

Improving the Commuter Experience Across the GTA

Executive Summary - Team 2

The continued growth of the population of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) has led to significant urban sprawl, with residential areas being developed increasingly further from commercial centres. This pattern of growth strains the GTA's transportation systems, creating a need for increased reach, capacity, and overall efficiency. A process improvement team (PIT) was formed in order to address the resulting issues. The process vision is to transform Toronto transit, including both the TTC and GO, into a world class customer-centric transportation system by increasing customer satisfaction to 81% by 2020.

The PIT studied the As-Is state of the TTC and GO Transit systems in order to identify gaps in the system and develop recommendations to improve the commuter experience. Initially, the main objectives that the PIT set for this project were to reduce overall travel times, increase customer satisfaction, and reduce both intentional and unintentional fare evasions. For research purposes, the PIT used three data collection methods: field research, user interviews, and benchmarking against other transportation systems. Upon conducting research, the scope of the project was modified in order to focus more of the attention on issues related to user experience design. This includes creating a system that is easier to use, since difficulties of use create frustration and add time to the users overall travel process. As a result, they are deterred from using the system altogether. The selected focus for the project also aligns with the PIT's current skill set. Accessibility, wait times, and issues resulting from station construction were deemed as out of scope due to either high cost, lack of team skill set to address these problems, or that solutions were already well underway to address these problems.

The PIT's overall research yielded five major findings:

- The current implementation of PRESTO has low visibility of information and inconsistencies between different methods of transportation
- Unintentional and intentional fare evasion is easy to achieve on streetcars
- There is a lack of communication about how to use transfers and proof of payment
- Fare collection at TTC stations is poorly designed and structured
- Little amount of information and guidance available on transit systems

In order to address these issues, several recommendations were conceived by the PIT and categorized as either early wins or long term investments. Early wins include improving content on the subway platform display screens, splitting cash payment and ticket/token purchase lines,

making street level payment machines more salient, and modifying fare inspector schedules. A major long term investment includes the development of a unified TTC/GO mobile app, where riders can plan their trip, check their PRESTO balance and learn how to use the system. The PIT also recommends improving PRESTO responsiveness by allowing the user to see their balance remaining and transfer status on tap on the TTC. As well, a new payment strategy will be proposed to eventually have only one form of payment, either PRESTO or cash. The final long term investment proposed is the implementation of driverless trains to reduce human labour as well as an overall TTC informational signage overhaul to better design the system for ease of use. Implementing those recommendations outlined in the PIT's action plan would improve the overall commuter experience in the GTA and is expected to lead to an overall customer-centred culture shift.