

## Wellington Street underpass proposal under review: Staff

As Metrolinx continues double-tracking work and station upgrades in Aurora to make way for all-day two-way GO Train service to Toronto, a traffic underpass proposed for Wellington Street East intended to ease traffic congestion is now under review.

Aurora's Director of Planning, Marco Ramunno, told Council last week that the underpass, which would see Wellington Street East closed due to construction for its duration, was in the process of being re-assessed.

Metrolinx is embarking on the work on adding the second track through to Aurora, said Ramunno at last week's Public Planning meeting. They are looking at either this fall or spring to begin adding the bridge and second track through north of Vandorf and then they will also be continuing on with the addition of the second track through north to Wellington. That will all happen this spring.

GO Transit, he added, has now opened a new commuter parking lot of approximately 400 spaces for riders off Scanlon Court and Industrial Parkway North, previously the site of the Town's Department of Public Works.

That is to supplement the additional parking around the current GO Station and the current garage because they will be losing some surface parking west of the tracks when they add that second track, Ramunno continued. With respect to the Wellington Street grade separation, Metrolinx has advised that they are still re-assessing that project. For the time being, it is really the addition of the second track that will commence late this fall in early 2024.

In our last discussion with Metrolinx staff, it (the proposed Wellington underpass) was one of the ten projects they identified for grade separation, where Wellington would then go under the track. They have put that on hold and they are re-assessing all the grade separations up and down the corridor. We don't think that is going to happen any time soon. It's not on their plans.

In a statement to The Auroran, Metrolinx confirmed that level crossings, such as the one on Wellington at the GO Station were being assessed but it is an ongoing process.

The GO Expansion program will bring faster, more frequent service, every 15 minutes in both directions between Union Station and Aurora GO, and across core segments of the GO network, said Metrolinx. Current work at Aurora GO is preparing the station for future two-way train service. Construction upgrades at Aurora GO Station will include a new second platform and track, a new pedestrian tunnel with elevators, additional parking spaces and rail signal upgrades. The Aurora GO Station modernization project is part of the broader GO Expansion program on the Barrie Line.

Metrolinx, along with its partner OnXpress, are currently in a development phase and are assessing all level crossings on the network. Once this assessment is completed, we will then have a clearer idea on how to best deliver these projects.

A further question mark remains on some of the impacts of the rail expansion, particularly the future of Centre Street.

The future of Centre was at the heart of some residents' concerns as the street, often used as a traffic bypass of Yonge and Wellington to the consternation of neighbours, as well as the Town, which has implemented several traffic control measures to stop the influx of cars, was discuss for closure to thru-traffic due to the frequency of passing trains at its level crossing.

We had a motion [to look at Industrial Parkway] from Scanlon to Wellington with Centre Street to look at what we can do with that intersection, whether it is some widening, whether it is some changes in direction, [or] flow of traffic, said Mayor Tom Mrakas last week, responding to questions from residents on whether Centre would indeed be closed. We're supposed to be investigating all of that. That information still hasn't come back to us, it has been a while [and the motion] got side-tracked a little bit and put on the backburner, but it's back and staff are looking at that. We'll probably get some more information as we continue to look at how it develops and I believe staff are working with the consultants with regards to that motion as well.

?They looked to that aspect of that area and what we need to do to enhance traffic flow.?

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