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Notes for remarks by

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Premier of Ontario**

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ADDRESS TO THE BIG CITY MAYORS SUMMIT

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you for that kind introduction.

I am delighted to be here with you this evening.

I want to particularly welcome all the mayors here tonight, from across Canada and across Ontario.

I hope you are enjoying your visit to Canada's largest city.

I am pleased to welcome my hometown mayor Bob Chiarelli. And I am pleased to see so many of my federal colleagues here.

Let me take the opportunity to comment briefly about the meeting we had recently in Ottawa – I think we might draw a lesson or two from that experience.

If we could just allow ourselves to be inspired by the people we are privileged to serve, if we understand that there is this abiding conviction in the people of this country.

This longing for something better.

This desire to work together.

This understanding that together, we are stronger than when we are separated and divided.

We all played important roles and I want to put something on the record – and I want to say this to my federal cousins:

You should be very very proud of your Prime Minister.

We would not have had that meeting in the first place had he not made the commitment.

We would have not secured the deal that we ultimately secured had it not been for his determination and his leadership.

So I want to thank you - I have said that to him privately, I want to say that to all of you publicly.

We all know that the City of Toronto is an economic colossus, an international home of commerce, media and the arts ... a site for world-class science and medical research ... and a great place to live, too.

In this past week alone, you could see the world's most famous filmmakers and movie stars here, or catch the world's greatest hockey players, or just down the road, in Oakville, rub shoulders with the greatest golfers on the planet.

I want to thank Mayor Miller for hosting such a valuable meeting.

I'm proud to be working with David, and all the other Ontario mayors here tonight, to renew urban life in our province.

That work is part of the mature new partnership our government is building with Ontario's cities.

We're building strong communities today — and far into the future.

Because when our communities are stronger, our province is stronger.

In the past few years, the 92 per cent of Canadians who live in urban areas have pushed their concerns onto the national stage.

That's because, while we're proud of our country, and we identify with our province, we actually live in cities.

And while no two Canadian cities are alike, Canadians who live in cities share many things in common.

From coast to coast, Canadians want cities that work.

They want cities in which they can live, dream and put down roots.

They share a desire for clean air and water, greenspace and stress-free commuting.

They want livable downtowns, great neighbourhoods, fabulous arts and culture, and ample parks and recreation.

They want quality public transit, affordable and decent housing, social diversity and they want to live in a caring community.

They want great public schools, colleges and universities, accessible health care and plenty of economic opportunity.

And they rightly expect that their governments at all levels will work together to protect and enhance their quality of life.

Above all, each generation that rediscovers our cities wants the creative and social buzz that goes with being at the heart of the action.

It wasn't always this way.

A deep aversion to city life runs through history and popular literature right into the 20th century.

In Victorian times, cities were deemed to be cesspools of corruption, greed and temptation.

The English poet William Cowper said in 1785 that "God made the country, and man the city."

Now, the vast majority of us call the city home.

We are an urban people. And we know that the most innovative and thriving economies are found in cities where there is a rich diversity of people, skills and knowledge.

The result is that our cities are actually driving our economy — and they are doing so in competition with a continent of worthy rivals.

For the first time in our history, our cities are firmly in the economic driver's seat.

And Canada, and the provinces, will only do well if our big cities are doing well.

Our government came to office firmly conscious of this new dynamic.

Our commitment to build strong communities tapped into our people's desire to ensure Ontario's cities have everything they need to compete.

And it reflects a growing desire among our people for an improved urban experience.

Over the last 10 years, Ontarians watched their cities grow with a mixture of fascination and concern.

With growth has come gridlock.

With rising property values came urban sprawl.

With more housing starts came a lack of affordable housing and a need for more infrastructure.

Ontarians decided they want growth, but not sprawl.

The kind of growth that respects the environment, preserves greenspace, builds on what we have, attracts new investment, spreads prosperity and improves quality of life.

No level of government can deliver everything on that list.

And none of us can even start to tackle that list on our own.

That's what our mature new partnership with municipalities is all about.

It recognizes that only by working together can we make our cities even greater places to live, work and enjoy.

That's why, when the federal government gave municipalities a GST rebate earlier this year, we were quick to say we would not claw it back.

It's why we scrapped the backward plan that would have required municipalities to hold a referendum before raising new revenue.

It's why we gave municipalities greater flexibility last year to determine tax rates for homeowners and businesses.

It's why we're giving them more funds to meet increased recycling and diversion targets.

And it's why, by 2007, we'll fund 75 per cent of municipal public health costs, up from 50 per cent.

That's a \$127-million upload.

When we talk about partnership, we're not just talking the talk.

We're walking the walk.

We're providing up to \$965 million in low-cost, longer-term loans to help 90 municipalities renew their public infrastructure.

And, we're meeting one of the most pressing issues in our cities by helping them build affordable housing.

Since last October, we've announced funding to create more than 2,300 units of affordable housing.

That's eight times more funding in our first year than the previous government committed in eight-and-a-half years.

We're determined to tackle pollution, reduce commuting times, and unlock some of the gridlock that frustrates our people and stalls our economy.

With the help of leading municipal politicians we're creating a greenbelt across the Golden Horseshoe.

And beginning this fall, we'll start delivering on our commitment to make two cents of the existing provincial gas tax available to cities for public transit.

We will begin with one cent this October, increasing to one-and-a-half cents in October 2005 and two cents in October 2006.

That represents a potential total transfer of up to \$700 million over the next three years to support transit in Ontario cities.

And that's on top of the \$448 million we're spending on transit in our cities this year.

These are some of the things we're taking action on now.

But if we want to make sure the next 30 years in our big cities are not like the last 10, we've got more work to do.

That's why since taking office we've been planning for the next wave of growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

We're asking the tough questions about transit, infrastructure, housing, development and investment now, rather than scrambling to catch up later.

And we've put it all together in a draft plan entitled *Places To Grow: Better Choices. Brighter Future.*

We're planning for growth.

Not managing growth. Not limiting growth. Not stunting growth.

But planning for growth — not just reacting to it.

The Greater Golden Horseshoe is one of the fastest growing regions on the entire continent.

Over the next 30 years, almost four million people will move to Ontario ... most into central Ontario.

That's like having every single person in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg and Halifax load up the truck and head this way.

This is good news.

People are coming here because of the economic opportunities and quality of life we offer.

That makes Toronto stronger. And it makes Canada and Ontario stronger, too.

But it's bad news if we don't plan for it.

By 2031, at the rate we're going, average automobile travel times would increase by 44 percent due to congestion. Greenhouse gas emissions would increase by 42 percent.

New development will consume more than 1,000 square kilometres of valuable farmland ... that's almost double the size of Toronto.

Our goal is to take control of the steering wheel and direct this growth — instead of allowing it to steamroller us.

At the heart of the Greater Golden Horseshoe lies the City of Toronto.

Home to more than 2.5 million people from all corners of the world, living in harmony, pursuing incredible opportunities.

A city with a mighty downtown, and mighty neighbourhoods.

Toronto is the source of more than 46 per cent of provincial GDP and almost 20 per cent of national GDP.

It's an international centre of finance and insurance, law, media and publishing.

It's home to world renowned health care, universities and colleges carrying out ground breaking research in life sciences and bio-technology and other emerging fields.

Toronto is the engine of economic growth in Ontario and much of Canada.

Let me put it this way - Ontario contributes 23 billion dollars more to the federal government than we receive in return.

We are strong net contributors to the federation and we are proud of it.

And Toronto contributes close to one half of that money.

This city's continued economic prosperity and quality of life has to be a priority for all of us.

One of the debates that did not get that much media attention recently in Ottawa had to do with equalization.

This is an agreement we have stuck as Canadians that we will distribute the wealth.

There are two provinces who are privileged to be in the position to be net contributors to the federation -Alberta and Ontario.

But it is important to know that this city is a major contributor to that equalization and is contributing to the quality of life to be found in communities in eleven other provinces and territories.

I think too many of us take that for granted.

It's a miracle it has delivered prosperity for so long and to so many — despite living in a legislative and fiscal straightjacket that would baffle Houdini.

Toronto sets the pace in so many ways, yet it can't set the size of its own city council, or in many cases, its own speed limits.

It lacks the power to establish a code of conduct, appoint an integrity commissioner, create a lobbyist registry or enhance the powers of its auditor general.

And a city that hosts the largest public film festival in the world has to first get permission from Queen's Park to offer extended bar and hospitality hours.

Toronto means a great deal to Ontario. And to Canada.

That's why it needs a new deal.

As a first step, I am announcing this evening that the province and the city will undertake a joint review of the City of Toronto Act.

The object of this review is to:

- Make the City of Toronto more fiscally sustainable, autonomous and accountable.
- Give it the tools it needs to thrive in the global economy and
- Reshape the relationship between Ontario and its capital city.

A modernized City of Toronto Act will be introduced at Queen's Park by the end of next year.

We have come a long way together, in less than a year.

But there is so much more we can and must do, together, in the years ahead.

Even in a strong and productive partnership, we can't do it all alone.

We need the federal government's help.

Because we can strengthen this new partnership between Queen's Park and our cities, but it will only be strong *enough* when it fully includes the federal government.

On this front, too, there are encouraging signs.

This year, the Martin government joined us in making major funding announcements for the TTC in Toronto, and for GO Transit across the Golden Horseshoe.

And we're looking forward to working with them on new projects in Ottawa and Kitchener-Waterloo.

It's a good start.

But these have to be just the beginning.

Instead of clinging to old jurisdictional boundaries, we need to look for new ideas.

If the U.S. enthusiastically supports urban renewal projects, then so can Canada.

If Washington can help revive a brownfield in Cleveland or Portland, Ottawa can certainly consider the same sort of project in Toronto or Windsor or Guelph.

At the very least, we can ensure that cities are at the table when we're discussing national changes that affect them.

Because the best way to achieve positive change — to get results — is by working together.

If we are united — whether we sit in Queen's Park, Parliament or local council ...

If we are focused — on the challenges facing urban Canada today ...

If we truly build our partnership, with dialogue and respect and understanding ...

Then we can have cities, provinces and Ottawa truly working together.

And we can truly do our best job of serving the people who sent us here.

The people of Ontario — the people of Canada — deserve to live in cities that are strong and safe and solid.

People who deserve a quality of life that is second to none.

Thank you very much.