



A Division of METROLINX

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

2012 Niagara Seasonal Train Service

Situation

For the fourth consecutive year, GO Transit is offering passengers seasonal travel options to/from the Niagara Region by train. The service runs along the Lakeshore West corridor with stops at Union, Exhibition, Port Credit, Oakville, and Burlington GO Stations, and the St. Catharines and Niagara Falls VIA stations.

For the 2012 season, GO is running this service:

- Victoria Day weekend (May 18-21)
- Summer session (June 23*-Sept 3)

The service will offer one trip each way on Friday evenings and three trips each way on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays between Niagara Falls and Toronto.

**The excursion service will not run on the first Friday of the summer session (June 22) due to operational limitations.*

New in 2012, GO is offering a shuttle GO Bus between the St Catharines GO Train stop and downtown Niagara-on-lake. This will substantially broaden the marketing potential for this service. (TBC)

GO also provides bus service between Toronto and the Niagara Region year-round, seven days a week.

Objectives

- To effectively communicate and promote the Niagara train service
- To meet ridership objectives
- To leverage GO marketing efforts and add value for riders through strategic promotional partnerships
- Increase awareness of year-round Niagara GO Bus service

Audiences

- General Public
 - Particularly, 18-34 year olds without cars
- GO Transit passengers
- GO Transit staff
- Media partners
- Ministry of Transportation

Key Messages (Victoria Day weekend)

- GO Transit is running its seasonal train service between Niagara and Toronto during Victoria Day weekend again this year. There will be one trip in either direction on Friday evening, and three trips on Saturday, Sunday, and Monday.
- The train will make stops at Union Station, Exhibition, Port Credit, Oakville, and Burlington GO Stations and the St. Catharines and Niagara Falls train stations.

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- Our new shuttle GO Bus will meet the train in St. Catharines and take you to Niagara-on-the-Lake. (TBC)
- After Victoria Day weekend, GO will run the Niagara weekend train service again from June 23 through to September 3.
- Visit gotransit.com/niagara for more information

Key Messages (summer session)

- GO Transit is running its seasonal train service between Niagara and Toronto again this summer. There will be one trip in either direction on Friday evenings, and three trips on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays.
- The train will make stops at Union Station, the Exhibition, Port Credit, Oakville, and Burlington GO Stations and the St. Catharines and Niagara train stations.
- Our new shuttle GO Bus will meet the train in St. Catharines and take you to Niagara-on-the-Lake. (TBC)
- There will be two bike coaches on Saturdays and Sundays
- The seasonal Niagara service is now part of our annual service schedule.
- Visit gotransit.com/niagara for more information.

Strategy

To inform the public about the seasonal train service to/from Niagara in advance of May 18, we will execute four phases of communication to coincide with service commencement and long weekends.

- Phase 1 – May 1, 2012 (in advance of Victoria Day weekend service)
- Phase 2 – June 5, 2012 (in advance of summer service)
- Phase 3 – July 30, 2012 (in advance of the August long weekend)
- Phase 4 – August 27, 2011 (in advance of the Labour Day weekend)

Tactics

GO Passengers and General Public

Communication Tool	Responsible	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
www.gotransit.com (Home > Niagara) (Schedule Changes > Niagara)	Caroline Busbridge	May 1	June 5	n/a	Aug 27
On the GO alerts	Karen Warner Savio d'Gama Rose Brendon McGibbon	May 8	June 5	July 30	Aug 27
CSA/Driver/Station Announcements	Karen Warner Savio d'Gama Rose Brendon McGibbon	May 8	June 5	July 30	Aug 27
PINS Board messaging	Karen Warner Savio d'Gama Rose Brendon McGibbon	May 1	June 5	July 30	Aug 27
Facebook	Transit reporters	May 1	June 5	July 30	Aug 27
Twitter	Transit reporters	May 1	June 5	July 30	Aug 27
Advertising (see Media Plan)	Stephanie Trenchocher	TBD	On-going	On-going	On-going

Promotional partnerships	Stephanie Trendocher	TBD	On-going	On-going	On-going
Customer Contact Centre phone messaging	Brendon McGibbon	May 1	June 5	July 30	Aug 27

Government stakeholders:

Communication Tool	Responsible	Due
MTO Comm roll-out	Trina Melatti	Complete

GO Transit staff:

- Briefing document/Q&A for all front-line staff to assist in dealing with customer inquiries.

Communication Tool	Responsible	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Job aid (for front-line staff)	Jason Allen	April 24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Q&As (for media inquiries)	Malon Edwards	April 24	n/a	n/a	n/a
Heads Up	Brendon McGibbon	April 24	May 31	n/a	Aug 22
Department-specific notices	Respective department	April 24	May 31	n/a	Aug 22

Media partners:

- Leverage media relationships to produce coverage of seasonal rail service

Communication Tool	Responsible	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
News release	Caroline Busbridge	May 8	June 5	n/a	Aug 27
Media pitches	Malon Edwards	May 8	On-going	On-going	On-going

Evaluation

Quantitative and qualitative measures to determine whether communication objectives were achieved:

- Increased amount of positive coverage and media impressions
- Decreased number of questions and complaints to Contact Centre regarding service communications related to the Niagara seasonal train service in 2012 compared to 2011
- Ridership targets obtained
- Promotional partnership objectives met