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Frequently asked questions about the Georgetown South Rail Expansion and Union-Pearson Rail Link



Q1: Why do this?

Expanding GO service on the Georgetown Line — and adding a new rail service to the airport — would benefit our economy, our environment and our quality of life. It would benefit residents, businesses and travellers in every community on the line — and beyond.

The Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is important to Ontario's economy, and the transit corridor between Union Station and Georgetown is one of the key arteries.

GO trains on the Georgetown line are at capacity. We need more frequent rail service to help give people more choices. The project provides core infrastructure in the Georgetown South Corridor which would ultimately allow for important new services, such as:

- Two-way, all-day local service between Toronto and Georgetown, and between Toronto and Bradford
- All-day express service between Toronto and Brampton
- New peak period service between Toronto and Bolton and between Toronto and Guelph, and
- Establish a new rail link between Union Station and Pearson International Airport.

Q2: Why is the Transit Environmental Assessment Process being used for this project?

The Ontario Government is committed to moving public transit forward as quickly as possible so we can get out of gridlock, get moving again and enjoy a cleaner environment.

The Transit Environmental Assessment Process is designed to take six months to complete -- making planning faster so that Ontarians can have transit sooner.

The Transit Environmental Assessment Process does not change the requirement for up-front planning, including, identifying existing environmental conditions, fully assessing impacts, and resolving land use issues. Consultations will occur prior to the start of the formal assessment process and throughout. The full involvement of the community will make this project a success.

Q3: The Transit Environmental Assessment Process takes six months. Is that enough time for the public to participate?

This project has been studied extensively. The project is not starting from scratch. All previous work will be taken into account in the Transit Environmental Assessment Process. We will carefully review all previous studies.

We encourage the public to get involved. For more information, visit www.metrolinx.com, call 1-866-658-9890, or email info@metrolinx.com.

Q4: What does this project include?

Using the Transit Environmental Assessment Process, Metrolinx will be reviewing proposed plans for the Georgetown South rail corridor expansion and Union-Pearson rail link that will include:

GO Rail Georgetown South Corridor Service Expansion:

- Adding 3 new tracks from the airport spur to Dundas Street and 4 new tracks to east of Strachan Avenue in the 25 kilometre rail corridor Malton and Union Station
- Widening of 14 bridges and eliminating all level road crossings on the CN line in the Georgetown South Corridor, including new grade separations at Strachan Avenue, Denison Road and Carlingview Drive
- A covered depressed rail corridor through Weston that maintains Church and King streets at their present grade and a pedestrian overpass at John Street
- Relocating the GO Weston Stop from John Street to Lawrence Avenue and the construction of a Weston Station to accommodate GO trains and Union-Pearson rail link trains
- Modifications to the Bloor GO/Dundas TTC station to accommodate GO and Union-Pearson rail link trains
- Consideration for the Gateway Hub proposed in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation at the proposed Eglinton Light Rail Transit crossing line for GO trains
- Designing for a potential future GO/Union-Pearson rail link station at Woodbine

Union-Pearson Rail Link:

- Adding a new 3.3 kilometre rail spur from the GO Georgetown Line to Terminal 1 at the Pearson Airport with 7 grade separations
- Opening a new passenger station at Terminal 1 at Pearson Airport with additional stops in Weston, the Bloor GO/Dundas TTC station and at Union Station
- Introducing fully modernized clean-diesel rail passenger cars with stringent emission controls
- A potential new Union-Pearson rail link train repair and maintenance yard

Q5: What about air pollution from the rail cars on the Union-Pearson rail link?

Rail Link diesel trains are more fuel efficient than automobiles or buses. These trains will use new clean-diesel engines that likely exceed 2010 Tier 3 Environmental Protection Agency emission control requirements.

In its first year of operation, the Rail Link will take 1.1 million vehicles off our roadways which will result in a net reduction in GHGs and contribute to the province's GHG reduction targets.

Q6: Why not electrify the line?

Electrification of the Georgetown Line is proposed in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and it is part of the 15-year plan. The Transit Environmental Assessment Process for the Georgetown South Expansion with the Union-Pearson Link will be designed to allow for future electrification.

Q7: Why don't we build a public transit system that can service the airport and communities with stops along the way?

That's exactly what we want to do. The GO Georgetown line expansion will mean more frequent two-way all-day local and express service to communities along the entire corridor.

The Union-Pearson rail link will serve travellers in, and visitors, to the GTHA with passenger stops at Pearson Airport, Weston, GO Bloor, and of course, Union Station.

The Regional Transportation Plan also calls for improved transit connections to the Airport from all directions.

We think this is the best combination of fast, reliable, safe and cost effective travel. It means more choice for everyone.

Q8: What will the overall economic benefit of this project be for the GTHA?

GO service expansion will stimulate intensification and development along Corridor.

Better connectivity of communities along and beyond the Corridor will contribute to making the Toronto Region more competitive.

The project will create 10,000 jobs during design and construction and hundreds of jobs during its

operation.

Taking millions of automobile trips off our roads every year will

- Reduce lost economic opportunities due to congestion
- Free up space on roads for goods movement
- Reduce societal costs for automobile collisions

A fast, reliable and accessible connection to the Airport will also:

- Contribute to making the Region more competitive
- Stimulate business and tourism industry
- Enhance the Region's ability to host special events like 2015 Pan-Am Games

Toronto is unique among world class cities in that it does not have a direct rail link. Most world class cities do, including London, Paris, Rome, Washington, Amsterdam, Zurich, Vienna and others. This makes international business and tourist travel more constrained in Toronto than in most world class cities.

Q9: Will the rail crossing at Strachan Avenue be depressed under the roadway as requested by the City of Toronto?

Our technical team will work with the City of Toronto and the Liberty Village community to explore depressing the rail corridor and other practical options to grade separate the Strachan Crossing.

The depressed corridor option along with other viable options will be presented for public comment and consideration at the Community Open Houses in February.

Q10: When will construction begin?

Design will begin once all provincial and federal environmental and funding approvals are complete. Construction will follow and will be phased in. A specific timetable will be developed.

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