

New Mulock GO Station will help ease Aurora's pressure: Officials



By Brock Weir

A new GO Train station on Mulock Drive in Newmarket will have a positive impact on the Aurora station and ease the parking concerns of those living around it, according to Newmarket-Aurora MPP Chris Ballard and Mayor Geoff Dawe.

Both men were on hand outside of Newmarket Town Hall on Friday when Ontario's Transport Minister Steven Del Duca announced three new stations slated for construction on GO's Barrie-to-Toronto Corridor at Kirby Road in Vaughan, near the line with King Township, at Mulock Drive, and in Innisfil.

While Mr. Del Duca cautioned that the three new stations need formal approval from Metrolinx this week ? and following which will be more details on the where, the when, and the cost ? local politicians welcomed the announcement.

?I think it is going to go a long way to solve that parking problem around the GO Station,? said Mr. Ballard. ?We know that a significant number of Newmarket residents ? and beyond ? come to Aurora. Now, this Mulock station will have lots of parking, we are assured, and should relieve that pressure in the Aurora Downtown.

?The issue with GO is we are a victim of our success in many ways. We promote GO, GO is a fantastic way to get to your job in Toronto, to get to entertainment in Toronto, and the numbers increase and increase and we need parking for that. I suspect people who are at the north end of Aurora will be happy to pop up here and park, and that should relieve the significant pressure.?

Speaking to The Auroran following the announcement, Mr. Del Duca said ?a number of factors? are considered in determining the location of a new station, not the least of which is parking pressure.

?Between the plans for some of the new stations we have, plus also as part of the GO Regional Express Rail, we will be including some updates and some creative expansions with respect to our parking. One of the things people sometimes forget, including in my own community in Vaughan, is that GO Transit is actually the largest parking authority in all of Canada, with somewhere in the neighbourhood of 60,000 or so spaces in our network right now. Having said that, we still do have plans because we see that the demand is off the charts with respect to the service itself.

?I have heard from Mayor Dawe and I have heard from Chris Ballard and others about some of the challenges specifically in Aurora, so we are aware of it and we will continue to do our best to work through some of those challenges. Because the service is so popular and so needed, when you're dealing with that kind of growth that is one of the challenges you have. We're working on it!?

Mayor Geoff Dawe was in agreement. When asked whether he saw this as a ?magic bullet? to the pressures ? and complaints ? that

have been mounting in Aurora, he said the devil was in the details.

"The major bullet is it will relieve the pressure off our station," he said. "Anecdotally, I would say 25 to 30 per cent [of those parked] are not Aurora residents. A friend of mine, who actually lives in Newmarket, comes down to the Aurora GO Station because it is easier to access at that hour in the morning when he uses it. I know there are people who come from various other places as well. By having a station here [in Newmarket], which is much more accessible than the Aurora station will make a huge difference."

With this problem potentially alleviated, our local representatives say they have other transit items that are working their way up the list including, from Mayor Dawe's perspective, advocating for a 404 interchange at St. John's Sideroad and, for Mr. Ballard, continuing that push for an all-way two-way electrification of rail service to Newmarket-Aurora.

"This is proof positive that we are providing yet another way to make sure our residents can get to and from school, work, or any Point A to Point B and do so more effectively," said Mr. Del Duca at Friday's announcement, which was also attended by Newmarket-Aurora MP Kyle Peterson, Newmarket Mayor Tony Van Bynen, King-Vaughan MP Deb Schulte, Regional Chair Wayne Emmerson, and dignitaries from Vaughan and Simcoe County.

"These new stations will help to connect transit and improve transportation options right across the Region and improve access to service and help us build ridership. We are giving commuters in this Region another reason to leave their cars behind and take transit, which is so fundamental to our economy, our quality of life, and our fight against climate change."