Implementation of Niagara’s GO Rail Expansion

Committee of the Whole

July 4, 2019
Agenda Overview

• Niagara Region Investment in GO
• Key Milestones
• Policy Framework
• Transit Oriented Development
• GO Hub & Transit Stations Study
• Station Status
• Conclusion and Next Steps
Niagara Region Investment in GO

• 2015 Business Case: Region committed $40M (1/3 of projected capital costs) to the expansion of GO rail to Niagara
  • $40M already set aside (2016 - $10M; 2017 - $30M)
  • $34M remains (Grimsby parcel, GIO, consulting, due diligence)

• $40M contribution as cornerstone of Niagara project expansion
  • Regional contribution = very positive MX and provincial recognition
Key Niagara GO Expansion Milestones

**2015**
- Meeting with MMAH & Metrolinx
  - Discuss approaches for land use planning

**2016**
- Provincial Commitment to GO
  - GO Rail Service to Grimsby by 2021, St. Catharines & Niagara Falls by 2023

**2017**
- GO Business Case submitted to Province and GO Hub & Transit Stations Study starts
  - Region enters MOUs with Grimsby, Lincoln, St. Catharines & Niagara Falls

**2018**
- Secondary Plan Approval
  - Local adoption and Regional approval of four Secondary Plans

**2019**
- Drafting Secondary Plans
  - Transportation analysis, functional design, outreach strategy, working groups, public engagement for Secondary Plans

**2021**
- Opening Day GO Rail Service (Grimsby) and Canada Summer Games (Niagara host)
- 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
Transit-Supportive Policy Framework

Significant investment in creating proactive policy climate for transit-supportive development:

- GO Transit Niagara Expansion EA (2011)
- Niagara Region Official Plan
- GO Hub & Transit Stations Study (2015)
- Transportation Master Plan (2017)
- Municipal Secondary Plans (2018)
- Local Transit Connections (2019)
- Station Development Strategy (2019)

“...the development/redevelopment of rail stations to serve as major transit station areas, to support needs of communities along the corridor...”

- Niagara Region TMP
Mobility Hub Objectives

### Seamless Mobility
1. Seamless integration of modes at the rapid transit station.
2. Safe and efficient movement of people with high levels of pedestrian priority.
3. A well-designed transit station for a high quality user experience.

### Placemaking
4. Strategic parking management.
5. A vibrant, mixed-use environment with higher land use intensity.
6. An attractive public realm.

### Successful Implementation
7. A minimized ecological footprint.
8. Effective partnerships and incentives for increased public and private investment.
9. Flexible planning to accommodate growth and change.
Dec. 2018 - new Provincial approach on GO station delivery (TOD)

- MX focus is operating service going forward
- Third Party ‘Market-driven’ (municipal, developer, P3, etc.)
- New delivery approach required for Niagara stations
- MX no longer building at Grimsby; not acquiring STC or NF stations
- MX budget containment – investments now focused on ‘in-corridor capital improvements’ and rail operations (service frequency)
GO Hub & Transit Stations Study

• Proactively 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
• Land uses that permit transit-supportive development and protect existing neighbourhoods
• Clear direction to budget for and move forward with enabling capital work projects at local and regional levels
Niagara GO Extension: Current Status

- Grimsby (announced)
  - Subject to Provincial/MX TOD policy
  - New build, greenfield site; MX lands + Regional lands
  - Region acquired 14.2 acres for this express purpose

- Niagara Falls & St. Catharines (in service)
  - Utilizing existing VIA stations

- Lincoln (TBD)
  - 2011 ESR ‘future potential station’
  - Opportunity to proceed under Provincial/MX TOD policy
Grimsby GO Station

• 2011 MX EA identified station area
  • Station area included parking, bus loop, and PPUDO facilities on all of the lands identified as station area

• Region land purchase – start of proactive implementation strategy

• Proactive, comprehensive secondary plan

• Grimsby Council confirms station area

• MX now pursuing “market-driven approach” to station construction

• Casablanca Boulevard/South Service Road reconstruction

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St. Catharines GO Station

- MX detailed design in progress
- Secondary Plan has VIA station as mobility hub & core of the area
- Opportunity to leverage vacant parcels to create a hub with TOD
- Primary station access road MOU
- City’s Ridley Road reconstruction
- St. Paul St. West CNR bridge reconstruction
• Region & City partnered to create transformative vision for Niagara Falls GO Station precinct
• Secondary Plan has station as a mobility hub & core of the area
• Catalyst for development
• All precinct elements identified/recommended within Secondary Plan policy
• Region & City will budget for, coordinate, and implement these elements in upcoming years
• Bridge St. reconstruction

Niagara Falls GO Station Precinct Vision

Niagara Region (GO Implementation Office; Public Works, 2018)
Municipalities across GGH are leveraging transit investment to drive growth

Transit station areas serve important function within regional transportation system

Current proactive policy framework presents unique opportunity to proactively invest in transportation networks and infrastructure around our GO stations to create vibrant mobility hubs and drive growth

Niagara Region preparing strategy investment of $40M existing contribution for Niagara station area improvements as catalyst in establishing true mobility hubs as envisioned in Secondary Plans

Multi-site station development strategy to Corporate Services in August

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