

For Immediate Release
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ONTARIO APPROVES NEXT STEP IN OTTAWA'S LIGHT RAPID TRANSIT PROJECT *New Transit System Will Lead to Cleaner Air In Our Nation's Capital*

OTTAWA – The City of Ottawa's plan to build a north-south rapid transit system has taken another step forward, Environment Minister Laurel Broten announced today.

The Ontario government has approved an environmental assessment for a 31-kilometre, electric-powered light rail transit system between the Rideau Centre to a southern terminus in the future Barrhaven Town Centre.

"Ottawa's plan to meet its long term transportation needs through a new public transit system is good news for the environment and local residents," Broten said. "Our government will continue to take positive action towards a cleaner, healthier, more livable Ontario".

By encouraging commuters to take transit, the new system will help get cars off the road, improve air quality, and reduce emissions that contribute to smog and climate change. By 2021, a projected 60,000 to 70,000 riders per weekday will be served by the north-south rapid transit system.

"Light rail is a key part of our comprehensive plan to improve the quality of life for all Ottawa residents over the next fifty years," said Mayor Bob Chiarelli. "We welcome this approval from the Ontario Government as it takes us one step closer to our vision of a better future."

The McGuinty government is on the side of commuters who want better transit options. Approving Ottawa's innovative transit plan is just one more way the Ontario government is protecting our communities and the environment. Other initiatives include:

- A \$1.2 billion investment in new or improved transit, municipal roads and bridges.
- Establishing a target to produce five per cent of Ontario's electricity from renewable sources by 2007 and 10 per cent by 2010.
- A plan to include an annual average of five per cent ethanol in gasoline that takes effect January 1, 2007. Ontario's 2007 target for ethanol will reduce annual greenhouse gas emissions by about 800,000 tonnes, equivalent to removing 200,000 cars from the road.
- Contracts for 1,300 megawatts of wind power – enough power for 300,000 homes.

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