

2020 Metrolinx Accessibility Status Report



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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the efforts of current and former Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) members for their valuable input into our accessibility planning activities.

1. Introduction

The 2020 Accessibility Status Report provides an update to the 2018-2019 Metrolinx Multi-year Accessibility Plan, and is reflective of Metrolinx efforts as of December 31, 2020. Metrolinx, a Crown agency of the Province of Ontario under the responsibility of the Ministry of Transportation, operates GO Transit, PRESTO and the Union Pearson (UP) Express.

This Status Report fulfills Metrolinx's legal obligations under the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) to publish an annual update on the multi-year accessibility plan. Metrolinx Multi-Year Accessibility Plans and other accessibility planning documents can be found on the Metrolinx website at the following link: www.metrolinx.com/en/aboutus/accessibility/default.aspx.

Metrolinx, including its operating divisions, remains committed to proceeding with plans to ensure AODA compliance. Improvements continue to be made to remove barriers in order for services to be more convenient and easier to use for all customers, including those with disabilities. Metrolinx will be in compliance with future regulatory requirements when they come into effect. More broadly, Metrolinx will work to improve the customer experience for everyone, rather than focusing only on what is required to comply with the AODA.

Metrolinx is guided by the following corporate accessibility commitment statement:

Metrolinx is committed to ensuring that its services and operations are accessible to all customers and employees in accordance with the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA), and to working with partners in the GTHA (Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area) to plan, build and operate an integrated accessible transportation system. The organization will work diligently to remove existing barriers to access, avoid creating new barriers, and will demonstrate leadership, consulting widely and incorporating best practices to enhance accessibility in its services.

Examples of key accomplishments since the 2018-2019 Multi-Year Plan include:

- Finishing construction and opening the new, accessible Union Station Bus Terminal;
- Completion of extensive renovations at Cooksville GO Station in Mississauga, which includes various accessibility improvements;
- Elevator upgrades and installation of tactile attention indicator tiles along platform edges at various GO stations;
- Approximately 50 additional bus stops served by GO Transit have been made accessible;
- The rollout of new and improved PRESTO fare payment devices (in-station and onboard buses) for GO Transit, UP

Express, York Region Transit, Durham Region Transit, Brampton Transit, MiWay, Oakville Transit, Burlington Transit, and Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). These new payment devices were designed with enhanced accessibility features; and

- The accessible PRESTO apps for Android and iPhone were updated to include Near-Field Communications (NFC) load and check balance for iPhone and Google Pay for Android.

Examples of key areas of focus and planned accomplishments for the coming year include:

- Finish construction and open the new Kipling Bus Terminal for GO Transit and Mi-Way (Mississauga Transit) buses. The new terminal will also include an accessible pedestrian bridge to the Kipling GO Station platform, meaning that this train station will include a barrier-free route to the platform in early-2021.
- Accessibility improvements (new tactile warning tiles, elevator modernization) at numerous GO accessible stations;
- The introduction of a new GO station in Richmond Hill/Aurora (Bloomington);
- Continued work on the new Eglinton Crosstown and Finch West Light Rail Transit (LRT) projects in Toronto;
- Continued work with municipalities to convert on-street municipal bus stops to accommodate all GO Buses;
- More new "Super-Lo" double-decker buses added to fleet, with shallower and stronger ramps for easier boarding, and wider wheeled mobility aid securement areas.
- New accessible PRESTO fare payment options including the new PRESTO E-Tickets app for iOS/Android and the ability to tap to pay with a credit card or debit card on UP Express; and
- Early implementation and adoption of the new Metrolinx Universal Design Standard.

2. Accessibility Accomplishments and Planned Activities

Metrolinx, GO Transit, PRESTO and UP Express have continued to make improvements to existing and planned services.

This section will look at both the accessibility accomplishments and planned activities under the categories of Plan & Design, Build, and Operate & Deliver.

2.1. Plan & Design

2.1.1. Metrolinx

- 2.1.1.1. Metrolinx is working with the City of Toronto and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) on an Automated Transit shuttle (also known as an Autonomous Vehicle or AV) trial that will provide a first-mile last-mile shared ride option for customers travelling to and from Rouge Hill GO Station in Scarborough. The AV shuttle vehicles will be accessible, including a ramp to board the vehicle, and audible and visual next stop information. There will also be an attendant on-board to provide assistance to customers.
- 2.1.1.2. Metrolinx continues to collaborate with municipal specialized transit service providers in the GTHA to improve cross-boundary travel for customers with disabilities. Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the main area of focus for 2020 has been on modifying services and procedures to ensure that both customers and staff are kept safe and healthy. Examples include reducing the number of customers in each specialized transit vehicle, enhanced cleaning and disinfecting practices, and use of personal protective equipment by staff and customers. Apart from COVID-19, other key areas of focus have been on reducing dwell times for cross-boundary transfers, improving cross-boundary bookings, and closer coordination between specialized and conventional transit. Discussions between service providers have recently resulted in

better harmonization of support person terminology used across all agencies, and agreement on what the minimum criteria are for cross-boundary transfer locations.

2.1.1.3. The following six Design Principles are overarching values that inform and guide the development of the Metrolinx Design Standards, and integrate the physical, digital and human aspects of the end to end customer journey: Seamless, Intuitive, Inclusive, Safe, Reliable, and Thoughtful.

2.1.2. **GO Transit**

2.1.2.1. New accessible stations will be added to the GO Transit rail network through the Transit Oriented Communities, Market Driven Strategy. To date: developers are working with Metrolinx to deliver a new GO station at Woodbine Racetrack on the Kitchener corridor and a new station building at Mimico on the Lakeshore West corridor.

2.1.2.2. Additional information about GO station accessibility features as well as station descriptions for some stations will be added to the GO website. Information about alternative accessible routes will also be provided so that customers know what options are available in the event that an elevator goes out of service along the primary accessible route.

2.1.3. **PRESTO**

2.1.3.1. PRESTO is working with UP Express to launch PRESTO Open Payment, the ability to tap a regular credit card (VISA, Mastercard, American Express) or Interac Debit Card instead of a PRESTO card to travel. This means that residents, business travelers and tourists will all be able to tap a payment card already in their wallet, rather than needing to learn how to buy and load a PRESTO card. PRESTO Open Payment will work with the accessibility features of the PRESTO fare payment

devices, including the plug-in audio mode on the in-station device. PRESTO Open Payment will also include web and app functionality, which will also be designed and tested to ensure accessibility.

2.1.3.2. Working with the TTC, in January 2020 PRESTO began installing a solution called the Mobile Fare Processing Application in sedan taxis contracted to back Wheel-Trans. More than 1600 taxis are now capable of processing PRESTO card payments for Wheel-Trans customers and their companions. PRESTO is working with other transit agencies using PRESTO to enable their contracted accessibility fleets.

2.1.4. Light Rail Transit

2.1.4.1. The Finch West and Hurontario LRT projects are moving forward and are slated to open in 2023 and 2024, respectively. Accessible design requirements will be followed for these projects.

2.1.5. Subways

2.1.5.1. Metrolinx has assumed responsibility for planning and design of new subway projects. New subway lines/extensions being planned include: Eglinton Crosstown West Extension, Ontario Line, Scarborough Subway Extension, and the Yonge North Subway Extension. Station design will meet the Metrolinx Universal Design Standard and incorporate lessons learned from LRT projects. Additionally, new design standards are being developed, which will address station and vehicle accessibility features.

2.2. Build

2.2.1. GO Transit

2.2.1.1. Construction is underway on the following new stations:

- Bloomington Station (Richmond Hill/Aurora), on the Richmond Hill line - the new, accessible station will include a station building with a parking garage, a platform equipped with a snowmelt system and heated shelters, a bus loop, a Kiss & Ride, and a bike lane and bike shelters with direct access to the platform. The station is expected to be completed and ready for service in 2021.
- Confederation Station (Hamilton), on the Lakeshore West line - the station began receiving bus service in late-2019 with approximately 60 parking spaces available on the north side of the site. At the same time, the design and construction of a self-serve rail station is proceeding. The revised scope for Confederation Station went out for public tender in April 2020, and includes: an island platform with canopies and an accessible platform; a pedestrian tunnel; direct stair access from the platform to Centennial Parkway; and approximately 150 parking spaces. The timeline for construction will be confirmed following contract award.
- Mount Dennis Station (Toronto), on the Kitchener line - this new, accessible transit hub will connect Kitchener's two-way, all-day GO Transit service to the airport via UP Express, the future Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and TTC buses. It will offer 120 bike parking spaces, including 80 indoor spots, as well as a pick-up and drop-off area. The station is scheduled to open in 2022.

2.2.1.2. Progress has continued on making GO Train service accessible at the remaining

four non-accessible and one partially-accessible GO stations. In most cases, station improvements are being delivered as part of the GO Expansion capital program. As the GO Expansion program continues to evolve, project scope and timelines are subject to change.

- Eglinton Station, on the Lakeshore East line - construction and installation of new ramps and elevators to each platform is expected to create an accessible station by Spring 2023.
- Georgetown Station, on the Kitchener line - an interim accessibility improvement project creating the opportunity for most train trips to provide accessible service to the station was completed in summer 2015. Completion of an accessible station is expected in late-2024.
- Kipling Station, on the Milton line - construction of a new barrier-free route to the GO Train platform is scheduled to be completed in early-2021. The renovated station will provide a new accessible connection between GO and TTC services, and will include a new, accessible bus terminal for GO Transit and MiWay (Mississauga Transit). The barrier-free route from the GO Train platform to the bus terminal will be via a new pedestrian bridge over the train corridor.
- Long Branch Station, on the Lakeshore West line - the station will undergo a complete reconstruction including elevators, a new station building, reconstructed platforms, new shelters as well as various initiatives to enhance the customer experience. A new barrier-free path of travel to the platforms (via a new tunnel) is expected to be completed by the end of 2024.
- Mimico Station, on the Lakeshore West line - planned improvements are expected to provide a new barrier-free path of travel to the platform (via a new tunnel) by the end of 2024. Metrolinx is also pursuing a third-party agreement for mixed-use development at the station, which would include a new station building, parking and

other customer amenities, through the Transit Oriented Communities program.

- 2.2.1.3. Accessible station design features continue to be added/improved as part of GO Station renovations. Key examples include:
- New yellow tactile warning (truncated dome) tiles along the full length of platforms, to identify the platform edge.
 - In 2020, new tiles were installed at the following stations: Ajax, Allandale, Barrie South, Bloor, Erindale, Lisgar, Mt. Pleasant, Newmarket, Old Cummer, and Oshawa.
 - For 2021, the list of stations is still being finalized.
 - An elevator modernization program that will improve the performance of existing elevators, by replacing parts which have reached the end of their lifespan. The program will result in more efficient and more reliable elevators.
 - In 2020, elevators were upgraded at the following stations: Ajax, Oakville.
 - For 2021, the list of stations is still being finalized.
- 2.2.1.4. There are 30 GO Transit Park & Ride facilities that are accessible. The facility at Dundas Street and Highway 407 in Burlington has been updated and enlarged, and additional improvements will be made.
- 2.2.1.5. GO Transit is working with municipalities to convert on-street municipal bus stops to accommodate all GO Buses. By the end of 2020, the plan is for approximately 53 additional shared stops to be made accessible. By the end of 2021, the plan is to upgrade an additional 150 stops to be accessible.
- 2.2.1.6. More “Super-Lo” low-floor double-decker buses continue to be added to the GO bus fleet. These buses are gradually replacing the older lift-equipped buses. From

approximately 2018 to 2021, the GO bus fleet will have shifted from about half to almost two-thirds being low-floor buses.

2.2.1.7. Metrolinx developed a new Wayfinding Design Standard to better harmonize wayfinding and signage across the Metrolinx service area, including for municipal services. New signage that better reflects the Wayfinding Design Standard has been installed at various locations around Union Station, including some platforms and the York Concourse.

2.2.2. PRESTO

2.2.2.1. PRESTO is nearing the end of a device refresh activity to replace the older PRESTO fare payment devices (in stations and on buses) for GO Transit, UP Express and the 905 municipal transit agencies. Installation is expected to be complete by the end of 2020. The refreshed equipment includes the following accessibility features:

- bright high-contrast screen information featuring large coloured symbols (green checkmark vs. red “X”) as well as black-on-white supplemental information (e.g. fare, balance, time remaining);
- tactile tap region indicators (raised circle);
- tactile barcode region indicator (raised rectangle);
- audio tones to indicate non-visually whether the transit rider’s card was accepted or declined; and
- the in-station devices also include plug-in bilingual audio mode.

2.2.2.2. PRESTO recently launched a new PRESTO E-Tickets app for iOS/Android with support for Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) and Durham Region Transit ticket sales. This

accessible app enables customers to purchase e-tickets (adult, senior, student, etc.) with a credit card ahead of their trip, which they then activate before boarding the vehicle. Planned improvements include support for additional transit agencies and for a feature that allows tickets to be sent between customers.

2.2.3. **Light Rail Transit**

- 2.2.3.1. Construction for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT has progressed and is estimated to open in late-2022. Construction is well underway on all underground stations and at-grade stops. All stations and stops will be accessible when the Eglinton Crosstown goes into service.

2.3. Operate & Deliver

2.3.1. Metrolinx

- 2.3.1.1. A Regional Transit Traveller Information System (Triplinx), developed in collaboration with the GTHA transit agencies, was launched in April 2015 in order to make it easier to use transit to travel around the GTHA. Triplinx provides a one-stop source of transit information, beginning with a trip planner, schedules and other information on transit services. Triplinx is available on the Triplinx.ca website, has an iOS and Android app, and is integrated with several transit agency websites, and on iPhone, Android, and Windows platforms. Triplinx has made a priority of meeting AODA web accessibility requirements and ensuring, through extensive testing, that both the website and apps are readily used by customers with disabilities including features such as accessible text-only versions of Triplinx web pages through screen readers. Triplinx provides travel information that is useful for customers with disabilities, including the option to select itineraries that use wheelchair-accessible routes and stops. As of early-2020, Triplinx began supporting real-time alert information for GO Transit.
- 2.3.1.2. As a result of the limits on public gatherings due to COVID-19, Metrolinx staff did not participate in in-person accessibility outreach events in 2020, most of which were cancelled or changed to virtual events.

2.3.2. GO Transit

- 2.3.2.1. Accessibility is an important design element of the new Union Station Bus Terminal, which opened on December 5, 2020. The bus terminal occupies the first two floors of a new office tower at the northeast corner of Bay Street and Lakeshore Boulevard West in downtown Toronto. It includes the following accessibility features:

- Elevators near main entrances at both the north and south ends;
- An increased number of eye-level/accessible digital signs with departure information;
- Tactile handrail signage to provide wayfinding information through raised print and Braille;
- Hearing induction loops in all intercoms;
- Vertical activation bars for automatic doors that allows the door to be operated by a hand/arm or a crutch, cane, or wheelchair footrest; and
- Adult change tables in universal washrooms.

2.3.2.2. All GO Trains and Buses include automated stop announcements in English and French. Messages have been added on GO Trains to remind customers to give priority to customers with disabilities to accessibility features such as elevators.

2.3.2.3. Next-stop electronic (visual) displays are provided on GO accessible railcars and GO Buses.

2.3.2.4. Integrated intercom/audio induction loop systems have been installed at service counters and/or intercoms at several stations, including Burlington, Oshawa, and Cooksville GO Stations, among others. This system allows customers who use hearing aids (equipped with a t-coil switch) to clearly hear staff through the intercom system, by filtering out background noise.

2.3.2.5. The Interactive Voice Response (IVR) phone system in the GO Contact Centre launched in November 2015, and includes features such as voice recognition, automated schedules, and several self-serve options. Recent enhancements include “where’s my bus” real-time trip information and improved scripting for greater clarity/adaptation. As part of the VoIP 2.0 project, additional IVR enhancements will begin in 2021, focused on delivering increased self-serve capabilities for customers.

- 2.3.2.6. The centre stanchion in one set of doorways of every railcar has been removed to allow easier access for customers with strollers and other larger items, with the goal of encouraging these customers to use other railcars instead of the accessible railcar. New railcars will not include the centre stanchion.
- 2.3.2.7. Every effort is made to notify customers immediately of any accessibility features (such as elevators) which are temporarily unavailable due to malfunction, construction or repair work. Customers can find this information on the "Service Updates" section of the GO Transit website, or by subscribing to receive status updates via email or text from "On the GO".

If accessibility equipment breaks down on a bus, train or at a station or terminal, GO staff can make arrangements so that customers with disabilities get to their destination. In some cases, this may involve issuing a taxi voucher to provide an accessible transportation alternative.

2.3.3. PRESTO

- 2.3.3.1. Onboard (bus/streetcar) self-serve fare payment devices: The PRESTO fare payment devices that customers use to pay their fares as they board a vehicle include: tactile tap region indicators, red/yellow/green lights, and audio tones to indicate non-visually whether the tap was a success or failure and whether a payment concession (e.g. student, senior, etc.) was recognized. Many of these devices are being refreshed, as described previously.
- 2.3.3.2. Off-board (in-station) self-serve fare payment devices: The PRESTO fare payment and query devices that customers use before they board a vehicle (e.g. in a GO Station) include: tactile tap region indicators, red/yellow/green lights and audio tones to indicate non-visually whether the tap was a success or failure and whether a payment concession was recognized (e.g. student, senior, etc.). These devices are being

refreshed, as described previously.

- 2.3.3.3. Secondary (lower) PRESTO readers have been added to the wider, accessibility lanes of the modern fare gates installed on the TTC Subway. This will help customers using wheeled mobility aids, who may have difficulty reaching the primary readers located higher up on the fare gates.
- 2.3.3.4. Self-serve sales devices: The PRESTO Self-Serve Reload Machine (TTC and GO Transit stations), Single Ride Vending Machine (TTC streetcars and select stops), and Fare Vending Machine (TTC stations) all include a variety of accessibility features, including:
- Braille labels,
 - high-contrast tactile labels,
 - a plug-in bilingual audio mode,
 - and the ability to operate the device from the keypad instead of the touchscreen.
- 2.3.3.5. PRESTO card services (card vending, card query and adding value to PRESTO cards) are also available on UP Express and GO Ticket Vending Machines (TVMs), which include a bilingual audio mode.
- 2.3.3.6. Handheld transit fare payment: Some specialized transit services make use of the PRESTO handheld Mobile Fare Transaction Processor (MFTP). The device includes a bright, colourful display and includes an audio mode to allow the customer to privately hear their transactions and card query results. Note: the device is always controlled by the vehicle operator.
- 2.3.3.7. Mobile fare processor app (for taxi operators): Some specialized transit services contract non-dedicated taxis to provide rides to some customers. The PRESTO Mobile Fare Processor App (MFPA) solution includes an app loaded on to a standard Android tablet and an external card reader. The device includes a bright,

colourful display and includes an audio mode to allow the customer to hear their transactions and card query results. Note: the device is always controlled by the vehicle operator.

- 2.3.3.8. The accessible PRESTO mobile app for iOS/Android devices has been optimized to take advantage of the accessibility features built into modern smartphones, such as screen readers (i.e. iOS VoiceOver, Android TalkBack) and font size control. Both versions now allow loading and querying PRESTO cards via the NFC capability built into most modern smartphones. This means that a customer can load funds to their PRESTO card with their phone as they wait for their bus. Then, once they've boarded, tapped and taken their seat, they can query their card with their phone to review the cost of the fare paid and their balance remaining.
- 2.3.3.9. PRESTO website: PRESTO maintains an accessible website that allows customers to check their card balances, add funds to their cards, order new cards and more. The website can serve as an alternative, accessible channel if customers have difficulty performing functions using any of the PRESTO self-serve kiosks. The PRESTO website conforms to WCAG 2.0 Level AA. The PRESTO website also includes an accessible web chat help feature.
- 2.3.3.10. PRESTO customer service: PRESTO provides a number of accessible customer contact channels, including: phone, email, accessible web chat or postal mail. While accessibility concerns can be reported via any channel, the Accessibility section on the PRESTO website also provides an email contact channel for accessibility-specific concerns (accessibility@metrolinx.com).
- 2.3.3.11. In-person PRESTO sales: PRESTO customers who are more comfortable receiving service in person can receive this by visiting GO Transit stations, municipal transit agency service locations or any one of a growing network of retail locations around the GTHA and Ottawa. Most of these locations are Shoppers Drug Mart stores, but locations also include select Loblaws,

Superstore, and Fortino's locations. These retail locations support buying, loading and setting up a PRESTO card with a fare type (e.g. senior, student).

2.3.3.12. PRESTO cards: PRESTO cards include several accessibility features: High contrast (black-on-white and white-on-black text), text that is as large as practicable, and a Braille "p" in the upper-right corner to help differentiate the card from other cards in a customer's wallet or purse.

2.3.3.13. PRESTO TTC Tickets: PRESTO Tickets are a limited-use product, especially for tourists and occasional customers. They are made of paper containing a lightweight chip, and are tapped like PRESTO cards. The tickets include high contrast (black-on-white) text and customers can query the tickets on TTC Fare Vending Machines (FVM) to reveal how many rides or time remains. The FVM audio mode can be used for this operation.

2.3.4. **Bus Rapid Transit**

2.3.4.1. The Mississauga Transitway (Bus Rapid Transit) has been completed and is in service. The Transitway runs from Winston Churchill in the west to Renforth in the east. All stations and amenities are accessible, including elevators from the street to Transitway level.

2.3.4.2. As of December 2020, all of York Region Transit's VIVA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Rapidways on Highway 7, Centre Street, Bathurst Street, Davis Drive, Yonge Street in Newmarket and the Richmond Hill portion of Yonge Street are in-service. All stations have accessibility features built to compliance with AODA standards.

3. AODA Compliance Status Update

Appendix A of this document outlines the Metrolinx compliance status for in-progress and recently-completed (since the 2018-2019 Multi-Year Accessibility Plan) AODA requirements for all services.

4. Accessibility Consultation and Feedback

The Metrolinx Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC), along with various ad hoc working and testing groups, provide input into Metrolinx accessibility planning activities. Metrolinx has also sought input into its accessibility planning activities through the annual accessibility public consultation in late-fall 2020, which was shifted to virtual consultation for this year due to COVID-19. Input received through these consultations is considered during the development of the annual Accessibility Status Reports and Multi-Year Accessibility Plans. Additionally, Metrolinx uses the GO Transit Customer Input Tracking system (which systematically tracks customer input provided by email and phone, as well as staff responses) to get input into accessibility planning. A Customer Input Tracking system is the main tool used by Metrolinx to manage, evaluate and take action on customer feedback.

Input received through comments from the 2020 virtual accessibility public consultation will be incorporated into a summary document and posted on the Metrolinx website.

Appendix A

Metrolinx AODA Compliance and Dates - Completed / In-Progress since 2018-2019 Multi-Year Plan

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Clause Number	Accessibility Requirements	Compliance Timeline	Notes
14	Accessible websites and web content - existing content	January 1, 2021	GO Transit, PRESTO, UP Express websites- completed; Metrolinx website- in-progress, remediation plan in development
52	On-board announcements: electronic	January 1, 2017	On-board audible announcements of the route, direction, destination or next major stop are provided on all vehicles, and digital signs on accessible vehicles (including almost all accessible GO railcars) provide visual on-board information of the route, direction, destination or next major stop. Installation of digital signs on the remaining accessible railcars is expected to be completed by early to mid-2022.

Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation (IASR) Clause Number	Accessibility Requirements	Compliance Timeline	Notes
80.23-80.29, 80.34-80.37, 80.39, 80.41, 80.43	Exterior paths of travel, access aisles, minimum number of accessible parking spaces, signage, on-street parking spaces, service counters, waiting areas	January 1, 2016	Requirements are already implemented for all new construction and major retrofits that have entered into contracts after December 31, 2012. All projects starting design on or after January 1, 2016 will be in compliance.