

April 20, 2018

Phil Verster
President & Chief Executive Officer
Metrolinx
97 Front Street West
Toronto, ON M5J 1E6

RE: Piloting the use of ridesharing services to facilitate better connectivity to GO stations and transit hubs

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce (OCC) would like to offer its support for development of a pilot to ascertain the efficacy of using ridesharing services to facilitate improved connectivity for passengers to GO stations and transit hubs.

Daily ridership for GO passengers has been increasing and is projected to be between 225,000 and 250,000 weekday riders to new and existing stations by 2031, up from approximately 100,000 riders in 2016. The projected ridership increase would result in the need for another 80,000 parking spaces that would have tremendous financial cost as well as further encouraging driving to GO stations and transit hubs. Additionally, simply building additional parking spaces to address growing ridership is not sustainable in the long-term.

As it stands now, 62 percent of GO rail passengers heading into Toronto start their trip by driving to the station and parking there, with a further 15 percent being dropped off by car. Only 8.5 percent arrive at the station on transit, and the same share arrive on foot. Approximately 4.5 percent carpool and just 1 percent of GO rail passengers ride bicycles to their station.

For reasons of environmental and financial sustainability, it is important to make commuting to GO stations by alternative means as attractive as single-occupancy vehicle trips. This would have benefits on multiple fronts, including reducing greenhouse gas emissions and road congestion as well as optimizing available land for purposes other than parking lots.

The OCC is aware that in its *2041 Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area*, Metrolinx has considered the role that intelligent transportation systems as well as mobility as a service (MaaS) platforms have to play in transportation planning. Conducting a ridesharing pilot on the GO transit system would provide a natural continuation of that discussion and analysis.

Using innovative models such as ridesharing services is one way to improve connectivity for passengers. There have been many jurisdictions across North America that have employed pilot partnerships between local transportation agencies and ridesharing companies to provide first mile/last mile connectivity for passengers.

Creating a system that provides a mixture of multiple transportation modes would allow urban mobility to reach its full potential. It is estimated that the demand for multimodal solutions in urban locations will increase by 20 percent each year for the next five years. This indicates an opportunity for ridesharing services to form partnerships with local transportation providers and governments to maximize transit hubs and create dynamic transportation systems throughout Ontario. Conducting a pilot project would allow for qualitative and quantitative analysis into the effectiveness and relevancy of an integration of ridesharing services into the GO transit system.

The OCC would be pleased to discuss this prospect further with both Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation.

Regards,



Rocco Rossi
President & CEO

CC:

Hon. Kathryn McGarry, Minister of Transportation
Leslie Woo, Chief Planning Officer, Metrolinx
Dan Moulton, Crestview Strategy
Chris Schafer, Uber Public Policy Manager – Canada
Steve Orsini, Secretary of Cabinet