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## MEMORANDUM

CSC-C 14-2019

**Subject: Niagara GO Station Strategy**

**Date: August 7, 2019**

**To: Corporate Services Committee**

**From: Matt Robinson, Director**

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This memo provides Committee with the rationale for the proposed Niagara GO Station Development Strategy presented in confidential report CSD 17-2019, which outlines a strategy for Niagara to invest in the GO train station sites along the CN Rail-owned Grimsby Subdivision, also known as the Niagara corridor. The GO Station Development Strategy outlined in CSD 17-2019 will allow Niagara Region and our local municipal partners to fully leverage and maximize the resident and visitor experience at these key gateways by creation of multi-modal mobility hubs. The customer experience is vital to the continued growth of GO Train service in Niagara, the growth of municipal and regional transit, and tourism in the region.

Niagara has taken considerable time and resources in the strategic planning for transit and GO Train service, including establishing premier transit-supportive policy sets to ensure the foundation for future transit growth and that development is clear, focused and appropriate. The following sets out the policy regime already in place to enable and fully leverage investments in station areas in Niagara Region.

The 2017 Niagara Region Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is what guides the Region's transportation capital investments, and creates the blueprint for growth. The TMP presents a long-term strategy to guide the planning, development and renewal of a multi-modal transportation system in a manner that is consistent with projected needs, aligned with the region's growth, and with the overall vision for a sustainable Niagara.

The following foundational policy has provided the direction to invest in the station areas:

*"Continue to support the expansion of GO Transit passenger rail service to Niagara Region, and the development/ redevelopment of rail stations to serve as major transit station areas, to support needs of communities along the corridor, and to commuters and tourists moving in both directions between Niagara Region and the GTHA."*

This policy clearly demonstrates the strategic planning and critical integration these station areas have in the long-term transportation network and growth of the region. Other initiatives in place that have led to this GO Station Development Strategy as the logical next step in Niagara's GO Expansion Implementation include:

1. Niagara Region Official Plan policy objectives for the urban areas that includes: *“to actively support the continuation and improvement of the railway system for the movement of both passengers and goods”* clearly indicating that Niagara Region has long supported investment in rail as a travel mode for passengers and believes there is an active role for the Region to play in delivery of this objective;
2. Significant investment in transit including seamless connection all 12 of Niagara’s local municipalities, and expansion of transit service hours over the next three years;
3. 2011 “Niagara Rail Service Expansion Environmental Study Report GO Transit” by RJ Burnside which concluded that the existing rail stations were keys to GO’s expansion and that there would be a new station built in Grimsby;
4. Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Lincoln, Grimsby, and Niagara Region have set out a vision for the station areas through the Secondary Plan process. Unanimously approved and adopted into the respective Official Plans in each community, these transformational GO station area visionary plans laid out the future development, capital improvements and next generation land use around the train station sites, establishing a full suite of transit-supportive policies that enable full maximization of the land densities, station accesses and transportation network upgrades necessary to ensure these stations remain at the core of the transportation network and the areas evolve into dynamic mobility hubs.

Investing in the station areas further enables the implementation of the mobility hub vision by providing integrated transit connectivity and public investment. This investment will act as a catalyst for further development and redevelopment by the private sector in these station areas. The Region is best positioned to fully capitalize on the existing potential of the station areas as transit hubs, which will be a benefit for all parties and future transit users. At Committee of the Whole July 4, 2019, these and other elements of the overall GO Station Development Strategy were presented (attached Appendix 1).

Respectfully submitted and signed by,

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Matt Robinson  
Director, GO Implementation Office



# Implementation of Niagara's GO Rail Expansion

Committee of the Whole  
July 4, 2019



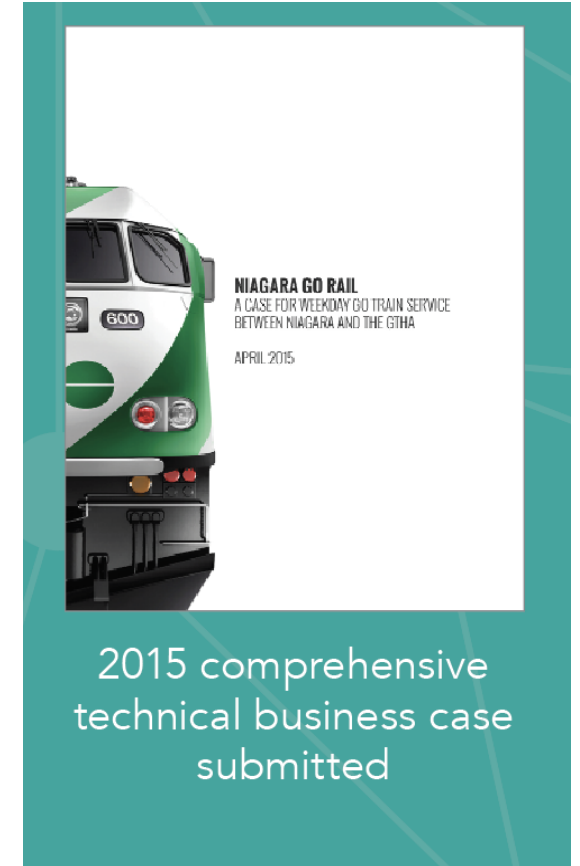
# Agenda Overview

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

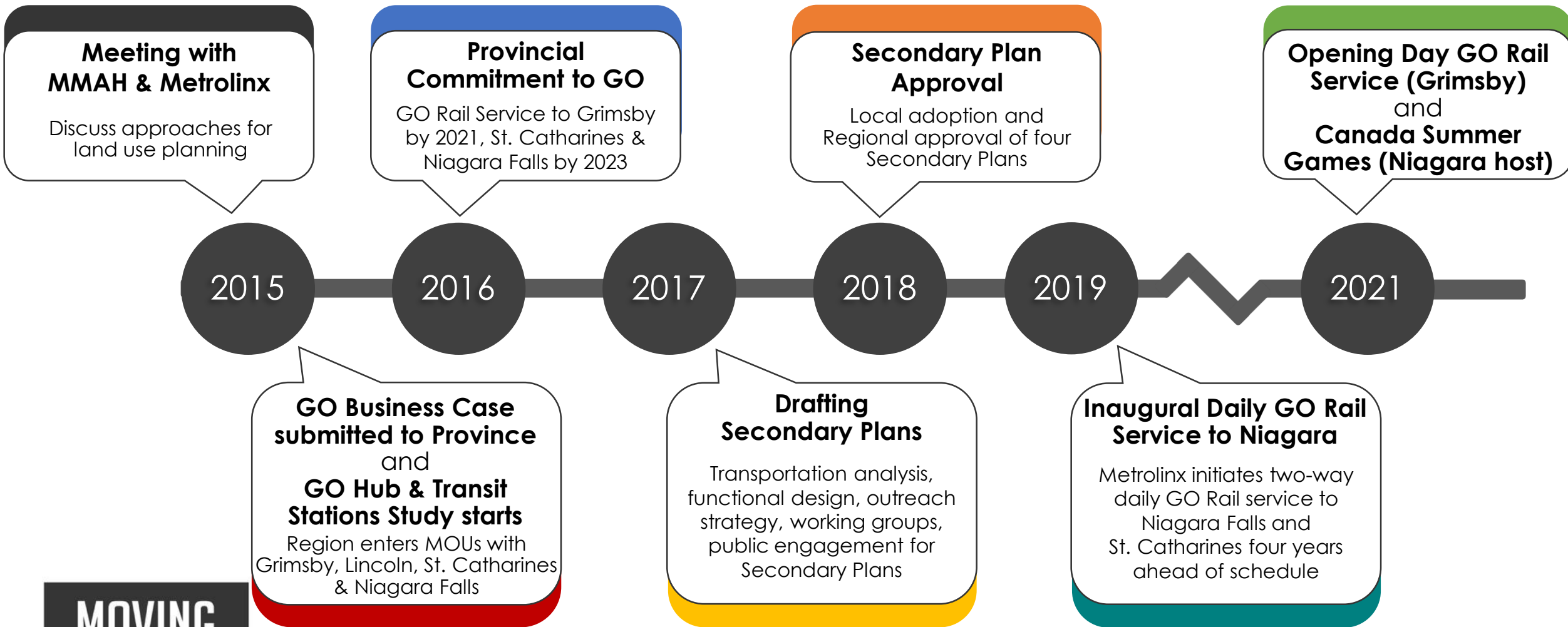


# Niagara Region Investment in GO

- 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



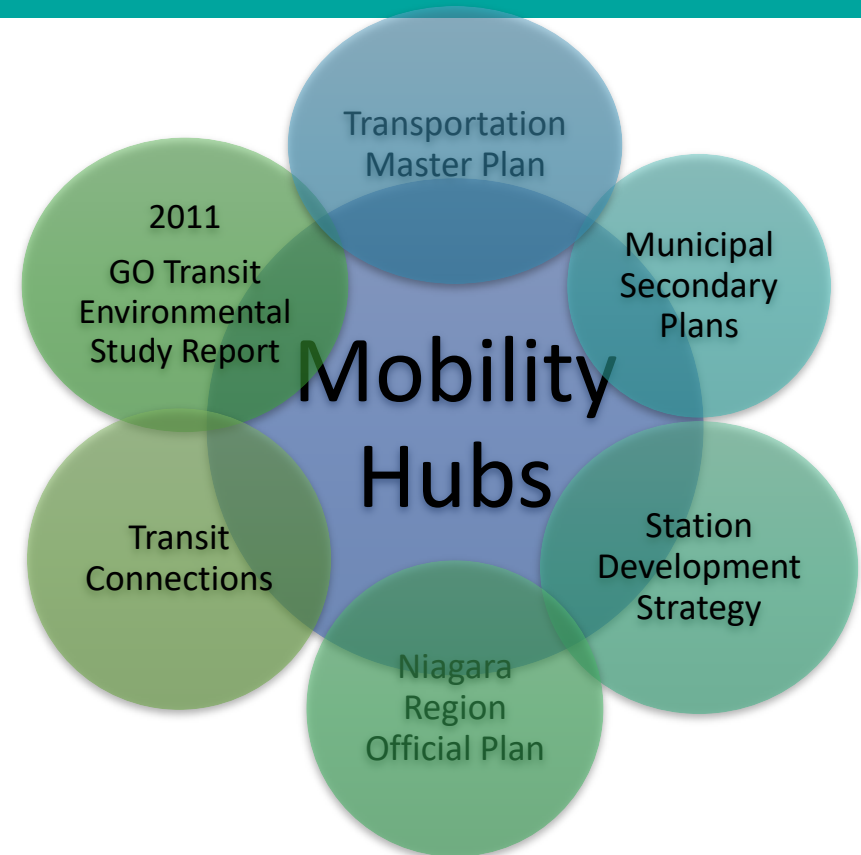
# Key Niagara GO Expansion Milestones



# 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



## SEAMLESS MOBILITY



Seamless integration of modes at the rapid transit station.



Safe and efficient movement of people with high levels of pedestrian priority.



A well-designed transit station for a high quality user experience.



Strategic parking management.

## PLACEMAKING



A vibrant, mixed-use environment with higher land use intensity.



An attractive public realm.

## SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION



A minimized ecological footprint.



Effective partnerships and incentives for increased public and private investment.



Flexible planning to accommodate growth and change.



# Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

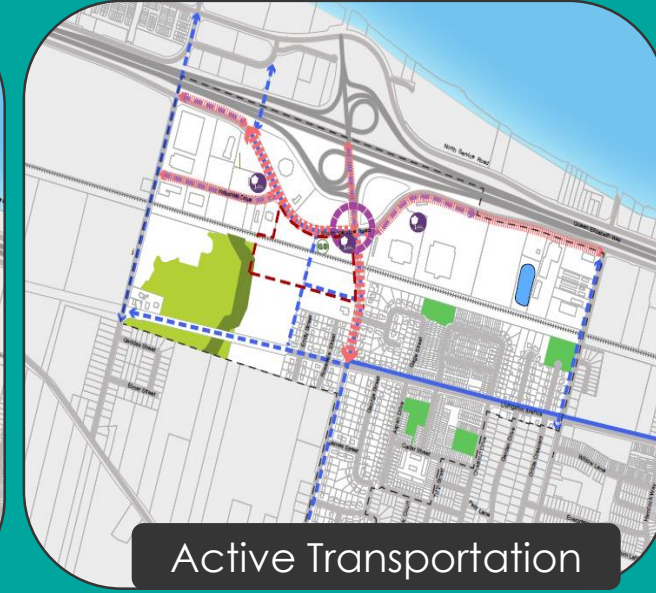
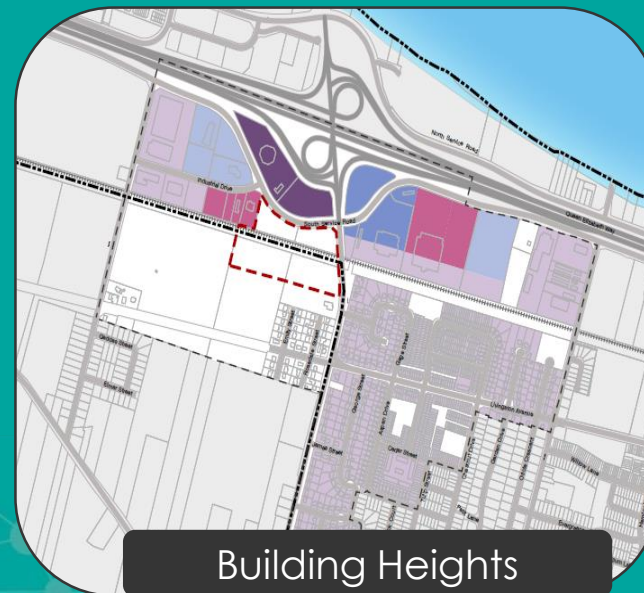
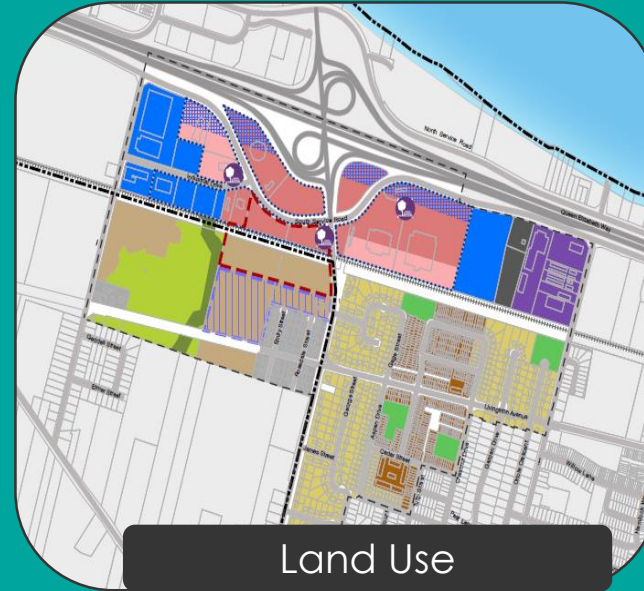
Dec. 2018 - new Provincial approach on GO station delivery (TOD)

- 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

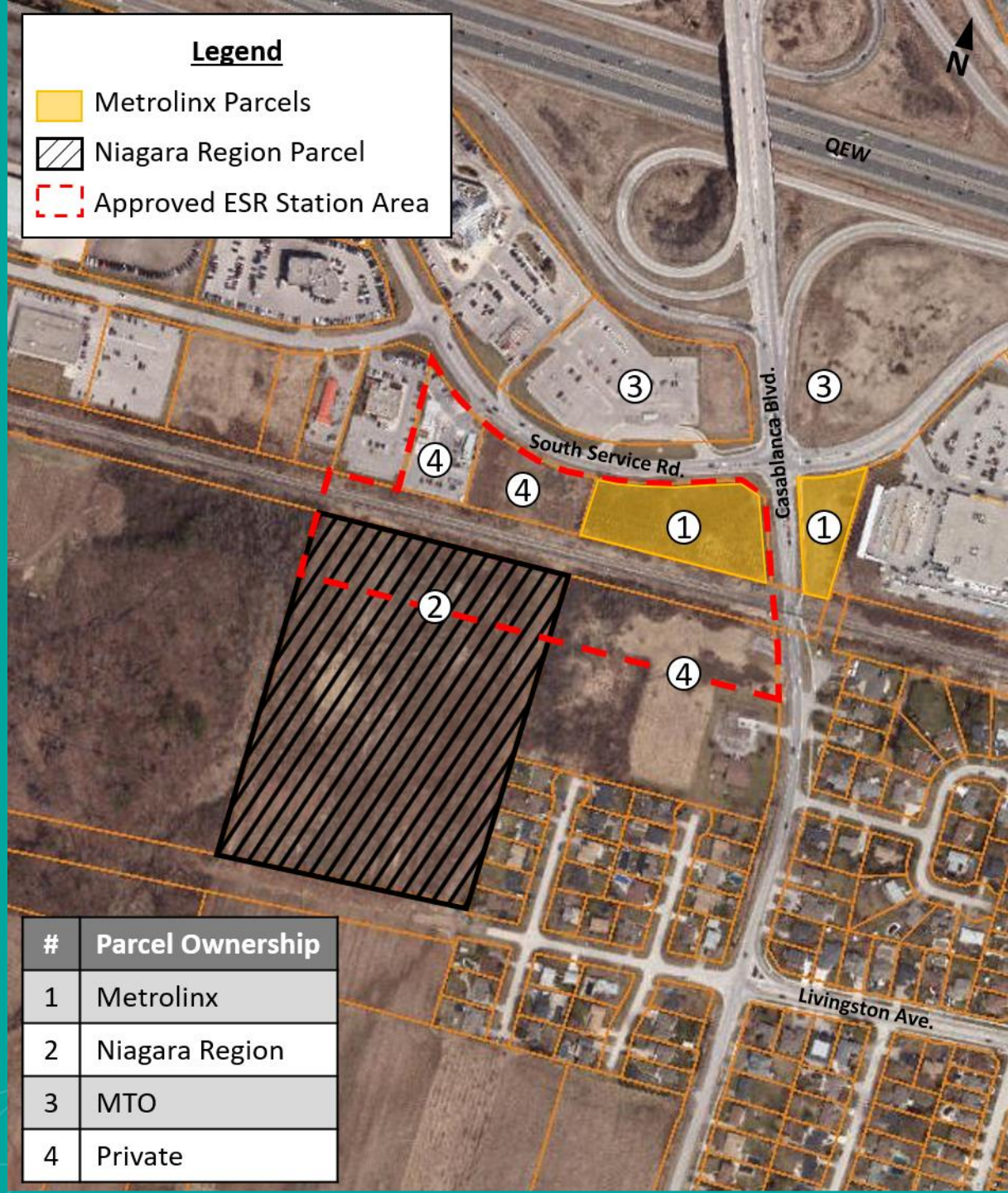
- Grimsby (announced)
  - Subject to Provincial/MX TOD policy
  - New build, greenfield site; MX lands + Regional lands
  - Region acquired 14.2 acres for this express purpose
- Niagara Falls & St. Catharines (in service)
  - Utilizing existing VIA stations
- Lincoln (TBD)
  - 2011 ESR 'future potential 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





# 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

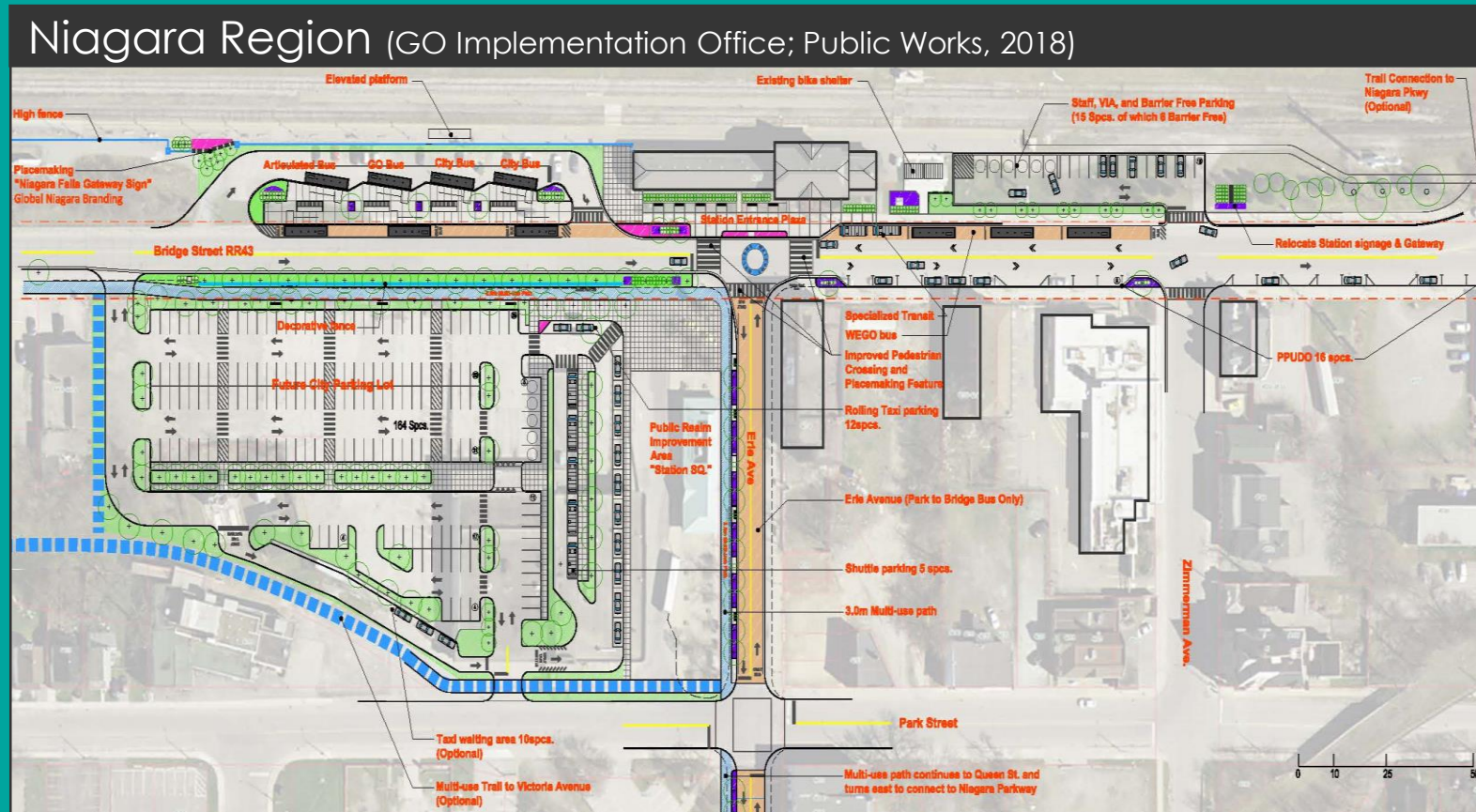
## Metrolinx Functional Design





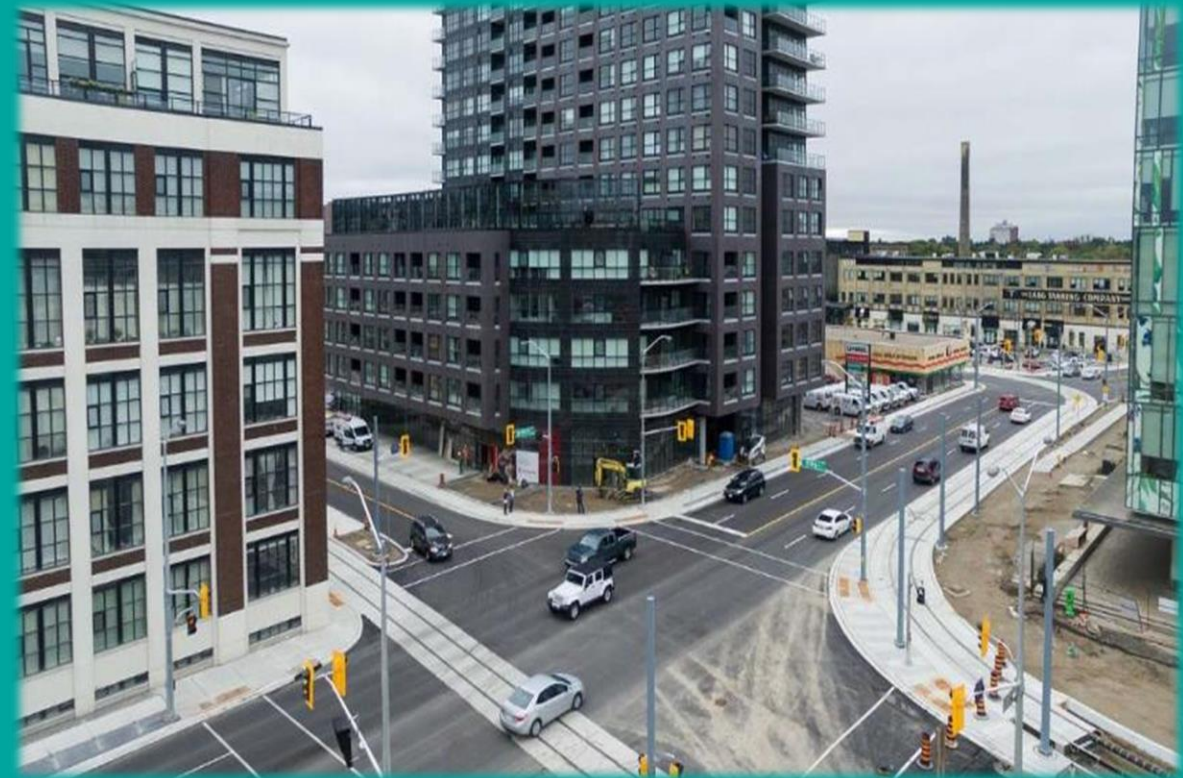
# Niagara Falls GO Station Precinct Vision

- 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



# Conclusion/Next Steps

- 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)*