

City Preliminary Comments on Bill 131, Schedule 2, Proposed GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023

Date: October 25, 2023

To: Planning and Housing Committee

From: Chief Planner & Executive Director, City Planning

Wards: All

SUMMARY

On September 25, 2023, the Ontario government introduced the [Bill 131, Transportation for the Future Act, 2023](#), which proposes to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023, and amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006.

The Province's Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy held public hearings on October 18 and 19, 2023. The Province provided a 30-day commenting period, which closes on October 25, 2023. City staff have submitted preliminary comments to meet the October 19, 2023, deadline for written comments to Standing Committee (Attachment 1). The Standing Committee will consider amendments to the bill on November 1, 2023. The purpose of this report is to provide Planning and Housing Committee with a brief summary of the proposed Bill and staff's comments to the Province.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report. The proposed charge on new development is intended to pay for costs related to the construction of a new GO Transit Station. The regulation necessary to operationalise the Act and assess potential impacts to the City has yet to be released.

As proposed, in order to impose the charge, prescribed municipalities would be required to prepare a background study, undertake consultation, and pass a transit station charge bylaw which identifies the area to which the charge will apply. As set out in the [Provincial Newsroom release](#), municipalities would need to show a reduction in development costs to help offset the charge for developers, such as reduced parking requirements. The Treasurer is to provide Council with an annual financial statement relating to the bylaw.

GO Transit services are the responsibility of Province and historically, GO station construction has been generally funded by the Province. It is unclear whether the City's contribution to SmartTrack stations, or costs required to create complete communities around transit stations that are not recovered through municipal growth funding tools, can be recovered through the new charge.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agree with the financial impact information. Staff will continue to monitor and assess the impacts as more information becomes available.

DECISION HISTORY

On April 6, 2022, Council adopted without amendment CC42.1, "Transmittal of Toronto Transit Commission Update on Cross-Boundary Service Integration". City Council and TTC requested the Ontario Government to amend Section 395 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 to enable cross boundary transit service integration.

[CC42.1 - Transmittal of Toronto Transit Commission Update on Cross-Boundary Service Integration](#)

COMMENTS

Bill 131 proposes to enact the GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023 and amend the City of Toronto Act, 2006. Upon the Province's issuance of the necessary regulations, staff will review and report to Committee, as necessary. The proposed amendment to the City of Toronto Act, 2006, on cross boundary transit service integration is being made at Council's request and did not warrant comments from City staff.

The GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023, introduces a new funding tool for prescribed municipalities to impose a charge on development to pay for costs related to the construction of a new GO Transit station. No municipalities have been prescribed to date. Further, only stations that have not yet started construction at the time the bylaw is passed would be eligible for funding.

There are three objectives in the Act meant to guide Council in considering a transit station charge bylaw: the creation of local and regional transit connections; the creation and growth of transit-oriented communities near the GO Transit station; and the recovery of costs related to construction of the new GO Transit station in a reasonable, transparent, and fair manner. The bylaw is to be approved by the Minister of Infrastructure. There is currently no timeline for the Minister to approve the bylaw.

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Toronto Staff Preliminary Comments on Schedule 2 of Bill 131 -
Proposed GO Transit Station Funding Act, 2023