

**To:** Metrolinx Board of Directors  
**From:** Mark Childs  
*Chief Marketing Officer*  
**Date:** December 2, 2021  
**Re:** Marketing Quarterly Update

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### **Executive Summary**

Throughout the summer and early fall the Marketing team continued to support ridership recovery by promoting leisure trips across the region. The effectiveness of our new GO Beyond brand campaign and promotions were highlighted by the success of the weekend e-ticket passes and the Niagara Falls combo ticket initiative, which encouraged travel to the region's main attractions. With the easing of COVID airline travel restrictions and the successful launch of the Keep Your Trip on Track integrated and multicultural campaign, UP Express ridership rebounded at the end of the summer.

We also hosted innovative customer experiential community events in our GO parking lots, pioneered a VIP GO bus experience with The Wine Rack and expanded Purolator kiosks/trucks at our GO stations. These new programs, reinstated service and personal health and safety reassurance have supported a customer satisfaction score of 84% year to date.

### **Ridership Performance**

This summer, we observed strong ridership growth due to the success of customer leisure travel including e-tickets and weekend pass offerings. Metrolinx has achieved a 23% ridership recovery compared to pre-COVID and 45% weekend ridership supported by the GO Beyond campaign and demand driven service frequencies. Niagara was the top performing GO Beyond destination, validating earlier research insights about customers' intention to return first to leisure travel. Working together with Niagara Falls visitor transportation, we offered a GO & WEGO Combo ticket from Union Station to Niagara Falls that included both GO train fare and the convenient WEGO hop-on, hop-off bus which reaches Niagara Park sites, hotels and other attractions. Labour Day ridership this year far exceeded that of years prior to the pandemic.

With the return of sporting events and concerts at full capacity, continued support of fall leisure travel and students returning to school, we expect to sustain ridership followed by an anticipated increase in ridership from January into the winter months as businesses and offices re-open and employees return to their workplaces.

UP Express has reached 24.9% of pre-COVID ridership after a summer ridership increase due to easing of airline travel restrictions. With increased road congestion, the new brand campaign reinforced UP Express as the reliable option to travel from Pearson Airport to downtown Toronto in just 25 minutes together with 30-minute reinstated service frequency. Fall ridership is forecast to increase aligned with

seasonality and airport traffic trends, heading into the holidays.

### **Customer Experience**

Through the summer we piloted several new fare and non-fare initiatives and partnerships to enhance the customer experience and journey.

Notably, the Arterra Wines GO VIP bus experience from Union Station Bus Terminal to the Niagara Estates winery in the Niagara region in September and October sold out weekend trips. The trips included wine tasting, lunch and a stop at the Wine Rack on the return to Toronto.

In recent months, we created community events and value-added services at our GO stations and parking lots. As part of our existing collaboration with Purolator we have installed a new Purolator kiosk at the Union Station Bus Terminal and a Purolator truck at Georgetown GO, allowing customers to return and ship items during the busy holiday season. Parking lot events have included a diverse range of community festivals including Tamifest at Guildwood GO, the Spooktacular Light Show at Meadowvale GO and Mount Joy GO, and the Milton Rotary Ribfest. Upcoming winter events include Journey into Enchantment at Meadowvale and Mount Joy GO, and Santa Story Time in the Skywalk.

Through innovative advertising assets including digital screens at GO stations and billboards along the GO network, and the new GO Wi-Fi Plus on-board portal, we are meeting the needs of regional, national and Metrolinx brands as they plan their media to bring marketing campaigns to life with wider audiences.

With the summer and early fall ridership recovery as a foundation, we turn our focus to meet the winter leisure travel needs of customers and returning business partners across the region. GO, UP and PRESTO App brand campaigns will continue to drive ridership demand and a new campaign for Metrolinx will bring to life resident benefits for our capital builds, all with integrated plans to reach multicultural audiences. Existing and new partnerships will continue to support destination travel and enhance customer satisfaction, including the installation of Shoppers Drug Mart vending machines at Union Station Bus Terminal, Burlington GO and Oshawa GO in early December.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Childs

*Chief Marketing Officer*