# **Part 1** GO Rail Station Access

# 1. Introduction

GO Rail Station Access is a pillar of Metrolinx's GO Expansion program. It supports enhanced GO station access, improves options for customers, and increases the capacity of GO stations to coincide with ridership growth to 2041.

This document provides requirements and guidelines that support the forecasted ridership growth associated with the GO Expansion program, which is bringing faster all-day, twoway rail service to communities across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). It supports increased station access capacity and improved options for customers to access GO stations by walking, local transit, cycling, passenger pick-up and drop-off, and parking. The focus is on facilitating alternatives for customers that rely on drive-and-park as their primary station access mode to improve overall first mile access to GO stations. While not in scope for the current GO Rail Station Access document, planning for last mile connectivity will be addressed through future Metrolinx work.

This document updates the 2016 GO Rail Station Access Plan and the 2013 GO Rail Station Access and Parking Strategy while accounting for long-term COVID-19 impacts, new insights on GO Expansion service levels, policy updates such as the Growth Plan for the GGH and initiatives such as the Transit Oriented Communities Program. This section describes:

- The purpose of this document (1.1),
- How this document will be used (1.2), and
- How this document is organized (1.3).



# 1.1 Purpose of GO Rail Station Access

The purpose of GO Rail Station Access is to achieve the following objectives:

- Set requirements to support forecasted ridership growth and related GO Expansion program benefits Anticipated GO Rail service levels will provide frequent service to many more customers than today.
- Enhance the customer experience Provide seamless, intuitive, inclusive, safe, reliable, and well-planned facilities to support a positive experience for customers to access GO stations by all modes.
- Grow multimodal access
   Manage the demand for parking and support customer use of multimodal options, aligned with the GO Rail Hierarchy of Access (see Figure 3 and section B-3.1.1).
- **Support more equitable access** Consider the impacts and opportunities in station planning processes to remove barriers and increase access to transit for racialized and other equity-seeking communities.
- Support decision-making
   Ensure that station investments deliver
   sufficient benefit relative to cost, applying
   Metrolinx's <u>Benefits Management</u>
   <u>Framework</u>.
- Align with regional policies and plans Direct station access infrastructure improvements to Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), as provided in Ontario's <u>Growth</u> <u>Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe</u> and <u>Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation</u> <u>Plan</u>.



Figure 3 GO Rail Hierarchy of Access

# **1.2 How this document** Will Be Used

This document is a resource for Metrolinx staff and third parties who play a role in planning and delivering station access improvements and redeveloping GO station areas.

# **1.2.1 What GO Rail Station Access Provides**

GO Rail Station Access provides:

- Support for investment in GO Rail stations by identifying access requirements for Metrolinx-led procurements and provincial Transit-Oriented Community projects and other opportunities, and informing how existing station upgrades and supporting studies are prioritized;
- Support for coordination among all stakeholders that plan station areas and deliver municipal and regional transit services by informing the review of municipally-led MTSA studies, stationadjacent development applications, official plan reviews, transportation master plans, and other planning studies; and
- A framework for monitoring the progress and success of investments and strategies over time.

## 1.2.2 Revisions to this document

The station access requirements support implementation of Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan and the GO Expansion program. The requirements are based on a current understanding of station access needs to 2041. This document will be subject to review, as a whole, approximately every five years. As an interim step, Metrolinx will review the requirements periodically as significant new information becomes available to ensure alignment with GO Expansion, fare integration and other related Metrolinx and provincial initiatives and to monitor progress. Delivery timelines will be aligned with funding, ridership recovery and growth, and service planning, as well as opportunities identified by Metrolinx's Sponsor Office and Capital Projects Group, municipalities, and other third parties.





# **1.3 How this document is Organized**

This document is structured in two parts.

**Part 1** provides context for GO Rail Station Access and the station-specific requirements.

**Chapter 1** provides the framework for GO Rail Station Access:

- The purpose and objectives of GO Rail Station Access (1.1);
- How this document is intended to be used and applied over the long term (1.2);
- How this document is organized (1.3);
- The policy and strategic framework for GO Rail Station Access (1.4); and
- Key planning considerations to accommodate growth (1.5).

**Chapter 2** presents station-specific requirements and includes:

- An overview of how the requirements apply (2.1);
- A series of station-specific requirements to improve access to all existing and in-delivery

stations (2.2);

- The methodology used to develop the requirements, taking into account current and future GO Rail ridership, station access types, mode share, as well as service levels and timeframes (2.3); and
- Procedures for amending the requirements (2.4).

**Part 2** provides essential supplementary information to inform and achieve the requirements of GO Rail Station Access, including:

- Station-specific off-site recommendations for access improvements in the municipal realm (Supplement A)
- The principles and policies that inform station-specific requirements at the station, corridor, and network levels (Supplement B);
- The identification of station access types (Supplement C-1) and mode-specific considerations (Supplement C-2) to inform GO station and MTSA planning;
- A strategy for implementing station access requirements, including delivery opportunities (Supplement D-1), a framework for decision-making (D-2); and
- A process for monitoring success (D-3).

# **1.4 Supporting Policies** and Business Cases

A number of supporting policies and strategic business cases informed the development of this document and will support its implementation. This includes:

- A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (1.4.1);
- The 2041 Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (1.4.2); and
- Additional planning considerations (1.5).

## **1.4.1 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan** for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020, office consolidation)

Ontario's <u>Growth Plan</u> defines how and where growth and development should take place in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It emphasizes the importance of integrating land use and infrastructure planning, including transportation infrastructure. It also provides detailed policies to achieve vibrant and complete communities, including enhancing access to transit networks, protecting employment zones, and increasing the amount and variety of housing options.

The Growth Plan sets out general policy objectives for the development of transportation infrastructure. The objectives informed the development of GO Rail Station Access, including:

- Providing connectivity among transportation modes for moving people and goods;
- Offering a balance of transportation choices that reduce reliance on automobiles and promote transit and active transportation;
- Being sustainable and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by encouraging the most financially and environmentally appropriate mode for trip-making;
- Offering multimodal access to jobs, housing, schools, cultural and recreational opportunities, and goods and services;

- Providing for the safety of system users; and
- Directing municipalities to implement Transportation Demand Management (TDM) policies to:
  - Reduce trip distance and time;
  - Increase the modal share of alternatives to automobiles by setting mode share targets;
  - Prioritize active transportation and transit;
  - Expand infrastructure to support active transportation; and
  - Consider the needs of major trip generators.

The Growth Plan also includes policies on Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) that address transportation network objectives. It directs that MTSAs be identified, planned and designed to be transit-supportive, contribute to multimodal access to stations, and enable connections to nearby major trip generators by providing:

- Connections to municipal and regional transit services and transit service integration; and
- Infrastructure to support active transportation, including sidewalks, bicycle lanes and secure bicycle parking, and commuter pick-up and drop-off areas.

The Growth Plan also provides a list of criteria for how all transit planning-related decisions and investments are to be made, including:

- Placing priority on increasing the capacity of existing transit systems to support intensification areas and density targets;
- Facilitating improved linkages from nearby neighbourhoods to urban growth centres, MTSAs, and other strategic growth areas; and
- Increasing the modal share of transit.



GO Rail Station Access was developed, and will be implemented, in conformity with the Growth Plan.

## **1.4.2 The 2041 Regional** Transportation Plan (March 2018)

Metrolinx's 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) conforms with the Growth Plan and other provincial land use policies intended to help manage growth, establish complete communities, and support more sustainable transportation options. It provides a blueprint for a multimodal transportation system across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area that provides safe, convenient, and reliable connections, and supports a high quality of life, a prosperous and competitive economy, and a protected environment. The RTP includes strategies, priority actions, and policies for:

• Delivering regional transit projects that connect more of the region with frequent

transit projects, including GO RER (now GO Expansion), subway, light rail transit (LRT), and bus rapid transit (BRT) projects (Strategies 1 and 2);

- Optimizing the GTHA's transportation system, including by integrating fares and services, and by providing improved multimodal options for the first- and last-mile so that travellers can move seamlessly from one transit system to another (Strategy 3);
- Integrating transportation and land use, particularly around transit stations (Strategy 4); and
- Preparing for an uncertain future, including working with the Province to plan and prepare for the development of new technologies such as autonomous vehicles, undertaking joint actions, such as a transition to low-carbon transit vehicles, and adopting new technologies to influence how customers travel and access stations (Strategy 5).

GO Rail Station Access was developed and will be implemented in alignment with the RTP, as well as with Metrolinx's GO Expansion program.

# **1.5 Additional Planning Considerations**

The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is growing, with a regional population projected to reach 11.4 million by 2041 (from 7.4 million in 2016).<sup>1</sup>

To prepare for this significant growth and to address increasing congestion, the Province of Ontario is making unprecedented investments in both regional and municipal transit.

# **1.5.1 GO Rail Transit Service is Increasing**

<u>GO Expansion</u> is a transformative Metrolinx program, projected to more than double GO Transit's peak rail service and quadruple its offpeak service. It will provide faster, all-day, twoway service on substantial portions of the GO Rail network and increase regional benefits by providing new travel options. The improvements will be complemented by new stations and a host of other regional and municipal transit projects. Anticipated GO Rail service levels for 2041 at each station are based on the GO Expansion Full Business Case (FBC) and are depicted in Figure 7.

GO Rail service levels include:

- 15-minute, all-day, two-way service: Bidirectional service every 15 minutes or better during the peak period and 15 minutes during the remainder of the weekday.
- All-day two-way service: Bi-directional service every 15 minutes or more for peak hour and peak direction trips, and service from 30 minutes to 1 hour for the remainder of the day.

 Peak-only service: Peak hour, peak direction service every 15 minutes, and service from 30 minutes to 1 hour for the remainder of the peak period.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Peak period service refers to trains arriving at Union Station between 6:30 a.m. and 9:30 a.m., and leaving between 3:30 and 7:30 p.m. Weekday service refers to trains travelling between 5:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m.



<sup>1</sup> Hemson Consulting, 2013 Addendum "Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Forecasts to 2041"



Figure 4 2041 Forecast: percentage increase in population compared to 2016 \*Grimsby Station is not part of this document's scope



Figure 5 2041 Forecast: percentage increase in jobs compared to 2016

\*Grimsby Station is not part of this document's scope



#### Figure 6 2041 Daily forecast: average daily footfall



#### Figure 7 Anticipated 2041 GO Rail service levels

Source: GO Expansion FBC, 2018

# The GO Expansion program will provide a range of improvements across the GTHA:



Figure 8 GO Expansion Full Business Case (November 2018)

## **1.5.2 The GO Expansion Full Business Case Makes the Connection**

Metrolinx developed a Full Business Case (FBC) to assess the GO Expansion program (November 2018). The FBC confirms the connection between ridership growth and station access (see <u>GO Expansion FBC Table E.1</u> and Figure 8).

The FBC provides a proposed investment program, its benefits and costs, and core requirements to successfully implement the GO Expansion program. The FBC demonstrates that GO Expansion is a high-value investment, not just for rail passengers, but for the travellers who do not use GO Rail and for the GO service region as a whole. The program will provide:

- Reduced travel time and congestion;
- A total of \$1.9 billion in traveller savings over the next 60 years, through reduced gas and parking costs;
- Increased productivity and 8,300 new jobs per year in construction and supply-chain industries;
- Reduced operating costs and increased ridership growth for Metrolinx; and
- Opportunities to partner with the private sector to improve delivery and expand development.

GO Rail Station Access is a pillar of the GO Expansion program and will help Metrolinx achieve the full benefits of the program, as outlined in the FBC.

## **1.5.3 A Shift to More Sustainable Modes is Essential to Support Growth**

Metrolinx's 2016 GO Rail Station Access Plan identified that ridership growth could no longer be accommodated with unlimited parking expansion. The plan recognized that station access capacity was critical to enabling ridership growth and that different station access strategies had distinct costs and benefits. The plan supported ridership growth through an incremental approach to investment that focused on encouraging greater use of sustainable modes determined to have the highest benefit-to-cost ratio. The approach is presented in the GO Rail Hierarchy of Access, which prioritizes access modes starting with walking, followed by transit, cycling, passenger pick-up and drop-off, and drive-and-park.

The incremental approach is carried forward in this document as the preferred strategy for increasing station access capacity and accommodating ridership growth. The objective is to support ridership by gradually reducing the predominance of drive-and-park as the primary station access mode, and improving multimodal options over time to support a shift to more sustainable modes.

For the future, Metrolinx will continue to monitor trends in new and emerging mobility technologies such as Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CV/AVs), electric vehicle, e-bikes/ e-scooters, etc. and explore how these can be incorporated in future reviews of this document.



### **Connecting the GGH: A Transportation Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe**

On March 10, 2022, the Province released *Connecting the GGH*, which provides a long-term vision for mobility in the region to 2051 with new infrastructure, better services and policy directions for all modes of transportation to align on-going and future investments by the province and other transportation providers. The GGH plan identifies strategic infrastructure needs, per A Place to Grow, 2020 (APTG), including future transit and road infrastructure.

Metrolinx will work with MTO to inform future reviews and updates to GO Rail Station Access to ensure all plans and programs are coordinated and implemented towards a common transportation vision across the GGH region.



Figure 9 Existing and forecasted future GO Rail ridership accounting for short- and long-term COVID-19 impacts on regional travel.

Sources: 2017 and 2019 GO Rail Passenger Survey, Greater Golden Horseshoe Model, 2020 Statistics Canada Canadian Survey on Business Conditions, 2020 Toronto Regional Board of Trade Survey of Downtown Workers, and 2022 Station Access Model.



**Figure 10** Network-wide mode share of average weekday ridership (excluding Union Station). Source: 2015, 2017, and 2019 GO Rail Passenger Survey and 2022 Station Access Model.



### Figure 11 2041 Daily forecast: total daily home riders



### Figure 12 2041 Daily forecast: total daily destination riders

## **1.5.4 Improved Multimodal Station** Access Benefits Everyone

Beyond managing growth in population and GO Transit ridership, improved station access provides a range of societal benefits:

### • Greater transit access

Making it easier for customers to access the GO Rail network and other connecting transit services increases the likelihood that they will choose transit. It improves overall satisfaction with transit services and supports people who may not have access to a car or whose schedules may not align with fixed schedule transit services.

### Access to social and economic opportunities

Helping to ensure that the benefits of GO Expansion and other transit investments are more equitably experienced by communities and barriers to equity are reduced or eliminated.

• Improved health and wellness Increasing the potential for people to more comfortably walk or cycle to stations can support more active lifestyles, leading to improved health and wellness.

# • Environmental sustainability

Growing the share of more sustainable modes through improved station access can help contribute to environmental sustainability by reducing vehicular travel and associated greenhouse gas emissions.

### • More efficient land use

Reducing the need for expensive parking facilities and less land-consumptive modes can help to reduce costs. It also supports partnership opportunities on station lands that can increase the financial efficiency of delivering GO Rail services for customers.

### • Increased safety

Access enhancements can help to minimize conflicts between pedestrians, cyclists, buses, and drivers at GO stations and in the surrounding community.

### **Evaluation Process for New Stations**

New GO Rail stations may be proposed at any time by Metrolinx and/or third parties through Ontario's Transit-Oriented Communities program and other opportunities.

Once proposed, Metrolinx undertakes a planning assessment and business case analysis for the new station. New station facility requirements are determined through Metrolinx's business case process, applying the same methods for forecasting ridership, mode share, and facility requirements that are used for existing stations included in GO Rail Station Access.

Once the Metrolinx Board endorses an Initial Business Case (IBC), it is adopted and made publicly available. The new station is incorporated into GO Rail network maps and forecasting models\* to determine the impacts on ridership, mode share, and facility requirements at adjacent existing and in-delivery stations.

\*Note that while new stations are integrated into forecasting models, the station-specific requirements for new stations that are not yet in-delivery are not included in this document, as they may be subject to commercial negotiations. Interested parties should refer to the relevant IBC(s) or contact Metrolinx for information on new stations.