

Transit Options in Caledon

Clean Air, Quieter Roads

Canadians create 20% of our smog and 11% of global warming gases from personal automobile use. In Caledon our community is very car-based and there are few alternatives to driving. While taking the car is easy and comfortable, it is hard on the environment. Driving is also the riskiest activity that most of us do. By reducing our driving, we could reduce traffic, noise, emissions, accidents, healthcare costs, road repairs and policing costs.



Driving is also expensive, even if we don't see most of the costs day-to-day. An average small car costs \$8000/year to own and operate. An SUV can cost twice as much. Driving an average vehicle 100 km works out to \$25-40 when you add up all the costs. Commuting by car to Toronto can easily cost \$40/day, including parking.

There are few public transit alternatives available in Caledon. Public transit is stuck in a "chicken and egg" scenario. Due to the low service, ridership is low. Since ridership is low, little service is offered. This is a difficult situation for individuals who want to commute by transit, and will remain so until the political will changes. Perhaps with the Kyoto Accord, we will get more practical service in Caledon. Here are some options currently available to commuters:

GO TRANSIT

One good, practical option that commuters may not have considered is driving to the Malton GO station by the International Centre (Derry and Airport Rd.). My wife rides on this train 4 days a week. The GO train takes 28 minutes to Union Station 8 times daily, and parking is free. The train is smooth and quiet, and you can read or even do some work. I wrote this article on the GO train on my way to teach at U of T. The train is usually faster than driving to downtown Toronto, avoids traffic jams further south and is much cheaper - less than \$8 for a return trip. Residents of west Caledon can get on this train earlier in Bramalea, Brampton or Georgetown. For schedule information check <http://www.go transit.com/> or phone 1-888-438-6646 or 416-869-3200.

A GO bus travels down Hwy 10 twice on weekdays, from Orangeville to the Brampton GO station, where the GO train continues to Union Station. There are bus stops along Hwy 10 near Caledon, Belfountain, Inglewood, Victoria and Snelgrove.

GO Transit runs two weekday buses from Bolton to the Etobicoke North GO train, Yorkdale and York Mills. The route goes indirectly via Nobleton, Kleinburg and Woodbridge. Unfortunately, eastern Caledon does not yet have a fast direct GO bus to the GO train or subway. (A provincial election is coming - ask your MPP!)

PMCL

PMCL runs a more direct bus stopping in Palgrave and Bolton on its way to Yorkdale and the Bay St. downtown bus station. It arrives in downtown Toronto at 8:30 a.m. and leaves at 4:30 p.m. Because it is not subsidized, it is more expensive than GO Transit. For more information, call 1-800-661-8747.

Car pooling

Another good option is carpooling. This requires some flexibility, but is an easy way to reduce emissions and still have a comfortable and companionable ride. There is a carpool sign-up list (offer a ride or need a ride) on the Caledon Countryside Alliance (CCA) website at <http://www.woodrising.com/cca/rides.htm> and there is a new free Canada-wide website that matches up drivers and passengers for carpooling by postal code (<http://www.carpooltool.com/>). Employers could offer incentives for employees to carpool, as it frees up parking space, which can translate to cost savings.

Other

Metis Transit has proposed a local Caledon bus service that may become available in the future.

The payback:

If you normally commute to Toronto by car, you can make a difference to the environment by taking transit even just one day a week - an 80 km reduction. For an average vehicle, you will save \$325 per year, reduce your car's carbon dioxide emissions by a tonne, and meet your personal share of the Kyoto target. You can do this for your CCA Step Up To Kyoto pledge. Please see <http://www.woodrising.com/cca/stepup.htm> for more information.

Dr. Richard Ehrlich
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Step Up To Kyoto. Future generations will thank-you a tonne.