

Flaherty Unclear On How Much Infrastructure Funding is Earmarked for Transit

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TORONTO - The federal government needs to make clear how much of its infrastructure funding has been earmarked for public transit before Canadian cities can go ahead with much-needed transit expansion, advocates warn.

Participants at the Canadian Urban Transit Association's fall conference applauded Finance Minister Jim Flaherty on Monday for recognizing Ottawa has responsibilities to honour on the transit file.

Still, many said they became worried when Flaherty spoke of traditional infrastructure priorities such as roads, bridges and highways in the same breath as public transit during his speech to open the conference.

"Our challenge is . . . making sure that there is a commitment to carving out a piece of that infrastructure (funding that is) specific for transit," association president Michael Roschlau said following Flaherty's address. "I would have liked the minister to use the word transit a few more times that he did... what was positive was his recognition that public transit is a federal responsibility."

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