

Improvements to GO?will result in 15-minute service

By Mark Pavilons

Improvements by Metrolinx over the next few years will usher in 15-minute, all-day, two-way service from the King City GO?Station.

Work being done by Metrolinx will greatly improve service along the Toronto-Barrie line, resulting in fast and efficient service for commuters. Hopes are the lightning-fast service will arrive in 2025.

Metrolinx staffers Anthony Irving and Mirjana Osojnicky updated King councillors on the very preliminary plans for the upgrades. In King, some major expansions are planned for the King City GO station, and Metrolinx is planning a small layover compound north of the village.

Irving called the expansions ?real rapid transit? which will see GO's fleet becoming faster and more efficient. The overhaul at Union Station in Toronto has been ongoing for years, and it's now revealing a new, modern look.

Osojnicky explained the King City station will see the installation of an enclosed pedestrian bridge with elevators, a new west platform and 200 more parking spaces.

A layover facility is planned for the area and Metrolinx is working with TRCA on assessment of the lands. Irving explained it's a rather small compound that includes several small sections of extra track, where trains are parked overnight. There is a similar one at the Bradford GO station and he stressed it's not a maintenance facility.

The lands are within the Oak?Ridges Moraine and within TRCA regulated areas associated with the East Humber River.

Metrolinx is also reviewing more than 160 level crossings, including five in King Township, to see how to best meet federal regulations. These include Station Road, Dufferin, 15th Sideroad, Bathurst and Toll?Road.

Metrolinx and Township staff are continuing their discussions and more updates to council will be coming.

While councillors welcomed the increase in service, there are some outstanding issues surrounding whistle noises and sound barrier walls.

Mayor Steve Pellegrini wanted to know when the overdue walls will be installed, something residents have been eagerly waiting for. Irving said it likely won't happen until 2024 and they're well aware of the whistle issue.

Pellegrini said he hoped the walls would be installed by 2020, and not 2024.

Metrolinx also plans a 200-spot parking lot, freeing up more space for commuters. Irving admitted that Metrolinx is examining the future of parking lot management, since they don't want to be in the parking business.

To meet the demand quicker, Pellegrini asked if the lot could be given a gravel surface, and be used temporarily.

The mayor noted that upwards of 90% of the spots are reserved, and residents are paying the fee to secure a guaranteed spot. ?Any help is welcome??in generating more parking, he said.

Councillor Debbie Schaefer pointed out that many of those reserved spots sit empty and she's like to see a system in place that lets people know if spots are free on any given day.

Councillor Jordan Cescolini said he's disappointed in the delays on the noise walls and whistle issue.?He's also opposed to the site chosen for the layover compound, noting it's on sensitive land where King was hoping to create a park. He pointed out there are better locations for this. Irving stressed it's still very early in the process and there is a lot of time for review and consultation.