

# GO News

GO Transit's newsletter for customers

gotransit.com • summer 2009

**Niagara Falls,  
here we come!**

**PRESTO on the GO**

**E-News improvements:  
You spoke, we listened**



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- 2 | Niagara Falls, here we come!
- 4 | E-News improvements: You spoke, we listened
- 5 | Customer satisfaction is our goal
- 6 | GO Bus service reaching into new areas
- 7 | Presto on the GO
- 8 | Curious commuter
- 10 | Heard about electrification? Here's what GO is doing

## Niagara Falls, here we come!

Starting this summer, GO Transit will begin running a weekend and holiday train service to Niagara Falls. This exciting new service gives tourists and families another convenient and comfortable option to get to the spectacular travel destinations in the Niagara Falls region.

An alternative to driving, this service will get customers to the Niagara area in about two hours from downtown Toronto. It will also make stops along the Lakeshore West line at Port Credit GO Station, Oakville GO Station, Burlington GO Station, and St. Catharines VIA Rail station, arriving at the Niagara Falls VIA Rail station. This scenic route will be available during the summer season until Thanksgiving and will include four trips in each direction.

GO Train service to Niagara Falls will boost Niagara's tourism industry, and provide a travel option for passengers in the Niagara Falls and St. Catharines areas looking to visit Toronto and its many attractions. This new travel choice will help stimulate local economies and will benefit the environment by taking cars off of the road and easing congestion.

For schedule information, please visit [gotransit.com](http://gotransit.com).





## E-News improvements: You spoke, we listened

At the start of the year, GO asked E-News subscribers what they think of our E-News service and how it could be improved. As part of our goal to improve customer service, we asked, listened, and are in the process of making improvements to this popular service.

From the feedback we received, we have implemented some immediate improvements based on common suggestions. We are now sending out messages for delays of 15 minutes or greater. This threshold used to be 30 minutes or more.

We are also looking to tailor messages to customers from specific stations. In order to receive these messages, customers will need to sign up for station-only information. Our goal is to inform customers of any news or problems before they reach their station.

The long-term goal of improving our E-News service is to provide messages and alerts that respond directly to our customers' needs. We will continue to ask for your input. Thanks for sharing! To sign up for E-News, visit [gotransit.com](http://gotransit.com).



### GO has been busy implementing other communication initiatives including:

- System wide LCD signs at each train station now inform customers on the platform about any service problems or delays.
- Piloting new electronic gate signs at Union Station. These signs have been installed in waiting areas and notify customers when they can safely proceed to track level.

# Customer satisfaction is our goal

Customer satisfaction is one of the driving forces behind GO's future plans. Thanks to our recent Customer Satisfaction Survey, we have an even better idea on how to meet the needs of our customers.



We are committed to making improvements in many areas that you identified as important. For instance, we are building new tracks on the Milton, Georgetown, and Lakeshore West corridors that will allow us to increase the frequency of our service. These new tracks, once complete, will also reduce the scheduling conflicts that can impact when and how often we can run GO Trains.

Knowing we're on the right track with our customers is critical to our success. Thank you to all participants in the recent survey – we encourage customers to take part in future questionnaires.

# GO Bus service reaching into new areas



Starting this fall, GO will offer new bus service and expand its reach into the Peterborough, Niagara Falls, and Kitchener-Waterloo areas. These new services are part of our Strategic Plan, *GO2020*.

Peterborough residents will be able to travel to the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and connect to existing train and bus services at Oshawa GO Station, starting this September.

The Niagara Falls area will also get GO Bus service in September that will connect Niagara Falls, St. Catharines, Grimsby, and Stoney Creek with GO Train and GO Bus services from Burlington GO Station.

Kitchener-Waterloo GO Bus service will begin in October, connecting Kitchener-Waterloo and Cambridge with Milton GO Station and Mississauga City Centre.

These new GO Bus services will give the people in these areas the option of a more environmentally friendly, affordable, and convenient alternative to driving.

## And more train service...

Milton customers will be pleased to know that we are adding two new weekday train trips to the Milton line. This summer, a new morning and a new evening trip will be added to the schedule. The new morning weekday eastbound train will leave Milton GO Station at 8:08 a.m. The new evening weekday westbound train will leave Union Station for Milton GO Station at 5:40 p.m.

# PRESTO on the GO

Commuting within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is about to become easier with the PRESTO fare card.

The Government of Ontario, along with GO Transit and the municipalities of Hamilton, Burlington, Oakville, Brampton, Mississauga, Toronto, York Region, and Durham Region, are encouraging public transit use by providing commuters with PRESTO – a more convenient way to get to their destination.

Using smartcard technology, the PRESTO card is like a refillable debit or gift card. When you tap your card on the PRESTO device at the station or on the bus, your fare is automatically deducted from the card's preloaded dollar amount. Travel flexibility, easy transfers, faster boarding, convenience, and balance security through card registration are some of the many benefits the PRESTO card will bring to your daily commute.



Beginning this fall, select passengers will be using PRESTO at Bronte GO Station, Oakville GO Station, and Union Station. By 2011, PRESTO will be system-wide, seamlessly connecting all of GO's customers with municipal transit systems.

For more information, visit [www.prestocard.ca](http://www.prestocard.ca).

## Curious commuter

**Q:** Each weekday, I commute to work by GO Train. When passing the cars parked on the Gardiner during rush hour, I know I made a good decision. However, sometimes my train is delayed and when this occurs I've heard a variety of reasons why. What causes train delays?

~ **Confused about delays**

**A:** We strive to have exceptional on-time train service, though on occasion, GO experiences rail service delays. These delays can occur for many reasons and their impact could be system-wide or more localized with minimal impact on trips. The most common reasons for delays include signal failures, track work, construction, equipment problems or failures, severe weather, and police investigations.



There is no one reason why delays happen, and a variety of situations can impact our service. Some causes of delays are out of our control, while others are due to the complexity of our system and having to share the tracks with freight trains.

The number one reason for delays is signal problems. A signal problem can mean a few different things, such as the crew did not receive a green light to move forward; a delay in the communication process between the train crew, dispatcher, and the railway; or a mechanical failure.

Some of the delay causes that are beyond our control include medical emergencies, pedestrian accidents, debris on tracks, or slow orders which are given for train travel through areas under construction.

To keep you informed, we provide up-to-date service information in a variety of ways, including: announcements; electronic signs; E-News messages; and the service status page on GO's website.

~ CC

**Q:** In the mornings at my GO station it's difficult to find a parking spot. It seems that there are never enough spaces. Will you be adding more?

~ **Looking to Park It**

**A:** We understand that finding a parking spot can be a challenge at many of GO Transit's stations. The limited parking availability is partly a result of a growing ridership as well as limited property space to expand. The good news is that we are working to expand parking at stations across our entire network.

If GO can't expand outwards onto new property for surface parking, we plan on expanding upwards by building multi-level parking structures. In the next five years, we will be adding more than 18,000 parking spaces, including both surface and structure parking spots. In the upcoming year alone, we will be adding over 5,000 new parking spaces.

There are also alternative ways to access your station, such as walking, cycling, getting a ride, or carpooling. We also work with different local transit agencies to offer customers a discount with their fare.

~ CC



GO propels towards a green future with the introduction of our first wind turbine, at the Lisgar GO Station in Mississauga.

# Heard about electrification? Here's what GO is doing

GO Transit is in the midst of a dramatic transit expansion that will provide more transit options across the province and reduce vehicle traffic congestion, air pollution, and other health hazards.

We have already made strides to reduce our environmental footprint, including ensuring that all of our new MP40 locomotives meet strict compliance levels for emission standards.



Running electric trains is a long-term, multi-year goal, which will cost billions of dollars. As part of current transit expansion plans, we are building the infrastructure now to support future electrification across many parts of GO's rail system, such as designing and building all structures like bridges to meet the height requirements.

GO Transit and Metrolinx are working to improve transit for commuters, as well as those living along the rail corridors. And while less than one per cent of all commuter rail in North America is electrified, GO believes that it's not a matter of if we electrify, but when.

To assist us in moving toward this goal, Metrolinx will undertake a study to determine the costs and benefits associated with electrifying the GO system. It will also look at the next steps for moving toward converting GO's diesel rail system to electric propulsion engines.

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