



METROLINX REGIONAL OPEN HOUSES

Meeting Summary Report [9 of 13]

Sacred Heart Catholic High School
98 Lemar Road, Newmarket
November 22, 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 65 people attended the ninth of 13 Regional Open Houses at Sacred Heart Catholic High School in Newmarket. The meeting began with a 30-minute open house, including a display of information boards for review. Manuel Pedrosa, James Hartley, and Tania Gautam (Metrolinx) co-delivered a 30-minute overview presentation, and Nicole Swerhun (Swerhun Facilitation) facilitated about 45 minutes of questions from the audience. Following questions, Kyle Hellewell from RWDI was available to address noise and vibration impacts and mitigation options. Suzanne Bevan (Toronto and Region Conservation Authority) was available to address tree removal impacts along the corridor, and

discuss the idea of a new standardized compensation protocol. Metrolinx staff and technical experts were available to answer questions in a separate area with the information boards and roll plans for the remainder of the evening. Written feedback received from participants at the meeting (using feedback forms) is also integrated into this summary (3 feedback forms were received). Please see the *Appendices* for the meeting agenda, the feedback form, and a list of reference materials provided.

Casey Craig and Nicole Swerhun, 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. MAINTAINING COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- Metrolinx needs to address parking, grade separations, and first/last mile connections if it wants to keep people on board with expanded transit. These are the three areas where people are most likely to be dissatisfied, and if that happens, then the support needed for additional transit will not be there.

2. ELIMINATE ALL AT-GRADE CROSSINGS

- Safety is a high priority. Additionally, train traffic at grade should not impede the flow of cars and other rapid transit like BRT in the area.

3. TEMPER PROVINCIAL GROWTH EXPECTATIONS TO MATCH ABILITY TO PROVIDE TRANSIT

- Reduce growth pressures on East Gwillimbury until double tracking to accommodate increased service beyond Aurora is approved and funded. East Gwillimbury is facing pressure to grow, but this growth may not be supported by adequate service.

4. DO NOT CLOSE THE YORK UNIVERSITY STATION

- The station is well used, particularly by students.

5. ADDRESS TRAIN HORN NOISE

- Examine the regulations around train horns to find ways to reduce the impact of noise. The regulations are outdated and do not reflect the environment in which the trains are operating.

6. EXPLORE INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

- Continue to investigate innovative technology options for the rail corridor. Consider compressed hydrogen, PEM fuel cells, and nickel metal hydride batteries carried in a fender car

DETAILED MEETING SUMMARY

Feedback was provided during the question period and in writing through feedback forms. The summary below integrates feedback from both of these sources and is organized into two parts: questions and answers, and feedback and advice. Note that the questions and feedback 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 and feedback don't necessarily follow in chronological order.

Metrolinx team members who provided responses included: Matt Baynie, VP GO Operations; Nick Spensieri, Director, Barrie Corridor Infrastructure; James Hartley, Electrification; Bruce Sevier, Senior Manager of Barrie Corridor Infrastructure; and Tania Gautam, Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion. Responses are noted in *italics*, where provided. *[Metrolinx added the following post-meeting note: Andre Lalonde is now acting VP GO Operations]*

Questions and Answers

Electrification and Train technology

1. **Are you electrifying engines or acquiring new trains sets?** *Metrolinx will be deciding on a new rolling stock around the end of the second quarter of 2017. We will have to transition from existing trains to the new fleet, but existing stock will remain in use for the non-electrified corridors.*
2. **Have there been studies on the EMF generated by the electrified service?** *Yes. Metrolinx has looked at EMI and EMF impacts, and the studies have concluded that impacts are very low.*
3. **Why is Metrolinx electrifying, instead of using Hydrogen power trains, which would eliminate the need for the extra infrastructure?** *In 2010 Metrolinx completed an Electrification Study, looking at the feasibility of various types of locomotives and energy to power trains. The study concluded that electric service was the technology of choice. Other technologies have not been proven reliable enough, yet. We are still open to alternative technologies, though we have yet to see a hydrogen fuel cell solution that can push and pull bi-level, 12-car trains. If there is information you would like to share with us, we are always open to reviewing it.*
4. **Are there international examples of success with electric trains?** *Germany, France, Australia, Montreal, New Jersey, and California have good examples of electrified rail systems. California's Cal-Train is similar to what we are proposing for Metrolinx's GO Service.*

Building support for electrification and expansion

5. As Deputy Mayor for Newmarket (John Taylor), I think this is an extremely positive project, especially with the huge amount of growth we're experiencing. I'm glad additional service is being added, and I know it will be tough to get there. I've met with the Minister a number of times, and the double track will not be going to East Gwillimbury at this time, even though we know there are a number of benefits with going to Newmarket. The question now has to be, how do we do it best? There are three key things that need to be done:

- i. **Parking needs to be addressed. The parking we have now doesn't match the ridership projections, and if people don't have a place to park they won't use the service.**
- ii. **Grade separations need to come in order to support long term expansion. Without them the traffic disruption will be too great, and we will irritate people more than we will win their support.**
- iii. **Getting people to and from the last mile needs to be addressed.**

Metrolinx needs to put as much effort into i), ii) and iii) as is being put into electrification. If people are dissatisfied, then the support for additional transit will not be there. We need to do these things to ensure we have people on board all the way. *These are really good points. We are looking at parking, and while we expect four times the number of passengers, we will not be building four times the amount of car parking. What we are doing is encouraging people to get out of their cars, and encouraging them to use municipal buses as part of our first mile/last mile strategy. We're also working on grade separations, which are complex projects and very expensive. We have a number grade separations planned, but not as many as everyone wants. It's about getting the funding we need to get all this done.*

Double tracking and increased service

6. The Province has told us that East Gwillimbury will see explosive growth. Instead of stopping at Aurora, why not go at least to East Gwillimbury? Also people from Bradford don't drive to Aurora, but they can go to Newmarket. Currently the project is only funded to Aurora. We are working to accommodate this option.

Noise and train horns

7. Could Metrolinx put train horns closer to the train crossing to reduce disruptions? Now when I try to contact Metrolinx I'm told to contact the municipality. Then the municipality tells me to contact Metrolinx. I'm in a perpetual loop. *There has been very little innovation with respect to horns and whistles. Metrolinx is in contact with Transport Canada to find better ways to manage horns at train crossings and decrease the volume of bells and whistles. We are also improving crossings for continued safety, and we are investigating grade separations, as well.*

[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.]

Service planning

8. **How late will the 60 minute service continue from Aurora to Barrie?** *Service will be every 15 minutes from Union to Aurora and every 30 to 60 minutes from Union to Barrie, and will likely stop around 1:00 am.*
9. **How will people transfer from the 15 minute service to Aurora to the 30 minute service to Barrie?** *Passengers would likely take the 30 minute train from their station all the way to Barrie instead of getting on the 15 minute service trains that ends at Aurora and having to transfer.*
10. **How is Metrolinx addressing parking, grade separations, and the challenge of the first and last mile?** *Metrolinx will be releasing a comprehensive network wide document known as the GO Rail Station Access Plan in the coming weeks (now available at http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/projectevaluation/studies/GO_Rail_Station_Access_Plan_EN.pdf). Metrolinx has to get demand, balance, and alternatives right. We are looking at how to get people onto municipal buses over the next 10 years as well. Metrolinx is working with York Region and other municipalities on grade separation – a few are already planned. Grade separations are complex, expensive projects, and we need to secure funding. There is a strategy underway to prioritize grade separations.*

Station and corridor plans

11. **What are the plans for the Newmarket (Tannery) Station?** *We're doing a Mobility Hub study centered at Newmarket GO Station, including looking at opportunities for better integration with local transit and walking or cycling.*
12. **Why is Metrolinx considering closing the York University Station? There are 53,000 students at York, and it doesn't make sense to close the station there when Metrolinx is expanding everywhere else.** *A decision has not yet been made on whether to close the York University Station. Metrolinx is trying to understand what infrastructure needs to be put in place. Downsview Park, south of York University, will be a full GO Station interconnecting with the subway.*
13. **Has Metrolinx considered changing the right of way, and running the system in a new place instead of where it is now?** *Metrolinx is not looking at realignment of the Stouffville corridor. That would involve moving the corridor from an established area to a new impact area.*
14. **What are Metrolinx's plans for taking property?** *Our approach is to minimize the number of property takings required. There are over 100 slivers of property and in some cases full properties that are required for short and/or long term needs. However, everything is being done to minimize impacts – on trees, on property owners, and mitigation of noise impacts.*

Safety

15. **There are Transport Canada requirements for the safety of rail corridors. Is Metrolinx responsible for constructing the safety features and mitigation tools?** *Metrolinx will provide safety measures in areas where we are making changes, though we can't see this impacting our corridors.*

Cost

16. **This project is large, complex, and involves a big spend. With limited funds, how will you manage the program to make sure there are not major cost overruns?** *There are a number of ways we are ramping up Metrolinx in terms of project management. We have brought in expertise to control cost spending and control scope creep. For some projects we have been engaged with Infrastructure Ontario to ensure financing control, and they have experience with hospitals and other major public*

projects. This is an issue we take very seriously at Metrolinx, and the Ministry of Transportation also works to ensure that we spend money properly.

Feedback and Advice

Comments focused on safety concerns around at-grade crossings; a lack of parking at GO stations; the desire to see double tracking extend beyond Aurora to accommodate increased service; the noise impacts from train horns; and whether the electrification was the appropriate technology choice. Specific advice and suggestions for Metrolinx included:

Long term planning

- **Put equal time and money into parking; grade separations, and the challenge of the first and last few miles.** Train traffic at grade should not impede other rapid transit like BRT in the area. Make it easier for people to get to and from the stations to get them get on board with the plan.
- **Metrolinx should talk to the Ontario Government and tell them to take the pressure off growth in East Gwillimbury until there are increases in Go transit service.**

Stations and parking

- **Do not close the York University Station.** This station is well used, particularly by students.
- **Examine the parking impacts of increased service in Aurora.**
- **Provide more station parking than currently planned,** especially in East Gwillimbury.

Noise and train horns

- **Examine the horns and whistles rules** as you plan for the service increase.

Train Technology

- **Do not close the door on potential technology options in the future.** Consider compressed hydrogen, PEM fuel cells, and nickel metal hydride batteries carried in a fender car.

Trees

- **Replace cut trees in the Aurora Arboretum.**

NEXT STEPS

Nicole Swerhun 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

AGENDA

6:30 pm	Open House
7:00	Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review <i>Swerhun Facilitation</i>
7:05	Overview Presentation <i>Metrolinx</i>
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

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.metroinxengage.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.

Appendix D: Feedback Forms

Participants submitted written feedback on comment forms, and in some cases, provided feedback via e-mail after the meetings until December 14, 2016. Please see the following pages for feedback received related to the November 22, 2016 Regional Open House meeting.

Trees

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

On your property?

In your community?

From the watershed?

5. Any other thoughts or advice?

MetroLink should consider abandonment of most of the electrical infrastructure and replace it with compressed hydrogen, PEM fuel cells and ~~nickel~~ metal metal hydride batteries carried in a ~~cab~~ tender car.

None eliminate overhead catenary, overhead bridge modifications, part of the electrical feed system. Remove train kW load from grid peak demand. Shift to off-peak period.

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Province is wrong about energy conservation. The real problem is grid peak demand.

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

- 6. Aside from noise and tree related comments, do you have any additional feedback related to the Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion Project that you would like to provide with respect to your house, your street, or your community?

Provide much more station parking than currently planned, especially in East Gwillimbury.

- 7. Are there any specific impacts related to the Barrie Rail Corridor Project that you are concerned about?

Alignment is wrong. Cheaper to purchase new alignment along undeveloped land before new development is built.

- 8. Do you have any comments related to the GO system as a whole?

Good idea. Need better bus connections at East Gwillimbury.

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Trees

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

On your property?

In your community?

From the watershed?

consider
compensation
in the
aurora
arboretum
(as preferred over one-off
street trees).

5. Any other thoughts or advice?

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?**

REMOVAL OF ALL GRADE CROSSINGS THAT WILL CAUSE ACCIDENTS & INJURY, AND DISRUPT VEHICLE TRAFFIC
i.e. DEATH ON DAVIS DRIVE.
GREEN LANE HIATUS.
TRAFFIC

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?**

RELOCATE THE EXISTING RAIL ROW,
DON'T WASTE MONEY ON EXISTING RAIL ROW
THAT MAY HAVE TO BE ABANDONED IN THE
FUTURE.

3. Any other thoughts or advice?

DON'T RENOVATE - RELOCATE ↓.

AT BATHURST & GREEN LANE THERE ARE DRUMMINGS
ENOUGH TO PROVIDE A GRADE SEPARATION EMBANKMENT
FROM KING CITY TO BRADFORD.

Trees

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

On your property?

DON'T

In your community?

WASTE

From the watershed?

MONEY !

5. Any other thoughts or advice?

GET COUNSEL FROM NEWMARKET & ADROPA ABOUT HOW THEY WOULD USE ANY LAND INVOLVED IN MOVING THEIR WESTERN BOUNDARY SOME DISTANCE INSIDE KING TOWNSHIP ON THE OTHER SIDE OF BATHURST.

GET COSTS OF SUPPLYING WATER & DRAINAGE TO NEW COMMERCIAL & RESIDENTIAL CAMP IN BETWEEN NEW GO TRAIN STATIONS AND PARKING.

INVOLVE YORK REGIONAL TRANSPORT IN HOW THEY WOULD PROVIDE SERVICES TO THE NEW STATIONS.

COST THE TOTAL ESTIMATES, AND FIGURE OUT DEVELOPMENT CHARGES FOR LAND DEVELOPERS TO BEAR

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

6. Aside from noise and tree related comments, do you have any additional feedback related to the Barrie Rail Corridor Expansion Project that you would like to provide with respect to your house, your street, or your community?

- FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, NEW RAIL ROW NEEDS TO BE PLANNED FOR, AND ACQUIRED, WITH ATTENTION TO MINIMIZING, IF NOT ELIMINATING, ALL LEVEL CROSSINGS.
- ALL WORK ON EXISTING RAIL ROW THAT ~~WILL HAVE~~ ^{MAY} TO BE ABANDONED SHOULD NOT PROCEED.

7. Are there any specific impacts related to the Barrie Rail Corridor Project that you are concerned about?

- DEATH ON DAVIS - INEVITABLE AT DAVIS LEVEL CROSSING, ONCE TRAINS RUNNING EVERY HOUR
- PROBLEMS WITH GRADE CROSSINGS EVERYWHERE
- EXISTING RAIL ROW THROUGH AURORA & NEWMARKET SHOULD BE ABANDONED, AND NEW RAIL ROW - ON AN EMBANKMENT - RUN ALONG BATHURST - KINGETT TO

8. Do you have any comments related to the GO system as a whole?

- ARE ANY FACILITIES BEING DESIGNED TO ANTICIPATE POSSIBLE RUNNING OF GO TRAINS ON HYDROGEN, GENERATED BY SURPLUS HYDROGEN ENERGY?
- RE ^{NEW} LAYOVER AREA ON BARRIE LINE - IS IT POSSIBLE THAT THE GENERATION OF HYDROGEN MIGHT BE THERE IN 25 YEARS? OR JUST WHERE THE HYDROGEN BOTTLES WILL BE ATTACHED TO THE ENGINES?

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