



# GO TRANSIT

Annual Report  
2008-09

For the year ended March 31, 2009



## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

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GO Transit's 2008-09 fiscal year was a very active one, an exciting year of continuing accomplishment and growth.

We delivered our *Strategic Plan – GO 2020*, which will guide us through to the year 2020. It will let us maintain our status as a worldwide leader in quality interregional transit service, and it will provide the framework for developing our budgets and business plans. It meshes with the Province of Ontario's *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, and with the strategies and improvements of the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, *The Big Move*.

Our strategic plan's vision is straightforward, and attainable: **GO Transit will be the preferred choice for interregional travel in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.**

The plan is our commitment to give current and future customers an outstanding travel experience, and to meet the region's longer-distance transportation needs in the coming decades.

With the Province's continued support, GO Transit has already been working toward many of the elements in the strategic plan. There are so many projects and developments on the go that this report can only touch on the topmost high points.

Much more work and many more improvements will come in the years ahead. This is an exciting time to be in the transportation business. With 42 years of quality service to the travelling public under our belt, and another annual record ridership of nearly 55 million passengers in 2008, GO Transit is well on the way to delivering even higher-quality transit service to an ever-growing number of riders in a growing service area.

I would like to thank staff and my colleagues on the Board for their dedication to this vision. With the support of our stakeholders, partners, and loyal customers, we **will** become the preferred travel choice.



Peter R. Smith, C.M.  
Chairman

## BUILDING

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**We continued to build solutions to move people.** Many projects big and small were underway or completed during the year across our network. Highlights of the progress included:

- Lincolnville GO Station, our 59th train station, opened in September 2008. As the new terminus station on the Stouffville line, it takes pressure off Stouffville station and serves the growing residential areas of northern York Region and western Durham Region.
- Streetsville GO Bus Facility – the first green transit facility in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) – opened at the end of February 2009. It was designed and built to silver LEED standards, as recognized under the nationwide Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. Environmentally friendly and state-of-the-art, Streetsville houses about 100 GO Buses, with servicing facilities for more than 200. It is home to our double decker bus fleet.
- Another green milestone was the wind turbine – GO's first, and the first for any transit system in the GTHA – that was being built at Lisgar GO Station. Scheduled to start operating early in the next fiscal year, the turbine is designed to produce as much as 80% of the station's power needs, reducing reliance on the electrical grid.
- We continued with an aggressive program to build surface and structured parking to provide the opportunity to attract more ridership. The program will add 10,000 more parking spaces over the course of three years – 2,500 new spaces were added this fiscal year, and we plan to add another 5,100 in 2009-10. Our first multi-level parking structure, at Burlington GO Station, opened in September 2008. By the end of the fiscal year, construction had begun on our second parking structure, at Aurora station, and design was underway for a structure at Whitby station.
- Detailed design began on the GO component of the Mississauga Bus Rapid Transit project, which will provide 11 kilometres of dedicated, two-lane roadway for fast, convenient, bus-only service – it includes 11 stations for customer access, four of which will have parking. Across the rest of our bus network, we will also be building more park & ride lots to give people convenient access to our bus services.

## **BUILDING** (CONTINUED)

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- Construction progressed on extensive infrastructure improvements throughout the network, with these major developments during the year: An underpass opened on the Stouffville line just south of Unionville station, separating GO Trains from CN's main east-west freight line. A new mainline track on the Lakeshore East line was completed between Danforth and Scarborough stations, while construction continued on a new mainline track on the Lakeshore West between Port Credit and Oakville stations – the additional capacity of these new tracks will allow us to add trains in the future and give us more operational flexibility on these busy lines, which have high volumes of mixed passenger and freight train traffic. Construction began on an underpass at the West Toronto Diamond, which will lower our Georgetown corridor tracks under CPR's main east-west line, separating our trains from freight trains and giving us the opportunity to add trains in the future.
- Union Station, the heart of our network, was a busy hub of activity as we continued our multi-year program to renew the station and its rail corridor. The major works begun or underway during the year included: modernizing the signal system with a state-of-the-art one that will greatly improve operational efficiency and give us the capacity to add trains; replacing track switches with a modern, high-speed design to improve operations; installing more track switch clearing devices to clear snow and ice for improved winter operations; and building a new platform at the station's south end (scheduled to open early in the next fiscal year). The next five years will see the historic station transformed when we repair, restore, and upgrade the train shed's roof, including a new, glass atrium in the middle that will fill the platforms with light.

## MOVING

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**We continued to find solutions to move people.** We added service. We carried on renewing and expanding our train and bus fleets so that we could add service, and to give our customers a high-quality transportation experience. Highlights were:

- We added routes and improved service across the GO Bus network. In April 2008, we introduced daily, express airport bus service between Square One in Mississauga, Toronto Pearson International Airport, and Richmond Hill Centre. Our double decker buses made their inaugural runs in April 2008 on our busy Highways 403 and 407 Bus Rapid Transit corridors – with 78 seats each, these distinctive new buses offer 37% more seating capacity than regular, single-level highway buses. In June 2008, the bus network grew again with two new routes: weekday service between Milton and Bronte stations, connecting with the Lakeshore West GO Train, and express weekday service between the community of Stoney Creek and Burlington station, also linking with Lakeshore West train service.
- Another GO Transit milestone was reached in September 2008, when we surpassed 2,000 bus trips on an average weekday, a significant achievement as we continued to expand our network with more frequent, more widespread transit options. The previous milestone of 1,500 trips per day was reached in 2005.
- GO Train service also grew. Two new weekday afternoon express trains, one each on the Lakeshore West and Lakeshore East lines, were added in January 2009; the new trips help to relieve crowding, improve customer service, and meet growing ridership needs. That month a morning eastbound Lakeshore train which had originated in Oakville started farther out, from Aldershot, to give customers another travel option. When our Hamilton train layover site was finished, this trip began originating from Hamilton GO Centre in March 2009, giving Hamilton commuters more service in the form of a fourth morning eastbound train.
- We continued lengthening station platforms on the Milton and Lakeshore lines so that we can run longer, 12-car trains powered by our new, more powerful locomotives. With two more cars each than 10-car trains, these longer trains offer 300 more seats per trip, a 20% increase in seating capacity. During the year, as we added bi-level passenger railcars to the fleet, we also lengthened trains elsewhere in the system – all trains on the other lines are now operating with 10 cars each.

## MOVING (CONTINUED)

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- Our 27 new MotivePower MP40 locomotives were all in service by mid-February 2009, and we ordered 30 more for delivery by mid-2011. Thirty-five new bi-levels were all delivered by the end of the fiscal year, increasing the bi-level fleet to 457 cars, and we ordered another 25 from Bombardier for delivery by mid-2010. On the bus side, the fleet also grew with 56 new MCI highway coaches, two of which are hybrid buses to let us test the efficiency of hybrid engines in our type of commuter service. We ordered another 20 MCI buses, as well as 10 more Alexander Dennis double decker buses, for delivery in mid-2009. With the new buses that were delivered this year, our fleet now totals 384 buses (12 double deck and 372 regular).
- To give people yet another option to access our services, we became more bicycle-friendly during the year. In August 2008, we began offering bike racks on our buses on two routes in the Hamilton corridor, giving cyclists a convenient way to ride with their bikes to their destination or to connect with other transit, including the GO Train. Each bus has a rack on the front that can hold two bicycles. This feature will be rolled out across the rest of the GO Bus network early in the next fiscal year.
- To make it more attractive to cycle to our stations – part of our station access strategy to reduce the reliance on driving and parking – we are installing bike shelters system-wide to provide safe and convenient storage for our customers' bicycles. The first phase, finished this fiscal year, installed more than 100 shelters; the second phase is scheduled to begin in mid-2009.

## CARING

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**We continued to move people by giving them the best possible customer experience.**

Whether it was extra service for special events, outreach to the community, better communication with our passengers, introducing defibrillators to help save lives in heart attacks, letting our veterans ride free on Remembrance Day, free rides on New Year's Eve for a safe alternative to driving, or keeping station buildings open longer in severe cold weather, GO Transit continued to put our customers first. The year's highlights:

- Our transition from CN to Bombardier-operated crews for all our GO Trains (except on the Milton line, which CPR operates for us) was completed by the end of October 2008. Besides having two qualified commuter train operators driving each train, these new crews have a customer service ambassador who is dedicated to assisting our customers on board, looking after everything from timely, informative PA announcements to putting down the portable ramp at accessible stations.
- Our first electronic messaging sign went into service at Port Credit station, part of our system-wide rollout of LCD signs to provide our riders with timely information about their train's service status. Our Union Station electronic departure info signs are also now available on our website, [gotransit.com](http://gotransit.com), making them convenient to check from home or office, on desktop computers or mobile devices.
- Another communication enhancement began at the end of June 2008, when our website became bilingual, with information available in French as well as English. This is part of our multi-year commitment to making our services accessible to our French-speaking population in the GTHA.
- Union Station's signs were improved as part of the station's renewal. Directional and information signs changed in August 2008, making them easier to read and find information about trains, buses, and accessible routes in and around the station, including the walkways and the bus terminal. Platforms were renumbered in October 2008, following a more recognized style of numbering that uses numbers only for easier identification (instead of being named as tracks with a combination of numbers and letters).



## **CARING** (CONTINUED)

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- In October 2008, we began installing public-access defibrillators, called MIKEYs, in partnership with The Mikey Network and Toronto's EMS Cardiac Safe City program. About 100 defibrillators were installed across the GO network on the accessible car of every train, at all stations along the two Lakeshore lines, at the end stations on each of our other five lines, and at our train layover yards. The defibrillators, if used within the first critical moments, can increase a sudden cardiac arrest victim's chance of survival before paramedics arrive.
- We established a Customer Service Advisory Committee to give us better customer insight in improving all aspects of our service. Meeting at least once a quarter, it has nine members selected from volunteer applicants representing a cross-section of our different bus and train customer groups. The committee has discussed a wide range of matters, including the defibrillator program, service reliability, parking, and crowding on platforms.



## GROWING

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**We will continue to grow so that we can move even more people in the years ahead.**

There were several significant developments during the year that will help GO Transit improve and expand to reduce gridlock on roads and highways, and to meet the region's increasing demand for efficient public transportation.

- The Province announced in June 2008 a streamlined, shorter environmental assessment process so that transit projects can be built faster. The new process gives a shorter, six-month window to consult with the public, assess the potential environmental effects, and identify measures to mitigate these effects. GO Transit's first two projects moving forward under the new rules will be the expansion of the Milton line to all-day train service and the extension of Lakeshore East trains to Bowmanville.
- In November 2008, after a year of extensive public consultation, Metrolinx released *The Big Move*, its Regional Transportation Plan for the GTHA. (Please see the Metrolinx annual report for details.)
- A month later, in December 2008, we delivered our *Strategic Plan – GO 2020*. It will guide us in growing into an even more comprehensive system that links multiple activity centres and communities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe region of Southern Ontario. Over the past 15 years, we have been expanding by taking advantage of opportunities for incremental, cost-effective service improvements. We have developed into an efficient service targeted at a very specific market, primarily commuters travelling 20 to 50 kilometres from outlying communities to downtown Toronto. As the urban region matures around Toronto, interregional travel needs are now changing. With the help of the strategic plan and continuing support and financial investment from the senior levels of government, we look ahead to the future to ensure that our services evolve to help shape the region in its growth and success.
- Significant investment continued to be committed to GO Transit. In February 2009, and April 2009 in the fiscal year following this one, the Provincial and Federal governments announced joint funding totalling \$500 million to upgrade and revitalize our infrastructure. The money will be for many diverse projects across the network, including parking lot expansions and multi-level structures; many station improvements; bus facility expansions; bridge and track rehabilitation; locomotive refurbishing; purchase of more bi-level railcars; and a second train station in Barrie.
- The fiscal year closed on a significant, historic note: The Province introduced legislation to merge GO Transit and Metrolinx into a combined agency retaining the Metrolinx name. The goal is to build transit faster, ease gridlock, and create jobs for a stronger economy. We look forward to working as a single, strong, and effective body to help shape the future of this vital region of Ontario.

**GET ON THE**

