An overview of Niagara’s GO Rail Expansion

Planning & Economic Development Committee

February 20, 2019
The Catalyst

Environmental Study Report

• GO Transit’s **Niagara Rail Service Expansion** ESR approved in 2011

• Study included Niagara as a continuation of Hamilton expansion

• Stations at Grimsby, St. Catharines, & Niagara Falls, with a ‘future potential station’ identified at Lincoln

• Region understood the need for proactive planning

• In 2014, a united Regional Council lobbied the Province to take action
Key Niagara GO Milestones

Meeting with MMAH & Metrolinx
Discuss approaches for land use planning

Provincial Commitment to GO
GO Rail Service to Grimsby by 2021, St. Catharines & Niagara Falls by 2023

Secondary Plan Approval
Local adoption and Regional approval of four Secondary Plans

Opening Day GO Rail Service (Grimsby) and Canada Summer Games (Niagara host)

2015
GO Business Case submitted to Province and GO Hub & Transit Stations Study starts
Region enters MOUs with Grimsby, Lincoln, St. Catharines & Niagara Falls

2016
Drafting Secondary Plans
Transportation analysis, functional design, outreach strategy, working groups, public engagement for Secondary Plans

2017
Inaugural Daily GO Rail Service to Niagara
Metrolinx initiates two-way daily GO Rail service to Niagara Falls and St. Catharines four years ahead of schedule

2018
2019
2021
Proactive efforts

Niagara’s GO Business Case - (2015)

• Based on 2011 ESR, proactively submitted to Province to justify need for GO Rail service expansion to Niagara
• Council dedicated funds for GO implementation

GO Hub & Transit Stations Study (GHTSS) - (2015)

• Confirmed station locations of GO’s 2011 ESR
• Adopted local Secondary Plans that established transit-supportive policy and design around stations
• Identified enabling capital work projects for safe and efficient access to each GO Station
• Developed GO Station design precincts around Niagara’s identified GO Station sites
Enabling transit-oriented development (TOD)

- Municipalities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe are leveraging transit investment to drive growth.

- Provincial investment presents a unique opportunity to proactively plan land uses, transportation networks and infrastructure around the GO station.

- The Province’s Growth Plan directs municipalities to plan for intensification around GO stations.

- Transit station areas serve an important function within the regional transportation system.

- A secondary plan is the best mechanism to proactively plan for change and enables the Town to set its priorities for change.

Evolving transit hub in Kitchener (GO rail and LRT station)
Grimsby GO Station

- MX completed functional design (shown left). Detailed design in progress.
- MX now pursuing a “market-driven approach” to station construction at Province’s direction.
- Province has reaffirmed its commitment for GO Rail service to Grimsby by 2021.
- Greenbelt Plan permits linear public infrastructure on specialty crop lands.
- Region-owned lands south of rail line are envisioned to be used for future municipal transit infrastructure.
St. Catharines GO Station

- Region & City submitted joint comments identifying desirable station elements / amenities for functional design.

- MX has completed functional design. Detailed design in progress.

- Detailed design will confirm feasibility and location of functional design elements.

- Existing station has federal heritage designation.

- Extensive public outreach with Proactive Advisory Group (PAG) for all GHTSS-related capital projects and background studies.
St. Catharines GO Station: Primary Station Access

- GO’s 2011 ESR station area limits Metrolinx’s ability to locate the primary station access (#3).

- Region, City, and Ridley College are undertaking an MOU to establish a dedicated public road access (#2).

- Access will be determined through a Plan of Subdivision application.

- MOU is expected to be brought to PEDC for endorsement Q1 2019.

- Region and City pre-emptively waived review fees associated to Ridley College’s Plan of Subdivision application.
Niagara Falls GO Station

• Region and City have worked closely with MX and have submitted comments identifying desired station elements/amenities.

• MX completed functional design. Detailed design in progress.

• Detailed design will confirm feasibility and location of functional design elements.

• Existing station has federal/municipal heritage designation.
Niagara Falls GO Station Area Vision

• Region & City have partnered to create a broader vision for the Niagara Falls GO Station area.

• Elements are identified and recommended within Secondary Plan policy.

• MX has recognized and incorporated elements of this vision into its functional design concept.

• Region’s Bridge Street EA will further refine detailed design of streetscape.

• Region & City will budget for, coordinate, and implement these elements in upcoming successive budget years.
NIAGARA FALLS
Bridge Street Reconstruction EA

- Design will dove-tail with Thorold Stone Rd. Extension Phase II, which includes the new roundabout at Victoria Ave and Bridge St.

- EA design and considerations will take direction from the Niagara Falls GO Secondary Plan and Regional Transportation Master Plan.

- EA will design a new bus loop at the GO Station as envisioned within the Region and City’s broader GO Station area precinct.

- Region and City will coordinate phasing and budget for all capital improvements in this area to ensure alignment and sequencing.

*Requires approval from CN & VIA

Aspirational Timeline

Region & City project coordination workshop

Winter/Spring 2019

Public Information Centres 1 & 2

2020/2021

Notice of commencement

2019/2020

ESR filed & initiation of detailed design

2021

Construction complete

2023
- Evaluated and determined need for immediate replacement due to aging.
- Existing sight line constraints when accessing Great Western St.
- Reconstruction will enhance safety and travel experience for all transportation modes.
- EA will be coordinated with the City.

**Aspirational Timeline**

- Notice of commencement: Winter 2019
- ESR filed & initiation of detailed design: Spring/Summer 2019
- Construction complete: 2020/2021

**St. Paul St. West CNR Bridge Reconstruction EA**

- Year of original bridge construction: 1922
- Age of St. Paul St. West CNR bridge: 97 years
• Identified as a key capital work improvement in the Grimsby GO Secondary Plan.

• Improvement area includes Casablanca Blvd. and GO Station access (from North Service Rd. to Main St.) and access to Region-owned lands on the south side of the CN rail line off of Livingston Ave.

• Does not include portion of Livingston Ave. through the woodlot to Main St.

• ESR details planning process and preferred alternative, including how public and agency input was incorporated.

Aspirational Timeline:
- ESR filed & initiation of detailed design: Winter 2019
- Construction begins: Summer/Fall 2019
- GO Rail Service to Grimsby: 2021
- Construction complete: 2020

Public Information Centre 3
Next steps

- Local zoning by-law updates
- Enhance municipal transit services
- Understand MX TOD delivery framework
- MX public engagement (2019)
- File Casablanca ESR (Feb. 2019)
- GO Rail Service to Grimsby (by 2021)
- Work with MX to increase GO service frequency through Niagara corridor