

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors

From: Jennifer Van der Valk
Chief Communications Officer (A)

Date: March 25, 2021

Re: **Communications Quarterly Report**
November 27, 2020 to March 25, 2021

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Recent Highlights

The Communications division is transforming to better serve the community and support delivery of our rapidly growing Capital Program. To enable a more seamless and connected customer experience with the neighbourhoods we serve, we have developed a 'We Are Here For You' campaign so our residents know who to contact when they have a question or concerns.

Though the pandemic has changed the way we interact and engage with residents, stakeholders, staff and media, we continue to connect through virtual outreach, correspondence and other channels to ensure we are providing timely and accurate information and are accessible to our communities and audiences.

Building trust and collaborative partnerships

Our community relations team continues to engage with the neighbourhoods they serve through positive partnerships and initiatives including:

- a joint communication strategy developed with the City of Guelph for the relocation of Locomotive 6167 from Guelph Central Station to John Galt Park in November 2020
- improved relations with tenants and stakeholders along the former Hamilton LRT corridor. Demolition works continue in the area, and through proactive communication, there have been fewer complaints and queries.

Our community engagement efforts also included:

- 23 virtual public meetings with participation by more than 6,816 people
- 350 virtual stakeholder briefings with approximately 2,710 attendees
- 2,663 interactions related to the Subway program, GO Expansion & Rapid Transit projects (correspondence, emails, phone calls)
- 347 e-blasts (construction notices & weekly/bi-weekly/monthly eblasts)
- 157,001 direct-to-home communications

Growing our digital reach

Metrolinx News continues to grow as communities, riders and the media look for stories that explain how progress is being made on our projects and services.

- Search is now driving traffic, as Google search has passed all other referrers - including Twitter and our Metrolinx.com homepage - bringing more viewers to Metrolinx News.
- Metrolinx News produced 123 features during the period.

Proactive and responsive communications and media relations

Metrolinx has a great progress story to tell, and the last quarter included many major events.

- We planned communication strategies for the December 5 launch of the Union Station GO Bus Terminal, January GO and UP Express service changes, and new PRESTO payment devices and contactless payment on UP Express.
- The media relations team answered 505 media calls, which is an increase of 13% over the previous reporting period. Additionally, for the reporting period, Metrolinx was featured in 1,318 broadcast (TV and radio) news stories and 1,830 online news stories.
- The team's media proactive and transparent strategy has positioned Metrolinx as a leader in our response to the pandemic, ensuring balanced media coverage.
- We received significant media coverage of the completion of the Kipling Mobility Hub and Ontario Line progress.
- Communications and engagement internally were focused primarily on COVID-19 safety information, available employee support resources and supporting frequent touchpoints with employees on the frontlines and those working remotely.
- The Communications team led March's CEO Town Hall, and more than 2,200 employees tuned in to see the live streamed video and question-and-answer session.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Van der Valk
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