

It's official

GO Transit derails Acton/Guelph line

By JANET BAINE
Staff writer

Giving up hope of additional provincial funding, GO Transit's board of directors decided to cancel the Guelph/Acton train at a meeting held last week. The last commuter train will run on Friday, July 2.

North Halton MPP Noel Duignan stands behind his government's decision, even though he regrets it.

"At this time of fiscal restraint it's unfortunate that this has to happen, but it's a lot of money," he said.

The operating cost of the Guelph/Acton train is \$709,000 annually, according to Tom Henry, GO Transit manager of information services. About 100 people use the train daily, 80 get on in Guelph and the remaining 20 people board in Acton, Henry said.

Duignan notes that if you divide the number of passengers into the operating costs, the subsidy is very high.

Only two or three of his constituents called his office to complain about cancellation of the train, which has been under discussion for a month.

"I'm trying to meet with the Minister of Transportation to see if we can get the line extended as far as Acton," Duignan said, but he

isn't very hopeful this will happen.

The morning train, which starts out in Guelph and leaves Acton at 7:28 a.m., will now originate in Georgetown at 7:43 a.m. and arrive in Union Station at 8:38 a.m. In addition, the afternoon train which leaves Union Station at 5:20 p.m., will finish in Georgetown at 6:17 p.m., instead of continuing on to Acton and Guelph. No new buses will be added, but the service from Georgetown will remain the same.

"I'm extremely disappointed. We were happy after years of frustration that finally the train service was restored," Acton councillor Norm Elliott said.

He believes the Acton train is well-used, and is puzzled that more people from Guelph don't take the train. This is another bit of bad news for the people of Acton, who recently learned of a possible moratorium on development in the community, and more homes would mean more commuters for the GO train.

"I can't imagine that it makes good economic sense for GO to cancel this after going to all the expense of putting in those two stations," he said, adding he wonders what happened to the philosophy of getting people off the roads in order to preserve the environment.

GO train service in Acton started two and a half years ago after the government spent \$408,000 in Acton and Guelph. The Liberal government decided to restore the service, but the New Democratic Party had taken over the helm of the Ontario government before the first Guelph/Acton train left the station in October, 1990.

"The decision (to restore the train by the Liberals) was not a bad one. It was a good one at the time, but these are really hard hard times," and the province can't afford the train anymore, Duignan said.

Canceling this train is just one of several measures GO Transit is being forced to take in order to save \$6.5 million in the current fiscal year.



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Residents on advisory group

It was announced at Tuesday's council meeting that seven Halton Hills residents have been appointed to the town's Environmental Advisory Committee. Group members are: Mark Ashley, Bryan Boyce, Doug Clark, Brian Dennis, Tonny Johannsen, Karen McKenzie-Stepner and Michael Zimmer. Four council representatives will also be appointed to the committee.

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