

TORONTO LEADS AGAIN

COMBINE METROLINX BUSINESS CASES WITH TORONTO LEADS AGAIN DELIVERY GATES



STRATEGIC	right problem?	
ECONOMIC	benefits > resource cost?	
FINANCIAL	who pays / cash flow?	
DELIVERABILITY	can it be built and operated?	
WORLD-CLASS CONTROL RULE		
No corridor graduates because the map looks attractive. Each gate tightens scope, schedule, cost, operations and ownership.		

Major mobility proposals should pass explicit business-case, accessibility, affordability and delivery gates before scale.

Connected Region: High-Speed Rail & Regional Mobility

A complete-journey strategy connecting TTC, GO, regional mobility, Pearson, Union Station and a Toronto-led high-speed rail vision.

Campaign Policy Proposal - Not a City of Toronto Publication



Jamie Atkinson for Mayor of Toronto

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People first. Families first. Machines serve. Democracy decides. Nature sets the constraint. Art gives the future meaning.

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Why this matters

Executive Summary

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Why this matters

Complete journeys before prestige

The public experiences a journey, not a line on a map. Door-to-platform time, walking, vertical travel, transfers, waiting, reliability and elevator dependence belong in major transportation decisions.

Toronto can lead without pretending to control

High-speed rail is intergovernmental. Toronto can protect station interfaces, integrate local and regional networks, prepare station districts, convene partners and advocate for a western extension without misrepresenting municipal authority.

Executive Summary

Connected Region begins with the complete journey. A kilometre of track is not useful if transfers, walking distance, elevators, waiting, fares or unreliable connections make the trip difficult. Toronto should coordinate local transit, GO, Union Station, Pearson and intercity rail as parts of one mobility system.

High-speed rail is a partner-dependent national and provincial infrastructure project. Toronto's role is to champion the corridor, protect useful interfaces, develop station and access requirements, and make the business case for a western extension toward Waterloo, London and Windsor while coordinating with Alto's Toronto-Quebec City work.

The first term prioritizes service planning, accessibility, through-running opportunities, station interfaces and corridor protection before committing to prestige infrastructure.

Major commitments

- Adopt complete-journey accessibility and 30/60/90-minute access measures.
- Coordinate TTC, GO, Union and Pearson interfaces around through journeys.
- Create a Toronto high-speed rail advocacy and station-access file.
- Advance a western HSR extension business-case request toward Waterloo, London and Windsor.
- Protect corridors and interchange opportunities before incompatible development closes them.
- Use service plans before concrete: frequency, stopping patterns and transfers drive infrastructure choices.

How this fits the governing program

Financial treatment: first-term actions in this report must reconcile to Report 03. Unsigned partner funding and unverified technology savings are not booked in the municipal base case.

How to read commitments and numbers

Status	Meaning
OFFICIAL BASELINE	Current public evidence or an inherited program.
ADOPTED CITY TARGET	A target already approved by the City; not a new campaign promise.
CAMPAIGN COMMITMENT	A first-term action proposed by the campaign, subject to lawful Council/budget authority.
CAMPAIGN TARGET	A measurable result the campaign proposes to pursue.
PLANNING ASSUMPTION / SCENARIO	A decision-support input, not a guarantee.
PARTNER-DEPENDENT OBJECTIVE	Requires another government, agency, utility, institution or private partner.
LONG-RANGE ASPIRATION	Part of the 25-year direction; future Councils retain democratic authority.

Key public baselines and planning anchors

Indicator	Value	Date / status	Use in this report
Toronto population forecast	3.65M	2051 Official forecast	Long-range planning denominator; refresh when official forecast changes.
Toronto jobs forecast	1.98M	2051 Official forecast	Planning horizon; not guaranteed jobs.
Alto corridor length	~1,000 km	Current scope Official project baseline	Toronto-Quebec City initiative.
Alto design speed	300 km/h+	Current scope Official project objective	Final alignment/service plan remains in co-development.
Alto preliminary construction range	\$60-90B	2024 real dollars Early official estimate / Class 5	Not final project budget.
Alto early co-development funding	\$3.9B	Initial period Government funding announcement	Design, consultation, land, assessment, approvals.
TTC new service hours	~200,000	2026 budget Budgeted inherited service expansion	Not new campaign spending.
GO core service ambition	15 min or better	Program objective Agency target	Two-way all-day on core segments where delivered.

Vision and Outcomes

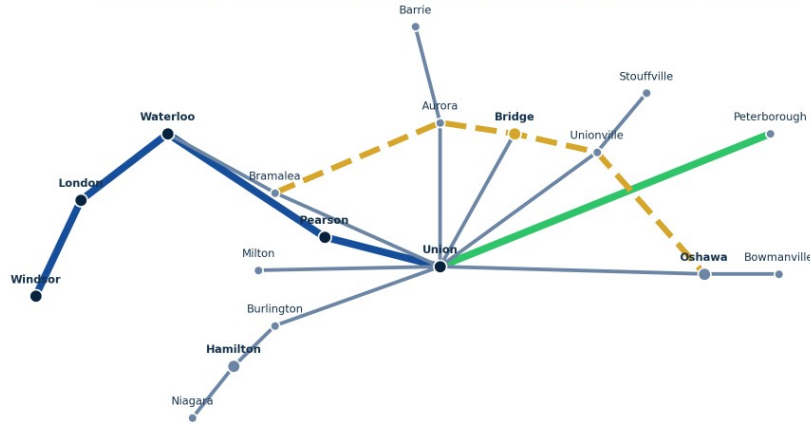
The strategy is organized around outcomes that can be understood by residents and tested through delivery.

- A complete journey that is fast, reliable and accessible.
- TTC, GO, Union, Pearson and intercity rail working as one connected system.
- High-speed rail advanced through credible partner business cases.
- Station districts that support housing, jobs and public life.
- Freight and passenger capacity planned together.

Visualizing the Strategy

Selected campaign visuals from the earlier reference reports are retained here because they explain relationships that are harder to understand in prose alone. They are explanatory illustrations; the surrounding text and tables define commitments, costs, authority and status.

CONNECTED TORONTO REGION - SERVICE HIERARCHY SCHEMATIC



Schematic only - not an alignment. It combines current/official corridors with proposed service layers and leaves major route choices subject to business case.

Service hierarchy: local transit, regional rail, intercity rail and high-speed services should each do the job they are best suited to do.

TERMINAL TRAP



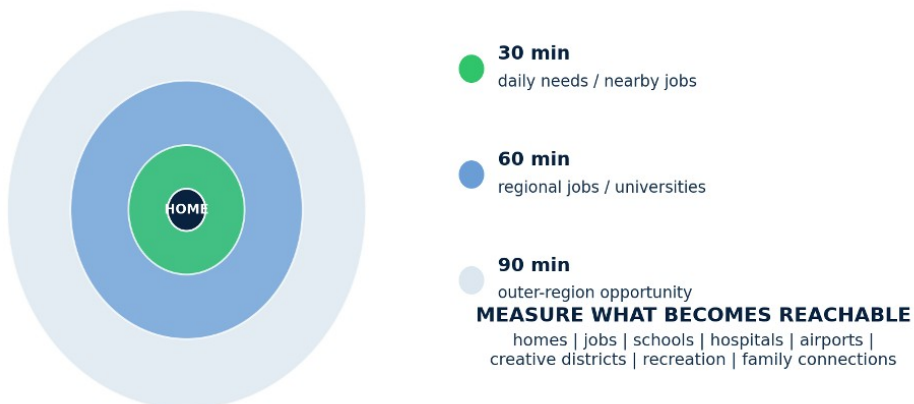
RECOMMENDED THROUGH-RUNNING SAFEGUARD



Madrid and London show the value of converting terminal railways into through networks. Protect the path before the station geometry is locked.

Avoid the terminal trap: through-running and useful connections can matter as much as a landmark station building.

30 / 60 / 90 ACCESSIBILITY DASHBOARD



Design for the human body: accessibility should be measured as the complete journey, including walking, waiting, vertical travel and transfers.

Purpose and Network Principles

Introduction - Build Forward, Do Not Start Over A 2026 regional strategy should not behave as if the region has no plan. The 2041 RTP remains a sophisticated architecture for multimodal integration: complete current projects, expand frequent rapid transit, optimize the system, integrate transportation with land use, and prepare for uncertainty. Current GO Expansion has since narrowed and updated the practical service envelope: its core goal is 15-minute-or-better two-way all-day capacity on Lakeshore East to Oshawa, Lakeshore West to Burlington, Kitchener to Bramalea, Stouffville to Unionville and Barrie to Aurora. Union is being rebuilt to handle up to 80 trains per peak hour. At the same time, the federal landscape changed fundamentally. Alto is now a 300 km/h-or-more, primarily dedicated and electrified high-speed rail project of roughly 1,000 km. Alto says its western segment begins

in downtown Toronto and identifies Union and its surroundings as a strong connectivity candidate while other downtown-adjacent options remain under study. Rolling-stock and signalling market sounding began in 2026. The planning task is therefore integration, not invention. The region needs a target service plan that answers: which trips should be HSR, which should be GO rapid rail, which should be express bus, where orbitals make sense, how transfers are timed, how freight is protected, and what stations must become complete mobility hubs rather than parking lots. CONTINUITY ARC Current projects -> target service plan -> network hierarchy -> complete journey -> land/freight integration -> engineered business cases -> staged delivery -> measured human outcomes. Figure 2. Combined regional schematic. Official/current corridors and campaign study directions are deliberately distinguished;

this is not an alignment map.

The Outside View What the best transportation networks teach Toronto - and which lessons should not be copied blindly.

A Reference Class of World Transportation Systems No single city is a template for the GTHA. Paris is denser, Hong Kong has different land institutions, Tokyo has decades of cross-operator interoperability, and Switzerland has a national governance culture that cannot simply be imported. The useful exercise is to extract repeatable operating principles and then test their transferability. Figure 3. Twelve international reference classes used in this report.

The 12 reference classes System Observed design logic Transfer to GTA Caution Grand Paris Express / Line 15 Major orbital metro; Line 15 will serve 36 new stations and is planned for more than 1.5 million daily riders. The broader GPE is about 200 km and 68 stations. An orbital can transform cross-suburban travel when demand and density are large enough. Protect 407 interchanges now. Do not infer that a 150-km GTA orbital should begin as heavy metro. London Elizabeth line Through-running suburban services across a new central trunk; 24 trains/hour in the busiest central section. Union-area design should maximize through movement and direct cross-region journeys. High central density and large sunk rail network are not directly comparable. Tokyo Metro through-service 7 of 9 metro lines through-run with other railways; combined through-service network about 355.8 km. Cross-agency operating

agreements and compatible standards can remove transfers without merging every operator. Toronto freight ownership and vehicle standards differ. Singapore LTMP 2040 Outcome framing: 20-minute towns and a 45-minute city; inclusive, safe, healthy journeys. Use access-time outcomes and neighbourhood connectivity as headline KPIs. GTHA geography is far larger; do not adopt the 45-minute figure literally. Seoul GTX-A Metropolitan express railway; current GTX-A section is 33.7 km, five stations, 180 km/h maximum. There is a legitimate category between local commuter rail and HSR. GO express overlays can capture some of this value. Dedicated metro-region express tunnels are expensive; use existing GO infrastructure first. Madrid HSR through tunnel 7.3-km standard-gauge HSR tunnel links Chamartin and Atocha, creating transversal HSR and relieving terminal constraints. Protect an east-west HSR

path at Union before final geometry is locked. Toronto geology, station layout and costs require independent study. Frankfurt Airport Regional and long-distance rail at one airport; long-distance ICE station has direct national/international service and about a 10-minute walk to Terminal 1. Pearson should be a regional gateway,

not merely an airport stop. Airport terminal geometry may favour airport-edge HSR plus people-mover rather than direct tunnelling. Deutschlandtakt "Timetable first, infrastructure second"; nodes and regular intervals define required capacity and travel times. Create a Toronto Region Target Service Plan before approving major infrastructure. National German rail governance is different; use the principle, not the exact timetable. Switzerland Clock-face timetable, integrated national ticketing and timed hub connections. One account / one itinerary plus pulse hubs

can make the regional network legible. HSR reservations/premium fares may remain separate. Netherlands PHS Six Intercity and six Sprinter trains per hour on key corridors; freight rerouting/track works create passenger capacity. GO express/local layering and freight rationalization must be planned together.

Dutch network is compact and highly

rail-oriented. Hong Kong MTR R+P Property development rights and station-area development support railway financing and ridership. Use station land and value creation as one capital lane where ownership/legal rights exist. Never book generic land uplift as guaranteed Toronto cash. Copenhagen City Ring 15.5-km urban ring, 17 stations, 24-hour service; dense orbital connects many inner-city districts. Orbitals work when they serve many strong interchange markets. Not analogous to a 150-km regional 407 line; station spacing/density are very different. Sources: [PARIS-GPE] Grand Paris Express Line 15 and network materials. [LON-ELIZ] TfL. [TOKYO-THRU] Tokyo Metro. [SG-LTMP] Singapore LTA. [SEOUL-GTX] Korea Transport Institute/GTX-A project data. [MADRID-HSR] Adif. [FRA-AIR] Frankfurt Airport. [DE-TAKT] Deutschlandtakt. [CH-TIME] Swiss federal/SBB materials. [NL-PHS] ProRail/NS. [HK-RP] MTR. [CPH-RING] Metroselskabet.

The ten transferable design rules Rule Implication for the Toronto region

Service plan before concrete Define mature frequencies, express/local patterns and transfer pulses before designing e

infrastructure.

Through-running beats terminal

accumulation Avoid forcing every regional or HSR trip to terminate at Union when a through path can increase capacity and reduce transfers.

Frequency usually matters more than

top speed For daily regional trips, 10-15 minute reliable service can be more valuable than a rare faster train.

Sparse stops preserve express value Use different stopping patterns. A physical station does not mean every train must

Orbitals need staged capacity Start with buses and direct interchanges; build dedicated rail only where observed demand

Airports are regional hubs Serve airport workers, employment lands and national rail passengers, not only air travel

One journey must feel like one system Fare/payment, information, accessibility and schedules should be coordinated across

Station districts are part of the

transport asset Housing/jobs/amenities increase catchment and reduce car access, but financing must be legally grounded.

Freight is a co-equal network user Passenger expansion must not quietly destroy goods-movement capacity.

Measure access and reliability Jobs/homes reachable in 30/60/90 minutes, transfer burden and reliability are stronge

opened.

Current Network and the Architecture to Keep

The System Toronto Inherits Metrolinx already supplies the base architecture. The 2026 task is to update it, not erase it.

The Metrolinx Architecture We Should Keep

The 2041 RTP is strongest when it stops behaving like a project list and becomes an operating doctrine. Its five strategies - complete current projects, connect more of the region with frequent rapid transit, optimize the system, integrate transportation and land use, and prepare for an uncertain future - remain highly reusable. The plan explicitly defines a Frequent Rapid Transit Network as 10-15 minute all-day service built from subway, BRT, LRT, 15-minute GO, Priority Bus and Frequent Regional Express Bus. It also anticipated several issues that remain central today: coordinating GO with high-speed/high-frequency rail and Union Station; using Highway 407 for Regional Express Bus before building a dedicated transitway; integrating fares and schedules; shifting GO-station access away from drive-and-park; and protecting a Strategic Goods Movement Network.

2026 Treat the 2018 RTP as the strategic constitution, but replace its old service assumptions with live 2026 projects and demand. Current GO Expansion - not the 2018 map - controls the present baseline. 2018 architecture 2026 controlling update Planning consequence 15-minute GO expansion across multiple corridors Current GO Expansion targets 15-minute-or-better core service to Burlington, Oshawa, Bramalea, Unionville and Aurora. Do not republish old 15-minute extents as current commitments; use express/local or timed outer service beyond current core segments. Union as regional rail centre Union enhancements are under construction for capacity up to 80 trains/hour at peaks. Any HSR solution must coexist with a heavily utilized through railway; dedicated HSR capacity must be engineered. High-speed rail coordination Alto is now a real 300+ km/h federal project, with Toronto station/corridor work underway.

National/intercity HSR is now a formal network

layer, not a speculative provincial concept.

407 Transitway beyond 2041 Central 23-km segment has prior environmental work;

Bridge Station protects future connection. Use express bus now, protect dedicated transitway interfaces, and set demand triggers for upgrades. Fare integration PRESTO/contactless and one-fare improvements have advanced since 2018. Shift from "integrate fares" to "one journey / one account / one itinerary" including HSR transfer logic. Uncertain future / AVs AI, automation, climate and digital operations have advanced rapidly. Keep mode-neutral corridors, open data, cyber resilience and human accountability. Sources: [MX-RTP] pp. 58-66, 74-86 and Appendix 5. [MX-GO] current 2026 GO Expansion. [MX-UNION] current Union Station enhancement. [ALTO] 2026 project materials. The outcomes Metrolinx measured correctly The 2041 RTP model is valuable because it asks what the network changes for people. In the plan scenario, the Frequent Rapid Transit Network grows to about 1,860 km; 38% of residents

and 49% of jobs are within walking distance of frequent rapid transit; the average resident can reach roughly 1.06 million jobs within an hour by transit, about 320,000 more than the 2011 base; and peak-period transit trips rise by roughly 700,000. The exact values are 2018-model outputs and should not be reused as 2026 forecasts, but the measurement framework should be retained.

The new plan should recalculate the same accessibility questions using current population, jobs, current projects and HSR/regional-express scenarios. Do not replace an old model with an unmodelled slogan.

Best-Fit Network Architecture

The Best-Fit Network Architecture

A target service plan for one region - different speeds, different modes, one journey.

Six Passenger Layers + One Freight Plane Figure 4. The recommended hierarchy prevents one mode from being asked to do every job. The Target Service Plan The key upgrade from the previous report is to define the desired service before choosing all infrastructure. Germany and Switzerland demonstrate the logic: a timetable can reveal where speed, passing tracks, terminal capacity or additional platforms are actually needed. Toronto should adopt a Target Service Plan for 2051 and use it as the operating specification for business cases. Layer Mature planning target Purpose / rule Status HSR trunk Planning target: at least 2 trains/hour on mature core intercity markets; infrastructure should test higher combined capacity near Toronto. Long intercity trips; sparse stops; reserved-seat/premium model possible. Scenario until Alto/western business case sets service plan. GO core rapid rail 15

minutes or better on current core segments. Turn-up-and-go regional rail; local and express patterns where capacity supports. Current Metrolinx program objective. Outer GO / regional express 30-minute or better all-day as a planning objective on key outer markets, timed to core pulses. Barrie, outer Kitchener, Hamilton/Niagara and other longer-distance markets. Requires corridor-specific operations/business case. Frequent Regional Express Bus 15 minutes or better on qualifying trunk corridors. Cross-region markets not served by 15-minute rail; managed lanes/direct stations.

2041 Rtp

concept; can be advanced incrementally. Priority Bus / BRT / LRT 10-15 minutes all day on high-demand corridors. Fill grid gaps and feed rail hubs. Metrolinx/municipal framework. Local / access Frequent urban feeders where demand; guaranteed timed connections in lower-density outer areas. First/last mile, paratransit, cycling/walking and on-demand. Local agency delivery.

A 15-minute label should mean a network has the capacity to provide that service, not that every outer station is promised 15-minute trains regardless of demand or infrastructure. Figure 5. Illustrative pulse-timetable concept. Fixed departure/arrival rhythms make transfers predictable and reveal infrastructure needs. The Toronto Region Pulse Timetable At major hubs, long-distance services should be designed to meet one another at repeatable minutes. A half-hour pulse can align HSR, outer GO express services and Regional Express Bus, while 15-minute core rapid transit fills the intervals. The point is not that every train must depart at exactly :00 and :30; the point is a repeating pattern that travellers can understand and planners can design around. This improves three things simultaneously: transfer time, network legibility and capital discipline. If a desired pulse cannot be met

because of a junction conflict or platform shortage, the infrastructure gap becomes explicit. That is a stronger investment test than building an asset and designing the timetable afterward. Sources: [DE-TAKT] Deutschlandtakt. [CH-TIME] Swiss clock-face/direct-transport materials. [MX-RTP] frequent network and integration principles.

Union, Pearson and Airport Integration

National and Intercity Rail Keep HSR downtown, protect through-running, and make the western corridor a national business case rather than a municipal promise.

Union: From Terminal to Through Hub Union remains the strongest primary HSR anchor because downtown is the largest concentration of jobs, destinations and connecting transit. But the correct public position is not "put Alto on an existing Union platform." It is "protect a dedicated HSR station solution at, below or immediately

adjacent to the Union Station District while safeguarding future east-west through-running." Madrid supplies a direct precedent for the importance of this geometry: the standard-gauge high-speed tunnel between Chamartin and Atocha turned formerly separate terminal networks into a single transversal HSR network. London provides the regional analogue: the Elizabeth line uses through-running across a central trunk so western and eastern suburban services do not all terminate at the edge of downtown. Figure 6. Through-running is an irreversible geometry decision.

Protecting the path is cheaper than rebuilding a terminal later. PUBLIC WORDING Advocate for a dedicated high-speed rail station solution in the Union Station District, integrated with GO, TTC, VIA, UP Express and the Ontario Line, with a protected future path west to Pearson, Waterloo Region, London and Windsor. Sources: [ALTO] Alto says the western segment begins in downtown Toronto and identifies Union/surroundings as a strong connectivity candidate. [MX-UNION] Union capacity works target up to 80 trains/hour. [MADRID-HSR] Adif through tunnel. [LON-ELIZ] TfL Elizabeth line. Pearson: A Regional Gateway, Not an Airport Siding Pearson should be planned as an airport-employment-regional interchange. Frankfurt demonstrates the value of combining regional rail and long-distance rail at the airport; Tokyo and Singapore show that airport access works best when it is part of a broader network

rather than a standalone shuttle. The Pearson study should compare a terminal-integrated HSR station with an airport-edge station connected to terminals by a high-capacity people mover.

If HSR is airport-edge rather than terminal-integrated, the accessible platform-to-terminal transfer should target about 10 minutes or less under normal operations, with weather protection, baggage-friendly circulation and protected connection reliability. Western HSR: Keep the station set, tighten the business case The strongest current physical station set remains Union - Pearson/West GTA - one Waterloo Region Gateway - London - Chatham-Kent - Windsor. But the final corridor business case must test a Hamilton/Burlington southern alternative rather than assuming the Waterloo alignment is always superior. The alternative should be scored on total ridership, travel time, airport integration, engineering complexity, population/jobs served, construction cost, land impact, network effects and the ability to connect the technology/manufacturing corridor.

Figure 7. Build the station network but protect express value with differentiated stopping patterns. Station / market Recommended role Universal stop? Gate 1 question Union District National downtown anchor / through hub Yes Which Union/adjacent geometry maximizes access and future through capacity at acceptable cost? Pearson / West GTA Airport + employment + west-GTA gateway No Terminal-integrated or airport-edge? What is total passenger transfer time? Waterloo Region Gateway Technology/manufacturing/education region Usually Kitchener Central vs Pinebush/Cambridge vs any better site; geometry vs catchment. London Core southwestern hub Yes How to preserve downtown access without excessive urban speed penalty? Chatham-Kent Regional/agri-industrial access No Station with through tracks and selective service; ridership vs stop penalty. Windsor Western anchor / border economy Yes Downtown-

adjacent site with future Detroit interface safeguard. Hamilton/Burlington Alternative alignment comparator + regional intercity market TBD Does a southern HSR alignment outperform the Waterloo route, or is frequent regional intercity rail the better role? Why every train should not stop everywhere The existing engineering screen remains useful. At a 300 km/h planning envelope with the campaign acceleration/braking assumptions, an intermediate stop costs roughly six minutes including braking, dwell and re-acceleration. The exact value will change with the selected train, grades, curves, signalling, platform approach and winter margins, but the conclusion does not: stopping patterns are an operating decision, not a station-construction decision. A mature western corridor should test at least three service families: Western Express (Union-Waterloo-London-Windsor), Airport/Intercity (add

Pearson) and Regional HSR (add Chatham-Kent). Infrastructure should support overtakes or timetable separation where necessary rather than forcing one universal pattern. Sources: [TLA-1] prior report engineering screen. [ALTO] rolling stock still in market sounding; 300+ km/h standard. [MADRID-HSR]/[FRA-AIR] station/through-running precedents.

High-Speed Rail and Intercity Corridor

Regional Rail and Rapid Transit Turn GO from a commuter railway into a regional rapid-rail network without pretending every corridor is HSR.

GO Expansion Is the Backbone Current GO Expansion should be treated as the backbone of the regional strategy. The program is building the capacity for 15-minute-or-better, two-way all-day service on core segments of five major corridors. The best campaign contribution is not to duplicate those tracks. It is to define what express/local patterns, outer-region service, pulse connections and station access should be added around them. The Netherlands is a useful reference class: on key corridors, high-frequency Intercity and Sprinter services share a network while infrastructure projects and freight routing are designed around the service pattern. Seoul GTX shows that sparse-stop regional express rail can occupy a legitimate market between local rail and HSR. Tokyo shows that through-service between operators can reduce transfers when technical standards and agreements allow it. Corridor

2026 baseline / gap Recommended enhancement Lakeshore West 15-min core to Burlington; regional service toward Hamilton; major freight/passenger corridor. Make Burlington-Hamilton a timed regional-intercity extension; protect Niagara service growth; integrate with Hamilton LRT/BRT and regional buses. Lakeshore East 15-min core to Oshawa; Bowmanville extension planned separately. Create Durham regional hub logic at Oshawa/Bowmanville; connect to 407 orbital and express bus. Kitchener 15-min core to Bramalea; farther service constrained by corridor/ownership/infrastructure. Express/local overlay to Guelph/Kitchener/Waterloo; integrate with HSR Gateway if western HSR proceeds. Barrie 15-min core target to Aurora; outer line to Barrie. Barrie GO Express overlay with selective stops and overtakes/passing where business case supports; do not call it HSR. Stouffville 15-min core to Unionville.

Express/local pattern toward Markham/Stouffville; connect orbital at Unionville/Markham. Richmond Hill Not part of current 15-min core program; flood/corridor constraints. Bridge/Yonge North becomes major northern gateway; improve GO service where justified without assuming 15-minute rail. Milton Freight-owned/constrained; old RTP noted major infrastructure and potential freight corridor need. Use express bus / managed lanes as immediate network layer; undertake passenger-freight capacity business case before promising 15-min rail. Barrie Regional Express - reframe as an overlay The north-south idea is strongest when it is explicitly an operational overlay on GO Expansion. A candidate express pattern can test Union - Downsview Park - one Vaughan gateway - Aurora - Newmarket - Bradford - Barrie South - Allandale Waterfront while local trains serve intermediate stations. The correct target

is a P50 timetable derived from actual acceleration, stops, overtakes and track capacity - not a political round number.

Seoul GTX demonstrates the market for sparse-stop metropolitan express rail, but Toronto should first extract that value from GO infrastructure already being built before considering a separate deep-bore regional express system. Hamilton and Niagara - a missing regional-intercity spine The previous report focused on the Waterloo-London-Windsor corridor, but a best-in-region plan must also strengthen the southwest/lakeshore spine. Hamilton is a major employment, education and health centre; Niagara is an important tourism, border and population market. The recommended role is high-frequency regional/intercity rail, not automatic HSR. The western HSR business case must still test the Hamilton/Burlington alternative alignment so that the final decision is evidence-based. Milton - the case for bus-first honesty The old 2041 RTP itself warned that 15-minute Milton rail would require extensive

track works and might require a new freight rail corridor. That is exactly where a world-reference plan should resist map inflation. Until passenger/freight capacity is solved, frequent Regional Express Bus on managed highway infrastructure can improve access sooner, while rail remains a formal business-case lane rather than an unfunded promise. Sources: [MX-GO] current GO Expansion core segments. [MX-RTP] pp. 60-65 and Milton/freight discussion. [NL-PHS] Netherlands. [SEOUL-GTX] GTX-A. [TOKYO-THRU] Tokyo Metro.

Orbital and Bus-First Network

The Orbital and Bus-First Network

Build cross-region connectivity early with Regional Express Bus; let observed demand determine when dedicated transitway or rail is justified.

Why the 407 Orbital Should Start as Bus, Not Rail The 2018 RTP already proposed Frequent Regional Express Bus using managed lanes and Highway 407, including direct ramps and high-quality stations close to the highway. It explicitly stated that improved 407 stations and connections could be implemented before a dedicated transitway. That is a remarkably strong starting point for the Gigacity orbital. The Paris and Copenhagen orbitals show what dedicated orbital rail can accomplish in dense, mature urban markets. They also show why Toronto should not jump directly to the most expensive mode. Grand Paris Line 15 alone expects more than 1.5 million daily passengers; Copenhagen Cityringen has 17 stations in only 15.5 km. The 407 corridor is longer, more dispersed and already has a reliable tolled highway. The mode should scale with real demand. Figure 8. Orbital staging: demand first, mode

second. Stage 1 - 407 Regional Express Bus The first orbital should be an operating service, not a megaproject. Use Highway 407 and managed lanes to run fast east-west buses between major north-south corridors. The key engineering moves are direct access ramps, stations on or immediately adjacent to the highway, off-board payment, level boarding, weather protection, real-time information and timed transfers. Avoid long deviations into terminals that destroy through travel time. A first network should test strong interchange markets such as Burlington/Oakville - Mississauga/Brampton - Highway 407/Vaughan - Bridge/Richmond Hill - Markham/Unionville - Durham. Exact routes should come from current origin-destination data, not the 2018 map. Bridge Station becomes the northern hinge Bridge Station is unusually important because it can join Line 1, Richmond Hill GO, GO buses, Viva/YRT and a

future 407 Transitway. Current Metrolinx forecasts roughly 35,000 people within walking distance, 36,900 daily bus transfers and more than 9,000 nearby jobs by 2041. In the combined network it becomes the hinge between the north-south spine and the orbital.

When should the orbital graduate to rail? Trigger Evidence before upgrade Reliability Buses cannot meet published travel-time/reliability standard even with managed lanes/direct ramps. Passenger volume Observed peak passenger flow consistently exceeds BRT capacity or would require impractical bus volumes. Operating cost Lifecycle cost per passenger of higher-capacity mode becomes competitive after capital cost and renewal are included. Land / interchange readiness Protected right-of-way and station areas can accommodate the mode without destructive acquisition. Network effect Upgrade materially improves transfers with Barrie/Yonge/Stouffville/Lakeshore/Kitchener corridors. Funding / owner Provincial owner, operating model and capital stack are defined; City is not treated as sole funder. ORBITAL RULE Do not build a rail line to prove demand. Use bus to prove demand, then build the right rail where demand has already demonstrated itself. Sources: [MX-RTP] pp. 65-66 and Appendix 5. [MX-407] Yonge North EPR/407 Transitway: central 23-km segment planned initially as BRT with future LRT conversion. [PARIS-GPE]. [CPH-RING].

Complete-Journey Accessibility

The Complete Journey

One journey, one account, accessible transfers, station districts and measurable opportunity.

One Journey Toronto Region

The 2041 RTP was right to focus on fare integration, first/last mile and traveller experience. Switzerland and Tokyo show the next level: the user should not have to understand the institutional boundaries of the network. Toronto does not need one operator, but it does need one journey.

One Journey element Recommended standard

Account / payment One account-based payment identity across TTC, GO and partner local transit; HSR can preserve separate fare/reservation rules while appearing in the same journey. Itinerary One trip planner across local transit, GO, HSR, bike-share/on-demand and accessible services. Timetable Coordinated pulse connections and transfer windows; service planning across agencies rather than independent schedules. Transfer protection Where a reserved HSR/express connection is sold as one itinerary, disruption rules should define rebooking/holding/assistance. Accessibility The accessible path must be measured separately: walking distance, elevators, vertical travel, transfer time and failure contingency. Real-time information One disruption layer; agencies hand off incidents rather than leaving passengers to reconcile contradictory alerts. Wayfinding Consistent regional symbols, naming and

platform information even when operators differ. From route kilometres to 30/60/90 access Singapore frames transport around time to opportunity; the 2041 RTP modelled jobs reachable within 60 minutes. The next Toronto region plan should institutionalize that approach. Every major network option should publish how many homes, jobs, schools, hospitals, universities, airports and other essential destinations become reachable within 30, 60 and 90 minutes by a reliable, accessible door-to-door journey. Figure 9. Accessibility is a better network KPI than route kilometres alone.

A Station Access Standard Metric What to publish for every major hub Platform-to-platform time Median and accessible transfer time between major modes; number of vertical movements. Walk/cycle catchment Population/jobs within realistic all-season walking and cycling distance, not just a geometric radius. Local transit access Feeder frequency, span of service, on-time reliability and directness. Weather protection Covered transfer length, heated/sheltered waiting where appropriate, snow/ice maintenance standard. Parking / pick-up Priced and managed as one access mode, not the default design driver. Baggage / family accessibility Elevator dimensions, stroller/luggage path, washrooms and seating. Failure resilience Alternative route if elevator, escalator or local feeder fails. Station districts: learn from Hong Kong, do not imitate blindly MTR demonstrates that station-area development can

both increase ridership and help finance rail when the railway has actual development rights and a legal mechanism to share property value. Toronto should adopt the integration principle but reject generic "land value will pay for it" claims. Each hub needs a specific land inventory, planning framework, market value, ownership structure and cash-flow pathway. LAND-VALUE RULE Value capture is a project-specific capital instrument, not a universal balancing item. If no enforceable development right or cash flow exists, the value is not funding. Sources: [MX-RTP] fare integration, first/last mile, design excellence and accessibility. [SG-LTMP] time-based outcomes. [CH-TIME] integrated ticket/timetable. [TOKYO-THRU]. [HK-RP] Rail + Property.

Freight and Goods Movement

Goods Movement and Capacity A prosperous region must move people and goods. Passenger plans that ignore freight are incomplete.

Make Freight a Parallel Network

The 2041 RTP explicitly called for a Regional Strategic Goods Movement Network and recognized that rail corridors face rising passenger and freight demand. This is especially relevant to the Kitchener/Milton/Lakeshore systems, Pearson cargo, major CN/CP intermodal facilities and the Windsor-Detroit trade gateway. The Netherlands offers a direct lesson: high-frequency passenger rail is enabled partly by deliberate freight routing and infrastructure separation. Alto also identifies a freight benefit from dedicated passenger tracks: removing intercity passenger trains from shared freight lines can free capacity and improve reliability. Figure 10. The passenger network must be overlaid with a separate freight/cargo capacity model before corridor commitments are made. Regional freight rules Rule Planning implication Do not consume freight capacity invisibly Every new passenger frequency on

shared corridors must show the freight path/capacity consequence. Separate where the operating mix becomes incompatible Electrified frequent passenger rail, heavy freight and express services may require dedicated tracks or rationalization. Protect intermodal gateways Pearson cargo, CN/CP yards, ports and Windsor border logistics need reliable highway/rail connectors. Use off-peak and urban consolidation Urban freight hubs, parcel pickup and off-peak delivery can reduce core congestion. Track freight outcomes Publish truck/rail travel reliability, terminal access, delay and conflict metrics alongside passenger KPIs. Coordinate capital packages Passenger rail benefits should not be financed by shifting hidden capacity costs onto freight operators or the economy. Milton and the freight conflict Milton is the clearest stress test. The old RTP already warned that frequent service would

require extensive infrastructure and potentially a new freight corridor. The best plan therefore keeps two lanes alive: a near-term bus/managed-lane network for passengers, and a formal rail capacity/freight rationalization business case. That is more credible than announcing a frequency that the corridor cannot yet support. Sources: [MX-RTP] Strategy 3 goods-movement and passenger/freight separation. [NL-PHS] ProRail high-frequency passenger + freight-routing program. [ALTO] dedicated passenger tracks/freight-capacity benefit.

Regional Service Plan and Pulse Timetable

Engineering, Operations and Delivery A great map is not an executable railway. The operating plan, power, fleet, depots, interfaces, procurement and business case must agree.

Service-First Engineering The new world-reference architecture changes the order of work. Instead of beginning with a preferred line on a map, begin with a target service: frequency, stopping pattern, journey time, transfer pulse, reliability and service span. Then determine the infrastructure required to operate it. This is the strongest lesson from Deutschlandtakt and high-frequency Dutch rail. For HSR this means exact acceleration/braking curves, block/signalling headways, junction conflicts, turnback/through-running, maintenance windows and depot access. For GO it means express/local overtakes, platform assignments, core capacity and freight interfaces. For Regional Express Bus it means managed-lane reliability, ramp delay, station dwell and terminal circulation. Rolling stock and technology envelopes System Do now Do not claim yet Alto / western HSR Use 300-320 km/h reference

envelope; winterization, accessibility and trainset length as market-sounding requirements. A specific train vendor, exact acceleration curve or fixed timetable before procurement. GO rapid rail Design service around electrification and new fleet capability; simulate express/local patterns. That every outer segment will receive the same 15-minute service as the core. Regional Express Bus Specify high-capacity zero/low-emission fleet, level boarding, luggage where airport role requires, real-time operations. That BRT or rail is automatically required before bus performance is measured. Orbital higher capacity Protect geometry and utility envelopes. A specific LRT/metro technology before demand triggers are met. Power, depots, maintenance and winter Rail power and depot requirements must enter the Toronto Capacity Budget rather than appear late in design. HSR traction power, GO

electrification, maintenance depots and station-area development all compete for land and grid interfaces. Winter design must cover catenary/overhead systems, switches, snow/ice control, platform heating where appropriate, drainage, salt/corrosion, fleet HVAC and recovery margins. Combine the two best project-control systems Metrolinx uses business cases organized around Strategic, Economic, Financial and Deliverability/Operations questions. every gate carries all four cases, with progressively tighter evidence.

Figure 11. Business-case lenses sit inside the Gate 0-5 maturity process. Gate Minimum evidence Gate 0 - Policy Human outcome, jurisdiction, service problem, network role and alternatives are defined. Gate 1 - Initial Business Case Strategic/economic/financial/deliverability cases; reference-class range; target service; route/site alternatives. Gate 2 - Preliminary Design Case Quantities, corridor/site constraints, utilities, operations simulation, cost class, schedule, lifecycle, environmental/Indigenous work. Gate 3 - Full Business Case / Procurement Approvals, market-tested cost, risk allocation, escalation, procurement model, operating owner, funding agreements. Gate 4 - Delivery Cost/schedule/change orders, safety, quality, community disruption, supply chain, testing. Gate 5 - In service Actual journey time/reliability/accessibility/ridership, O&M; lifecycle

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condition, benefits realization and lessons. The 12 studies that make the plan executable Study Decision it must resolve

Toronto HSR Terminal + Through-Running Union/adjacent/East Harbour geometry, access time, platform operations, westwa

Western HSR Corridor Alternatives Waterloo/Pearson route vs Hamilton/Burlington alternative, normalized benefits/cost

Western HSR Service Simulation Train-specific performance, stopping patterns, fleet cycles, headways and recovery.

Waterloo Gateway Site Selection Kitchener vs Pinebush/Cambridge vs other viable site using complete-journey scoring.

Pearson Regional Gateway HSR location, LIFT/UP/GO/local interfaces, airport-worker access and terminal transfer stand

GO Express/Local Target Service Plan Barrie, Kitchener, Stouffville, Lakeshore and outer services; overtakes/passing/

Milton Passenger-Freight Capacity Case Rail expansion, ownership/freight implications and interim Regional Express Bu

407 Regional Express Bus + Orbital Staging Updated OD demand, direct stations/ramps, first operating routes, BRT/rail triggers.

Hamilton-Niagara Regional Intercity Frequency, travel times, rolling stock, terminal/station interfaces and HSR alter

Regional Pulse Timetable Common node minutes, transfer windows, service spans, night network and infrastructure

constraints.

Regional Accessibility + Station Atlas 30/60/90 access, station catchments, housing/jobs, accessible transfer burden

gaps.

Goods Movement + Rail Capacity Model Freight clusters, CN/CP train paths, intermodal gateways, passenger/freight sep

resilience. STUDY RULE A study exists to reveal when the preferred answer is wrong, not to decorate the answer already chosen. Sources: [MX business-case framework] Metrolinx business-case guidance. [DE-TAKT]. [NL-PHS]. [TLA-1] prior Gate framework.

Delivery, Jurisdiction and Business-Case Gates

A 25-Year Action Plan What Toronto can lead now, what Ontario/Canada must own, and what future Councils should decide only after evidence matures.

2027-2051 Delivery Sequence Figure 12. The recommended sequence keeps the first term focused on decisions and enabling work that preserve future value. Horizon Toronto / regional action Partner-led action Do not claim 2027-2030 Adopt target service plan and 30/60/90 dashboard; complete-journey station standards; Union/Pearson readiness; municipal station-area plans; 407 express-bus pilots; freight/accessibility atlas. Alto Toronto studies; GO Expansion delivery; western HSR joint business case; orbital corridor refresh; GO express simulations. No City-funded HSR build; no fixed western opening date; no rail orbital before demand evidence. 2031-2035 Build local access, housing/utilities and station districts around approved hubs; implement service

integration and pulse timetable elements. GO electrification/express-local enabling; dedicated highway bus stations/BRT segments; HSR

preliminary design/EA/land if approved. No single-point megaproject cost until design maturity supports it. 2036-2040 Deliver municipal interfaces and capacity upgrades in sequence with major works. Potential western HSR packages after FID; high-priority orbital transitway; freight rationalization/capacity packages. Do not let station-area growth outrun grid/water/transit capacity. 2041-2051 Refresh targets at least every five years; scale only demonstrated network gaps. Network completion, through-running opportunities, higher-capacity orbital sections, possible cross-border study. Do not lock future Councils into obsolete mode or technology choices.

Who owns what? Work package Toronto / municipalities Ontario / Metrolinx Canada / Alto / others Union / HSR interface Streets, local transit, station district, municipal infrastructure, accessibility. GO/Union integration, provincial interfaces. HSR station/track systems, national business case, regulation/funding. Western HSR Coalition, land-use readiness, local stations. Major partner, corridor/utility/transport coordination. Federal/HSR owner lead on development, rail systems and funding structure. GO rapid rail Station access, local transit, TOD. Lead infrastructure, service and operations through Metrolinx/GO. Potential capital funding. 407 orbital Local interchanges, municipal transit feeders, land use. Lead corridor/managed lanes/transitway. Potential infrastructure funding. Freight Local roads/industrial lands/curb rules. GGH goods movement, highways, provincial rail interfaces. Federal trade/border/rail policy; CN/CP/private operators. Windsor-Detroit safeguard Advocacy only. Ontario/Windsor integration. Canada/US/Michigan/border agencies for any actual project.

First-term governing commitments

A mayoral platform should commit to the work Toronto can lawfully lead, not promise to procure national railways. The first term can create a Toronto Region Mobility Evidence Table; convene Canada/Ontario/Metrolinx/municipal partners; protect Union through-running and Pearson gateway requirements; make station-area infrastructure project-ready; advocate for the western HSR business case; launch the 407 Regional Express Bus partnership; and publish an annual accessibility, travel-time and project-maturity dashboard. PUBLIC PROMISE Build forward from the regional system already underway, make it work as one network, and prepare the missing intercity connections so future governments can say yes to projects that are ready rather than ideas that are merely exciting.

Conclusion - The Toronto Region as One Connected

System The world-reference review does not produce a single foreign model to copy. It produces a better operating philosophy. Paris proves the power of an orbital where density is high. London, Madrid and Tokyo prove the value of through-running and cross-network integration. Singapore proves the value of time-based outcomes. Seoul proves the value of a distinct regional-express layer. Germany and Switzerland prove that timetables and transfers should drive infrastructure. The Netherlands proves that frequent passenger service and freight capacity must be planned together. Frankfurt proves an airport can be a national rail gateway. Hong Kong proves land use and rail finance can reinforce each other when the legal rights are real. Applied to Toronto, the answer is not "more rail everywhere." It is a layered network that assigns the cheapest effective mode to each job, designs services

before infrastructure, protects future through paths, creates high-quality transfer hubs, measures complete journeys and refuses to call a project executable before its authority, funding, operations and lifecycle are known. The western HSR proposal remains compelling as a national study direction. It becomes stronger - not weaker - when it sits on top of a mature GO, subway, BRT, Regional Express Bus and goods-movement system. The 407 orbital becomes more practical when buses build the market before rail. North-south travel becomes more credible when it is framed as GO express service rather than a second HSR promise. Union becomes more future-proof when through-running is protected now. Pearson becomes more valuable when it is treated as a regional employment and national rail gateway, not just an airport station.

Final Network

RULE Fast where distance demands it. Frequent where daily life demands it. Connected where the region demands it. Build the timetable, then build what the timetable needs. as the controlling rail strategy, then feed its twelve studies and service targets into the Decision Ledger and Engineering & Logistics Control System.

Implementation and Delivery

First 100 Days

The opening 100 days focus on complete-journey data, Union/Pearson integration, construction coordination and a formal Toronto advocacy position for the high-speed rail corridor and western extension.

- Publish complete-journey baseline measures for representative trips.
- Convene TTC, Metrolinx and City staff on priority interface and through-journey problems.
- Define Toronto station-access requirements for Alto and future western HSR.
- Request a formal western-corridor screening/business-case process with Ontario and Canada.
- Identify corridor and interchange protection actions within municipal planning authority.

2027-2030 First-Term Action Plan

During 2027-2030, Toronto improves the trips it directly influences while advancing partner business cases and agreements for Union, Pearson, GO/TTC integration and the national high-speed rail spine.

Phase	Action	Lead / authority	Resident result
Measure	Complete-journey travel, accessibility and transfer burden	TTC / Transportation / partners	Investment decisions reflect what riders experience.
Integrate	TTC-GO-Union-Pearson service and information interfaces	City / TTC / Metrolinx / airport partners	Fewer avoidable transfer penalties.
Protect	Future corridors and station interfaces	City / Province	Options remain available while business cases mature.
Advocate	Toronto-led high-speed rail corridor and western extension	Mayor / Canada / Ontario / Alto	Toronto requirements are represented in partner decisions.
Plan	Station districts as housing, jobs and public-realm hubs	City Planning / partners	Rail investment supports city-building rather than isolated terminals.

2031-2051 Long-Term Direction

The long-range mobility direction is a Toronto centred on fast, accessible regional and intercity connections, with future corridor and station decisions proceeding only through proper business cases and partner approvals.

- Pursue a high-speed rail spine only through successful federal-provincial business cases, environmental review, financing and procurement.
- Design regional services as a hierarchy: local, rapid transit, regional rail, intercity and high speed each perform distinct roles.
- Preserve freight and goods-movement capacity as passenger service expands.

Risks and dependencies

Risk	Specific mitigation
Prestige project crowds out useful service	Require service-plan and complete-journey tests before major infrastructure commitments.
Jurisdiction is overstated	Label Toronto-controlled work separately from Metrolinx, Ontario, Canada, airport and rail decisions.
Station design creates transfer penalties	Use through-running, walking, vertical-travel and accessibility measures in design requirements.
Travel-time claims overpromise	Publish methodology and ranges; update only when official business cases support them.
Freight capacity is harmed	Include goods movement as a co-equal network constraint.

Review and renewal

Mobility initiatives will be reviewed against travel outcomes and partner business cases; corridor advocacy will change as federal/provincial project decisions become clearer.

Accountability and Public Reporting

Performance framework

Mobility reporting will track complete-journey travel time, reliability, accessibility, transfer quality, construction disruption and the status of partner-led rail business cases and agreements.

Metric	Baseline	Target / direction	Horizon	Responsible body	Reporting
Representative complete-journey travel time	Establish baseline	Improve	First term	TTC / Transportation / partners	Annual
Transfer and vertical-travel burden	Establish station baselines	Reduce where projects intervene	Project-specific	TTC / Metrolinx	Project reporting
Jobs/homes reachable in 30/60/90 minutes	Existing modelling where available	Increase	Long term	Transportation / partners	Annual
HSR partner milestones	Partner baseline	Advance formal business-case and interface decisions	First term	Mayor / intergovernmental	Semi-annual

Sources and Notes

Primary public sources are listed by organization and title. Campaign commitments, targets, scenarios and long-range aspirations are distinguished from adopted government policy throughout the report.

- [Transport Canada - Alto](#)
- [Metrolinx - Regional Transportation Plan](#)
- [Metrolinx - GO Expansion](#)