



METROLINX

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Memorandum

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Greg Percy
Chief Operating Officer
Date: December 8, 2016
Re: **Operations Quarterly Report, Covering July 1- September 30, 2016**

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Overview

This past summer, GO implemented significant schedule changes to facilitate ongoing construction at Union Station. Train on-time performance dropped below the Passenger Charter target of 94% in July and August. In September, operational performance recovered and reached 95%. Year-to-date on-time performance is 93%, on par with this time last year.

GO bus on-time performance finished the quarter at 94%, and year to date at 95%. On-time performance was affected in June, July, and August by schedule changes and volume, which resulted in delays at Union Station and along most corridors.

The Province and Metrolinx continue to deliver new services to the GTHA, as Gormley GO station, the new northern terminus on the Richmond Hill corridor, opens this month. This station will bring new GO train service to more residents in York Region and address future ridership demands in the area.

In other improvements, a reduced idling policy has been invoked for both GO trains and buses, minimizing the amount of time drivers idle their engines. This translates into a reduced fuel burn rate with lower operating expenses and less environmental impact. GO has finalized its 2016/17 winter preparedness plan with a strong focus on customer communication. To improve communications, a new public address (PA) system is being installed at all GO stations and some facilities, to support the Passenger Charter commitment of keeping passengers in the know.

UP Express on-time performance averaged a strong 99% in the quarter, a full 2% increase from the same quarter last year. Average trip time decreased by more than one minute, with the average for the quarter being 24.6 minutes. Ridership increased 28% over the last quarter. A new single-day ridership record of 11,980 was set on Friday September 23rd, as UP provided a quick and reliable way for visitors and commuters to access the downtown core as the Blue Jays played the Yankees and the last weekend of the World Cup of Hockey was underway.

Major Highlights

Operations

UP Express ran 14,472 trips in the quarter and on-time performance averaged a strong 99%. Year-to-date on-time performance has increased to 98%. The average trip time has decreased over a minute from last year, and averaged 24.6 minutes.

In the past quarter, GO ran 21,254 train trips and on-time performance fell slightly compared to last year, averaging 92%. The GTHA experienced one of the hottest summers on record, which affected tracks and led to slow orders being issued on six days in July. Multiple medical emergencies, a trespasser fatality, grass fires, freight congestion, and trespassers also had a significant effect on on-time performance. Despite these challenges in July and August, on-time performance reached 95% in September. Year-to-date on-time performance is 93%, on par with this time last year, though below our target of 94%.

GO ran a total of 180,725 bus trips and on-time performance averaged 94% in the quarter, dropping 1% compared to last year. Year-to-date performance is 95%, however, which is 1% over target.

The Toronto Blue Jays continued to draw substantial crowds to the downtown core, resulting in service delays because of increased time to board. Trips in and out of Union Station also continued to experience traffic congestion resulting from ongoing construction projects. This affected almost all corridors with minor service delays.

With leadership from Metrolinx Energy Management and Sustainability staff, GO rail and bus services teams are making strong progress on idling reduction for both trains and buses, translating into reduced fuel consumption and lower operating expenses. Rail Operations will implement a new “throttle control” program where Bombardier locomotive operators are trained and measured against the performance standard for the mass, length of train, and route they are operating. The team will pursue further fuel savings using peer recognition awards every month/quarter for success in this performance measure.

Rail Operations staff are preparing for winter, with a strong focus on customer communication. Like cars and roadways, trains and tracks are exposed to the elements, requiring GO to change the way it operates during winter weather to provide safe and efficient service. During severe winter weather, GO may operate on an adjusted schedule that allows as many trains as possible to run. This involves focusing on trips that do not require trains to switch from one set of tracks to another, reducing the likelihood of switch problems due to snow and ice build-up. If GO needs to run on an adjusted schedule, customers will be made aware as far in advance as possible so they can adjust their schedules and make other arrangements.

UP Express continues to experience increasing ridership and is making operational adjustments as necessary. Over the course of summer, UP Express saw two primary ridership trends – airport leisure travel occurring around long weekends and travel within Toronto tied to a variety of summer activities in the city. Our front-line teams responded by focussing on passenger and staff safety, including efficient boarding procedures (pre-validation lines) and using additional three-car trains during peak periods to manage demand.

Ridership

More than 791,000 trips were taken on UP Express in the past quarter, an increase of 28% over the last quarter. At the end of June 2016, average daily ridership on UP Express was approximately 7,600; at the end of September, it grew to approximately 9,100. UP Express still remains primarily an airport service, with over three quarters of customer trips starting or ending at Toronto Pearson.

Overall, GO ridership totaled 17.5 million in the quarter, with 14.2 million customers riding our trains and 4.3 million boarding our buses. Ridership increased 1.3% versus the previous year, with the growth coming largely from a 3.1% increase in bus customers. Fiscal year to date ridership has increased 2.6% to last year.

Network

Gormley GO station, the new northern terminus on the Richmond Hill Corridor, is now in service. This station will bring new GO train service to more residents in York Region and address future ridership demands in the area. The station includes surface parking with 850 spaces, a bus loop, a kiss-and-ride drop-off area, and pedestrian walkways. Effective December 5th, Metrolinx extended five morning and five afternoon GO train trips from Richmond Hill GO station to serve the new station.

To meet ongoing customer demand, approximately 300 additional parking spaces have been completed at West Harbour GO station.

Expansion of the Don Yard began in November to provide additional train storage and light train servicing capabilities in close proximity to Union Station. Work includes modifying existing tracks and creating three new storage tracks with wayside power and compressed air systems for storing and shutting down trains when they are out of service. This will help meet current and future operational demands on GO Transit and UP Express services by reducing deadhead trips, fuel consumption and costs, crew hours, and congestion within the Union Station rail corridor.

Metrolinx is building a new GO bus storage and maintenance facility in Kitchener. This facility will improve transit service for commuters in the Kitchener-Waterloo region, and help meet current and future growth. It will include space for 20 buses and will open in 2018.

Customer Service

In October, plans were announced to install an electronic sign on the QEW near Appleby GO station displaying next-trip information for GO trains at that station. The pilot will expand to Bronte and Oakville GO stations and will then show travel time comparisons for GO train and highway trips. As part of the pilot, technologies will be evaluated that determine real-time parking availability at GO stations. These signs will promote GO Transit and UP Express services to help manage congestion and get drivers thinking about taking transit when they're driving on the highway.

The new custom-built, low-floor, fully accessible GO buses have arrived, and 13 of the new SuperLo double-deck buses were recently placed into service. Twenty-five additional units are expected to be delivered by the end of December.

Metrolinx has also implemented a new PA system at all GO stations and some facilities. Upgrades include adding automatic volume adjustment based on background noise, and the ability to create and play pre-recorded messages. The new system will also give staff the ability to monitor speakers remotely so any failures can be more quickly identified and addressed.

When finalized, the new system will have the ability to create “zones” across stations, allowing messaging to be targeted to specific audiences in specific areas, like platforms, ticket areas, and parking lots.

GO Passenger Charter Key Performance Indicator Report Card

Measure		Target		2016/2017 Fiscal Year	2015/2016 Fiscal Year
On time	We will run 94% of trains within five minutes of the scheduled time.	94%	Not yet met	93%	94%
	We will run 94% of buses within 15 minutes of the scheduled time.	94%	✓	95%	95%
Safety	We will have 30 or fewer complaints per 1,000,000 boardings regarding safety.	30	Not yet met	31	27
Keeping you in the know	77% of our customers will be satisfied with GO Transit's communication as measured by our customer satisfaction survey.	77%	Not yet met	75%	70%
	We will have 30 or fewer complaints per 1,000,000 boardings regarding service status communication.	30	✓	29	24
Comfortable experience	We will have 30 or fewer complaints per 1,000,000 boardings regarding comfort in stations, trains and buses.	30	Not yet met	60	22
Helpfulness	We will ensure 85% or more of customer inquiries/concerns are resolved the first time they contact us.	85%	✓	100%	97%

GO's Passenger Charter promises that customers will be provided a comfortable journey. Train and platform crowding in June and July caused a spike in comfort complaints, and this valuable feedback will be taken into account as future service changes are planned.

We are reviewing whether to have one combined or separate Passenger Charters for GO Transit and UP Express, given the difference in demographics and operating profile.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Percy
Chief Operating Officer