

Brantford on Track: Paving the way for GO Rail Extension



Table of Contents

Introduction Letter from Mayor Davis	3
Problem and Opportunity	4
The Opportunity	5
Living Here.....	6
Executive Summary: The Case for Change.....	8
The Case for Change Analysis	9
Strategic Case	13
Brantford Station Parking Capacity	20
Sustainable Communities	21
Strategic Case Summary	22
Brantford’s Economy	23
Unlocking Regional Growth: Post-Secondary Institutions.....	27
Unlocking Regional Growth: Tourism Growth.....	29
Appendices	
Chamber of Commerce Support.....	31
Wilfrid Laurier University Support	32
Conestoga College Support.....	33
MPP Bouma Support	34



Introduction Letter from Mayor Davis

*Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
Ministry of Transportation
5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8*

Dear Minister Sarkaria,

On behalf of the City of Brantford, it is my sincere pleasure to submit the attached GO Transit service proposal to the Ministry of Transportation.

The City of Brantford has been identified as a major growth community, including being named one of Canada's best locations to invest for the fourth consecutive year, and is expected to continue growing at an above provincial average growth rate. For many of our constituents, Brantford is the perfect location because of the close proximity to major cities including Toronto, Hamilton, London, and Mississauga, whereby residents enjoy living, learning and raising families in Brantford while maintaining employment in larger nearby cities. These constituents rely heavily on passenger rail to commute.

Our office has been contacted by a significant number of residents who have expressed their need for a more affordable, consistent, and reliable commuter service connection to employment and studies in surrounding cities, specifically within the Greater Toronto Area. .

Brantford is ready.

I trust you agree that this is a win-win situation for us locally and provincially. A GO Station in Brantford is inevitable, with substantial GO revenue on the horizon and Brantford's alignment with the GTHA vision as a community. Brantford is ready, willing, and able to support and foster economic growth as the gateway to Southwest Ontario.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Kevin Davis, Mayor of Brantford



Problem and Opportunity

Investing in Regional Transportation to Realize and Manage Urban Growth in Brantford/Brant/Six Nations on the Grand

THE PROBLEM:

The current go transit network cannot meet the needs of the growing region of Southwestern Ontario.

By the year 2051, Brantford's population is projected to grow nearly 60% with an expected workforce of 80, 000 people. While growth will be spread across the region, Brantford remains the quickest growing community in the southwest, with the largest concentration of jobs, new homes being built and expected to increase by more than 170% by next year.

Existing infrastructure will not be able to accommodate this growth. Much of the network is already congested today – demand for travel exceeds the network's capacity.

- 1. Congestion costs billions of dollars annually in lost productivity**
- 2. Congestion can increase travel times for drivers by up to 120%**

Our region's transportation network requires new travel choices for trips within cities, between cities and across Southwestern Ontario, from the GTA. Without investment, the region's transportation network will become a bottleneck amidst further growth and will limit our ability to achieve provincial housing targets.



The Opportunity

Brantford: A Natural Gateway to the West

Brantford is a progressive city in the province's economic heartland. Our community boasts a unique balance of amazing urban and rural amenities, modern conveniences and natural features. Our rich history is shaped by our greatest natural asset - the Grand River, as well as our proximity to major consumer and industrial markets throughout North America.

Strategically located along Highway 403 and a critical rail line, Brantford is a natural gateway to Southwestern Ontario and U.S. markets. The community is well positioned and connected to support forecasted economic and population growth within Ontario.

As a designated Urban Growth Centre in the provincial Places to Grow plan, our population is projected to grow nearly 60% from 104,688 in 2021 to 165,000 by 2051. As a result of a recent boundary expansion agreement, Brantford embodies a proactive local government, robust infrastructure network and a vast inventory of future development lands dedicated for employment and residential uses. Our Council supports development as the City strives to maintain a timely and equitable development application process for growth.

The Provincial mandate described in "A Place to Grow Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe" (August 2020 Consolidation) offers insight into the Province's desire to manage growth within delineated built-up areas (Section 2.2.2.1.a.) for certain municipalities. Brantford is named among 12 municipalities as having a target minimum of 50 percent of all residential development annually occurring within the municipality's delineated built-up area. This strategy aims to intensify housing with higher density infill development. Such a strategy requires adequate infrastructure and access to services, employment, leisure, and education resources. Of the 12 municipalities named in this section (Barrie, Brantford, Guelph, Hamilton, Orillia, Peterborough, Durham, Halton, Niagara, Peel, Waterloo, and York), only Brantford, Orillia, and Peterborough lack a GO Train Connection to the rest of the Greater Golden Horseshoe (noting that Orillia does not have active rail infrastructure to begin with). Later in the Growth Plan, the same list of municipalities is compelled to have not less than 50 net residents and jobs combined per hectare (Section 2.2.7.2.a).

In order to further support the Province's objectives with this policy statement, Brantford can leverage GO Train service to direct and manage growth in the city core. Progressive and ongoing revitalization efforts in our downtown have produced an eclectic mix of old and new. It is home to a growing post-secondary community including Wilfrid Laurier University and Conestoga College, as well as Six Nations Polytechnic.

Neighbourhoods in the city's core boast a variety of unique restaurants, shops, museums and galleries that are intermixed with a diverse student population and campus buildings offering a vibrant atmosphere for patrons and visitors, looking to experience all that a progressive urban hub has to offer.

Brantford is a gem that has long been one of Ontario's best kept secrets. With a short commute to many major cities in Ontario, Brantford offers an exceptionally unique blend of large city amenities and smalltown charm. More and more people are attracted to Brantford for its:

1. Real estate value and affordability
2. Warm, welcoming character
3. Healthy work, play and life balance
4. Beautiful natural features
5. Strong and resilient economy
6. Unique shops, restaurants, eateries
7. Transforming Downtown
8. Job opportunities within and nearby
9. Focus on quality of life/recreation
10. Emphasis on education
11. Strong labour force
12. Ideal proximity to larger provincial cities and major U.S. markets
13. Growing arts and culture scene
14. Promise of inevitable continued growth
15. Appeal as an ideal place to raise a family

Living Here

Brantford is a beautiful, charming and growing community, removed from the busyness and expense of larger centres to the east while close enough to visit most within a 90-minute drive.

Money Sense Magazine has recognized the Brantford and area market as the one of the best places to buy real estate in Canada for 6 consecutive years (6th out of 35 cities in 2020, 3rd in 2019, 1st in 2018, 3rd in 2017, 3rd in 2016, and 4th in 2015).

In 2018 Editors noted, “...Brantford has diversified its economy and thrived. Its low unemployment rate and affordable yet steadily rising housing prices pushed the city to the top spot in our annual ranking of the best places to buy property in Canada’s major urban centres.”

Additionally, in 2021, the Huffington Post ranked Brantford 3rd in its “Best Cities To Move To Near Toronto” list.

The growth of Brantford’s real estate market is driven by a number of factors. While home prices continue to climb in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), more buyers are looking to Brantford because of our smalltown feel, our amenities, our proximity to major urban centres, and our attractive mix of housing options.

Brantford is widely recognized as a place with a strong sense of community that takes great pride in building long-standing, successful relationships with our valued community partners, including 25 Neighbourhood Associations.



Expected Growth

In 2021, the City of Brantford received Minister Approval for a new Official Plan, that laid the policy framework to accommodate expected growth, and a new Zoning Bylaw that will be in place by end 2023. The City is projected to add 29,636 residential units by 2051. Of these, 14,115 will be built in the existing built boundary, mostly within 2-3km of the City's existing VIA rail train station. Currently there are 530 units in active development within 800m of the existing train station, and 5,900 units within 2km of the train station. This growth will yield (in 2021 dollars) an estimated \$350 million in new municipal infrastructure and \$6-7 Billion in new construction.

The City has a robust planning framework and Development Approvals Process system in place to facilitate the development of a GO station at the existing VIA station location.

The City's development trends support these population and unit targets with average year-over-year increases of 35% in residential units permitted over the past 5 years.

At Brantford's current pace of building homes, we are on track to exceed provincial targets by 176%, with significant growth planned within close proximity of the existing train station.

Advantage Brantford

Brantford is home to many businesses, across several sectors, each providing unique career opportunities. We are also home to a growing number of retail, service, and hospitality businesses. These provide the products, amenities, and supports that contribute to improving quality of life for our residents, and attract more people to our area.

Our diverse economy and proximity to large consumer markets offer businesses several competitive advantages that have resulted in significant investments from global investors. Our supportive municipal government continues to make great strides in shaping our city into one that is increasingly vibrant, innovative, inclusive and open for business—key factors that contribute to the community's overall attractiveness as a place where people want to invest and do business.



Executive Summary: The Case for Change

Problem Statement

“How can transit service be developed in South Western Ontario to best meet the short, medium and long-term transportation needs of local communities?”

The City of Brantford’s population is projected to grow from 106,000 in 2021 to 165,000 in 2051, resulting in an increase from 46,000 in 2021 to 80,000 in 2051 (nearly double).

As a result of the Boundary Adjustment in 2017, an additional 1,830 acres of future Employment Lands and 4,993 acres of future residential lands were added to Brantford’s boundary. In response to economic demands, particularly from the auto sector, transit ridership to and from the GTA is projected to increase as the population and the employment opportunities in the South West of the Province continue to increase. Commuters travelling from Brantford are currently limited to personal vehicles and GO Bus service.

Brantford is home to many businesses, across several sectors, each providing unique career opportunities. We are also home to a growing number of retail, service, and hospitality businesses. These provide the products, amenities, and supports that contribute to improving quality of life for our residents, and attract more people to our area.

Our diverse economy and proximity to large consumer markets offer businesses several competitive advantages that have resulted in significant investments from global investors. Our supportive municipal government continues to make great strides in shaping our city into one that is increasingly vibrant, innovative, inclusive and open for business—key factors that contribute to the community’s overall attractiveness as a place where people want to invest and do business.



The Case for Change Analysis

Driver	How does this Driver influence the problem/opportunity?	What is the impact of not addressing the problem/opportunity?
Organizational Policy	The extension of rail services to South Western Ontario is being piloted within 120 km into the fastest growing area of the Province. Expanding service into London was identified by Metrolinx as a priority project.	Not conducting a rail extension threatens to undermine existing provincial housing and employment growth objectives and cast a negative light on the province.
Transport Service Provision	Currently the City of Brantford (and area) is served by GO buses operating in intervals. The closest GO Train station is Aldershot, where they are currently experiencing full capacity parking on an average weekday. This investment has the potential to alleviate congestion and supply Brantford, The County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River while alleviating traffic congestion at the 403 and Lincoln Alexander Parkway merge point.	Aldershot GO parking supply will continue to be at capacity. Failing to address service provision (ensuring that enough services go where people want to go, when they want to go there) means that regional growth will be constrained or remain reliant on automobiles, further necessitating inefficient expansion of and capital expenditures on 400 series highways instead of higher efficiency means of moving commuters throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
Travel Behaviour	Understanding how people currently travel and the potential shifts in this behavior is a critical factor given there is a significant demand for commuting to and from our area due to a rapidly growing population and increased economic activity.	Without an alternative, Brantford and area residents will continue to heavily rely on personal vehicles for inter and intraregional travel, thus increasing congestion on the 403 between Brantford and Hamilton, particularly at the Lincoln Alexander Parkway. This travel behaviour increases emissions, and urban sprawl while people unhappily spend more time traveling and will cause future provincial governments to invest in capital investments into already inefficient transportation infrastructure.
Transport Infrastructure and Technology	Rail service offers commuters more capacity at faster speeds than current transport infrastructure and technology options provide.	Maintaining the current operation of GO Buses to Brantford will allow ridership to grow, however the extension of GO Train Service to Brantford has the potential to further increase ridership due to higher speeds, convenience, and capacity.

Congestion	Increasing travel times on the regional road network is leading to declining reliability, in effect, pressuring Brantford and area residents to travel for longer amounts of time than previously required. A long term solution is needed to mitigate these negative trends.	South Western Ontario Regional travel times will continue to increase, reducing accessibility, limiting economic development opportunities, increasing greenhouse gas emissions and negatively impacting overall quality of life. Addressing this factor in the future will also require significant capital investments by the Province.
Demographic Change	A rapidly growing population intensifies pressure on the transport network, contributing to increased congestion and pollution, particularly from excessive automobile use.	Not addressing the problem will make the 403-corridor a less attractive place to live, work and do business that, ultimately, reduces prosperity of the region and overall quality of life.
Economic Activity	Growth in jobs and changes in the nature of work, primarily brought about by automation and communication technologies dramatically increases demand for public transit. For example, there is tremendous growth in the Electric Vehicles industry in South Western Ontario, that we expect will add to the net number of residents and jobs in our area.	If the transit network is not improved, the region may not be able to accommodate the expected growth in jobs, or provide the quality of mobility that fosters productivity and economic development.
Government Policy and Planning	Neighbouring municipalities, including Woodstock and London, have also identified this rail extension as a priority and have incorporated it into their regional transit planning to enable future growth and enhanced accessibility.	Municipal secondary plans and site plans for proposed station sites will be compromised without GO Rail stations; the core of several of these plans, as will provincial policy statements regarding growth targets for the implicated municipalities.
Land Use	Transportation investment policies and programs must be intrinsically linked with land use policies and programs to plan for sustainable future communities.	Inadequate coordination between land use planning and transit network improvements can lead to imbalances in transit demand and capacity, ultimately impacting people's mobility choices and opportunities.

Status Quo

Without this necessary investment, GO Rail services will continue to terminate at Aldershot station with connections via bus service as the only option to a rapidly growing population of commuters.

With the projected growth in South Western Ontario, in particular along the 403-corridor, a GO Train extension into Brantford will accommodate the expected increase in commuters, offering rail service operating to Union Station. With populations expected to grow by more than 50,000 by 2051, challenges in the regional transportation system are inevitable. Without investment, South Western Ontario will be unable to support a high quality of life, increased prosperity and sustainability.

Strategic Value

There are three key ways that the extension of GO Transit to Brantford can benefit the region:

1. Quality of Life

The GO Train extension into South Western Ontario, and in particular Brantford will:

- o Improve the user experience and reduce stress of daily travel by increasing transit travel speeds and reliability while expanding the range of destinations people can reach across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.
- o Reduce transport related collisions, deaths and injuries by attracting travellers from the auto network to the rail network.
- o Encourage the use of active modes of transportation, such as walking or cycling to access transit facilities by providing station locations in dense residential areas.

2. Prosperous Economy

- o Improve connectivity between homes, jobs and businesses via new services that decrease travel times and increase reliability.
- o Create connections between areas that are proposed for new residential and commercial development, such as station sites, as well as existing economic activity centres.

3. Sustainable Development

- o Reducing transport emissions by attracting travellers off congested highways and regional roads to the rail network by providing services and stations in areas previously not serviced by GO.

Alignment with 2024 RTP Goals

The proposed investment will create an improved transit connection across South Western Ontario, directly supporting the realization of the three priority goals in the Metrolinx 2024 Regional Transportation Plan. (2024 RTP)

Complete Travel Experiences

The proposed investment should create an improved transit connection in South Western Ontario.

The proposed investment will provide faster and more reliable travel times by:

- o Improving the transit network
- o Decreasing transit travel time
- o Increasing the reliability of transit
- o Providing improved GO Station facilities

Sustainable and Healthy Communities key objectives

- o Reducing auto vehicle trips
- o Encouraging active modes of transportation
- o Ensuring negative environmental impacts are minimized
- o Reducing future costly bandwidth expansions of the highway network



Strategic Case

The Strategic Case outlined below summarizes the performance of the rail service expansion to Brantford against identified strategic objectives, demonstrating how the investment addresses the Problem Statement and the goals of the 2041 RTP.

This strategic business case addresses the following:

1. What strategic benefits are envisaged?
2. How does option contribute to strategic objectives and goals?
3. What impact does the option have on how people use the transit network and move around the region?
4. What challenges exist that could jeopardize the achievement of strategic outcomes?

Strategic Evaluation: Alignment with Metrolinx 2024 RTP Goals and Objectives

The following section assesses the option against the identified strategic outcomes and answers the question: does the investment address the problem statement and realize meaningful benefits? These strategic outcomes are consistent with the GO Expansion Full Business Case and serve as a guide for overarching strategic objectives that the investment of an addition to GO Expansion aligns with.

How the investment realizes a high quality of life

Extending GO Rail service to Brantford will help residents achieve a higher quality of life whether they utilize the service or not. The expansion of rail service will provide transit service as a viable option, reducing transit travel times to and from Brantford. The option provides opportunities for GO users, currently driving to Hamilton or Aldershot, to access a closer station, thereby shifting their travel time from driving a personal vehicle, to riding a train, ultimately reducing stress increasing predictability of their commute time.

Transportation infrastructure, and more notably commuter transit connectivity is often cited as a major catalyst for private sector investment into infill development. This will create jobs, wealth, amenities, and focus revitalization of large sections of the downtown core. The investment will attract a significant number of new customers to GO services, removing them from the local road network and reducing congestion for other drivers. This will lead to a higher quality of life in Brantford and Paris.

How the investment realizes a prosperous economy

The Brantford extension will improve connections between Brantford and the County of Brant, and the GTHA, while also improving connectivity between employment clusters, urban growth centres and residential areas. Linking people and businesses via reliable and fast transport services will make it easier to connect, invest and innovate in the western GTHA for years to come.

Extension of peak services will improve access to jobs for residents in Brantford, especially for those without automobile access. Implementation of all-day service would make it easier for Brantford and County of Brant residents to commute to jobs and activities within the Hamilton to Toronto corridor.

How the investment realizes sustainable development

The Brantford extension will improve connections between Brantford and the County of Brant, and the GTHA, while also improving connectivity between employment clusters, urban growth centres and residential areas. Linking people and businesses via reliable and fast transport services will make it easier to connect, invest and innovate in the western GTHA for years to come.

Extension of peak services will improve access to jobs for residents in Brantford, especially for those without automobile access. Implementation of all-day service would make it easier for Brantford and County of Brant residents to commute to jobs and activities within the Hamilton to Toronto corridor.

How the investment realizes sustainable development

This extension will foster reduced auto dependency on travel. Reduced vehicle use will decrease emissions from and result in fewer accidents on local, regional, and provincial roads that can lead to serious injury or death.

Expanding rail services would increase the number of trips to and from existing stations and promote sustainable development by unlocking land use potential in their immediate vicinity. This, in turn, creates opportunities for residential and commercial property development in those areas. Higher density transit-oriented development near the station will optimize use of City infrastructure and reduce per capita land use. This will make sustainable means of access such as walking and cycling to the station feasible and preferable to driving.

Regional Connectivity

The expansion of GO Rail services and the construction of new rapid transit stations in urban population areas will improve connectivity between employment clusters, urban growth centres and residential areas. This will improve connections between people and the places they live, work and play such as downtown Brantford and Paris and academic institutions across our area. This extension will also open up opportunities for residents in Brantford and Paris, particularly for those without automobile access. Under peak period or all-day service patterns, it will also be easier for residents to commute to jobs and activities within the Brantford to Hamilton to Toronto corridor.

Figure 4a, Figure 4b, and Table 3 provide a look at the population and employment figures located within 1km (walking distance) and 10km (cycling distance) of the Brantford station. Figure 4a and Figure 4b illustrate the projected number of individuals and jobs that would be serviced by the proposed station in 2051. Table 3 combines the projected population and employment.

Figure 4a: Population (2021 and 2051) Served by Existing Station

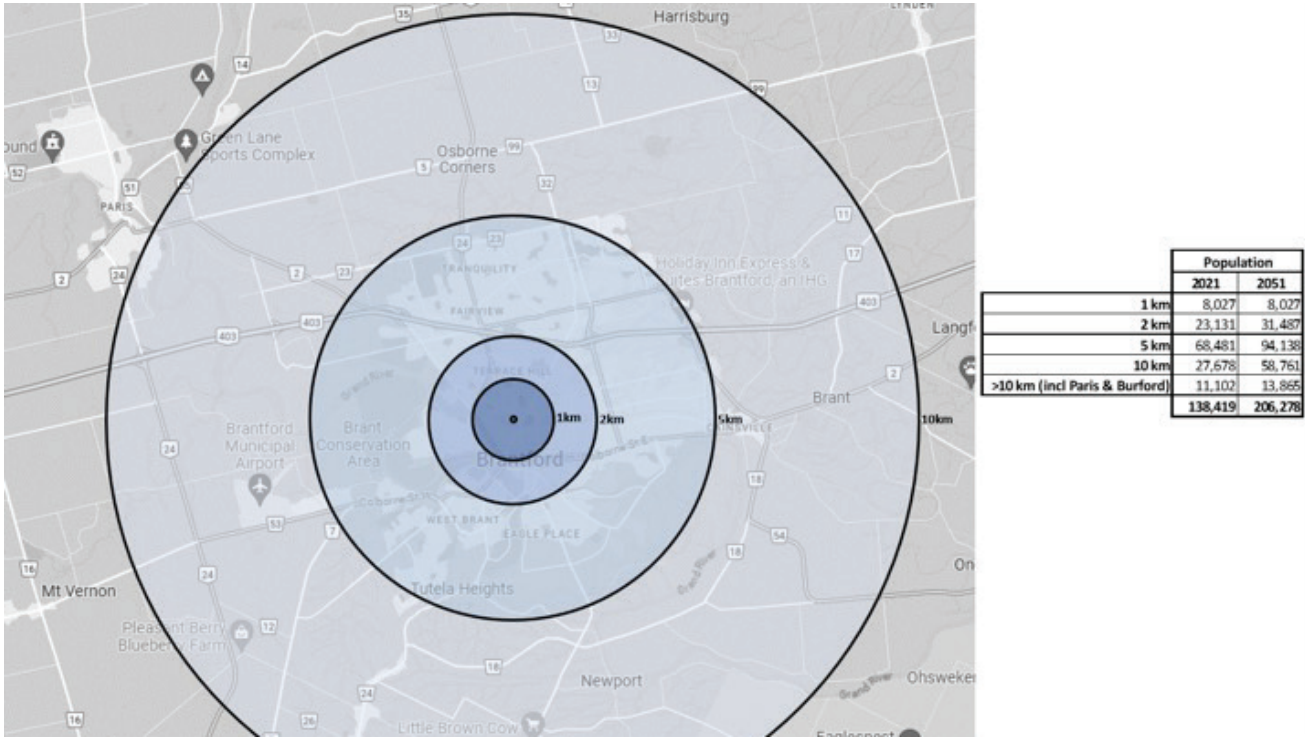


Figure 4b: Employment (2021 and 2051) Served by Existing Station

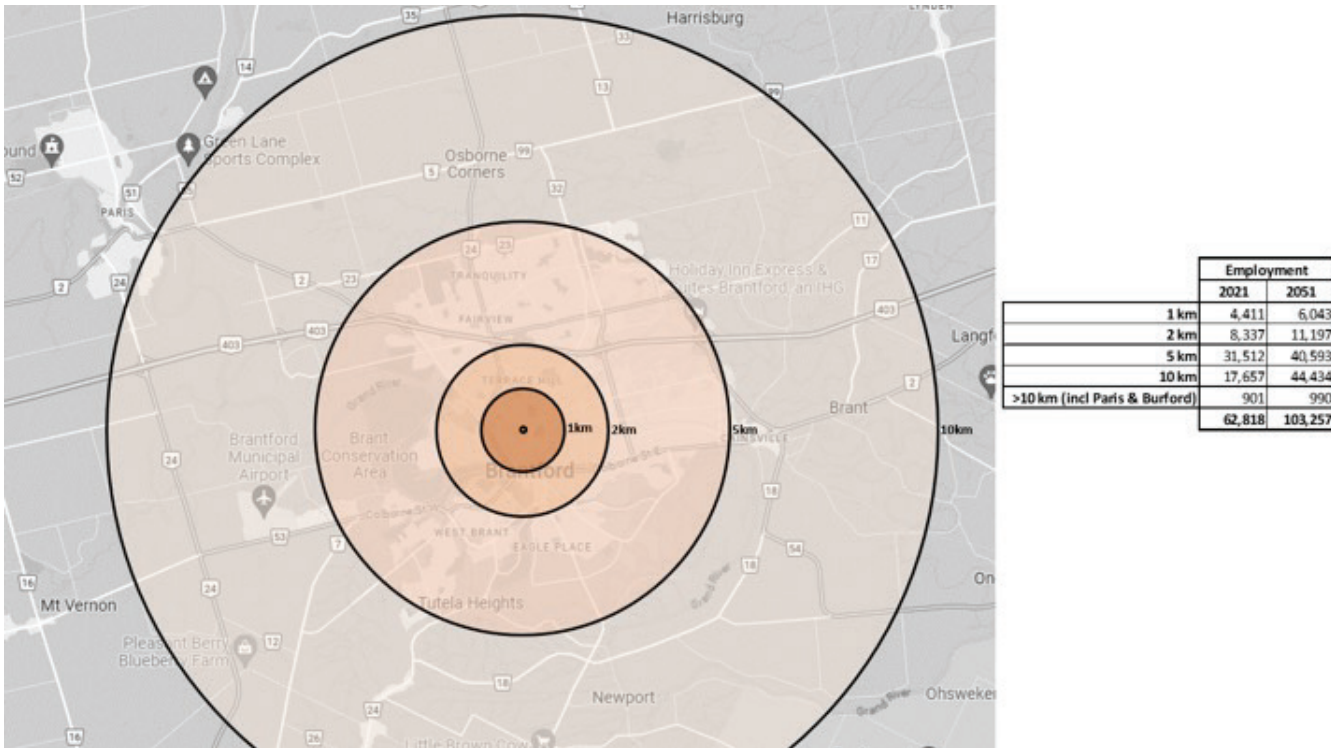


Table 3: Total Population and Employment served by Brantford Rail Extension in 2021 and 2051

Alignment Option	2021 Population	2051 Population	2021 Employment	2051 Employment
Brantford Expansion	138,419	206,278	62,818	103,257

* Includes Paris and settlement areas in the County of Brant

Ridership: Demand and Forecasts

The City's Strategic Transportation model was used to derive market area person trips to the GTHA for the a.m. peak hour in 2021 and projected in 2051. Table 4 provides a summary of the a.m. peak hour trips to the GTHA.

Table 4: 2021 and 2051 AM Peak Hour Person Trips – Market Area to GTHA

A.M. Peak Hour

Distance from Station	2021			2022		
	Transit	Auto	Total	Transit	Auto	Total
1 km	41	40	81	49	57	106
2 km	-	177	177	-	234	234
5 km	-	907	907	-	1,165	1,165
10 km	-	471	471	-	822	822
10 km+ Paris & Burford	-	107	107	-	110	110
	41	1,703	1,744	49	2,387	2,436

Peak hour person trips were estimate using a peak hour to daily factor and adjusted for calibration to 2016 TTS person trip flows between Brantford and the GTHA. Table 5 provides a summary of the daily trips to the GTHA.

Table 5: 2021 and 2051 Daily Person Trips – Market Area

Daily

Distance from Station	2021			2022		
	Transit	Auto	Total	Transit	Auto	Total
1 km	433	424	857	519	603	1,122
2 km	-	1,869	1,869	-	2,468	2,468
5 km	-	9,585	9,585	-	12,312	12,312
10 km	-	4,982	4,982	-	1,159	1,159
10 km+ Paris & Burford	-	107	107	-	110	110
	433	17,990	18,424	519	25,225	25,744

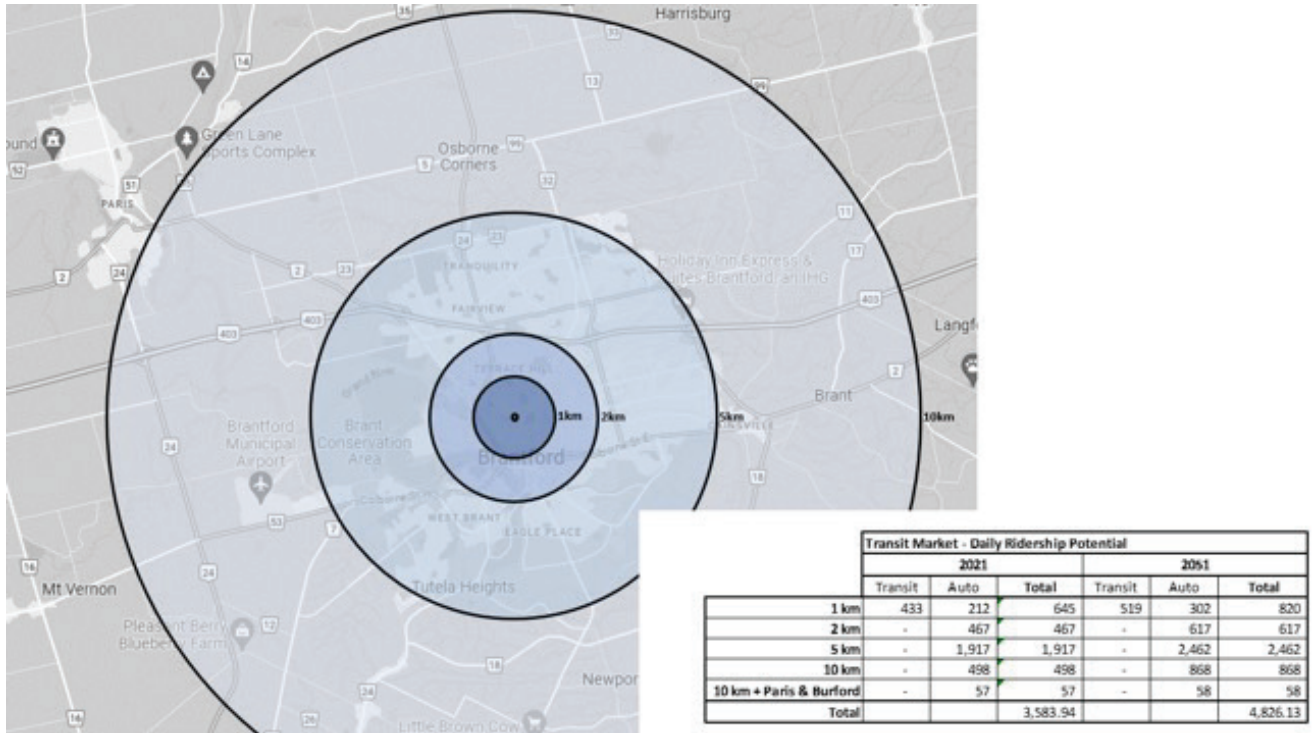
Among these person trips, we can distinguish between captured riders (those who do not own a vehicle and presently carpool) and choice riders (those who would opt for transit instead of using a personal vehicle). The closer the trip’s proximity to the station, the greater the likelihood that it will shift to transit. Table 6 offers a concise overview of the varying mode splits applied to person trips, aiding in the projection of potential ridership.

Table 6: 2021 and 2051 Mode Split to Transit Estimates – Market Area

MS Adjustment

Distance from Station	2021			2022		
	Transit	Auto	Total	Transit	Auto	Total
1 km	100%	50%		100%	50%	
2 km	100%	25%		100%	25%	
5 km	100%	20%		100%	20%	
10 km	100%	10%		100%	10%	
10 km+ Paris & Burford	100%	5%		100%	5%	

Figure 5: Existing Brantford Train Ridership based on Strategic Model Forecasts and Mode Split Potentials



The ridership forecasts (2,500 in the peak hour by 2051, and 4,800- daily by 2051) are indicative of a single, peak hour train (A typical GO Train set has a capacity of 5,250 people). Considering the projected daily ridership potential by 2051, a compelling case can be made for the inclusion of at least one off-peak train.

Expanding the a.m. peak hour ridership to an annual ridership, results in a forecast of almost 400,000 riders per year by 2051, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7: 2021 and 2051 Annual Ridership Forecasts – Based on Peak Hour Service Only

Distance from Station	2021			2022		
	Transit	Auto	Total	Transit	Auto	Total
1 km	35,595	17,405	53,001	42,628	24,794	67,422
2 km	-	38,389	38,389	-	50,708	50,708
5 km	-	157,540	157,540	-	202,355	202,355
10 km	-	40,941	40,941	-	71,348	71,348
10 km+ Paris & Burford	-	4,646	4,646	-	4,761	4,761
			294,516.56			396,594.87

Forecasts reveal significant demand for expanded GO Rail service to and from Brantford. Many users likely want to use GO services today but cannot in the peak and off-peak times due lack of required service by bus and rail.

Transit Network Connectivity

The expansion of rail services in Brantford would further enhance the transit network, provide more connections with the Brantford Transit network.

Transit Travel Time and Reliability

Rail service to transit would result in more reliable travel times into and out of Brantford.

Table 8: *Travel Time Comparison - Existing Auto versus Estimated Rail - Existing Conditions*

From	To	Travel Distance		Travel Time	
		Auto	Future Rail	Auto	Future Rail
Brantford	Hamilton (GO Centre)	40 km	40 km	30-50 min	30 min
	Aldershot (GO Centre)	45 km	40 km	30-50 min	30 min
	Toronto (Union)	100 km	95 km	80-180 min	100 min

Table 8 demonstrates the comparison of the existing travel times by mode (auto vehicle versus expected transit service). It demonstrates that there is a significant time advantage during peak, congested time periods. This advantage will significantly increase as growth occurs to 2051.

It can also be inferred from these estimates that rail would hold a significant advantage over comparable peak hour bus service.

Extending GO Rail service to Brantford would result in increased transit reliability and consistency. GO Rail service would provide transit service operations that would alleviate congestion on the local road network and Highway 403.

Brantford Station Parking Capacity

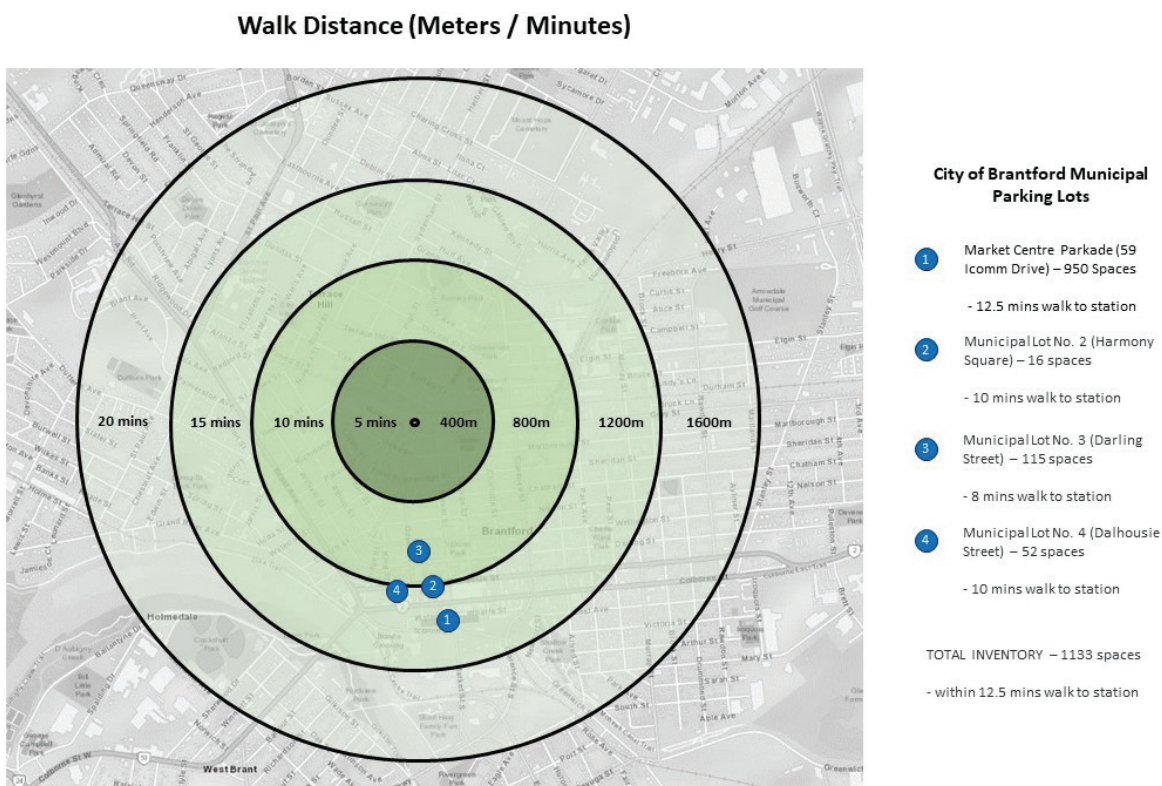
The existing station’s parking lot including 131 parking stalls is currently vastly underutilized.

With the introduction of rail service and the forecasts peak hour demand, the forecast demand for parking is expected to increase to 450 vehicles in 2021 and 640 vehicles by 2051. These calculations assume variable auto mode share by distance from the station (ranging from 0% within 1km of the station, to 40%, 2km to 5km from the station, and 85%to 90% 10km or more from station).

[consider implicating bill 131 to fund parkade through DCs]

Figure 6 provides an overview of the proximity of off-site municipal parking that is available within a comfortable walking distance to the station. The figure shows that over 1,100 public parking spaces are available within a 12.5-minute walk (1km) of the station, including the 950 space Market Centre Parkade. This additional, accessible parking supply would address the parking demands of the station area.

Figure 6: Walking Distance / Time to Municipal Parking Lots from the Existing Station



Go Transit Station Funding Act (Bill 131)

The recently introduced Transportation for the Future Act, 2023 (Bill 23) will help municipalities, like the City of Brantford, build transit-oriented communities by providing an optional funding tool. The new tool, called the Station Contribution Fee, will assist The City of Brantford in speeding up the construction of a new GO Transit station, creating new opportunities for a mixed-use community surrounding the station. These important steps taken by the Province will help strengthen and connect our community with both the South West and GTA. By bringing jobs and housing closer to transit, this legislation will be a catalyst for increasing ridership, reducing traffic congestion and greenhouse gas emissions, while also stimulating economic growth and housing supply.

Sustainable Communities

Energy Use

The GTHA's transport network is a major source of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and is one of the region's major contributors to climate change. Extending rail services to Brantford will shift demand from a personal vehicle network to the rail network and remove thousands of daily auto trips off of area (regional and provincial roads), resulting in reductions of greenhouse gas emissions and auto accidents.

This reduction in automobile use benefits not only those users switching to GO, but also users of the local road network who still drive. Remaining commutes by automobiles will be subject to reduced congestion levels post-investment.

The Brantford Extension will foster reduced auto dependency for travel to and from Hamilton Toronto. This would increase the propensity of GO passengers to use sustainable modes of transportation when accessing stations.

Natural Habitat Impact

Environmental impacts are also accounted for when reviewing the impacts of the extension. With reduced auto dependency, the expansion of local and provincial infrastructure can be deferred and, in some cases eliminated. Reducing direct and indirect impacts to road corridors (new and expanded) will have net positive benefits on the natural environment.



Strategic Case Summary

Table 9: Strategic Case Summary

2041 RTP Goal	Strategic Outcome	Rail Service Expansion
Strong Connections	Population and jobs served by Brantford Rail Extension	By 2051, 8,000 people and 6,000 jobs within 1km of the station
	Increase GO Ridership	Daily Ridership - 4,800 Peak Hour Ridership - 2,400
Complete Travel Experiences	Improve the Transit Network	Improved connection within the City using Brantford Transit. Improved connections to the GTHA.
	Improve Travel Time and Reliability	Improved connection within the City using Brantford Transit. Improved connections to the GTHA.
	Provide Improved GO Capacity	Introduction of Brantford station to GO service would alleviate parking requirements at Aldershot and Hamilton Centre
Sustainable Communities	Reduce Auto Vehicle Trips	New service will promote non-auto travel on local road, regional, and provincial roads.
	Encourage Active Modes of Transportation	New service will encourage active modes of station access
	Positive Natural Habitat Impact	Reduced auto volumes will defer/eliminate the need for infrastructure expansion to the benefit of natural habitats in these corridors. It will also result in significant reduction of GHG emissions.

Brantford's Economy

Our diverse economy is built on a rich history of entrepreneurialism and innovation. Businesses continually invest in Brantford for new and/or expanding operations. In doing so, they create new and unique streams of employment. Brantford's pro-business, pro-development Council supports growth and recognizes that a healthy economy is critical to a healthy community. Our economy and community thrive through the collective efforts of individuals from diverse backgrounds and walks of life. This diversity is the cornerstone of our strength and resilience, as it brings together a rich tapestry of skills, perspectives, and experiences. People of various backgrounds contribute their unique talents and expertise to our local economy, fostering innovation and creativity. They also enrich our cultural landscape, adding depth and vibrancy to our social fabric.

The table below demonstrates the number of businesses with employees in Brantford by size and sector.

Table 10:

	Total	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	10-19 Employees	20-49 Employees	50-99 Employees	100-199 Employees	200-499 Employees	500 plus Employees
Total, all industries	3107	1588	626	402	312	108	42	20	9
Unclassified	167	127	21	12	7..	..	..	..
Sub-total, classified	2940	1461	605	390	305	108	42	20	9
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	20	10	3	5	1..	..		1..	
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	4..		2..		2..	..	..	..
Utilities	2..		1..	..	..		1..	..	
Construction	337	191	80	37	24	4	1..	..	
Manufacturing	230	52	45	32	52	23	15	8	3
Wholesale trade	384	132	109	59	50	26	7	1..	
Retail trade	306	260	13	11	12	7	2	1..	
Transportation and warehousing	174	60	39	35	31	8..		1..	
Information and cultural industries	31	11	14	2	3	1..	..	..
Finance and insurance	110	55	22	16	14	2..		1..	
Real estate and rental and leasing	129	92	21	7	8	1..	..	..
Professional, scientific and technical services	234	167	24	29	10	4..	..	..
Management of companies and enterprises	10	4..		3..		3..	..	..
Administrative and support, waste management and remediation services	138	73	31	16	11	2	3	2..	

	Total	1-4 Employees	5-9 Employees	10-19 Employees	20-49 Employees	50-99 Employees	100-199 Employees	200-499 Employees	500 plus Employees
Educational services	26	6	5	8	3	1..	..		3
Health care and social assistance	275	124	46	57	28	9	6	3	2
Arts, entertainment and recreation	45	17	15	7	2	2	1	1..	
Accommodation and food services	204	46	56	41	44	13	4..	..	
Other services (except public administration)	277	161	79	25	9	2	1..	..	
Public administration	4..	..	..		1..		1	1	1

Our key sectors

Brantford's major industrial sectors demonstrate the depth and diversity of our local economy. We are home to leading businesses in advanced manufacturing, food and beverage manufacturing, plastics and rubber products, and warehousing and distribution. Many other local businesses support these industries, ensuring that operations continue to thrive.

Furthermore, Brantford's commitment to fostering a well-rounded economy extends to its investment in skilled trades and educational partnerships. Our city recognizes the importance of developing a skilled workforce to sustain and advance these vital industries. To achieve this, Brantford has established strong partnerships with institutions like Conestoga College and Six Nations Polytechnic, facilitating training and education programs in fields related to our major industrial sectors. These collaborations not only provide local residents with access to quality vocational training but also attract individuals from across the region who seek to enhance their skills and contribute to our thriving industrial community. By investing in education and promoting skilled trades, Brantford ensures the long-term success of our businesses and the prosperity of our city as a whole.

Advanced Manufacturing

Industry in Brantford is built on the fusion of innovation and manufacturing. Our long history of innovation began with Alexander Graham Bell's invention of the telephone in 1876. Building on that inspiring tradition, our manufacturers and innovators have contributed to and embraced new technologies and techniques that push the limits of production processes.

Brantford is centrally located in one of the most innovative regions of the world. Given our unique proximity to leading universities and innovation centres, companies in Brantford are able to tap into research and advanced manufacturing techniques.

Food and Beverage Manufacturing

Brantford is a leader in food and beverage manufacturing and a strategic centre in Ontario for new and expanding operations. Ontario is one of North America's largest agri-food sectors. Companies choose Brantford because it puts them close to more than 200 agricultural commodities and a market of 460 million consumers. Ontario is North America's second largest centre for food processing.

Investment in Brantford's food and beverage industry makes sound economic sense. This is most evident in our central and strategic location, available and experienced workforce, competitive wages, network of leading food and beverage manufacturers, and proximity to plentiful agricultural commodities.

Plastics and Rubber Products

Plastics and rubber manufacturers create products for almost every facet of our daily life. The sector involves the production of goods by processing raw rubber and plastics materials into components and finished goods. It is comprised of polymer manufacturers, additive suppliers, concentrate producers, compounders, plastics processors, machinery manufacturers, mould makers, and recyclers. In Brantford, the plastics and rubber sector support other key sectors. Businesses invest here to take advantage of an experienced workforce, the proximity to supporting industries, major transportation networks, and access to most suppliers and customers in Canada and the U.S.

Warehousing and Logistics

Warehousing and distribution are critical components of the global supply chain and closely linked to the pace of economic activity in other sectors. The importance of this industry makes Brantford the ideal location for the logistical operations of many companies. Our strategic central position in Southwestern Ontario along key transportation networks and our proximity to major North American markets provide businesses with a clear advantage to improve efficiencies and lower costs. The concentration of resources and talent in this industry makes Brantford an ideal location for companies looking for a competitive advantage.

Brantford: A Growing Labour Force

Brantford has a strong industry-based work ethic. Our labour force is very diverse with employees possessing skills and education from a wide variety of sectors. The continued expansion and development of the community's four post-secondary institutions ensures that the future labour pool of Brantford will only get stronger as more graduates enter the local workforce. The Brantford Census Metropolitan Area has a workforce of approximately 80,000 (Stats Canada, July 2023).

Brantford's centralized location allows the city to capitalize on several surrounding communities for talent attraction and retention, translating into 1.092 million workers within 50 km (30 mi) and 6.054 million workers within 125 km (80 mi). Brantford is ideally situated in the heart of the Greater Golden Horseshoe, one of the most dynamic and fastest growing regions in North America. This area is recognized for its highly-educated workforce and multicultural population, whose social and economic diversity are critical factors for success in a knowledge-based economy.

Table 11: Brantford Population and Labour Force Size by Radius Distance

Radius Distance	Population*	Canadian Labour Force Size*
Brantford CMA	122,000	80,000
50 km (30 miles)	1,623,000	1,092,000
125 km (80 miles)	8,974,000	6,054,000

**Estimates based on the Statistics Canada July 2023 Labour Market Report. Labour force is defined as individuals 15 to 64 years of age presently working or actively looking for work. Calculation uses Census Metropolitan Areas (CMA) and multiplying by 1.10 to account for surrounding rural centres. The Ontario ratio of CMAs to total population is approx. 1:1.20.*

Commuters

Brantford's major industrial sectors demonstrate the depth and diversity of our local economy. We are home to leading businesses in advanced manufacturing, food and beverage manufacturing, plastics and rubber products, and warehousing and distribution. Many other local businesses support these industries, ensuring that operations continue to thrive.

Table 12: Number of Brantford Residents Driving to a Destination for Work (2021)

Destination	Drivers
Brantford	20,470
Hamilton	3,200
County of Brant	2,950
Cambridge	1,315
Woodstock	595
Burlington	540
Mississauga	390
Norfolk County	385
Haldimand County	375
Toronto	360
Oakville	290
Kitchener	220
Guelph	170
Brampton	145
North Dumfries Township	115
Waterloo	115
Milton	110
London	100
Total - All	32,260
Total - Outside of Brantford (37%)	11,790

Table 13: Number of People by Community Driving to Brantford for Work (2021)

Destination for Work	Commuters
Brantford	20,470
County of Brant	3,435
Hamilton	2,380
Norfolk County	1,770
Cambridge	965
Haldimand County	475
Woodstock	395
Kitchener	385
Burlington	290
Norwich	120
Mississauga	105
Total – All	32,095
Total – Outside of Brantford (36%)	11,625

Unlocking Regional Growth: Post-Secondary Institutions

As a growing centre of education, our community recognizes the value of learning and growing. Brantford is proud to welcome three outstanding post-secondary institutions providing a wide range of academic and training opportunities. They include, Conestoga College, Six Nations Polytechnic and Wilfrid Laurier University.

There are also 17 Universities (including specialty University Colleges) located within 125 km (80 mi) of Brantford. A total of 399,080 students studied at these universities, including 301,000 full-time undergraduate and 41,080 full-time graduate students.

There are also 9 colleges located within 125 km (80 mi) of Brantford. Over 170,091 students studied at these colleges in a total of 1,294 active programs. Of course, these programs could be significantly expanded through the addition of GO Transit services in our community. Letters of support from Wilfrid Laurier University, Six Nations Polytechnic and Conestoga College are attached as Appendix A.



Table 14: Major universities within 125 km (80 mi) of Brantford

University	Campus Location	km	miles	*All Students	Full Time Undergrads	Full Time Graduate
Brock University	St.Catharines	50	30	19,620	15,600	2,300
McMaster University	Hamilton	35	20	37,330	30,400	1,300
OCAD University	Toronto	100	60	4,990	4,200	480
Toronto Metropolitan University	Toronto	100	60	47,870	30,600	14,300
University of Guelph	Guelph	55	35	31,180	24,400	3,600
University of Toronto	Toronto	100	60	97,400	69,400	6,400
University of Waterloo	Waterloo	55	35	42,200	34,700	1,300
Western University (excludes colleges)	London	100	60	43,190	34,000	2,100
Wilfrid Laurier University	Waterloo	55	35	22,500	16,700	3,600
York University	Toronto	115	70	52,800	41,000	5,700
TOTAL †				399,080	301,000	41,080

Source: Universities Canada, 2022 * Includes part time students. † Specialty university colleges reported are included in larger campus totals.

Table 15: Colleges within 125 km (80 mi) of Brantford

College	Campus Location	km	miles	Total Full-Time Students	First Language Not English	**Active Programs
Centennial College	Toronto	125	80	17,172	66.6%	149
Conestoga College *	Brantford, Kitchener	35	20	22,532	60.6%	153
Fanshaw College	London, Woodstock, Simcoe	50	30	17,410	33.7%	162
George Brown College	Toronto	100	60	18,241	37.0%	131
Humber College *	Toronto	110	70	23,962	28.8%	175
La Cité Collégiale	Toronto	105	65	4,767	95.8%	72
Mohawk College	Hamilton	35	20	11,875	25.3%	96
Niagara College	Welland, Niagara-On-The-Lake	90	55	9,109	99.7%	98
Seneca College *	Toronto	120	75	28,428	82.7%	146
Sheridan College *	Oakville, Brampton	65	40	17,405	37.7%	112
TOTAL				170,091		1,294

Source: Province of Ontario, 2022. * Designated as an Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. ** Programs reported with active students

Unlocking Regional Growth: Tourism Growth

Tourism

In 2022, Brantford's local attractions and events resulted in:

1. 15,000 attending meetings and conventions
2. \$2.5M spent on hotel rooms
3. 81 Motor Coaches and 3,500 visitors
4. 10,000 attending sport tourism events
5. 53,215 attending events at the Sanderson Centre

The City of Brantford offers incredible natural features and green spaces coupled with access to fantastic facilities opens the door to healthy benefits for all our residents. Whether soloing it on the trails or participating in organized sport, opportunities to be active abound in Brantford. Consider just a few of the amazing options in our community.

Discover our arts and culture scene

Rooted in the past, our arts and culture environment continues to evolve and expand in step with the growth of the community. We have an array of performing, literary and visual arts organizations; multicultural groups; libraries; museums, galleries and historic sites; artists and artisans; and the historic Sanderson Centre for the Performing Arts.





Retail, food and drink establishments

Our community's cultural fabric is accentuated with several outstanding retail, food and drink establishments.



**BRANTFORD
BULLDOGS**

Brantford Bulldogs OHL Team

Earlier this year, the Bulldogs OHL Team announced that they would be relocating to Brantford for three seasons, perhaps more, while their home arena in Hamilton is being renovated. During this time, more than 100 Brantford Bulldogs regular-season home games are expected to draw nearly 300,000 fans from Brantford and Hamilton and beyond.

Brantford Needs GO Rail!

The extension of GO Rail service to Brantford will positively impact all residents of the City of Brantford, the County of Brant, and Six Nations of the Grand River. It promises to elevate the overall quality of life for all citizens, even those who may not directly use the service. This expansion will bring about a remarkable improvement by alleviating traffic congestion and shortening travel times for everyone, regardless of whether they personally make use of the rail service.

This option provides GO users who currently commute by car to Hamilton or Aldershot with the chance to switch to a nearby station, thereby transitioning from driving to taking the train. This shift not only alleviates the stress of driving but also enhances the reliability of their daily commute.

As one of Ontario's rapidly growing communities on track to surpass the province's mandated housing intensification goals, the extension of the GO Train into Brantford is entirely logical. The Federal and Provincial Governments' substantial investments in the automotive industry in the southwestern part of the province means that the decision to extend commuter rail connectivity will reinforce and help ensure the success of these substantial investments. The investment in commuter rail will add to our collective efforts to strategically nurture sustained growth.

The extension of GO Rail service to Brantford presents a transformative opportunity for the entire region. It promises to elevate the quality of life for residents of Brantford, neighboring communities such as the County of Brant and Six Nations of the Grand River, and even those who may not directly use the service. Furthermore, it aligns perfectly with Brantford's growth trajectory, making it a sensible and forward-thinking choice for the betterment of the entire community. As we look to the future, extending GO Train service to Brantford is not only practical but also essential for promoting sustainable development, economic prosperity, and an improved quality of life for all.



CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
BRANTFORD • BRANT

September 26, 2023

Hon. Prabmeet Singh Sarkaria
Minister of Transportation
Ministry of Transportation
5th Floor
777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 1Z8

Re: Letter of Support – GO Train Service for the City of Brantford

Dear Minister Sarkaria,

The Chamber of Commerce Brantford-Brant wishes to express our strong support for the initiative led by MPP Will Bouma and Mayor Kevin Davis to secure GO Train service to our community. We recognize the immense impact that commuter rail service can have on a community, and we are proud to be champions of this critical element of transit, which serves as a key driver of economic activity in our region.

As one of the leading communities in meeting the provincial government's housing growth targets, we acknowledge the intrinsic need to service a growing population with increased access to transportation infrastructure and mass transit options. The province's own legislation and intensification targets emphasize the need to improve housing density surrounding Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs). We believe that extending GO Train service to our community is a desirable and necessary step to meet these goals and foster sustainable growth.

In addition to being consistent with the province's own planning and housing acts, there are many additional points to consider as we advocate for this vital extension of commuter rail services:

Economic Benefits: Commuter rail service is a proven catalyst for economic development. By extending GO Train service to Brantford, we can attract businesses and investments to our community, creating jobs and enhancing the overall prosperity of the region.

Reduced Congestion: With more residents opting for public transportation, we can significantly reduce traffic congestion on our highways and roads. This will lead to shorter commutes, less stress for our citizens, and a more efficient transportation network.

Environmental Impact: Expanding commuter rail services aligns with the provincial commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Commuters choosing rail over personal vehicles will contribute to a greener and more sustainable future for our community.

Connectivity: The extension of GO Train service will provide more robust connections for residents and businesses alike. This will foster greater interaction between our community and neighboring regions, encouraging tourism, trade, and collaboration.



77 Charlotte Street, Brantford, ON N3T 2W8
519.753.2617 chamber@brcc.ca www.brantfordbrantchamber.com

October 4, 2023

Dear Minister Sarkaria,

Wilfrid Laurier University is pleased to provide this letter in support of the City of Brantford's efforts to bring a much-needed GO Train stop to the Brantford-Brant community. Enhancing the existing Via Rail Station in Brantford – located a short five-minute walk from our campus – by adding a GO Train stop would provide a logical, invaluable, and sustainable enhancement to public transit, and greatly expand access to higher learning and employment opportunities across the GO Transit corridor.

Since its establishment in 1999, Laurier's Brantford campus has grown to nearly 3,000 students, including full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate students, and international students from over 25 countries of origin who attend our partner institution, Wilfrid Laurier International College. Many students rely on public transit to get to and from campus daily, and the need for better, more frequent transit is often cited by current and prospective students. Further, enhanced transit would greatly expand co-op and other workplace learning opportunities for students in programs like Business Technology Management, User Experience Design, Education, and Social Work, providing mutual benefit for students and for employers in these high-demand fields.

Laurier's Brantford campus provides high-quality jobs for 327 employees. The lack of efficient public transit in and out of the community is an issue cited by existing employees. It can also pose a barrier for some qualified candidates who would otherwise wish to work with us in Brantford-Brant, particularly those we are working to attract from other communities who are accustomed to greater levels of public transit service.

As an institution, Laurier prizes its commitment to sustainability, and is proud to have been named one of Canada's Greenest Employers for the last five consecutive years. Many of our students, faculty, and staff take seriously this commitment to sustainability and greener choices and would use public transit more frequently if convenient options like the GO Train were available locally.

Laurier students, staff and faculty have a great impact on the local community, partnering with over 300 community organizations, and injecting \$16.7 million per year in student spending directly into the local economy. The university has a formal strategy in place to increase this impact by growing the Brantford campus to 5,000 students in the next five years. Enhanced public transit will be necessary if we are to achieve this goal and further amplify our positive social, cultural, and economic impact in the community.



CONESTOGA

Connect Life and Learning

Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning

299 Doon Valley Drive, Kitchener, ON N2G 4M4 Canada, 519-748-5220, www.conestogac.on.ca

September 28, 2023

Sasha Hill Smith
Manager of Government Relations & Corporate Initiatives
Office of the Mayor & CAO
City of Brantford
58 Dalhousie Street, Brantford, Ontario
N3T 2J2

Dear Ms. Hill Smith,

I am writing on behalf of Conestoga College to express our support for the proposed GO Transit expansion in Brantford. We commend the city for taking the initiative to move this project forward and believe it aligns with the college's commitment to fostering access to education, sustainability and community engagement.

At Conestoga, we understand the positive impact access to public transportation systems can have on our students and community members. The proposal to bring a GO Transit train stop to Brantford will provide several benefits for the college.

Potential increase in enrolment for Conestoga Brantford: A primary benefit of introducing GO Transit to Brantford is the potential to provide programming to a broader range of students. With convenient access to public transportation connecting Brantford to Hamilton and the Greater Toronto Area, prospective students from these areas will be more inclined to consider Conestoga as their institution of choice. Increased enrolment will contribute to the growth and vitality of our campus and stimulate the local economy.

Environmental impact and accessibility: By providing accessible and timely transportation options for students and community members, we can reduce the carbon footprint associated with commuting which aligns with Conestoga's sustainability initiatives and demonstrates our commitment to responsible environmental stewardship. Improved transportation options will make it easier for students to attend classes in person, promoting a sense of community engagement.

Expanded programming opportunities: The introduction of a GO Transit train stop in Brantford will offer the potential to increase our enrolment and expand programming opportunities. Expanded programming will address the growing demand for career-ready graduates with the skills and knowledge to serve the workforce needs of the community. Access to transportation may also offer additional work-integrated learning and co-op opportunities for students.

WILL BOUMA
MPP - Brantford–Brant



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✉ will.bouma@pc.ola.org

Constituency Office
96 Nelson Street, Unit 101
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🖨 519-759-6439

November 3, 2023

Mayor Kevin Davis
City of Brantford
58 Dalhousie Street,
Brantford, ON N3T 2J2

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Kevin'.

~~Your Worship,~~

Please accept this letter as an expression of my unreserved support for Brantford-Brant GO Train service to and from Union Station in Toronto.

Our community is growing by leaps and bounds, both by organic growth and an influx of immigrants from outside of Canada. Both are welcome and needed to sustain Ontario's growth targets and enrich our community both culturally and economically. As such, as our government is laser-focused on building 1.5 million homes while being good stewards of Ontario's environment. Permanent GO Train service in Brantford would certainly advance these goals, by providing a cost-effective transportation alternative to Toronto, Peel, Halton and York Regions for an ever growing workforce. Not only will this proposed Brantford GO Train service be convenient for commuters, but also will remove thousands of automobiles from the region's highways – easing congestion as well as reducing pollution levels.

Please add my name to the top of the list of supporters for this project and I wish the City of Brantford all the best in this endeavour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Will Bouma'.

Dr. Will Bouma,
MPP Brantford-Brant
WRB/mn



CITY OF
BRANTFORD

