

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	March 18, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	GO Expansion Full Business Case (PED19061) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Brian Hollingworth Director, Transportation Planning and Parking Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

The City of Hamilton Transportation Master Plan (TMP) was approved by Council in August 2018. Action 19 of the TMP is to “advocate Metrolinx to accelerate the plans to provide two-way, all-day, service on the Lakeshore West corridor to Hamilton, with extensions to Niagara Region by 2020”.

Information:

In March 2018, Metrolinx adopted the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (2041 RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The 2041 RTP identifies three Regional Rail projects within the City of Hamilton:

- Confederation GO Extension (West Harbour GO – Confederation GO);
- Niagara GO Service (Confederation GO – Niagara Falls GO); and,
- Lakeshore West 15-minute GO Service Extension (Aldershot GO – Hamilton GO).

The 2041 RTP did not assign a specific timing to the implementation of these projects but included directions to refine priorities and implementation plans as part of the next stage of work, which is now underway.

In December 2018, the Metrolinx Board of Directors received and endorsed a major report on GO Rail Expansion entitled GO Expansion Full Business Case, November 2018. The purpose of this business case was to illustrate the proposed investment program, its benefits and costs, and the core requirements to successfully implement the program to decision makers, the public, and funding partners. Key benefits of the overall investment across the GTHA, articulated in the business case, include travel time savings, more jobs and increased productivity, more efficient train service, and opportunities for private sector partnerships. The estimated cost of the system enhancements is estimated at \$16.2 Billion over its lifecycle, including \$12.2 Billion in capital and \$4.3 Billion in incremental operating costs. The Net Present Value (NPV – benefits minus costs) for GO Expansion is \$26 Billion, leading to a Benefit Cost Ratio (BCR) of 2.6.

The Full Business Case evaluates a Reference Concept Design (RCD). Within and around Hamilton, the RCD is described as including the following:

- Two-way all-day service between Union and Hamilton, fifteen minute service or better between Burlington and Union; and,
- Electrification from Union Station to Burlington Station.

Assumed frequencies in comparison to existing conditions are summarized in the table below.

	Confederation	Hamilton GO Centre (Hunter)	West Harbour	Aldershot (Burlington)
Existing				
A.M. Peak	No service	Every 30 minutes (four trains)	Two trains	Every 30 minutes
Off-peak	No service	No service	No service	No service
Reference Concept				
A.M. Peak	Every 30 minutes one-way Eastbound (EB)	Every hour one-way EB	Every 30 minutes one-way EB	Every 30 minutes EB; Every hour WB
Off-peak	Every hour two-way	No service	Every hour two-way	Every hour two-way

It is noted that the RCD does not appear to include two-way service in the A.M. peak to either Hamilton GO or West Harbour. That is, no trains from Toronto to Hamilton. However, there would be two-way service to West Harbour and Confederation Stations

in the off-peak. This is assumed to be a result of rail corridor capacity constraints as discussed below.

The Full Business Case does not provide specific timeframes for each corridor, but it is noted that the assumption is the RCD will be implemented by 2031, for the purpose of calculating benefits.

Since 2018, there has been several minor enhancements to rail service potentially benefitting Hamilton residents/employees, and others are planned. These include:

- Extension of the 6:29 a.m. train at West Harbour to start in Niagara Falls at 5:19 a.m. Provides link from Niagara into Hamilton in morning;
- Improved train frequencies between Burlington station and Toronto;
- Continued construction progress on the Confederation Station, with a target opening of later in 2019; and,
- Track improvements and bridge work between West Harbour and Confederation Station (on-going).

Over the years, there have been many formal and informal discussions involving Metrolinx representatives, members of City of Hamilton Council, Members of Provincial Parliament, and senior staff. Through these discussions, two common obstacles to a more reasonable timeframe for implementation of rail service improvements are cited. The first relates to the capacity of Bayview Junction (the junction between the two Canadian National (CN) tracks and the Canadian Pacific (CP) tracks near the High-Level Bridge) and difficulties negotiating rights of access with CN Rail. Currently, Metrolinx does not own all of the rail corridor through Hamilton and therefore requires access from CN for service through to Niagara. More recent discussions with Metrolinx have indicated that gaining access from CN is a more significant barrier than the Bayview Junction, and that more focused negotiations are underway.

While the Full Business Case is helpful in clarifying what is planned for improvements to Hamilton in the longer term, there are many uncertainties regarding when Hamilton will see improved rail service in the near term. In addition, the lack of reverse peak (Toronto to Hamilton) rail service in the A.M. peak (and presumably leaving Hamilton in the P.M. peak) is concerning from an economic development perspective and also in terms of managing congestion on the highway system.

City staff will continue to work with and request regular updates from Metrolinx on the delivery of improved rail service to and from Hamilton.

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