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July 9, 2012

Mr. Mike Finnegan
Chair, Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee
13-575 Thornton Road North
Oshawa, ON
L1J 8L5

Dear Mr. Finnegan:

Thank you for your letter dated May 25, 2012 and for sharing a mutual interest to provide accessible services for people with hearing loss.

We appreciate your suggestion to install real-time visual stop announcement systems on our accessible railcars first, before proceeding with the remainder of our fleet. Installing a sign system like this on all railcars is part of our long-term plan; however, this cannot be completed until we install and test a Central Computer Aided Dispatch and Automated Vehicle Location (CAD/AVL) system, which communicates the desired location information to the on-board signage and public address system.

Since our correspondence to the former Chair of your organization (Mr. Kinsley) on April 29, 2010, we experienced some unforeseen delays due to the complex nature of this overall communication initiative. Our current best assessment with respect to installing the CAD/AVL system on all of our buses and railcars is the fall of 2014. We anticipate that the installation of the real-time visual signs will require a further six months beyond these dates. The above timelines may be subject to further adjustments over the course of these projects, and are contingent upon the availability of sustainable funding. To speed up the installation process, this will occur across the entire fleet at the same time rather than the accessible railcar first.

In addition to our prior advice regarding travel on the accessible railcar where our Customer Service Ambassador can provide the required assistance, and referencing station names using highly visible and repeating signs along the entire length of the platform, we are pleased to offer another interim solution. Our GO Mobile application provides arrival alerts, as well as service schedule and Union Station departure information. The arrival alerts can be set for any station, and will alert audibly, or by vibrating, when the train is within approximately 200 meters of the desired station.

The PRESTO video clips in American Sign Language can be accessed on the prestocard.ca website at the following link: www.prestocard.ca/en/StaticContent/Videos/.

Please feel free to call Silvan Bruno at 416-869-3600 Ext. 5429 if you have any further questions.

Sincerely,



Gary McNeil
President, GO Transit

C: Durham Deaf Accessibility Committee – Don Kinsley, Veronica Bickle, Gordon Ryall, Beverley Dooley, Mirek Swiecicki, Kim Reid, David Hamen, Bryan Meany, Behishta Mushta and Robert Lang
Chris Kenopic, President and CEO, The Canadian Hearing Society
Maggie Doherty-Gilbert, Regional Director, The Canadian Hearing Society, Peterborough, York, Durham and City of Kawartha Lakes Regions
Rex Banks, Director, Hearing Health Care, The Canadian Hearing Society
Tracy MacCharles, MPP, Pickering-Scarborough-East
Joe Dickson, MPP, Ajax-Pickering
Christine Elliott, MPP, Whitby-Oshawa
Jerry Ouellette, MPP, Oshawa
John O'Toole, MPP, Durham
Bruce McCuaig, President and CEO, Metrolinx
Silvan Bruno; Senior Project Officer – GO Accessibility Program, Metrolinx