



GO Transit

Although it only serves Southwestern Ontario east of Kitchener, the GO Transit rail and bus services provided by provincially-owned Metrolinx have an impact on the region's public transportation system, including the areas west of GO's service territory.

Started as a one-line rail service on the Lakeshore Line in 1967, GO has grown into a Toronto-centred, multi-route rail and bus network blanketing the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The service levels on this expanded system vary by route, some operating only for weekday am/pm peak trips in and out of Toronto.

For Southwestern Ontarians, the GO routes that have the greatest impact are the rail and bus services to Kitchener, Guelph and Barrie, and the all-day Lakeshore rail service to Aldershot. All are likely to be expanded over the next decade under the \$29-billion Moving Ontario Forward program. The weekday-only Kitchener rail service will eventually operate

frequently in both directions daily. Electrification and upgrading of the Lakeshore Line will provide faster and more frequent service.

Of these two GO routes, the Lakeshore Line currently provides the largest benefits to Southwestern Ontarians. Many who previously drove to and from Toronto can now avoid some of the GTHA's highway congestion by parking at Aldershot and completing their journey by GO. As well, the direct connections made with VIA Rail Canada's Windsor-London-Toronto trains at the shared Aldershot and Oakville stations allows passengers to use GO to reach intermediate points. VIA passengers from Southwestern Ontario may also connect with other GO rail and bus routes at Toronto Union Station.

However, the introduction of GO Kitchener rail and bus services have also had a negative effect on some Southwestern Ontario communities. These routes compete with those traditionally operated



to Kitchener and points west by VIA and private bus operators. This competition has resulted in a reduction in the VIA service through Kitchener to London and Sarnia. It has also been a contributor to the termination by the bus operators of unprofitable Southwestern Ontario routes, which were cross-subsidized by the profitable routes on which GO is now competing.

While GO's planned expansion will improve mobility in the easternmost section of Southwestern Ontario, it should not be done in a manner that will destabilize and reduce the services provided by other operators,

particularly on the portions of their routes that extend west of Kitchener.

The opportunity to safeguard these services is through the current review of the Metrolinx Act, 2006. Revising the legislation to include mandatory consultation and coordination with existing carriers is one possible means of ensuring GO expansion benefits many and harms none.