

New Mobility Report for the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update

Project Overview

The mobility landscape is evolving rapidly with the convergence of a perfect storm of trends across a number of sectors. In recognition of this imminent change, Metrolinx commissioned WSP to develop a report on the evolving New Mobility paradigm to inform the 2016 review of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The report took stock of the changes that were occurring across the mobility sector and beyond, and used an adjusted foresight analysis framework to explore strategic directions and actions across a number of themes for Metrolinx to consider in preparing for the future.

Recommendations from the New Mobility report were carried forward into Metrolinx's draft RTP, released in 2017.

What innovations and future trend(s) did we consider?

Mobility fueled by data

- Improved data analysis capabilities and advancements in mobile computing have made new mobility models possible.
- Developments in machine learning and connected technologies are fueling the advancement of connected and automated vehicle technologies.

A shifting line between public and private

- There is growing interest from the private sector in entering the provision of mobility services, which has been predominantly a public responsibility.

A world of uncertainty

- The world is facing increasing uncertainty from environmental change, global instability, and issues around cyber security.
- These factors may cause travel behaviours to evolve in a number of different ways—planning for this range of uncertainty will be critical.

How were they considered?

The New Mobility report considered all these trends together through a scenario generation exercise that considered the system dynamics and network relationships across the trends.

How was our approach better?

In addition to examining emerging trends linearly through literature reviews and desktop research, the adapted foresight analysis approach allowed for consideration of non-linear dynamics across these trends. This approach made it possible to explore different outcomes across the spectrum of plausibility. Beyond preparing the GTHA for expected outcomes, this approach highlighted potential opportunities and challenges that may not have otherwise be recognized.

The outcome

The New Mobility report directly informed Metrolinx's RTP. As a result of the recommendations that came out of the New Mobility report, Metrolinx is now proceeding in a number of action areas, including station and facility design and considerations for future mobility integration. Subsequent to this work, WSP was also commissioned for a follow-up project focused on navigating uncertainty around future trends beyond mobility.

Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan:
<http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rtp/>

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