

New Year GO train?



COMMUTERS CAN'T WAIT: It will be the New Year before the GO Train makes four stops daily at the station being constructed on Town land beside the Hide House. — Jack Carpenter photo

MetroLinx hopes construction of Acton's new GO Train station will be complete by the end of December, but, "At this time, we don't have a start date for GO Train service to Acton, as we're still finalizing schedules," said MetroLinx Media Relations and Issues Specialist Malon Edwards in a recent update.

Crews continue working on the Acton stop which will include three cement pads with heated passenger shelters, a ticket kiosk and parking. In an earlier press release, GO said the Acton location would have platforms, a kiosk/ station building, parking for 110 cars, a bus bay and drop-off area.

On a recent Saturday, Phille Bereira with Montana Electric, said he was working overtime because, "T.O. (Toronto) was worried about the weather and wanted the platforms done before

winter." He said the electrical work would "not be functional" until the next year, but would not be more specific. Initially, GO/MetroLinx said it expected train service in Acton to begin by the end of 2011.

Securing the initial GO Train service to Acton, and now its return, has not been easy, including what Mayor Rick Bonnette called "quite a war of words," between former Town Mayor Russ Miller and then Halton Tory MP Otto Jelinek. In 1987, Jelinek wanted the Town to pay \$50,000 for a train station so Toronto residents could come to Acton for lunch, and leave mid-afternoon to return home.

It was at that point that Bonnette suggested the Town buy track-side land from CNR in hopes that eventually Acton would get commuter service. Both Bonnette and then



WORK PROGRESSES: Montana Electric employee Phille Bereira worked overtime recently to complete the electrical work at the under construction Acton GO Train station where service is expected in the New Year. — Frances Learment photo

Olde Hide House owner Steve Dawkins lobbied the province for a GO train stop and were successful in 1990, when the David Peterson Liberals agreed to add the service. And, while the Liberals lost power to Bob Rae's NDP government, the inaugural Go Train rolled through Acton in October of that year.

Just one year into the NDP's term, the government threatened to stop the service — citing poor ridership figures, which were hotly disputed by Halton Hills Councillor Rick Bonnette — and by 1993, it cancelled the service. Although the schedules for the two daily trains which will run to Union, and points between, have not been released, GO officials said the train times would suit commuters' morning and evening schedules.

The new Acton station was approved as part of the Georgetown-to-Kitchener Extension Environmental Assessment in 2009. One of delays to service was the talks between the Town and Hide House on its \$5,000 a year lease with the Town for non-exclusive use of the parking lot beside the railway tracks for its customers. The public may also use the lot, 24 spaces are allotted for medical centre patients and both the Acton Truck Sale and a service club's charity Christmas trees sales may also use the lot.

The first train station in Acton was built near the proposed station in 1908 by the Grand Trunk Railway. The line became part of the Canadian National Railway system, which discontinued regular passenger service to Acton in 1967.

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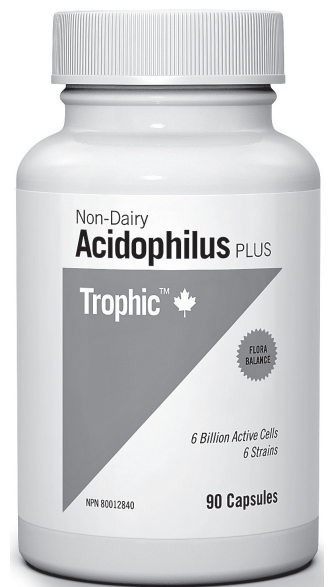
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