

October 2025

Rapid Transit Rescue For Toronto



Photo from Canadian Dimension, Article by Nick Grover

Every day, close to 1.4 million people use Highway 401 in the core of the Greater Toronto Area, from Mississauga to Pickering. The flow of cars and trucks is slowing down in ever-longer peak periods, and it's not going to get better. Thousands of people get caught in the massive gridlock on Highway 401 between Dixie Road in Mississauga and Highway 400. It's brutal and hellish, not only for the average commuter, but also for enormous numbers of trucks. Even now during peak periods, there is barely room for more traffic.

Population growth over the next thirty years – a million more people in Toronto alone – means that Highway 401 in Toronto will become nonfunctional for much of every day. That must not happen. The highway needs a relief valve to ensure that essential traffic moves efficiently across the region.

Many of the daily commuters who are slogging through it dream for another way to get to where they want to go. It now costs them \$11,000 and more per year to buy and operate a used car, and \$16,000 and more

per year for a new car. It's essentially a massive hidden road toll that cuts deeply into the budgets of moderately income households, preventing them from investing in other household priorities.

Personal relationships are affected, too. Family gatherings, softball games, special events and much more are falling victim to the city's gridlock – people just can't get from here to there in reasonable time.

The Ontario government is rushing to build new rapid transit lines to try to keep things moving in Toronto. The Finch West and Eglinton LRTs will be completed soon, and other projects – the Ontario Line, extensions of the Line 1 and Line 2 subways, and more GO Transit – are underway. Beyond 2030, nine more rail rapid transit expansions and bus rapid transit are planned for Toronto.

But will rapid transit expansions keep pace with travel demand growth? If everything in the GGHTP for Toronto is implemented, and improvements to the Toronto Transit Commission's existing services inch forward, it looks like it might – sort of, maybe. One reason it's uncertain is because about half of forecasted boardings on new rapid transit system expansions will be current transit users rather than new transit users.

Offsetting demand for travel by automobile also needs to include good municipal growth planning focused on increasing population and employment densities that boost transit ridership growth, and planning for walking and bicycling as modes of travel.

Will it be enough just to keep pace?

But just keeping pace with congestion and its impacts won't do. Few people will be happy if all that can be said in 2051 will be "Well, at least it hasn't gotten much worse". That would mean unending road congestion and failure in the war on the climate crisis. Is that what Torontonians want to give our kids and grandkids?

True progress requires that the number of kilometres traveled by motor vehicle plunges from today's volumes. It means that fewer and shorter trips will need to be taken by fewer cars. In general, that is not happening.

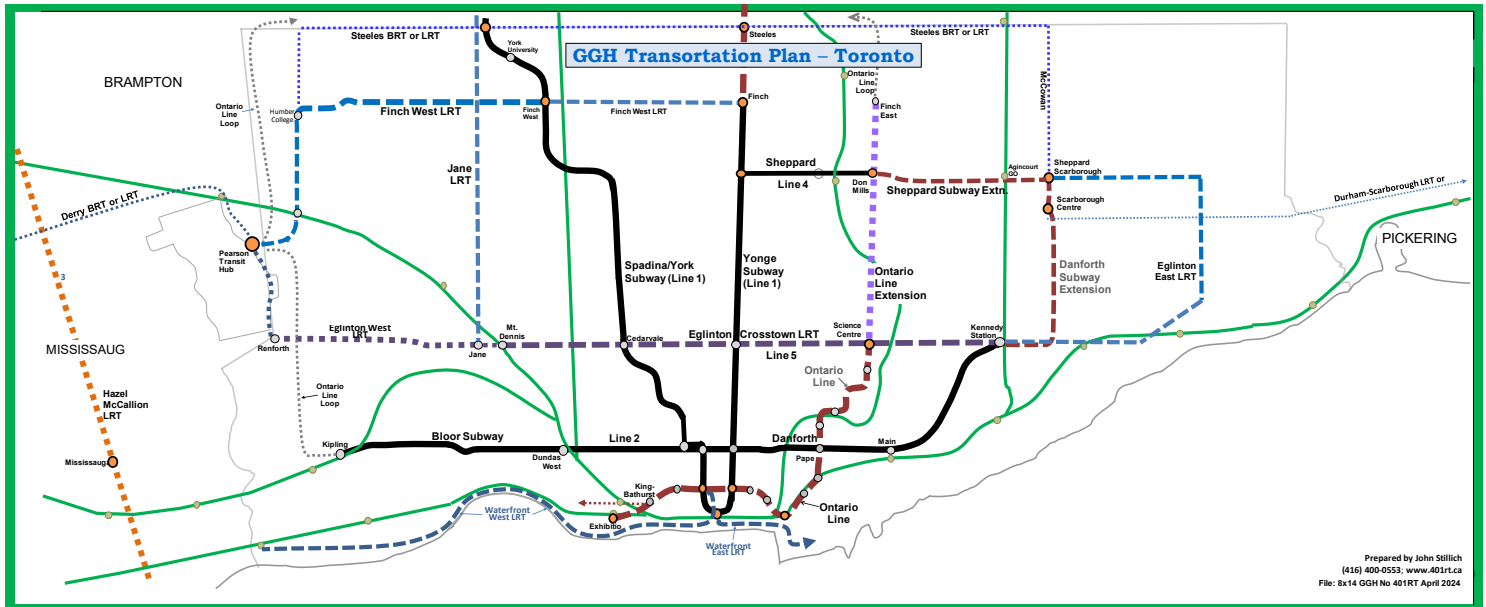
Toronto's Northern Rapid Transit Gap

The crux of Toronto's road congestion and Highway 401's slow crawl to death by strangulation lies in the dismal planning for rapid transit in the northern half of Toronto. The Toronto portion of the GGHTP is mostly a collection of scattered pieces that have been around for decades, without anything that can enable rapid travel across the whole of the northern half of the city, or to connect to north-south rapid transit. It is why people drive into the downtown core, clogging the Don Valley Parkway and other arteries across the city.

It is assumed that traffic on Highway 401 will continue to increase as the Toronto region's population continues to increase rapidly. That is why the GGH Transportation Plan includes a stated policy to add road capacity to Highway 401, rather than providing a rapid transit alternative to driving across the city. This has been actualized by the Premier of Ontario, who has announced a study to determine whether a new highway tunnel of at least two lanes in each direction under Highway 401 will be feasible or affordable.

2051 Rapid Transit Scenario (Figures in Millions)	Approx. Cost to Build	Approx. New Transit Trips per Yr.
Finch W LRT to Humber Coll	2,500	6.4
Eglinton LRT Mt.Dennis to Kennedy	12,800	19.0
Eglinton W LRT to Renforth	4,700	9.0
Ontario Line - Exhibition to Eglinton	14,000	72.4
Yonge SbwY extn to Richmond Hill	5,600	11.4
Scarborough SbwY to Sheppard E	5,500	13.9
GO Transit 2051	1,600	21.5
	46,700	153.5
Other Rapid Transit initiatives:		
Eglinton East LRT to UTSC& Malvern	4,650	11.0
Sheppard Subway to McCowan	4,800	6.5
Eglinton LRT Renforth to Pearson	1,200	3.9
Finch W LRT extension to Yonge	1,900	5.7
Finch W LRT extension to Pearson	1,200	1.1
Jane Street LRT	2,600	8.0
Ontario Line extn to Finch	6,900	19.5
Waterfront West LRT	1,900	13.7
Waterfront East LRT	900	2.4
Go Transit Enhancements	11,900	118.0
Varous BRT Routes	16,500	21.2
	54,450	210.9

The tunnel plan will not work. It would require massive property acquisitions for on and off ramps and may cost \$1.5 billion per kilometre to build – possibly \$90 billion or more to construct, depending on length. Multi-year disruptions on Highway 401 would be created during its construction, including massive removals of earth. It may be that by the time the tunneled highway is complete, it will be filled, and the number of motor vehicle trips on municipal roads going to and coming off the highway will have increased, to up to 40% by 2055. Highway 401 itself will already have been rendered gridlocked and non-functional.



High-occupancy lanes on Highway 401 for buses have been suggested as an alternative solution, but hundreds of buses would be required to make a dent in traffic volumes. Moreover, the costs and complexities of managing scores of new bus routes will be daunting for transit operators and for travelers.

What do Torontonians want? Do they want more highway lanes, or do they just want – somehow – less traffic congestion, not only on the 401, but everywhere?

The only east-west rapid transit lines that exist north of Eglinton Avenue are the Finch West LRT – which will be too slow and too remote to make a noticeable difference in Toronto's traffic volumes even if extended to Yonge Street and to Pearson – and the five kilometre long Sheppard Subway. Even if the Sheppard subway's planned extension to McCowan Road is built, it will be only 13 kilometres long. Toronto is 40 kilometres wide. It will not attract the number of new transit trips to make it worthwhile.

For example, getting from Scarborough's Neilson Road at Ellesmere Road (near a hospital) to Pearson International Airport by public transit will continue to be a struggle. It would mean a bus trip to Sheppard Avenue, a wait, another bus to the Sheppard subway at McCowan Road, another wait, the subway ride to Yonge Street, a wait for the Yonge subway, a ride to Finch Station, a wait for the Finch West LRT, and a trip on the Finch West LRT past Humber College to the airport. Altogether, almost a two-hour trip. The Eglinton LRT, geographically in the southern half of Toronto, won't be of much help.

The only sensible way to travel will seem to be to drive to Pearson on Highways 401 and 409; however, the 401 will also be congested for most of the day, and be gridlocked during peak periods.

Parking lots across the northern half of the city will remain full. The downtown core will continue to be congested with cars from Toronto's northern suburbs. As air travel continues to increase, Pearson's

expanded parking lots and garages will be full, despite light rail transit extensions from Finch and Eglinton Avenues. The Don Valley Parkway and other roads will remain clogged for most of the day, even with the Ontario Line nearby. And too many households will have to bear the burdensome costs of owning and operating personal automobiles, often one for every adult in the home.

Filling the Rapid Transit Gap

While the Province implements its existing rapid transit expansion plans, it also needs short term solutions that will help municipalities expand their transit services to attract more transit users. **A short term solution** can take the form of a \$2 billion (or more) in new capital grants for the purchase of municipal buses and for local transit infrastructure. It also means bringing back the long-lost 50% provincial subsidy for all municipal transit operating deficits. Those initiatives invigorate transit services and transit use by travelers. They will enable more frequent bus services, new express bus services, new community bus services and industrial shuttles, experimental autonomous vehicle services, transit shelters at all stops, and more. In various ways, that will encourage transit ridership that reduces motor vehicle traffic on local roads, including the congestion caused by cars coming off Highway 401 and other highways.

The Premier hinted at the long term solution to looming gridlock on Highway 401 when he suggested adding space for rapid transit to his highway tunnel vision. This is a significant consideration because there is currently no transit initiative in the Ministry of Transportation's Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan that will have a meaningful congestion-reducing effect on Highway 401 through Toronto.

That gap needs to be fixed. The most effective solution is a seamless rapid transit line that extends from Pickering through the northern half of Toronto and deep into Mississauga – one that is fast and comfortable enough to compete directly with driving across Toronto on Highway 401, and that provides easy connections to both legs of the Line 1 subway, an Ontario Line that's extended north of Eglinton East, the Line 2 Subway extension to Scarborough Centre, any of six GO Transit rail lines, Pearson airport and its massive surrounding employment area, and to myriad other destinations and a hundred bus connections along the way.

Rather than tunneling this rapid transit line, the most cost-effective alignment for this **"401RT Express"** would be one that is elevated above and adjacent to Highway 401's eastbound collector lanes, from Liverpool Road in Pickering to Highway 401 at Derry Road in Mississauga, where it is close to Brampton.

However, the alignment along the 401 bypasses several highly significant destinations, including Pearson International Airport and its surrounding employment area, and downtown Mississauga.

That can be resolved. Westward from its Islington/401 station, the 401RT Express is envisaged to include a seamless branch line off the Highway 401 corridor alignment, from Islington Avenue to Pearson

International Airport and its employment area, and southward from there to a junction of Highway 401, Eglinton Avenue, the Eglinton West LRT, and the Mississauga Transitway. From there it would continue above existing transportation corridors to Mississauga's downtown core, and terminate at the Erindale GO Station. 401RT users traveling westward from anywhere east of Islington



Avenue can choose to board a train that continues along Highway 401 to Derry Road, or to board a train that travels to Pearson and to Mississauga's downtown core. No transfers would be needed.

Illustrations of the 401RT Express alignments can be accessed at www.401rt.ca.

Locating the 401RT Express (or just 401RT) above existing corridors means that property acquisition costs or neighbourhood disruptions would be minimal. 75% of the lands bordering the highway are non-residential. Careful separation of the 401RT from the closest residential lands bordering the highway should minimize NIMBY (Not-In-My-Backyard) reactions. Most stations along Highway 401 would be above the on- and off-ramps along the highway's south edge.

Elevating the 401RT also means it can be built faster than tunneling it, and at less than the per-kilometre cost of the Ontario government's proposed highway tunnel. Most rail beds would be supported by dual pillars. Speed of construction can be maximized by multiple fully dedicated construction teams working simultaneously at several locations along the 401RT Express (e.g., one between Yonge and Pearson, another eastward from Derry Road, etc.), and modular construction of rail beds where possible.

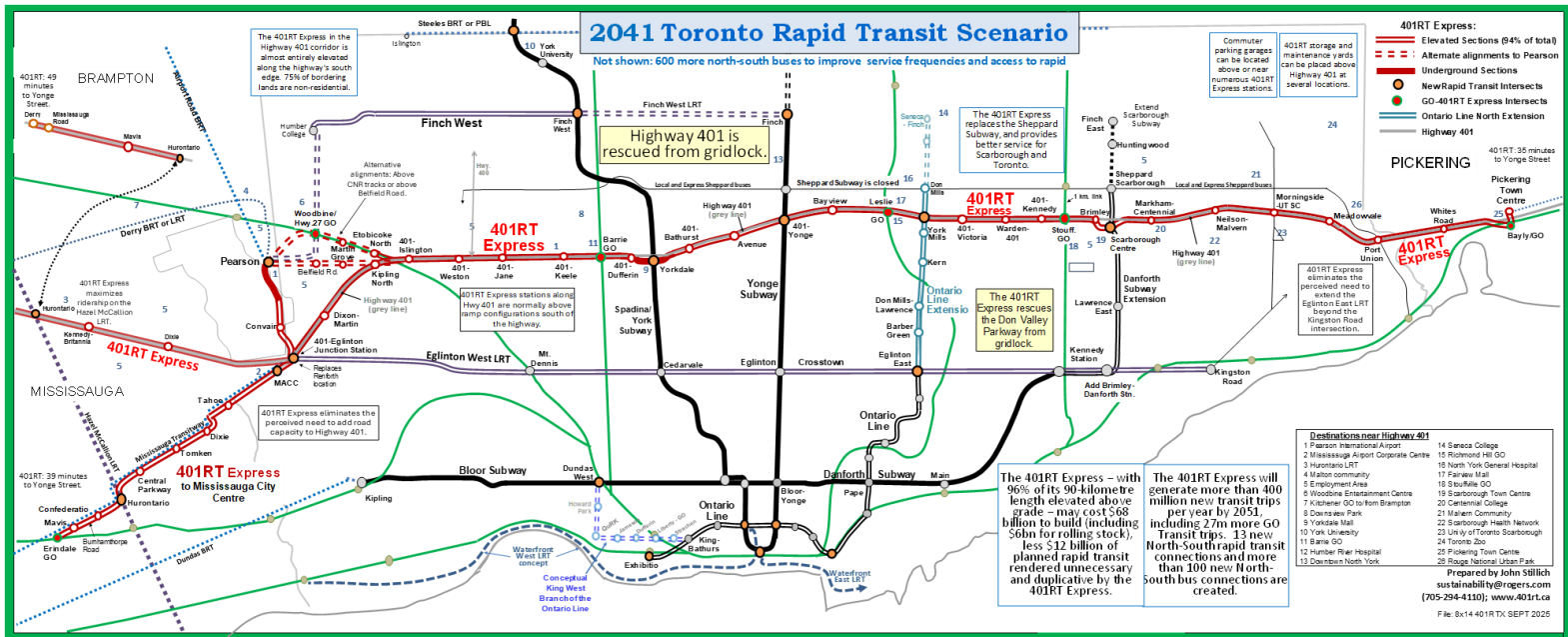
Commuter parking would be possible at numerous locations. At Erindale GO Station and at the Pickering Town Centre stations existing ground-level lots can be replaced by with new multi-level garages. Along 401RT Express segments running in the Highway 401 corridor, commuter parking garages are possible at several locations. At Pickering Town Centre, some land would need to be acquired from retailers. Elevated parking garages can be constructed at several 401RT Express stations, and are also possible at the base of Highways 400 and 404 to enable commuters from the North to transfer to the 401RT Express. Maintenance yards can be constructed over Highway 401 east of Jane Street, east of Dixie Road, and at Kennedy Road in Scarborough, above Eastgate Parkway, and perhaps at other locations.

Operating speeds can entice many people out of their cars and onto transit. For example, the 401RT Express will get travelers from its Yonge Street station to Pearson International Airport in about 26 minutes. End-to-end travel time from Pickering to Erindale GO station could be 80 minutes. These times reflect an average 85 kilometre per hour cruising speed between stations.

Travel time for the arduous trip example between Neilson Road and Pearson airport would be cut in half, from 110 minutes to just 56 minutes. That kind of change would have a transformative effect – Scarborough and Etobicoke would be reachable and feel closer together, particularly for people who cannot or do not drive automobiles. End-to-end trip time can be reduced by eliminating some station stops.

With a 401RT operational, many travelers flying out of Pearson International Airport can leave their cars at home instead of fighting traffic and paying for airport parking. Friends and families won't need to drive them to or from the airport.

Highly importantly, the 401RT Express would have enough capacity to offset all non-commercial traffic growth on Highway 401 for many decades after it becomes operational. The perceived need to add road capacity to any part of Highway 401 would end.



Success In the Suburbs

It is sometimes said that high-capacity rapid transit doesn't work in the suburbs because urban densities are too low. But GO Transit's Lakeshore Line shows that it can. It works because it brings commuters from suburban locations directly into Toronto's downtown core. In comparison, the 401RT Express has key destinations across all of its route, the most noteworthy being Pearson International Airport and its adjacent employment zone, and the Line 1 subway. As with GO Rail Transit, most 401RT Express users arrive at stations by car (where parking exists) or bus. The success of the 401RT Express would also stem from the fact that, for many longer-distance travelers, the only two practical travel options would be Highway 401 or the 401RT Express, and if the highway is too often congested or affected by motor vehicle crashes, the 401RT Express may be considered the best and most reliable option.

The 401RT Express will entice enough new ridership to ensure its success. These include its

- High average cruising speed between stations (85 kph),
- Continuous length and comfortable ride,
- High visibility above grade,
- Central location in the core of the Toronto Area,
- Population growth (a million more Torontonians in thirty years),
- Congestion and gridlock on roads and highways,
- Smart urban development,
- The increasingly unaffordable cost of personal automobiles and other costs of living,
- Intensified bus services on intersecting arterial roads,
- Connections to GO Transit that create long-sought east-west rapid transit services to and from the radial GO system,
- Much easier access to Pearson and its employment area from across Toronto and from Mississauga, and
- Latent transit demand for rapid transit.

Although latent demand for an alternative to driving is important and has not been researched, it is likely that a sizable portion of today's Highway 401 users would prefer to use a viable rapid transit alternative. The 1.3 million trips per day on Highway 401 in 2019 is estimated to rise to approximately 2.0 million by 2051. Major shifts from driving to the 401RT Express will occur because travel on Highway 401 and on alternative local roads will be significantly slower than traveling on the 401RT Express for the east-west segment of most trips. In effect, commuters will have little or no choice but to use the 401RT Express if they need to travel. Numerous other ridership effects arising from the 401RT Express will occur by 2051:

- GO Transit's six intersects with the 401RT Express will generate approximately 27 million new GO Transit trips and 24 million new 401RT Express trips.
- The Islington-to-Pearson-to-Erindale GO branch of the 401RT Express will generate additional trips to and from downtown Mississauga, the Mississauga Airport Corporate Centre, and other points;
- The transit modal share of trips to and from Pearson International Airport and its adjacent employment area will be much higher than is currently the case;
- Additional buses on north-south routes intersecting with the 401RT Express will attract new transit users whose destinations are not the 401RT Express; an estimate is 52 million new trips / year by 2051;
- Some urban development in the form of high density housing and office uses at and near the 401RT Express will have a higher than average transit modal share;
- High costs of automobile ownership and use, and other economic effects, will accelerate the shift of trips to the 401RT Express.
- The growth in truck movements will contribute to the shift to transit for commuters.

Without the 401RT Express or a similar rapid transit line, those additional transit trips will not occur. Overall, the 401RT Express is estimated to generate more than 400 million new transit trips per year by 2051 (more than one million trips per day). Together with other planned transit initiatives, the shifts to transit can offset the growth in demand for use of Highway 401. An equilibrium of use between Highway 401 and the 401RT Express would be established that would keep traffic on the 401 moving. The 401RT Express should reduce dramatically the high levels of congestion on the 401 between west of Dixie Road and Highway 400. A transit ridership scenario is attached to this document, based on a ridership volume that would keep, and reduce, growth in Highway 401 usage at 2024 volumes.

Key destinations directly served by the 401RT would be Pickering Town Centre, Scarborough City Centre, the Line 1 subway and the Ontario Line, Yorkdale Mall, Pearson International Airport and its adjacent employment areas, and the Mississauga City Centre area. Private shuttle buses operated by groups of employers can deliver employees to and from locations not served by municipal bus routes.

Overall, the 401RT will attract ridership from a wide swath of geography, from north of Lawrence Avenue to Steeles Avenue, and from numerous points of origin in Pickering and Mississauga. While 400 million new transit trips per year by 2051 is a seemingly high volume of new transit trips, it is less than the trips per-station than forecasted by Metrolinx for the Ontario Line from Exhibition GO to Eglinton Avenue East; however, because 401RTX trips are likely to be longer, occupancies per train kilometre would be higher.

An extension of the Ontario Line from Eglinton Avenue East to the 401RT Express will be necessary to keep 401RT Express users from overcrowding the Yonge Street subway. A northerly extension of the Ontario Line from Eglinton Avenue East to north of Highway 401 is already included in the GGH Transportation Plan.

For some, the 401RT Express seems too big an endeavour – 85 new kilometres of rapid transit, with up to 50 new stations and 13 new rapid transit connections. But it has to be done – it's critically important. And in reality, it's not a significantly larger project than the sum of rapid transit expansion projects currently

underway for Toronto and Mississauga. The critical point is that the 401RT Express is adequate to the scale of the transportation crisis facing Toronto, and necessary if the Premier of Ontario's ill-conceived highway tunnel is to be avoided.

Benefits of the 401RT Express

The effects of the 401RT Express would be transformative for the core of the Toronto area. A list of 66 general benefits (excluding almost all site-specific benefits) is attached to the end of this document. No other rapid transit initiative or combination of rapid transit initiatives would have as many benefits.

Goodbye to The Sheppard Subway

Despite many years of discussion and planning about extending the Sheppard subway to McCowan Road in Scarborough, the 401RT Express will make the entire Sheppard Subway, including its proposed extensions, obsolete. According to TTC statistics, people use the Sheppard subway mostly to go to Yonge Street or to catch a Don Mills bus, or to go to points east of the subway's Don Mills terminus. With a 401RT Express operating, most travelers who want to get to Yonge Street from, for example, somewhere along Markham Road or Kennedy Road, will prefer to take a bus to the nearby 401RT, two minutes south of Sheppard Avenue. **Very importantly**, the 401RT will enable seamless travel to or from west of Yonge Street and eastward to Pickering. Closing the Sheppard Subway could mean replacing it with a seamless bus service that can run from Toronto's eastern border to Weston Road. The extension of the Sheppard Subway, if extended to Scarborough Town Centre, would be approximately \$6.3 billion. Because the 401RT Express will render the entire Sheppard Subway operationally non-viable, the extension costs should be avoided. Lands at the current Bayview, Bessarion and Leslie stations can be repurposed for much-needed multi-storey affordable housing – for seniors, lower-income households, currently homeless persons, and for other persons who need support.

How is the 401RT Express Affordable?

The 401RT Express will cost an estimated \$62 billion to build; rolling stock (trains and buses) will cost \$6 billion. People of thrift, and perhaps others, will argue "That's Too Much!! I can't afford this!! My taxes will go through the roof!" Not so.

The \$68 billion is deceptively overstated. Today's Toronto taxpayers won't be digging into their wallets to pay that much. For one thing, the cost would be carried forward by public debt; in that way, future users of the 401RT would, very appropriately, contribute to the cost. Debt financing also greatly reduces the annual cost to taxpayers. Moreover, the cost will rise slowly, as the 401RT Express is being built.

As a cost-saving measure (and as a land use efficiency measure), members of the development industry may be contracted to build and, at least in part, pay for 401RT stations in exchange for air rights to build residential and/or office towers above the stations.

A highly significant cost-saving measure will be the elimination of some of the Ontario Government's currently planned rapid transit initiatives, including fairly high-profile initiatives that have been around for decades and hoped for by many. Altogether, they produce a cost-avoidance of \$11 billion in future infrastructure costs. There are four transit projects that would be rendered unnecessary by the 401RT Express:

1. The proposed \$7.5 billion Sheppard Subway extension to McCowan Road and to Scarborough Centre, less decommissioning costs. The subway would run closely parallel with the 401RT and not have the ridership volumes to justify its construction. Instead of a 13-kilometre Sheppard Subway, Toronto

would have the 85-kilometre 401RT. The decommissioning costs of closing the Sheppard subway may cost a net of \$800 million, after sale or repurposing of Sheppard Subway station lands.

2. Most of the proposed \$5.3 billion Eglinton East LRT extension in Scarborough. It's long been thought that an eastern extension from Kennedy subway station to the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus and to the Malvern community, and then westward to the Sheppard Subway extension, should be a priority. However, a 401RT through Scarborough provides much better and faster access between the northern half of Scarborough and the rest of Toronto. However, it is worthwhile to extend the LRT to Kingston Road (roughly \$1.7 billion), but not further.
3. The planned \$1.3 billion extension of the Eglinton West LRT from Renforth Drive to Pearson would not be needed. Travelers to Pearson would transfer from the Eglinton LRT to the 401RT at a junction station east of Renforth. The Eglinton LRT extension to Pearson would be an impediment to construction of the 401RT Express.

401RT Express Cost & Effectiveness Summary	Infra-structure Cost \$m	2051 Trips per Year Millions	Cost per New Trip	Kms. Of Track	Cost per Km. of Track
401RT Express - Pickering to Erindale GO	48,800	303	161	69.0	\$708
401RT Express - Derry to Islington@401	13,500	61	221	16.0	\$844
401RT Express - Rolling Stock	6,100				
Bus ridership increases (non-401RTX trips)		52			
401RT Express Effect on GO Transit (\$ by GO)		27			
Total Recommended Infrastructure	68,400	443	\$154	85.0	\$805
Recommended Expenditure Offsets:					
Sheppard Subway Extn. to Scarboro Ctr.	7,500	6	} \$626	9.0	\$830
Decommissioning Sheppard Sbwyr; net	-800				
Eglinton West LRT - Renforth to Pearson	1,300	4		7.6	\$171
Eglinton E LRT - Kndy to Malvern to McCowan	5,300	11	} \$515	19.1	\$278
Eglinton E LRT - Kndy to Kingston Rd (build)	-1,700	-3		-4.5	\$378
Total Expenditure Offsets*	11,600	18	\$647	31.2	\$371
Net New Cost Commitment	56,800		} \$128		
Potential Gain in New Trips per Year		443			

* The 401RT draws ridership from these higher-order transit routes, rendering them operationally non-viable. Overall, these trips are not lost; they would be served by existing bus services or trips are diverted to the 401RT Express.

N.B. The 401RTX requires an extn of the Ontario Line N from Eglinton; already in MTO's Greater Golden Horseshoe Transportation Plan.

N.B. Excludes shortening of the planned Durham-Scarborough BRT to east of Liverpool Rd. (not itemized)

N.B. Based on cost per new transit trip, the 401RT Express is approximately four times as cost-effective as the recommended expenditure offsets (\$579/\$154).

Additionally, the 401RT and the Eglinton LRT would divert some ridership from a proposed \$2.6 billion Jane Street LRT, reducing its perceived benefits. For example, a trip from Jane at Wilson Avenue to downtown Mississauga currently takes 78 minutes; a Jane LRT wouldn't make the trip much faster. Using the 401RT, the trip would take just 33 minutes. Overall average trip lengths on Jane buses would shorten, decreasing crowding on Jane buses.

For a 401RT Express across the underserved northern half of Toronto and into Pickering and Mississauga, and 400+ million new transit trips per year by 2051, a net \$56.8 billion cost (\$68.4 bn less \$11.6 bn) above current plans for rapid transit is a huge bargain. The cost to Ontario would very likely be further reduced by federal cost-sharing as a public transit project, and may be eligible as an environmentally appropriate "Build Canada" initiative that increases economic productivity and maintains the essential functionality of Highway 401 for the movement of workers and goods. In the past, federal cost-sharing has reached 40% of eligible costs; for the 401RT Express, this can be a further \$22.7 billion (\$56.8 billion x 40%).

Of critical importance, the 401RT Express eliminates the perceived need to build a new highway tunnel under Highway 401, at a potential cost of \$90 billion or more.

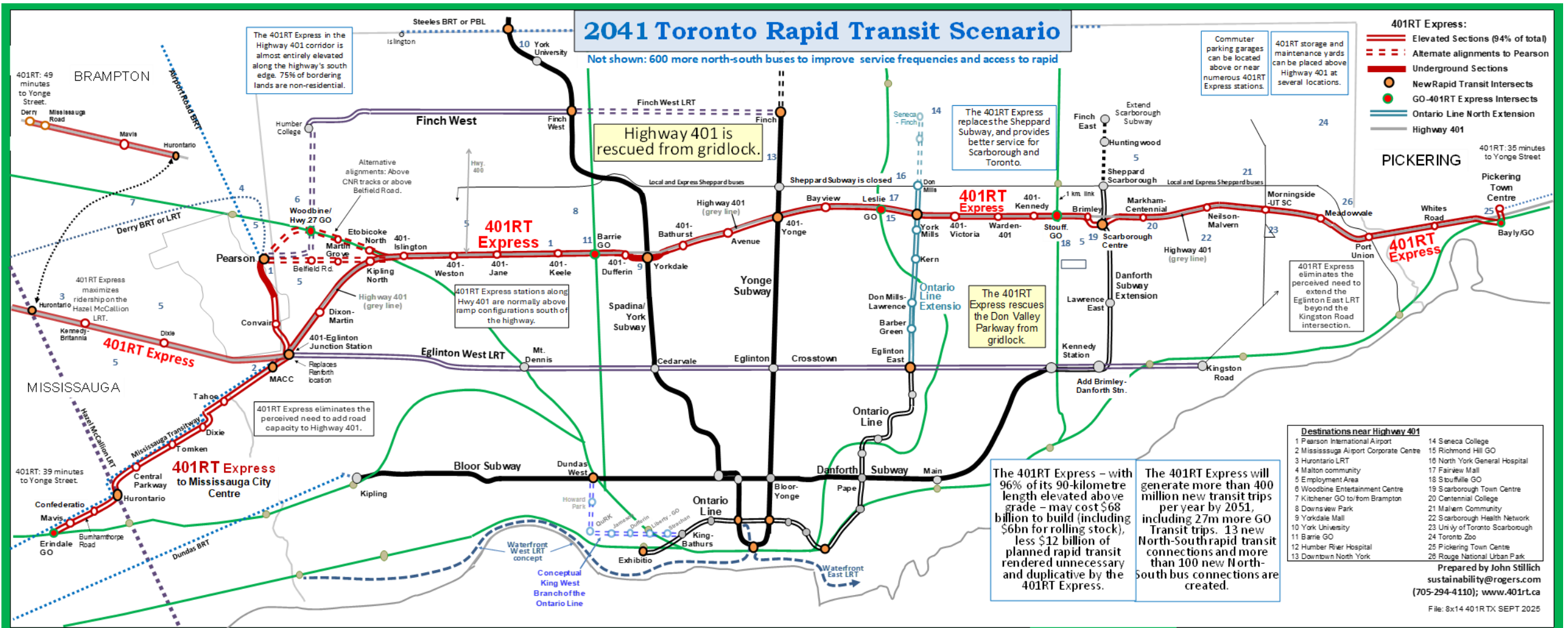
The tax cost to Toronto households would be highly affordable. Cost sharing by non-residential taxpayers and the federal government (assuming 40%), population growth, deficit funding and assuming a borrowing rate for the Ontario government of 3%, the average daily cost per household by 2041 for Ontario's costs to build the 401RT Express would grow to about **18 cents per day**. Ontarian's share of the 401 federal cost may add another **5 cents**.

And what's the comparison? The average cost per year to own and operate a new gasoline-powered car in Ontario can be, variably, \$15,000 per year. That's \$41 per day. So, in a way, switching from driving a car to using public transit can be a household budget bonanza.

All of a sudden, it's a 'no-brainer'.

401RT Express Infra. Cost - Per Household	
(Costs in millions of dollars)	
53,600	Gross Cost - Pickering to Erindale GO
14,900	Gross Cost - Islington to Derry/401
68,500	
-11,600	Expenditure offsets
56,900	
- 22,700	Canada Share @ 40%
34,200	Net Ontario cost
3.0%	Ontario borrowing rate (N.B. 2023 was 3.2%)
1,026	million\$\$ per year
50.0%	Household share (per Ontario Budget)
513	Household share - millions\$
19,700,000	Ontario population 2041
2.5	Avg. hshld size 2041
7,880,000	Ontario Households in 2041
\$ 65.10	Cost per avg. hshld in 2041
\$ 0.18	per day (excluding household tax share of Gov't of Canada cost)

file: 401RT Costs & Riders ELEVATED SIMPLE



30+ years from now, there will be a million more people living in Toronto. The **401RT Express** is essential if highways and local streets in Toronto are to be decongested. Currently-planned rapid transit expansions will struggle to keep up with travel demand growth, and will not reduce overall use of motor vehicles on city streets. Adding road capacity to Highway 401 is not a solution; its impact will be to encourage driving and to increase congestion on local roads.

The **401RT Express** should be recognized as inevitable and urgent. The 401RT Express's seamless length, speed of service, connectivity, and high visibility will make it a success. It will render numerous current rapid transit initiatives unnecessary and operationally nonviable: the Eglinton West LRT Phase 2 extension to Pearson International Airport, the Sheppard Subway extn (and the Sheppard Subway itself), most of the Eglinton East LRT, and the Jane Street LRT. Spending on these will waste an estimated \$12 billion.

The \$68 billion **401RT Express** (including \$5bn rolling stock) is highly affordable, and is estimated to be more than twice as cost-effective as rapid transit initiatives currently being implemented, based on new transit trips generated. Its net cost to build would be as low as \$57 billion (after cost avoidances of aforementioned initiatives). Federal cost sharing can be 40%. The 401RT Express (or similar) would be transformative for transportation in Toronto, and is essential for achieving climate change goals. It is essential for tens of thousands of households that struggle with the high costs of automobile ownership and use. Visit www.401rt.ca for more information. Call John Stillich at 705-294-4110 or visit www.401rt.ca for more information.



Benefits of the 401RT Express Through Toronto

The 401RT Express is a concept for a seamless 85-kilometre 50-station rapid transit line through the core of the Greater Toronto Area that is almost entirely elevated over or alongside existing transportation corridors. It would operate from Pickering Town Centre to an Islington station at Highway 401 and, westerly from there, divided into two branches – one to Pearson International Airport and its employment area, and then southwesterly through Mississauga’s downtown core to the Erindale GO station, and the second branch continuing along the Highway 401 corridor to Derry Road in northwestern Mississauga. An enlarged view of the proposed alignment of the 401RT Express is shown at the end of this document.

The 401RT Express is of transformative significance, and would affect other transit expansion decisions in Toronto, Mississauga, and Durham Region. The scale of the 401RT Express reflects the magnitude of the transportation and climate change problems facing the region; the overall traffic congestion problem in Toronto cannot be resolved with constrained approaches. The following list of general benefits is lengthy and significant, and highlights the strategic importance of the 401RT Express in the Toronto area. Purely local benefits are generally not included in this list.

1. The first practical transit alternative to driving across northern Toronto is created, bringing rapid transit much closer to many thousands of today’s car-driving commuters.
2. The first seamless and practical rapid transit connection is created between Toronto and downtown areas of Mississauga and Pickering.
3. Access to the ongoing movement of employment and other destinations from the downtown Toronto core to its northern suburbs becomes less car-dependent.
4. Up to thirteen new rapid transit connections are created (Hazel McCallion LRT, Mississauga Transitway, Union-to-Pearson Express, Woodbine GO, Barrie GO, Spadina/York Subway, Yonge Street Subway, Oriole GO, Pickering GO, an extended Ontario Line, the Scarborough Line 2 subway extension, a possibly-relocated Agincourt GO station or additional GO/401RT Express transfer station south of the Agincourt GO station, and the Lakeshore East GO Transit line at Pickering.
5. Gridlock on Highway 401 is avoided as high volumes of transfers from the highway to rapid transit occur.
6. Gridlock and congestion on the Don Valley Parkway is ended as the 401RT Express enables rapid transit access to the Ontario Line .
7. Plans to widen Highway 401 between Highway 427 and Highway 404, or to construct a highway tunnel under the 401, are rendered unnecessary. The 401RT Express and Ontario Line reduce or end road congestion in downtown Toronto.
8. More than 100 new surface bus route connections to rapid transit are created.
9. North-south bus trips to east-west rapid transit are significantly shorter in time and distance.
10. The 401RT Express enables the GO Rail system to be used for trips across Toronto’s suburban North; east-west rapid transit access to/from the radial GO Rail system has been long desired.
11. The seamless 85-kilometre length of the 401RT Express and its up to 50 stations maximize trip origin-destination opportunities.
12. The extremely high level of congestion on Highway 401 between west of Dixie Road and Highway 400 is eased or ended.
13. Truck transport is improved, and economic costs of transport delays on highway 401 are avoided as car drivers transfer to the highly visible 401RT Express.
14. The trip capacity of the Highway 401 corridor in Toronto is more than doubled.

15. The 401RT Express reduces or ends road congestion on the Don Valley Parkway, by providing east-west connectivity to the Ontario Line and Line 2 extension in Scarborough.
16. The 401RT Express relieves potential over-capacity pressures on the Eglinton LRT.
17. Traffic congestion on city streets throughout Toronto and in parts of Mississauga and Pickering is reduced as major modal shifts to transit occur; all road trips begin and end on local streets.
18. Travel times across the northern half of Toronto are significantly reduced when compared to current transit services. End-to-end travel time on the 401RT Express from Pickering Town Centre to Erindale GO station (69 kilometres) is approximately 80 minutes. This compares well to current travel times by automobile during peak periods.
19. The 401RT Express increases transit ridership by more than 400 million per year by 2051, including a 52 million annually in local non-401RT Express trips on enhanced intersecting bus services and 24 million new 401RT Express trips resulting from new GO Rail intersects.
20. GO Transit ridership increases by approximately 27 million trips per year by 2051, 25% beyond current forecasts, as a result of six new Intersect stations with the 401RT Express (Erindale GO, Kitchener Line at Highway 27, Barrie GO Line, Leslie-Oriole GO, the (potentially relocated) Agincourt GO station, and Pickering GO).
21. Overall, the “loose ends” of north-south rapid transit lines are connected to enable rapid access to destinations along the 401RT’s east-west axis. This is highly significant.
22. Overcrowding of the Yonge Subway as a result of high 401RT Express ridership is avoided once the Ontario government’s plan to extend the Ontario Line to Sheppard Avenue East is completed; this essential extension should coincide with 401RT Express implementation.
23. The 401RT Express may reduce the number of automobiles on Highway 401 and other roads by approximately 15%, a reduction that can enable some streets to have more and safer bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, and more greenscaping.
24. The addition of large multi-level garages above the Weston and Jane 401RT Express stations (plus access ramps) may enable the creation of a transfer point for drivers having come into Toronto on Highway 400. This enables people to avoid using city streets to get to downtown Toronto or other destinations.
25. In general, access to services and to employment across Toronto and to/from Mississauga, Pickering and Brampton becomes much faster and easier, especially for persons of modest incomes, or who do not own cars or cannot drive. This is a significant enhancement of quality of life for them.
26. The northwest arm of the 401RT Express brings parts of Milton and Brampton within rapid transit commuter range of Toronto. For example, travel time on the 401RT Express from its Derry Road terminus to Pearson International Airport is approximately 25 minutes.
27. Rapid, affordable, and direct rapid transit access to Pearson International Airport from downtown and from suburban locations across the region is created (Approximately 85% of trips to the airport do not originate from downtown Toronto).
28. Travel costs are reduced for thousands of households as fewer cars need to be owned, or are used less. Money saved can be redirected towards other household priorities. After-tax household savings vary widely, but can range between \$11,000 and \$20,000 per year per vehicle (or more), less the cost of using public transit (approx. \$1,900/year in 2024). **This is a significant household affordability benefit.**
29. For many commuters, the 401RT Express becomes the first alternative to what is now an expensive forced daily drive on congested highways to and from Toronto.
30. The Greater Toronto Airports Authority’s plans for a transit hub are transformed to be much more effective, and perhaps simplified; parking infrastructure would be reduced.
31. Rapid direct access to Pearson International Airport via the 401RT Express from locations across Toronto makes the Government of Ontario’s planned \$1.4 billion extension of the Eglinton Crosstown LRT from Renforth to Pearson International Airport unnecessary. A 401RT Express northward from the juncture station at Eglinton Avenue east of Renforth Drive would provide the rapid transit link to/from

Pearson. The LRT extension would be an impediment to a continuous 401RT Express service to and from Pearson; **it should not be built.**

32. Access to the employment areas surrounding Pearson airport is greatly improved; these employment areas in Mississauga and Toronto revitalize as accessibility to them improves, and helps them to become more attractive to business and to workers.
33. Current and forecasted road overcapacity situations in the large employment areas around Pearson International Airport are reduced.
34. Employment opportunities and labour market conditions are enhanced. Fewer people will decline employment opportunities near the airport or elsewhere due to road congestion and travel times. This resolves an important concern of employers regarding workforce access, especially at and near Pearson International Airport.
35. The 401RT Express's intersect with the Line 2 subway's extension at Scarborough City Centre significantly increases ridership on that extension.
36. Enhanced access from across all of Toronto to the University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, Centennial College (Scarborough), York University, and the U of T downtown campus is created. Many students will no longer need to decide on courses of study based on travel time and distances to campuses, nor will need to acquire an automobile for their commutes.
37. Improved and rapid access to the University of Toronto's Scarborough campus using the 401RT Express will reduce ridership volumes on the proposed Eglinton Crosstown East LRT extension, **rendering it unnecessary.** Savings from eliminating the LRT extension approaches \$5.5 billion. However, it may be worthwhile to extend the LRT from Kennedy station to Kingston Road only, a cost of approximately \$2 billion.
38. Overall, the 401RT Express serves Scarborough residents much better than the Sheppard Subway, **rendering the entire Sheppard Subway obsolete.**
39. The perceived need for a Jane Street LRT proposed by Toronto would become less necessary, as east-west connections provided by the 401RT Express, the Finch West LRT, and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT at Jane attract Jane bus users and reduce passenger volumes and trip-length crowding on Jane Street buses to Bloor Street. Savings may be \$2.6 billion.
40. Access to employment opportunities and services for residents of disadvantaged communities and for people who do not drive automobiles is significantly improved.
41. Direct rapid transit access to Mississauga's Airport Corporate Centre (at MACC station) from across northern Toronto and from central Mississauga is created.
42. Canada and Ontario government capital cost contributions could result in an influx of more than \$50 billion into the Toronto area economy during the 401RT Express's construction. Almost all of the 401RT Express's costs would be provincially and federally funded.
43. Overall, federal cost-sharing makes the 401RT Express a much more financially advantageous option for the Government of Ontario, compared to the proposed Highway 401 tunnel (illustration at right). Shareability would be based on improving economic productivity, environmental benefits, and social factors.
44. The 401RT Express creates a large economic stimulus as approximately **40,000 workers** are directly employed for up to 12 years during the 401RT Express's construction – more than any other transportation job creation project in the GTA has achieved.
45. Hundreds of ongoing transit operating jobs are created, including maintenance, customer service, security, administration, and more.
46. Economic losses from traffic congestion are reduced; business efficiency is improved.
47. Economic losses from imports of motor vehicle fuels and automobiles are reduced. Most cars and trucks sold in Ontario are imported, as is almost all fuel.

Cost-Sharing Options

	Gross Cost (\$millions)	Federal Cost-Sharing	Net Ontario Cost (\$millions)
Highway 401 Tunnel	90,000	0%	90,000
401RT Express	68,400	40%	41,000
Cost Savings	21,600		49,000

The 401RT Express may be cost-shareable as a Build Canada project, or as a Canada Public Transit Fund project..

48. The number of deaths and injuries from motor vehicle collisions and the traumas and costs borne by the families and friends of crash victims are reduced, as are the associated daily congestion effects of collisions.
49. The 401RT Express helps enable the transformation of Yonge Street north of Highway 401 as the Yonge Street subway is extended to Highway 7. The 401RT Express will attract new transit users from driving on Yonge Street, by making it easier for them to access employment east and west of Yonge Street.
50. Greenhouse gas emissions are reduced by more than 800,000 metric tons per year until electricity-powered vehicles become more prominent. Toxic vehicle emissions and their negative effects on health are also reduced.
51. The operational effectiveness of the Toronto area's pre-existing transit system is improved; for example, more people will use existing buses and new buses for local trips not related to the 401RT Express (approximately 52 million per year by 2051) as service frequencies improve with the addition of more than 600 north-south buses as part of the 401RT Express concept. Frequency of service for some of these routes may be reduced to five minutes.
52. Suburban sprawl is eased, as development in the central area of the GTA is attracted by the 401RT Express, including construction of buildings near and at 401RT Express stations, and along intersecting arterial roadways served by enhanced bus services.
53. Property tax revenues are increased from new urban development at/near 401RT Express stations, and from increased property values in parts of Toronto, Mississauga, and Pickering, and in some '905' areas served by GO Transit.
54. For owners of real estate near 401RT Express stations, property values will increase. (Unfortunately, this also means buyers must spend more money to purchase property.)
55. Improved transit access via the 401RT Express supports an increased distribution of work across Toronto outside the downtown core and in Mississauga.
56. Rapid access to/from the 401RT Express improves automobile-free connectivity for businesses, and access for workers who live both downtown and in suburban areas.
57. Rapid transit access to places of work or to home outside the downtown core may enable the number of parking spaces downtown and across Toronto to be reduced, even as overall travel demand increases with population growth. Opportunities increase to transform public downtown parking spaces into affordable housing, open greenspaces and other public uses.
58. Overall operating revenues for the 401RT Express may cover 100% of costs or more by 2051, much better than that of Toronto's overall public transit system. The estimate assumes that 401RT Express users will pay a small premium fare than the standard fare for TTC buses.

59. Based on estimated new transit ridership generated by 2051, the overall capital cost-effectiveness of the 401RT Express would be more than twice that of Ontario's announced 2019 Rapid Transit Plan for Toronto, based on the cost per new transit trips generated. (N.B. the 401RTX cost figure **excludes \$12 billion** in expenditure offsets re currently planned rapid transit initiatives made unnecessary by the 401RT Express.

Ontario Rapid Transit Plan vs. 401RT Express

	New Trips (Million/yr) 2051	Est'd. Infra. Cost (\$Mil)	Cost per New User	New Kms. Of Track
Ontario Rapid Transit Plan*	118	39,500	\$335	58.3
401RT Express**	443	68,440	\$154	90.0
Comparative Ratio	3.76	1.73	2.17	1.54
401RT Cost Effectiveness Advantage				2.17

* Costs of the announced \$28.5 billion have increased to approximate current values, and include the Hazel McCallion LRT, the Ontario Line, the Yonge North Subway extension to Highway 7, the Scarborough Subway, and the Eglinton West LRT extension to Renforth.

** Includes \$6 billion for rolling stock.

60. Based on total new transit ridership generated by 2051, the capital cost effectiveness of the 401RT Express compared to the proposed High-Speed Rail (HSR) service from Toronto to Windsor would be approximately 14 times that of the relatively lightly-used HSR.

High Speed Rail to Windsor vs. 401RTX

	Millions of New Trips/ year 2051	Gross Infra. Cost (\$Mil)	Cost per New User
HSR to Windsor	10	21,000	\$2,100
401RT Express	443	68,440	\$154
Comparative Ratio	44	3.26	13.6

61. Based on total new transit ridership generated, the 401RT Express would be extraordinarily more cost-effective (14.6x) than a high-Speed rail service between Quebec City and Toronto, serving ten times the number of trips at much less cost. The comparative cost effectiveness of the 401RT Express enhances arguments for federal cost sharing.

Comparing Rapid Rail Concepts

	Millions of Trips/yr by 2051	Gross Infra. Cost (\$Mil)	Cost per User
HSR Toronto to Quebec City			
- Recent Estimate	40	\$90,000	\$2,250
401RT Express*	443	\$68,440	\$154
Cost effectiveness advantage of 401RT Express:			14.6

* Excluding rolling stock

62. For Mississauga's residents, the 401RT Express through downtown Mississauga would enable affordable access to destinations to and from the airport area and across Toronto, and generate modal shifts to public transit that would reduce growing congestion on Highway 403 to/from Toronto.
63. The operational revenue-to-cost ratio of the Hazel McCallion LRT in Mississauga is improved as intersects with the 401RTX at two points attracts additional new ridership; additional high-density urban development at and near Hurontario Street is supported.
64. The 401RT Express at its Port Union, Whites Road, and Liverpool stations enables transfers between the Durham-Scarborough BRT and 401RT Express to speed travel for many cross-boundary commuters. The Scarborough portion of the BRT would become unnecessary.
65. In York Region, the 401RT Express would ease road congestion to and from Toronto as north-south York Region bus services connecting to the 401RT Express improve.

A 2051 Scenario of Modal Shifts from Highway 401 to 401RT Express

Transit ridership are largely based on the diversion from projected Highway 401 traffic volumes

		AM & PM Peaks		Off-Peak Periods - Note 1		Totals
		Non-Commercial	Commercial	Non-Commercial	Commercial	(Daily)
Based on Derry to Liverpool segment (on-ramp AADT):						
(Sum of all Highway 401 segments 2019 - Liverpool to Winston Churchill)						
Period % split of 24hrs		50%	50%	50%	50%	
Hwy 401 total vehicles/day - 2019		526,500	123,500	526,500	123,500	1,300,000
(Based on AADT 2019 data. Assumes avg trip is 8 segments out of 32 total.)						
(Commercial Veh. @ 19% per MTO)						
2024 vehicles	5.4% growth	554,931	130,169	554,931	130,169	1,370,200
(This assumes that no efficiencies in the transport of goods/freight have been achieved)						
Relative Space Utilization		1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.095
(Assumes that the average truck on Highway 401 consumes 1.5 times the amount of road space as an automobile or pickup truck)						
2024 spatial equivalency		554,931	195,254	554,931	195,254	1,500,369
Freight efficiency increases, if any	(input)		10%		10%	
Net spatial efficiency before modal shifts		554,931	175,728	554,931	175,728	1,461,318
Latent demand shift rate	(input)	10%	0	5%	0	5.5%
(Assumes that there are large numbers of commuters who would use a rapid transit service along Highway 401 if it were available)						
Latent demand to 401RTX		55,493	-	27,747	-	83,240
Hwy 401 spatial equiv. 2051 @ 35.0% growth		749,157	237,233	749,157	237,233	1,972,780
Less 2024 latent demand to 401RTX (per above)		55,493	-	27,747	-	83,240
Net 2051 Hwy spatial equivalents		693,664	237,233	721,410	237,233	1,889,540
Modal shift rate applied to net Equiv.	(input)	45%		22.5%		25.1%
The % represents a scenario of modal shifts achieved by 2051. Assumes that during on-peak periods, a higher portion of Highway 401 users will continue to use the highway. The modal shift also reflects that using local roads as an alternative to the 401RTX may be slower than using the 401RTX for E-W segment of trips, i.e., a high % of travelers will have no practical choice other than to use the 401RTX. The shift rate may also incorporate changes in remote office work, and potential effects of highway congestion tolls, which would be appropriate after the 401RT Express becomes a practical alternative to driving, in the form of speed, connectivity, and convenience currently missing from GTA transit systems.						
Modal shift		312,149	-	162,317	-	474,466
Latent demand shift (per above)		55,493	-	27,747	-	83,240
Total shift achieved		367,642	-	190,064	-	557,706
2051 space equivalency before shifts		749,157	237,233	749,157	237,233	1,972,780
Less shifts to 401RTX achieved (above)		367,642	-	190,064	-	557,706
Net 2051 net spatial equivalents		381,515	237,233	559,093	237,233	1,415,074
2024 net spatial equivalency (per above)		554,931	175,728	554,931	175,728	1,461,318
Increase or (decrease) in hwy congestion		(173,416)	61,505	4,162	61,505	(46,244)
Islington/401 to Pearson to Erindale GO Segment:						
Period % split of 24hrs		50%	50%	50%	50%	
Total vehicles/day - 2019		305,573	71,678	305,573	71,678	754,500
(This is an uncertain representation of what the volumes may be - no specific info found re non-401 trips in Pearson area or downtown Miss'ga. Used AADT volume (avg. on-ramp data) for Hwy 409 (95,000) + approx avg for Hwy 427 (150,000) + Hwy 403@Huronario (193,500)).						
(Commercial Veh. @ 19% per MTO)						
2024 vehicles	5.4% growth	322,073	75,548	322,073	75,548	795,243
(This assumes that no efficiencies in the transport of goods/freight have been achieved)						
Relative Space Reqmt		1.0	1.5	1.0	1.5	1.095
(This assumes that the average truck on Highway 401 consumes 1.5 times the amount of road space as an automobile or pickup truck)						
2024 spatial equivalency		322,073	113,322	322,073	113,322	870,791
Freight efficiency increases, if any	(input)		10%		10%	2.6%
Net spatial efficiency before modal shifts		322,073	101,990	322,073	101,990	848,127
2024 Latent demand shift rate	(input)	10%	0%	5%	0%	5.5%
(This assumes that there are large numbers of commuters who would use a rapid transit service along Highway 401 if it were available)						
Less latent demand shift to 401RTX (per above)		32,207	-	16,104	-	48,311
Hwy 401 spatial equiv. 2051 @ 35.0% growth		434,799	137,686	434,799	137,686	1,144,971
Less 2024 latent demand to 401RTX (per above)		32,207	-	16,104	-	48,311
Net 2051 Hwy volume equivalents		402,592	137,686	418,695	137,686	1,096,660
Modal shift rate applied to net Equiv.		45%	0%	22.5%	0%	25.1%
The % represents a scenario of modal shifts achieved by 2051. Assumes that during off-peak periods, a higher portion of Highway 401 users will continue to use the highway. The modal shift also reflects that using local roads as an alternative to the 401RTX may be slower than using the 401RTX for E-W segment of trips, i.e., a high % of travelers will have no practical choice other than to use the 401RTX. The shift rate may also incorporate changes in remote office work, and potential effects of highway congestion tolls, which would be appropriate after the 401RT Express becomes a practical alternative to driving, in the form of speed, connectivity, and convenience currently missing from GTA transit systems.						
Modal shift (applied to 2051 spatialequivalents)		181,166	-	94,206	-	275,373
2024 Latent demand (per above)		32,207	-	16,104	-	48,311
Total shift achieved		213,374	-	110,310	-	323,684
2051 space equivalency before shifts		434,799	152,985	434,799	152,985	1,175,568
Less shifts to 401RTX achieved (above)		213,374	-	110,310	-	323,684
Net 2051 net spatial equivalents		221,425	152,985	324,489	152,985	851,884
2024 spatial equivalency (per above)		322,073	101,990	322,073	101,990	870,791
Increase or (decrease) in hwy congestion		(100,648)	50,995	2,416	50,995	(18,907)
SUMMARY:						
2051 spatial equivalents before shifts		1,183,956	390,218	1,183,956	390,218	3,148,348
Less total shift achieved (per above)		581,015	-	300,374	-	881,389
Net 2051 spatial equivalents		602,941	390,218	883,582	390,218	2,266,958
2024 spatial equivalency		877,004	277,718	877,004	277,718	2,309,445
Increase or (reduction) 2024 to 2051		(274,064)	112,500	6,578	112,500	(42,487)
The target should be to achieve a volume of motor vehicle trips that is lower than 2024 volumes.						
Other 401RT Express ridership factors:						
Subtotal modal shifts to 401RT Express achieve		581,015 daily		300,374 daily		881,389
Other modal shifts to 401RT Express:		Urban development at/near 401RT Express stations (higher transit modal share due to close proximity to 401RTX)				26,384
		401RTX ridership increase from new GO Transit intersects				65,753
		Higher transit share of trips to Pearson (air travelers only)				23,000
						996,526
		Other factors @ 0%	(input)			-
		Total daily 401RT Express trips - 2051				996,526
		2051 401RT Express trips - Annual Equivalent				363,730,000
	New non-401RT Express trips:	New GO Transit trips (excluding Lakeshore E & W)				27,390,000
Assumes a 25% increase in projected 2055 GO Transit ridership for Kitchener, Barrie, Stouffville and Richmond Hill routes intersecting with the 401RTX, and a 15% increase in Lakeshore East GO route at the Pickering 401RT Express intersect.						
		Non-401RT Express transit trips generated by more N-S buses				52,000,000
The bus routes intersecting with the 401RTX assume a 20% increase in trips applied to overall travel demand projected for 2051, plus a 10% congestion and car cost increases.						
		Total annual effect of 401RT Express: 2051 Scenario				443,120,000

Estimations exclude effects of AI and trade wars (assumed to be temporary). More people may have retired from employment, but more people may have to rely on transit for household financial reasons or not wanting to drive, or being unable to drive.

Ridership will rise as segments are completed; those will be difficult to forecast. Ridership will be synergistically low for individual segments - the longer the operating 401RTX, the higher the boardings per station.