

Feds pump nearly \$600 million into Aurora GO line



By Brock Weir

The Federal Government is pumping nearly \$600 million into making all-day two way GO Train service from Aurora to Union Station a reality.

Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson was joined at the Aurora station on a wet and windy Friday by Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard, Mayor Geoff Dawe, and York Region Chair Wayne Emmerson to make the announcement the government was investing \$595,142,500 into the Barrie to Toronto rail corridor.

The infusion of cash on the local service was part of a larger \$1.899 billion announcement that will go towards funding Regional Express Rail (RER) across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

“The Government of Canada has been hard at work to deliver unprecedented investments in infrastructure,” said Mr. Peterson. “Budget 2017 is the next step in the Government of Canada’s ambitious plan to make smart investments that will help grow our economy. Expanding on historic infrastructure investment over the past year, Budget 2017 will invest in faster, more efficient public transit systems that will help people get to work on time and, at the end of a long day, back home faster to their families and loved ones. It will help communities become cleaner and less reliant on sources of energy that pollute the air, harm the environment and compromise our health.

“This [funding for the Barrie line] includes the construction of approximately 51.2 kilometres of new tracks and required grading between Aurora Station and Union Station along the Barrie corridor and work will also involve four new grade separations, train layover facilities and station modifications.

“After the GO Regional Express Rail expansion, we will see 15 minute two-way all-day service between Aurora and Union, 30 minute peak period weekday service from Union to Allandale (Barrie) and 60 minute two-way midway evening and weekend service between Union and Allandale. This project will provide good well-paying jobs for the middle class and support a modern, efficient transit system that will mean a faster commute, less time in traffic and more time with loved ones for millions living in our communities across York Region.”

Projects like these contribute to “smart growth on a national scale,” he said, facilitating 21st century infrastructure that prepares communities to meet “today’s unique challenges.”

This was echoed by Mr. Ballard, who said he was “thrilled” at the news, calling GO Transit the “backbone” of the GTHA’s transportation network.

“This investment will provide faster and more frequent service with electrification on core segments of the network,” said Mr. Ballard. “We are building a modern and more integrated transit network in the Region to seamlessly connect communities and business. The Government is thrilled to be at the table with the Federal partner who shares our vision for the future of transportation. We are all working together now as we deliver on our ambitious plan to improve travel options for you and your family.

“We talk about GO service as one that focuses on commuters, getting people from Newmarket and Aurora to Toronto and back

again, but there is another and, I think, bigger issue we have, a more exciting one: that with the growth of GO, especially along the Barrie corridor, we bring investment into our communities and I think what we see, as this builds out in years ahead, is more investment in Aurora and Newmarket and the growth of jobs here in Town so maybe one day people will be able to live and work within a short commute of their homes.?

Before and after the formal announcement, Mayor Dawe heralded the fact all three levels of government are working towards a common goal.

?Metrolinx's Barrie Corridor is an extremely important transportation route for all our residents,? he said. ?Whether it is commuters or tourists, the ability to use congestion-free rail transit is a substantial benefit to our quality of life. This investment by the Federal Government shows that when all three levels of government work together we can make significant progress to the benefit of all.?