

Durham Region Joint Chambers and Boards of Trade

July 5, 2019

The Honourable Doug Ford, MPP
Premier of Ontario
Queen's Park
Toronto, ON M7A 1A1

Dear Premier Ford,

We are writing regarding Metrolinx's forthcoming and recent decisions regarding public transit in Durham Region. Our message comes on behalf of the Durham Region Joint Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade, which are comprised of eight individual chambers, and represent nearly 3,000 member businesses in Durham Region.

Representatives of Metrolinx have recently come out to Durham Region to share [the four proposed options for the GO Lakeshore East Extension](#), taking GO train service from Oshawa into Bowmanville. Leaders from our chambers and boards of trade have actively participated in these sessions.

Our network has consistently advocated for GO service to Bowmanville, and we are pleased to see it on the not-so-distance horizon. We would however, urge Metrolinx and the Ontario Government to continue planning for Option 1, its original plan and commitment. In 2011, following several rounds of public consultations and other community involvement, a route travelling north of Highway 401 in Oshawa and on to Clarington was listed as the preferred route. In Ontario's own 2017 [Provincial Growth Plan](#), Downtown Oshawa was identified as an "Urban Growth Centre" with a density target of 200 residents and jobs combined per hectare by 2031. Connecting transit is vital to helping achieve this growth target and align with provincial policy.

Durham College, a member of multiple chambers and boards across Durham Region, has noted their support for Metrolinx's Option 1. They are currently planning a 60,000 sq. ft. expansion of their Whitby campus, which will host over 4,000 students within five years, and will also include a new 64 bed residence. Durham College has noted that the four new stations proposed in Option 1, starting at the Thornton's Corners and going through Oshawa, Courtice and Bowmanville, is the most effective at meeting the growth of not only the college, but the region as a whole.

Effective September 2020, chamber and board of trade member Trent University Durham GTA will have students living in residence for the first time in their history. By 2021, a projected 200 students will be living on campus in this area with nearly one third of Trent University Durham GTA students renting or owning a home in the area. Currently 70% of Trent University Durham students reside in the Durham Region. With infrastructure expansions underway at Trent, a projected total of 2250 students will be studying here by 2024. Students that are living and learning in the community will need easily accessible transportation to travel into, and out of, the area. The potential jobs and business development that will accompany the Thornton's

Durham Region Joint Chambers and Boards of Trade

Corners proposal (Option 1) will increase access to services and amenities in the Thornton Road South/Consumers Drive area, promote a pedestrian community that will allow students and residents to easily access Metrolinx's services and drive economic development in the local community.

Ontario Power Generation (OPG), another chamber and board of trade member, is monitoring the four route options. While not supporting one route over another OPG has expressed that the extension to Courtice and Bowmanville could provide public transit options for their workforce. OPG has 2,300 staff at Darlington Nuclear, plus another 1,000 during unit maintenance outages. More than 2,000 employees will be moving to the new corporate campus, adjacent to the Darlington station, in 2024, and up to 3,000 staff and contractors are on site to the end of the refurbishment project.

We sincerely hope that our government will consider the investments made, and the impact on future investment in their decision-making.

Meanwhile, we also continue to advocate to keep our entire region connected. It has been announced that trips on GO Bus Route 81 and 81A will be reduced, as will GO Bus Route 90. We ask that Metrolinx keep public transit as a viable option for residents of north and east Durham so they can travel south and west and continue their labour market and economic contributions.

Our agencies continue to work for the economic benefit of our members and the Durham Region as a whole. On behalf of the Durham business community, we thank you for considering our message.

Regards,

The Heads of the Durham Region Joint Chambers and Boards of Trade;
Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade Executive Director, Nicole Gibson,
Brock Board of Trade President, Christine Dukelow,
Clarington Board of Trade Executive Director, Sheila Hall,
Newcastle & District Chamber of Commerce President, Jane Black,
Greater Oshawa Chamber of Commerce CEO, Nancy Shaw,
Scugog Chamber of Commerce Executive Director & General Manager, Kenna Kozak,
Whitby Chamber of Commerce CEO, Natalie Prychitko,
Uxbridge Chamber of Commerce President, Angela Horne.

CC:

President and CEO of Metrolinx Phil Verster,
Minister of Transportation and Minister of Francophone Affairs Caroline Mulroney,
Associate Minister of Transportation (GTA) Kinga Surma,
Ajax MPP Hon. Rod Phillips,
Durham MPP Lindsey Park,
Haliburton-Kawartha Lakes-Brock MPP Hon. Laurie Scott,
Oshawa MPP Jennifer French
Pickering-Uxbridge MPP Hon. Peter Bethlenfalvy,

Durham Region Joint Chambers and Boards of Trade

Whitby MPP Lorne Coe,
Durham Regional Chair and CEO John Henry,
City of Oshawa Mayor Dan Carter,
City of Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan,
Municipality of Clarington Mayor Adrian Foster,
Town of Ajax Mayor Shaun Collier,
Town of Whitby Mayor Don Mitchell,
Township of Brock Mayor Debbie Bath-Hadden,
Township of Scugog Mayor Bobbie Drew,
Township of Uxbridge Mayor Dave Barton.

