

GO Expansion Program – 2024 Update

Date: October 22, 2024

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Transit Expansion and General Manager, Transportation Services

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide City Council with an update on Metrolinx's progress on the GO Expansion Program (GOE Program). The GOE Program will expand and improve service on the GO rail network to meet the needs of Toronto and the growing region. The information contained in this report reflects the status of the GOE Program's three main packages of work, namely, Enabling Works, Off-Corridor and On-Corridor Works (OnCorr) provided to Transit Expansion by Metrolinx, since City staff last reported to Executive Committee in October 2023.

The GOE Program is comprised of multiple projects. Metrolinx is currently in the construction phase for the majority of the Enabling Works and some Off-Corridor Works, which will be followed by OnCorr works. OnCorr, which contains the electrification and additional track installation along certain corridors, is currently in a development phase, where the scope, design, and pricing are being re-evaluated.

City staff are engaged in reviewing GOE Program designs, facilitating permits and approvals, and generally advocating for and protecting City interests through all stages of Metrolinx's project delivery. City staff are guided by existing agreements between the City and Metrolinx, such as the Council-approved GO Expansion Master Agreement.

This report includes a request from the General Manager, Transportation Services for a time extension of the temporary delegation of authority to allow for up to 365-day consecutive road, lane and sidewalk closure permits to support the GOE Program from March 31, 2025, to December 31, 2031. In addition, this report also seeks Council authority to receive funds from the Region of York for their share of the capital costs of the Steeles Avenue Grade Separation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Transit Expansion and General Manager, Transportation Services recommend that:

1. City Council amend Section 937-3.9 of City of Toronto Municipal Code Chapter 937, Temporary Closing of Highways, to:
 - a. Delete the phrase "Regional Express Rail" where it occurs and replace it with the phrase "GO Expansion Program"; and
 - b. Delete the phrase "March 31, 2025" and replace it with "December 31, 2031" such that the General Manager, Transportation Services, will be delegated the authority to temporarily close to vehicular and pedestrian traffic highways or portions of highways for a period up to and including 365 consecutive days, until December 31, 2031, with the exception of those highways listed in Section 937-4 of Chapter 937, as required for the purposes of the construction of the Metrolinx GO Expansion Program, and to exempt the General Manager, Transportation Services in carrying out this extended delegation from Section 937-5 of Chapter 937, Temporary Closing of Highways, that being the requirement to notify the local Ward Councillor of the pending closure and the requirement to report on the proposed closure if so requested by the local Ward Councillor.
2. City Council authorize the General Manager, Transportation Services, upon confirmation from Metrolinx of the total cost of the basic grade separation for the road-under-rail grade separation along Steeles Avenue East, east of Kennedy Road, and upon confirmation of the municipal cost contribution for the basic grade separation, to issue an invoice and/or receive payment from The Regional Municipality of York to recover 50% of the municipal cost of the basic grade separation.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

For the road-under-rail grade separation along Steeles Avenue East, east of Kennedy Road, there is no additional financial implications associated with the adoption of this report. The cost for the municipal share from both the City of Toronto and Region of York has been budgeted and approved in the Transportation Services budget as part of the 2024 – 2033 Capital Budget process. Funds are available in the Transportation Services 2024 – 2033 Capital Budget and Plan (CTP821-03 GO Expansion).

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

DECISION HISTORY

A full decision history is provided in Attachment 1.

COMMENTS

Metrolinx's GOE Program has been grouped into three main packages of work, namely: Enabling Work, Off-Corridor Work and On-Corridor Work.

- **Enabling Work** includes works in each of the GO rail corridors that are required to be completed in advance of the broader network improvements. Enabling Works include infrastructure such as track work, signalling, and utility relocations.
- **Off-Corridor Work** refers to work off the railway corridor, including customer and safety-related improvements to existing stations as well as the expansion of facilities.
- **On-Corridor Work** is focused on the electrification and systems improvements of various GO corridors, installing new tracks and facilities throughout the network and constructing grade separations.

Metrolinx is currently in the construction phase for a majority of the Enabling Works and some Off-Corridor Works, which is required for the delivery of the OnCorr Works. Metrolinx is finalizing the OnCorr development phase, where the scope, design and pricing are being re-evaluated. The OnCorr Works will be separated into several projects. City staff are working with Metrolinx and their contractor, ONxpress, on a Design Development and Implementation (DD&I) phase for Union Station, which will inform the final Union Station design improvements. Metrolinx has agreed to provide the City with monthly schedule and project updates for OnCorr Works.

This report provides details on:

1. Enabling Works along the Barrie, Kitchener, Lakeshore East and West, and Stouffville Rail Corridors;
2. Off-Corridor and OnCorr Works related to Union Station, York Mills Layover, various grade separations, Birchmount Bridge and Electrical Protection Barriers; and
3. Delegated authority for road closures.

1. Enabling Works and Off-Corridor Milestones and Key Updates

Barrie GO Rail Line

Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion & Improvements

Along the Barrie corridor, between Strachan Avenue and Steeles Avenue, Metrolinx is upgrading approximately 17.2 kilometres of existing rail and modifying adjacent grading, drainage, security fencing, and utilities as well as retaining and noise walls to enable the

installation of an extra two-way track. Track work is taking place simultaneously across the project. Noise wall installations, drainage improvements and grading between Lawrence Avenue and Highway 401 was completed in Q1 2024, while work continues in other areas along the rail corridor, including within and outside Toronto. Metrolinx will deliver Caledonia GO Station adjacent to the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit station at Caledonia Road. This station will share a Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) bus loading zone to offer a more seamless transition between transit systems. Following the City's review of the 90% detailed design for the station in January 2024, the tender for construction was released in March and closed in July 2024. The targeted construction start date for this station is winter 2025.

Metrolinx is also delivering a new rail bridge, pedestrian bridge and ancillary improvements at Sheppard Avenue West to accommodate the additional track and a new west platform at Downsview Park GO Station. This work began in Q3 2023, with substantial completion expected in December 2025.

Davenport Diamond Grade Separation (DDGS)

The DDGS Elevated Guideway project reached substantial completion in March 2024, with final completion expected in Summer 2025. This project was constructed to eliminate at-grade rail crossings between Bloor Street West and Davenport Road, by constructing an elevated two-track guideway over the rail crossings.

Davenport Diamond Public Realm Project (Public Realm)

The Public Realm project, also known as the Greenway, will utilize the newly created space underneath the Davenport Diamond Guideway, to create a public realm trail and greenspace from Bloor Street West to Davenport Road. The detailed design has reached completion. The City has not received a tender date for the public realm project from Metrolinx. Once a tender date is provided to the City, and the contract awarded, the City will receive an updated completion date. The City is reviewing environmental reports for the Dog Off-Leash Area proposed for south of Campbell Park, which is connected to the Public Realm project. Metrolinx provided an update on the Greenway to the Community Liaison Committee on February 15, 2024¹.

Kitchener GO Rail Line

Kitchener 4th Track Work

To support future increases to service on the Kitchener GO Rail Corridor, several improvements are currently underway between Lansdowne Avenue and Black Creek Drive. Work on this corridor involves the construction of:

- A partial 2.5-kilometre fourth track between Lansdowne Avenue at Rideau Avenue and Dupont Street at Dundas Street West;

¹

https://assets.metrolinx.com/image/upload/v1708112041/Images/Metrolinx/Feb_15_2024_Greenway_CLC_Presentation.pdf

- A pedestrian tunnel connecting Bloor GO Station with Randolph Avenue, as well as a covered pedestrian pavilion;
- Noise barriers and retaining walls; and
- A community park at Ernest Avenue, which comprises of a 740 square meter community space located along the rail path.

The project is anticipated to be completed in Q4 2025.

Lakeshore East GO Rail Line

Lakeshore East-West (LSE-W)

The LSE-W project is located on the Lakeshore East GO line, stretching eight kilometres from Pape Avenue to Kennedy Road. This project is divided into three packages:

- Package A (Kennedy Road to Milne Avenue) achieved total completion in spring of 2024;
- Package B (Milne Avenue to Woodbine Avenue) currently projected to be completed in summer 2025; and
- Package C (Woodbine Avenue to Pape Avenue) on track for substantial completion by early 2025.

These packages largely entail grading and retaining wall construction to accommodate the addition of a 4th track and noise walls by the OnCorr constructor.

Small's Creek Ravine

Small's Creek Ravine is a well-used and highly valued natural area within the project limits of LSE-W, passing under the corridor between Coxwell and Woodbine Avenues. In February 2022, work commenced within the ravine to rectify a collapsed culvert. The construction of the culvert and the retaining wall is now complete. Beginning in April 2022, Metrolinx hosted the first "Small's Creek Restoration and Pathway Working Group" meetings with City of Toronto staff, TRCA, and elected officials to develop a restoration plan. Metrolinx used the input from these meetings to develop a revised restoration plan, including a boardwalk to re-connect a severed pathway, which was not included in the original plans. The construction of the boardwalk began in Fall 2024.

Warden, Woodbine and Danforth Bridges

The addition of a new fourth track along the LSE-W section requires the widening of the rail bridges at Warden, Woodbine, and Danforth Avenues, as they are not sufficiently wide to support a fourth track. The widening of these bridges is being delivered through Package B of the LSE-W Grade Package and West Corridor Expansion Project.

On Warden and Danforth Avenues, LS Lakeshore Constructors concluded bridge pier work in 2021. The remaining work includes widening of the bridge abutments and installing new rail bridges. The Woodbine Avenue bridge is undergoing the same bridge

widening process. Construction of the Woodbine rail bridge began in late March 2023. Metrolinx is tracking for substantial completion of these bridges for summer 2025.

Lakeshore West GO Rail Line

Long Branch GO

As part of the Lakeshore West Corridor Improvement project, Metrolinx is delivering the full station rehabilitation at Long Branch station, including:

- New pedestrian tunnels;
- New station and entrance buildings;
- Platform updates; and
- Making the station AODA compliant.

In Q2 2024, the demolition of the North and Southeast platform was completed. The installation of a temporary rail bridge is ongoing.

Stouffville GO Rail Line

Steeles Avenue Grade Separation

A new rail-over-road grade separation was built at Steeles Avenue as part of the GOE Program. The project reached substantial completion in summer 2023. Metrolinx and the City are working together to confirm the handover of City assets. Given this project is located on the municipal boundary with York Region, and that it contains City road and water management assets, both the City and York Region have agreed to divide the costs for the municipal share of this work. This report requests Council authority to invoice and/or receive payment from York Region for funds associated with this work.

Stouffville Rail Corridor Expansion (Second Track and Signals, Part 2)

In-corridor upgrades including grading, double-tracking, and new signals are underway. This project is divided into phases. Phase 1 is between north of Kennedy GO station to Highland Creek. Phase 2 is between Highland Creek and Agincourt GO station. Upon its completion, this project will provide greater corridor capacity to gradually increase GO train service resiliency and frequency. Phase 1 of signal work was completed in 2024, allowing for a newly built track to enter into service, and the removal of the existing diversion track. Phase 2 Substantial Completion is tracking for mid-2026.

Multi-Corridor Projects

Existing Stations Renovations Program

The Existing Stations Renovation Program includes a variety of station improvement works at existing stations on the GO network. Design packages for stations on the Barrie and Stouffville corridors achieved 60% design completion in January 2024. These projects will deliver improved signage, parking lot and bus loop improvements, and bicycle parking at stations across the corridors.

Utility Early Works - West Toronto Transmission Line Relocation and Arsandco Park (Relocation of Toronto Hydro overhead infrastructure)

To support the future electrification of Metrolinx's rail network, third party utilities will need to be relocated away from the rail right-of-way to accommodate additional infrastructure. A vast majority of these relocations are contained within the Metrolinx rail corridor. The City does not have current timelines for this work from Metrolinx but will work closely with Metrolinx for any relocations that have impacts to City property.

2. On-Corridor (OnCorr) Milestones and Key Updates

OnCorr is the largest component of GO Expansion, and refers to trackwork, train service planning, signalling, electrification, and maintenance and the remaining civil works required to unlock 15-minute or better two-way all-day electrified service over the core segments of the GO Rail network.

Metrolinx with their contractor, ONxpress, has reached 30% design on several initial scope packages of work. Relevant design packages are being shared with the City. It is expected that ONxpress will start some limited, mostly in-corridor, work in 2024-2025. Metrolinx anticipates there will be improvements to service starting in approximately 2026-27, with additional service being introduced incrementally as various work phases are completed.

Union Station Enhancement Project (USEP)

USEP is currently underway to expand the capacity of Union Station to meet future service increases. Construction began in late 2021. The project includes improvements at Union Station and related works in the eastern Union Station Rail corridor, East Bridge Expansion and works at Wilson Yard. Key improvements include:

- Improved GO train platforms with canopies;
- More stairs and elevators to access platforms; and
- A continuous concourse between Bay and York Streets.

The works at Wilson Yard are projected to be completed in October 2026.

The most visible component of USEP will be a new south concourse at Union Station to support service on the Lakeshore West and Lakeshore East corridors. As of Q2 2024, the south concourse excavation has reached the future concourse floor. In the adjoining rail corridor, as part of the East Track Enhancement project (ETE), the Sherbourne signal bridge work was completed in October 2023, to facilitate the new Sherbourne bridge extension for future tracks to support 15-min two-ways service. The ETE project is tracking for completion in January 2026.

Union Station Rail Corridor

A bridge expansion at Jarvis Street and Sherbourne Street is ongoing to accommodate the installation of two additional tracks on the southern side of the GO rail corridor. As part of the bridge expansion work, the wingwall demolition and bridge abutment

installation took place in October 2024. Metrolinx conducted the installation of underground conduits between Wilson Yard and the Esplanade transfer station on behalf of Hydro One. Utility bridges were constructed over Parliament Street and Cherry Street in summer 2024 to allow for the installation of Hydro One electrical cable over the roadway. The energization of these cables will take place by November-end 2024.

York Mills Layover Facility

The York Mills Layover Facility, formerly the Don Valley Layover, is one of three new proposed layover facilities planned within OnCorr. This facility was relocated from the proposed Don Valley location to an alternate location on the Richmond Hill GO line, south of York Mills Road to the east of Leslie Street, in a light industrial area. Metrolinx is tracking to share initial design drawings for the York Mills Layover Facility with the City in late 2024.

OnCorr Grade Separations

Metrolinx is advancing the design and has shared initial drawings with City staff for five key priority grade separations on the LSE corridor, these include the:

- Morningside Grade Separation;
- Galloway Grade Separation;
- Poplar pedestrian crossing;
- Reconstruction of the existing Birchmount Bridge; and
- Expansion of the Highland Creek rail bridge in the summer of 2024.

The City expects to begin reviewing the 60% designs in Q4 2024.

Birchmount Bridge Reconstruction

This bridge was originally planned for major modification and rehabilitation to allow an additional track at the crossing. However, the detailed condition survey of this bridge, conducted during preliminary design, concluded that the existing bridge is in poor condition and should be replaced. The City and Metrolinx have been working on ensuring that the current bridge does not present safety issues and are moving forward with designs for the reconstruction of the bridge. The City provided comments on the initial design drawings for the bridge reconstruction in August 2024. Metrolinx is expected to provide the City with the 60% detailed design before the end of 2024.

Electrical Protection Barriers (EPBs)

EPBs are attachments on top of bridge barriers (i.e. poles, railings) that are installed over electrified catenary wires or other infrastructure. These barriers help to reduce any safety risk for commuters by making high-voltage cables inaccessible. Metrolinx has been advancing the EPB design on some bridges to prepare for the electrification. Initial design drawings for bridges will be shared with the City in late 2024.

Richmond Hill Corridor

Metrolinx is advancing the concept design development for the Richmond Hill GO rail corridor. Initial corridor design drawings have been shared with the City as part of the review packages with the City in July 2024. City staff have provided comments in August 2024, and the review is currently ongoing.

3. Road Closures

Time Extension of Temporary Delegation of Authority

The construction of the GOE Program requires road/lane and sidewalk closures associated with a variety of activities, including tunnelling, utility relocation, station construction, roadway restoration and streetscape implementation. To ensure schedule adherence, Transportation Services needs to be able to act expeditiously to issue the required permits, allowing the necessary closures to be in place during construction.

This recommended delegation is a request to extend the authority previously granted to the General Manager, Transportation Services for the GO Expansion Program which necessitate numerous concurrent and consecutive lane closures that will extend beyond 30 days during a multi-year construction period. However, reporting on closures exceeding 30 days could delay construction schedules as Council report cycles last several months. Delegation minimizes the chance of project delay and significantly reduces the administrative burden on City staff, enabling them to focus on working with Metrolinx, contractors, local Ward Councillors, and the community to maximize the effectiveness of traffic management and construction scheduling. It is also recommended that, in carrying out this delegation, the General Manager, Transportation Services, be exempt from Section 937-5 of Chapter 937, that being the requirement to notify the local Ward Councillor of the pending closure and the requirement to report on the proposed closure if so requested by the local Ward Councillor.

Metrolinx has developed a comprehensive communications program for the GO Expansion Program, which includes facilitating regular monthly meetings with key stakeholders, including local Members of Provincial Parliament, local Councillors, project partners, City staff, and TTC staff in advance of construction. These meetings provide a platform for updates, consultation, and feedback. In addition, through Metrolinx's consultation strategy one-on-one briefings with Councillors on the GO Expansion Program via Transit Expansion's Partnerships & Community Unit occur to address specific milestone events and emerging issues. Metrolinx alongside with City staff will continue to closely engage with local Councillors to discuss specific details of the traffic management plans as they are prepared and evolve.

Continuing through to construction, Metrolinx's communications plan includes scheduled Construction Liaison Committee meetings with local Business Improvement Areas, resident/community associations, local businesses and local Councillors, providing regular construction updates as well as providing a forum to discuss arising construction activity concerns and mitigation measures.

Next Steps

The Transit Expansion Division will continue to facilitate one-window access to the City with Metrolinx and its contracting partners to ensure the GOE Program conforms to local planning direction, and City policies, by-laws and priorities. In addition, the City will continue to provide input to Metrolinx on local regulations, interests and concerns on this multi-billion-dollar transit expansion investment as it develops.

City staff continue to advocate for further details on the OnCorr project from Metrolinx. For OnCorr, Metrolinx has committed to providing additional information and schedules, as these details become available through the Development Phase process. City staff will report back to Council annually with updates on the GOE Program.

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ATTACHMENT

Attachment 1: Decision History