

Update on the Metrolinx GO Expansion Program – First Quarter 2022

Date: January 12, 2022

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Metrolinx's GO Expansion Program ("GOE Program"), formerly known as Regional Express Rail, will expand and improve service on the GO rail network to meet the needs of a growing region. The GOE Program will provide faster and more efficient trains, two-way all-day service, accessible stations, and 15-minute or better service on core portions of the GO rail network. The GOE Program is one part of a multi-billion, Government of Ontario, investment in transit expansion that includes light rail transit, subway and bus projects across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Portions of the GOE Program's improvements to rail infrastructure have been happening incrementally in and around Union Station and along the eight GO corridors that serve 19 stations within the City of Toronto. The purpose of this report is to provide a status update on components of Metrolinx's GOE Program that have achieved significant milestones since City staff last reported to City Council in September 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Transit Expansion Office recommends that:

1. Executive Committee receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no financial implications resulting from the adoption of this report.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

In November 2016, City Council adopted, with amendments, EX19.1 *Transit Network Plan Update and Financial Strategy*, and endorsed a Summary Term Sheet that set out cost-sharing principles between the City and the Province on the GO Expansion Program. City Council also requested that Metrolinx assess the requirements for additional grade separations at Passmore Avenue, McNicoll Avenue, Huntingwood Drive, Progress Avenue, Havendale Road and Danforth Road.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX19.1>

In September 2020, City Council adopted, with amendments, EX16.4 *Metrolinx-City of Toronto Master Agreement for the GO Expansion Program* and authorized the City Manager or designate to finalize negotiations, enter into and execute a Master Agreement with Metrolinx for the GOE Program based on principles identified in the report, and to enter into any such ancillary or related agreements, amendments, and renewals as may be necessary. This report also noted previous City Council decision history on the GO Expansion/Regional Express Rail Program.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX16.4>

On June 8, 2021, City Council considered MM34.18 *Keeping the Promise - Requesting a Federal Environmental Assessment of Metrolinx's Proposed Don Valley Layover Facility - by Councillor Paula Fletcher, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton* and requested Council to express support for a Federal Impact Assessment of Metrolinx's proposed Don Valley Layover Facility.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.18>

On June 8, 2021, City Council considered MM34.19 *Keeping our environment on track: requesting Metrolinx to conduct more analysis and plan for environmental stewardship in Small's Creek and Williamson Ravines - by Councillor Brad Bradford, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie* and requested that Metrolinx undertake a technical review of alternative structural design approaches; conduct an engineering analysis to explore opportunities to connect Small's Creek and Williamson ravines with a new wildlife crossing or pedestrian underpass; and, provide an ecological restoration and stewardship plan for the Small's Creek Ravine in advance of significant work impacting trees and the wooded ravine slope.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.19>

On July 14, 2021, City Council considered MM35.48 *Protecting Jobs in Scarborough - by Councillor Michael Thompson, seconded by Councillor Jennifer McKelvie* and requested that Metrolinx revisit the design of the Progress Avenue Grade Separation, and others, to reach a joint design solution prior to proceeding with project procurement.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM35.48>

On December 15 and 16, 2021, City Council adopted, with amendments, EX28.12 *Metrolinx Subways Program - Real Estate Protocol and Land Valuation Principles for Subways and GO Expansion Programs* and authorized staff to utilize specific land valuation principles for the City lands required for the GO Expansion Program.

Link: <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX28.12>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

In its 2014 Budget¹, the Province of Ontario announced that the expansion towards two-way, all-day GO Transit rail service running at intervals as frequent as 15 minutes was a provincial priority, thus launching the development of the GO Expansion Program ("GOE Program"). The GOE Program was formally defined through the 2015 Initial Business Case for Regional Express Rail² prepared by Metrolinx and further refined in their 2018 GO Expansion Full Business Case³.

To achieve service-level targets that support the GOE Program, various track infrastructure improvements, upgrades or modifications are planned across the rail network. These projects have been grouped into three main packages of work, namely: Early Works, Off-Corridor and On-Corridor.

1. Early Works

Early Works includes works in each of the rail corridors that are required to be completed in advance of the broader network improvements and include infrastructure such as track work, signalling, utility relocations and electrification. This work is currently being procured through a combination of Public-Private-Partnerships (P3) and traditional contracts.

2. Off-Corridor

Off-Corridor is the smallest package of work and refers to work off the railway corridor, including customer and safety-related improvements to existing stations as well as the expansion of facilities to meet growth in customer demand.

3. On-Corridor

On-Corridor ("OnCorr") is the largest package of work and will be procured under a single contract to design, build, operate and maintain new infrastructure and trains for 25 years. On November 30, 2021, the request for proposals stage closed. Two proponent teams, EnTransit and ONxpress Transportation Partners, submitted their proposals, which will be evaluated by Infrastructure Ontario (IO) and Metrolinx over the next few months. IO and Metrolinx anticipate announcing the successful proponent in late 2022.

In general, OnCorr is focused on the electrification of various GO Corridors and includes any outstanding infrastructure not constructed as part of the Early Works package, such as new track and facilities throughout the network and a number of grade separations. These elements represent work that is required to enable two-way all-day GO service and includes various projects in Union Station.

¹<https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2014/>

²https://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/projectevaluation/benefitscases/GO_RER_Initial_Business_Case_Summary_EN.pdf

³https://www.metrolinx.com/en/docs/pdf/board_agenda/20181206/20181206_BoardMtg_GO_Expansion_Full_Business_Case.PDF

To assess the impacts of new infrastructure under the OnCorr package of work, Metrolinx is undertaking Environmental Assessments (EA) and EA Addendums under the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) (Ontario Regulation 231/08), including:

- The Scarborough Junction Grade Separation TPAP, New Track and Facilities TPAP, Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations TPAP; and,
- The Network-Wide Structures Project (an Addendum to the Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion TPAP 2017), and an Addendum to the GO Rail Network Electrification TPAP 2017.

To deliver many of the complex projects that make up the GOE Program, Metrolinx will be utilizing a P3 model, which transfers design and delivery responsibilities to private sector partners. Although a private partner will deliver the projects, Metrolinx will remain the owner of the system and will continue to be publicly accountable for its performance, coordination with other public agencies, and decisions on service planning and fares.

The City of Toronto plays a crucial role in the delivery of the GOE Program, as it is host to 19 stations (a third of all current GO stations across the network, including Union Station) and portions of all eight rail corridors, which are accompanied with bridges, signals, grade separations and other associated infrastructure. As such, City staff are involved in the planning, design, and implementation of the GOE Program through activities such as reviewing technical drawings, developing required legal agreements, reviewing construction management and traffic management plans, and providing planning approvals, among many other activities. In addition, the City provides input to Metrolinx on local interests and concerns, and is committed to providing updates to Council on this multi-billion dollar transit expansion investment as it develops.

An update on components of GOE Program that have achieved significant milestones since City staff last reported to Council in September 2020 is provided below. This report also addresses several City Council directives related to the GOE Program.

COMMENTS

1. EARLY WORKS & OFF-CORRIDOR

Q4 2020 to Q4 2021 Milestones and Key Updates

Highway 401 / 409 Tunnel Expansion

In February 2021, Metrolinx completed the excavation of tunnel two, less than three meters under Highway 401/409. These two tunnels will accommodate two future tracks, as well as signaling and communications infrastructure on the Kitchener corridor. Construction to excavate the tunnels began in July 2019 with substantial completion achieved in July 2021.

Stouffville Stations and the Steeles Avenue Grade Separation

Improvements are taking place at existing stations along the Stouffville corridor, which connects York Region to Toronto. On October 25, 2021, the new Agincourt GO station building was opened to the public featuring improved station amenities and larger waiting areas. At the same time, Metrolinx crews began access and accessibility improvements to enhance community connections to and through the station. A new second track and platform, and relocated east platform, both with canopies and integrated shelters, will also be installed as part of this work, which is currently ongoing.

At Milliken GO Station, Metrolinx is improving amenities, and will be installing a second track and platform, two new pedestrian tunnels with elevators, and a pedestrian bridge across Steeles Avenue East that will connect to both platforms.

As part of the Stouffville Stations project, Metrolinx has constructed a road-under-rail grade separation to separate the train tracks from vehicle traffic lanes on Steeles Avenue East. To enable the grade separation, Metrolinx's contractors began lowering Steeles Avenue East, between Silver Star Boulevard, Old Kennedy Road and Midland Avenue in September 2019. At that time, the Steeles Avenue East Diversion Road was commissioned to facilitate construction of the grade separation structure. In June 2021, the Steeles Avenue East Diversion Road was approved for permanent closure by Scarborough Community Council, and in July 2021, a lowered Steeles Avenue East, between Redlea Avenue and Silver Star Boulevard, was reopened with two additional traffic lanes.

Currently, construction work is on-going at Milliken Station and at the Steeles Avenue Grade Separation. Substantial completion of the projects is anticipated in 2022.

Lakeshore East Corridor

The Lakeshore East (LSE) Corridor's west section stretches for eight kilometers from Pape Avenue to Kennedy Road. Throughout this segment, LS Lakeshore Contractors (officially awarded the construction contract in March 2021), will construct a new fourth track; extend, replace and rehabilitate existing culverts and retaining walls; and, temporarily or permanently relocate third party utilities. Work on portions of the corridor has already begun, and monthly Construction Liaison Committee (CLC) meetings, hosted by Metrolinx, have been underway since September 2021. CLC's provide an ongoing opportunity for the community, elected officials, City staff and Metrolinx to discuss construction updates and address related concerns.

Small's Creek Ravine

The Small's Creek Ravine passes under the LSE Corridor's west section, between Coxwell Avenue and Woodbine Avenue. This ravine is well used by the surrounding residents and the southern portion is in an Environmentally Sensitive Area.

Throughout 2021, Metrolinx met with the community on several occasions to discuss their preferred vision for the Small's Creek Ravine, including:

- A Virtual Open House on February 3, 2021, which was attended by over 150 participants. Participants were particularly concerned about how work planned for Small's Creek would impact tree plantings and expressed that top priorities should include the retention of as many trees as possible and the planting of additional trees in compensation⁴.
- An on-site community walk on August 23, 2021 with local stakeholders, including members of The Friends of Small's Creek and City staff. Community stakeholders further expressed concerns about the Ravine's preservation and future enhancement, and requested that Metrolinx consider the community's feedback on alternative design approaches.
- An additional Virtual Open House on September 29, 2021⁵ to provide the community with construction details associated with widening the GO rail corridor in the Small's Creek Ravine area.

City and Metrolinx staff are currently meeting bi-weekly to discuss ecological approaches as a result of consultation and engagement with the community. Metrolinx has shared restoration details for Small's Creek with the community, and proposes to plant up to 2,000 native, locally sourced trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants. Metrolinx has also committed to providing two years of maintenance on new plantings, to ensure the success of the replanting efforts.

On June 8, 2021, City Council also adopted MM34.19⁶, and requested Metrolinx to undertake a technical review of alternative structural design approaches; conduct an engineering analysis to explore opportunities to connect Small's Creek and Williamson ravines with a new wildlife crossing or pedestrian underpass; and, provide an ecological restoration and stewardship plan for the Small's Creek Ravine in advance of significant work impacting trees and wooded ravine slope.

Alternative structural design approaches were previously investigated and rejected by Metrolinx. Metrolinx has decided to proceed with their preferred design. The overarching scope of work as proposed by Metrolinx continues to include enabling works to support a fourth track on the LSE Corridor. At a broad level, enabling works consist of constructing retaining walls, removing vegetation, replacing the culvert, and carefully considering restoration plantings. Significant portions of the work and access to the work locations will be completed within the Metrolinx right of way, with only some additional work occurring City-owned portions of Small's Creek ravine.

At present, a pedestrian connection from Merrill Bridge Road Park to Williamson Park Ravine has not been included in Metrolinx's scope of work. However, Metrolinx and its consultant are preparing a cost estimate to formalize the existing footpath through the Small's Creek Ravine on the north side of the rail corridor.

⁴ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/lakeshore-east-live-event>

⁵ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/smalls-creek-live-september-29-2021>

⁶ <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.19>

City staff have asked Metrolinx to review how it plans to do the work in the area to reduce the impact on significant trees and the ravine ecosystem. Metrolinx has stated that the current proposal preserves as many trees as possible. Metrolinx has also reiterated that it will follow protocols set out in the Metrolinx Vegetation Guideline (2020)⁷, including those associated with municipal permitting processes and compensation for trees outside the rail corridor. The City expects Metrolinx to also comply with guidelines related to Toronto's Ravine Strategy⁸, among other City strategies, to ensure the protection of the area is balanced with its use. The City will continue to request alternative proposals that reduce the impact to the ravine ecosystem.

Birchmount Road Bridge Reconstruction

The Birchmount Road Bridge, located north of Danforth Avenue, was built in 1957 and carries vehicular traffic over the LSE Corridor. As part of the LSE Corridor Expansion (Don River to Scarborough Station) EPR⁹, Metrolinx proposed modifications underneath the Birchmount Road Bridge to make sufficient space for a new fourth track along the rail corridor. Recent assessments by Metrolinx and City staff have concluded that the 64 year old bridge warrants replacement to support a fourth track on the LSE Corridor and improve operational flexibility for Metrolinx trains.

In late November 2021, 100% design for the new Birchmount Road Bridge was achieved. Metrolinx anticipates to award the construction contract in April 2022, and currently, construction is anticipated to begin in August 2022 and continue until summer 2024.

On January 10, 2022, Metrolinx also hosted a Virtual Open House¹⁰ to provide an update about progress being made on the project. The Virtual Open House focused on providing an overview of LSE (Package A) Early Works, and updates about the scope of work. Participants were particularly concerned about the reconstruction's impact to roads, how transit would be re-directed, and future GOE Program plans in proximity to the project.

Davenport Diamond Grade Separation

The Davenport Diamond Grade Separation project, also referred to as the Davenport Diamond Guideway project, will eliminate at-grade rail crossings, and provide an elevated two-track guideway between Bloor Street West and Davenport Road on the Barrie rail corridor. The project scope includes:

- Elimination of the existing at-grade crossing between the Canadian Pacific (CP) Railway and the Barrie rail corridor north of Dupont Street and addition of a new bridge over the CP Rail tracks;

⁷ https://www.metrolinxengage.com/sites/default/files/mx_vegguide-final_draft_s001-gen-7761-005_reduced_size.pdf

⁸ <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/9183-TorontoRavineStrategy.pdf>

⁹ https://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rer/LSE_Segment1_EPR_EN.pdf

¹⁰ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/birchmount-go-live-january-10-2022>

- Creation of a new pedestrian underpass at Paton Road and a new rail bridge at Wallace Avenue; and,
- Rehabilitation of the Dupont rail bridge and replacement of the existing rail bridge at Bloor Street West.

Metrolinx is currently constructing one of the two future tracks, the west track. Once the west track is completed in the first half of 2022, construction of the east track will begin. The project is anticipated to be complete in 2023. City staff continue to provide input to Metrolinx and its Project Co. on project-specific activities, such as traffic management, and are coordinating and sequencing the City's capital works program with the Davenport Diamond project. Public engagement is also underway, with Metrolinx hosting monthly CLC meetings and the Greenway Public Realm Committee with community members, elected officials and City staff.

Davenport Diamond Public Realm Project

The Davenport Diamond Public Realm project, also known as the Greenway, will create a new open space underneath the future guideway, provide a multi-use trail from Wade Avenue to Davenport Road, and new east-west connections.

City staff are working to ensure compliance with regulations for all City-owned assets and functions impacted by the project through design review, and are focusing on the future east-west connections where the Greenway will merge with City streets. Metrolinx is proposing to create connections at Wade Avenue, Paton Road, Wallace Avenue, Antler Street, Dupont Street and Davenport Road. City staff are advocating for Metrolinx to capitalize on all opportunities for connections where open spaces will appear, including at Lappin Avenue.

City staff are also working with Metrolinx to ensure that the design of the Greenway reflects recommendations from the community that were expressed during the round of public consultation in 2015. To that end, the City and Metrolinx are exploring options for the creation of a dog-of-leash-area as part of the project. CLC meetings also continue to take place monthly. On December 13, 2021, Metrolinx hosted a Virtual Open House to provide an update about progress being made on the Greenway project. The Virtual Open House focused on design development work, landscape and plantings, as well as Greenway connections at Wallace Avenue, Campbell Park and Dupont Street¹¹. Participants were particularly concerned about the status of community benefits, the Antler Street and Lappin Avenue connections, as well as noise.

The Greenway is scheduled for tender in Q4 2022, and construction is anticipated to begin in 2023.

¹¹ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/DavenportGreenway/Dec13>

2. ON-CORRIDOR

Q4 2020 to Q4 2021 Milestones and Key Updates

Scarborough Junction Grade Separation

The Scarborough Junction Grade Separation (SJGS) project will reduce the number of at-grade crossings along the Stouffville and Lakeshore East (LSE) Corridor between St. Clair Avenue East and Eglinton Avenue East. By reducing at-grade crossings, trains will be able to freely pass over or under roads without the need for stoppages. Infrastructure improvements and modifications associated with this project include:

- Rail / Rail Grade Separation of the Stouffville and LSE Corridors;
- Midland Layover;
- Corvette Park - Multi-use Crossing;
- Danforth Road - Rail Tunnel;
- St. Clair Avenue East - Bridge Expansion; and,
- Modification or relocation of Scarborough GO Station Building.

The SJGS project followed the provincial Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP). In accordance with the TPAP, Metrolinx held the third and final round of virtual consultation for the project from November 27 to December 11, 2020. The engagement session focused on providing updates to the Socio-Economic, Land Use and Stage 1 Archeological Assessments, and information about the Midland Layover effects and mitigation measures, as well as Operation Noise, Vibration and Air Quality.

The Notice of Completion for the SJGS TPAP was issued on December 21, 2020, and the 30-day public review of the Environmental Project Report (EPR)¹² occurred from December 22, 2020 to January 20, 2021. The EPR has been reviewed by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and the Statement of Completion was issued allowing the project to proceed to the detailed design and construction phase.

New Tracks and Facilities

The New Tracks and Facilities project proposes to build new or modify existing Metrolinx-owned infrastructure along various rail corridors to enable the GOE Program's targeted service levels, and has followed the provincial TPAP. In accordance with the TPAP, Metrolinx held the third and final round of virtual consultation from November 27 to December 11, 2020. The engagement sessions largely focused on the Don Valley Layover Facility's revised design, its associated environmental impacts and Metrolinx's mitigation plans.

Metrolinx subsequently published an EPR for a 30-day public review period from December 30, 2020 to January 28, 2021. The EPR¹³ has been reviewed by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and a Statement of

¹² <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/scarborough-junction-grade-separation-environmental-project-report>

¹³ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/new-track-facilities-environmental-project-report>

Completion for the TPAP was issued on March 5, 2021, allowing the project to proceed to the detailed design and implementation phase.

Don Valley Layover Facility

The Don Valley Layover Facility ("Facility") was one of three new layover facilities proposed under the New Tracks and Facilities project. A new layover facility is required in order to reduce the congestion currently experienced at Union Station and provide a location for storage and light maintenance of trains during day-time off-peak periods.

The Facility utilizes existing track on Metrolinx's Don Branch rail corridor (currently not operational) that runs parallel to the Don Valley Parkway. By situating a layover site on the Don Branch, Metrolinx has advised the City that it will be able to use existing track infrastructure and an existing access road to minimize additional property and infrastructure requirements. The Facility will house various one-storey service buildings, facilities related to the cleaning of parked trains, and equipment, such as a power supply required for the short term/daily layover of trains.

Regarding existing nearby facilities, such as Don and Bathurst Yards, Metrolinx has indicated that these facilities have already been expanded and would not have additional capacity to support storage and light maintenance activities for trains during day-time off-peak periods. Several locations on the west side of the Don Valley were also considered but rejected by Metrolinx as it would require the construction of new tracks and an access road, resulting in a larger impact on the Don Valley¹⁴.

Impact Assessment and Public Engagement

The EA for the Facility was included as part of the New Tracks and Facilities project assessment. The full report and associated appendices can be found on the Metrolinx's New Tracks and Facilities EPR webpage¹⁵. Following City and stakeholder feedback received in late 2020 through the final round of the TPAP's virtual consultations, Metrolinx proposed further modifications to the Facility to minimize impacts, including:

- Adjustment of crew services and buildings to a higher elevation, adjacent to the storage track, within Metrolinx's right-of-way;
- Reconfiguration of buildings' placement to reduce the Facility's footprint by 23%; and,
- Reduction of the amount of required storage tracks from three to one existing track by parking trains in a linear line.

Since the TPAP's completion in March 2021, Metrolinx has hosted two additional community engagement sessions, as well as site visits and stakeholder workshops to answer questions from participants about the Facility. At the June 29, 2021¹⁶ Virtual Open House in particular, Metrolinx communicated to participants that the project is currently at a key stage, and that Metrolinx staff are reviewing design elements, refining

¹⁴ https://www.metrolinxengage.com/sites/default/files/layover_comparison_chart_en1.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/new-track-facilities-environmental-project-report>

¹⁶ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/dvlfLIVEJune29>

project requirements and prioritizing restoration activities. Metrolinx's presentation¹⁷ focused on responding to outstanding community concerns, including ones about the Facility's impact to Don Valley park and trail users. Participants at the session were predominantly interested in the choice of location in the Don Valley; the need/purpose of the Facility; the accumulative impact of many projects in the area; loss of trees; size of the facility; noise from idling trains; and, changing ridership.

During June's Virtual Open House, Metrolinx affirmed that the Lower Don Valley Trail will remain accessible to the public during construction, and proposed to provide signage and fencing to support safe use. In addition, Metrolinx confirmed that the Facility will be compatible with current Don Valley park and trail uses, and that the opportunity for a potential future Don Branch trail has not been eliminated. To reduce the Facility's visual impacts from the recreational trail, residential areas, and the Don Valley Parkway, Metrolinx communicated to participants at the session that screened enclosures, anti-graffiti coatings on public-facing retaining walls, and light sources that minimize impacts to environmentally sensitive areas and users, will be incorporated. Landscaped and planted areas that are environmentally sustainable, were also described as planned elements by Metrolinx, and proposed to be selected in consideration of the surrounding area, and in alignment with the City's Green Standard.

In early fall 2021, Metrolinx initiated a procurement process for a technical advisor (TA) that will advance the Facility's design. The TA is anticipated to begin work in early 2022.

In tandem, Metrolinx is undertaking studies that evaluate and consider the impacts of the Facility on the Don Valley Park. Work to inform Metrolinx's studies began in late 2021, including arborist evaluations of trees in the vicinity of the proposed layover. In 2022, work including biologist assessments of the habitat features in the adjacent area; heritage expert assessments of impacts on heritage features in the area including the Prince Edward Viaduct; and, engineering analyses of the current infrastructure, will begin to further inform Metrolinx's studies.

Metrolinx has committed to continued community and stakeholder engagement through this refinement of project requirements stage, and through to detailed design and construction. Metrolinx has also communicated that it will continue to address stakeholder comments with the aim to further minimize impacts and enhance the ecological function of the Don Valley.

City staff will continue to work closely with Metrolinx to provide feedback on studies that evaluate and consider the impacts of the Facility on the Don Valley Park. Staff will also rely on the Metrolinx-led studies and any relevant information that can be shared to assess implications to municipal infrastructure, assets, and services (including park operations, natural environment, and other capital projects). Comments will continue to focus on how the facility impacts the City's Official Plan Policies related to Parks and Open Space, Ravine Strategy and Implementation Strategy, Lower Don Trail Master Plan, TOCore, Reconciliation Action Plan and Strategic Forest Management Plan, among other City Strategies. When the reports are available, City Divisions, including

¹⁷https://www.metrolinxengage.com/sites/default/files/don_valley_layover_overview.june_28_version_.pdf

Parks, Forestry and Recreation will review and provide comments to Metrolinx on the project through the Transit Expansion Office.

Designating the Don Valley Layover Facility under Federal Impact Assessment Act

On June 8, 2021, City Council adopted MM34.18¹⁸ and expressed support for a Federal Impact Assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* (IAA) of Metrolinx's proposed GO Layover Facility in the Don Valley. Per Council direction, City staff transmitted this request to the federal and provincial governments.

On July 19, 2021, the Federal Minister of Environment and Climate Change issued a response to members of the community that a regional assessment of the Toronto-Danforth area is not warranted under the IAA. The Minister's response was detailed in a letter summarizing that relevant existing regulatory frameworks and other ongoing initiatives are well placed to address the environmental, health, social and economic effects of infrastructure development in this region¹⁹.

Network Wide Structures – Poplar Road

In November 2016, Metrolinx completed a Provincial TPAP²⁰, evaluating the expansion and improvement of the LSE Corridor between Scarborough Golf Club Road in the City of Toronto and Pickering GO Station in the Region of Durham. As part of the LSE Corridor Expansion (Guildwood to Pickering) project, an at-grade closure of Poplar Road was proposed in conjunction with a non-vehicular pedestrian and cyclist grade separation, pending City staff approval.

On September 30, 2020, City Council adopted EX16.4²¹ and per directive 7, requested Metrolinx to provide an update on Poplar Road's closure and that the Poplar Road rail crossing be added to the grade separation list for the Lakeshore East Line. In 2021, the City and Metrolinx reached agreement to pursue the at-grade road closure of Poplar Road and addition of a non-vehicular grade separation as part of the OnCorr package of works. Metrolinx and City staff are currently discussing the design and are working towards confirming timelines to conduct associated works.

Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations

On November 8, 2016, City Council considered EX19.1²², and requested that Metrolinx assess the requirements for additional grade separations at Passmore Avenue, McNicoll Avenue, Huntingwood Drive, Progress Avenue and Havendale Road to recognize the increased frequency of rail movement through at-grade crossings under the GOE Program, and respond with a solution to minimize traffic conflicts in Toronto.

Through the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations (SRGS) project, Metrolinx has proposed to construct grade separations at Passmore Avenue, McNicoll Avenue,

¹⁸ <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.MM34.18>

¹⁹ <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/81596>

²⁰ https://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/rer/guildwood-pickering_meetings.aspx

²¹ <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EX16.4>

²² <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2016.EX19.1>

Huntingwood Drive and Progress Avenue. At Havendale Road, Metrolinx has proposed to close the road and implement a grade-separated multi-use crossing. The SRGS project, in and of itself, is proposed to accommodate corridor expansion and reduce traffic conflicts in Toronto through road-rail separations or road closures.

The SRGS project followed the provincial TPAP, and accordingly, Metrolinx held the third and final round of virtual consultations from November 27 to December 11, 2020. At the Virtual Open Houses, Metrolinx presented draft EPR findings, including design updates to previously presented infrastructure, as well as the environmental study results for the proposed new infrastructure. Metrolinx also conveyed that construction sequencing of the grade separations was considered in the Transportation Impact Assessment²³. The construction sequencing scenarios were identified based on the potential for traffic impacts only, and further development of construction sequencing was indicated to be undertaken during detailed design to consider a broader range of restrictions. The potential construction sequencing scheme that avoids simultaneous construction recommends that:

- Passmore Avenue, McNicoll Avenue, Huntingwood Drive and Havendale Road shall not be conducted simultaneously;
- Huntingwood Drive construction shall be completed before Havendale Road closure; and,
- Construction of Progress Avenue be completed before the proposed road closure at Havendale Road.

As required by Ontario Regulation 231/08, Metrolinx subsequently published an EPR for a 30-day public review period from January 6, 2021 to February 4, 2021. The EPR has been reviewed by the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, and a statement of completion for was issued allowing the project to proceed to the detailed design and implementation phase²⁴.

Passmore Avenue

At Passmore Avenue, community and business stakeholders raised initial concerns about the design solution required to facilitate the grade separation. As such, to account for the additional time needed for an agreed upon design solution, Metrolinx did not seek TPAP approval for the Passmore Avenue Grade Separation as part of the Stouffville Rail Corridor Grade Separations EA.

Metrolinx has indicated it will seek approval for this grade separation through a TPAP addendum to the Stouffville Grade Separations TPAP. Metrolinx will prepare a future EPR addendum for the proposed grade separation at Passmore Avenue to address the outstanding stakeholder concerns related to its design and any additional environmental consideration not covered already in the current TPAP. City staff will continue to provide comments on Metrolinx's design solution, associated reports and submissions.

²³ https://www.metrolinxengage.com/sites/default/files/stouffvillegs_constructionseq_23nov.pdf

²⁴ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/stouffville-rail-corridor-grade-separation-environmental-project-report>

Progress Avenue

Metrolinx's Progress Avenue Road-Over-Rail project will separate the Stouffville rail corridor from the road network. To facilitate the grade separation, various existing entrances from Progress Avenue and William Kitchen Road will be altered. Based on potential property impacts, Metrolinx has been meeting with affected business owners to gain a better understanding of existing and future planned operations of the properties. Additional information on the impacts associated with the project are available in the SRGS EPR²⁵.

Metrolinx continues to meet with City staff and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to discuss the Progress Avenue Road-Over-Rail project and reach a joint design solution suitable for continued operations of all affected businesses. City staff continue to provide feedback through established channels on a regular basis and are advocating for a reasonable design solution that does not delay project execution and maintains business operation prior to proceeding with the construction.

SUMMARY

The Transit Expansion Office will continue to facilitate one-window access to the City to ensure Metrolinx's GOE Program conforms to local planning direction and City policies. In addition, the City will continue to provide input to Metrolinx on local interests and concerns, and is committed to providing updates to Council on this multi-billion dollar transit expansion investment as it develops.

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²⁵ <https://www.metrolinxengage.com/en/content/stouffville-rail-corridor-grade-separation-environmental-project-report>