

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Jennifer Van der Valk
Chief Communications Officer (A)
Date: September 9, 2021
Re: **Communications Quarterly Report**

Recent Highlights

Several milestone announcements sent a positive progress message to our customers and to residents over the past quarter. The opening of the new Bay Concourse at Union Station, the return of service on all our routes, plus new trips to West Harbour GO in Hamilton and great leisure offerings like weekend trips to Niagara Falls, highlighted that our region is coming back strong as more and more Ontarians get vaccinated.

This exciting news for customers was bolstered by capital project progress, including the start of construction on the Scarborough Subway Extension, which signalled the first shovels in the ground for the Province's flagship subways program. The communications strategies supporting these offerings generated positive impressions, significant media interest and enthusiastic social media activity for Metrolinx.

New service, new stations and improved connectivity across the network is a result of years of hard work from our construction and operations teams along with consistent grassroots engagement by the community relations team to mitigate some of the disruption caused by construction in our communities.

The Communications team also worked to amplify our health and safety initiatives with internal and external communications tactics and proactive media relations to support the smooth rollout of the vaccine clinics at Guildwood GO, and the launch of two retrofitted GO-VAXX buses that are bringing COVID-19 vaccinations to communities across the region.

'We are here for you'

With the gradual opening of the province, the Communications division has resumed in-person community and stakeholder meetings, community offices have reopened, and the teams are back on the ground with active canvasses, walking tours and community pop-ups to build positive partnerships and improve the quality engagement. While the shift to digital platforms allowed us to connect over the past year, in person conversations simply cannot be beat.

Our community relations teams have been leading site walks along the Yonge North Subway Extension line, chatting with Stouffville corridor residents about service increases, hand-delivering flyers in Leslieville and Riverside to provide greater clarity and answers to community concerns, hosting virtual public meetings and more. Our Hamilton team re-engaged with the community about next steps for the Hamilton LRT. Meetings with local

officials and residents were held from Guelph to Niagara to Halton Hills to Aurora and across Toronto, as Metrolinx works to execute on its mandate to connect communities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe and beyond for generations to come.

Over 700 residents and businesses along the Ontario Line attended our four-part series of virtual Open Houses. From the west end all the way up to the north end of the line, we were able to discuss specific areas of interest with community members and provide the latest project updates.

We were here for our employees, too, as our Corporate Communications team continued to roll out plans for our return to the office and communicated with our frontline staff who have been out serving the public every day throughout the pandemic.

Summary of our engagement numbers for the period June 25 - September 9:

- **18** virtual public meetings with participation by more than 1,218 people
- **246** virtual stakeholder briefings with approximately 1,534 attendees
- **2,395** interactions related to Subway program, GO Expansion and Rapid Transit projects (correspondence, emails, phone calls)
- **96,537** e-blasts (construction notices & weekly/bi-weekly/monthly eblasts)
- **173,029** direct-to-home communications which include over 2000 doors knocked on in Peel, as well as canvasses conducted along the Ontario Line communities
- More than 90 Metrolinx News features, covering everything from service changes to updates on the Eglinton Crosstown and how all five of the province's priority transit projects are contributing to a stronger, more connected transit system.
- Metrolinx maintained a neutral to positive media tone over the quarter, fielding 358 media calls, a 5 decrease over the previous board period and approximately 15% decrease from the same period last year. Metrolinx was featured in 2,920 broadcast (TV and radio) news stories and 3,314 online news stories. This represents a 33% increase over the last quarter.
- The team also arranged nine interviews for the CEO.
- Metrolinx participated in four speaking engagements including a CEO presentation during a panel on public-private partnerships, and a discussion on how technology, in particular a virtual reality environment used for training and familiarization helped the new Union Station Bus Terminal program to go-live.
- We finalized the 2020-21 Metrolinx Annual Report with official transmission to the ministries of transportation and finance in late July.

Respectfully submitted,

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