

Local commuters continue to fight for vital Route 38 Go Bus service

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

Bolton residents who work in the Downtown core of Toronto rely on GO Transit on their transportation to get them to and from work. Metrolinx proposed to eliminate Bus route 38 due to lack of demand.

The route was extended six months following several complaints from commuters, but no long-term plan has been announced as of yet. The route is planning to be a temporary service until January 2020, but many commuters refuse to allow the elimination.

Lorraine Marchione and Mike Brunetto presented to Council on the importance and essentiality of the route for Bolton residents, like themselves, who are dependent on the route.

'Our goal has been to advocate the importance of keeping a GO bus service that will connect residents to the downtown core. I was away for a little bit and came back to the notice that a transit route, which we know, is being planned,' says Marchione. 'I just want to make it very clear and my co-riders have stressed, we want to make it very clear that it is not a solution for us. The only solution is really the status quo.'

Commuters expressed concerns in regards to Highway 50 because of large quantities of truck convoys causing delays and arising safety concerns. Other vehicles on the road cut in and out of traffic creating risk for accidents, and even just traffic. Commuters believe there should be more bus riders than cars out on the road. As the date of the end of expansion in December approaches, commuters are looking for an announcement to be made.

'What was asked for was a one-year extension to be reassessed, in terms of ridership stats at the end of the year. That would give us the year to really develop a strong communication campaign, to build awareness, and to try and curb behaviours to get people taking transit,' explains Marchione. 'Not only to sustain the GO bus for our personal needs, but really because we believe in a transit society.'

The second ask that the riders delegated to council was to schedule negotiations with Metrolinx to reattract riders, and, thirdly, for local commuters to have the opportunity to work alongside the Town to build a campaign to spread the word about the importance and vitality of ridership.

'The first priority to us is get that one-year extension. We are all in line with that,' says Mayor Allan Thompson. 'I've been pushing extremely hard while in Minister Jones's office, to say look 'we need this'.'

MPP Sylvia Jones extended an email to the members of the community informing them of a letter from CEO of Metrolinx, Phil Vester, providing three options for consideration. The Town's route and GO Route 38 running parallel, GO Route running from Mayfield Park and Ride to Malton GO, while Town's route covers the local loop, or Town's route extended to Malton GO.

Mayor Allan Thompson responded to Metrolinx with on Oct 17 stating that 'of the three options provided in your October 1 letter, the Town's preference is still option #1: 'RFP Route (Town's local service) and GO Route 38 running parallel.'

'We're working together and there is a strong dialogue, that we have the same vision. Our biggest concern is the timing. We're now in November, and as far as we know, until a commitment is made, there's this December 31 date looming,' explains Marchione.