

Staff Report 2021-0201

Meeting Date: May 18, 2021

Subject: Caledon GO Rail Line Status Update

Submitted By: Arash Olia, Manager, Transportation Engineering, Engineering Services

RECOMMENDATION

That the establishment of the Caledon GO Rail Line as a Strategic Priority Project to provide sustainable transportation options for the existing and planned growth in the Town, be approved and endorsed;

That staff continue to work with the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx, Region of Peel, Region of York, neighbouring municipalities, and the area landowner groups to advance the in service date of Caledon GO Rail Line by 2031; and

That a copy of Staff Report 2021-0201 be provided to the Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Metrolinx, Peel Region, York Region and to the Cities of Brampton, Toronto and Vaughan.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- In November 2020, the LPAT approved ROPA 30, which provides for the expansion of the urban boundary around Bolton to accommodate an additional 11,100 persons and 3,600 jobs by 2031;
- In March 2021, the Province issued a Ministerial Zoning Order (MZO) that designated the lands at Humber Station Road and King Street for a future Caledon GO Rail Station site and adjacent lands for mixed uses transit orientated development - These lands are included in the LPAT decision on ROPA 30 as the Option 3 lands;
- Immediate action is required by various levels of government to initiate the Caledon GO Rail service prior to 2031 so sustainable transportation options are available for the planned and future growth in Caledon;
- In consideration for the recent approval of ROPA 30 and the MZO, Town staff have met with Metrolinx and MTO to provide them with the current growth projections and discuss the technical merits of advancing the Caledon GO Rail Line by 2031;
- MTO and Metrolinx will consider this new information in conjunction with the GGHTP study and respond to the Town in June or July 2021; and
- Region of Peel staff have also agreed to review the status of the Caledon GO Rail Station lands as a high priority Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) with consideration for ROPA 30, MZO and recent LOPA submission from the landowners.

DISCUSSION

Purpose

This report is intended to provide Council with an update on staff's recent discussions with the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx and the Region of Peel with respect to the Caledon Go Rail Line, and seeks Council's endorsement of the Caledon Go Rail Line as a strategic priority project for the Town.

Background

In 2008, Metrolinx released the first Regional Transportation Plan -The Big Move- for the Greater Golden Horseshoe which identified the Bolton Go Rail Line – referred to as the “Caledon Go Rail” in this report - as a short term priority project to be implemented by 2025.

The Caledon Go Rail Line extends from the existing Weston Go Station northerly along the existing CP Rail corridor through the Cities of Toronto and Vaughan and ends at a terminal station north-west of Bolton as shown on Attachment 1. The findings of a recent technical report suggest that this proposed Go Rail Line could include between three and five stations and service a population of approximately 670,000 people and 360,000 jobs within its potential catchment area by 2041. The Caledon Go Rail Line is also well situated to serve the existing Provincially Significant Employment Zone that is contiguous from Bolton through the Cities of Brampton and Vaughan.

The need and justification for commuter rail service between Caledon (Bolton) and Union Station has been identified and established through many studies, including the Metrolinx *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP-2008), *MoveOntario 2020* and *GO 2020 Strategic Plan* as a desired service in the near-to-medium (15 years) timeline.

In 2010, Metrolinx investigated and completed the *Bolton Commuter Rail Service Feasibility Study*. This feasibility study examined the required infrastructure and service to provide a new commuter rail service to Bolton on an existing Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) where no passenger service currently exists. The study reconfirmed the need for the Bolton commuter GO Rail service based on the growth in population and employment and high potential demand for rail ridership. Ridership forecasts at the time indicated that demand exists to support an inaugural service to provide a direct peak period service between Bolton and Union Station.

In 2018, Metrolinx updated the RTP and reviewed the long list of transportation projects, which resulted in the Caledon GO Commuter Rail Line being reprioritized to beyond 2041. As part of the review of RTP-2041, Town comments were sent to Metrolinx with a request to expedite rail service to the Bolton area.

Bolton Residential Expansion Area approved by LPAT in 2020

In November 2020, the Region of Peel Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 30 was approved by the LPAT. ROPA 30 provides for the expansion of the urban boundary around Bolton to accommodate an additional 11,100 persons and 3,600 jobs by 2031. The proposed urban expansion will be located on 245 developable hectares of land spread out over five distinct geographical areas, including the lands containing the site of the future Caledon Go Rail Station located north of King Street and west of Humber Station Road (Option 3).

Province approved a MZO to protect the Caledon Go Station lands

In March 2021, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing zoned the ROPA 30 - Option 3 (MacVille) lands for a Mobility Transit Hub (Caledon GO Rail station site) and mixed use residential with densities compatible with transit orientated development. This designation is important from transportation planning perspectives, as density and intensification are key for the provision of high-order transit services such as Caledon GO Rail. The landowners (MacVille) have also recently submitted a Local Official Plan Amendment (LOPA) application including lands that accommodate more than 18,000 jobs and people and Transit-oriented development around the Mobility Transit Hub. These land uses, especially the residential densities, support the high-order transit service provided by the Caledon GO Rail.

MTO is preparing a Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan (GGHTP)

The Ministry of Transportation is currently developing a long-term multimodal transportation plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) based on a 2051 planning horizon. This transportation work will provide input and direction to other transportation agencies and service providers for all modes, including highways, railways, regional transit, cycling, and walking. Along with the Growth Plan and other provincial plans, the GGH Transportation Plan aims to support broader government objectives such as economic growth and prosperity, health and equity, environmental sustainability, resiliency, and adaption to climate change.

The GGHTP will inform the next update of the Metrolinx RTP and transit project prioritization.

MTO and Metrolinx have been provided with current growth projections for the Town

In light of the recent planning approvals, (ROPA 30 and MZO), Town and Regional staff facilitated a meeting with MTO and Metrolinx to provide them with an update on the proposed development framework and the current population and employment forecast for Caledon to 2051 for consideration in the GGHTP study and future transit priority

planning exercises. MTO and Metrolinx staff accepted this information as stakeholder input and advised that the preliminary recommendations from the GGHTP study will be shared with the area municipalities for review in June or July 2021.

In addition, Regional staff have committed to continue to evaluation the designation of the Caledon GO Rail Station lands as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) in response to ROPA 30, MZO and Town Council's resolution of September 24, 2020.

Staff will continue to advocate for the implementation of the Caledon Go Rail Line by 2031

In order to advance the implementation of Caledon GO Commuter Rail Line, Town staff will continue to work with:

- MTO, Metrolinx, Region of Peel staff to discuss how the Caledon GO Rail Line fits into the Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan (GGHTP) and the transit priorities of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Regional staff to evaluation the designation of the Caledon GO Rail Station lands as a Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) in response to ROPA 30, Option 3 MZO and Town Council's resolution of September 24, 2020
- Region of York and the City of Vaughan to advocate for the advancement of the Caledon Go Rail Line
- Bolton Area Developer Groups to integrate the Caledon GO Rail Station into the planning and organization of the MacVillie Community Plan (LOPA), with consideration for the:
 - Road network and traffic circulation
 - Local public transit service plans
 - Active transportation facilities
 - Adjacent land uses and densities

Caledon Go Rail Line is a key strategic priority for the Town

The Town of Caledon is one of the largest communities in the Greater Toronto Area without a commuter Go Rail service which results in a disconnection with the broader regional transit network, creating accessibility and mobility constraints. The Region and the Town are currently in the process of planning the significant population growth that is expected to occur in Caledon over the next 30 years. It is imperative that this residential growth is planned on a transportation system that is based on sustainable modes of travel rather than the car centric communities of the past.

Accordingly, the Caledon Go Rail Line is considered essential to support and provide Cosustainable transportation options for the existing and planned growth in the Town of

Caledon. For this reason, staff are recommending that Council identify the Caledon Go Rail Line as a strategic priority project for the Town. Staff will continue to update Council on this important initiative.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no immediate financial implications associated with this report.

COUNCIL WORK PLAN

Sustainable Growth
Connected Community
Improved Service Delivery
Good Governance

ATTACHMENTS

Schedule 1: Conceptual Transit Network Connectivity - Caledon Go Rail Line