



To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Greg Percy
Chief Operating Officer
Date: February 17, 2017
Re: **Operations Quarterly Report**

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Overview

We continue to offer new and extended services as ridership grows for both on- and off-peak travel. Two important announcements were made in December regarding service to Barrie and Stouffville. In addition, we added many extra services to move more passengers for special events throughout the holidays.

The new Gormley station opened for business on our Richmond Hill rail corridor in December. A welcome addition to our network, Gormley is serving new customers, as well as providing much needed parking relief to customers who have transferred from other stations. The station has not yet reached capacity; with approximately 50% of the parking spaces being utilized as of January, Gormley is well equipped to handle ridership growth. Customer feedback has been positive – available parking, large Kiss & Ride and large bus loop have made the station easy to access for all.

The winter season is now upon us, and we had our first significant snow falls during the second week of December, on the 12th and 15th, impacting both the a.m. and p.m. rush hours. Standard measures were in place to keep the system running smoothly and all trips ran as scheduled.

Bus on-time performance continues to exceed expectations for the 23rd consecutive month, standing at over 94%. The Ministry of Transportation has implemented the first bus bypass shoulder segment on Highway 401, which will help to minimize delays and maintain on-time performance going forward.

We continued to expand our self-serve options through updates to our online resources and ticket vending machines over the past quarter.

Ongoing improvements to customer communications included the introduction of line-specific Twitter handles. The success of many of the initiatives over the last quarter can be partly attributed to consistent, reliable communication to our customers through a variety of channels including social media, On The GO Alerts, on-board announcements and signage, to name a few.

As the Union Station revitalization project continues, additional wayfinding support has been put in place. Extra communications and support staff were in place as we moved into a new phase of work on the train shed construction. The installation of a new, illuminated

sign on York Street for the UP Express terminal was completed just in time for the holidays to help seasonal travelers locate the UP terminal from outside the building.

Major Highlights

Operations

During the past quarter, UP Express operated 14,421 trips, and on-time performance remains strong with the quarter completed at 98.32%, which is on par with the previous quarter. Average trip time was 24.7 minutes, versus a target of 25 minutes.

In the past quarter, GO ran 21,254 train trips and on-time performance averaged 95%, with no change over the same period last year.

On-time performance for bus was delivered at 94.72% in October, 94.70% in November, and 94.22% in December. This performance has resulted in a 12-month on-time performance average of 94.85%, on par with the previous year.

Wayfinding in and around Union station remains an area of focus, especially through the revitalization project. Just in time for our holiday travellers, an illuminated UP Express sign was installed on York Street to help guests locate the UP terminal from outside the building. Platform changes have taken place through December and January as the train shed construction project moves into the next phase of work. Extensive communications and customer outreach efforts spanned across several channels and teams to ensure high awareness, customer safety and minimize impact to the overall experience. The practice of bringing additional Metrolinx staff into Union Station to assist with wayfinding during platform changes has continued, with up to 40 additional staff at any given time on hand to both inform and direct customers.

Late November through early January proved to be a very busy time for both GO Transit and Toronto sports teams. We supported our teams and customers with special services running after the Grey Cup November 27th, Major League Soccer Conference Final on November 30th, the MLS Championship game on December 10th and the Centennial Classic on January 1st. These services were in addition to offering early afternoon rush-hour trips on December 23rd and 30th for those leaving early to start their holidays. Getting our passengers home safely was a top priority on New Year's Eve when we offered special late night services and free rides after 7 p.m. Throughout all of this extra service, communications efforts were extended, with outreach to major downtown event venues and organizers to keep all of our passengers in the know.

December saw the introduction and announcement of significant new GO Transit services. On December 31st, we introduced year-round weekend train service on the Barrie line. Barrie summer weekend train service was introduced in 2012 and continued to flourish, with ridership growing to approximately 41,000 rides for the 2016 summer season. On December 19th, we also announced one new Stouffville line trip during both the morning and afternoon rush hours that would begin on January 3rd. This is great news for residents along these corridors, who will benefit from the added service.

In October and November, we worked to build awareness of our excellent bus services to increase ridership on specific bus routes. Customers received messaging through a

number of channels including digital, print and social media. The reach through online and social media was strong, with a combined 1.5 million Twitter and Facebook impressions and 280,000 video views. The campaign returned strong results, with average daily boardings on the targeted routes increasing an average of 17%.

We've had our first taste of winter with two significant snowfalls during the second week of December. The morning of December 12th, the GTHA woke up to an average 14 centimeters of snow, which impacted the morning commute for many. Our crews worked through the night to ensure that switches were clear, snow was removed from the tracks and layover yards were cleared and ready for the trains to move in the morning. GO trains ran with an impressive 95% on-time performance for that day with no major delays attributed to the weather. On the afternoon of December 15th, another 15 centimeters of snow fell during the p.m. rush-hour service. The timing of the storm meant snow clearing and de-icing activities were taking place during our afternoon peak. These weather delays were further compounded by an afternoon rush hour IT failure in our main operations control centre, which required the re-booting of key operations systems. On-time performance for that day was 75%. However, no trips were cancelled and there were no major adjustments to service. On both days, extra measures in place included snow blowers to clear tracks, switch heaters and increased staffing to assist with de-icing doors. As always, we continue to review our procedures and modify as needed.

The first step in equipping all trains with backup cameras has now been completed and the backup system was successfully tested on December 21st. In certain instances, a crew member must currently walk to the back of the train to ensure the track is clear, which can be very time consuming and lead to delays. These cameras will eliminate that need. Cameras will be gradually introduced on existing cars and locomotives as we retrofit them, and all new coaches and locomotives will have them installed.

Ridership

Approximately 697,700 trips were taken on UP Express during the last quarter. Ridership decreased in October for the first time since the price change in part due to the anticipated lower airport traveller volumes at Toronto Pearson and because of a decline in non-airport trips (likely due to the Blue Jays playoffs having concluded in early October). A decline in airport trips continued into November, directionally following Toronto Pearson seasonality patterns as expected. In December, ridership was lower than anticipated partially driven by a decrease in non-airport trips (e.g. work-based trips) taken over the holiday season. Noteworthy days within the quarter were peak ridership days on the Friday before Canadian Thanksgiving, with 11,566 trips taken and again on the Monday following American Thanksgiving with 9,157 trips taken (well above a typical Monday). With decreases in both airport- and event-driven travel, average daily ridership for the quarter was 8,578 compared with the previous quarter at 9,230.

Overall, GO preliminary ridership totaled 16.6 million in the quarter, with 13.2 million customers riding our trains and 4.4 million boarding our buses. Ridership increased 0.9% versus the previous year, with the growth coming largely from a 1.5% increase in rail customers. Fiscal year to date ridership has increased 1.9% to last year.

GO Bus ridership statistics are now finalized for October, November, and December. Overall, 2016 bus ridership has experienced growth of 0.76% or 127,630 boardings (rides)

compared to last year. However, when bus routes that have been replaced by extended train service are excluded, bus ridership is up 3.16%, or 380,919 additional boardings compared to last year.

Network

As of November 21st, GO Transit buses are using the new bus bypass shoulder segment on Highway 401. This segment is in the eastbound direction between Regional Road 25 in Milton and Highway 407, and is the first to open on Highway 401. In addition to those already open on the Highways 403, 404 and the Don Valley Parkway, the new segment will help to alleviate delays, contribute to on-time performance and improve the overall customer experience.

Customer Service

In response to customer feedback, we have introduced corridor-specific Twitter handles to provide service status updates. This move takes us another step further in providing real time, accurate and relevant communications to our customers through a variety of channels. Customer response has been positive, with the initial announcement posts being retweeted and liked over 500 times on social media. The new handles have been well received across all corridors, with Lakeshore East and West generating the most followers at 1,422 and 1,801, respectively. Ongoing communications activities aimed at increasing followers will continue. The @GOTransit handle remains active and will be focused on network-wide events and broader updates impacting all customers.

Efforts to drive improved self-service experience and usage have continued throughout the fall and winter with many initiatives underway or planned. The first was a PRESTO “Win What You Load” contest aimed at promoting self-serve PRESTO load options. Customers who chose to load their PRESTO cards using self-serve options were automatically entered in a draw to win the value of their load. The draws took place monthly for September, October, November and December and resulted in an average increase of 8,500 self-serve transactions a month, with volume primarily going through PRESTO’s Autoload feature and self-serve reload machines.

Secondly, the first phase of a project that brings PRESTO load and sale capabilities into the ticket vending machines is underway as of January 31st. To start, 12 machines in select locations will be upgraded to give customers another self-serve option to load value on their PRESTO cards. Of the 12 machines, five will be equipped to also sell and dispense PRESTO cards.

We have also expanded the On-line Student Application program. We are pleased to have added the University of Toronto to the program in October, Mohawk College as of January 4th and The Michener Institute on January 9th. The program was first launched in time for the 2016 academic year with OCAD University (formerly the Ontario College of Art and Design) being the first institution to implement the new process. This program allows registered full-time students at participating post-secondary institutions to apply for electronic GO Transit-issued Student IDs using the online application. The objective is to incorporate all post-secondary institutions in time for the 2017 academic year. To date, 4,600 electronic IDs have been issued.

Finally, a new improved beta version of Triplinx was released in December for testing, and the full version was released February 9th. The updates to the app include a more intuitive user interface design with more maps and simpler menus, real time departure information, live trip tracking and customised schedules.

GO Passenger Charter Key Performance Indicator Report Card

Measure		Target		2015/2016 Fiscal Year	2014/2015 Fiscal Year
On time	We will run 94% of trains within five minutes of the scheduled time.	94%	✓	94%	94%
	We will run 94% of buses within 15 minutes of the scheduled time.	94%	✓	94%	95%
Safety	We will have 30 or fewer complaints per 1,000,000 boardings regarding safety.	30	Not yet met	32	29
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	65%	70%
	We will have 30 or fewer complaints per 1,000,000 boardings regarding service status communication.	30	✓	26	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	48	22
Helpfulness	We will ensure 85% or more of customer inquiries/concerns are resolved the first time they contact us.	85%	✓	100%	97%

Greg Percy
Chief Operating Officer