

2018 Metrolinx Accessibility Public Meeting Feedback Summary

Bus Stop & Terminal Accessibility

More bus shelters & stops are needed, especially in eastern part of Durham Region.

The locations of some garbage bins at bus stops block the driver's view of the bus stop seating.

Snow clearance at bus stops can be a bit slow at times.

Tactile information at bus stops would be useful for individuals who are blind.

Communications

Suggest that Metrolinx ensure quick response times for the delivery of TTY services. This service is sometimes slow or not available.

Concerns about elevators going out of service at transit stations, and ensuring clear communications about elevators being out of service at stations without redundant elevators.

Public Address (PA) announcements can be frightening for some customers with sensory, intellectual or developmental disabilities.

PA systems can be hard to understand, due to sound quality.

Better advertising about GO customer service staff to provide wayfinding assistance for customers who need help (for example, dementia).

The GO customer care phone number is difficult to find.

Calling the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system is cumbersome, especially if the customer wants to speak to staff.

Construction & Accessibility Impacts

Maintaining pedestrian infrastructure during construction is very important.

Bus stop relocations during construction don't always consider accessibility needs. For example, a relocated TTC bus stop (Bayview and Eglinton in Toronto) requires a walk uphill, which is challenging for some customers.

Displacement and fencing of entire neighbourhoods and the length of construction will create other challenges; it can sometimes split neighbourhoods.

Operations

Want to ensure that enough station attendants (GO, LRT stations) are present to assist and guide customers.

Automation of stations is a big concern. Some customers with intellectual disabilities have a hard time using new technologies. This will be a growing issue with the increase in automation, such as fare devices.

Enforcement of the support person fare and policy is a challenge for transit agencies.

More Customer Service Officers/better advertising of them to providing wayfinding assistance for those who need help (e.g. those with Alzheimer's, dementia)

Other Agencies

Ensure that crosswalks provide sufficient time for customers to cross from LRT platforms (in the centre of the road) to the sidewalk.

Each transit agency has its own fare policies, which can be confusing for some customers who use

Other Agencies

different transit agencies.

Connections between GO Transit and local transit systems can be difficult when a GO customer with a disability may need assistance; the local transit system likely won't be aware and may not be able to assist.

PRESTO

Requests to add PRESTO to specialized transit vehicles where it's not yet available.

Suggestion to add more PRESTO devices to load funds at municipal transit stations.

Adding more PRESTO tap-on devices on streetcars near the accessible seating area would be helpful.

Some customers feel there are a lack of convenient and accessible locations to purchase PRESTO cards.

If a customer forgets to tap off for GO Transit, they usually end up paying more for their trip. Communications/signage such as "remember to tap off" will help, as well as considering other locations for PRESTO devices.

PRESTO devices should be along the accessible path for customers who use mobility aids.

Reading the information on PRESTO GO device screens can be difficult for some customers to understand.

Public Consultation, Outreach, Advisory Committees

Suggestion to expand outreach list for Metrolinx Accessibility Public Meetings beyond the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area.

Signage & Wayfinding: All Services

Wayfinding needs to be consistent and clear.
For someone who has dementia, signage is critical.
Be mindful of the colour contrast, words and symbols used.

Station & Terminal Accessibility: Design Standards

Reflective surfaces such as glass station walls can be confusing for some customers with dementia, so having a distraction pattern or design on those surfaces would be helpful.

Tactile information on poles to provide information and tactile wayfinding tiles is helpful. This is provided in other cities such as Hong Kong.

For customers who have visual impairments, it can be challenging to find elevators or exits when getting off a train.

Some customers have to rely on staff to bring them to or from the train.

Shorter walking distances and tactile wayfinding would be beneficial to improve guidance within stations (for example, Crosstown LRT stations).

Distance between elevators/entrances and the accessible railcar makes it harder to find/get to them.

At GO Stations, there is no railing or tactile tiles at the end of the platform, creating conditions where customers with visual impairments could walk off the platform without warning.

Slippery surface materials (such as polished concrete) are hazardous, especially when wet.

Limited or incomplete sidewalks in the vicinity of some GO stations (such as Whitby GO Station) make it difficult for pedestrians to access stations.

Connections to municipal sidewalks; sometimes end at the GO station property line.

Station & Terminal Accessibility: General

The Canadian Transportation Agency has developed draft training materials to support people with disabilities, including sections on bus operations, customer service, terminals (ferry and bus). There may be relevant information for Metrolinx.

Suggestion to have markings on the ground to identify "accessible routes" in stations.

Having an easy to find, clear, designated space for customers to ask for assistance is helpful to customers with cognitive impairments.

Ensure adequate availability of seating in stations, designated waiting areas and street level shelters. Some individuals may need to take breaks throughout their journeys.

Do designers and engineers speak to customers to get feedback on design and accessibility?

Some GO train stations (such as Eglinton GO Station) are not yet accessible.

Only having one elevator creates challenges if an elevator is out of service (no redundancy).

Station & Terminal Accessibility: Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stations

Concerns raised about the gap between the LRT platform and vehicle, especially for customers who use mobility devices.

Would the contractor teams competing for LRT projects have the opportunity to meet with local Accessibility Advisory Committees?

When opportunities for input on station and stop designs are provided earlier in the process, it helps ensure more successful integration of accessible design.

Will a snow melt system be included in LRT platforms?

Concerns raised about escalators with glass balustrades; can be hard to navigate/locate for customers with low vision. Suggestion to make the bottom half of the railing opaque with the top half being glass

Station & Terminal Accessibility: Light Rail Transit (LRT) Stations

so as not to completely obstruct light going into the station.

Where will people cross the street and LRT tracks?

Training

Many customers have noticed big accessibility improvements to GO services (training, design, etc.) over the last several years.

Most operators provide friendly, helpful, and courteous service– they recognize regular customers and are happy to meet their needs.

Some front-line staff have poor attitudes when serving customers with disabilities.

There are occasional instances of operators avoiding picking up customers with disabilities.

Front-line staff are not currently equipped to effectively communicate with customers with hearing impairments (for example, lack of sign language training).

It seems that some bus drivers/staff can be more thorough in completing their pre-trip equipment check to ensure that seats near the designated accessibility area are working.

Suggestion to use mystery shoppers who have a disability to better demonstrate that front-line staff have the skills necessary to accommodate all customers.

Question regarding the type of training front line staff receive to support customers with different needs, including those with dementia. Staff training would be beneficial to identify who may have cognitive impairments and how to support them.

The Alzheimer's Society in Toronto offers free 2-hour staff training.

Better training, procedures and processes for staff at stations to communicate and manage when elevators are not working (UP stations given as example).

Vehicles: GO Buses

Could wheeled mobility aid securement be optional on buses?

It is helpful that digital signage on the new double decker buses shows the next few stops.

Announcing the next stop immediately after bus has left the previous stop and then repeated when approaching the stop is helpful.

Snow, ice, salt, grit sometimes get stuck in grooves next to ramps; can cause problems.

Suggest that more space be provided on buses to accommodate customers who have a guide dog. Customers usually place their guide dog underneath the seat, and sometimes the dog protrudes out from under the seat.

Another bus agency delineated a red and white space on the bus floor to indicate that the space is reserved for people with disabilities.

Vehicles: GO Trains

There is a lot of luggage and customers with strollers on the accessible railcar. This makes it difficult for customers with disabilities who need it the most.

It is challenging to monitor and enforce the use of accessible railcar (cannot ask about disabilities).

Public awareness campaigns to encourage proper behaviours can help.

Suggestion to include customers with disabilities as part of its' train derailment simulations because it is important for Metrolinx to understand the lived experiences of people with disabilities.

Vehicles: Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)

Recommendation to increase the number of flip-down seats.

Next-stop announcements inside some other vehicles (such as buses or trains) can be difficult to hear due to vehicular noise.

Consider including a push button in the priority seating area to call for assistance.