

TRANSPORTATION GOVERNANCE AT THE CROSSROADS THE CASE OF TORONTO

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's first review of the regional economy, Toronto's model of economic development is under pressure (OECD, 2010). While the Greater Toronto Area (GTA, figure 1) generates 17% of Canada's GDP and 45% of Ontario GDP, the OECD cautions that from 1995 to 2005, the region experienced economic and labor productivity growth significantly lower than the average for OECD metro-regions. The GTA maintains a diverse economy – Toronto is an international business centre and finance capital as well as a significant manufacturing hub – but the region's traditional manufacturing industries, notably the automotive sector, have experienced dramatic decline since 2002: a trend exacerbated through the current global financial crisis. The OECD identifies: (1) a lack of capital investment; (2) an inadequate utilization of Toronto's prized cultural diversity; and (3) a poorly integrated transportation network as curtailing productivity and economic competitiveness (congestion on the region's roads alone is reportedly responsible for an estimated \$3.3 billion annually in lost productivity), while (4) limited intergovernmental collaboration stymies the prospect for future growth.

Ontario's neoliberal revolution – implemented in 1995 through the provincial Progressive Conservative Party's *Common-Sense Revolution* (CSR) – attempted to restore growth to the GTA after Toronto's Fordist accumulation regime stagnated (terminally in the 1989-1993 recession) and the region's metropolitan governance dynamic broke down (Donald, 2002; Keil, 2002). The CSR placed Toronto at the forefront of urban neoliberalization – facilitating, in part, the emergence of the GTA as a successful, dynamic and global(izing) urban region – yet the internal contradictions and re-territorializations of this contingent political-economic project have proved unable to resolve the region's crisis tendencies underlined by the OECD.

This paper presents a preliminary examination of the evolving relationship between governance and territory in the GTA in the wake of the CSR's penetrating and multi-scalar processes of neoliberal restructuring. I posit the underlying tensions between pre-existing metropolitan political dynamics and an emergent, neoliberal regional urbanization both structure and limit the potential of the GTA. Exploring these issues is particularly relevant at the contemporary juncture as the 2007-2010 “financial crisis” illuminates and engenders new multifaceted and multiscale articulations of urban restructuring; reverberating from macro-scale reconfigurations to the rhythms of everyday life of urban inhabitants. In the American context, the present crisis perhaps found its most vivid expression in the housing market. The situation in Canada has been relatively mild by comparison. In Toronto, new home construction continues, particularly in the downtown condo-boom, and in select areas bidding wars are resurfacing. Fears of a property market meltdown such as experienced in the United States, have thus far failed to materialize. Rather, the “crisis” in the Toronto context has found its most pertinent articulation as a crisis of regional governance and rescaling, concretely articulated within the developing politics of regional transportation¹.

¹ This argument draws from on-going collaborative research with Robert Fiedler, Department of Geography, York University and I acknowledge his contribution here.

Transportation provides the important connective sinews of the emerging urban condition. It is, in a sense, the materiality of the urban region. Keil and Young (2008) suggest transportation has become a bottleneck to regional competitiveness yet large-scale public works investment have also been brought to the forefront of public and political consciousness, forwarding cities as key sites for economic recovery. Transportation then, as indicated by the OECD's territorial review, proves an instructive lens through which to examine the development of neoliberal regionalization and governance, and the problematic relationship between crisis-induced governance restructuring and the rescaling of urban and political processes (Magnusson, 2009). In contrast to the mega-projects and events pursued within "competitive" policy frameworks (Kipfer and Keil, 2002; Lehrer and Laidley, 2008), urban transportation networks serve as the largely unglamorous urban infrastructure the post-Fordist global city is premised upon (Erie, 2004; Hackworth, 2007). Yet such transportation infrastructures are, as Graham and Marvin suggest, "essentially political decisions" and cannot be viewed as "technical, engineered systems existing somehow separate from society, which operate to 'impact' on society" (2001, p. 105). As such, in the following, I engage them as a *state spatial strategy* "intended to reconcentrate socioeconomic assets and advanced infrastructural investments... to enhance the territorial competitiveness of major local and regional economies" (Brenner, 2004, p. 176).

The paper is structured as follows: first, I outline the theoretical framework utilized in exploring the nexus of political-economic restructuring and re-territorialization. Second, I trace the history of neoliberal restructuring enacted through the CSR. Third, I examine the scalar crises of regional transportation in the GTA following the CSR before fourth, assessing the emerging nexuses of governance and territory surrounding regional transportation.

POLITICAL-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS AND STATE RESTRUCTURING

Neoliberalism and the relativization of scale

The emergence (and subsequent ascendancy) of neoliberalism engenders both a fundamental reshaping of the rules of urban and regional politics and the far-reaching rescaling of state power (MacLeod and Goodwin, 1999; Mahon and Keil, 2009). For Neil Brenner, the consequences of such processes of rescaling thrust "the apparently ossified, entrenched fixity of national state territoriality abruptly and dramatically into historical motion, radically redefining its geographical significance, its organizational structure, and its linkages to both subnational and supranational scales." As such state territoriality currently operates more "as a polymorphic, multiscale institutional mosaic composed of multiple, partially overlapping institutional forms and regulatory configurations that are neither congruent, contiguous, nor coextensive with one another" (2004, p. 46). In place of the entrenched primacy of the nation-state, the territorialization processes of capitalism within the throws of "glocalization" (Swyngedouw, 1997) produces a "relativization of scales," in which no single scale of political-economic activity or struggle dominates over others (Jessop, 2001).

In this regard, the national context, and contextual embeddedness of state formations within dynamic and multilayered political-institutional networks remains fundamentally important in shaping the specific articulation of socio-spatial restructuring (Keil, 2003). Emerging from the explosion of scale in the crisis-induced restructuring of "spatial Keynesianism," Brenner argues the present articulation of state spatiality appears as a Rescaled Competition State Regime (RCSR): "a scale sensitive... unstable, evolving institutional-geographic mosaic" of political formations which increasingly focus on economic competitiveness over social-welfarist concerns (2004, p. 260).

Brenner's analysis is particularly pertinent in the GTA. Engaging with the Canadian context is instructive as it contains elements of both European and American experiences and traditions of regionalism (Boudreau et al., 2007). During the immediate post-war period metropolitan governance in Toronto – through the innovative political architecture of Metropolitan Toronto – formed an integral component of “the city that works,” leading the city to avoid the fate of comparable American “rustbelt” cities. Toronto's Fordist-Keynesian regime proved (largely) adept at tackling urban growth and collective consumption issues (including transportation) at the metropolitan scale through a two-tiered regional government (Friskin, 2007; Sewell, 2009). However, as the post-war metropolitan dynamic stopped working, Toronto developed an “actively neoliberalized governance apparatus, which pushes into the urban region and aggressively involves state, business, and civil society actors in building a new regional consensus around growth,” which Boudreau et al. suggest strongly conforms to the RCSR model (2007, p. 50).

The RCSR political-institutional arrangement and accompanying competitive policy framework enabled Toronto's emergence (to a degree) from the prolonged 1989-1993 recession and the (tentative) emergence of the GTA as a “global city-region” (Courchene, 2001; Kipfer and Keil, 2002). Yet further, the political-economic ramifications of neoliberalization profoundly transformed the territorial structures and imaginaries of the *urban*, and the internal constellations, dynamics and relations of urban space and society. The absolute spatial boundaries of jurisdictional territories and politics of *metropolitan urbanization*, as I shall argue through exploring the dynamics of transportation in the GTA, no longer contain the processes, connections, relations, flows and networks that constitute an emergent mode of *regional urbanization*. The metropolis has become “unbound” not only in terms of physical expansion and sprawl, but the processes which constitute the urban itself (Isin, 1996; Soja, 2000).

City-regional politics and spatial imaginaries

It is against this background that the regional scale is emerging as an increasingly significant political, as well as economic space; particularly through debates on *new regionalism* and *new city-regionalism* (Jonas and Ward, 2007a; MacLeod, 2001; Purcell, 2007; Scott, 2001; Scott and Storper, 2003). It is important to note that the significance urban regions lies not only with the institutional-materiality of cities, but in the production of *spatial imaginaries* creating diverse, multifaceted but contradictory spatial formations between discourse and practice. Such spatial imaginaries are “collectively shared internal worlds of thoughts and beliefs that structure everyday life” and alter social practices to become “‘permanences’ in the social process” (Boudreau, 2007, pp. 2596-2597).

The emergence of new spatial and social urban structures both shape, and are shaped by, new strategies of governance and spatial regulation, economic constellations, and technological innovations within evolving political-economic contexts. New modes and geographies of governance crystallizing around the city-region – produced by key actors at particular scales to optimally provide services and coordinate social, political and economic activity – are receiving an increased levels of academic and popular attention (Harrison, 2007; Jonas and Ward, 2007a; Parr, 2005; Pastor, Lester, and Scoggins, 2009).

Such spatial imaginaries however “are not simply the unintended outcome of economic, social and political process but are often the deliberate product of actions by those with power in society, who use space and create places in pursuit of their goals” (Johnson, 1991, p. 68). In this regard, Boudreau asserts the strategic production of regions as a political space “depends on the mobilization of existing spatial imaginaries and the creation of new ones that resonate with residents and users of the city-region” (2007, p. 2597). Sub-national

regions are not the a priori privileged geographical loci for post-Fordist spatial fixes or social compromises. Rather, following Brenner (2000), regions and regionalization are best conceptualized as *institutional mediums* through which states may engage in strategies of crisis-management.

The production of city-regional space – and formation of collective regional actors – are therefore important, not just in terms of the institutional construction of supra-local governance architectures, but also in the power of the spatial imaginary of the city-region to shape political discourse and policy frameworks. Yet city-regions do not act “naturally” as collective actors (Le Galès, 2002). Governing these territories becomes problematic as new spatial imaginaries are layered upon preexisting political jurisdictions producing a new, complex and unstable scalar politics. City-regional space is fractured, uneven and remains significantly structured by pre-existing political boundaries and jurisdictional arrangements (Horan, 2009) despite arguments for interjurisdictional cooperation (Matkin and Frederickson, 2009).

The multiplicity of city-regional spaces and politics frames has led some critics to decry the “fuzziness” of the city-region concept, which is rendered further problematic by the contentious relationship between “abstract theorizing” and applied policy work – particularly when relying on over-abstraction from single case studies (Jonas and Ward, 2007b; Markusen, 2003). There are certainly grounds to these critiques. However, despite the inherent “fuzziness”, conceptualizing urban space in terms of the *city-region* facilitates the theoretical break-out of rigid, “hard” territorial imaginaries of the metropolis and opens a relational and dialectical understanding (which is also materially grounded in the functional integrity of territories) of the internal and external dynamics of the urban as a totality (Harvey, 1996; Peck, 2003). As Harding posits, the utility of the city-region “is not that it avoids ambiguity, fuzziness and overlapping ‘boundaries’ but that it encourages relational understandings of the internal and external dynamics of territories that have some degree of functional integrity but are very rarely defined administratively” (2007, p. 451).

NEOLIBERALIZING THE TORONTO REGION

Common-sense creative destruction

Mike Harris’s Progressive-Conservative Party’s victory in Ontario’s 1995 provincial election ushered in a new era of urban politics in the GTA. Harris’s electoral platform presented a decidedly neoliberal agenda, and the policy framework deployed in Ontario’s neoliberal revolution engendered a profound transformation in political, social and economic relations at numerous scales (Isin, 1998; Keil, 2002). Courchene (2001, pp. 163-165) divided the sweeping political-economic reforms of Harris’s government into two distinct episodes: firstly the Progressive-Conservative’s electoral platform itself – the CSR – that focused on “returning the province to fiscal sanity” through a program of budget balancing, often painful fiscal discipline and income and property tax cuts. Secondly, Courchene pointed to an “institutional-municipal revolution” framed around the broad package of “Megaweek proposals” launched in January 1996.

These reforms significantly restructured both the institutional configuration and funding mechanisms of many state functions. Property tax shifted to market-value assessments. Provincial transfers to public sector institutions (e.g. schools and universities) decreased, provincial subsidies to public transit agencies were drastically cut, while Ontario’s hospital system and school boards underwent consolidations and closures (Basu, 2007). Many provincial-municipal powers were transferred, with “hard services” (property/infrastructure) devolved to municipalities and “soft services”

(education/health/welfare) uploaded to the province (Hackworth and Moriah, 2006). Several municipalities themselves underwent restructuring, most notably in the amalgamation of Metropolitan Toronto's two-tier governance structure into a singular "Megacity" in 1998 (Boudreau, 1999; Sancton, 2000).

Courchene's distinction is insightful in highlighting the disparate elements of Ontario's neoliberalization, yet it serves to obscure the complex and interrelated processes it was deployed through. Neoliberalization at the municipal and provincial levels reflected a concomitant processes of creative destruction, conceptualized by Peck and Tickell (2002) through the intertwined moments of "roll-back neoliberalization" (undermining and deconstructing pre-existing governance formations) and "roll-out neoliberalization" (the construction of new political-institutional regime more accommodating to neoliberal goals) (also see Brenner and Theodore, 2002). The CSR expresses such crisis induced restructuring in Ontario but it is important to note that the aggressive deployment of Harris's neoliberal agenda was spatially uneven and geographically distinct. For several observers, the CSR and municipal amalgamation in particular represented an attempted to suburbanize Toronto's traditionally progressive urban politics, with the Harris reforms intended to discipline the City's middle-class² (Boudreau, 1999).

Conceptualizing governance and crisis in the GTA post-CSR

The turbulent era of neoliberal restructuring in the GTA came to an end in 2003 as the Progressive-Conservatives were swept from Queen's Park by Dalton McGuinty's provincial Liberal Party. At the municipal scale, 2003 also represented a shift in urban politics as progressive reformist David Miller replaced the pro-growth Mel Lastman as Mayor of Megacity Toronto. Boudreau et al. (2009) frame the era from Harris's election in 1995 to the defeat of the provincial Conservatives in 2003 as that of Toronto's anti-statist neoliberalization. During this period, "pro-growth, neoliberal, and suburban interests" dominated city-regional politics in southern Ontario (ibid, p. 204).

2003, then, marked a new, "neoreformist period" in Toronto which fundamentally shifted regional politics in the GTA away from urban-suburban conflicts and pro-growth development strategies towards the search for city-regional consensus, with quality-of-life issues forwarded as central to economic development and global competitiveness. Certainly, the neoreformist era began with an air of optimism and consensus building. However, towards the end of his second term in office, the stance of Miller's Toronto vis-à-vis inter-regional collaboration (while continuing in the City's reformist tradition) has become increasing uncooperative, instead focusing on a "416"³ policy agenda.

With Miller declining to run for a third mayoral term in 2010 on the back of an unpopular public sector strike, and growing dissatisfaction with the provincial Liberal Party, the neoreformist consensus appears critically fractured and the GTA's multi-scalar governance architecture has succumbed to political fragmentation and inertia. The backlash

² The battle over "Megacity" amalgamation has come to be viewed as an attempt by the urban middle-class (those working in public sector or professional jobs that had thus far evaded much of the impact of post-Fordist restructuring) to resist political suppression by a suburban middle-class (constituted by private sector professionals whose lives were already ordered according to neoliberal rationalities) (Isin 1998; Boudreau et al. 2009). Lost in the mix were residents of less affluent inner suburban areas – the places where immigrants, refugees, the working poor and lower-middle class, those groups who have experienced the negative impacts of economic restructuring most directly, increasingly live.

³ Within the GTA, the division between the Megacity of Toronto and its surrounding suburbs is discursively codified in the distinction between telephone area codes; with "416" referring to areas within the City, and "905" correlating to the surrounding suburban districts.

against Miller and the political downfall of his heir-apparent, Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) chairman Adam Giambone, have come to threaten the legacy of the progressive neoreformist period and, significantly, its transit-focused agenda. Increased economic uncertainty, inadequate re-investment in urban infrastructures and social services and unstable geographies of marginalization and inequality now characterize the post-CSR GTA (Walks, 2009).

The wide-ranging impacts of neoliberal governance restructuring on cities and urban regions are well documented in political and geographic scholarship (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Hackworth, 2007; Harvey, 2005; Peck, 2004). However, in order to understand contemporary transitions in spatialized GTA politics after CSR restructuring – and the significance of the neoreformist period – I argue it is necessary to refine our theorization of urban neoliberalization. Here, I draw from Keil (2009) who constructs a new phase of neoliberal urban politics to extend and complement “roll-back” and “roll-out” neoliberalization, *roll-with-it neoliberalization*, where neoliberal governmentalities and social formations are normalized and entrenched in the socio-urban fabric. To “roll-with” neoliberalism:

means that political and economic actors have increasingly lost a sense of externality, of alternatives (good or bad) and have mostly accepted the ‘governmentality’ of the neoliberal formation as the basis for their action (ibid, p. 232).

Reflecting the contradictory nature of the neoliberal project, an intertwined two-fold typology of political action characterizes this third moment of neoliberalization: “roll-with-it 1,” reflecting more capital-orientated, authoritarian politics, and “roll-with-it 2,” referring to more populist, reformist and ecological alternatives (ibid, p. 239-240). This schema, I shall argue, offers the potential to: (1) grapple with the seemingly contradictory urban politics in the GTA that has emerged after the painful treatment of neoliberal shock therapy⁴; and (2) provides the conceptual tools to analyze the current scalar crisis facing transportation governance in the GTA.

SCALAR CRISES AND THE POLITICS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION

Neoliberal restructuring and the GTA’s contemporary transportation crisis

The OECD’s critiques of the GTA’s poorly integrated transportation network and limited intergovernmental collaboration highlight a long-running problematic in the region that has its roots in the 1980s when investment in urban infrastructures began to fall behind overall growth in the GTA. While not the sole cause of the current crisis, the CSR greatly exacerbated the long-running trend of declining investment in transportation infrastructure – particular in relation to mass transit. The restructuring of funding mechanisms and financial responsibilities enacted through Ontario’s neoliberalization has shifted the priorities of both the province and municipalities away from transportation investments as other sectors increasingly demanded larger allocations of all budgets (Soberman et al., 2006, p. 1). The combination of “growth” (in terms of economic activity, urban development and population expansion), historically low levels of investment in roads and public transit, and a lack of any comprehensive planning or regulatory action produced systemic gridlock which threatened the future prosperity of the region.

Neoliberal restructuring has had profound impacts on the transportation sector – of particular note being air travel deregulation (Alberts, Bowen, and Cidell, 2009; Cidell, 2006;

⁴ Particularly the reluctance of neoreformist politicians in municipal and provincial politics to reverse the institutional changes of the CSR (Coulter, 2009; Hackworth, 2008).

Johansson, 2007) and the emergence of public-private partnerships in mass transit agencies from London to Denver (Gómez-Ibáñez and Meyer, 1993) to York Region's VIVA bus rapid transit system (BRT). However, the GTA's present transportation problematic predominantly centers on restructuring urban infrastructures to increase capacity and mobility in an expanding metropolis and shifting space economy. The city-region thus faces the challenge of, on the one hand, maintaining and financing a deteriorating urban infrastructure in an age of fiscal austerity – with shortfalls in capital investment from all levels of government (BCMC, 2007) – while on the other, producing a transportation system which meets the demands of an expanding global city-region (Erie, 2004; Harris, 1994).

Furthermore, in light of rising oil prices and the impact of the 2007-2010 financial crisis (see Atkinson, 2007) the logic of a neoliberal urban planning process seen as producing sprawling suburban landscapes dependent upon automobile transport have been increasingly critiqued in the Toronto region. Yet developmental pressures persist, with their associated requirements for infrastructural provision. Projections of future urban growth, employment location, and (rush hour) travel patterns suggest that increasing levels of travel between Toronto and its “exploding” suburbs, and between suburbs, necessitating an integrated regional approach to the crisis; coordinating land use planning, increased densities and transportation strategies rather than opportunist developments driven by political considerations over actual need⁵ (Soberman et al., 2006).

Transportation conflicts and contradictions

“Need” in this regard is constructed in terms of utility for commuters within the Toronto region, and it is through this articulation that much of the debate on transportation in the GTA appears in political and public discourses. Indeed, while transportation is viewed as “the biggest headache in the GTA”⁶, these concerns are more related to congestion and traffic than a broad conception of transportation issues. Articulating the transportation crisis in terms of outgrown infrastructures, increased commuter times and uncontrolled “sprawl” within Toronto and its “905” hinterland (Soloman, 2007), however is only one component of the transportation issues facing the region which are imbued with contradictions and conflict (Keeling, 2009). While transportation serves a use-value in moving people around the metropolis, Toronto faces strategic dilemmas in planning and governing transportation infrastructure to facilitate exchange-value orientated development as it attempts to position itself as a global city. Alan Tonks, then chair of the Greater Toronto Service Board (GTSB), warned in 1999; “the price of doing business in [the GTA] makes it virtually a no-go zone for our buses, for our truckers and for those who are delivering the life support for the city”⁷.

In this light, the transportation crisis highlights two important dynamics shaping (regional) governance and state spatial strategies in the GTA. Firstly, although the division is somewhat arbitrary, the pull to invest in *global* transportation infrastructures (aimed at attracting and concentrating people, goods, capital, investments etc. in the region) and *local* investments (which move them through the city-region once they are here) engender

⁵ The conflict between the densely populated City of Toronto and its dispersed suburban municipalities present a very real political obstacle in the establishment of both a regional approach to transportation in southern Ontario, and any movement away from automobile driven development (see Sewell, 2009). As Soberman put it in 1999, public transit beyond the Toronto's city limits – where most of the major job growth and commuting pressure is concentrating – is “a lost cause... We're tilting at windmills if we think we are going to get these guys on public transportation” c.f. Barber, J., and Rusk, J. (1999, April 5). Toronto reconsidered: Planning for the next century. *Globe and Mail*.

⁶ Javed, N. (2009, November 19). Biggest headache in the GTA? Transportation. *Toronto Star*.

⁷ c.f. Barber, J., and Rusk, J. (1999, April 5).

conflicting urban locational policy frameworks. Such contradictions are then internalized within the governance landscapes and urban form of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA)⁸ (Filion and McSpurren, 2007; Keil and Young, 2008). Secondly, investment in both global and local facets of transportation are embedded within Toronto's "competitive" policy framework (Keil and Boudreau, 2005; Newman and Thornley, 2004). Transportation is thus seen as a vital asset to Toronto's regional and global competitiveness (BCMC, 2007, p. 18). The politics surrounding transportation however, are proving divisive and destabilizing, with significant ruptures existing between advocacy for public transit from densely populated urban centers (i.e. the City of Toronto) and the continued use of automobiles in the less dense, "sprawling" suburbs. These fissures have crystallized surrounding the City of Toronto's proposed Transit City plan, and the regional transportation program being forwarded from the provincial government.

Moving towards Toronto the "Transit City"

Emerging from the City of Toronto's Official Plan of 2002, the TTC issued its *Ridership Growth Strategy* (RGS) in 2003 in order to begin addressing the pragmatic challenges of moving people around Toronto – thus increasing the city and region's competitiveness – on a transit system which was declining in usage⁹. The RGS sought to redefine the role of the TTC in "providing travel to the people of Toronto" and in assisting in the "'smart' reurbanization of Toronto" (TTC, 2003, pp. E-1). The RGS's plan, however, introduced a central contradiction between the rhetoric of increased importance of public transit¹⁰ on the one hand, and the combination of a "defensive strategy" (in relation to potential large-scale expansion) and accusations of underfunding (also see Kennedy, 2002).

In analyzing the RGS, Keil and Young (2008, pp. 14-15) posit two significant points regarding regional growth and governance and Toronto's development as a global city. Firstly, the RGS is argued to be the "negative copy" of transit plans in the regions surrounding the City of Toronto which "model their policies on specific linear needs between two distinct points rather than on comprehensive coverage based on urban density" (TTC, 2003, p. 15). Secondly, the TTC's RGS is clearly linked to the municipal expansion, in opposition to urban commentators wishing the TTC to focus investment in high density areas in the urban core (Sewell, 2009; Soloman, 2007). While it does not make explicit connection to global competitiveness, the RGS is argued to be a "regional niche strategy" building on the competitive advantage of public transit in dense urban areas (and in attracting increased levels of density surrounding transit hubs) for both ridership and cost recovery.

In 2006 Toronto's Mayor Miller consolidated his "transit city" re-electoral platform, the 2002 Toronto Official Plan, the recommendations from the RGS, and City of Toronto's *Building a Transit City* plan (2004) into one high level plan for light rail in Toronto: *Transit City*¹¹. Transit City calls for the construction of 120km of light rail transit (LRT) predominantly across Toronto's inner suburbs and is projected to carry 175 million riders per year by 2021 (including a direct route to Pearson airport). The total cost, including vehicles, was initially budgeted at \$6.1billion, but has subsequently risen to \$8.3billion; none of which

⁸ A notable upscaling of the GTA to include the City of Hamilton under the regional transportation plan.

⁹ TTC ridership fell most dramatically from 1990 (c.450million riders per year) to 1996 (under 375million, equivalent to usage in 1981). Ridership has recovered since 1996 aside from a decrease between 2002 and 2003 and the BCMC project continued growth into the 21st century (see BCMC, 2007, p. 13, figure 3.1).

¹⁰ Both for maintaining the attractiveness and competitiveness of Toronto, and enabling more sustainable growth. The TTC's RGS cited the federal government's commitment to the Kyoto Agreement, as did the City of Toronto's *Building a Transit City* plan (BTC) of 2004.

¹¹ See maps and illustrations at www.toronto.ca/transitcity/

is currently allocated from the TTC or City of Toronto's capital budgets¹². As such, the implementation of the plan is dependent upon securing funding from the provincial and federal governments, embedding the project within wider transportation planning for the region, and significantly politicizing its development.

Transit City LRT has been framed within a discourse of regional transit integration, partly in order to secure funding from upper levels of government and embed the project within the national and provincial transportation frameworks (TTC, 2008a). Furthermore, reflecting the (oft contradictory) intersections of (potentially) progressive environmental politics and economic competitiveness characteristic of roll-with-it neoliberalization, Transit City has drawn on a wider array of discourses including: environmental sustainability, urban redevelopment and social justice. In this regard, Transit City is forwarded not simply as a transit plan, but a plan for urban transformation. LRT lines aim to integrate marginalized inner suburban "priority neighborhoods" into the urban fabric of the city and radically transform modernist auto-centric landscapes characterized by low densities, tower blocks and strip malls and home to low-income and visible minority residents (Boudreau et al, 2009).

At the provincial level, transportation is also high on the agenda. A plan to fund 52 transit improvement projects in southern Ontario was a cornerstone campaign promise of Premier Dalton McGuinty's 2007 re-election campaign. Under the name *Move Ontario 2020*, McGuinty's plan called for the construction of 902km of new or improved transit infrastructure in the GTHA – including at least \$11.5billion (or up to \$17.5billion if the federal government participates) for Transit City – between 2008 and 2020. Queen's Park promised two-thirds of the estimated \$17.5 billion cost of the *Move Ontario 2020* plan, and asked the federal government to provide the remaining one-third. Municipalities, while not expected to contribute to the capital cost of the projects, would be responsible for any required operating subsidies.

To finance these projects, the provincial government forwarded \$497million towards "quick win" projects, budgeted at \$744.2million; although all of these are located outside Toronto's municipal boundaries. Both the provincial and municipal plans, due to the structuring of Canadian governmental institutions, fall under the control of a new regional transportation institution (which replaced the weak GTSB) and by the end of 2008, *Move Ontario 2020*'s projects had been placed under the umbrella of the new agency's regional transportation plan (RTP): this agency is Metrolinx.

Metrolinx: a regional transportation agency, a regional transportation actor?

In 2006 the province passed the *Greater Toronto Transportation Authority Act* (Government of Ontario, 2006) ushering into being the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA). The GTTA (subsequently rebranded Metrolinx in December 2007) is a regional governmental body (an agency of the Government of Ontario) charged with managing and planning transportation – including public transit – in the GTHA. Metrolinx co-ordinates between 9 public transit systems in the GTHA and, as authorized under the GTTA Act, is responsible for operating the GO Transit the network of regional commuter trains and buses. The significant power of Metrolinx to delienate the transportation agenda in southern Ontario begins to address transportation concerns at a regional scale¹³.

¹² On August 21, 2009, the TTC unveiled the "Transit City Bus Plan" to improve bus service on several key routes. The plan seeks to complement the integrated network approach of Transit City LRT with more frequent service and more express routes on 21 of 139 TTC bus routes by 2015 (TTC, 2009).

¹³ Reflecting this regional spatial imaginary, the agency is governed by a board consisting of: 2 appointees from the provincial government; 4 appointees from Toronto (initially including Mayor Miller and TTC chair Adam

Metrolinx released its (much delayed) RTP – *The Big Move* – on November 28, 2008 at the height of the 2007-2010 financial crisis (Metrolinx, 2008a). In announcing the plan, Metrolinx Chair Rob MacIsaac praised the levels of cooperation between municipal leaders (embodied in the Metrolinx Board), pitching the plan as vital for regional economic growth:

We are releasing *The Big Move* at a time of significant economic uncertainty. Despite this, we believe that now, more than ever, acting on the recommendations in the RTP is critically important. The RTP will not only reclaim our region's traditional transportation advantage, but also bolster our global competitiveness, protect our environment, and improve our quality of life. *For the very first time, like so many of our global competitors, we are thinking like a single region* (Metrolinx, 2008a, p. 1 emphasis added).

Through the RTP, Metrolinx presents an explicit spatial conceptualization of a single, unified region (focused upon several key urban growth centers) for the GTA, representing the latest iteration of the provincial *Greenbelt* (2005) and *Places to Grow* (2006) plans for Southern Ontario. Maps illustrating transport investments over Southern Ontario remove municipal and regional political boundaries¹⁴, acting to mobilize a new city-regional spatial imaginary and asserting the strategic importance of the GTHA as a political space (Boudreau, 2007). Furthermore, Metrolinx's agenda and the spatial imaginary it interpolates discursively embed the political discourses of roll-with-it 1 and 2 neoliberalization within the rationale of the RTP via an emphasis on global competitiveness, environmental protection and quality of life.

The Big Move seeks to set a comprehensive transportation agenda, expanding beyond the transit-centric concerns of Move Ontario 2020 and Toronto's Transit City, with Metrolinx significantly engaging with politically contentious issues of highway tolling.¹⁵ Toronto's system of 400-series highways were expressly constructed not to be tolled. However, with Metrolinx's green paper on roads and highways proposing variations on placing tolls on the 400 highways, Don Valley Parkway (DVP) and Gardiner Expressway¹⁶ and a blue ribbon panel submitting a report calling for the provincial government to implement tolls, pressure is growing on the municipal and provincial levels of government to seriously consider tolling.

A two pronged argument for tolls on Toronto's highways is being forward based on (1) integrating toll roads into clearer air and environmental initiatives; and (2) utilizing monies garnered through tolls to improve the region's infrastructure. Rob MacIsaac espouses a neoliberalized view of infrastructure in the GTHA, commenting:

...if roads are considered 'free', then motorists won't use them wisely... We use pricing to allocate scarce resources in almost every other aspect of our society; at the moment we're using time – that's the allocator for road space¹⁷.

The OECD's review echoes the logic of user fees in the GTA as a means to address congestion. Mayor Miller has stated his openness to the idea, commenting "if it's something

Giambrone); 1 appointee from Hamilton; and 1 appointee from each of Durham, Halton, Peel and York Regions (Government of Ontario, 2006).

¹⁴ See interactive mapping at www.metrolinx.com/thebigmove/interactive/big_move_interactive.html

¹⁵ The most prominent example of toll roadways in the GTA is the Highway 407 express toll route (ETR). The privatized expressway, running at 108km across the GTA was built by a private company, run for profit and subsequently "splintered" from the rest of the region's highway system (Graham and Marvin, 2001). Such "splintering urbanism," along with auto production and road-building are key elements of capital-orientated roll-with-it 1 neoliberalization, often sitting in direct opposition to a progressive politics prioritizing mass transit. Current debates in the GTA propose only limited privatized road development and operation as a mechanism to raise funding for transportation infrastructure and development.

¹⁶ Including just tolling trucks, high occupancy lanes, and tolling just at peak times) (Metrolinx, 2008c).

¹⁷ c.f. Girard, D. (2008, April 15). Is it time for toll roads? *Toronto Star*.

in a regional context, that I would consider very seriously,”¹⁸ however, the province has repeatedly ruled out roads tolls. Despite the bitter pill to motorists – particularly outside the high densities of the City of Toronto – presented by road tolls, the potential \$700million raised by such programs could provide significant funding for Metrolinx projects; significantly in light of a potential \$36billion shortfall facing Metrolinx¹⁹. However, while strategies (including congestion charges) have proved successful in London and Stockholm, Metrolinx CEO Rob Prichard cautions the challenges facing the GTA are distinct; resulting from the increasingly decentralization pattern of urbanization shaping the current region²⁰.

From governance synergy to rupture

Initially, it appeared Canada’s three levels of government were reaching a level of synergy regarding transportation policy, particularly surrounding city-regional transportation planning and its advantages for economic growth and competitiveness²¹. However, despite these trans-scalar policy synergies and regional cooperation argued to be embedded within *The Big Move*, operationalizing a regional political actor and transportation vision in the GTA has been undermined by internal locational politics. Metrolinx’s RTP stimulated significant debate between levels of government and between the central city and suburban hinterlands and subsequently, regional transportation becomes highly politicized surrounding: (1) the role, authority and scale of the TTC; and (2) the geography of infrastructural investments.

With proposals to extend the TTC’s subway network beyond the City of Toronto’s municipal boundaries into York Region (via York University to Vaughan Corporate Centre and along Yonge Street into Richmond Hill) the Commission’s fiefdom will be rescaled beyond that of a *municipal* transit agency. This, in addition to several transit contracts throughout the GTA already operated by the TTC, the Commission, under the leadership of Adam Giambrone, has adopted an expansionist agenda taking on transit provision beyond the City of Toronto. Yet the same forces driving the TTC to extend beyond its mandated service area have resulted in calls to upload Toronto’s transit network to Metrolinx (or the province) in order to integrate service effectively. The *Toronto Star* reported Metrolinx “strongly [considered] recommending a full uploading of the TTC” (although this was deemed impractical) with MacIsaac arguing the TTC was not thinking regionally enough: “[The TTC] needs to step up to the plate and meet Metrolinx and an equal partner... in terms of their approach to integration we believe there needs to be a lot more open discussion with the province and Metrolinx”²².

¹⁸ c.f. Kalinowski, T., and Gillespie, K. (2008, February 22). Province rules out road tolls: Panel's highway plan could raise \$700M. *Toronto Star*.

¹⁹ Warren, M. (2009, June 7). Region has a transit plan, now what about the money? *Toronto Star*.

²⁰ Kalinowski, T. (2009, November 11). It may be end of the road for toll opposition. *Toronto Star*.

²¹ In line with municipal calls for more investment in the transit sector, provincial investment throughout Canada grow with annual operating funding rising from \$47million to \$177million, and annual capital funding rising from \$146million to \$331million between 2001 and 2004 (Canadian Urban Transit Association, c.f. BCMC, 2007, p. 10). Metrolinx, in collaboration with regional transportation agencies across Canada (Montreal’s Agence Metropolitaine des Transports and Vancouver’s TransLink) and other “key transit stakeholders” (including the Canadian Urban Transit Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities’s Big City Mayor’s Caucus [BCMC]), is involved in supporting and developing a framework to bring the municipal, provincial and federal levels of government together in a National Transit Strategy (Metrolinx, 2008b). Continuing the recommendations from the June 2006 BCMC report *Our Cities, Our Future*, in a joint statement, Mayors Miller of Toronto and Tremblay of Montreal called the federal government to share revenues that grow with the economy, realigning transportation roles and responsibilities with appropriate financial backing – and to establish a National Transportation Strategy (Miller and Tremblay, 2007).

²² c.f. Kalinowski and Gillespie, (2008, February 22)

Metrolinx subsequently asserted their authority over Transit City's project scope and budget in July 2009 (including potential ownership of Transit City lines), although Robert Pritchard stressed a desire to work "in the closest possible partnership with the TTC"²³. The most significant ramification of Metrolinx's pulling rank appears in the agency's apparent willingness to incorporate private sector funding to finance transportation projects in contrast to the TTC's usual practice of contracting out design and construction work and previous reliance on provincial funding from Transit City LRT.

Clearly, the province prioritizes outward expansion of public mass transit from Toronto, including the subway extensions into York Region and focusing "quick win" projects outside the City. Toronto politicians, most notably Mayor Miller, by contrast, are lobbying to prioritize a Downtown Relief Line to serve the urban core's gentrifying districts and enable further densification in addition to Transit City²⁴. Increasing infrastructural capacity in the central city forwards a model of economic development and competitiveness centered upon the dominance of one urban core; the pre-amalgamation City of Toronto. Consequently, attempts to address the GTA's transportation crisis at the regional level are undermined by the conflict between those favoring LRT and investment in high-density urban areas (see Sewell, 2009) and those seeking rapid transit extensions and roadway improvements beyond the City of Toronto.

Reflecting the problematic retrenchment of municipal political geographies, Metrolinx staff protested in early 2009 that the TTC was acting as a barrier to integrated regional transit development by not committing to the region-wide *Presto* transit fare-card. The province subsequently heeded the regional body's calls for greater authority. In March 2009, Premier McGuinty restructured Metrolinx's board of directors – including the removal of Mayor Miller – in an attempt to de-politicize the agency and move beyond the political impasse preventing transportation projects breaking ground. The move raised concerns in the Toronto that future transit/transportation development would threaten Torontonians' interests within the region (notably fears of subsidizing suburban transit riders) and jeopardize Transit City.

Politicized transit and the future of Transit City

The net result of the politicization of transportation in the GTA is an institutional inertia threatening the future economic prosperity of the region, with problematic political dynamics spilling beyond the boardrooms of the region's transportation agencies. This is no more evident than in the struggle over the future of Transit City, which has emerged as a defining issue in Toronto's 2010 mayoral election. Despite the broad range of discourses utilized to support that LRT project, funding limitations, a changing political climate and fundamental critiques of the Transit City plan have placed the project in jeopardy. With this, the fate of Transit City is dependent upon the manner in which (1) political; (2) technical; (3) development; and (4) spatial barriers are overcome.

1. *Political barriers*: Despite previous promises of transportation funding made in 2007, on March 25, 2010, McGuinty's provincial government announced the deferral of \$4 billion to Metrolinx for Move Ontario 2020 projects. The move placed three of Transit City's seven proposed lines in financial limbo with construction of three of four priority lines

²³ c.f. Laidlaw, K. (2009, July 14). Metrolinx lays claim to Transit City; Rail Expansion. *National Post*

²⁴ Hanes, A. (2009, November 28). TTC's Spadina extension gets started; Miller pushes for Downtown Relief Line as next move. *National Post*; Vincent, D. (2009, January 30). City urges "relief" subway line from Pape to Union; Toronto wants it put ahead of the \$2.4 billion plan for a Yonge extension north to Richmond Hill. *Toronto Star*.

threatened. Mayor Miller contends the move is shortsighted and resigns Toronto to a future of smog and gridlock. The province counters budgetary crises necessitate a restructuring of funding to Metrolinx. Yet even before the postponement of the \$4billion, the City of Toronto reportedly agreed to cut 22.5km from the original plan – notably deferring direct connections to Pearson Airport – despite Miller’s continued objections²⁵. Miller’s decision to leave the mayoralty perhaps presents to largest threat to the Transit City project. With both Miller and TTC chair Giambrone stepping down in 2010, Transit City is losing its two most influential advocates. Four of the five leading candidates to replace Miller oppose the Transit City plan. Despite widespread backing amongst City councilors, Transit City appears likely to lose strong advocacy from the mayor’s office.

2. *Technical barriers*: Recent experiences with constructing grade-separated streetcars on Spadina Avenue (opened in 1997) and St Clair Avenue (constructed 2006-2010) put into question the ability of the City and the TTC to carry out the Transit City plan. Public resentment marred the construction of the St Clair dedicated right-of-way, as the project ran over-budget, over-time and caused considerable disruption to adjacent businesses. Further criticism has centered on the decision to develop Transit City as a LRT system²⁶. The majority of candidates for Toronto’s 2010 mayoral election advocate for the development of subways as the means to expand the TTC’s infrastructure, despite the increased costs and a history of cancelled and truncated subway developments. LRT would serve a different function to subways in Toronto’s suburbs, providing more localized service, more frequent stops and be visibly integrated into redevelopment efforts in Toronto’s “priority neighborhoods”.
3. *Development barriers*: The TTC operates with a farebox recovery rate of 73.8% (TTC, 2008b); a rate significantly above most North American public transit agencies. The retraction of provincial subsidies to the TTC by the Harris government (including a period between 1998 and 2003 where no subsidies were provided) places pressure on any expansion project to be financially viable, supported by stable ridership. While the transit corridors identified by Transit City contain pockets of high density, overall densities are lower than in urban (sub)centers. Raising densities (and ridership) through retrofitting marginalized, auto-centric, inner suburban neighborhoods (figure 2) presents distinct barriers to real estate development that becomes evident when comparing the transit-oriented development potential of greenfield sites in the outer suburbs (see the successes of Viva BRT in York Region). The transportation-development nexus is further complicated by the conflicting time-scales of political cycles and urban development. For example, the TTC’s Sheppard Subway (opened in 2002 through an affluent area in the north of Toronto) was immediately critiqued as a political project with low ridership, yet the line has stimulated a gradual process of transit-oriented development along its route that may take 20-30 years to mature.
4. *Spatial barriers*: Essentially Transit City remains a metropolitan plan for the City of Toronto. LRT lines integrate the urban fabric of the city by providing rapid transit to transit deficient suburban districts. However, the spatial imaginary deployed in the plan perpetuates the (predominantly political) disconnections between Toronto and the “905” – especially with the apparent loss of a direct Transit City link to Toronto’s international airport. As such, Transit City remains embedded with a metropolitan conceptual mode of urbanization that both overlooks and reinforces the disconnects between low-income

²⁵ Kalinowski, T. (2010, May 5). Toronto's Transit City, slower, shorter. *Toronto Star*.

²⁶ Labeling Transit City as an “LRT” is a political decision intended to distance the technology from existing streetcars and to project an image of European urbanization. Furthermore, the proposed LRT technology operates on a different gauge to both that used by the subways vehicles and existing streetcar rolling stock.

residents and newcomers in Toronto's inner suburbs and growing employment centers surround the airport and booming outer suburban municipalities such as Markham and Brampton.

EMERGING NEXUSES OF TERRITORY AND TRANSPORTATION GOVERNANCE IN TORONTO

The end of metropolitan urbanization?

Urban-regional transportation crises and responses in the GTA highlight a significant disjuncture between the spatial and functional scope of the contemporary urban process and the scaling of governance regimes: a problem echoed through the OECD's diagnosis of the GTA's regional economy. In the wake of neoliberal restructuring and the locally contingent relativization of scale, the GTA embodies the unstable, evolving and scale-sensitive state spatiality of RCSR governance. Yet while governance rescaling and re-regulation, funding shortfalls and decaying infrastructures present barriers to Toronto's global competitiveness, new governance formations, actor constellations and spatial imaginaries have increasingly emerged in an attempt to harness urban transportation infrastructures for the region's competitive policy frameworks. Pre-existing institutional boundaries, relations and spatial imaginaries and uneven geographical development, though, continue to significantly shape the GTA's emerging regional nexuses of governance and territory.

Reflecting the problematic disparity Kubler and Heinelt (2005, p. 8) note between "functional networks" – the connections, flows, sinews and diverse spatialities which characterize the contemporary urban process – and "institutionally defined territorial boundaries" they transcend, the development of a coherent city-regional political space, or an effective city-regional collective actor in the post-CSR GTA has been inhibited by a fragmented, internally contradictory scalar politics. These dynamics are significantly shaped by the politics the traditional spatial imaginaries of the city (constructed through, and in, specific downtown spaces) and suburbs which characterize *metropolitan urbanization*. Established regional political divides embedded in these imaginaries perpetuate and continued fear of: (1) the suburbanization of urban politics; or (2) the offloading of "urban" problems onto surrounding suburban municipalities.

Despite the persistence of urban-suburban political divisions, the city-regional scale and spatial imaginary appear increasingly significant in resolving the current economic development pressures facing the GTA. The OECD's territorial review represents the latest iteration of a powerful regional discursive conceptualization of urban form and process forwarded by key political and economic actors in the GTA (Boudreau, 2007). Indeed, it seems possible to posit the pressures of an emerging mode of *regional urbanization* are usurping the logics of metropolitan urbanization that shaped the GTA in the post-war period, which I shall tentatively discuss in the following section. In contrast to the GTA's political landscape during the CSR, at the contemporary juncture, both urban and suburban middle-classes seem to share an understanding of regional economic development for the future prosperity of the region (although the exact form of this regionalization is contested). The political inertia currently gripping the region appears likely to be resolved (one way or another) with the establishment of Metrolinx and the outcome of Toronto's mayoral election. With this the metropolitan dynamics, while continuing to shape the development of the GTA to a degree, will be reconfigured around an unstable and evolving set of processes of regional governance dynamics and social processes. This is to say that a regional imaginary and operational political space is necessary to move beyond the current inertia restraining the GTA; whether this reflects a politics of growth, or social and environmental justice.

With this, it is vital to note the role of other levels of government, particularly the Government of Ontario, in shaping the conditions for regionalization in the Canadian context (especially with the restrictions placed on funding sources) (Friskin, 2007). The CSR saw the provincial government stepping in to resolve the contradictions of the broken Keynesian-Fordist regime – and the conflicts between urban and suburban middle classes (see footnote 1). As can be seen with the increased authority assigned to Metrolinx, the province appears willing (and to a degree, needed) to intervene in order to resolve the institutional inertia restraining regional growth and development. Building from the provincial *Greenbelt*, *Places to Grow* and *Big Move* plans, a regional spatial imaginary is being distinctly *produced*, one which draws on discourses of environmental sustainability, quality of life and economic development embedded within the GTA’s contingent articulation of roll-with-it neoliberalization. As such, the trope of *regional* growth and competitiveness has percolated into policy discourses throughout the GTA and across urban policy sectors.

Roll-with-it regionalism

Keil’s conceptualization of roll-with-it neoliberalization provides a provocative analytical lens through which we can begin to grasp this reasons for this, and the complexities of the breakdown of metropolitan urbanization and emerging regional socio-political relations. In this context, as Keil asserts “[a]ctors moving along their various registers create new contradictions, struggles, conflicts and possibilities... as politicians, capitalists and activists want to stabilize, restore and revolutionize ‘the system’ all at once” (2009, p. 232) but they do so with an increasingly with neoliberal rationalities as the basis for action. Processes of “roll-back” and “roll-out” neoliberal restructuring persist (see Hackworth, 2008), but they are supplemented and normalized in the post-CSR landscape. Therefore, although the neoreformist era in Toronto politics deployed softened policies and discourse in comparison to the harsh restructuring of the CSR, the neoreformist governments have continued to pursue and internalize the goals of neoliberal competitiveness; albeit couched in “Third Way” discourses stressing environmental sustainability and quality of life (Coulter, 2009).

The 2003 elections of Miller and the McGuinty Liberals replaced the overtly neoliberal Harris/Lastman regimes, yet they inherited a political-economic landscape fundamentally reshaped by the CSR. In this regard, the current responses to the social housing and transportation crises (in contrast to immediate calls for funding and support from upper levels of government) reflect a continuation, rather than rupture, of Ontario’s neoliberalization. The neoreformist era after 2003 substantively consists as much of a crystallization and institutionalization of the neoliberal reforms implemented after 1995 as a viable alternative to, or rejection of neoliberalization. The processes of *roll-with-it regionalization* engendered in transportation policy and governance reflect this through the contradictory politics of capital-orientated roll-with-it 1, and competitive environmental and quality or life-oriented roll-with-it 2 neoliberalization. Four tendencies evident in the responses to the crises discussed illustrate this argument:

1. *“Competitive” urban policy*: urban policy frameworks have shifted to embed notions of competitiveness into crises in traditional collective consumption amenities. Urban policy is thus path-dependently locked into neoliberalized governance.
2. *Sectoral (dis)engagement*: transportation, as a vital facilitator of capital accumulation, becomes a key policy sector around which (neoliberal) regional collaboration is (tentatively) coalescing. Yet this is uneven and articulates distinct moments of (de)valorization and (dis)connection.

3. *Destruction of public alternatives*: the possibilities for public, collective or progressive alternatives to neoliberal governance are curtailed materially through: (1) a political-economic climate that stymies non-marketized solutions to urban problems; and (2) neoliberalized governmentalities and spatial imaginaries which blinker potential non-neoliberal policy formulations.
4. *Redefined role of the state*: the state operates in a new manner, with a redefined operational rationale. In the transportation sector, the debate over toll roads for example, suggests the municipal government, if not the provincial level, are willing to utilize pseudo-private mechanisms to generate funds and increase “competitiveness” on road infrastructures which were created for collective public consumption. Metrolinx serves as an illustration of nongovernmental bodies taking over traditional governmental responsibilities, and with this, being sheltered from political backlashes (despite openness to “public consultation”; see Keil and Young, 2008).

The material and discursive construction of a regional political space is embedded within, and co-constitutes, these processes. The dynamic of regionalization emerging within the GTA internalizes the logics and politics of roll-with-it neoliberalization, with the “accepted the ‘governmentality’ of the neoliberal formation,” as Keil (2009, p.232) contends, underlying state re-territorialization. Roll-with-it regionalization thus represents the continued attempt by the state to mediate the internal contradictions and crises of neoliberal RSCR urban and regional governance. The utilization of roll-with-it regionalism though, is uneven and deployed with varying levels of success across both policy sectors and regional space. This results from: (1) the overlaying of regional flows, relations and imaginaries over fractured, multi-faceted pre-existing political formations; and (2) emerging geographies of uneven development and socio-spatial polarization engendered by neoliberalization.

Indeed, the power and focus of the emergent regional spatial imaginary in Southern Ontario problematically obscure the socio-economic geographies of the neoliberal region (see Walks, 2009). Hackworth (2007, pp. 80-81), notably, points to a three-fold process of neoliberal urbanization in which the urban core experiences (re)valorization along with valorization of the outer suburbs while devalorization is now focused upon the inner-suburbs: an observation borne out in the GTA by a number of studies (United Way, 2004; Walks, 2001). This suggests alternative spatial imaginaries, academic and popular, are required to conceptualize the new dynamics of neoliberal, post-Fordist urbanization, provide alternative modes of governance and structure the provision and rationales for urban infrastructures.

CONCLUSION

After the creative destruction of the region’s spatial Keynesian formation, the GTA’s emerging governance “mosaic” has been defined by a central contradiction between increasingly significant processes of political and discursive roll-with-it regionalization and a retrenched institutional inertia shaped by locational politics and localized political agendas (Brenner, 2000). Regional governance appears necessary to coordinating growth and development in the GTA, for both pro-growth and progressive politics; yet such regional governance is increasingly being dominated by discourses of regional economic competitiveness, particularly in Toronto’s transportation sector. This serves to embed city-regional state space within the auspices of continued neoliberalization, now structured in *trialectical* tension between moments of roll-back, roll-out and rolling-with-it. The fluid, “fuzzy” nature of city-regional space will likely lead any potential political-institutional fix emerging at this spatial frame to internalize these contradictory dynamics and the fragmented uneven development of the GTA, with both their latent potential and limitations.

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Figure 1: The Greater Toronto Area political boundaries (source: Wikimedia Commons, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Greater_toronto_area_map.svg)

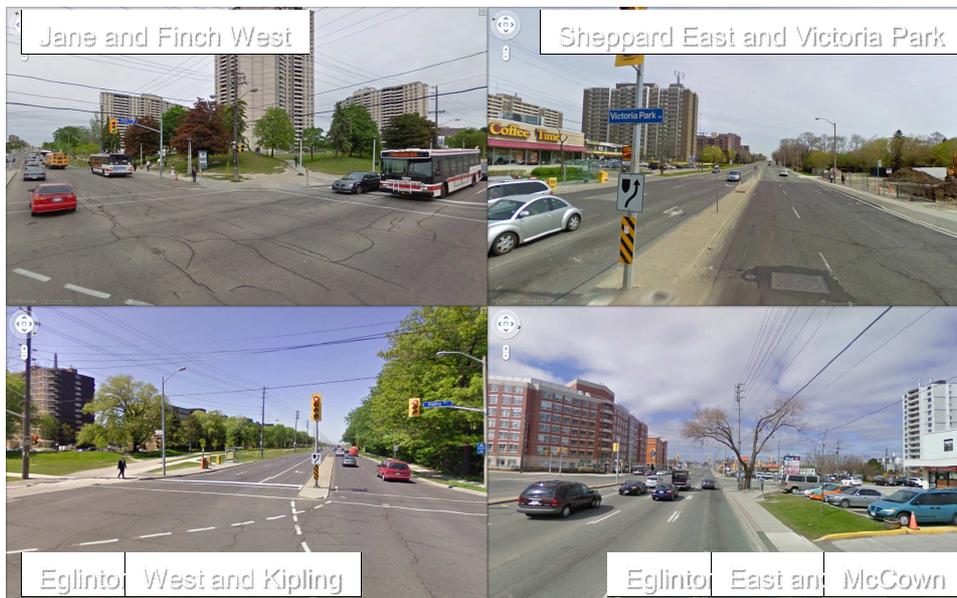


Figure 2: Transit City landscapes; samples of corridors designated for grade-separated LRT right-of-ways (source: Google Maps Street-View)