



# Customer Service

Quarterly Board Report  
March 31, 2010



A Division of Metrolinx

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# 1 Highlights

## 1.1 Customer Service Initiatives

We have found that our passengers are more satisfied with GO's performance this year as evidenced by increased commendations and fewer complaints regarding reliability, parking, communication and timeliness of response.

Key Improvements were the launch of our revitalized website, Google trip planner and the implementation of Rail's winter preparedness.

## 1.2 Key Performance Measures

### Reliability

Reliability continues to be one of the most important attributes to passengers as identified in surveys and customer comments received. Our efforts have been focused on improving reliability, and we have successfully improved on time performance for the quarter by 10.9% (from 85.2% to 94.5%) for rail and 0.7% (from 98.3% to 99.0%) for bus.

Winter is traditionally the worse season to have high on-time performance, due to the impacts of severe weather conditions on electrical and mechanical systems. This winter our on-time performance was markedly higher than anticipated, even with a relatively mild winter.

### Customer Care

A daily focus on resolving customer concerns promptly through increasing employee empowerment has resulted in reducing the average length to close a customer complaint to 2.6 days as compared to 12.1 days last year.

Fewer comments regarding reliability, parking, fare increase and credit/refund requests have resulted in a decrease in the overall number of comments by 19.7% as compared to the same quarter last year.

135 customer comments (13.7% of the total) in March are attributed to the recent schedule changes on April 3, 2010.

The number of commendations increased by 11.6% over the same quarter last year.

### Ridership

Primarily due to the economic downturn, growth in ridership slowed down year over year. We achieved a 1.2% ridership growth, an addition of 666,300 trips, that was primarily due to increased ridership levels in the later part of 2009 and early 2010 as the economy recovered.

## 2 Customer Service Initiatives

We strive to ensure passengers have a positive experience while using our services so that they will continue to use GO Transit and recommend it to their friends. As such, we are continually reviewing customer feedback, searching for opportunities to improve and seeking out best practices from across the globe to enhance our passenger's experience. The following section provides a brief description of some of the initiatives completed across the organization as well as some that are on their way.

### 2.1 Improving Customer Communication

We continued to enhance communications through web and e-News channels.

Accomplishments include:

- A marketing campaign that was launched February 24, 2010 to promote the multiple communication channels passengers can use to find information regarding their travel. The intent of the campaign was to increase e-News subscribers and social media participation. The number of e-News subscribers increased by 10,000 as a result of this campaign and now represents over 58,000 subscribers. Our Facebook fans and Twitter followers continue to increase weekly; currently we have 1,173 fans and 567 followers.
- A refresh of the GO Transit website was completed and launched on January 26, 2010. It focused on refreshing and standardizing content and providing a new look and feel to the website. The new layout simplifies navigation by reducing the number of “clicks” to find information so customers can self serve more easily.
- The Google trip planner was successfully launched on February 16, 2010, and provides customers a customized way to plan their travel.



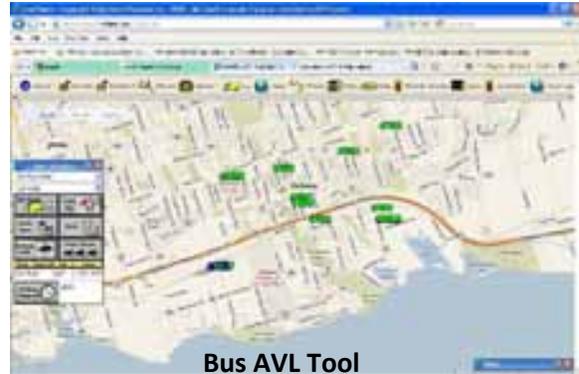
Throughout the year, we reach out to passengers via surveys to measure and evaluate their attitudes, opinions and satisfaction level so we can take action to enhance our service. We recently completed the following surveys:

- Quarterly customer satisfaction survey with results available in mid May.
- Annual communication survey with results available in mid May.
- A time table / schedule survey has been developed to gather passenger feedback on their needs for timetables. This survey is being done in conjunction with an industry review. Results from both surveys will be available in May 2010.

## 2.2 Enhancing Services

The following is a list of service enhancements implemented this quarter:

- A customer service training module to support the rollout of PRESTO was developed and training will start May 10, 2010. This workshop is designed to help front line employees respond to customer questions and effectively reinforce and position PRESTO benefits based on passenger travel needs.
- We implemented protocols to minimize the effects of cold, snow and ice on railway equipment as detailed in our winter preparedness plan. As a result, on time performance improved by 10.9% this quarter over last year.
- The full rollout of the bus automatic vehicle locator in the customer contact centre was completed in January 2010. This tool will increase customer satisfaction by enabling front line staff to respond to bus service status inquiries at the first point of contact.
- Our Rail and System Safety teams have coordinated with the Provincial Coroner's Office to expedite service recovery during a pedestrian fatality. The pilot project was finalized in March and will be launched on July 30, 2010.
- As a result of customer feedback, we changed the "bus stop flagging policy", so that customers no longer need to "flag" our service in rural areas. When we approach a shared bus stop (GO/Local) we will stop regardless of being flagged. Our "flag" service will continue in rural areas, where a GO Transit bus stop does not exist. This has resulted in a 14.2% reduction in complaints related to missed stops from last year's levels.
- We finalized new safety policies regarding parking enforcement, removal of abandoned vehicles, fare inspections and managing intoxicated passengers to address passenger concerns.
- In response to passenger demand, the Corporate Infrastructure team increased parking capacity by 5,525 spaces this year. This is well above the target of 3,500. A target to add an additional 1,650 spaces for the coming year has been set.



## 2.3 What's Coming

- The second stage of PRESTO will launch this summer. It will expand to Lakeshore West, Milton, Georgetown GO Train lines as well as Oakville Transit, Burlington Transit and six stations for the TTC subway. A PRESTO outreach program will be in place at each of our stations during this launch to promote the PRESTO system to provide further support for the card issuance process.
- Our Transit Safety team will be launching
  - a parking enforcement campaign,
  - the “See something, Say something” campaign, and
  - upgrading content of our web pages to promote positive passenger behaviour.
- Other, less public-facing items that will assist our Transit Safety team in serving passengers include: the recruitment of ten new transit safety officers, developing our incident management software, refreshing the art work on our patrol cars to enhance visibility, and upgrading our vehicles with on-board equipment.
- The customer complaint management process is being revamped to further reduce the time to resolve cases. Changes are scheduled to rollout in June and will assist us in achieving our new target of closing a case within 2 days.
- For Operation Lifesaver’s Rail Safety Week (April 26 – May 2, 2010), we are partnered with others in the industry to reinforce our continued commitment to railway safety and, in particular, the safety of our customers and the general public.
- Starting in May, all tender information and documents will be available exclusively through the MERX website ([www.merx.com/Metrolinx](http://www.merx.com/Metrolinx)). This electronic tendering service will simplify the process for both our procurement team and potential contractors by enabling an electronic distribution of documents.
- Customer Appreciation days are scheduled for the Cooksville and Oriole stations in early May and are the first of 14 celebrations this year. This is an increase over the seven events that occurred last year.



## 3 Key Performance Measures

### 3.1 Reliability

Reliability continues to be one of the most important attributes to passengers as identified in surveys and the customer comments received. Our efforts have been focused on improving reliability, and we have successfully improved our performance over last year by 10.9% (from 85.2% to 94.5%) for rail service reliability. Bus service reliability continued high at 99%.

#### Rail On-Time Performance

<b>TARGET</b>	92%*
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	94.5%
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	85.2%
<b>% CHANGE</b>	<b>10.9%</b>
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	91.0%
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	87.6%

#### Cancellations and Delays over 20 minutes for Rail

<b>TARGET</b>	1.0%
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	1.3%
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	1.3%
<b>% CHANGE</b>	<b>0.0%</b>
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	1.1%
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	1.2%

\*We have an on-time performance target of 87% during winter months (December, January, and February).

#### Improvements this quarter on all corridors

	January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	Q ending Mar 2010 vs. Q ending Mar 2009	Fiscal year ending Mar 2010 vs. Fiscal year ending Mar 2009
<b>Lakeshore West</b>	91.4%	95.5%	95.6%	7.5%	1.2%
<b>Lakeshore East</b>	94.9%	95.7%	92.9%	13.1%	5.5%
<b>Milton</b>	95.0%	97.0%	97.8%	7.7%	5.3%
<b>Georgetown</b>	92.8%	93.3%	95.6%	12.9%	2.4%
<b>Barrie</b>	95.0%	96.1%	95.7%	8.7%	3.8%
<b>Stouffville</b>	94.0%	96.3%	95.7%	6.9%	4.1%
<b>Richmond Hill</b>	86.6%*	97.1%	96.6%	36.5%	16.6%
<b>Overall</b>	<b>93.0%</b>	<b>95.6%</b>	<b>94.9%</b>	<b>10.9%</b>	<b>3.9%</b>

External factors were the predominant causes of delays this quarter. Examples include the following:

- In January, CN Rail had significant problems with their Rail Traffic Control computer system that impacted service on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. Meetings are ongoing with CN to review redundancy for the traffic control system
- \*Richmond Hill was primarily impacted by a disabled freight train in January. Meetings have occurred with CN Rail to move freight train 435 to an earlier time slot.
- On February 18, 2010, a mile of in use signal cable was stolen at Guildwood station which resulted in serious delays and cancellations. The lack of signal control resulted in the inability to safely move trains between Guildwood and Rouge Hill, except under a cumbersome manual control system.
- Service in late March was impacted by a derailed CN freight train in Pickering on March 30, 2010. Delays from the train derailment continued into the following morning, but we were able to return to normal service by 9:00 am on April 1, 2010.

## Bus

Our on-time performance for bus service continues to be strong. We continue to monitor our performance to ensure we maintain these high levels.

### Bus On-Time Performance

<b>TARGET</b>	95.0%
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	99.0%
<b>QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	98.3%
<b>% CHANGE</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010</b>	99.1%
<b>FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2009</b>	98.9%

Over the past quarter we achieved a 99.0% on-time performance rating, which is well above our target of 95%.

Bus on-time performance was consistently above our target and improved 0.7% over the same period last year. The increase we are seeing this quarter is primarily due to improved weather conditions over the comparable period in 2009.

	January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	Q ending Mar 2010 vs. Q ending Mar 2009	Fiscal year ending Mar 2010 vs. Fiscal year ending Mar 2009
<b>Bus</b>	<b>99.4%</b>	<b>98.1%</b>	<b>99.6%</b>	0.7%	0.2%

## 3.2 Customer Care

### Response Levels

On average, we receive over 50,000 calls in a month and approximately 1,000 customer comment cases.

#### Phone Response Level

TARGET	80.0%
QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2010	86.2%
QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2009	85.2%
% CHANGE	1.2%
FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010	82.0%
FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2009	76.1%

Our goal is to answer 80% of all phone calls within 20 seconds.

This target was achieved for the quarter.

Best practice call centres aim for a service level of 80% (80% of calls answered within 20 seconds or less). Staff costs climb disproportionately when a service level higher than 80% is targeted, without a corresponding increase in customer loyalty.

Best practice call centres try and stay as close as possible to their target service level without falling below it.

#### Close Case Rate

TARGET	2 Days
QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2010	2.6
QUARTER ENDING MARCH 2009	12.1
% CHANGE	78.4%
FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2010	3.4
FISCAL YEAR ENDING MARCH 2009	7.8

Our goal is to have customer comments addressed within two days on average. The daily focus on resolving customer concerns promptly through increasing the level of employee empowerment has resulted in an average close rate of 2.6 days over the quarter and is an improvement of 78.4% over last year.

	January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	Q ending Mar 2010 vs. Q ending Mar 2009	Fiscal year ending Mar 2010 vs. Fiscal year ending Mar 2009
Average Close Rate	2.8	2.4	2.7	-78.4%	-56.4%

## Comment Rate

In addition to surveys, we capture feedback through our passenger comments. These comments are used for conducting incident investigations and identifying trends and opportunities for improvement. Our goal is to reduce the rate of customer comments per 10,000 passenger journeys by removing causes of customer dissatisfaction and complaints.

	January 2010	February 2010	March 2010	Q ending Mar 2010 vs. Q ending Mar 2009	Fiscal year ending Mar 2010 vs. Fiscal year ending Mar 2009
Customer comments per 10,000 passenger journeys	2.2	2.0	1.9	-28.3%	-16.5%

Customer comments totalled 2,984 this quarter versus 3,672 last year, a decrease of 19.7%. This decrease is attributed to:

- Receiving 39.6% fewer comments regarding reliability, on bus and rail combined. Favourable weather conditions along with the efforts of the winter preparedness plan, successfully improved performance over last year's levels.
- Comments regarding parking decreased by 64.2% as we continued to add parking spaces at highly utilized stations.
- Receiving 49.1% fewer comments regarding our fare increase and credit/refund requests. As a result of the high number of comments received last year, we revised our communication strategy for the recent fare increase.

Although the overall number of comments is down, we received an increased number of comments regarding:

- Inquiries and concerns regarding schedule changes which were announced in March.
- Inquiries regarding the PRESTO launch on the Lakeshore West line.
- Feedback on the launch of the refreshed website in January and Google trip planner in February. Customers provided positive comments and identified some opportunities for future enhancements.
- Customer commendations. We received 173 customer commendations this quarter, which is 11.6% higher than the same quarter last year.

## 3.3 Ridership

### Ridership Compared to Forecast

The 2008 planning for our 2009/2010 fiscal year anticipated a 4.5% growth in ridership. Due to the economic downturn, we did not achieve this growth. We achieved a 1.2% growth that was primarily realized in the later part of 2009 and early 2010.

Average Weekday Ridership					Total Ridership	
	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Q ending Mar 2010 vs. Q ending Mar 2009	Fiscal year ending Mar 2010 vs. Fiscal year ending Mar 2009	Fiscal 2009/2010 Goal
<b>Overall</b>	213,490	210,760	219000	4.8%	1.2%	4.5%
<b>Rail</b>	176,830	175,890	181950	2.4%	-0.2%	
<b>Bus</b>	36,660	34,870	37050	16.9%	9.4%	

### Service Development

Beginning April 3, 2010, we made several system-wide train and bus service changes to bring schedules in line with actual travel trip times and to meet the needs of our growing ridership across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Areas (GTHA). A number of factors have contributed to the need for these changes, including:

- an expanded service network, increased ridership and added train capacity with the implementation of 12-car trains, which have had an impact on the published schedule versus actual travel times;
- progress toward a fully-integrated regional transportation system across the GTHA by adjusting services to avoid duplicating routes already being offered by our regional transit provider partners;
- a system-wide service review that identified opportunities where service resources across the region could be used more efficiently and effectively to better meet the needs of commuters across the region; and
- a responsibility to provide continued high-level service in a fiscally responsible way.

## 4 Conclusion

The initiatives highlighted in this update address attributes that are of most importance to GO customers. We continued to reach out to customers regularly through surveys, to identify services they most value. Using customer feedback, we developed and implemented initiatives, some of which are highlighted in this document, to continuously improve our customers' experience with GO Transit.

This past quarter we continued to realize improvements in GO's performance, particularly in the areas of service reliability, reduced time to resolve customer complaints and increased parking. The reduction in customer complaints is a strong indicator that customers are more satisfied with overall performance and the implementation of initiatives that are targeting areas of most importance to them.