

Doug Ford's government has announced a regional transit review. Originally introduced in the provincial election, there are still few details about the government's plans. During the election, Doug Ford proposed to take control – or upload – parts of the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to the province. Premier Ford expresses his enthusiasm for subways at every opportunity, and he said this is what he would like the province to control.

Former provincial Transportation Minister Yakabuski appointed Michael Lindsay to lead a panel for this review. The review panel has been appointed for up to one year. Lindsay previously worked for global project engineering firm Hatch and his biography indicates previous experience with privatization schemes. Lindsay also held a senior executive position at Infrastructure Ontario, which would indicate in-depth knowledge of key players and processes in the province.

The 'upload' announcement and review has been met with suspicion. We don't know what the panel will end up recommending, but we have already seen the Ford government use reports like these to act however it wants. For example, this report could lead to changes to Metrolinx, the province's transit authority, and lead to the province taking control of the TTC subway lines to privatize them. Even if the system remains publicly owned, there could be deals struck for privatized long-term maintenance contracts and even operation contracts. This is the work our members do, and we've already seen them privatize parts of the system, like the new LRTs and PRESTO system.

The government's announcement also seems to reach further than just the Toronto system. Although specific to a Toronto subway upload, former Transportation Minister Yakabuski stated the following:

"This is part of our government's plan to improve public transit and bring relief to commuters across the region," said Minister Yakabuski. "Travelling around the GTHA can be difficult and cumbersome. Traffic congestion and a lack of transit infrastructure is costing money, jobs and time. Our government is stepping up and treating the subway like the vital service it is. I welcome our new Special Advisor, Michael Lindsay, and I look forward to working with him on this important initiative."

It is also not clear what the panel would say about new expansion, like the Scarborough, York, and relief line subway extensions.

The TTC is a large integrated system. If the government decides to tear away key components, like the subway, it will fragment the system under different governance and set it up for private control. Taking the subway lines away from the TTC would set up the subway component to be sold off and privatized. There are well known models of this in other jurisdictions, such as the United Kingdom, which ended in a disastrous collapse.

In London, England the city was subjected to one of the worst examples of a privatization of a public service known when parts of their subway – the London Underground – were privatized in a complicated and disastrous scheme. The plan was so bad, former Mayor and current Conservative MPP called the P3 deals "daylight robbery".

Ultimately, if we lose control of more of the TTC system, we would lose control over key parts of the system and it could affect everything from how long riders wait for trains, health and safety procedures, or maintenance schedules. It could also mean lost jobs for CUPE Local 2 members.

Find out more history at [Local 2's website](#) and visit TTC Riders to sign their petition against breaking up our system – http://act.ttcriders.ca/ourttc?sp_ref=442176418.392.190574.t.0.2.