

Media Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

METROLINX IDENTIFIES WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES IN DRAFT 2041 REGIONAL PLAN Council asks Metrolinx to not charge transit users for parking at Stouffville stations

WHITCHURCH-STOUFFVILLE, ON – Metrolinx has identified several planning and transit improvement projects within Whitchurch-Stouffville in their Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) released in September.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Council was updated on these initiatives, which include the electrification of the Stouffville GO train corridor, the expansion of the layover facility in Lincolnville and a new Lincolnville GO station on Tenth Line, at the Council meeting Tuesday.

Council was also asked to not endorse a plan by the provincial Crown agency to charge riders for parking at the proposed Lincolnville GO station and the current Downtown Stouffville station.

“Charging users for parking at any of the current or proposed GO stations in Whitchurch-Stouffville could add to the parking issues we already face in Town,” said Rob Flindall, Director of Public Works and Project Lead of the Town’s recent Commercial and Residential Parking Study. “We may start to face issues where GO riders seek free parking in other areas of the town, reducing the availability of parking for businesses and residents.”

According to the Draft 2041 RTP, only 32% of riders travelling to Toronto on the GO train arrive at their suburban GO station via a mode of transport other than a single-occupancy vehicle. Metrolinx wants to increase this number to 62-64% by 2041.

“Locally in Whitchurch-Stouffville, this policy will help reduce the number of vehicles on the roads and ease rush hour traffic congestion around the GO stations; however, it will also require the Town to increase development density and put more people within a 10-minute walk of the stations,” said Haiquig Xu, Deputy Director of Development Services.

To help achieve this objective, Metrolinx is suggesting to “... recover the cost of parking at GO stations to help shift trips to modes that do not require parking ...”

“While charging for parking may work at GO stations that are well connected with local public transit, it will likely encourage more GO customers that cannot walk or take transit to the station to search for local municipal parking,” said Flindall.

“As such, staff believes Metrolinx should consider differentiating this policy between mature urban areas and suburban areas” he said.

Whitchurch-Stouffville Council concurred on Tuesday by passing a motion to ask Metrolinx to reconsider the charging of GO transit riders for parking in Whitchurch-Stouffville stations. They also approved staff to submit comments regarding the Plan.

At the meeting, Councillor Iain Lovatt suggested asking Metrolinx to make all-day GO train service from Union Station to Lincolnville a reality “as soon as possible.”

Council on Tuesday was also updated on the following Metrolinx initiatives in Whitchurch-Stouffville and the surrounding area:

- Metrolinx and Hydro One have jointly undertaken an environmental assessment study for the electrification of the GO rail network, including the Stouffville Corridor. Town staff has asked Metrolinx to consider mitigation measures regarding vibration, noise, vegetation, and health and safety concerns, as well as concerns of sensitive receptor facilities, e.g. schools, child care centres, and long-term care centers in the vicinity. According to Metrolinx, electric train service would see peak period train service double and off-peak train service quadruple by 2025 throughout southern Ontario.
- Service to the new Gormley GO Station at Stouffville Road and Leslie Street started on December 5, 2016. Construction of the Bloomington GO Station at Bloomington Road started in early 2017, which includes a 1,050-space parking garage and a future MTO car pool lot. The new Bloomington GO Station is scheduled to open in 2019.

- Identification of the impact of construction-related disruption and noise due to the increased number of trains, train whistling, and safety at levelled road/rail crossings. Metrolinx has indicated that a grade-separation between rail and road at Main Street in Stouffville is not a priority, and agreed to work with Town staff to minimize other impacts by providing alternative solutions wherever possible.
- The expansion of the existing Lincolnville layover facility. The purpose of the Lincolnville layover facility is to support improved service on the Stouffville GO Rail Corridor with the addition of three layover tracks. The expansion of the Lincolnville layover facility is scheduled to be complete in 2019.
- Identification of the land south of Bethesda Side Road, west of Tenth Line, and immediately east of the rail line the site for the new Lincolnville GO Station, which is inside the areas of the Town's Official Plan Amendment 137, known as "the Phase 3 lands". Metrolinx has started the planning and design works for the new Lincolnville GO Station, and issued a notice of application for approval to expropriate the land on September 28, 2017.

"Metrolinx has outlined some ambitious projects in the Whitchurch-Stouffville area which will only help to alleviate some of the transportation woes in the Greater Toronto Area and reduce negative effects of diesel engine emissions on human health and the environment," Xu said. "Residents should look forward to these improvements over the coming years."

"The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville certainly advocates the use of public transit and these initiatives set forth in Metrolinx's 2041 Plan help achieve goals that will benefit everyone," he said.

The Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan, released on September 14, guides the work being done to transform the transportation network in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The final version will be released in December following a 90-day public consultation. The Plan is open for public comment until November 17, 2017.

To view the Transportation Plan, please visit metrolinxengage.com/en/collections/draft-plan.

About the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is one of the jewels of the GTA, located just north of Toronto on Highway 404. We are a community rich in heritage and character and we are committed to offering our residents and businesses 'Country Close to the City'.

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