scale, individual station stops can be similarly leveraged.

Right now, the only direct connection between renewable energy and our transportation system is solar-powered parking meters. I wish I was kidding. Cities around the world are using transit system space as an energy asset, and we need to catch up. This is not only about energy and public safety, it's about Toronto catching up as a competitive, world-class and visionary city where people who want to live and thrive in the context of climate change can do so.



DEEP TRANSIT: TRANSIT AS AN ECONOMIC & SOCIAL CATALYST

I believe the key to getting residents to buy into a large-scale transit system upgrade is to communicate and quantify not only the practical value of being able to get around but the net profitability both in terms of actual dollars and quality of life.

- **The environment:** Further to the previous section, better transit is essential to the air we breathe, the water we drink, the natural environments and green spaces of the city, even the food we can grow right here in our city if we free up and use the space.
- **Public health:** When people can move around freely, they can work more productively, have more time to spend with their family, have more time to think and make healthier choices, and it's easier to get what they need to make them. More Than A Map is stress reduction on a massive scale, worth billions of dollars in net economic benefits.
- **Education:** More Than A Map will make education for young people building their lives and mature residents upgrading their skills dramatically more convenient and accessible. The idea for a TTC UniverCity, the world's first post-secondary educational institution with a curriculum exclusive focused on transit -- from design and engineering to human resources and administration -- is one that I will be putting forward in more detail during my first term as mayor.
- **The economy:** More Than a Map will create hundreds of millions of person-hours of employment in Toronto, the GTA and beyond: engineering and construction, information technology, manufacturing operations and management, education and training, retail and service. In addition, businesses of all sizes hire more people because their workforce can get to work faster, they can produce and deliver more goods and services & transport them more efficiently, and purchasing power & convenience will increase. The experts have already told us this; we just need to listen.
- **Housing and density:** I believe More Than a Map can be a massive catalyst for building hundreds of thousands of housing units of all types -- private- or city-owned (or partnership) apartments, condominium, single-family infill, high-rise and mid-rise -- that integrates space for the community and businesses. While it doesn't include any transit projects, the Regent Park revitalization is an example from which we can learn and Lawrence Heights has the potential to be one as well.
- **Civic engagement:** The urban/suburban divide is a toxic blight on a city that prides itself on diversity and inclusiveness. At its very core, More Than A Map is about not only making people's personal and family lives easier, it's about making it possible for more people to explore and connect with the treasure that is Toronto and its cultural & geographic communities.

DEEP TRANSIT: A CATALYST FOR TECHNOLOGY, INNOVATION EDUCATION AND A CULTURE OF TRANSIT

I am going to start this with an example of we are using technology in what I believe to be a seriously flawed way. We're spending \$700 million and counting for PRESTO, a fare payment system which is already obsolete because it doesn't use mobile phone or debit payment options, and will be even more outdated by the time it's up and running. I think it's time to stop chasing our tails and think of transit in terms of what it can be as a driver of technology and innovation, especially in a city with strong technology infrastructure and people power. And we need to do it in the design stage, guided not by current realities but those of a city 20 years in the future with 500,000 more people in it -- and a region with three million more people in it. We are also well-served to remind ourselves that there are innovations happening every day, and that new possibilities will be available to us that we haven't yet considered. In other words, we don't know what we don't know.

- **Fare payments:** The Metropass, tokens and cash fares will always be the linchpins of TTC payment. I propose to add "smart cards" that can be loaded with any amount over a 5-fare minimum, integrated with a mobile application that works with existing scanning technology. The new streetcars are an example of how on-board fare payments can evolve, but I think we need to take that to the next level.
- **Vehicles:** Not only is the subways vs. LRT debate counterproductive, it's completely unnecessary. More Than A Map assumes a brand-new visional canvas for new ideas in vehicles that work for their environments. Bombardier is a world leader in transit technology, right here in Toronto and elsewhere in Ontario. This expertise is literally in-house.
- **Signalling and transit network/control communication:** Simply increasing subway frequency by 30 seconds would go a long way towards easing the current bottlenecks in our subways. Using GPS and SMS technology, we can dramatically improve the synchronization of bus and street routes across the system to decrease wait times by adjusting the speed at which vehicles move.
- **Tracks and routing:** Building scalable transit infrastructure in an already developed and congested city without causing chaos is a huge challenge, and technology is the key to addressing it; here are a few examples. We can build tracks of varying widths on certain routes that may not have optimum width for two-way surface or underground routes. On certain routes, with the proper signalling systems, we can have a single track on the surface with another track immediately below, routing vehicles above or below in either direction at different times of the day. We can also build flexible track systems that can accommodate different types of transit vehicles.

TTC UNIVERCITY

I am going to wrap up Deep Transit with a concept that can unify the various transit-based relationships I have put forward here and many others -- and even more importantly, help build a culture of transit in our city.

I believe that a true culture of innovation starts with education. That is why I am proposing a groundbreaking new idea that would be the first of its kind anywhere in the world. TTC UniverCity would be a post-secondary institute of higher learning devoted exclusively to transit, offering graduate, baccalaureate, diploma and certificate programs. We have three major universities in Toronto and four community colleges, all of whom would be engaged in developing and offering a transit-focused curriculum covering everything from advanced engineering and systems design, to vehicle mechanics, to administration and human resources. I would build "campuses" around TTC stations all across the city, including new space integrated into station builds as we go forward with expanding the system, using classroom space at university and colleges in the interim. TTC UniverCity would galvanize Toronto into a world leader in transit development, creating tens of thousands of high-paying jobs with qualified people to take them and generating made-in-Toronto transit solutions for generations to come (and, thankfully, out of the hands of politicians every four years).

For more information on Ari's transit plan and other bold visions for Toronto, please read his *More Than A Map* plan for a truly interconnected transit city and visit his website at: www.ariformayor.com



UniverCity

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