

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Heritage Road Layover**

#### **What is the purpose of the Heritage Road Layover?**

Metrolinx is proposing to expand its facilities along Kitchener Corridor, which runs from Union GO Station to Kitchener GO Station. A new layover is required to provide the additional storage capacity needed to achieve the proposed level of service, including enhanced peak service and two-way, all-day service to Mount Pleasant GO Station, and replace an existing layover facility at Georgetown that is approaching the end of its service life.

#### **Why is this site proposed for the Heritage Road Layover? Were other sites considered for the layover location?**

Metrolinx looked to identify a potential location for a new layover yard site between the Mount Pleasant GO Station to the east and the Georgetown GO Station to the west to reduce deadhead (empty) train movements and facilitate future two-way, all-day service. The proposed location for the Heritage Road Layover provides convenient storage of trains that will facilitate the increase in service to and from Union Station.

An initial study was done by RV Anderson in 2016 to review different sites. This study recommended the heritage road layover site should be used. The criteria included cultural and natural environment impact, interface with other adjacent environmental assessments (EAs)/secondary plans, operational considerations and cost.

**How will plans for Highway 413 affect the Heritage Road Layover project?**

The Heritage Road Layover site is well to the west of the study area for the preferred corridor for Highway 413. Through the Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP), the Ministry of Transportation, the City of Brampton, and Peel Region will be consulted to determine how the respective plans for the layover and the highway may affect one another.

**The section of track where the Heritage Road Layover is proposed is owned by CN, does this affect the project?**

Metrolinx and CN are cooperating in the planning and design of the infrastructure improvements needed to meet the GO Expansion service needs and CN freight movements. CN will be building additional track(s) within their rail corridor right-of-way for eventual connection to the layover facility, and Metrolinx is coordinating with CN on this work.

**Does the Heritage Road Layover site allow for public access?**

No. There is no public access to the site as this facility would be utilized for maintenance and train storage.

**Does the design of the Heritage Road Layover consider future electrification?**

Yes, the facility design protects for future electrification. Tracks will be spaced further apart to enable future installation of overhead catenary poles.

**Will there be additional noise as a result of the Heritage Road Layover?**

The Halton Subdivision between Mount Pleasant GO Station and Georgetown GO Station is owned by CN. A Noise and Vibration Study was completed as part of the 2009 GO Transit Class EA Georgetown to Kitchener Rail Expansion Environmental Study Report. The Heritage Road Layover was not assessed at that time. A Noise and Vibration Study is in preparation as part of the TPAP, and the results will be shared after study completion.

**Will any trees be removed to build the Heritage Road Layover?**

Studies for the natural environment and tree inventory will be conducted in spring and summer 2022. Information about the impact on trees within and surrounding the site, as well as appropriate mitigation measures, will be provided after study completion. The [Metrolinx Vegetation Guideline 2020](#) will serve as the implementation framework for vegetation compensation.

**Will there be an impact to surrounding wildlife and environment during construction of the Heritage Road Layover?**

TPAP studies for the natural environment (including Species at Risk surveys) and tree inventory will be conducted in spring and summer 2022. Information about the impact on wildlife and the environment within and surrounding the site, as well as appropriate mitigation measures, will be provided after study completion.

**Will there be an impact to the watercourses within the Heritage Heights subwatershed drainage system?**

Studies for site drainage and stormwater management are in preparation as part of the detailed site design. Information about the impact on watercourses throughout the site, as well as appropriate mitigation measures, will be provided after study completion.

**What are the Heritage Road Layover construction timelines?**

Construction on the Heritage Road Layover is tentatively scheduled to begin in spring 2023 and completed in fall 2025.

**Will there be consultation with Indigenous Nations during the TPAP Process for the Heritage Road Layover?**

Metrolinx wishes to build a strong, meaningful, and mutually respectful relationship with Indigenous Nations. Metrolinx is committed to engaging with Indigenous Nations on the Heritage Road Layover Project throughout the project lifecycle.

**How will traffic be impacted in the area during construction and operation?**

A TPAP study of potential traffic impacts from construction and operation of the Heritage Road Layover is underway. Results of the traffic impact analysis will be shared upon study completion. Since construction laydown areas will be outside of the public roadway, and only maintenance vehicles will be allowed to access the site once the layover is operational, impacts to traffic as a result of the layover will likely be very minor.

## **GO Expansion**

### **Why is Metrolinx expanding GO service?**

Two-way, all-day service on the Kitchener Corridor was identified by local communities as a priority to support growth and economic development along the Toronto-Waterloo Innovation Corridor. Service increases have been limited because a portion of the Kitchener Corridor between Bramalea and Georgetown GO stations is a freight rail corridor owned by CN.

Following the recommendations from the 2019 [Initial Business Case \(IBC\)](#) the options to deliver two-way all-day service would all divert from the originally explored expensive rail bypass being built, and instead, through partnership with CN, move forward with an approach that involves sharing tracks and minimal infrastructure. The infrastructure and service concept was further refined and reassessed in the 2021 Preliminary Design Business Case (PDBC). Through its new partnership with CN, Metrolinx was able to implement early service increases on the Kitchener corridor, including the introduction of limited off-peak two-way service to Kitchener in 2019.

### **Why is Metrolinx continuing to build for increased service when COVID-19 has impacted the ridership across the GO network?**

Throughout the pandemic, Metrolinx has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to safety. Metrolinx implemented various health and safety actions in response to changing customer needs and ridership trends, including installation of rail and bus seat dividers and hand sanitizer stations.

In 2021-22, this safety focus will be complemented with frequent service to welcome customers back to GO, as public health restrictions relax, and vaccinations roll out. Ongoing monitoring of government policies, ridership, and customer behaviour trends feed directly into demand-based plans to return service across the network. Services will continue to be adjusted to support changing customer habits

and needs and support economic recovery and growth ([Kitchener GO Rail Service Preliminary Design Business Case – March 2021](#)).

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be temporary whereas Metrolinx is constructing a transit system for the long term. The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is experiencing incredible growth with an expected nine million people by 2041 and seeing trends of increased public transit usage and decreased car ownership. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Metrolinx had 1500 weekly trips. GO Expansion will increase this amount to 6000 weekly trips and provide connections to the entire region. While COVID-19 has decreased ridership temporarily, the [GO Expansion Full Business Case](#) demonstrates that ridership will increase in the long-term and therefore, the GO Expansion is still financially feasible.

While we expect COVID-19 to have impacts on commuting habits for the next two years, we are building a transit system for the long term. The region is experiencing incredible growth, with an estimated nine million people calling the region home by 2041. COVID-19 will likely have impacts on workforce patterns in the next few years.

Other trends are emerging such as a decrease in car ownership, and new travel patterns. Metrolinx is planning and building a system for the next 50 to 60 years, and will allow customers to move across the region, with two-day, all day service on GO, as well as new LRT, BRT and subway lines. This means more choices not just for commuters travelling downtown, but all transit users, travelling in all directions.

### **What are GO Expansion plans for the GTHA?**

Work is underway to deliver the GO Expansion program - the largest transit expansion in Canadian history. GO will offer more service with faster trains, more stations, and seamless connections to a regional rapid transit network. GO Expansion will transform the GO network from a commuter service to a new all-day, all-direction, schedule-free travel option. This is a new approach for GO – moving beyond

commuter trips to provide frequent trains, all day, in a metro-style service. It will be easier than ever to use GO Transit like the subway to get to events, go out to dinner, and visit friends or family in the evening or on weekends.

Here's how Metrolinx is expanding in Toronto:

- Building new GO stations
- Adding track to the Stouffville, Lakeshore East, Kitchener and Barrie lines
- Electrifying the Barrie, Lakeshore, Stouffville, and Kitchener lines
- Building new underpasses and overpasses

### **What improvements are planned for the Kitchener Corridor?**

The Kitchener Line serves urban centres and communities west of Toronto with direct connections to Brampton, Guelph, and Kitchener-Waterloo. To meet substantial growth, just as many riders return to transit, Metrolinx is making major improvements to service on the corridor. Some of the improvements along the Kitchener corridor include:

- Additional track in key locations throughout the corridor to allow trains to pass each other, along with supporting signal and structure modifications to support the new tracks;
- New Mount Dennis GO Station
- Improvements at GO Stations along the corridor, including platform modifications and upgrades to station access facilities and customer amenities
- Track and signal upgrades between Georgetown and Kitchener to allow for higher train speeds

On Sept 7, 2021 Metrolinx announced a service increase that will see 20 train trips per day between Toronto and Kitchener/Guelph (up from 16 pre-pandemic), including weekday rush hour express options for Kitchener, Guelph, Acton, Georgetown, Mount Pleasant, Brampton, and Bramalea GO, trip extensions to and from Kitchener GO, and new and reinstated trips to and from Bramalea GO throughout the day.

### **Is electrification of the Guelph Subdivision between Acton and Kitchener proceeding?**

Metrolinx owns the rail corridor up to Bramalea GO Station, and the section west of Georgetown GO Station. While it would be possible to electrify the rail in the section west of Georgetown, only diesel trains would be able to serve the area due to the lack of electrification in between Bramalea GO Station and Georgetown GO Station. In partnership with CN, Metrolinx continues to work on feasibility and design efforts along the corridor, as key preliminary work is completed.

In 2019, Metrolinx initiated consultation and preliminary studies to support the Guelph Subdivision Electrification TPAP. This study aimed to better understand the impacts of various infrastructure improvements along the Guelph Subdivision of the Kitchener corridor needed to provide electrification for 54 kms of track between the Kitchener GO Station to Mile 30.0 east of Acton. After hearing back from the public and other stakeholders about the constraints and concerns related to the project, Metrolinx collected all study information and consultation feedback to keep on file for future reference prior to advancing with the formal TPAP.

Work is proceeding on implementation of the infrastructure improvements needed to improve service levels, safety and travel times now, and to make the Guelph Subdivision electrification-ready, should Metrolinx and CN reach an agreement to electrify the Halton Subdivision track section between Georgetown GO Station and Bramalea GO Station.