

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Jamie Robinson
Acting Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer
Date: June 27, 2019
Re: **Communications & Public Affairs Quarterly Report**
February 7, 2019 to June 27, 2019

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Recent Highlights

- The Whitby GO Rail Facility was featured as part of Doors Open Whitby on May 4th, and the Eglinton Crosstown LRT project hosted a Doors Open Toronto event on Saturday May, 25th. Together, more than 5,000 people attended these events.



Doors Open Toronto visitors at the Eglinton Crosstown Maintenance and Storage Facility

- The Metrolinx blog was rebranded as *Metrolinx News* and hit a number of significant milestones in the last quarter. There were 112 original stories posted during the reporting period and more than 40,000 views logged in May 2019 – a 64% increase over February’s 24,299 views.

We continue to execute a robust engagement strategy to ensure proactive outreach to employees, residents, businesses and stakeholders.

Here are our engagement numbers since February:

- 13 public meetings
- 274 stakeholder briefings
- 1,725 interactions related to GO Expansion & Rapid Transit projects (including emails, phone calls and walk-ins)
- 329 e-blasts
- 338,631 direct-to-home outreach
- 112 blog posts



Community Relations

- Our teams proactively engaged communities in project areas throughout the



Finch West LRT information booth

quarter. The Finch West community relations team hosted seven pop-up information booths in the Rexdale, Albion, Jane/Finch and Thistletown areas in April. Together with project constructor Mosaic, the team also hosted three open houses at Yorkgate Mall, St. Wilfrid Catholic School and Northwood Community Centre.

- With several projects rolling out under the GO Expansion program, the community relations team continued

engagement with stakeholders and communities along the rail corridors. A Bowmanville expansion site tour took place on April 8th with Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster, local Durham Mayors and the Regional Chair, focused on economic development in the region.

- Safety remains a key message in all communications and on May 22nd, a rail crossing safety pop-up was held at Old Cummer GO Station in collaboration with Transit Safety and Station Operations East. Other safety education initiatives continue across the region in partnership with Operation Lifesaver.
- With a priority on building stronger stakeholder partnerships, an Indigenous Relations Unit was established in March and will be working primarily through the Community Relations & Communications unit.
- Community engagement continued with the GO Expansion team participating in the Agincourt Village Community Association Clean-up in April, while the Finch West team took part in the Toronto Police 31 Division Open House and Barbecue, engaging more than 200 people who visited the Finch West LRT booth during this June 1st event.

Communications Planning

- We executed communications plans and coordinated joint announcements with MTO related to April and June service changes, the Kids GO Free initiative and the implementation of lower GO Transit base fares.

Stakeholder Relations

- The first two in a series of regional Ask Metrolinx public town halls took place in Kitchener on March 4th and in Whitby on May 2nd. In Kitchener, more than 150 people attended in person with another 50 participating online through the Metrolinx Engage live streaming platform. In Whitby, more than 140 people attended with more than 60 others tuning in online.

- We supported two high-profile speaking engagements: Stephanie Davies, Executive Vice President for GO Expansion, presented at an Ontario Public Works Association event marking International Women’s Day on March 8th, and Phil Verster addressed the Empire Club on May 2nd, where he outlined how Metrolinx is delivering new transit and the scope of our capital infrastructure projects across the network.



Phil Verster addresses the Empire Club

Media Relations and Newsroom

- From February to June, we received 692 media calls. Areas of interest were the TTC subway upload, the unveiling of the Ontario Line plans, as well as the announcement of lower base GO Transit fares. For the second quarter in a row, Crosstown construction progress and vehicles have been topics of interest. Earlier this quarter, the Kids GO Free initiative and the promotional video for the GO Bus at the Toronto Autoshow generated positive media.
- There was high interest from regional media in the two Ask Metrolinx town halls (Kitchener and Whitby), which continue to build excitement for new service throughout the GTHA.
- There was great media interest and positive coverage related to the Toronto Raptors making it to the NBA Finals. With the central hub for GO rail and bus service near all the action at Union Station, the media team has been proactively delivering key messages to reflect Metrolinx’s commitment to safety and customer service.
- Among the most popular features on *Metrolinx News* have been the periodic updating of the detailed GO ridership map, as well as news of service and fare changes.

NEWS No Serious Injuries Following Vehicle Fire on the 401 in Milton

Big Changes are Coming to the Burlington Pedestrian Bridge

by Paige Petrovsky on April 19, 2019
in Burlington, News

Like 127 Share Tweet

 A photograph showing a large, green metal pedestrian bridge under construction. The bridge has a complex, multi-level structure with many beams and supports. It is situated outdoors, with trees and a building visible in the background.

A recent Metrolinx [blog post](#), written by Nitish Bissonauth, Metrolinx bilingual spokesperson, media relations and issues specialist, has revealed that some big changes are coming to the Burlington pedestrian bridge.



A behind-the-scenes look at tunneling taking place underneath Avenue Station on the Crosstown.

- Behind-the-scenes stories have also done well, including images and details from our series on Crosstown progress, profiling the work at every station along the line. That series ran throughout April and May.

- Twitter and Facebook generate high numbers of referrals to *Metrolinx News* and we expect continued growth in audience engagement. Media regularly contact us about our

stories, and sometimes take them directly from our site. A significant portion of *Metrolinx News* readership is Metrolinx staff, reflecting our efforts to share our stories internally as well as with our customers and the public.

Internal Communications

- We are continuing to improve communication within Metrolinx to support greater employee engagement. An internal communications survey was conducted through various channels to help identify preferred modes of communication amongst staff. The team recently concluded a two-week roadshow to drive participation in the survey.
- Yammer subscriptions have increased to 2,528, a 46% increase since our last reporting period.
- We developed a communications strategy for senior management to roll out the organization's 2019-20 Strategic Objectives.
- We continued to work with Human Resources to support engaging and effective communication to employees on a number of initiatives, including new name badges for all frontline staff and executives, implementation of a Diversity and Inclusion calendar of events, and a recognition ceremony for employees living the Customer and Safety Charter Promises.



Respectfully submitted,

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