

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors  
From: Jamie Robinson, *Acting Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer*  
Date: December 6, 2018  
Re: **Communications & Public Affairs Quarterly Update**

---

Our proactive outreach strategy to inform and engage residents, businesses and stakeholders about our projects resulted in lots of activity through the fall.

While we continue to talk about the benefits transit expansion will bring to communities throughout the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, we're taking a different approach in Hamilton by letting community leaders, residents and business owners – like Kerry Jarvi - share why they're excited for future transit. Launched in September, the Hamilton LRT Community Profile Series captures a candid photo and a simple quote in support of the project that is shared over Twitter and can be repurposed across multiple channels. This ongoing initiative speaks to the diverse voices and priorities of Hamiltonians as the city grows and transit is enhanced with the future LRT. We've also profiled Anthony Frisina, Community Producer of Above and Beyond, Mohawk College employee, and



advocate for inclusion and accessibility; Kristin Archer of I Heart Hamilton and CFMU radio personality; and Dr. Antonio Paez, Associate Professor in the School of Geography and Earth Sciences at McMaster University. The Hamilton-based band Arkells and CFL football team the Hamilton Tiger Cats have also voiced their support of the Hamilton LRT project.

## Engagement

(since September 15)

- 34 public meetings
- 263 stakeholder briefings
- 1,998 correspondences
- 175 e-blasts
- 87,363 direct-to-home outreach

A unified approach to communicating with residents and stakeholders in Brampton and Mississauga on behalf of our various project outreach teams is helping to build confidence and trust in major GO projects and the Hurontario LRT construction. This coordinated effort resulted in Metrolinx speaking with one voice at Hurontario LRT open houses, 60+ events across Peel Region, presentations to local stakeholder organizations and briefings with newly elected MPPs along the Hurontario corridor. Leveraging the known and trusted GO Transit brand when talking about upcoming new construction projects has helped increase overall confidence in these

projects - especially the Hurontario LRT - by reminding residents in Peel Region that we're the same organization they've relied on to get to and from work daily.

We didn't let the end of summer slow our outreach activities down. Teams continued handing out materials and proactively talking to families about future projects. One of the bigger events saw the Community Relations, GO Expansion and Marketing teams attracting crowds at the 2018 Markham Agricultural Fair. The Metrolinx trailer was a big hit with eye-catching transit project information displays, paper trains, paper hats, buttons, phone cases, flyers, pens and rulers. Staff recorded more than 1,000 positive interactions with families, generating conversations about our services and project updates for GO Expansion.



The Community Relations team for the Finch West LRT proved people love our paper trains and conductor hats. Engaging with post-secondary students headed back to school this past September, we participated in Humber College's Service Fair and York University's Transportation Fair. Both post-secondary institutions are key stakeholders and highly supportive of the Finch West LRT project. This sentiment was reflected in the 100% positive interactions the team had with more than 400 students, who were excited to hear about Metrolinx's plans to improve transit connections to their schools.

The latest round of open houses are being held through November and December for the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and the Community Relations team continues to share construction progress and updates with local residents

Our engagement focus wasn't restricted to just future transit riders. The Stakeholder Relations team was busy coordinating outreach activities to new and re-elected Mayors, Councillors and Regional Chairs soon after the municipal elections in October. Introductory meetings and regular check-ins position Metrolinx to be on strong footing with our municipal elected stakeholders as the new term begins. To help leaders and staff feel engaged in these important developments, the team provided weekly municipal election campaign updates, summarizing Metrolinx and transit-related platform commitments and comments from candidates across the region, as well as results on election night.

### **Metrolinx Town Hall**

On September 26, we held another session of our 'Ask Metrolinx' public town hall series. Participants had the opportunity to ask our senior management team questions, in person or online.

### **September Session**

**91** Pre-submitted Qs  
**16** Qs answered in-person during the event  
**103** In-person & online participants

Sharing our great stories with external audiences continued and the highest-performing story to date on Metrolinx digital channels was the September piece profiling a GO Customer Service Ambassador making his way through “conductor school” to become a Commuter Train Operator. The number of engaging stories being shared on the Metrolinx digital channels continues to climb, along with the number of viewers interacting with the content. Another 40 blog posts went live and the month of October saw 10,000 views, a high for 2018.



Rapid Transit teams published social media content, from an Eglinton Crosstown LRT major project milestone - substantial completion of the Maintenance and Storage Facility - to Finch West LRT’s new [‘A Region United Spoken Word’ video](#). In total, we shared 287 tweets, 101 Facebook posts, 132 graphics on Instagram and eight videos on YouTube - generating almost 700,000 user engagements (views, likes, retweets, etc.) on our content.

The team supported announcements regarding:

- Our largest service increase in more than five years with 220 new trips per week added to the Lakeshore corridors.
- Completion of the Pickering pedestrian bridge and LED light installation
- Plans to partner with private developer Vandyk to build the new Mimico GO Station along with mixed-use development
- PRESTO media pitch
- Operation Lifesaver’s Rail Safety Week Launch

From July through to December, we saw a significant 27% increase in media calls over the same period in 2017. Key areas of interest included the change in provincial government, a new Minister of Transportation and the new Metrolinx Chair, and a significant increase in GO train service on the Lakeshore lines. Interest from community and regional media remains high as excitement builds for new service throughout the GTHA.

“Putting the Customer at the Heart of Transit,” the theme at November’s Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) Fall Conference and Transit Show, proved a perfect fit for the conference co-hosts, Metrolinx and the TTC. Phil Verster’s keynote speech and presentation to over 700 transit sector leaders and innovators from across North America focused on how “customers are the focus of everything we do,” contributing to the 3% increase in ridership Metrolinx has seen over the



past year. Members of Communications & Public Affairs in conjunction with Marketing and other teams worked together to help shape the conference and showcase Metrolinx's innovation and thought-leadership with speaking opportunities and tours.

Improving engagement and communication within Metrolinx continues to be a significant focus. Participation in the new workplace social media network has jumped dramatically, from 702 users at the end of September to 1,488 in late November. This represents a new way of working and communicating, and helps to reach non-desk based staff as it is accessible via any web-enabled mobile device. We also executed comprehensive communication strategies about important changes affecting staff, such as the new Fit for Duty Policy, a campaign to raise awareness of workplace discrimination and harassment prevention efforts, and new employee support programs to help achieve work-life balance.

Respectfully submitted,

Jamie Robinson

*Acting Chief Communications & Public Affairs Officer*

416-202-4632

jamie.robinson@metrolinx.com