

## **Metrolinx not backpedaling on all-day GO, Mayor says**

By Adam Carter CBC news June 5, 2013

Hamilton's mayor is still championing all day GO train service in Hamilton and says Metrolinx is not backpedaling on the issue — even though the city is not getting the service the province promised back in 2011.

But opposition politicians say the Liberal promise to the city is proving to have been an empty one, made to help it win an election.

“I would not categorize this as shifting stance,” Mayor Bob Bratina, a strong advocate of all-day go service for Hamilton, told CBC Hamilton. “Metrolinx through the GO management team is dealing with a complex multi-jurisdictional project. The specific outcomes and timelines are difficult to predict as evidenced by the rollout of the Big Move.”

In 2011, then-premier Dalton McGuinty promised two-way, all-day GO Train service for Hamilton in time for the 2015 Pan Am games — with Bratina sharing his stage. Bratina has often put all-day GO as the city's top priority in his dealings with the province ahead of LRT, much to the frustration of members of council.

But now, Metrolinx can't say exactly when that service will come to the city. The provincial transit agency is “committed” to bringing all-day GO train service to Hamilton “in the future,” says spokesperson Malon Edwards, but he could not be more specific.

**'You can't expect people to organize their lives based on two or three trains.'**—PC Transportation and Infrastructure **Critic Frank Klees**

Instead of the all-day service that had been promised, Metrolinx is working to bring more “peak period service during the morning and afternoons” to Hamilton by 2015, he says. That means four extra trains daily from the new station planned on James Street North.

“Currently, we are working with CN and the city of Hamilton to develop the infrastructure requirements and staging plan to introduce increased levels of service in Hamilton beyond 2015,” Edwards said. “Negotiations are underway with CN to secure access to the rail tracks to finalize the number and timing of trains.” CN and GO share the tracks heading to the new station.

Bratina told CBC Hamilton that he would “love to have” all-day GO service even before the 2015 Pan Am games. “We've already seen GO-related development near the new station,” he said. “The planned Stoney Creek station would also stimulate growth in that hub, and take cars off the QEW.”

Edwards made no mention of a Stoney Creek development for GO's future plans in Hamilton.

## Backtracking is 'obvious,' NDP says

Even if the Mayor doesn't think so, provincial NDP leader Adrea Horwath says it's "obvious" that Metrolinx is backtracking on all-day GO in Hamilton.

"The thing that's frustrating is these are the kinds of things that make people cynical about politicians - unfulfilled election campaign promises that don't get followed up on," Horwath told CBC Hamilton.

She also took the government to task for asking people in Hamilton to pay more to fund "The Big Move" while at the same time not providing the service that was promised.

Last month, Metrolinx recommended new fees that will total about \$500 per average household to raise the \$2-billion needed annually to fund public transit in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Metrolinx has recommended hiking the HST, raising the gas tax, creating a business parking levy and adding to development cost charges to raise the funds.

"People are being told they have to pay up, and at the same time they're being told that the two-way, all-day service that was promised for Hamilton by GO is not going to happen," Horwath said. "So why would people want to buy in to the government's plan if they're being told that Hamilton is being cut out of the loop on something that was promised years ago?"

## Combating gridlock

All-day GO train service should be considered a basic service to communities in the GTHA if we want to do something about gridlock, says PC Transportation and Infrastructure Critic Frank Klees. He says congestion exists because people don't have enough reliable alternatives.

"And one way to give people that reliable alternative is all-day GO train service," he said. "You can't expect people to organize their lives based on two or three trains."

Klees says all-day GO train service was just a promise that was pulled out when it was "politically expedient."

"Then it gets lost in the shuffle," he said.

"I think people are getting tired of this, and at some point, they're going to stop believing these people."