Niagara Region

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MEMORANDUM

PDS-C 4-2019

Subject: Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Design

Date: February 20, 2019

To: Planning and Economic Development Committee

From: Cheryl Selig, MCIP, RPP, Planning Lead – GO Implementation Office

The purpose of this memo is to notify Planning and Economic Development Committee that Metrolinx has issued a 'Notice of Completion' for its Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan. Metrolinx has been working in partnership with Niagara Region and City of Niagara Falls staff throughout the process.

Functional design is the first step of Metrolinx's GO Station design process. The purpose of functional design is to identify and recommend the location of GO Station elements to ensure that all users accessing the station are accommodated in a safe and efficient manner. Subsequent to 'Notice of Completion', Metrolinx will initiate its detailed design process. The purpose of detailed design is to evaluate the feasibility of recommended functional design elements and refine elements as necessary to guarantee practical operation.

Metrolinx used its GO Rail Station Access Plan while drafting the Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan. The Station Access Plan identifies station elements that Metrolinx must be considered when developing a functional station design.

Functional Design – Niagara Falls GO Station

Based on the functional design, the future Niagara Falls GO Station has been confirmed at the site of the existing VIA Station building located on the northern edge of Bridge Street, at the Erie Avenue intersection. On December 10, 2018, Metrolinx issued its 'Notice of Completion' for the Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan. The preferred functional site plan is attached to this memo as Appendix 1.

Region staff have reviewed the completed Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan and have observed the absence of some station design elements and considerations recommended within the Station Access Plan. Metrolinx has based the site plan on technical feasibility; policy direction; and, input submitted by Niagara Region, the City of Niagara Falls, and other stakeholders.

Although not shown within the functional site plan which is providing what will be required for service in 2023, further expansion of the GO Station may be required as ridership and service frequency grows. Expansion could occur on the vacant lands

located north of the existing rail line within Transit Station Area approved within GO Transit's *Niagara Rail Service Expansion Environmental Study Report (2011)*.

Proposed Public Realm Improvement Design – Niagara Falls GO Station

Included in Metrolinx's completed Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan is a Proposed Public Realm Improvement Design (attached as Appendix 2 to this memo). The proposed design is a vision developed in partnership between Niagara Region and the City of Niagara Falls to exhibit how the future GO Station could become better integrated with the existing community and Downtown core.

Elements shown within Appendix 2 are for demonstration purposes only. Some envisioned elements, such as the bus loop, will be considered during future Environmental Assessments (EAs) undertaken by Niagara Region and the City of Niagara Falls.

Conclusion

Metrolinx's completed functional site plan as shown in Appendix 1 will serve as a foundation for subsequent detailed design led by Metrolinx's Capital Projects Group (CPG). CPG is responsible for all decisions related to detailed design and construction phasing. The Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Site Plan is subject to change pending further detailed design, technical analysis, and funding availability.

Niagara Region and the City of Niagara Falls will continue to work closely with Metrolinx to ensure the successful and efficient operation of daily GO Rail Service to Niagara Falls.

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

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Cheryl Selig, MCIP, RPP
Planning Lead – GO Implementation Office
Public Works, Niagara Region

Appendix 1: Niagara Falls GO Station Functional Design
Appendix 2: Proposed Public Realm Improvement Design Precinct