

Transportation & Infrastructure:

F. Regional Transportation Fare Integration

Submitted by: Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade, Toronto Region Board of Trade and Vaughan Chamber of Commerce; Co-sponsored by the Newmarket Chamber of Commerce and Mississauga Board of Trade

Issue

Connectivity in modes of transit is essential to the success of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Regional Transit Plan. A crucial element of this connectivity is a one-card fare integration system for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Although progress has been made in the process of fare integration, there is still more that must be done. To ensure a seamless transportation network, and to build further momentum across the wider region for fare integration, GO Transit needs to be integrated with the Toronto Transit Commission, Durham Region Transit, and other municipal transportation services. This issue must be addressed as soon as possible, to keep up with the needs of the growing population and visitors to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Background

We applaud the federal, provincial and municipal governments for making their largest-ever investments to help fund transit infrastructure within the GTHA. The present transportation system is widely viewed as inadequate and traffic congestion is now a cross-regional issue that affects all municipalities and residents in the GTHA and beyond. The ability of businesses to move people and goods, of commuters to get to work and home, of visitors to travel in and through the GTHA, and the vitality of the regional economy are dependent upon an efficient regional transportation network. This is important to both the region and the province: GO Transit and the municipal transit agencies that connect to it serve two-thirds of Ontario's population (approximately 10 million people).

Network connectivity needs to be the backbone of the regional transportation plan; transfers between municipal transit systems should be easy and efficient. Connectivity must not stop at any particular municipal boundary; rather it should be continuous throughout the GTHA and be based on an integrated fare system which incorporates "smart" card technology.

GO Transit and the nine municipal transportation agencies in the GTHA have already made progress on fare integration. Currently, GO Transit has signed co-fare agreements (allowing for discounting of fares when transferring from one transit agency to another) with eight municipal agencies. The PRESTO fare card allows users of more than one transit agency to get an immediate discount when they transfer between GO and one of the participating agencies. In addition, all the 905 transit operators (except Milton) have agreed to accept each other's transfers without additional fares.

While the TTC currently offers a co-fare, that discounted rate for PRESTO users will expire on March 31, 2020. This will once again increase costs for commuters and create incentives for people to drive and increase the wider region's traffic problems.

To illustrate the cost implications to commuters: a person commuting from their home, to the Ajax GO Station and on to York University would have to pay Durham Region Transit (DRT) a cash fare of \$3.75, GO Transit \$9.65, and then pay the TTC \$3.25, for a total of \$16.65 /per trip, an increase of 73% over what

they would pay were the cost integrated into a single GO Transit fare. Alternatively, they could use a PRESTO card to pay DRT a co-fare of \$0.80, GO Transit \$8.12 and then tap their PRESTO card again at the TTC to pay \$1.60, for a total of \$10.52/per trip, an increase of 30% over what they would pay for a fare integrated into the GO Transit fare.

The implementation of a regional fare integration system is integral to the creation of a sustainable, attractive and efficient transportation network. The benefits of the move to a smart card system will support the development of further infrastructure and will make the regional transportation network more customer-friendly, leading to greater use of the network and ultimately assisting in the alleviation of regional congestion and gridlock.

Recommendations

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Through Metrolinx, implement a fully integrated fare system at the earliest possible opportunity for the GTHA regional transportation system including GO Transit and all municipal agencies, which will make for a more customer-friendly, seamless, and affordable transit network, and help alleviate wider-region traffic congestion and gridlock.
2. Facilitate the equitable distribution of fare dollars collected by an integrated fare system among the participating regional transit operators and Metrolinx.

G. Support for Metrolinx Big Move and 'Next Wave' Priority Projects

Submitted by: Richmond Hill Board of Trade. Co-sponsored by Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and Newmarket Chamber of Commerce.

Issue

Over the past 20 years, there has been tremendous population and business growth throughout the Greater Toronto – Hamilton Area (GTHA), particularly in the 905. In fact, York Region is now one of Canada's fastest-growing large urban municipalities with nearly 1.2 million people and approximately 25,000 new residents moving there every year. Notwithstanding the many positives that result from urban intensification, increased traffic congestion typically accompanies population growth if infrastructure investments do not keep pace, as they have failed to do in the GTHA and beyond. The average round-trip commuting time in the GTHA is now 84 minutes and many residents grapple with far longer travel times to work as a red-hot housing market necessitates more first-time home-buyers to look beyond local markets. In fact, traffic congestion is estimated to cost the economy in the range of \$7.5 Billion to \$11 Billion per year, according to a study by the C.D. Howe Institute.

This level of traffic congestion, and lack of alternative transportation infrastructure, impacts not simply those directly commuting to and from the GTHA. Lack of public transit options leads to less choice for commuters and ultimately increased vehicular traffic, which results in costs to business supply chains such as movement of goods delays.

Failure of our transportation infrastructure to keep pace in the face of unprecedented growth also affects tourists and visitors to the wider-region and contributes to air pollution and carbon emissions. Recent investments by all levels of government in public transit, including the extension of the Toronto-York

Spadina Subway Extension to Vaughan and construction of VIVA-YRT bus rapidways are welcome additions to the transportation network in York Region. It is clear that to maximize these investments in public transit infrastructure, support must be given for the Metrolinx Big Move transportation plan and 'Next Wave' priority projects including the Yonge North Subway Extension and the Relief Line in the context of the regional transit network.

Background

Transportation and transit infrastructure is critical to the success of our region, our province and our country. For that reason we must focus on the big picture. Municipal boundaries act as transit boundaries that prevent effective movement of passengers. Transit policies and routes should be planned based upon population growth and need, not on municipal boundaries. The busiest subway in Canada, the Yonge North-South line, has not been expanded since the 1970's. This despite the fact that York Region is one of the fastest growing areas in Canada contributing to some of the longest commute times in North America. To entice people out of their vehicles and alleviate traffic congestion, the Yonge North Subway Extension has become the top priority of the Regional Municipality of York and each of the nine municipal governments in York Region. In fact, transportation is the top local issue for the vast majority of York Region residents.

The Yonge subway extension and Relief line will complement investments made in our existing transit network and help connect the GTHA by integrating with neighboring transit options. They will also maximize the recent investments in GO Transit, VIVA-YRT, Eglinton Crosstown LRT, UP Express connectivity to Pearson Airport, and the Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension. They will ensure for greater connectivity with surrounding communities.

Already included in the Metrolinx Big Move and identified as 'Next Wave' Priority Projects, developments of this magnitude will lead to new business and job creation, intensification, and the attraction of more affordable housing as well as significant environmental benefits. In fact, by eliminating the need for 2,500 bus trips that currently service a stretch of Yonge Street each weekday, the Yonge North Subway Extension has significant potential to reduce carbon emissions and eliminate up to 28 tonnes of GHG each

workday. Notably, the Yonge North Subway Extension has already received \$55 million from the Province for preliminary engineering and design, a notable investment that should be maximized.

As populations continue to grow and densities rise throughout the GTHA and beyond, there is an urgent need to create connected infrastructure for future generations that ensures for the greatest range of mobility options. Projects of this size and scope require the financial support of all levels of government, over an extended duration of time. The longer we wait, the more expensive projects of this magnitude become.

Recommendation

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario, the Regional Municipality of York and the City of Toronto to:

1. Together, commit the dedicated revenue and begin the construction required as soon as is feasible for Metrolinx Big Move and 'Next Wave' Priority Projects, including the Yonge North Subway Extension, given the benefits to the GTHA and wider-region for current and future generations.

K. Developing Infrastructure for the Expansion of Electric Vehicle Market in Ontario

Submitted by: Vaughan Chamber of Commerce and Newmarket Chamber of Commerce

Issue

Ontario's current infrastructure and rate-base classification is ill-equipped to manage the growth of the Electric Vehicle (EV) market. The lack of Local Distribution Company (LDC) involvement in any electrification strategy may cause unintended system consequences and delays in meeting the provinces' electrification goals.

Background

While EVs currently consist of a limited portion of vehicles sold in Ontario, their worldwide share grew by 40% between 2018 and 2020.¹¹¹ The Government of Ontario has already signaled its intentions to support the growing EV market by agreeing to work with the Federal Government to co-fund the production of these vehicles at the Ford and GM plants in Oakville and Oshawa¹¹² respectively.

Ontario will need to increase its public charging network to support the growth of this market. While private charging would be ideal for EV ownership, this is likely more difficult in densely populated areas including the GTHA¹¹³.

Currently, there are just 1300¹¹⁴ publicly available charging stations available across Ontario. Comparatively, BC has almost 1000 charging stations despite purchasing half as many EVs; as demonstrated in figure 1¹¹⁵.

The Government will need to engage electrified infrastructure cost-effectively, reliably, and expediently to support the industry's growth. By allowing LDCs to manage the charging infrastructure, it enables the local grid to be more responsive and nimbler to the significant growth in demand that will undoubtedly result in electrification and an increased uptake of EVs.

Further consideration should be given towards the rate-base classification for charging EVs, with at least one alternative rate needed for EV charging. This is also technical advice that LDCs can provide through an understanding of the kW requirements for different charging classes. Failure to effectively plan for the expanding EV market will result in the Province having to play catch-up, to the detriment of both the Government and customers.

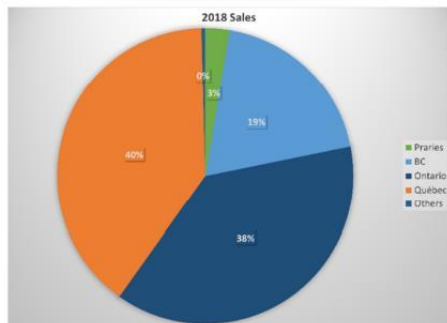


Fig 1: Canadian EV sales

Figure 1.2 Passenger electric car sales and market share in selected countries and regions, 2013-19

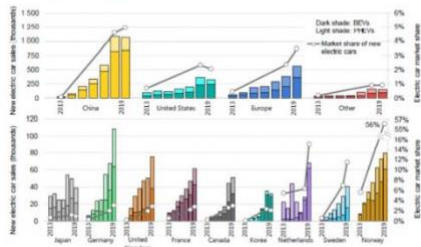


Fig 2: Global Sales of EV

Recommendations

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Enable and encourage LDCs to support electrified transportation through infrastructure developments. While the contracts for these individual stations can be optioned out to private companies, LDCs should be consulted regarding the locations of these proposed EV charging stations to ensure they are compatible with the current grid.
2. Give LDCs the ability to rate-base strategic investments in electrification technologies, such as EV and transit-oriented charging stations, where the LDC business case balances customers' needs, government policy objectives, and supports the Province's robust electricity systems.

In coordination with the OEB, allow LDCs to review existing customer rate classes and establish a specific rate class for public fast charging.