

# West Aurora

## Network

### Study

August 2025



## **Executive Summary**

The Town of Aurora's local bus network currently only has three routes running off of Yonge Street. Of those, only one substantially runs outside of the arterial roads, leaving most west Aurora residents a long walk from transit. The one neighbourhood route (32 – Aurora South) runs infrequently during rush hours and is circuitous, making it inconvenient for most trips. A survey of ridership on route 32 found around 97% of travellers were going to an arterial road (Wellington or Yonge) or somewhere which required use of one, showing how non-GO riders need a route designed for transfers at arterial roads. Other neighbourhood routes have also previously existed along Industrial Parkway and in northern Aurora, though all have been discontinued due to either low ridership or a desire to save money. The former shows routes which should not be implemented again.

At the same time, the parking lot at Aurora GO Station is running out of space on weekdays and has no room to expand, needing an overflow lot a 10-15 minute walk away. Existing transit is not timed or routed to help people catch the GO Train, further reducing transit's convenience. With parking running out, transit will play a pivotal role in maintaining existing ridership as well as allowing for ridership growth needed to justify added off-peak service which will continue to mostly end in Aurora.

Several alternative solutions were proposed for a new bus network in Aurora. One alternative was considered for if the budget was unable to increase. Other than that, they assumed a need to expand service into all neighbourhoods of west Aurora. These routes provide a mostly direct connection with Aurora GO Station and Viva blue, run every 30 minutes, and are a short walk for most residents.

The alternatives included a new route serving northwest Aurora along Orchard Heights Drive, a few proposals to split route 98 – Yonge at Wellington Street and have both routes serve Aurora GO Station as well as smaller roads where running a single route did not make sense, a route along Henderson Drive with a more direct path to Aurora GO Station, extensions of routes 33 and 88 to connect the two routes, and options for whether to continue the existing service along Stone Road.

The short list had two or three in each area based on directness, resource use, walking distance, and connections. A merge between routes 33 and 88 was found infeasible due to the existing 88's reliability issues. As a result, they would run concurrently either along Wellington Street between Bathurst and Aurora GO with route 33 having a loop serving Aurora Heights or along 15th Sideroad Between Bathurst and Seneca Polytechnic's King Campus. For southwest Aurora, alternatives were considered which ran route 32 directly to Aurora GO via Edward and Engelhard or via Murray Drive, with the former requiring a local Yonge route run along Murray. In north central Aurora, route 31 had options to run along Yonge or into the neighbourhood there, with the former requiring a Yonge local route run along Old Yonge Street.

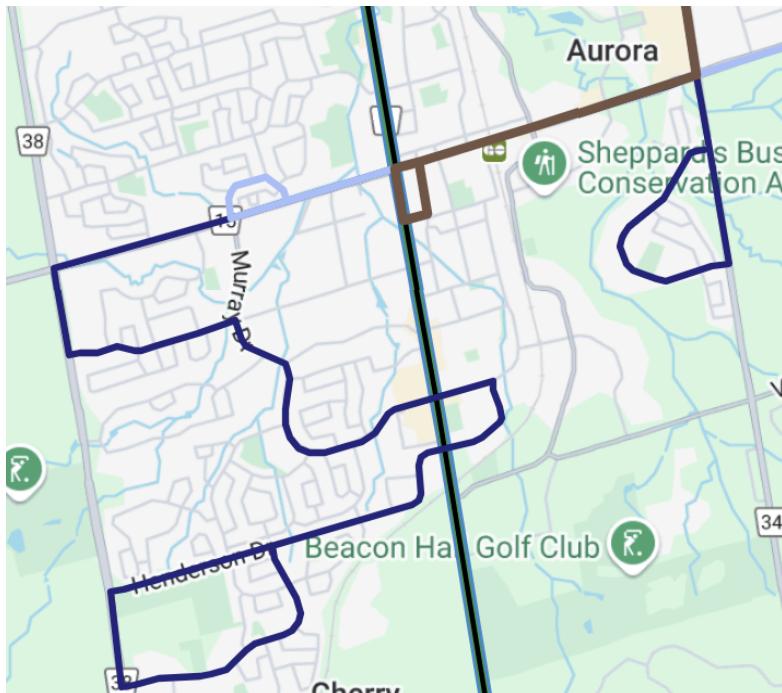
A more detailed analysis produced the proposed solution. It consists of a route 88 express or normal branch running to Aurora GO Station, route 33 – Wellington-Leslie running west to Bathurst on a loop via Aurora Heights Drive, route 31 – Orchard Heights reaching Aurora GO Station via Yonge Street, a northern route 97 – Yonge running via Old Yonge Street, and the southwest option with a direct route 32 – Henderson and a route 98 running to Aurora GO via Murray Drive. Route characteristics pertaining to areas outside the study area were mostly left undetermined.

Following the publication of this report and the completion of York Region Transit's Aurora travel survey, the details of each route's implementation should be fully determined. A year after implementation, ridership on these routes and the GO Train should be monitored to determine whether the network needs changes.

## 1.0 Introduction

As of summer 2025 and excluding school specials, the transit network within Aurora consists of the following routes shown in Fig. 1 [1]:

- The Viva blue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line, running along Yonge Street between Finch and Newmarket Terminals.
- Route 32 – Aurora South (dark blue), running during rush hours and serving Stone Road, Wellington Street between Bayview and Bathurst Streets, and the Aurora neighbourhoods between Yonge and Bathurst south of Wellington.
- Route 33 – Wellington-Leslie (light blue), running Monday to Saturday from Haida Drive near Aurora High School to the David Drive & Highway 404 Park & Ride lot via Wellington and Leslie Streets and a business park where the streets intersect.
- Route 54 – Bayview (brown), running Monday to Saturday from Yonge/Wellington to East Gwillimbury GO Station via Wellington Street, Bayview Avenue, and Main Street in Newmarket.
- Route 96 – Keele-Yonge (black), running between Pioneer Village and Newmarket Terminals via Yonge Street, King Road, and Keele Street.
- Route 98 – Yonge (green), running along Yonge Street from Bernard Terminal to Green Lane.



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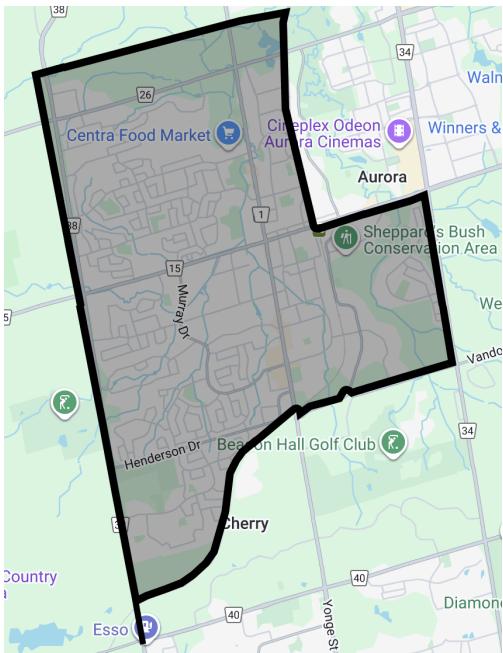
Figure 1. Map of the current transit network in Aurora.

This report studies travel in western Aurora—particularly on route 32—and proposes a new network based both on the data collected and the need to serve Aurora GO Station to accommodate anticipated ridership growth despite an existing parking shortage.

## 2.0 Background and Context

### 2.1 Study Area

As of 2021, the Town of Aurora has a population of 62,057 of which approximately 30,200 ( $\pm 500$ ) live west of the Barrie Line and 3,650 ( $\pm 80$ ) live in the Stone Road neighbourhood [2, 3]. Based on several site visits, the neighbourhoods in the study area are generally suburban in nature. The study area consists of the Town of Aurora west of the Barrie Line, the area between Wellington Street, Vandorf Sideroad, Bayview Avenue, and the Barrie Line, and Bathurst Street between Bloomington Road and the Newmarket boundary. A map of the study area is shown in Fig. 2 below.

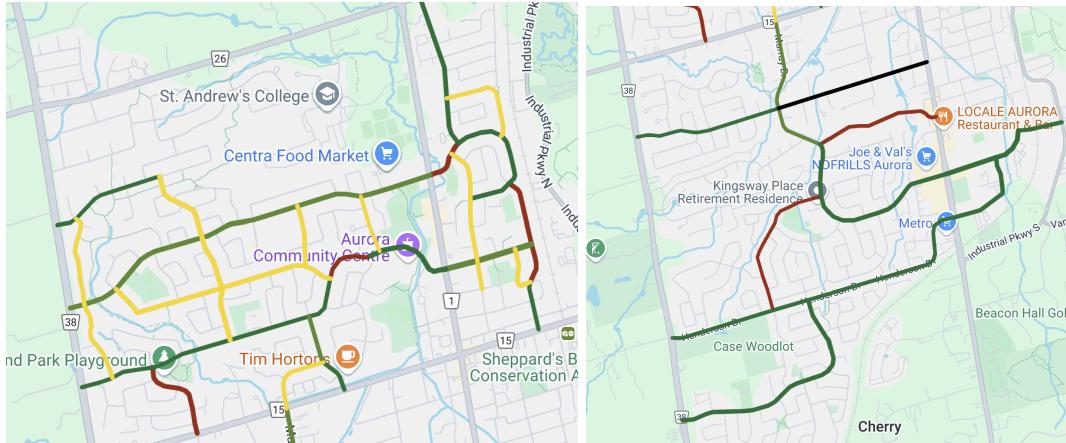


Map data ©2025 Google

Fig 2. A map of the study area. Created with [Google My Maps](#).

Based on several site visits, the vast majority of this area consists of low-density residential development (mainly single-family homes). Neighbourhood streets have at least one sidewalk, though Bathurst Street does not. Along Yonge Street near Henderson, Murray, Golf Links, Aurora Heights, and Orchard Heights Drives are low-density commercial areas with high levels of parking. Similar land uses exist along Wellington Street at Haida Drive, at John West Way, and at Bayview Avenue.

Several streets west of the Barrie Line are configured with one side's lane being narrower than the other. These streets' narrower lanes typically range in width from 3.0 to 3.4 metres. Street parking is only allowed on the side with the wider lane. This conflicts with YRT's standard mandating lanes be at least 3.3 metres wide on its routes. The roads highlighted in red in Fig. 3 were measured and lanes were found to be too narrow to run a bus on. Roads with wide enough lanes are shown in green or yellow, with yellow roads having no yellow line.



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 3. Roads in red represent those with lanes found to be too narrow for buses, defined as less than 3.3 metres wide [4, p. 103]. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

Along Industrial Parkway is a mix of commercial and industrial sites with plentiful parking for each site. Aurora GO Station sits near this area next to Wellington Street. Just west of Aurora GO Station is Aurora's historic business district along Yonge Street between roughly Church and Wellington Streets. This area consists of several mixed-use or commercial buildings as well as the Aurora Public Library and Town Square.

Aurora is home to five secondary schools. Aurora High School is located at the intersection of Wellington Street and Murray Drive. Dr. G.W. Williams Secondary School is currently located along Dunning Avenue near Yonge Street, but will be relocating to Bayview Avenue and Spring Farm Road at the start of the 2025-26 school year. As of the 2025-26 school year, Aurora HS's school boundary includes all of Aurora west of the Barrie Line and/or west of Yonge Street while the rest of Aurora is included in Dr. G.W. Williams' boundary [5, 6]. Dr. G.W. Williams also has an International Baccalaureate (IB) program with a boundary covering all of Aurora [6].

The York Catholic District School board also has two high schools in Aurora, Cardinal Carter on Bloomington Road between Bathurst and Yonge Streets and St. Maximillian Kolbe located on Wellington Street between Industrial Parkway and John West Way. Cardinal Carter's boundary covers the parts of Aurora southwest of the Wellington-Yonge intersection, while the rest of Aurora is in St. Maximillian's boundary [7, 8]. Ecole secondaire catholique Renaissance, run by a francophone board, is located at Bathurst Street and Bloomington Road. While there are no post-secondary institutions in Aurora, Seneca Polytechnic's King Campus is located nearby along Dufferin Street north of 15th Sideroad.

## 2.2 Aurora GO Station

Presently, Aurora GO Station is the terminus of most off-peak service [9]. There is no indication this will cease in the coming years, indicating Aurora GO is expected to maintain strong enough ridership to end trains there. With service improvements expected as part of GO Expansion, ridership should be expected to grow.

Aurora GO faces a parking shortage on busy days [10]. It has little room to build more parking, with an overflow lot being 15 minutes away by foot from the temporary platform [10]. From the regular platform closer to Wellington Street, a fast walker experiencing no wait at intersections can walk to the overflow

lot in 7.5 minutes at best based on [my experience](#). With the timing being inconvenient, I will try to avoid walks longer than the overflow lot for passengers attempting to access Aurora GO.

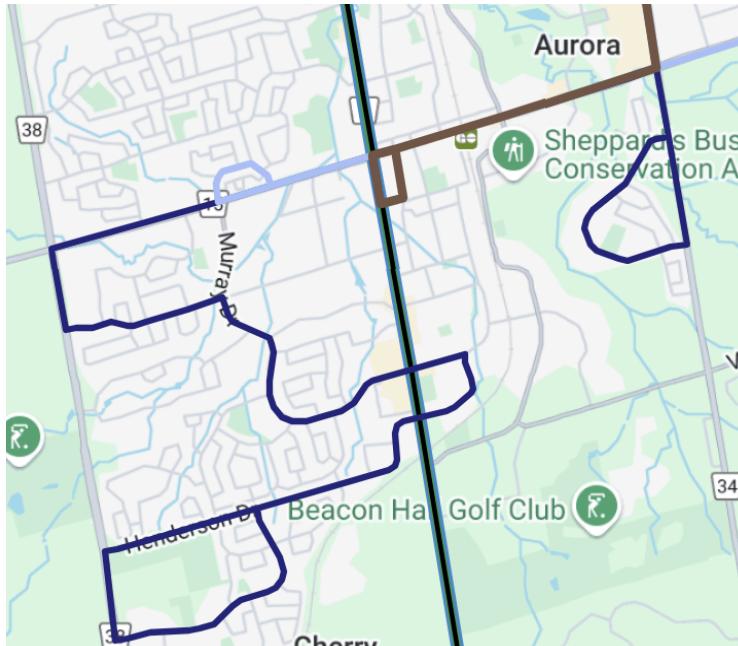
As shown in Fig. 4, the local bus schedules are not aligned with GO Train departures at Aurora GO. This makes it inconvenient for passengers to take transit to the GO Train. This may cease to be an issue in the event service on the line runs frequently (e.g. every 15 minutes) but that is unlikely in the next few years given current service levels which rarely surpass every 30 minutes as shown in Fig. 4. Aurora GO Station has a bus loop, however only GO buses use it.



Fig. 4. Morning schedules for routes 33 southbound (left), 54 southbound (2nd from left), and 32 northbound (2nd from right), and Barrie line departures to Union [9, 11].

### 2.3 Existing Network

The existing bus network in Aurora consists of six bus routes, most of which run primarily on arterial roads (usually Wellington Street or Yonge Street) [1]. There are no routes on St. John's Sideroad, Industrial Parkway, Bathurst Street (apart from Kennedy to Wellington), or any neighbourhood streets northwest of the Yonge-Wellington Intersection except those very close to Aurora HS on which route 33 loops [1]. The only route serving non-arterial roads in Aurora (apart from those on which route 33 loops) is route 32 – Aurora South, which runs rather circuitously through the neighbourhoods southwest of Yonge and Wellington as well as along Wellington to the Stone Road area near Bayview Avenue south of Wellington as shown in Fig. 1.



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 1. Existing Transit network in Aurora. Route 32 – Aurora south is the dark blue route.

The service levels of each route running through Aurora are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Service levels of each bus route running through Aurora as of September 2025 [11].

Route	blue	32	33	54	96	98
Where in Aurora	Yonge	Southwestern neighbourhoods	Wellington, Leslie	Wellington, Bayview	Yonge	Yonge
Headway (min.): Weekday before 9:30	10-12	70-72*	~30§	23-27	30-34	35
Weekday 9:30-15:00	16	None	30§	~36§	34-39	58
Weekday 15:00-19:00	12	69-72*	~31§	~29	~27	39
Weekday 19:00-22:00	14-20	None	~26^§	64	~30	51
Weekday 22:00-24:00	19	None	None	None^	~30	35-38^
Saturday	15-17	None	38-43	55-72	60	46^--58

Sunday/ Holiday	20	None	None	None	60	43^‐53
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\*Plus up to one school trip in either direction

§Resulting from a service improvement effective August 31, 2025.

^54 service actually ends around 22:30, 33 service ends around 21:00. Route 98 combines with route 99 further south around 22:00 and service ends around 2:00 (SB)/3:00‐3:30 (NB) the next day.

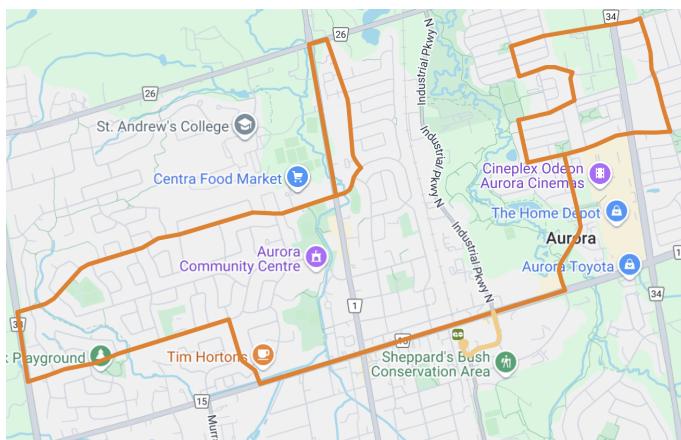
Aurora also has school special routes serving Cardinal Carter, Aurora, St. Maximilian Kolbe, and Dr. G.W. Williams at school bell times during the school year. Non-students have been observed riding them.

### 2.3.1 Discontinued Routes

Schedules from 2007, 2011, and 2019 as well as other historical material taken from the Wayback Machine were used when researching transit in Aurora. The former routes which no longer run can teach us something: If they were discontinued due to low ridership, perhaps there was something wrong with the route at the time that prevented it from gaining riders. Such routes in their exact form should not be implemented in the future unless there is a major circumstantial change like a significant increase in GO Train service. There may have been other reasons for changes which should also be understood to ensure the new network can avoid such changes.

#### 2.3.1.1 Changes Prior to 2012

In the 2000s, Route 31 – Aurora North was an indirect Monday-to-Saturday route serving northwest Aurora to Old Yonge combined with a section northeast of Aurora GO Station as shown in Fig. 5 [12]. The 2008 Annual Plan called for the route to end at Aurora GO Station, with service east of there replaced by a new 33A branch route. Service west of the station was reduced to rush hours only to cut costs [13].



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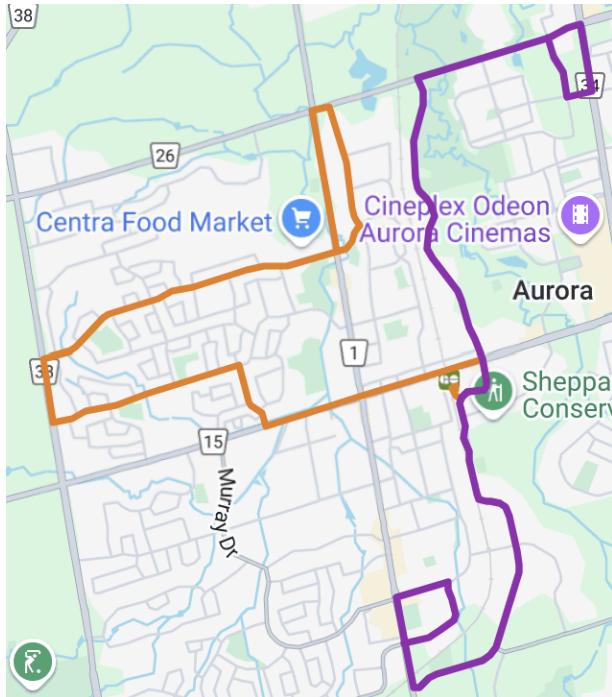
Fig. 5. Route 31 in 2007. The Aurora GO diversion in light orange only ran when connecting with peak hour GO Trains [12]. Map made with [Google My Maps](#).

Route 54 – Bayview originally served Stone Road rather than running to Yonge Street via Wellington Street like it does today [14]. It is unclear when this changed, though the route had been modified to serve Yonge Street by 2011 [15].

### **2.3.1.2 Routes Discontinued in 2012**

In the early 2010s, YRT began monitoring routes' financial performance [16]. The routes in Aurora were restructured, with the resulting network requiring fewer resources to run than the existing one.

Route 34 – Industrial Parkway ran between Henderson Drive and St. John's Sideroad via Industrial Parkway. The route's service had already declined from every 20-30 minutes to every 40 minutes by 2011 [14, 15]. The route never connected with GO Trains [14, 15]. At the time, Route 31 ran west to Bathurst via Wellington and Aurora Heights, then east to Old Yonge via Orchard Heights [17]. The two routes are shown in Fig. 6.



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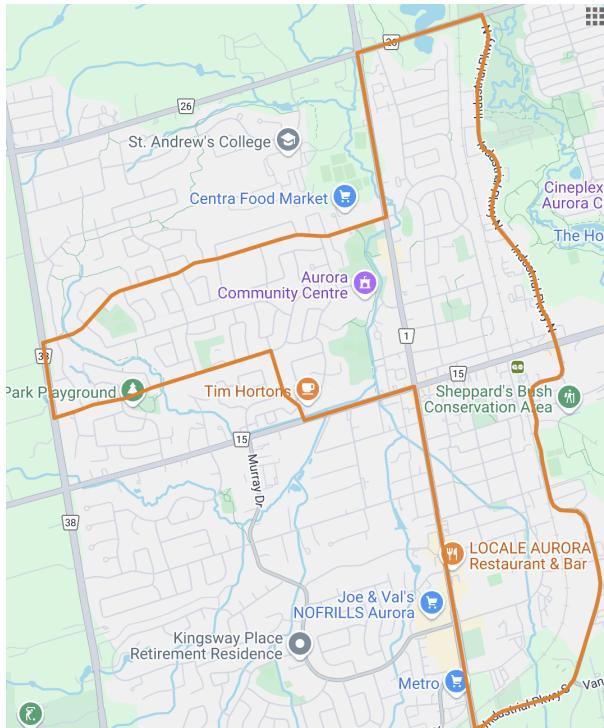
Fig. 6. Routes 31 – Aurora North (orange) and 34 – Industrial Parkway (purple) as they existed in 2011 [15, 17]. Map made with [Google My Maps](#).

In July 2012, route 34 – Industrial Parkway was discontinued, being merged with route 31 – Aurora North to form a new clockwise one-way loop route [18].

### **2.3.1.3 Routes Discontinued During and After the COVID-19 Pandemic**

Shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, YRT's budget was reduced and service was planned to be reduced or eliminated on some routes to cut costs [19]. During the pandemic, several routes were suspended or had service reduced [20]. Some routes never reached their pre-pandemic levels of service again while others (such as route 26 [21]) were cut further or eliminated entirely (such as route 41 [22]).

Most of the suspended routes never returned, including route 31 – Aurora North. This route ran in a clockwise loop as shown in Fig. 7. It only ran during rush hours and most trips connected to GO Train departures [23]. The route's revenue/cost ratio in Fall 2019 was approximately 25%, similar both to some discontinued routes (e.g. 28 – Huntington) and others which continue to run (e.g. 82 – Valleymede) [21, p. 96].



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 7. Route 31 as it existed in 2019 [23]. Made with Google My Maps.

In 2019, Route 32 was structured similarly to today with two exceptions. The route laid over at Aurora GO Station during the afternoon rush hour. Most other rush hour trips—specifically those connecting to a GO Train—also went to the bus loop at Aurora GO. Other trips served the station from Wellington Street [24]. Some late morning rush hour and all afternoon rush hour trips additionally served Seneca Polytechnic’s King Campus, providing a connection to the school as well as a connection to Route 88 - Bathurst [24].

In 2023, YRT discontinued route 33A – Wellington, a branch line of route 33 - Wellington (now route 33 - Wellington-Leslie) which looped through neighbourhoods near Bayview Avenue between Wellington Street and St. John’s Sideroad. By the time this change occurred, each branch was running every 66-70 minutes [21, pp. 29-30]. While the route was discontinued due to low ridership, route 33 as a whole was performing better financially in 2022 than 2019 [21, pp. 29-30], and would be extended along Leslie Street to Newmarket in 2024, with a weekday service improvement to approximately every 30 minutes occurring in September 2025 [4 pp. 26-27, 11].

All routes discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic were neighbourhood routes, suggesting YRT and/or passengers found the more direct nature of arterial routes more appealing than more windy, local routes. As of September 2025, the only Aurora route with significantly less service than in 2019 is Route 32 – Aurora South, the only remaining neighbourhood route.

## **2.4 Ridership and Passenger Destinations**

Between April and June 2025, I conducted a survey of the ridership of 32 – Aurora South and all nearby school special routes to determine where passengers in Aurora's western neighbourhoods like to go. The total ridership per day on Route 32 was approximately 176, which increased by one when adding school special trips and excluding passenger trips to Cardinal Carter and the now-relocated G.W. Williams high schools.

A clear conclusion is that the vast majority of passengers were connecting to an arterial road. My survey found 97% (95% CI: 95% to 99%) of passengers travelled to Wellington and/or Yonge or travelled to Stone Road, which requires use of an arterial road to access. Major ridership generators included Yonge and Wellington Streets, a shopping centre near Yonge Street and Edward Street, the straight Henderson Drive/McClellan Way section of the route, and the high schools along Wellington Street: St. Maximilian Kolbe and Aurora High Schools. Further information on passenger destinations can be found in Appendix A. Stone Road was not evaluated as thoroughly as the other sections of the route. However, the data I have suggests ridership is low in that area.

## **2.5 Service Guidelines**

York Region Transit's service guidelines suggest 90% of the urban population should live within 500 metres of a bus stop on a route operating during rush hours and within 1 km of an operating bus stop off-peak [25]. This is a lower standard than neighbouring agencies in Toronto and Brampton, which have a 400-metre standard during all time periods [26, 27]. For this study I will apply the York Region Transit guidelines, aiming to keep within the prescribed walking distance when sensible.

## **3.0 Problem statement**

Presently, most neighbourhoods in west Aurora have little to no bus service. The route that does run only operates during rush hours. It sees demand for travel to arterial roads but the route is very circuitous, being inconvenient for most trips. Meanwhile, Aurora GO station is running out of parking and the only place to build more is a 15-minute walk from the current (temporary) platform and 7.5 minutes from the usual platform in the best-case scenario. Transit serving these commuters from a closer distance can be more convenient than the overflow lot, however a network restructuring must occur for bus routes to be convenient for Aurora residents including those taking the GO Train. This restructure is essential to ensuring Aurora GO maintains capacity for growing ridership, which appears to be expected with its status as the end of most off-peak trips on the Barrie line.

## 4.0 Stakeholders

Apart from Passengers, YRT, and York Region, modifications to the route structure will likely impact the following parties:

Table 2. Stakeholders with a potential interest in route changes.

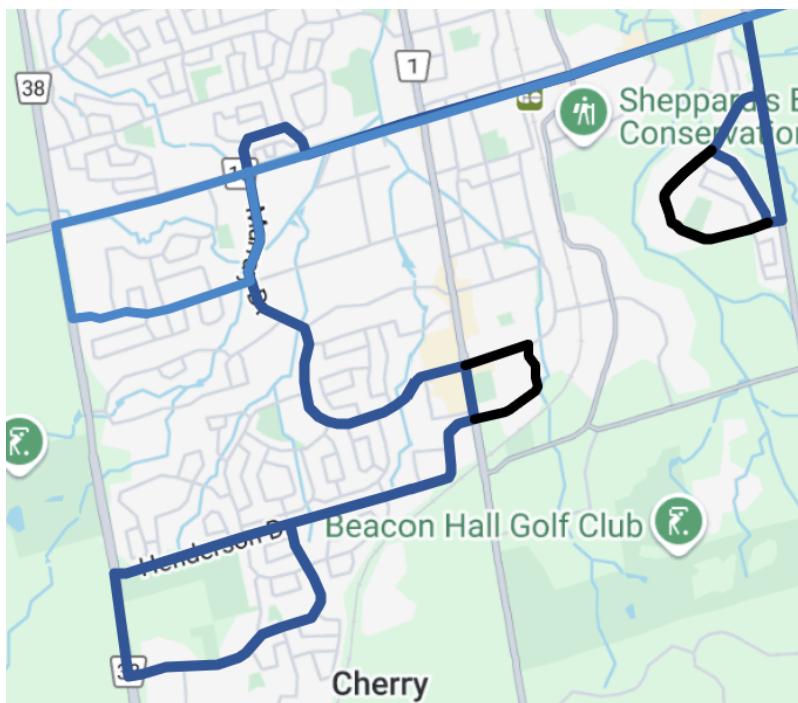
Stakeholder	Interest
Town of Aurora	Would prefer increased access to Aurora Community Centre, Aurora Town Square & Public Library, and businesses who pay property taxes. Buses may increase road maintenance expenses on roads they use due to their higher weight than cars.
Businesses along Yonge, Wellington; Industries along Industrial Parkway	Would benefit from increased access to their business, reduced maintenance expenses from fewer cars using their parking lot. However, the increased maintenance expense may not be a major issue.
Metrolinx	Would benefit from increased fare revenue from higher Barrie line ridership and from fewer cars in their parking lot, which would decrease the amount of parking they need to build and road maintenance expenses.
GO Transit passengers outside Aurora	Some commuters from outside Aurora prefer to use Aurora GO Station [10]. Allowing Aurora commuters to use transit would free up spaces at the station for commuters driving longer distances to Aurora GO.
York Region District School Board (YRDSB) & York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB)	Connections to high schools would enable boards to run fewer school buses, as YRDSB high school students served by transit with a reasonable travel time are ineligible for school bus travel, while for YRDSB its distance threshold increases from 3.6 to 4.8 km [28, 29].
Seneca Polytechnic	May be averse to increased road maintenance expenses, though it likely would not be a major difference as Route 88 – Bathurst already runs on their King Campus. Increased travel via transit would decrease demand for parking, which may save money long-term through building and maintaining fewer parking spaces.
Township of King	Zancor Centre may benefit from increased use accessibility for travellers from Aurora.

## 5.0 Alternative Solutions

As the existing network is already problematic, it was not considered as a possible option. However, routes similar to it were considered, including a minor change to be implemented if a budget increase is not approved.

### 5.1 If an Increased Budget can not be Secured

Without an increased budget for use in the area, YRT will be unable to introduce new routes in west Aurora. However, with the current network as circuitous as it is I felt minor changes could be made. Fig. 8 shows this change. Stone Road was not removed from the route due to uncertainty in my Stone Road data. However, the route was shortened slightly. The changes to Route 32 – Aurora South were designed such that it would be more direct and run approximately every 60 minutes, enabling connections to GO Trains at Aurora GO Station. At the same time, route 33 would be extended to Bathurst Street on a loop via Kennedy Road to maintain service and to provide a more direct route to Bathurst.

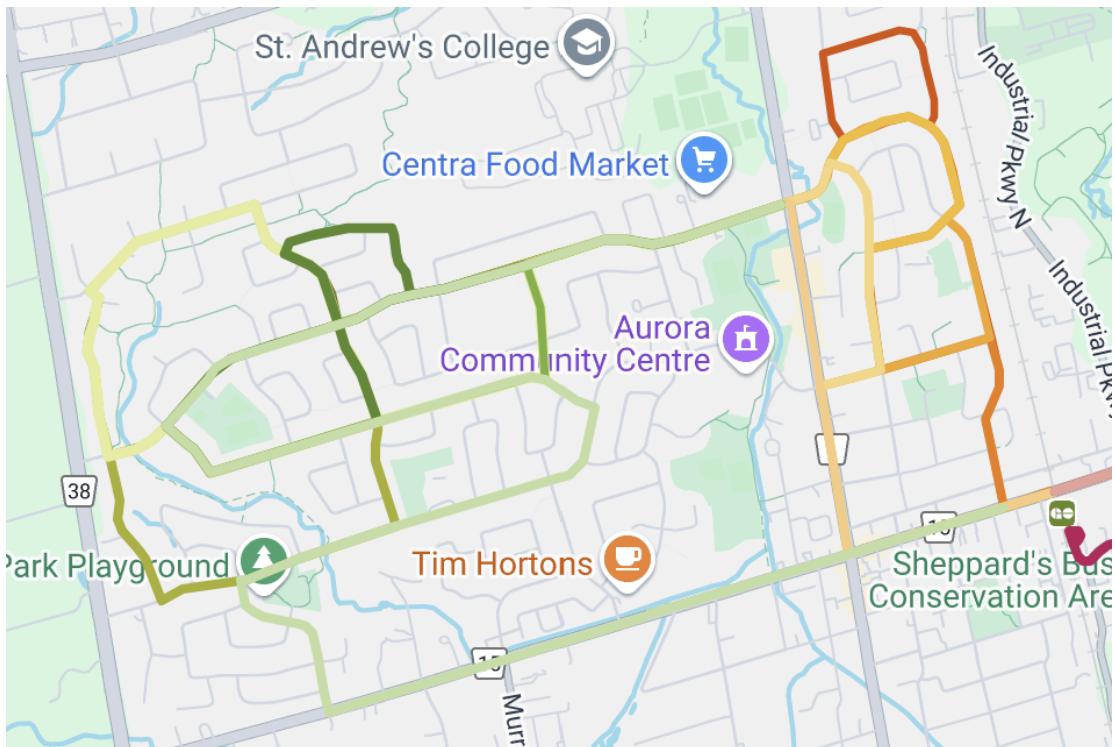


Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 8. My proposal for if the transit budget can not be increased. Black indicates areas with discontinued service. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

## 5.2 Northwest Aurora

With rider interest in direct routing found from the route 32 survey and indirect routings making up the bulk of the now-discontinued routings, making the new route reasonably direct was a high priority. Only one of the original long list of alternatives was not designed in this fashion, which was representative of a new school special route to be implemented in September 2026 [30, p. 38]. However, I considered this option unlikely to be implemented due to its indirect nature. Fig. 9 shows all alternatives initially considered for northwest Aurora.



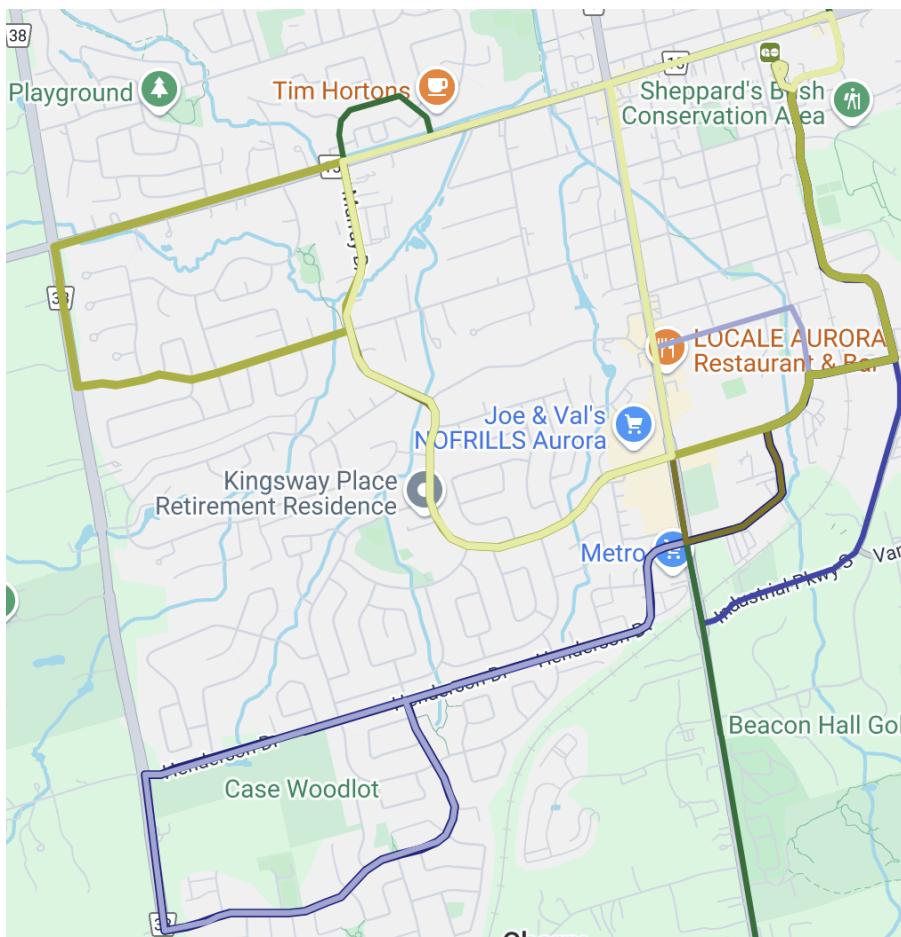
Map data ©2025 Google

Fig 9. All alternatives initially considered for northwest Aurora. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

### 5.3 Southwest Aurora

The existing route 32 routing along Henderson Drive was kept due to its directness and ridership. The access to Aurora GO was the main difference between proposals, with one accessing Aurora GO Station via Yonge Street and Industrial Parkway, and two via Engelhard Drive and Industrial Parkway. The main difference between these two alternatives is Option 3 serving a row of shopping centres along Yonge Street and Option 1 not running along Yonge Street.

For Murray Drive, alternatives proposed included access to Aurora GO Station via Wellington Street from Murray Drive's north end and via Engelhard from Murray Drive's south end. There was also a hybrid route accessing Aurora GO from Wellington which ran a long loop via Yonge Street, Wellington Street, and Murray Drive. All alternatives are shown in Fig. 10.



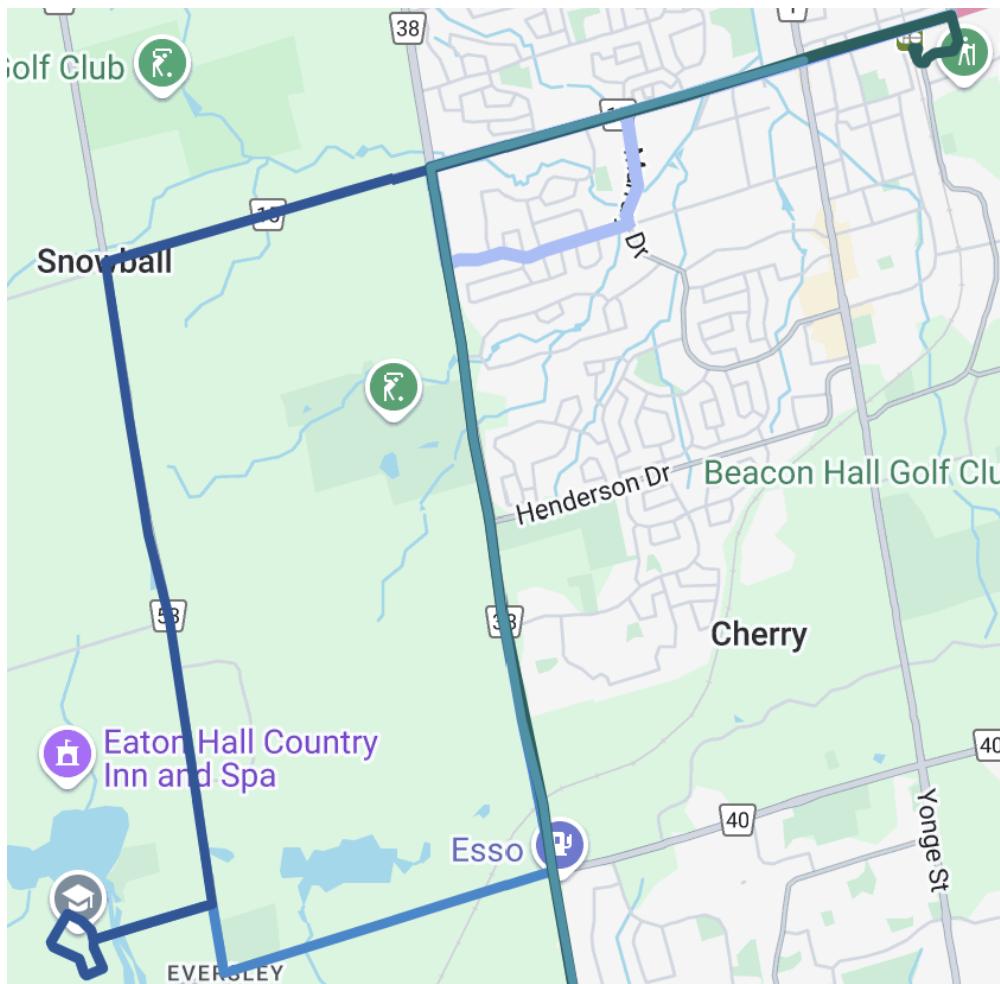
Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 10. All alternatives initially considered for southwest Aurora. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

#### 5.4 Wellington and Bathurst Streets

There is presently no transit service along most of Bathurst Street in Aurora. One was proposed in 2019 to be implemented in April 2020 [19, p. 14], but the proposal was later shelved. Meanwhile, route 33 currently ends approximately one kilometre east of Bathurst Street. With Bathurst being the urban boundary of Aurora, serving the neighbourhoods nearby with a new route will allow them to be within the prescribed walking distance of transit and bring further connectivity to Aurora. A route along Bathurst would be an extension of route 33 and/or route 88, as route 32 did not perform well in this role.

All alternatives shown in Fig. 11 except one connect route 88 – Bathurst to Aurora GO with a maximum of one transfer and no additional walking. The other alternative is the same as the “no budget increase” alternative for route 33. Proposals to extend route 88 would either be a branch route 88B or an express route 388.

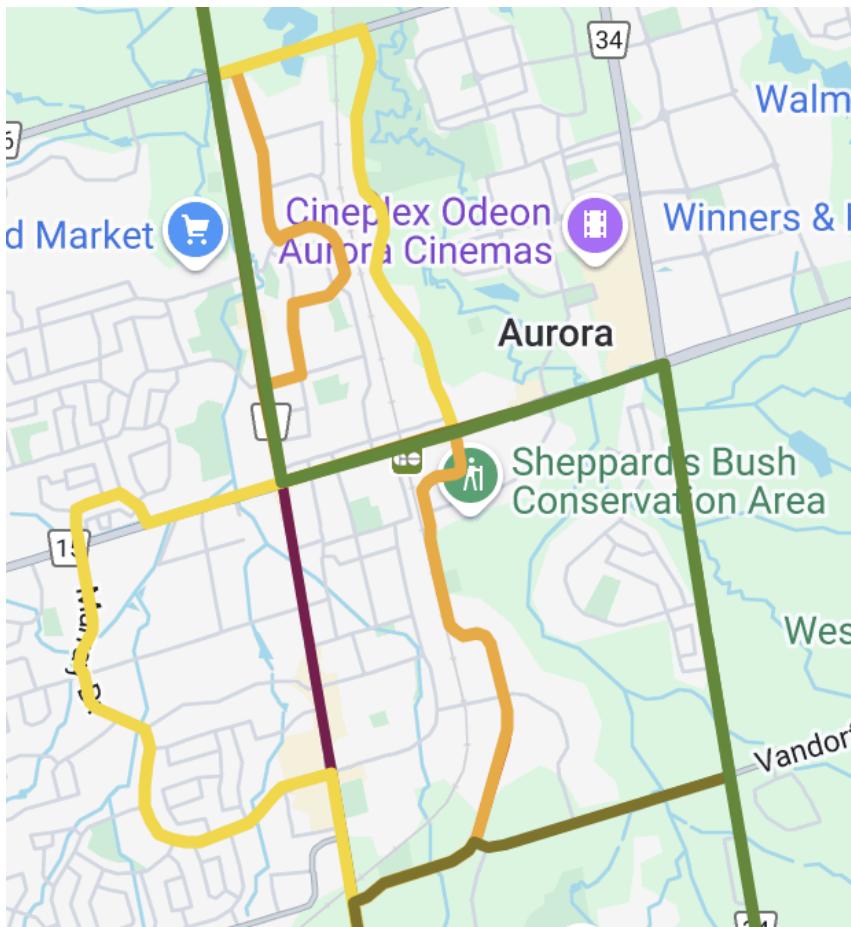


Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 11. All alternatives initially considered for Bathurst and Wellington Streets. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

## 5.5 Yonge Street

Currently, three separate routes run along Yonge Street. Viva blue was not considered for this study, but its presence along the corridor made it appear that route 98 – Yonge and route 96 – Keele-Yonge did not have a clear niche in Aurora. With Viva blue already serving long-distance travellers north-south, serving local neighbourhoods made the most sense especially for those small enough that a single route serving it may not make sense. As shown in Fig. 12, these routes kept a north-south direction but diverted off Yonge apart from the “Do Nothing” option (deep red).



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 12. All alternatives initially considered for Yonge Street. Map created with Google My Maps.

## 5.6 Stone Road

Stone Road alternatives were not considered as thoroughly as the others due to a lower amount of data. Stone Road had four options: Continue servicing the full length of Stone Road, reroute its service to October Lane, serve the neighbourhood from Bayview, and remove all service to Stone Road. Service running north from the neighbourhood and service running both north and south were considered, with routes in the latter category going back to Yonge Street or Aurora GO Station via Vandorf Sideroad and Industrial Parkway.

## 5.7 Access to Aurora GO Station

Aurora GO Station has a bus loop currently only used by GO buses. It was formerly used by routes 31 and 32 during rush hours [23, 24]. Such a loop is a potential layover spot and allows for direct access to the station without needing to cross the street. However, the loop has disadvantages. It is inconvenient for travellers going to destinations other than the GO station (e.g. Yonge Street) due to the added travel time. Based on site visits, the loop may not have enough capacity if all buses laid over there during a GO Train departure.

In the case Aurora GO Station's loop is full, buses may lay over on nearby streets. Site visits found a bus laying over on Industry Street, with the southbound side wide enough for a bus to lay over. However, the layover location is not beside the GO Station and a walk would require passengers to cross Industrial Parkway in an area with no crosswalk. Industrial Parkway's lanes are not wide enough for a layover, though the road can be widened if necessary. Road infrastructure changes are not desirable due to their timeline and costs.

Buses travelling along Wellington Street already serve Aurora GO Station from the street, though westbound passengers need to cross either at Industrial Parkway 250 m east of the station or at the tracks, where no crosswalk exists. Site visits found people were willing to cross where there is no crosswalk and the inconvenience of the existing access may dissuade riders from taking YRT to the station. A crosswalk at the rail crossing like the one shown in Fig. 13 would allow for a closer pedestrian crossing to the station. Such a crossing would allow for pedestrians to cross safely, particularly when a train is crossing which would happen directly before every southbound departure and immediately after every northbound departure.

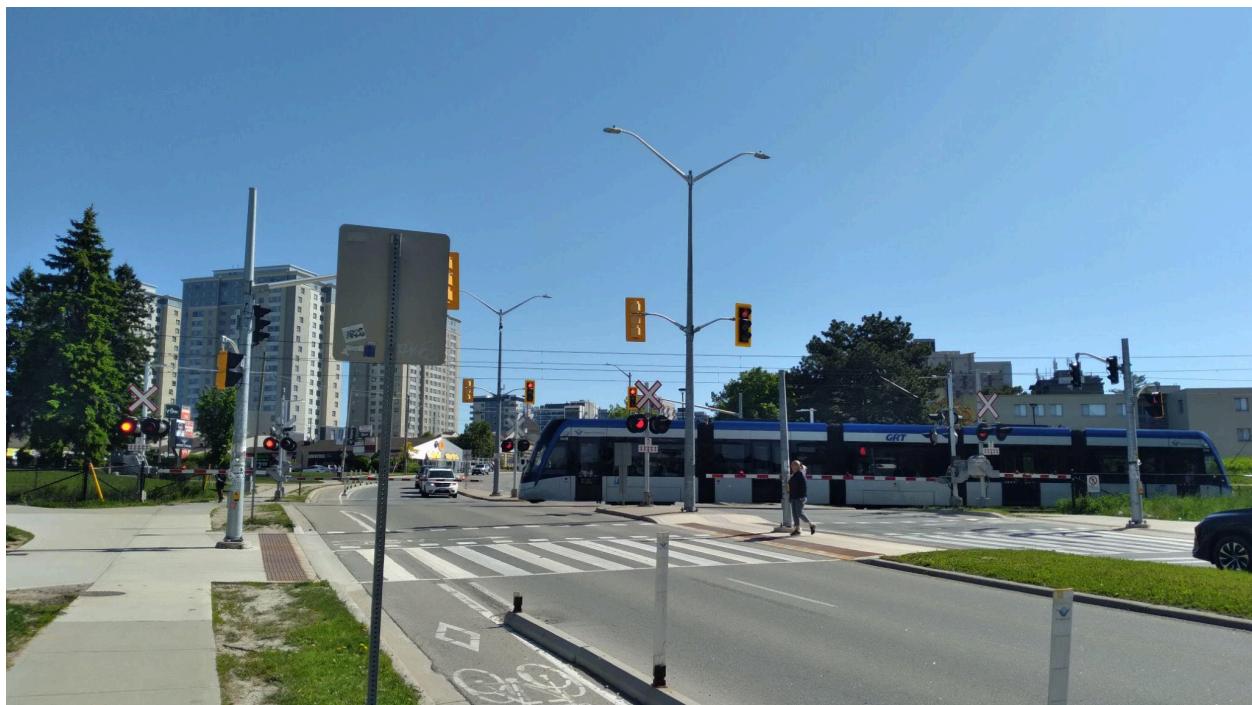


Fig. 13. Pedestrian crossing at a rail crossing in Waterloo, Ontario.

## 6.0 Selection of Preferred Alternatives

Route directness, feasibility, adherence to YRT's service guidelines, and cost guided idea selection. The analysis for the short list was meant to be enough to narrow the options down to two or three for each area, while the final selection was to the degree that a final solution could be found.

### 6.1 Long list to Shortlist

#### 6.1.1 Wellington, Bathurst, and Northwest Aurora

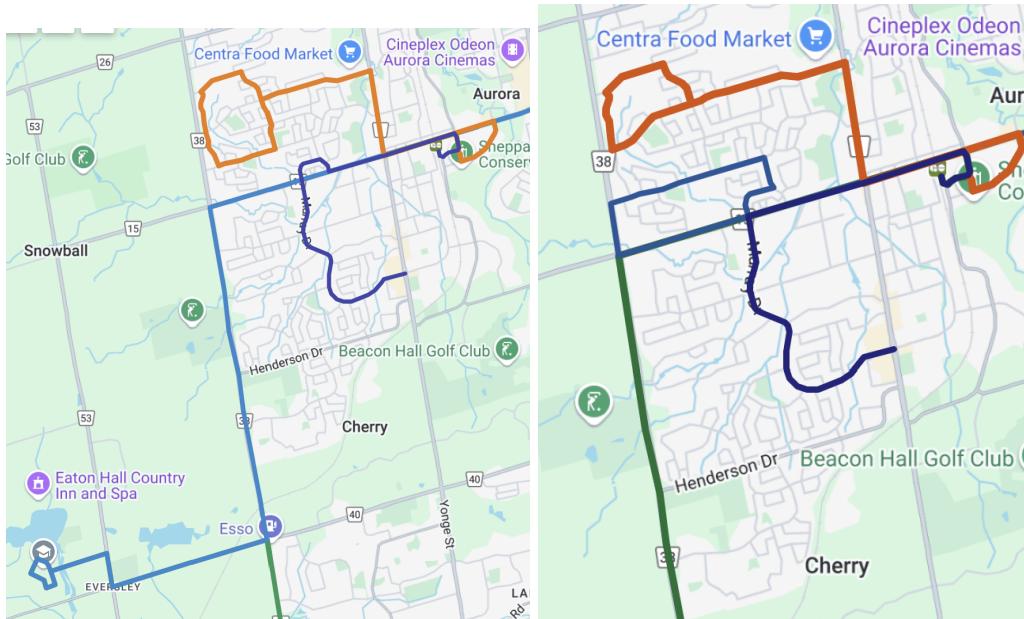
Heathwood Heights Drive and sites near Bathurst and St. John's Sideroad were determined to be too far from the non-Heathwood Heights loops for Heathwood Heights not be included. The big loop (Option W2) was found to be the only option with a good walking distance. A modified medium loop with route 31 running along Orchard Heights, Heathwood Heights, and Meadowood Drives was found to work well if route 33 looped via Aurora Heights Drive, so such an option was added.

Along Bathurst, the time saved by going to Seneca King via Dufferin instead of via Bathurst would likely lead to a longer 88 transfer for people from Aurora due to the lack of connection at or along Bathurst Street, on top of preventing more neighbourhoods near Bathurst from conveniently accessing this new route. The complete lack of a connection or north-south service along Bathurst when simply extending the 33 to Bathurst and not running a route southward was not appealing either. It appeared I neglected to propose a northern loop in my original list of proposals so I added one, which was carried forward.

Route 88 – Bathurst is currently quite long and from my experience, at least three intersections near the route's south end (Yonge/Steeles, Bathurst/Steeles, and Bathurst/Centre) can cause delays of 2+ minutes each due to traffic levels and/or signal timing. As a result, the route is often delayed. This lack of reliability is especially a problem for long routes: A longer route generally has more unpredictability leading to less predictable arrival times. As a result, routes should never be too long.

Combining a branch of route 88 and route 33 would result in a route with a round-trip time of approximately 4 hours and 17 minutes, five minutes longer than the Toronto Transit Commission's 501 Queen streetcar line, the longest-running transit line run by a local agency in Greater Toronto (GO Transit not included). It would also be significantly longer than any other Greater Toronto local route. As a result, routes 88 and 33 should not be merged.

As a result, two alternatives were carried forward for this section. Route 33 and a route 88 branch would either (Option 1) both end at Seneca King or (Option 2) run concurrently along Wellington Street west of Aurora GO Station with route 33 looping clockwise via Bathurst Street, Aurora Heights Drive, and Haida Drive. MacDonald Drive would be added during school trips. Option 2 includes the modified medium loop for route 31, with the long loop being included in option 1. The options are displayed in Fig. 14 below. The route 88 branch may be a local branch 88B or an express branch 388, which would run express south of a certain point on the route.

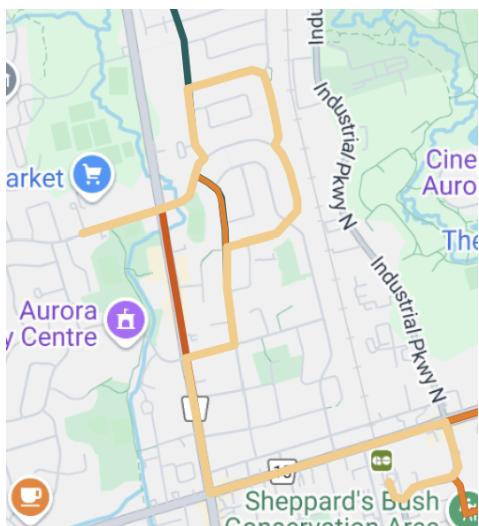


Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 14. Option 1 (left) and Option 2 (right) for routes 31, 33, and 88. Map made with [Google My Maps](#). The Murray Drive route further south depends on the options, as does route 31 east of Yonge Street.

### **6.1.2 North Central Aurora**

All alternatives using Walton Drive were eliminated due to the narrow lane in front of École élémentaire catholique Saint-Jean. Option C4 (the modified Option C3) was also eliminated as it did not save much time compared to C1, the school special routing. Route 31 thus has three options: via Yonge, via Spruce, and via Moorcrest. A Yonge routing for route 31 assumes a Yonge local route ending at Aurora GO Station would run along Old Yonge Street. Fig. 15 displays the shortlisted routes. The route may or may not run to St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic High School at bell times.

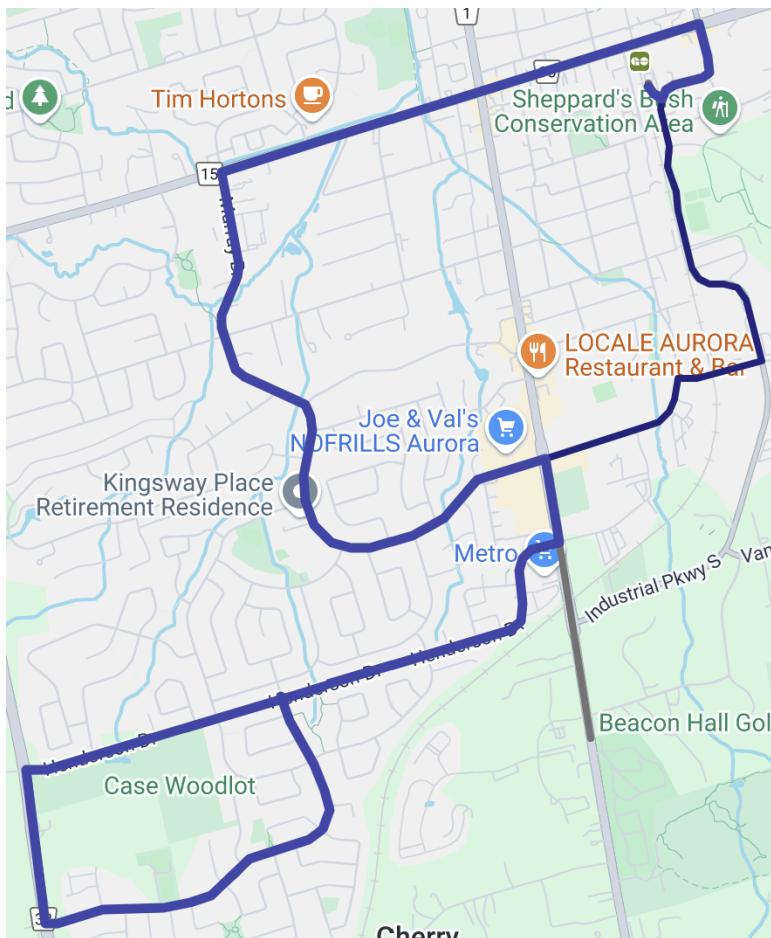


Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 15. Shortlist for north central Aurora. The potential Yonge local route is in green. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

### 6.1.3 Southwest Aurora

The existing route 32 at Yonge and Edward Streets is within 500 metres of Golf Links Drive so an extension to Dunning Avenue is unnecessary. Option 1 was calculated to have a round-trip time of approximately 25 minutes, short enough to run every half hour with only one bus, so it felt like the obvious choice for a direct route to Aurora GO Station not serving Murray Drive. In that case, a Murray route would be quite short so combining it with a Yonge local would allow resources to not be wasted. A long loop did not appear to favour a convenient route for people at the end of the loop, while routing along Wellington was more direct than via Engelhard. As a result, the Murray routings using Wellington to get to Aurora GO were carried forward. All shortlisted options are shown in Fig. 16 below. The Yonge Street routing south of Industrial Parkway is out of this study's scope.



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 16. All options considered for southwest Aurora. Map created with [Google My Maps](#).

### 6.1.4 East of the Barrie Line

Due to the limited data on ridership on Stone Road, I could not rule out serving the neighbourhood. However, its distance from Wellington and Bayview in some parts (walking distances >750 metres) made it clear that a route should run along Stone Road, either its entirety or through a shortcut via October Lane.

## 6.2 Final Selection

Among the two options for northwest Aurora, Wellington Street, and Bathurst Street, Option 2 offers a seamless transfer from Aurora GO Station but also features a route concurrency which may seem like a waste of resources. Option 1 requires a transfer at Seneca King but is also more convenient for Seneca King students and those looking to visit the Zancor Centre, located at Dufferin Street and 15th Sideroad. Option 1 also features a route concurrency along 15th Sideroad to Seneca King. The seamless transfer from Aurora GO to destinations further south serves a broader group of people than those going to Seneca King, and a transfer at Seneca King did not perform well last time it was run (on route 32). Option 2 was determined to be the best option for this area.

In southwest Aurora, a direct route 31 could require only a single extra bus if interlined with a local Yonge route running along Old Yonge Street. With this in mind, it appeared to be the clear choice. However, the original proposal missed Centra Food Market, a grocery store located at Yonge Street and Orchard Heights Drive. While walking distance for travellers may increase to 700-750 metres, they were also that close to Aurora GO Station so it appeared likely they would walk to Aurora GO Station rather than drive.

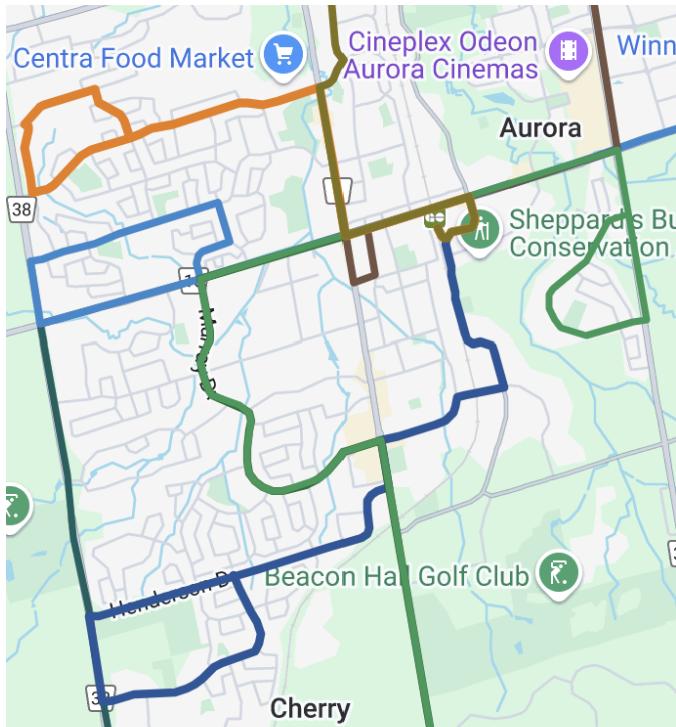
In southwest Aurora, a direct route to Aurora GO was favoured. As well, the Yonge local route running along Murray would provide access to two grocery stores for the residents of the Delmanor retirement residence further south as well as access to Aurora High School for nearby residents. It also provided access to both grocery stores for residents near Murray Drive. This combined with a vehicle likely saved by running route 32 directly to Aurora GO made Option 1 the clear choice for southwest Aurora.

Finally, the lack of data but low ridership on Stone Road was in mind when evaluating options there. A Stone Road route would require additional resources so existing routes which had time to spare felt like the best choice. The Yonge Street and Murray Drive route had extra time, but only if half the trips went to Stone Road. As a result, a branch line was found to be the best option, running every 60 minutes instead of every 30 minutes like the rest of the network.

Due to some trips as well as routes 33 and 54 not running to Aurora GO's loop but rather along Wellington, a crosswalk at the Barrie line tracks was a good option as it would require less construction time than any road infrastructure change.

## 7.0 Preferred Alternative

The preferred alternative, shown in Fig. 17, contains the following routes. All routes except the unchanged route 54 will certainly run every 30 minutes during both rush hours, with the branch line 98A to Stone Road running every 60 minutes.



Map data ©2025 Google

Fig. 17. The preferred alternative for Aurora. Stone Road will be a branch service. Map made with [Google My Maps](#).

Route 31 – Orchard Heights would serve northwest Aurora along Orchard Heights Drive, connecting them with Centra Food Market and Viva blue at Yonge and Orchard Heights and Aurora GO Station. Route 32 – Henderson would serve Henderson Drive and McClellan Way, connecting them to two grocery stores and Viva blue at Yonge Street and Aurora GO Station via Industrial Parkway, the latter of which can enable employees of businesses on Industrial Parkway South to travel by bus. However, this is not this network's target demographic.

Route 33 – Wellington-Leslie would be extended west to Bathurst Street via a loop serving Aurora Heights Drive. MacDonald Drive may be served only during bell times if the loop is found to require too much time. It will run concurrently with an extended Bathurst service, which may be a branch 88B or an express route 388. Whether the Bathurst service should be a branch or an express variant is out of this study's scope and would depend on demand to Seneca Polytechnic King Campus and whether the demand for service on Bathurst in the northern section of the route is mainly for longer-distance travel.

Route 98 – Yonge would be split at Wellington Street, with travellers advised to transfer to the more frequent Viva blue to continue on Yonge Street. The split enables route 98 to serve Murray Drive and connect it to Aurora GO Station. Half of 98 trips would continue east to serve Stone Road. Route 97 – Yonge would replace the section north of Wellington, serving Old Yonge Street between Orchard Heights

Drive and St. John's Sideroad and connecting that neighbourhood to Centra Food Market and Viva blue at Yonge and Orchard Heights.

Details about each route's bus allocation can be found in Table 3. Routes 31 and 97 would be interlined, meaning buses run both routes consecutively. Times were based on existing YRT schedules wherever possible, with long estimates used when necessary.

Table 3. Bus allocation on each route.

Route	Buses used	Round-trip time (min.)	Layover time (per round trip; min.)	Frequency (min.)
31 – Orchard Heights	1* (+1)	27	5	30
32 – Henderson	1 (No Change)	25	5	30
33 – Wellington-Leslie	3 (No Change)	80§	10§	30
88B or 388 – Bathurst	6.5^ (+1 to 88) or 6^^ (+6 for 388)	177^ or 155^^	18 or 25	30
97 – Yonge	3* (+3)	71	17	30
98/98A – Yonge	3 (No Change)	80	10	30 (combined) /60 (98A)

\*Routes 31 and 97 share their 4 buses. Numbers shown are approximate. One bus may be removed if the route is cut to Newmarket Terminal, but that is out of this study's scope.

§Time is approximate and assumes 6 min. extra allocated for the new loop, 3 min. saved from tightening travel times to reflect actual travel time along Leslie Street between Cenotaph Bl. and Addison Hall Cr., and 4 min. saved from discontinuing the low-ridership loop at Desjardins Way.

^If the branch option is selected, some of these buses would be taken from the existing 88 to Seneca King. ^^If the express option is selected, buses would be run independently. Time shown is an estimate based on December 2010 88E schedules.

All routes connect to a grocery store somewhere along their route and all routes end at a bus terminal or similar facility in at least one direction. The routes and the Barrie line should be scheduled to connect with as many GO Trains as possible. For all routes, this should be true for passengers connecting with southbound trips in the morning and for passengers arriving via northbound trips in the evening.

## 7.1 Off-Peak Service

Off-peak, trains on the Barrie line currently run every 60 minutes. Running routes too short to come once per hour would not make sense as resources would be used on trips not serving any trains. As a result, routes 31 and 32 will not run off-peak. Both routes are located close enough to another route that most passengers will be able to walk within the off-peak standard to a nearby route. The low ridership on route 98A combined with the resources saved by removing it would cause it to be removed. However, it may be added to midday service if necessary. The rest of the routes would remain the same to avoid confusion. Routes 97 and 98 would be interlined to save one bus. Bus allocations expected during mid-day hours are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Bus allocation on each route during weekday mid-day hours.

Route	Buses used	Round-trip time (min.)	Layover time (per round trip; min.)	Frequency (min.)
33 – Wellington-Leslie	3 (No Change)	75§	15§	30
88B or 388 – Bathurst	6 (+6) or 3 (+3)	161 or 145§^	19 or 35§^	30 or 60
97 – Yonge	2.5* (+2.5)	71	10	30
98/98A – Yonge	2.5* (+0.5)	69	10	30

§Estimate

\*Routes interlined.

^Express variant. Number of buses would depend on the desired frequency.

Route 88's substantial increase in bus allocation is the result of its current lack of off-peak service, which is currently every 37 minutes during mid-day hours and never more than every 25 minutes. In the event off-peak service on the Barrie line increases to every 30 minutes or substantial demand for Viva blue is found, the peak network can run during those hours on a trial basis to determine whether there is demand for it. Mid-day service would be run first, as parking is much less strained on weekends so demand would be lower.

## 8.0 Conclusion and Next Steps

This document highlights the information and thought process through primary and secondary research and how that data was used to determine the best options for a new bus network in Aurora. Some of the specific routing decisions outside the core study area have not been determined due to a lack of data, this should be collected to refine the recommendation before any network is implemented in Aurora.

While this study was progressing, YRT conducted a survey in Aurora with posters found at several bus stops along major routes in Aurora, as well as at major intersections such as Bayview Avenue and Wellington Street. The recommendations should be further refined based on this data if non-riders show different interests from existing riders or if they reveal additional information outside the study area.

When the new network is implemented, YRT should strive to inform GO Train passengers about it. This can involve posters at Aurora GO Station, announcements at the station and on Barrie Line trains, and signs in Aurora. Otherwise, passengers parking at Aurora GO Station may be unaware of the new network. A follow-up study should be conducted a year after implementation to determine whether the network is successful and whether it needs any changes from unnoticed demand or traffic issues.

### 8.1 Measures of Success

York Region Transit uses ridership per service hour and revenue/cost ratio as measures of success for their routes [25]. Likewise, the performance of these routes will be a measure of this project's success. Neighbouring agency Brampton Transit typically does not apply their full service standards until a year after implementation as it takes time to build ridership [26]. Likewise, success should not be measured until the new network has been implemented for a full year.

Comparing ridership on both the Barrie line and Viva blue with the parking taken up at Aurora GO Station can be used to determine how many travellers switched to taking the new network from parking at Aurora GO Station, or started using transit entirely after the new network was implemented. If the ridership per service hour of the new network is above 20, the network will be considered a success unless it is specifically the result of a temporary parking reduction further than the parking currently closed.

Otherwise, changes may need to be considered. This may be to the network itself, or to outreach ensuring passengers know how they can use the new network. Exactly what change is considered would depend on what is determined to be the cause of a failure to attract riders. Not achieving success within a year should not be considered an immediate failure in case ridership is rising more slowly than expected.

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## Appendix A. Summary of Ridership on Route 32 and Nearby School Specials

Each trip in this survey was taken on two separate dates. All percentages rounded to the nearest 1%.

Total 32 ridership: 353 (176.5 per day)

Total ridership (32, 428, 429, 434), excluding Cardinal Carter & Dr. G.W. Williams\* trips: 355 (177.5 per day)

Including Dr. G.W. Williams and Cardinal Carter: 447 (223.5 per day)

Trips solely along Wellington or Stone (could be people from NW Aurora, too!): 46% (95% CI: 41% to 52%)

Trips involving Wellington: 78% (95% CI: 74% to 82%)

Trips involving Wellington that go off Wellington: 32% (95% CI 27% to 37%; mean is 59% (95% CI: 52% to 66%) excluding trips that stay on Wellington).

Trips involving Yonge (including adjacent stops such as Victoria St.): 58% (95% CI: 53% to 63%)

Trips involving neither: 3% (95% CI: 1% to 5%)

Trips involving Wellington and Yonge: 38.03% (95% CI: 32.97% to 43.09%)

PM rush trips: 68% (95% CI: 63% to 73%);

AM rush trips: 32% (95% CI: 27% to 37%)

McClellan area: 30% (95% CI: 25% to 35%)

Henderson Drive (including the McClellan area): 34% (95% CI: 29% to 38%)

Portion of Henderson Drive passengers going to Yonge: 50% (95% CI: 41% to 60%)

Portion of Henderson Drive passengers going to Wellington: 47% (95% CI: 38% to 56%)

Portion of Wellington St. trips to/from a high school stop along Wellington St. at high school timing: 37% (95% CI: 32% to 44%)

\*Excluded as Dr. G.W. Williams is moving and Cardinal Carter is located outside the study area.