

Fall 2005

GO

News



GO Transit's newsletter for customers

Keeping the customer satisfied

The results are in from our recent customer satisfaction survey. We asked more than 1,000 riders, representing a wide cross-section of our passengers, about their level of satisfaction with customer service on the GO.

We tallied the results of the survey in conjunction with comments, complaints, and suggestions received by our customer service centre, call centre, website, and mail. The information gathered is used to set priorities and spot areas needing improvement. The overall goal is to meet customer service objectives and longer-term needs for frequent, faster, and more reliable service.

There was plenty of positive feedback. GO customers feel safe on our service and in our

facilities; they find the service easy to use, relaxing, and comfortable; and they find GO staff helpful, friendly, and courteous.

While our riders gave us a very high level of overall customer satisfaction, many also asked how we're addressing specific issues:

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GO retro

Toronto's skyline then and now

Look at that skyline. When GO began running trains in the sixties, the TD Centre and the Royal York hotel were among the few buildings that dominated Toronto's skyline. Back then, we didn't have the bi-level railcars we're now used to.

Single-level cars, like the ones below, were manufactured by Hawker Siddeley and ran from day one of GO Train service in 1967 until 1989.



Our bi-level (inset), introduced in 1978, was designed and built in Ontario by the company that has become Bombardier. It was made specifically for our commuter service needs, with passenger comfort a prime feature of the design.

Each car can hold up to 162 passengers, and actually has three levels, with a mezzanine at each end. Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Seattle are just three of several other North American cities that now use these popular cars.

Your spot is waiting for you

Driving to work is pricier than ever. It now costs about \$460 a month for a reserved parking spot in Toronto, while a non-reserved monthly spot will set you back about \$285*. Even if you don't drive all the way to work, it can be hectic trying to find a spot at your GO station.

But there is some good news. Reserved parking spaces are available for rent at most GO stations for \$60 (including taxes) a month per space, for a minimum six-month term. Having a reserved space is a real advantage if you take a later train due to your work schedule or daycare arrangements. Applications can be picked up at the Customer Service Centre in Union Station or at any GO Train station.

The parking info on our website (gotransit.com) includes more information about parking at GO lots, including payment options, and a list of stations with reserved parking. From our home page, choose *Stations and Stops*, then *Parking*.



*Statistics courtesy of 2005 North American Parking Rate Survey, Colliers International

Keeping the customer satisfied

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- Reducing delays and improving communication when delays occur: With our new E-News email alert system, better signs at stations and platforms, and GPS train location, GO is on track not only to communicate better during delays but also to reduce their frequency and length.
- More service, more convenience, and less crowding: As part of our 10-year plan, we're adding new tracks, eliminating major bottlenecks, expanding our fleet, adding new stations and parking, and improving Union Station. These improvements will allow us to operate more service and improve on-time performance.

Keep an eye out for us in November when we'll be conducting our bi-annual rail survey. We alternate every year between rail and bus. The surveys collect info about customer travel patterns and help us plan route and service improvements.

More about safety on the GO

GO Transit is one of the safest transit systems in North America. While we make every effort to ensure your safety on our trains and buses, there are many tips you can learn and things you can do to make your trip even safer.

When travelling on the GO Train, you can get help in an emergency by pressing the yellow alarm strip located above the windows. You can also ask for assistance from the conductor or another train crew member. The conductor is stationed in the train's accessible car, which is the fifth car from the locomotive. Train crew members are located in cars with the lit yellow light on the outside of the car.

Information about the emergency features of our railcars is posted just inside the entry doors, and all emergency equipment and instructions are clearly marked. Passengers can move between cars anytime. There are emergency door pulls at each set of doors, and emergency windows at each level and on both sides of the car. The exits have instructions posted above them. Each railcar also has a first aid kit, located next to the washroom.

The new gotransit.com offers even more

We've got a new look. The revamped gotransit.com now offers added information, improved navigation, and a more user-friendly layout. There are several new and useful features on the site:

- Under *Train and Bus Status* you'll find information about delays, detours, or reduced train speeds; *Station Updates* has up-to-date information about elevators and escalators that are out of service, or construction at your station.
- Visit *Schedules* and you can access all the timetables as before. Customers can now also get all GO schedules in pdf format for convenient viewing and printing.

GO Bus passengers travelling after 7 p.m. can request to be let off anywhere on the route if they have safety concerns about a designated stop, providing it's safe for the driver to stop. Just let the driver know in advance where you would like to exit. For added security when riding the bus, sit up front and tell the driver of any safety concerns — every GO Bus is in radio contact with our control centre.

All our bus drivers are trained in defensive and professional driving, and participate in ongoing safe-driving competitions with each other to stay safety-minded at all times. They are also trained in first aid.

For your general safety, and for the safety of those around you, we remind you to always be vigilant in our stations and terminals and on our trains and buses. Please report any suspicious activity (such as unattended parcels) to the police at 911, or to our Transit Enforcement at 905.803.0642 in Mississauga (collect calls accepted).

More information about safety and security can be found on our website at gotransit.com under *About GO*.

- Our new website was designed to be accessible to a broader audience. The straightforward layout and enhanced legibility make it easier for all visitors, including people with visual impairments, to navigate the site. More information can be found under *Accessibility*.
- Other new features include an online library of GO brochures and documents (*Publications*), information about events and tourism (*Popular Destinations*), useful transportation links (*Links*), and lots more.

Come give us a look and remember to update your bookmarks!

A look around GO

Safety for students a success

On May 4, grade 3 and 4 students converged on Union Station for a day of rail and road safety fun. More than 600 young people from across the GTA took part in a day of safety-related activities and presentations. Students got to experience a variety of safety exhibits, including emergency simulations, a GO locomotive and railcar, safe street crossing, and a mock vehicle rollover. The TTC, Bombardier, Toronto Police, Toronto Fire Services, and others joined GO and the Toronto Area Safety Coalition (TASC) to help spread the safety message. This was the ninth year Rail and Road Safety Day has taken place, with the biggest attendance to date. For more information about TASC visit www.torsafe.ca



Auror'in good time!

GO staff took to the streets for the 10th annual Aurora Street Festival on June 5. At the GO booth, visitors climbed aboard a GO Bus, mingled with our GO Bear mascot, and enjoyed giveaways galore. About 35,000 people came out for the great weather, vendors, and entertainment. The street festival is just one of many community events GO is part of throughout the year.



GO travel

Will return!

In our next issue, we visit historic downtown Brampton to explore the culture, events, and history of the area.

A station named Kennedy

Scarborough-area transit riders and other guests joined us on June 2 to open Kennedy GO Station. This accessible station is on the Stouffville line, between Agincourt GO Station and Union Station, and provides a direct link to the TTC's Kennedy subway station. Riders were treated to pastries and coffee, music, and welcoming remarks from Ontario's Minister of Transportation, as well as GO and TTC representatives. Kennedy is the 56th station in the GO network.



Breathe in, breathe out

To celebrate Clean Air Day on June 8, more than 4,000 Pickering GO Station customers were greeted with music, free coffee and cookies, and other goodies during the morning rush hour. Representatives from GO Transit, the City of Pickering, the Ajax-Pickering Transit Authority, and Ontario Power Generation thanked people for getting out of their cars and walking, biking, or riding public transit as the first step towards a cleaner environment and a more sustainable lifestyle. For tips on how you can help year-round, visit www.cleanairstay.com



We all play a role in accessible service

For GO rider Jane Transit, the daily commute to work is becoming more and more difficult.

Jane uses a wheelchair to get around. For her, it's not a big deal since she can still do almost anything she wants. Most of the GO stations she uses are accessible to people with wheelchairs and other mobility aids — they have ramps to platforms, accessible train service, and accessible washrooms and parking spaces. But things start to get complicated when able-bodied customers don't respect what GO has done to improve accessibility for Jane and others with similar needs.

In the past few months, Jane has arrived at her station to park in one of the accessible spots, only to find other cars parked there — cars that do not have a disabled person parking permit displayed. Parking in another spot is not an option. Passengers with wheelchairs or other mobility aids require the extra-wide room that accessible spots provide. Basically, if there are no accessible spots available, Jane, and others like her, cannot ride the GO, possibly missing work, school, cultural or sporting events, or even medical appointments.

While parking is her biggest problem, overcrowded elevators and available seating on accessible railcars are also big concerns.

Accessible train and bus services and facilities are designed to help passengers like Jane buy their ticket or pass, board the train or bus, and ride independently, at their convenience. Here are some things GO passengers can do to make everyone's ride more

- comfortable and convenient:
- Do not park in accessible parking spaces unless you have a disabled person parking permit and require the space because of your accessibility needs — it is against the law. Reserved parking is available for customers who want to make sure they have a spot every time. See the reserved parking feature in this issue of *GO News* for more information.
 - Allow passengers using mobility aids to get on and off elevators first, as they have no other way of accessing the platform.
 - Please be patient when passengers in wheelchairs are boarding lift-equipped buses, and when they are being secured by the driver — this is for the safety of all passengers on board the bus.
 - One car on every train is accessible to people who need step-free access to the train, including passengers who use mobility devices such as wheelchairs and scooters, senior citizens, passengers with medical conditions, or those with luggage or baby strollers. Special flip-up seats on these rail cars are for use by all passengers; however, please make sure to free up these areas for passengers using wheelchairs or scooters.
 - Each accessible GO Bus also has priority seating, and we ask passengers to voluntarily give up these seats for people using wheelchairs, scooters, or other mobility aids. These seats are the only unobstructed areas on our buses and help keep the aisles clear for others getting on or off the bus.





Courteous Commuter

Dear Courteous Commuter,

I'm not normally one to complain, but I'm appalled at the people who think it's OK to put their feet on the seats. Not only does it make the seats dirty and uninviting, but the person is also taking up valuable space on already-busy trains. Is there anything to be done about this nasty problem?

~ Fed Up With Feet

Dear Fed Up With Feet,

We definitely agree that feet on seats are a nuisance on both trains and buses. Our seats are for *passengers to sit on*. Bags, computers, and packages on seats are also part of this problem. Feet, bags, and other items make our seats dirty and worn, meaning GO must spend more time and money on cleaning and repairs. While we can't monitor every seat on every trip, we ask our passengers to respect others around them, who deserve a clean, comfortable ride.

~ Courteous Commuter

Dear Courteous Commuter,

Sometimes I feel like my ride home from work is even louder and more hectic than my workday! It's become very obvious that I am not the only one who is irritated by music from earphones, obnoxious ring tones, loud cellphone users, and overly-chatty riders. I know it's not realistic to expect a silent ride, but it irks me that some passengers seem to have no regard for others around them. How can I get a moment's rest?

~ Is Loud Allowed?

Dear Is Loud Allowed,

This is a hot topic. While we allow our passengers to use cellphones, computers, music players, and other technology on our trains and buses, we do agree that not all riders are interested in doing the same — or in being the audience! Passengers are asked to keep noise at a low volume. Whether it's talking on your phone or listening to music, please be aware that your fellow passengers may not want to hear you. Switch your phone to vibrate, keep conversations short, or make your call before getting on the GO. For music listeners, try holding your earphones in your hands — if you can hear the music, so can those around you.

~ Courteous Commuter



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