

GO

News



GO Transit's newsletter for customers

How to make \$1,000 before you even get to work



Monday, January 16 started out just like any other day for Jacqueline Delfosse, above, who works in downtown Toronto and commutes each day on the GO Train.

Jacqueline boarded the 7:37 a.m. train from Guildwood station as usual, and settled in with her usual group of commuter buddies for the short ride to Union Station.

Then her cell phone rang. Now, Jacqueline is the kind of person you might call a "courteous commuter" (see back page), and is conscious of

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Going the BRT way

What we're doing
to improve

Reduce your ecological
footprint, save the world!

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GOing the BRT way

What is GO BRT?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), as defined by transit industry experts, is a bus-only road system for express service. However, GO Transit is putting its own twist on BRT, customizing it to meet your needs.

GO BRT is a system that offers the frequency and speeds of urban rail transit (subways, metros, light rail) along Hwy. 407 without building expensive rail infrastructure. Luxury highway coaches are used to offer the most comfort to GO passengers. GO BRT service acts as a spoke connecting GO to local transit systems, and getting customers to where they need to be, quickly and comfortably.

Development of GO BRT

In 2000, GO introduced Hwy. 407 express bus service. It began with 24 daily trips and 900 monthly passengers. In 2007, GO BRT provides 530 trips to an average of 13,000 passengers every weekday.

New to GO BRT

In March, GO unveils the newest BRT terminal located on McMaster University's Hamilton campus. The terminal, which features heated bus shelters, will serve 2,000 riders a day.

On December 12, 2006, GO and Mississauga Transit opened the Square One bus terminal on Station Gate Rd., between Chapters and Playdium. The Square One terminal is used by 4,000 GO riders daily. There are already plans to

extend this terminal as bus services grow even more.

In the works

We're building another BRT hub at Hwys. 407 and 10. The facility will initially provide 100 parking spaces for bus riders and carpool users, as well as bus bays for GO, Mississauga, and Brampton Transit.

We'll also add two more terminals along Hwy. 403 at Winston Churchill Blvd. and Erin Mills Pkwy. In addition to more parking spaces, these new locations will include updated features such as kiss & ride passenger drop-off areas and heated shelters.

Keys to success

Contributing to the success of GO's BRT service are its partnerships with various local transit systems and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO).

The MTO partnership enables GO to acquire more land for future park & ride terminals. These terminals, with the parking capacity they provide, support the Ministry's High Occupancy Vehicle (carpool) lane program. And together, GO and local transit systems like Mississauga Transit build new terminals and bus platforms where needed.

Results that speak for themselves

Buses on GO's BRT service were on time 98% of the time in 2006.

To continue offering this high level of service to our customers, GO is making every effort to secure the necessary funding to keep expanding and improving BRT.

How to make \$1,000

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the fact that many passengers enjoy a quiet, relaxing ride to and from work. Excessive and loud cell phone use is generally frowned upon by the GO community, so she answered with a whisper, "Hello?"

A booming voice asked her to confirm her name, and then announced (to thousands, it would turn out) that she was the winner of an EZ Rock \$1,000 cash prize!

The radio station's morning show deejays told her she was live on the air and asked her where she was. When she said softly that she was on a GO Train, they insisted that she tell the people sitting next to her what she'd just won, and ask them to make some noise to celebrate!

As a result, listeners across the GTA were treated to the lively sounds of a train car full of commuters, shaken out of their usual quiet routine.

What we're doing to improve

The performance of a number of our trains has not been up to standard lately, and we apologize for the delays you may have experienced. Typically, if one train gets delayed, other train times suffer too.

We are working to improve the situation. Along with our railway partners CN and CPR, we've identified problem areas and are establishing measures to resolve them quickly:

- We are looking at every train's performance for the past several months to determine common delay locations and recommend solutions
- CN has introduced preventative maintenance strategies for old signal/switching plants that have been the cause of many train delays
- Additional train staff at Union Station will work to prevent delays to specific trips

GO is also looking at longer-term improvements. In May 2004, the Government of Canada and the Province of Ontario agreed to fund GO's multi-year expansion program along with the Greater Toronto Area municipalities – a total investment worth a billion dollars. Several of the program's projects have now been initiated.

Starting in late 2007, we will receive the first of 27 new, much more powerful locomotives. These locomotives will replace our 20-year-old fleet. They will

be more reliable and able to pull 12 railcars, compared to 10 cars now. The new locomotives are also more fuel-efficient and environmentally friendly. They will be used on the Milton line, and for express trains on the Lakeshore line.

We're also building new track on our busy Lakeshore East and West lines, to give our trains more travel options and less chance of being stuck behind other passenger or freight trains. This will improve our reliability, allow us to extend trips, and eventually let us increase the number of trains we run, giving customers more choices.

We're making significant upgrades on our Georgetown, Bradford, and Stouffville lines. These cross east-west freight lines, and we're moving our tracks either over or under the other tracks. This means that our trains will not have to stop and wait for east-west trains to pass. Bradford line trains are already using a new overpass, and construction is underway on the other two lines. The new crossings will improve reliability, and should also allow us to run more trains on these three train lines *and* the Richmond Hill line.

To find out more about our expansion plans, please visit gotransit.com and choose GO Grows from the homepage. We've prepared a website that contains detailed information about all the projects we're working on.



A look around GO

GO supports PATH clothing drive

During the last week of January, GO Transit and the City of Toronto supported the 9th annual Longest Underground Walkway Clothing Drive and Sale.



The event, held from January 22 to 26, involved 14 of the towers in Toronto's underground PATH system.

Commuters dropped off

gently-used clothing donations at the GO concourse and other PATH locations.

On hand at the event's launch were Raptor's legend Jerome "Junkyard Dog" Williams and Dr. Rick Tobias, President and CEO of the Yonge St. Mission.

Nearly 7,000 bags were collected during the event, with donations going to the Yonge Street Mission's Double Take clothing store.

Ticket to ride contest

The grand prize winner was Joe K. from Oshawa. He won tickets to *Rain – the Beatles Experience*, round-trip GO tickets to get to the show, an Oasis Wellness Centre and Spa package, dinner at the Hot House Café and a one-night stay at the Delta Chelsea.

The contest ran from December 18 until January 12, with 1,339 GO customers entering the draw.

The winner and four runners-up were drawn randomly from all the correct entries, and were asked to answer a skill-testing question.

Remember to visit gotransit.com to find out about other great contests.

GO Transit customers focus of enforcement blitz

During the last week of January, Toronto police conducted a city-wide blitz, dubbed Operation Safe Commute, to deal with rush-hour traffic issues. GO commuters driving to their train stations contribute significantly to these problems.

The blitz, orchestrated by Toronto Police Sgt. Brian Bowman, was not about giving tickets, although tickets are a good motivation to alter speeding behaviour, he said. The focus was rather on education.

"Some drivers speed trying to make up for lost time, turning the drive for the train into a life or death situation," said Sgt. Bowman. "This puts friends and neighbours at unnecessary risk."

Sgt. Bowman refers to the stretch of road by Rouge Hill station as the "GO 500". People race down the road trying to make their train, he said. Drivers have been clocked doing well over the posted 50 km, even surpassing 80 km.

While Rouge Hill GO Station in particular was noted, all GO stations are considered by police as high risk driving areas during rush hour.

The most common excuse commuters give to officers is: I'll be late for my train.

To avoid unwanted tickets, allow yourself extra time to get to your station. Sgt. Bowman said it best: "I've never seen an obit where the cause of death is missing a GO train."

City-wide blitz statistics:

- 2,736 speeding tickets
- 4 tickets for failing to yield to pedestrians
- 86 careless driving tickets
- 684 tickets for turning offences (either making unsafe turns or turning into the wrong lane)

Reduce your ecological footprint

Save the world!

An ecological footprint measures how much land and water area a human population requires to produce the resources it consumes and to absorb its wastes.

A source of Canadian pride

The term was first used in 1992 by Canadian ecologist and professor William Rees.

Why it's important

An ecological footprint is an indicator of environmental sustainability and is used to educate people about their resource use.

Several common lifestyle factors are calculated in the ecological footprint; they include transportation methods, energy use, food and water consumption habits, building materials and other consumables.

The new 'hot commodity'

Renewable resources are what we and all species depend on for survival, and humans are consuming renewables faster than ecosystems can replenish them.

Currently, we're leaving an ecological footprint 23% larger than what the planet can regenerate, meaning we're entering a sustainability crisis.

Tread lightly

Of all the different impressions we leave on the earth, the carbon footprint – the amount of greenhouse gases produced to support human activities, expressed in tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) – is the most evident.

How you're doing your part

The average Toronto car carries only 1.16 people, and on an average day, GO transports about 100,000 people. One commuter car off the road for a year saves one tonne of CO₂.

As a result, by using GO Transit every day, passengers have contributed to reducing the approximately 100,000 tonnes of CO₂ per year that would have been emitted if everyone had driven their cars instead.

To do even more for the environment, don't leave your parked car idling while you're waiting for your GO Train to arrive. Vehicle idling is one of the worst causes of CO₂ emissions.

What else you can do

- Compost or get your neighbourhood involved in a green bin program
- Use energy-efficient light bulbs
- Support your local farmers by buying locally-grown items

Sources: Global Footprint Network and Time for Change.
For more information, please visit www.footprintnetwork.org
and timeforchange.org.





Courteous Commuter

Dear Courteous Commuter,

Seats are a hot commodity on the train and being seven months pregnant, I could use one. I realize I board at one of the last stops before Union Station so most seats are already occupied on the first level. However, it would be kind of someone to give up their seat for me. I've also noticed that pregnant women aren't the only ones made to stand when they shouldn't have to. Sometimes I notice people on crutches or even elderly men and women standing with difficulty. Have able-bodied riders lost their manners?

~ *Very Visible Bump*

Dear Very Visible Bump,

Congratulations on your soon-to-be! Your letter is a good reminder to riders – while you may get a seat first, you can make someone's day by giving it up, especially to a person in need. It's important to respect your fellow riders. Just think, what would your mother say?

~ CC

Dear Courteous Commuter,

I've noticed that people feel the need to put their bags and briefcases on the seats next to them, as though they think they're important enough to take up two seats. I've also noticed that people are putting their feet on the seats across from them, with and without shoes on. Is there anything you can do about this? Like charge these people for two seats?

~ *Only Needs One Seat*

Dear Only Needs One Seat,

You're not the only person who feels this way. These are common complaints we hear from customers. For the comfort of others, passengers should keep personal belongings to themselves. Not only will this make fellow riders happy, it also helps reduce the risk of theft.

And to keep our vehicles in good shape, we encourage riders to remember that while our trains and buses are supposed to be comfortable, they're not actually your living rooms. Your commuting compadres will feel more at ease if they're not sitting beside someone's dirty shoes or smelly feet.

~ CC



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