Free parking for nearly 16,000 vehicles is available on the sytem, but despite this large number of spaces, parking lots are often strained to the limit. Over the year GO has expanded most of the lots to improve the situation and, to encourage commuters not to drive and park, has provided kiss & ride lanes for passenger drop-off and pick-up at most stations, as well as special access loops for buses only. These improvements, however, were not enough, and GO sought other ways to relieve parking lot congestion.

One solution was to give commuters and incentive to take local transit by integrating fares with local systems, letting passengers transfer between the local bus and the GO Train either free or at a considerable discount off the combined fare. The fare integration program has been an encouraging success in Brampton, Oakville, Mississauga, Burlington, and Pickering, and is available to any municipality which wants to take part.

GO fares are charged by distance, are much less than the cost of commuting by car, and yet do not undercut the prices set by local transit. The goal is to recover 65 per cent of the operating costs through farebox revenue, with the Province making up the balance and paying all the capital costs as well.

Like any transit system, GO has had its difficulties, especially with peak-period service. It faced its first capacity crisis in the mid-1970s, when it had become obvious that the Lakeshore rail line needed major improvements to cope with demand. A twofold plan was eventually reached: replacing the original single-level coaches with doubledeckers to increase capacity throughout the system, and introducing rail service between Milton and Toronto to ease the strain on the Lakeshore West.

Eighty innovative bi-level coaches designed by UTDC specially for GO were introduced in 1978 in the first stage of the plan. They were built in Ontario with passenger comfort a prime feature of the design and proved instantly popular with the commuting public. Each coach has a full upper deck, a first for commuter rail equipment in North America, and seats almost twice as many passengers as the single-level. The nucleus of the GO fleet is now bi-level with the acquisition of 71 new, second-generation coaches in 1983.

As for buses, today they not only connect with the GO Train on many routes but also link numerous communities throughout the GO Tansit service area. The network has been refined and stream-lined into major trunk corridors to bring service where it is most needed, with emphasis shifted from downtown Toronto to sub-urban subway terminuses to eliminate duplication with the Toronto Transit Commission and cut the high cost of operating downtown.

The fleet has expanded over the years and is over 12 times its original 19780 size of 15 buses. It includes the most modern highway coaches and the Orion buses designed and manufactured in Ontario.



Go Train goes