

Supplement B:

Foundations of GO Rail Station Access

B-1 Vision

GO Rail Station Access will be integrated with each station area's redevelopment over time in a way that supports ridership growth, regional economic development, and city building. The planning and implementation of access improvements will:

- remove barriers for equity-seeking communities to access the GO Rail network;
- prioritize safety, customer experience, and quality of design; and
- reduce dependence on single-occupancy vehicles in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region.

Decision History

2013 - GO Transit Rail Parking and Station Access Plan: Adopted to direct decision making and investment in parking facilities and accommodate the ridership growth over the next two decades.

2016 - GO Rail Station Access Plan and Initial Business Case (IBC): Adopted as an update to the 2013 plan in response to province's commitment to GO Expansion. Incremental Change is the preferred scenario to shift investment towards access alternatives to accommodate the anticipated doubling of GO Rail ridership.

2018 - GO Expansion Full Business Case (FBC): Approved, setting the stage for the transformation of GO Rail into a rapid rail system with 15-minute, all-day, two-way service across most of the GO Rail network. The FBC provides further details on proposed service patterns. Ridership forecasts assume that suitable infrastructure is in place for customers to reach stations.

2018 - Transit Oriented Communities Market Driven Strategy: Adopted and identifies the opportunity to maximize the Province's investment in transit infrastructure as well as work with third parties to deliver new or improved transit infrastructure and stations.

B-2 Principles

B-2.1 Supporting All Modes

Investments will support ridership growth and support customer access to the stations by walking, municipal transit, cycling, and other vehicles to ensure safe and efficient movement to and through station areas for all GO Transit customers, aligned with the Hierarchy of Access.

B-2.2 Equitable Access

An equity lens will inform the planning and delivery of station access improvements to increase access to frequent and reliable transit services by racialized and equity-seeking communities and reduce secondary negative impacts of projects and programs.

B-2.3 A Multi-Dimensional Approach

A three-tiered system, corridor, and station-level approach will be used to plan and deliver station access investments.

B-2.4 Maximizing Benefits

Access investments will be evaluated according to Metrolinx's business case framework, considering strategic, economic, financial, deliverability, and operational factors, to support evidence-based decisions that maximize benefits for Metrolinx, customers, municipalities, and the region.

B-2.5 Working in Partnership

Ongoing engagement and public and private sector partnerships will be explored to support the successful planning and delivery of station access improvements.

B-2.6 Phased Implementation

Investments and programs will be delivered incrementally over time, seek value for money, and be subject to provincial funding and other delivery opportunities.

The principles that guide decisions and investments for improving station access will be aligned with all related provincial and Metrolinx policies and plans.

B-3 Policies

B-3.1 Supporting All Modes

Supporting and reinforcing a mode shift by increasing access options for customers is essential for addressing the legacy of policies and pricing signals that have favoured driving over other modes. It is also needed to mitigate the related negative economic, social, and environmental impacts associated with an over-reliance on drive-and-park.

Complementary transportation demand management (TDM) programs and marketing are cost-effective ways to maximize the benefits of new infrastructure and services to encourage a mode shift, especially when there are key opportunities for customer behaviour change. Sustained behaviour change can be difficult to achieve; however, people are more likely to try something new during periods of change in their daily routines. To support a shift in station access, behaviour change programs should be introduced:

- During times of construction at stations;
- Following the delivery of new infrastructure at stations and in surrounding communities;
- Following changes in individual life circumstances (e.g., a new job or home); and
- During the expected COVID-19 pandemic recovery period, as customers adjust to potential new work and commuting arrangements.

B-3.1.1 Application of the Hierarchy of Access

The system-wide policies and programs identified in this section have been developed to guide decision-making and implementation of the Hierarchy of Access.

Based on a station access choice analysis completed as part of the GO Rail Station Access Plan (2016), the Hierarchy of Access presents a prioritization of modes based on levels of impact for shifting travel to more sustainable alternatives. The study demonstrated that local transit has a substantial impact in travel behaviour changes, therefore, it is prioritized over cycling in the Hierarchy of Access. The hierarchy is ordered from highest priority to lowest priority as follows:



	Walk	Transit	Cycling	Pick-Up/ Drop-Off	Carpool Passenger	Drive & Park
Existing (2019)	11%	18%	1%	17%	8%	45%
	55%					
Target (2041)	16%	35%*	3%	11%**	4%	31%
	69%					

Notes: * Target (2041) transit includes microtransit
 ** Target (2041) pick-up and drop-off includes rideshare

Table 2 Access targets

Access enhancements will be prioritized using Metrolinx’s Hierarchy of Access to ensure more efficient use of assets, support equitable access to the GO Rail network, and enable sustainable growth in ridership.

Metrolinx will target an increase in modes other than drive-and-park from approximately 55% in 2019 to approximately 69% by 2041 (Table 2) based on the mode-specific requirements outlined below. Station-specific mode share targets are based on local characteristics and are intended to support the system-wide access targets (see Section 2.3.3).

B-3.1.2 Mode Shift Programming

1. Programs that provide incentives and information for GO customers to shift to more sustainable modes than drive-and-park will:
 - Recognize strategic opportunities to influence station access choices afforded by the behaviour change moments that GO Transit customers experience;
 - Identify specific mode shift programs and strategies, such as municipal TDM policies, transit oriented community TDM policies, PRESTO fare incentives, and commercial partnerships to deliver customer information and improve the customer experience;

Case Study
Temporary Construction and Customer Experience Requirements for GO Facilities

Developed in 2020, this document identified temporary construction as a strategic opportunity to influence behaviour and mode choice of customers accessing the stations.

The purpose of [these requirements](#) is to ensure that a holistic approach is taken to coordinate and mitigate impacts on customers, operations, access, and infrastructure at GO facilities.

These requirements are to be followed when planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining an in-service GO facility in order to uphold operational integrity and Metrolinx customer service principles.

Compliance with these requirements will ensure that work performed provides seamless integration within the operational site while maintaining customer satisfaction, and supports the goals of the GO Rail Hierarchy of Access during construction.

- Include specific marketing strategies and promotions that incentivize the use of active modes for customers who have access to these options; and
- Identify principles for determining which stations should be prioritized, including by developing an understanding of station characteristics and customer profiles at each location.

B-3.1.3 Managing Parking

1. Metrolinx's parking strategy will be advanced by:

- Expanding the number of programmed parking spaces (reserved and carpool) provided at all GO stations from approximately 7% in 2019 to approximately 52% by 2041, and by developing new parking products that support a more diverse range of trip purposes and arrival times;
- Implementing a parking management system to improve the customer experience for booking reserved parking spaces;
- Exploring opportunities for deploying a cost-effective, technology-based solution to gather and report on parking utilization, and provide real-time information on parking availability for customers; and
- Improving ride-matching services for carpool users and better enforcement of carpool parking to increase its mode share.

2. Parking needs at existing and new stations have been evaluated and prioritized at the corridor and station levels, based on the following criteria:

- **Availability of other modes:** Lower priority for parking expansion will be given where other transportation choices exist or are planned.
- **Potential for other modes:** Lower priority for parking expansion will be given at stations where:
 - A geographically-compact customer base provides greater potential for the provision and promotion of other

modes;

- A historical mode shift has demonstrated a higher than average willingness for customers to switch modes; and
- Other opportunities and improvements have been identified.

- **Utilization, capacity, and future demand:**

The demand for parking and other modes of station access will be estimated based on:

- Current parking utilization and capacity;
- Anticipated growth in peak and mid-day ridership demand in line with the local population; and
- Employment growth and improvements in level of service.

- **Local context:** The surrounding road network capacity, provincial policy, and municipal plans for the station area, including opportunities for intensification, will be considered.

- **Financial considerations:** The financial costs of delivering parking related to expected ridership benefits will be considered including:

- The cost to acquire or lease land in the local area;
- Construction costs; and
- Opportunity costs of potential lost intensification opportunities.

3. Before parking is expanded, other options will be exhausted, including optimizing the existing parking supply, exploring shared and modular parking, and identifying opportunities to increase the use of other modes.
4. Targeted parking expansion will be considered only if it supports ridership growth with the aim of moderating growth of the parking supply compared to historical trends. Parking expansion will use a market-driven parking strategy that considers the value of the land and appropriate benefit-to-cost analysis.

5. Targeted parking expansion will prioritize surface parking over the development of structured parking due to the relatively high cost and inflexible nature of parking structures. The market-driven parking strategy will outline when structured parking may be appropriate. The expansion of structured parking is discouraged across the GO network and will only be considered where it is critical for ridership growth, considering:

- **Costs:** When accounting for lifecycle costs, structured parking is the most expensive form of parking to implement.

- **Flexibility:** While surface parking may be adapted as parking needs change over time, structured parking provides little flexibility or opportunity for other uses.

These criteria informed the parking typologies for all stations with existing or planned parking supply. Updated parking supply recommendations were prepared for this document using a four-step process (see Figure 16).

2041 PARKING SUPPLY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

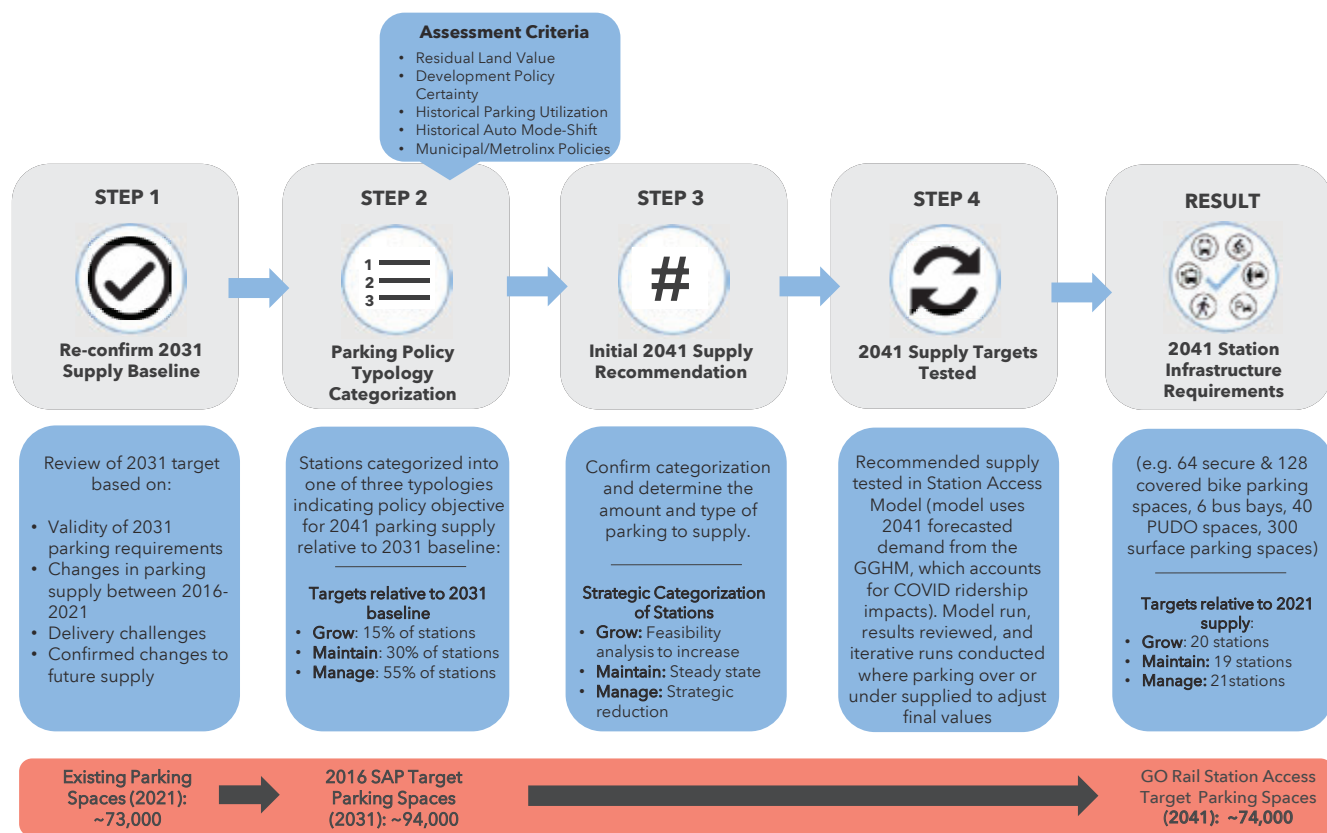


Figure 16 2041 Parking supply development process

Net Change in Parking Supply



Figure 17 Net change in parking supply

*Etobicoke North GO will be decommissioned and is planned to be replaced by a future GO Station along the Kitchener corridor. As such, no station access recommendations were identified.



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B-3.2 Equitable Access

Transit is a critical public service that connects people to jobs, services, education, and recreational opportunities. Still, not all communities are equitably served by the existing transit network, nor do they experience the impacts of investments in the same way. Racialized communities are less likely to have access to frequent and reliable transit services, which limits social and economic opportunities and compounds disadvantages, creating a negative feedback loop known as “transportation-related social exclusion.”

B-3.2.1 Planning for station access will seek to reduce transportation barriers for racialized and equity-seeking communities and enhance transportation by:

1. Developing planning methods that consider the impacts and benefits for racialized communities, such as in data collection and analysis, evaluation frameworks, consultation, and monitoring;
2. Working with racialized and equity-seeking communities to identify and remove barriers to station access and facilitate greater use of the GO Rail network as a connection to jobs, services, education, and recreational opportunities; and
3. Equitably and strategically distributing investments in station access infrastructure, services, and programs.

B-3.3 A Multi-Dimensional Approach

Each GO Rail station is unique in terms of its location and function in its community, relationship to other stations, and role in the broader transportation network. The access characteristics of one station may be influenced or supported by the features of other nearby stations. Characteristics of station access can also significantly affect the primary mode of station access and the ability to shift modes over the long term. The planning and delivery of station access improvements requires consideration at the system, corridor, and station levels to reflect the distinct access requirements of each GO Rail station.

B-3.3.1 The role of each station along the rail corridor and in the broader transit network will be considered when determining access strategies.

B-3.3.2 Investments will consider the evolving character of each station as defined by existing provincial and municipal plans and policies.

B-3.4 Maximizing Benefits

Evidence-based decision-making plays a vital role in the selection, design, and delivery of transportation investments to ensure they deliver value over the lifecycle of a project.

Metrolinx's business case framework is a critical element of the decision-making process that supports the planning and evaluation of station

access improvements. It provides a robust and transparent method for assessing options and making investment decisions that maximize benefits in key areas.

B-3.4.1 Decisions about station access improvements, programs, and services will be based on Metrolinx's business case framework.

B-3.4.2 Investments in station access will demonstrate benefits in four key areas of the business case framework:

1. **The Strategic Case:** Compliance and fit with the provincial and municipal planning policy context, the long-term vision for the station area, the interests of key stakeholders, and the ability to address a problem or opportunity.
2. **The Economic Case:** An understanding of the long-term value to society, including how the capital and operating costs of an investment may balance against a range of potential economic, environmental, health, and user benefits and impacts.
3. **The Financial Case:** An understanding of the financial resources required to implement the investment, and the cash flow impact for Metrolinx or the organization delivering the investment.
4. **The Deliverability and Operations Case:** The technical and commercial feasibility of the investment, including the ability to deliver the investment, maintain it over time, and minimize risks.

Coordinating with Municipal Service Providers

The GO Rail Station Access has been informed by feedback from municipal service providers including consideration of current municipal service plans. While transit integration is crucial to growing the municipal transit mode share for GO Rail station access and shifting away from drive-and-park over time, transit does not currently function as a single network across the region. Improved fare and service integration is needed to enhance transit competitiveness, support more equitable access to the GO Rail network, and attract people to choose transit for general transportation purposes and as a mode of accessing GO stations.

Within this context, Metrolinx is working with the Province and municipal service providers to remove barriers to transit use and to improve the experience for customers transferring between transit services across the region. While on-demand transit (ODT) services are more challenging to integrate as they are demand-responsive, there are opportunities for future integration, including utilizing contemporary technologies to make booking more appealing to customers, and integrating ODT in pick-up and drop-off facilities.

B-3.5 Working in Partnership

Partnerships play a crucial role in enhancing station access, such as through improved municipal transit services, changes to local land use patterns, area-wide streetscapes and mobility improvements, or the creation of new Transit-Oriented Communities.

Partnerships require continuing collaboration between Metrolinx and the municipal service providers that integrate with the GO Rail network, with private interests that provide services, and the numerous communities that are affected by, and have the potential to benefit from, improved access to GO Rail transit services.

Planning and Delivery:

B-3.5.1 Metrolinx will plan and provide access improvements in partnership with:

- Provincial ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure Ontario;
- Municipalities, including upper- and lower-tier municipalities and municipal service providers;
- Private sector developers; and
- Other stakeholders as necessary, such as VIA Rail, intercommunity bus operators, etc.

B-3.5.2 Metrolinx will establish partnerships to:

- Deliver station access improvements and improve the station access customer experience;
- Expand ridership beyond traditional transit customers;
- Deliver rewards programs that incentivize desired travel behaviours;
- Deliver ride-sharing solutions;
- Generate non-fare revenue; and
- Explore joint-marketing for TDM and promoting transit and active modes.

B-3.5.3 Metrolinx will undertake consultation with the public and impacted communities according to the consultation strategy included in Supplement C of this document.

B-3.5.4 Metrolinx will consult with local, municipal, and provincial partners as part of the scheduled five-year reviews of this document.

B-3.5.5 Collaboration between Metrolinx and municipal service providers will be based on shared objectives and understanding of the roles and responsibilities for research, project development, and project implementation.

B-3.5.6 Station access improvements will be coordinated with municipal service providers to support the increased use of municipal transit as a first- and last-mile solution.

B-3.5.7 Metrolinx will engage municipal service providers when developing GO station business cases and detailed station designs to ensure stations can accommodate the municipal service provider services required to attain the target transit mode shares.

B-3.5.8 Metrolinx must provide consistent and timely information to the municipal service provider service planning processes and incorporate municipal service provider feedback into GO Rail service planning and schedule development to:

- Support more direct transit connections between stations and current and future GO Rail customers;
- Improve service between GO Rail stations and area destinations; and
- Harmonize schedules.

B-3.5.9 Metrolinx will support and coordinate with municipal service providers and municipalities to explore delivery of on-demand transit (ODT) services that prioritize connecting customers to GO Rail service by:

- Researching opportunities for adopting ODT service models through new research, knowledge sharing, pilot programs, and future demand modelling to understand its potential future impact; and
- Developing appropriate guidance and design standards for accommodating ODT at stations to ensure priority access, orderly and safe circulation, and a clear and predictable customer experience.

B-3.5.10 Metrolinx and municipal service providers will work to develop approaches for accommodating electric bus charging facilities at GO Rail stations in order to support environmental sustainability.

B-3.5.11 Collaboration between Metrolinx and municipal service providers will be informed by efforts aimed at:

- Defining and communicating the cost and benefits of municipal transit compared to other access modes;
- Developing a range of solutions and better tools for right-sizing bus facilities that optimize bus bay configuration, utilization, and infrastructure investments; and
- Developing better forecasting tools for on-site infrastructure requirements at GO stations that reflect the typical five-year municipal transit service planning horizon (rather than the 20-year planning horizon used by GO Transit).

Complementary Plans and Objectives:

B-3.5.12 Access enhancements will complement and be supported by municipal policies and plans for land use and development, transportation, and parking, with consideration given to the areas surrounding GO Rail stations and the funding of infrastructure and services for more sustainable (non-single occupancy vehicle) modes of station access. Major Transit Station Area planning undertaken by municipalities for lands around GO stations should address multimodal station access.

B-3.6 Phased Implementation

Investments in station access will occur over time as resources and opportunities permit, and in response to the timing of service improvements and ridership growth.

B-3.6.1 Investments will seek value for money and depend on the availability of provincial funding and other delivery opportunities, such as through third parties.

B-3.6.2 Investments will be phased to respond strategically to ridership demand and local opportunities, focusing on areas with the most significant gains.



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