



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

Communications & Outreach Plan

More GO Train service for Milton line

Service launch: June 25

Communications launch: May 7

Prepared by: Caroline Busbridge, Strategic Communications

Approvals:

Name	Approved (Y/N) and/or signature	Date

More GO Train service for Milton line

Situation

Overview

Effective June 25, GO Transit is adding two new train trips on the Milton line to help meet increased customer demand and alleviate overcrowding.

GO currently operates seven 12-car trains during weekday morning and afternoon peak periods. Three trips in the morning and two in the afternoon are at 100% or higher capacity, and ridership along the line is expected to grow by at least 4% annually.

Non-Responsive Information

The new trips have been strategically scheduled to relieve the busiest hour of customer demand. As a result, two existing Milton morning train trips will depart 5 minutes earlier.

The new and adjusted service changes include:

- The 6:48 a.m. train from Milton GO Station will now depart at 6:43, arriving at Union Station at 7:40.
- The 7:08 a.m. train from Milton GO Station will now depart at 7:03, arriving at Union Station at 8:02.
- A new trip will depart Milton GO Station at 7:13 a.m., arriving at Union Station at 8:13.
- A new trip will depart Union Station at 4:00 p.m., arriving at Milton GO Station at 4:58.
- The Milton GO Bus trips departing the Union Station Bus Terminal at 3:40 p.m. will be discontinued as passengers will now be accommodated by the new 4:00 train.

History/background

In 2009, GO increased peak period train trips along the Milton line from six to seven. As noted, the area has experienced rapid growth, and it is now required that an eighth train be added.

Non-Responsive Information

Strategy

It is recommended that the Ministry make an official announcement prior to/on May 7. Immediately following the announcement, general information will be available on gotransit.com.

Note: The launch of the Barrie weekend service and the Niagara-on-the-Lake shuttle is two days prior on June 23. There is opportunity for one combined announcement on May 7.

On June 4, detailed service change communications will roll out to give customers enough time to trip plan and/or take full advantage of the new service; schedule information will be made available on the Schedule Changes page on gotransit.com and promoted from the homepage, and direct customer communications will be delivered the following day.

There is an opportunity on launch day, June 25, for the Ministry to participate in the inaugural train trip or distribute a news release. Follow-up customer communications will remind customers of the new and adjusted service.

Key messages

- GO is adding and adjusting GO Train trips along the Milton line to serve you better and to make your travel experience with us more comfortable.
- Starting June 25, there will be an extra morning and afternoon train trip making all stops between Milton GO Station and Union Station. Some morning trips will now depart five minutes earlier.
- The Milton corridor is owned by CPR, and it is a busy freight passage. Two-way all-day service requires GO to add tracks along the corridor, some of which passes through urban areas. This track infrastructure could cost as much as one billion dollars and could take as long as 10 years to construct. GO Transit has been investigating various design options, and the best approach to proceed is under discussion.

Service details

- The 6:48 a.m. train from Milton GO Station will now depart at 6:43, arriving at Union Station at 7:40.
- The 7:08 a.m. train from Milton GO Station will now depart at 7:03, arriving at Union Station at 8:02.
- A *new* trip will depart Milton GO Station at 7:13 a.m., arriving at Union Station at 8:13.
- A *new* trip will depart Union Station at 4:00 p.m., arriving at Milton GO Station at 4:58.
- Milton GO Buses departing Union Station at 3:40 p.m. will be discontinued as passengers may now take the new 4:00 GO Train from Union Station, which will make all stops to Milton GO Station.
- Milton is one of the busiest rail corridors on the GO system, moving an average of 25,000 passengers a day. The new trips during the morning and afternoon commutes will help to make those passengers' GO experience a more comfortable one.
- GO service expansion along the Milton line is a reflection of the substantial growth in the area, which has been estimated to be at least 4% annually in the coming years. A seventh trip was added in 2009, and now an eighth train in 2012; GO continues to make strides to improve the passenger experience.

Audiences & tactics

See chart

Media relations strategy

Media coverage is a significant way to generate unbiased promotion of the new service.

A mass distribution of GO's news release through Canada NewsWire (CNW) will ensure that the announcement of new service is provided to all media outlets throughout Southern Ontario at the same time.

Media relations will follow up the CNW mass distribution of the news release by sending it to a targeted email group of media outlets.

Communication Tool	Responsible	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
Ontario news release	MTO	May 7	n/a	June 25
GO news release	Caroline Busbridge	n/a	June 4	n/a
Media pitches	Malon Edwards	n/a	June 3	n/a

Marketing plan

Overview

Based on the Milton weekday train schedule, the primary market for this service is regular GO Transit customers who travel along the Milton train line already, looking for more options to alleviate overcrowding; the secondary market is made up of residents along the Milton train line who may consider GO for their commute now that the Milton ride is getting more comfortable.

Local newspaper advertising will be used to promote the new Milton train trips. These ads will run in conjunction with the general advertisements placed, using our contra space, in Metro Toronto, 24 Hours Toronto, and T.O. Night Newspaper in support of our June service change communications.

The media spend totals \$53,963.84, including agency fees.

Evaluation

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

- Increased amount of positive coverage and media impressions
- Ridership targets met