

Toronto, August 24, 2007

GTТА BOARD GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO SEVEN INTER-REGIONAL TRANSIT PROJECTS

Moving forward on its bold vision for a seamless, integrated transportation system, the Board of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTТА) today identified seven proposed projects to quickly improve service for commuters in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

The seven projects — four transit network expansions and three customer service improvements — will now be recommended by the GTТА to the provincial government for immediate funding consideration. Implementation of each of these early projects is estimated to require less than two years to complete.

“We are committed to action,” said Rob MacIsaac, Chair of the GTТА. “Even as we work toward a comprehensive Regional Transportation Plan, when we see opportunities to improve the system in the short-term, we will act on them.”

Recommendations by the GTТА Board include \$100.1 million for inter-regional network expansion, through four specific projects:

- Expansion of GO Transit’s rail fleet, including 20 new bi-level passenger coaches;
- Expansion of GO Transit track capacity, including two double-track sections installed on the GO Bradford and GO Stouffville corridors;
- Expansion of GO Transit’s bus fleet, including 10 new double-decker coaches;
- Construction of a new Markham/Cornell Transit Terminal; and
- Acquiring six new hybrid articulated buses for the Hamilton/Upper James Rapid Transit Corridor.

The Board also recommended up to \$6.5 million for customer service improvements, including:

- An integrated web-based Trip Planner pilot, giving transit customers real-time directions and schedules across the transit system;
- A carbon-footprint calculator, helping inform decisions by allowing transportation users to calculate the impact of their travel choices; and
- Bicycle promotion initiatives, including 1,000 new safe/secure bike storage spaces and expansion of bike/bus rack programs.

“Our ultimate goal is to plan and develop an integrated multi-modal transportation system to support the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area — to improve people’s quality of life, strengthen our economy and enhance our environment. These seven projects represent an excellent start in that direction,” MacIsaac said.

Criteria for Quick Action

At a previous Board meeting, criteria was established to allow the GTТА and its municipal and transit partners to move ahead quickly with transit and transportation initiatives.

“These ‘early wins’ are important, as they recognize the urgency in addressing transportation issues in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, and demonstrate to

the public that the GTTA is making a difference," MacIsaac said.

Among the criteria, visible and tangible benefits for consumers were critical to determining which projects would be fast-tracked.

"All of our decisions will be shaped by an overarching commitment to the people using the system," MacIsaac said. "Fixing complex transportation problems will be challenging, but we will always use the interests of the commuter as our guide — relentlessly asking how we can improve service for the travelling public."

Toronto Union Station Inter-Regional Bus Terminal

In addition to approving the seven projects outlined above, the GTTA Board agreed to move ahead in evaluating the viability of a longstanding proposal to establish an inter-regional bus terminal in the Toronto Union Station precinct. Specifically, a site at 90 Harbour Street, the former Ontario Provincial Police headquarters building, has been identified as potentially accommodating the requirements of a major bus terminal. GTTA staff will lead a six-month workplan to evaluate the business case, conceptual site plans and planning rationale for the proposed project. Features of the proposed plan include:

- A new multi-level inter-regional and long-distance bus terminal to replace the existing facility at Bay and Dundas Streets;
- A protected pedestrian access between the bus terminal and Union Station;
- Integration with the PATH underground walkway system; and
- A design of architectural merit that enhances the public realm, travelling experience and urban form.

The GTTA is a Crown agency of the Province of Ontario. 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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BACKGROUND:

IDENTIFICATION OF EARLY INITIATIVES:

The proposed projects were identified on the basis of their alignment with the mandate and objectives of the GTTA and MoveOntario 2020 vision. Final selected projects will be integrated with the strategic directions and actions to be set out in the GTTA Regional Transportation Plan.

Factors in determining which projects would be recommended to move ahead quickly included: visible and tangible benefits for consumers; an estimated completion time within two years; relatively moderate cost; cross-boundary or regionally significant benefits; and that they would not prejudice the roll-out of the GTTA Regional Transportation Plan, being developed for anticipated launch next spring.

The following seven projects have been identified for early implementation:

1. GO Transit Rail Fleet Expansion

\$60.0 million for 20 new bi-level passenger coaches

Timing and delivery of the new rolling stock will be aligned with the completion of the GO Lakeshore Corridor third track expansion project. Benefits to customers include more train departure choices during the morning and afternoon rush hours.

\$20.0 million for Track Expansion

Two double-track sections will be installed on the GO Bradford and GO Stouffville corridors, to allow all-day two-way service on the Toronto-Markham and Toronto-Newmarket routes.

2. GO Transit Bus Fleet Expansion

\$9.0 million for 10 new double-decker commuter buses

A precursor to a future east-west Bus Rapid Transit corridor, this project would improve service on Highway 403 and 407.

3. Markham/Cornell Transit Terminal

\$5.6 million capital cost to construct the Cornell Terminal (near Highway 407 and Don Cousens Parkway in Markham) and three intermediate stations in the Cornell community. This project will include new platforms and passenger amenities, and will seamlessly integrate VIVA with regional transit systems in York and Durham, as well as GO Transit.

4. Hamilton/Upper James Rapid Transit Corridor

\$5.5 million for six new Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) hybrid articulated buses — recognized as contributing to a cleaner, healthier environment — dedicated to the Upper James Corridor. This project is a precursor to future Bus Rapid Transit or Light Rail Transit service on the James/Upper James Street Corridor and connects downtown

Hamilton to John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport.

5. Integrated Web-Based Trip Planner

An integrated, interactive trip planner tool will be implemented at www.gtta.com, enabling transit customers to enter their travel origin and destination and receive real-time directions and schedules across the transit system. The web portal will also include an interactive map to allow customers to view real-time incident and traffic congestion information. Cost estimates for the pilot project are \$500,000 to \$1 million for development/implementation and \$250,000 per year for operating. The Integrated Trip Planner Pilot project will be addressed in the September 2007 staff report-back to the Board on the revised GTTA budget. The initial first phase or pilot could be implementation-ready in fall 2007, with further upgrades introduced in 2008.

6. Carbon Footprint Calculator

A region-specific carbon footprint calculator feature will be installed at www.gtta.com, enabling users to calculate the impact of their local and inter-regional travel mode choices, and their employment/home location decisions, on air quality, climate change, biodiversity, habitat and other indicators. Enhanced features could include access to customized advice on the user's specific footprint pattern and comparative analysis with footprint patterns and trends in other jurisdictions. The initial phase of this project could be ready in early 2008, at a

development/implementation cost of \$200,000 to \$250,000.

7. Bicycle Promotion Initiatives

\$2.1 million to \$3.2 million for safe/secure bike storage

Installation of 1,000 new safe, secure, weather-proof bicycle storage spaces at strategic locations across the GO Transit inter-regional network, to compliment current bicycle storage initiatives by GO Transit and the City of Toronto, City of Burlington, and City of Hamilton.

\$1.0 million to \$1.8 million for expanded bike/bus rack program

In a move toward the goal of 100 per cent bicycle accessibility for all bus routes, bicycle-carrying devices will be installed on 1,000 new-order and existing municipal transit vehicles.

THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN:

The Greater Toronto Transportation Act 2006 requires that the GTTA create a regional transportation plan. The creation of the plan will provide a strategic, long-term vision and guidance for investment decisions. Shaping the plan will require input from municipalities, operators, stakeholders and the public to ensure it brings together the needs of the broader region.

Starting later this fall, the GTTA will begin developing its Regional Transportation Plan with support from technical groups from its network of government and transit partners. During today's meeting, the Board was advised that GTTA staff are completing the Request for Proposals process, aimed at encouraging interest from a wide, global market of transportation planning firms. The RFP will be posted on MERX, the North American electronic procurement service used by governments across Canada and the United States.

Details on how the GTTA will develop the regional transportation plan are available at < http://www.gttta.com/en/business/regional_transportation_plan_0707.pdf>