

1
GO 2020
GO TRANSIT STRATEGIC PLAN

The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated January 20, 2009, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation Services.

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. York Region support the GO Transit Strategic Plan – GO 2020 which is key to York Region’s Transportation Master Plan and Metrolinx’s Regional Transportation Plan.
2. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to GO Transit, Metrolinx and to the Clerks of the local municipalities in York Region, City of Toronto, Durham Region, Peel Region, and Simcoe County.

2. PURPOSE

This report updates Committee and Council on the GO Transit Strategic Plan – GO 2020, to meet the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) longer distance public transportation needs.

A copy of GO 2020 is provided in Attachment 1.

3. BACKGROUND

GO 2020 builds on the Province’s transit planning

Metrolinx, the provincial agency charged with improving the coordination and integration of all modes of transportation in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), has recently completed a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The RTP provides a framework for decision-making on rapid transit investment and transportation planning policy in the GTHA. The \$17.5 billion MoveOntario 2020 Provincial investment will launch the transportation infrastructure improvements identified in the RTP to the rapidly growing urban area. GO Transit will play an important role in implementing the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan infrastructure improvements and delivering expanded interregional bus and train services in the region.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

GO 2020 presents a strategic direction to the year 2020

GO 2020 – GO Transit Strategic Plan is a commitment to meet the region’s longer-distance public transportation needs in the coming decades, consistent with the Province of Ontario’s Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, and the strategies and improvements in the Metrolinx RTP.

The Strategic Plan presents GO Transit’s Strategic direction to the year 2020, including the vision, objective and goals, and service strategy. GO 2020 and the program of rapid transit improvements identified in the Metrolinx RTP will provide the basis for GO Transit’s 10-year capital program, three-year operating plan, and annual business plans and budgets. The 10-year capital plan is updated annually and presented to the GO Board as part of the budget submission.

The Plan has six main goals to improve GO services

The plan is founded on six main goals aimed at improving access to better, more efficient transit systems:

- Deliver high-quality transit services throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- Be a leader in customer service.
- Continue to enhance quality through organizational excellence.
- Be a model for environmental initiatives while reducing GO's carbon footprint with every passenger.
- Maintain strong partnerships that create seamless transitions between municipal transit systems and improve access to regional transit services.
- Remain economically sustainable.

By 2020, GO ridership to the Toronto core is expected to more than double, and GO ridership outside the Toronto core will triple. The GO 2020 Plan establishes targets for managing this growth while improving service overall, including:

- doubling the proportion of passengers accessing GO stations (other than Union Station) by walking, cycling, or taking transit;
- improving service reliability so that 92% of train trips arrive within five minutes of their scheduled time;
- making seats available for every passenger on 95% of train and bus trips;
- focusing on best practices in environmental sustainability;
- greater ownership and control of rail corridors;
- 100% accessibility on bus and rail services by 2016; and
- well-integrated public transportation, including a common fare card, with provincial, regional, and municipal partners.

For GO Transit to achieve the above targets, municipalities will have to invest in infrastructure, service and program improvements in such areas as walking, cycling and municipal transit. These municipal investments will require partnerships with GO Transit and funding from senior levels of government.

Go 2020 supports our Regional Centres and identifies Anchor Hubs (stations or terminals associated with intensive land use such as urban growth centres) in each of the four centres. In addition, two additional Gateway Hubs (stations or terminals that are significant transfer points between rapid transit services) are identified within York, one in the Highway 7/Highway 404 employment area and the other at the Newmarket GO Rail station on Davis Drive.

Major service improvements planned for main GO corridors

Major service improvements outlined in GO 2020 include:

- Two-way, all-day service within GO's core service area by 2020.
- A train or bus departure at least every 15 minutes during peak periods and at least every 30 minutes in the off-peak periods (on primary corridors).
- New peak-period train service along rail lines not currently being used, between Bolton, Seaton, east Markham, and the Yonge and Summerhill area.
- Extending existing GO rail service including an extension of the Stouffville rail service to Uxbridge and the Richmond Hill rail service to Aurora Road.

The following list identifies the proposed services and capital improvements which benefit York Region:

1. Barrie line - Train service to/from Bradford every 15-20 minutes during peak periods, with selected trips for Barrie. Counter-peak service every 30 minutes. Off-peak all-day service twice hourly to Bradford with bus service to Barrie. Additional capital works to improve track and signals.
2. Richmond Hill line - Train service to/from Richmond Hill every 15-20 minutes during peak periods, with selected trips for Aurora Road. Counter-peak service every 30 minutes. Off-peak all-day service twice hourly to Richmond Hill. Additional capital works to improve track and rail-to-rail grade separation.
3. Stouffville line - Train service for Mount Joy every 15 minutes during peak periods. Counter-peak service every 30 minutes. Selected trips serving Lincolnville and Uxbridge as demand warrants. Off-peak all-day service twice hourly to Mount Joy with bus service to Stouffville and Uxbridge. Additional capital works to improve track and signals.
4. Bolton line – Peak-period train service every 30 minutes for Bolton with stops in Vaughan. Off-peak all-day bus service as warranted. Capital works to improve tracks and stations.

5. East Markham line (requires Crosstown line) - Peak-period train service every 30 minutes for east Markham (Locust Hill). Off-peak all-day bus service as warranted. Capital works on track improvements, stations and rerouting of freight trains.

GO services is an important component of York Region's transportation system and growth management strategy

GO rail and bus services are key elements in the Greater Toronto Area transit network both within the Region and connecting to neighbouring regions. It will be critical to the development of our Regional Centres and the effectiveness of York Region Transit to ensure that both GO and Regional rapid transit systems are developed in a complementary and integrated fashion.

A number of Regional transit services are presently tied into GO services, and the enhancement of GO service frequencies will allow effective integration of even more transit services. However, for GO Transit to achieve the targets set in the GO 2020 Plan, Regional and municipal service and infrastructure improvements are required. These improvements in transit services and walking and cycling facilities should be cost-shared with GO Transit and senior levels of government.

The GO 2020 Plan meets the 30-year infrastructure requirements of the Provincial Growth Plan. As such, it is consistent with the Metrolinx RTP and draft recommendations of the York Region Transportation Master Plan update.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial implication resulting directly from this report. It is important to note that, any subsequent changes to GO's 10 year capital plan may have financial implications on York Region's GO DC Bylaw.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

GO Transit provides an important transportation service in York Region, which has a significant land use support impact on all local municipalities. It provides services to all 9 municipalities in York Region and is critical to the planning of growth in many of them and the four Regional Centres.

7. CONCLUSION

GO 2020 is the most comprehensive blueprint of GO Transit's future and has been developed to deliver fast, convenient, and reliable transit services. GO 2020 synchronizes with the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, MoveOntario 2020 Provincial investment, and the York Region Transportation Master Plan.

Investment in Regional and municipal infrastructure, services and programs to encourage alternative modes of transportation (walking, cycling and transit) will be essential to the success of GO 2020. York Region will work with GO Transit to pursue partnerships and funding opportunities from senior levels of government to ensure that both the GO and Regional transit systems are developed in a complementary and integrated fashion.

For more information on this report, please contact Loy Cheah, Manager, Transportation Planning at 905-830-4444 ext. 5024 or Paul May, Director Infrastructure Planning at ext. 5029.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is included with this report.)