

GTТА BOARD ANNOUNCES \$791.3 MILLION IN TRANSIT PROJECTS, INCLUDING EXPANDED CAPACITY FOR YONGE SUBWAY

Projects support survey results showing 50 per cent of drivers willing to take transit more often

TORONTO (November 23, 2007) - Continuing to take action on transit projects that can be implemented in a short timeframe, the Board of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTТА) today approved a second round of transit improvements. This included increased capacity on the existing Yonge-University subway line through new, larger subway cars and leading edge technology, setting the stage for a possible subway extension to Richmond Hill in the longer term.

The 14 projects identified today will now be recommended by the GTТА to the provincial government for funding consideration. They build on seven projects announced in August 2007, which were approved for investment by the province. Funding for the first \$100 million package was announced by the Premier of Ontario on September 25, 2007.

"The GTТА was created to improve transportation. Each of these new projects will have visible, tangible benefits for people using public transit," said Rob MacIsaac, Chair of the GTТА. "Most transportation projects take a long time to implement, but with these investments, transit riders will soon see a positive difference."

In addition to tangible benefits for consumers and a relatively speedy timeframe for implementation, criteria for choosing the projects included alignment with the province's MoveOntario 2020 transportation plan announced earlier this year.

"Next year, we will be developing a comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan to give people more transportation choices in a seamless, coordinated system. But we don't need to wait for the plan to be completed to start making improvements," MacIsaac said.

Recommendations by the GTТА Board in this round of proposals include:

- Yonge-University subway capacity and service improvement, as the first phase of expansion of the line to Richmond Hill. This includes automated signals and 126 new, larger "Toronto Rocket" subway cars, increasing capacity by 15 per cent by 2012, setting the stage for a 30 per cent increase in capacity by 2017;
- Bus "rapidway" connection on Yonge Street between Finch Station and Steeles Avenue, offering dramatic service improvements for travellers between Toronto and York by 2011;
- Kick-off investment in Transit City Light Rail Transit (LRT), a rapid transit network on Toronto's major avenues, and potentially extending out to Durham, Peel and York Regions;
- A new Toronto Pearson International Airport multi-modal hub connecting the Mississauga Transitway, GO, TTC and Brampton Transit;
- An additional 22 hybrid buses for improved capacity and service frequency on the Hurontario and Dundas corridors in Peel Region and first steps towards future rapid transit service;
- Bus Rapid Transit service along the Highway 2 corridor connecting Durham Region's lakeshore communities;

- Investments towards VIVA Rapid Transit service improvements along Yonge Street and Highway 7;
- Bus Rapid Transit service along Dundas Street in Halton Region, linking Halton's growing communities to GO Train service, Hamilton and Mississauga; and
- Investments in Hamilton's James and King-Main transit corridors, and a new platform to accommodate future GO and VIA rail service to James Street North station.

"We encourage the province of Ontario to consider these new projects for the next budget cycle, helping us build momentum as we work toward a comprehensive plan to improve transportation across the region," MacIsaac said. "At the same time, we are also counting on federal funding, and we urge the federal government to recognize these projects as a high priority to meet our environmental goals and to keep Canada's economy strong and competitive."

Research Results Support GTTA Actions

The GTTA recently commissioned a public attitude survey, conducted by Ipsos Reid between October 18 and October 28, 2007. A representative sample of 1,000 residents, from across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), was interviewed by phone. The overall results are considered accurate to within plus/minus 3.1 per cent, 19 times out of 20.

Findings from the survey included:

- Transportation is a high priority for two out of three residents. It was cited as the top priority by fully 22 per cent of respondents.
- Fewer than 3 in 10 residents currently get around primarily by public transit.
- 50 per cent of drivers said they are likely to take public transit more often if it is improved.
- 79 per cent of current transit users said they are likely to take public transit more often to get around. Currently, 67 per cent of transit users drive their car at least one day a week.
- Faster travel times, increased frequency of service and less crowding on public transit were cited as key improvements respondents would like to see to motivate them to take public transit more often.

Full survey results are available at the GTTA interim website, <http://www.metrolinx.com/>.

The GTTA is an agency of the Government of Ontario whose board includes municipal leaders from the GTHA. Its mandate is to create a seamless and sustainable transportation system for the residents and businesses of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

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