gtechna

Company on the Move

Since purchasing GoTransit in 2006, Metrolinx has invested significantly in the expansion of its transit system which serves the Metro and Greater Toronto area, providing transportation services to more than 7 million residents across 11,000 square kilometers - Canada's largest and among North America's most rapidly growing.

As a result, Metrolinx has created an award-winning transportation system that leverages technology and integrates it across multiple platforms, and it's all centered around a positivecustomer experience. The Metrolinx system touches many communities within the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area, and it has experienced unprecedented growth - the corporation is one of the largest parking space owners with over 70,000 spaces. The system sees an average of 250,000 riders per day on bus and rail.

250,000 *Riders Per Day*

70,00 *Parking Spaces*

7 Million *Residents in the Area*

11,000 *Square Kilometers*

With Growth Comes the Need for Change

With first- and last-mile parking solutions becoming an ever-growing necessity, the Metrolinx team realized they needed to upgrade the way they handled parking and ticket fare enforcement. They reached out to gtechna to help them find a system that could handle the influx of riders in a more timely and customer-friendly manner. The system needed to be cost-
effective and possess the necessary level of sophistication and configurability to accommodate Metrolinx's business rules.

Metrolinx employs 16 Customer Attendants, who have the main jobs of ticket fare inspection on commuter trains, monitoring rider conduct and parking compliance for its 3,621 lots and 9 structures.

Metrolinx also employs 70 Special Constables, who oversee rider safety.

When Customer Attendants would issue either a fare compliance or parking ticket, they were doing so by hand. This meant that handwriting could be illegible or tickets could easily be misplaced. This was not only an issue for officers as they were doing paperwork after their shift but also for the office clerks. And to make matters worse, double data entry was needed to input data into two systems for ticketing and fine escalation. This meant long shifts as well as the potential for inaccuracies, misfiled paperwork, and a paper trail that led nowhere.

Communication between team members was also difficult before gtechna's enforcement application was implemented on mobile phones. It was never certain exactly where one team member might be or who was in the vicinity when a call came through. An invaluable tool, the the team can now respond to dispatches via messaging, phone or email allowing them to respond in a unified and coordinated effort.

While all public parking is on a free first-come, first-serve basis, there are a few parking spaces that can be reserved by the month, requiring enforcement. Before implementing gtechna's enforcement application, the time it took to visually patrol the lots and issue manual tickets made it nearly impossible to cover enough ground.

Changes in Phases

Parking

After the Metrolinx team decided to implement gtechna technology, they began making changes in phases. Phase one consisted of streamlining the way the Customer Attendants issued parking tickets and checked on reserved parking spots. With faulty cameras and a manual ticket-writing method now retired, the team can easily check the database on their handheld device for the license plate number of the vehicle parked in the reserved parking spot to see if they are legitimate. If not, they can print out a ticket and not only have physical proof of that ticket but a record that goes straight to the central server, making the solution a much faster alternative to manual ticket issuance.

Transit Ridership and Ticket Fares

Along with parking tickets, ticket fare Notices of Violation are also automatically sent to the server for reporting. Customers who wish to request the Review and Resolution process--where they can dispute and appeal a ticket fare Notice of Violation--can now do so immediately after exiting the rail. Previously, the team would have to turn the disgruntled customer away and tell them to come back after they had a chance to receive that manual ticket from the issuing officer which first needed to be entered into the system. This has created a greater customer service experience for those who use Metrolinx transportation services since all information is automatically updated in real-time.

An Easier Way to Pay or Appeal Notices of Violation

gtechna also introduced the Automated Fine Reduction (AFR) system to help with automating ticket disputes. The AFR system is part of a transparent approach to increasing compliance. The system aims to remove practices that stifle the process of managing ticket fare enforcement and make it easier for transit riders to access ticket information, pay or appeal a ticket online. Once an appeal is requested, all information about the ticket is transmitted to the screening system. The system is made up of two components: screenings and courts. Screenings can occur on both the merits of the case and/or a review of the fine amount. Thankfully, with this new system, 99 percent of all matters can be resolved during the screening stage, leaving just a fraction to be addressed in courts.

This approach has created a systematic and transparent way to alleviate backups in the court system as well as turning an otherwise-painful process into an automated and efficient way to resolve transit matters justly. And all of this information is updated and centralized on the back-office ticket management server.

Customized Integration

Metrolinx required an enforcement solution that could be configured to be completely compatible with its homegrown set of laws governing conduct on Metrolinx properties. The solution handles multiple ticket types given directly to an individual or placed on a vehicle. In addition, the solution is able to interface between a data management system, permits system, multiple provincial records management systems similar to the DMV as well as court systems.

Screenings Module

In order to bring Metrolinx's screenings system into the fold, Metrolinx required a solution that effectively digitized and automated the entire review and hearings process. Reviews can be requested to dispute a ticket via, phone, email or in person. Previously, each request would be processed manually and then transcribed to a separate system for fine escalation or resolution. gtechna developed a complete screenings module eliminating the need for any manual transcription or redoubling of efforts.

Users can request to dispute their tickets through:

Phone

In Person

Email

"Breakpoints due to human error multiply each time a new system and new transcription is introduced; we're allowing for another permutation of that file and chances of errors are increased every step of the way" stated Jason Vandervinne, Manager, Compliance Services at Metrolinx. "What gtechna has done is create a global central system containing all key components of our Administrative Fee Program and where third-party integration has been required, an interface was built. There's simply been no further need for manual transcriptions; this is true and complete integration."

With a fully integrated enforcement solution in place, officers are able to dedicate more time to ensuring a quality experience for commuters instead of being bogged down with copious amounts of data entry. They can also help to minimize collateral damage inflicted by those who abuse the system which ultimately impacts fare rates, quality of service and overall passenger experience.

Partnering for Success

Metrolinx is focused on creating a positive customer experience, now and in the future. They have a unique situation because not only are they issuing tickets to parkers and riders, they're issuing tickets to their patrons. They want to ensure that they can take care of their patrons in the most efficient, respectable way possible. By partnering with gtechna, they've shown that they're future-focused and willing to do the work to make their system transparent and user-friendly. gtechna has been happy to not only help deliver the right technology, but to do their part in showing that choosing a customer-friendly solution creates a win-win scenario by benefiting the user, the organization, and the city.

METROLINX
An agency of the Government of Ontario

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The Future is #ParkingSmart

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