METROLINX REGIONAL OPEN HOUSES

Meeting Summary Report [11 of 13]

Vellore Village Community Centre, 1 Villa Royale Avenue, Woodbridge
November 24, 2016
6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

OVERVIEW

Metrolinx hosted 13 Regional Open Houses between November 7th and November 29th, 2016 in multiple municipalities across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The purpose of the meetings was to share information, review proposed mitigation strategies, and seek feedback on the following three Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP*) projects to build new track and electrification infrastructure on Metrolinx-owned rail corridors:

- GO Rail Network Electrification TPAP (with Hydro One as co-proponents);
- Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion TPAP; and
- Lakeshore East – Don River to Scarborough Expansion TPAP.

The Regional Open House meetings also included review of Metrolinx's Regional Transportation Plan, providing an opportunity to formally incorporate new insights into the plan, while ensuring momentum is maintained on the projects underway.

Approximately 35 people attended the 11th of 13 Regional Open Houses at Vellore Village Community Centre in Woodbridge. The meeting began with a 30-minute open house, including a display of information boards for review. Karen Pitre and Tania Gautam (Metrolinx) co-delivered a 30-minute overview presentation, and Yulia Pak (Swerhun Facilitation) facilitated about 45 minutes of questions from the audience. Following questions, Mike Lepage from RWDI delivered an overview of noise and vibration impacts and mitigation options. Renee Afoom-Boateng (Toronto and Region Conservation

Authority) summarized the impacts of tree removal on certain parts of the corridor, and introduced the idea of a new standardized compensation protocol. The opportunity was then provided to participants to ask Mike and Renee specific questions about noise and trees. Following the group questions and discussion, Metrolinx staff and technical experts were available to answer questions around the information boards and roll plans for the remainder of the evening. Written feedback was sought from participants at the meeting using feedback forms, though no forms were submitted. Please see the *Appendices* for the meeting agenda, the feedback form, and a list of reference materials provided.

Casey Craig and Yulia Pak, third party facilitators with Swerhun Facilitation, wrote this meeting summary. The purpose of this summary is to document detailed feedback from the meeting; it is not intended as a verbatim transcript. This summary will be shared with participants who provided an e-mail address upon sign in and is posted at gotransit.com/electrification. If you have any comments or questions about this summary, please contact electrification@metrolinx.com or 1-800-GET-ON-GO or (416) 869-3200.

**The Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) is the Environmental Assessment (EA) process for transit projects.*

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

The following points provide a quick summary of the main feedback shared by participants during the meeting and in written feedback forms. Note that numbering is for ease of reference only and is not intended to reflect priorities.

1. **REVISE THE BELLS AND WHISTLES POLICY**
    - Work with Transport Canada to revise the outdated regulations on train whistles in urban environments.
    - Investigate a quicker train horn exemption process if the Transport Canada whistle regulations remain unchanged. It currently takes a municipality between 2 and 3 years to go through the process.
2. **REMAIN OPEN TO ALTERNATIVE TECHNOLOGIES**
    - Continue to consider innovative technologies for train operation that might provide better, more efficient service.
3. **MAKE SURE PARKING OPTIONS AND SERVICE IS MAINTAINED DURING CONSTRUCTION**
    - Provide sufficient parking to meet the additional demand that increased service will bring.
    - Ensure that parking alternatives are provided during the construction period so people are still able to take the train.
    - Ensure that existing train service is maintained for users during construction.
4. **ENSURE SECURITY OF THE ELECTRIFIED TECHNOLOGY AS WELL AS THE TRACKS**
    - Secure the train tracks and electrification equipment to avoid people tampering with it.

DETAILED MEETING SUMMARY

Feedback was provided during the question period. Participants were interested in the progress of additional GO Stations in the area, and the provision of alternative transportation options for people getting to and from GO Stations. There were concerns about whether there would be enough parking to accommodate increased service, and the impact that more stations will have on existing travel times. Participants were also interested in how the electrified network would perform in cold and snowy winters, and whether other technologies were considered for Metrolinx's corridors.

The summary below reflects the questions from participants and answers from Metrolinx team members. Note that the questions have been organized in general topic areas, so that multiple questions raised (and responses provided) on similar or related points can be read together. As a result, the questions don't necessarily follow in chronological order. Metrolinx team members who provided responses included: Karen Pitre and Mary Proc, VP Customer Service Delivery. Answers are noted in *italics*.

Questions and Answers

Station progress

1. **When will the Kirby Station be ready for use?** *This station must go through its own Environmental Assessment process, and this has not started yet. The timing is to be determined, but likely about 10 years.*
2. **When will Innisfil Station be ready for use?** *This station must also go through its own Environmental Assessment. There is high interest from the community in this station and the time frame will likely be about 10 years.*

Noise

3. **What defines 5 dB of noise?** *The noise increase we are modelling comes from the average increase in volume of trains more than the type of train (e.g. diesel or electric). The threshold of 5 dB is used in various guidelines and protocols for the assessment of noise impacts because it represents a fairly significant change in noise that most people would notice. Less than 3 dB change, for example, is barely noticeable by most people.*
4. **What is the train whistle cessation policy?** *Municipalities can negotiate an exemption from train whistles with Transport Canada. Metrolinx is undergoing a network wide investigation in partnership with municipalities to update the Transport Canada regulations for train horns and whistles.*

   [Metrolinx provided the following additional information on train whistles after the meeting:

   - *Train whistles are a requirement under the Canada Railway Safety Act, approved by Transport Canada, and must occur at a quarter mile from every public crossing. The engine bell must be rung continuously one quarter mile in advance of all at-grade crossings.*
   - *Metrolinx is governed by the federal whistling guidelines for safety and protection of train riders, residents, and operating staff. Special exemptions for anti-whistling can be issued, provided that certain conditions are met.*
   - *This process must be initiated by the municipality (to Transport Canada) and not Metrolinx. Members of the public can submit a request to the municipality to suspend train whistling in a specific area. Even if whistling is not used at crossings, trains may use their bells as a warning device at crossings instead.]*

5. **Are there any plans for the Maple/Rutherford area with regards to trains whistles? Currently the whistle is required to signal the lowering of the arm, but if the crossing is grade separated we could eliminate the need for this whistle.** *We are not sure about the specifics for Maple/Rutherford, but Metrolinx is undertaking a network wide grade separation study that would take this into account.*
6. **Will there be a high frequency buzz from the electric trains?** *The dominant source of noise on electric trains and diesel trains is the same: wheels on the rails, and heating and cooling systems. Acceleration and deceleration are louder on diesel trains, but at running speed both trains are relatively the same noise level. A high frequency buzz is not expected.*

Vibration

7. **Is there a distance at which vibration cannot be felt?** *Yes. RWDI modelled the heaviest trains (freight trains) and tracks closest to receptors to model vibration impacts. Real measurements were input into the modeling. After about 30 metres, vibration is typically less noticeable and within acceptable guidelines. The exact distance depends on whether the soil is rock, clay, or sand. RWDI modelled using rock as a worst case scenario.*

Electrification technology

8. **How does inclement weather, including freezing rain, impact the electrified service?** *Weather issues will be part of the design considerations.*
9. **Did Metrolinx consider anything other than electrification and an Overhead Contact System for power supply?** *In 2010 Metrolinx completed an Electrification study that looked at hydrogen, third rail (subway), and other options. The study concluded that electrification is currently the most tested and reliable option.*

Service planning

10. **What is the expected increase in ridership?** *The initial business case for Regional Express Rail has a cost-benefit analysis and ridership projections, which is available at: http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/projectevaluation/benefitscases/GO_RER_Initial_Business_Case_Summary_EN.pdf*
11. **Will service continue during construction?** *Yes, though from time to time there may be unexpected slowdowns.*
12. **Will increased tracks result in increased service from the freight companies like CN?** *At this time there is no indication that the freight companies will increase their service. Additional track allows Metrolinx to be more flexible in service planning for additional commuter trains. There is an Agreement in Principle for a freight bypass that could help move freight off of these lines but this is only a preliminary discussion.*
13. **What is being done to improve travel time between stations to make travelling by train faster and more appealing than travelling by car?** *Electric trains are slightly faster than diesel trains, as they are able to start more quickly. New stations will offset these time savings – but new stations means that access is improved. Metrolinx will also be working on addressing the challenge of the first and last mile to make transit more appealing.*

Safety and security

14. **How is Metrolinx protecting security and preventing manipulation of the electrified system?** *Metrolinx takes security very seriously. There is very little difference between the current system and the electrified system; we do not expect security concerns. We work closely with the Federal government, the RCMP, and CSIS in terms of security overall.*

Parking

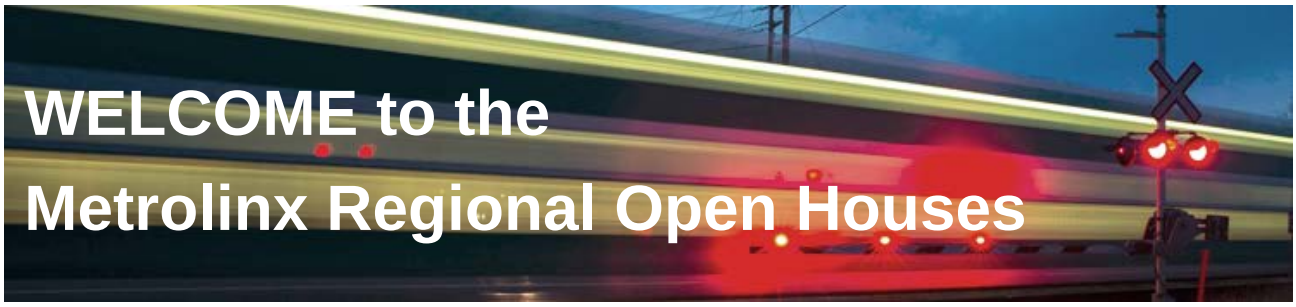
15. **What will the parking look like at Rutherford and Maple?** *There will be stacked parking structures, providing an increase of 1000 spots at each location.*
16. **Where will riders park during construction of the parking structures at Rutherford and Maple?** *Metrolinx is in the process of securing temporary parking locations within a 5 to 10 minute walk of the stations. Temporary parking located further than a 10 minute walk would have a shuttle service to the station.*

NEXT STEPS

Yulia Pak advised that all 13 meeting summaries will be available online early in the new year, along with an integrated summary identifying common themes across all meetings.

Participants were encouraged to tell their friends and neighbours about the opportunity to provide feedback. The same questions posed at the Regional Open House meetings will be available for feedback online until December 14, 2016. Participants were encouraged to provide their email address to ensure they receive up to date project information.

Appendix A: Meeting Agenda



The purpose of these Open Houses is to learn about key transit projects relevant to your community, provide feedback and talk to Metrolinx staff. Topics include:

- Discuss Environmental Assessment (EA)/Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP) to build new track and electrification infrastructure in the following areas:

    - GO Rail Network Electrification TPAP (Hydro One as co-proponents)
    - Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion TPAP
    - Lakeshore East – Don River to Scarborough Expansion TPAP

- Review of proposed mitigation strategies
- Review of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) providing the opportunity to formally incorporate new insights into the plan, while ensuring we maintain momentum on the projects underway

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AGENDA

6:30 pm	**Open House**
7:00	**Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review** *Swerhun Facilitation*
7:05	**Overview Presentation** *Metrolinx*
7:35	**Facilitated Questions of Clarification**
7:45	**Working Sessions (on Noise & Trees), Display Boards & Roll Plans** 7:45 – 8:15 Rotation 1 8:15 – 8:45 Rotation 2
8:45	**Wrap-Up Plenary Discussion & Next Steps**
9:00	**Adjourn**

Appendix B: Feedback Form

FEEDBACK FORM

Noise

1. We know there are important benefits as well as key challenges associated with construction of noise walls. **What are some of the challenges specific to your community? What would you like to see Metrolinx consider in order to address them?**

2. This EA will identify areas where noise mitigation should be investigated further, but will not identify the preferred mitigation measure. **What advice do you have for Metrolinx on how to continue to involve you and your community in future discussions regarding noise mitigation?**

3. Any other thoughts or advice?

Trees

What type of compensation would you like to see considered when trees are removed:

On your property?	In your community?	From the watershed?

Any other thoughts or advice?

Do you have any other feedback to share at this point?

Please write here if your comments are related to a specific GO corridor

CORRIDOR NAME: _____

Please write here if your comments relate to the GO system as a whole

Please hand your written comments in at the Sign-In Table before you leave and/or share your thoughts online at www.metrolinxengage.com

All feedback received by Wednesday, December 14, 2016 will be incorporated into a summary of input and advice received during the regional open houses in November. Each of the 13 regional open houses will have a summary, and an overall integrated summary will also be produced. The summaries will be posted online and shared with all participants providing an email address.

Appendix C: List of Reference Materials

Participants received the following information sheets as inserts to the agenda package upon sign-in:

- EA Info Sheet – Noise
- EA Info Sheet – Vibration
- EA Info Sheet – Trees
- EA Info Sheet – Visual Impacts
- Booklet – The Regional Transportation Plan for Today and Tomorrow

EA Info sheets were available on the Metrolinx Engage website throughout the Metrolinx Regional Open House meetings.