

2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation Question and Answer Summary

Table of Contents

- 1.0 Purpose of the document2
- 2.0 Questions/Comments and Responses3
 - 2.1 Strollers.....3
 - 2.2 5A Coach and Priority Seating5
 - 2.3 Vulnerable Persons Registry6
 - 2.4 Customer Service Ambassadors (CSA) Training/Pet Policy in the 5A Coach7
 - 2.5 Accessibility Assist/Wayfinding at Stations7
 - 2.6 Elevator Access, Outages, and Service Disruptions11
 - 2.7 Service Expansion.....14
 - 2.8 Bus Stops15
 - 2.9 Neurodiversity and Mental Health.....16
 - 2.10 PRESTO16
 - 2.11 York Street Tunnel19
 - 2.12 Station Maps20
 - 2.13 Station Accessibility21
 - 2.14 Public Engagement/Feedback22
 - 2.15 Customer Experience During Construction23
 - 2.16 Getting Involved24
 - 2.17 Website Accessibility25
 - 2.18 Stations Transformation (Staff)26
 - 2.19 Track/Platform Signage27
 - 2.20 2SLGBTQIA+ Safety, Dignity, and Respect28
 - 2.21 Covid Measures29
 - 2.22 DS-02 Universal Design Standard30
 - 2.23 Medical Equipment Disposal31
 - 2.24 Accessibility for the (d)Deaf Community32
 - 2.25 Live Troubleshooting During the Meeting33
 - 2.26 Resource Links34
 - 2.27 Others35

1.0 Purpose of the document

This document compiles all questions submitted by the public before, during, or after the 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation. Opportunities to submit questions included:

- Submitting a question through the MS Teams Webinar registration form and through the Slido portal in advance of the meeting during the eight (8) week registration period;
- Asking a live question or submitting a live question through the Slido portal during the meeting;
- Submitting a question through Slido during the review period that followed the live event;
- Submitting or asking a question by calling, GO: 1-888-438-6646 or UP: 1-888-438-6687; and
- Submitting a question through accessibility@metrolinx.com

Please note that the opportunity to submit questions for the 2023 Virtual Accessibility Consultation closed October 13, 2023.

2.0 Questions/Comments and Responses

All comments, questions, and responses have been organized by theme below.

2.1 Strollers

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What are the updates on the GO train stroller accessibility policy? Strollers are still not able to access coach A5 when seats are occupied, and it is not possible to lift/fold strollers onto a regular coach.
- Looking for updates on those with strollers/wagons.

Response:

- Strollers and wagons are welcome on board all coaches and now this includes the accessibility coach. We recognize there has been a lot of discussion around the use of the accessibility coach in particular when it comes to strollers. And I do want to assure everybody that this is something that we are looking at very closely. We understand that there are competing needs, and in doing so in looking at all options, we are focusing on providing additional resources on our website that touches on the stroller policy. There is more to come on that, but in the meantime one of the things that we want to highlight as well when it comes to the accessibility coach is that it is a shared space and the occupancy is based on a first come first serve basis. Now, although strollers and wagons are allowed on the accessibility coach, we also encourage parents, individuals, anyone who might use a stroller if they are able to navigate the stairs on a bi-level coach to do so. So in terms of our strategy, we are looking for ways to find that right balance that meets everyone's needs. And in doing so, we are collecting customer feedback to determine how to best move forward with this. We also encourage, in addition to encouraging individuals to utilize the full length of the coach when boarding if possible. If there is a need to utilize that ramp, it is something that we will permit. Now if there is an individual who is looking to board the train and they are using a wheel mobility aid, the CSA will make an announcement if other passengers are willing to either relocate to another coach if possible or a different level if they are able to do so.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- How is feedback being collected on the stroller policy?

Response:

- All customer feedback specifically relating to the stroller policy is being collected and managed through the customer relations team. Customers have the ability to go online or contact the contact center and submit their feedback relating to their concerns, suggestions for improvement, et cetera. I do want to highlight though, as I'd mentioned earlier at the beginning of the meeting or at the beginning of the Q&A session, that we are looking at adding additional resources onto the website as well that touches on the strollers in the accessibility coach and our policy when it comes to that. Anyone looking to share their feedback is certainly encouraged to reach out to the customer relations team through the contact center.

2.2 5A Coach and Priority Seating

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Handicapped seating must be expanded & enforced by GO Transit personnel including security officers as necessary! More than one coach will be required with expanded services & ridership levels. No passengers with rolling luggage in accessible coaches.
- CSA should be allowed to request the 2 front seats on the accessibility coach be vacated for the use of a person w/ a mobility aid. While there may be a legitimate need to be on the coach, an ambulatory person does NOT need those spots that are especially beneficial for a mobility aid or guide dog.

Response:

- Our Customer Service Ambassadors (CSAs) work hard to ensure that all customers have a safe, comfortable, and accessible ride. If customers are in need of a seat, CSAs will make a general announcement for volunteers. In addition, for customers with disabilities that are able to negotiate the steps onto the other coaches, priority seating is available. We kindly request that the 5A coach and priority seating sections be kept for those who cannot use alternative seats and that those that are able to, please consider relocating to another seat. In terms of luggage, we cannot accommodate large amounts of luggage; however, customers are welcome to use the ramp during non-rush hour service.

2.3 Vulnerable Persons Registry

Submitted Question/Comment:

- York Region Police has a Vulnerable Persons Registry. Can Metrolinx transit vehicles be set up to receive alerts from YRP so that drivers & staff can be on the lookout for missing persons or Amber Alerts broadcast by the Police?
- York Region Police have a vulnerable person's registry. If someone in that database goes missing, York Region Police issues an alert to all police cruisers with a photo and profile of the person. Can Metrolinx work with York Region Police to integrate this into the transit system so operators can look out for a missing person?

Response:

- Metrolinx is committed to serving our community and since safety is our top priority, we work closely with all local authorities across the GTHA to assist with matters involving vulnerable persons. This includes notifications of missing persons and Amber alerts which are shared with all frontline staff.

2.4 Customer Service Ambassadors (CSA) Training/Pet Policy in the 5A Coach

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Will there be better enforcement of the accessibility car on go train I.e. better training for staff to ask those taking up space to move for those with disabilities. And enforcement of no Pets on accessibility car for the safety of service dogs.

Response:

- Our Customer Service Ambassadors (CSAs) receive extensive training when it comes to assisting customers with their mobility needs and are tasked with balancing everyone's requirements as best as possible. This includes making a general announcement to see if anyone is willing to give up their seat to accommodate another passenger. Regarding our Pet Policy, all dogs are welcome on the lower level of the Accessibility coach, and we ask that customers give priority to those with accessibility needs when bringing their pets onto this coach.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Make sure that the front seats of the 5A are available to people with mobility aids and service dogs.

Response:

- That is great feedback. We will share that with the group that is developing the content for the stroller policy.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Have Metrolinx staff received any training on how to interact with Deaf passengers? If not, are there plans to implement this?

Response:

- Metrolinx staff receive instruction on strategies to improve interactions with customers living with disabilities as part of their training. This includes Deaf or hard of hearing passengers. The training is based on the best practices as outlined by the Canadian Transportation Agency.

2.5 Accessibility Assist/Wayfinding at Stations

Submitted Question/Comment:

- How is Metrolinx ensuring safe and accessible service such as way-finding for blind passengers at transfer points, e.g. between Go bus and train and TTC or other local public transit?

Response:

- Metrolinx is committed to providing barrier-free access across our network. Customers can access our "Accessibility Assist" program through the Contact Centre if they require assistance at any of our staffed stations during station hours. Although we don't provide assistance outside of station grounds, we can coordinate a hand-off with other transit providers at various transfer points. Customers are encouraged to provide at least 48 hours notice so that we can schedule a staff member to complete the request. Additionally, we offer a Support Person program, where customers who require assistance can have a travel companion ride with them for free.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- First of all, thank you so much for informing us about the accessibility projects you are up to. My question today is around those with reduced mobility who aren't able to push elevator buttons. Is there a way to inform the staff your destination so that they can assist those with reduced mobility when they arrive at their destination?

Response:

- Thank you for the question. We have a program called Accessibility Assist available at staffed stations where you can call in advance, and somebody will meet you and help you with gaining access to the platform. The contact center works in partnership with station operations and our bus operations division to support accessibility requests. The preference is for customers to provide us with 48 hours notice. Again, that is a preference, but it's not required if we do receive a request within 24 hours or even less, we will make every attempt to accommodate that. But we want to make every effort and we want to ensure that we have staff on hand to provide the assistance at the time that it's needed. In reference to your question, yes, if their assistance is needed to access the elevator controls at a station during a customer's journey, we can certainly provide a staff member at to that particular station if it is a staffed station, provided it's during staffing hours. And we'll be able to ensure that the individual is there to meet the customer and meet you at the point that we've agreed on.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- So I'm a blind person traveling on the GO train the Lake Shore East line, and I just heard someone say that they've been audited for accessibility. As a blind person who's really, really blind, I go to work and going from union to Whitby, sometimes Oshawa, Pickering, you know, depending on where the assignment is from time to time. My biggest problem is that not knowing all the, not being familiar with all stations and especially when I need to transfer, there is just no way, there's nothing that assists a blind person to make that transfer point, like from the platform to the bus or even to the taxi or pickup, there's just nothing tactile, right, for me. And when I do ask for that wayfinding assistance, the one that was just referred to 48 hours, I've tried and tried and tried, whether with 48 or 24 or when I get on the train, it's 50% hit and miss that they will, like, they'll say, the call center will say yes, yes, we'll have somebody there and then nobody shows up, and I've been left on the platform. And I've called in several times to customer service. And my request is even if you guys can't provide that, call me back, right? Let me know. So, I'm just saying for blind people who are traveling by themselves, I can't haul somebody to go to work with me. What is there so that there can be more independence access at those transfer points? I'm thinking even Finch to change to Vaughn bus, it's just so difficult and this wayfinding assistance is not consistent, not reliable, and I hate to be stranded on the platform. Thanks.

Response:

- Thank you very much for your comment. It's definitely something that we are aware of and we are looking into ways to resolve. It's not okay that you're left there without assistance, that's for sure. So, we are working on the Accessibility Assist Program and putting some more rigor into it and more consistency on how the program is delivered. Also, to your point, staff should give you a call back if somebody's delayed in traffic or if there's a reason why they're going to miss you at that particular component. We are having ongoing discussion to find an appropriate solution that meets the needs of all our customers. So we are definitely taking all of these comments, and questions to share with our larger team at Metrolinx and we will make sure that we have a good response to this in the future. So Yin, please stay tuned, we anticipate to have more on the Accessibility Assist Program shortly.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I guess you'd call it Accessibility Assist now, I used to call it wayfinding. But my trick is always when you get on the GO train, you talk to the customer service rep and he calls ahead. But I am noticing changes at union maybe hopefully for the better, but I'm noticing a lot of waiting for me to get someone to come to the platform for assistance. So yeah, I'm hoping that you do look it after that issue because it is a big issue. It used to be an excellent service, but I feel it's dwindled and hopefully that can be rectified and

advertised more. It's the best kept secret in town, this accessibility services. I hope not. It should be for all stations, not just union.

Response:

- Thank you very much for your feedback. Yes, the customer service ambassador (CSA) is another channel that customers can use to make a request for assistance, whether it be wayfinding, et cetera. The only thing that I would like to highlight, it's important to keep in mind that one of the reasons why we encourage customers to provide us with 48 hours notice so that we can ensure that we have staff on hand to meet you at the time of your travel so that you're not waiting around. When you do make the request while on route, you could potentially run into an increased wait time, you might not get serviced as soon as you arrive at the station. Now this doesn't mean that you can't utilize that channel, but it's something important that I thought I should highlight. Now with that in mind, this is great feedback because we are in the process of building out the Accessibility Assist Program and there are quite several new features that we are excited about sharing with the public.

2.6 Elevator Access, Outages, and Service Disruptions

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I'm in a wheelchair. Is there a way go down to platform early. Everyone goes past you as soon as doors of elevator open. You wait on next elevator. I don't want to run over anyone but if I don't make the train Access trans is disrupted & cancelled.

Response:

- Customers who are disembarking at Union, will hear an announcement on the train as it's pulling into the station stating, "Please let passengers using mobility aids get on the elevator first". For those who are trying to board our trains at Union, you can approach a member of our staff in the York Concourse to ask for platform information before it's displayed on the departure board. Please note, we encourage customers to use the elevators in the York Concourse at Union Station, due to limited elevator access in the Bay Concourse.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Despite repeated complaints about non-operating elevators at the Oakville Go station, I have never received an answer as to when or if they will be repaired. This has been a continuing issue for more than two years.

Response:

- We are committed to providing an inclusive and barrier-free travel experience to all of our customers. Our teams conduct routine inspections of all elevators across our network. However, there may be times that an unexpected outage occurs, at which point we will have a technician sent out immediately to address the issue so the elevator can be placed back in service as soon as possible. Oakville GO has experienced three major elevator outages over the past three years that lasted for an extended period of time. The issues that were identified in each incident have since been addressed. We encourage customers to sign up for On The GO Alerts to stay in the know about GO Transit service updates which includes elevator outage notifications.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Are any plans to address issues with elevator downtime at stations, specifically noted for Lakeshore West Line? When an elevator is not available to provide accessibility, the only solution provided is to go to a different station, which can be an inconvenience and add travel time.

Response:

- Thank you. Yes, we recognize the complexities of the elevators currently being utilized and we do want to acknowledge that our teams do conduct routine inspections of all the elevators across the network. Lakeshore West is one that we analyze consistently. There have been times where outages occur, we do send technicians out as soon as we are made aware of the elevator outages. We are hoping that we can resolve the issues in a faster methodology, and we are working with our suppliers to achieve a faster response time. We do encourage customers to sign up with "On the Go Alerts" to stay in the know about the GO Transit service updates. That will include elevator outages and construction notifications. So, if you are regularly frequenting a station, you can sign up for those news alerts so that you get the information as fast as we can give it to you. The information regarding elevator outages is also available on our website for those that are unable to access on the GO alerts. <https://onthegoalerts.gotransit.com/>

Submitted Question/Comment:

- When there are sudden service disruptions, right, and that has happened to me three times where the train is somehow out of order, everybody has to get off and go to a bus or another train, or once something happened on the highway so all the Durham buses are not coming to the GO station and they were just not, once there was a lot of service, I mean, staff around to assist, but I'm wondering what is in place when at the GO Station and the buses are not necessarily GO buses, they're Durham buses or but there's no announcement, no staff assisting to say where should you go or there are no buses for the next two hours. Like what goes into that, what you guys are talking about, sort of the linking with the municipal transit? I'm not talking about specialized transit, I'm just saying some kind of connection so that if there is service disruption, information goes out to passengers with disabilities. Yeah, 'cause it happened three times in the last year and I just find that when there's no information and it's very disturbing. Yeah, what's been planned or what can be planned?

Response:

- Anytime a major service disruption takes place, we will attempt to coordinate with other local transit providers. As an example, we do have a TTC protocol in place, which

is what we refer to internally. If there is a service disruption on our GO Transit, any on our GO Transit line that is within close proximity to a TTC connection we will issue on-the-GO notifications through on-the-GO alerts. That's one way of receiving the updates. There will also be announcements made. We will also leverage, depending on the timing, the local media outlets as well. But ultimately, I would, our recommendation is that you sign up for on-the-Go alerts and if we need to initiate the supportive protocol, then a notification would be sent to you through that channel. But again, we will also leverage banners on our website, announcements on the trains, buses at stations.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- A practical scenario. If an able-bodied person gets invited last minute to dinner with some friends, it is very simple for them to hop on transit. It is unfortunate that those with disabilities are not afforded that level of autonomy with the practises you currently have in place.

Response:

- Metrolinx is committed to providing a barrier free service. To that end, our bus and rail fleets are fully accessible, along with almost every station in our network. Efforts are ongoing to improve those stations that are currently not accessible. We also offer additional supports through our Passenger Assist process that is managed through the Contact Centre and wayfinding assistance on demand at all of our staffed stations. If a specific area of concern is identified, we will investigate it to identify opportunities for improvement.

2.7 Service Expansion

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I live in the blue Mountains and need accessible transportation to Barrie. How about a daily bus from Owen Sound to Barrie?

Response:

- GO Transit is a regional public transit service provider for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, with routes extending to communities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Our service area is prescribed and mandated by the province through the Metrolinx Act. We conducted an analysis in 2020 looking into a potential service between Owen Sound and Barrie and determined service was not recommended due to duplication with emerging local municipal services and the proposal's inconsistency with our strategic policy direction as per the 10 Year Bus Strategy and 2041 Regional Transportation Plan. Grey Transit, Collingwood Transit and Simcoe County Transit provide local transit options in the area that customers may want to consider when making the journey between the Blue Mountains and Barrie.

2.8 Bus Stops

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What are Metrolinx plans and timelines to make all bus stops accessible?

Response:

- Metrolinx is committed to providing barrier-free access across our network to ensure we meet all standards for Accessibilities for Ontario with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements. We are in the midst of upgrading and renovating the infrastructure across our network, which includes our bus stops, for the AODA deadline of 2025.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What are the plans to make sure all bus stops are accessible?

Response:

- Metrolinx is committed to providing barrier free access across our network to ensure we meet all the standards for accessibility for Ontario with disabilities Act. Approximately 190 additional bus stops served by GO transit were made accessible by the end of 2021, and we continue making progress, upgrading and renovating the infrastructure across our network, which includes our bus stops and station environments.

2.9 Neurodiversity and Mental Health

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I was wondering if Metrolinx will be getting a system advising Special Constables and other CSR's that a person is on the Spectrum? I think that would be very beneficial in case we have an emergency.
- Does Metrolinx consider mental health an area of accessibility in which they make accommodation and hold awareness?

Response:

- Yes, Metrolinx supports customers on the Autism Spectrum and customers with mental illness. One way we are doing this is by launching the Hidden Disability Sunflower program later this Fall. Once launched, customers with a Hidden Disability can discretely signal to staff that they might need help or assistance by wearing a sunflower pin or lanyard. Our staff will be trained to identify the Sunflower and may ask what they can do to help. These pins will be available to be picked up at Union Station by asking a staff member or by mail by emailing accessibility@metrolinx.com.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Specifically for the Sunflower program, will people with invisible disabilities be able to get a sticker for their PRESTO card similar to the disability sticker available a few years back? And will the Sunflower be recognized or known by municipal public transit agencies?

Response:

- The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower program is an international program that came from the United Kingdom (UK). It originated at Gatwick Airport and is widely adopted in the UK. However, we are the first public transit agency in our region in the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area to have adopted it, but we are sharing our participation with the program with others and advising other partners in municipal transit. And at this point, I don't believe there is a sticker that you can put onto your PRESTO card, however, there is a pin that Metrolinx will be distributing, or you can also use a lanyard or a card that has been provided from another organization.

2.10 PRESTO

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I would like to know if the Presto machines on GO buses will be moved to a safer and more accessible location. The present location on the low floor buses makes it difficult for wheelchair users and those who have limited use on their arms to tap on.
- Can the PRESTO machines on the GO buses be moved to a safer or more accessible location. The present location on low floor buses make it difficult for wheelchair users and those who have limited use on their arms to tap on.

Response:

- There are currently no plans to change the location on the GO buses. We're sorry to hear that the current location is challenging for you. However, in the busy boarding area of a bus, there are no easy solutions. A lot of factors are considered when selecting the best location for the PRESTO devices on a bus, including:
 - ensuring that devices are installed at a height that is relatively easy to reach from both a standing and seated position,
 - ensuring the loading area can be easily maneuvered, including by customers using mobility devices,
 - keeping grab bars clear,
 - reducing protrusions, and
 - keeping driver sight lines clear (e.g. ability to see their side mirrors).

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I just wanted to comment on the question that was just asked and the response, I have the same problem getting on, I'm in a manual wheelchair, I'm a double amputee above the knee and I just, my balance, I find it extremely difficult to tap on where they are, where the PRESTO machine is now because depending on the, like the angle of the ramp, sometimes that area isn't level. It's very difficult and you have a tendency to roll. I don't see why you can't have more than one place to tap on. You've got the one there that's on the left as soon as you get on the bus, why not have another one down lower somewhere on the right and have it clearly marked so that people have an option instead of forcing people that don't have the use of one hand to try and reach across, which is much more dangerous? You know, you're going to end up with somebody getting hurt and then that's going to be really bad. It's going to be bad for everybody. Like it wouldn't be hard to have a second place to tap on for people with disabilities that aren't able to use the main one, and make sure that it's like clearly marked 'cause someone's going to get hurt one day or just stop riding and that kind of counter to the whole endeavor to make things accessible.

Response:

- We can definitely take that back and look into future placements of devices, and the possibility of providing a more accessible one for individuals that cannot tap on the higher ones.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Two questions, one on the PRESTO Card. With the PRESTO, I'm very honored to have, is it still in place if I have a disability, I can have someone accompany me. My second question is seniors we get lower rates, which is great. Should be advertised more. Also, now you got the visa or your debit card, is that applicable to the visa or the credit card or debit card? Being disabled, having a companion and or being a senior?

Response:

- I will say that we welcome you to travel with the support person. The support person travels free of charge, and that is across any payment method that you would use. So please continue to travel with the support person as you feel appropriate for yourself. Regarding the senior concession for debit or credit, it does not apply, it only applies for the PRESTO card. So, with your PRESTO card, you do get that discount. Also just adding to the support person, if you do not have it yet, I believe there are some stickers that can be provided from Union Station that you can put on the PRESTO card so you can show that whenever you're traveling with the support person on GO Transit.

2.11 York Street Tunnel

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Re: York Street tunnel (west). I have RP (loss of peripheral/poor vision in low light/dark areas). This area doesn't seem to comply with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. I'm often anxious when using GO trains/making my way to the UP.

Response:

- Thank you for your comment, the York Street tunnel teamways are owned and operated by the City of Toronto division of Union Station. If you are able, we suggest that you express your concern by submitting a claim to the City of Toronto online at <https://www.toronto.ca/city-government/accountability-operations-customer-service/>

2.12 Station Maps

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Are there plans to add maps of each station to the website? It is very helpful when planning a trip to know how the station is laid out (location of elevators, distances between the train platforms and bus platforms, etc.).

Response:

- Thank you for the question. There are no immediate plans to provide maps of each station, however, we agree that this would be a useful planning tool for customers and will review internally.

2.13 Station Accessibility

Submitted Question/Comment:

- When will it be possible for persons with reduced mobility to board trains at GO Long Branch? The gap between the platform and bottom step is huge. (A raised platform would help.)

Response:

- The station will undergo a complete reconstruction to support an accessible and enhanced customer experience at the station. Expected to be complete in 2026.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What plans do you have to make the Georgetown GO Station fully accessible?

Response:

- At Georgetown Go, Accessible boarding is currently provided from the north side of the station. Completion of a project to address accessible boarding on the south platform is expected by late 2026.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Are they making the transit system more accessible for those with handicaps? I find this could still be improved. Keep up the good work.

Response:

- Thank you for the acknowledgement. As highlighted during our presentation, we are currently conducting a third-party built environment accessibility audit to establish areas of improvement in the realm of accessibility and universal design for transit users. It is anticipated that the information gathered will inform future upgrades to increase access and use by transit users.

2.14 Public Engagement/Feedback

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Is there anything we can view or read prior to the meeting in order to be better prepared?

Response:

- This year we will be providing a review period following the meeting to give attendees and those that were unable to attend an opportunity to provide feedback/questions about the material presented. This can also be used by those attending the meeting to provide comment after the meeting. In the coming days the meeting recording will be posted to Metrolinx's YouTube channel for review. You will have until October 13, 2023 to submit a question through SLIDO as well as participate in the feedback survey.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Can there be an in-person presentation to ACPD in Hamilton Ontario?

Response:

- Yes, we will be in touch with ACPD to hold an in-person meeting.

Submitted Question/Comment:

- When consulting for the LRT in Hamilton will you be asking for input from the accessibility committee for the city?

Response:

- Yes, we will be in touch with ACPD as the project develops to discuss how to collaborate and engage with their feedback.

2.15 Customer Experience During Construction

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Why isn't there a Safety Guard at all Construction Sites to assist the public, especially when some of us are vision impaired or Blind? Not all of can see your signs.

Response:

- Customer safety and experience is a priority for Metrolinx. As a standard at GO service construction sites, a site Station Ambassador is provided to assist with directing pedestrians through the site before and after each construction phase change to help users get familiar with the new construction phase layout. Site Ambassadors are available daily to inform Customers of the upcoming construction and mitigations seven calendar days immediately prior to Site impact. For further support, Customers can access our "Accessibility Assist" program through the Contact Centre.

2.16 Getting Involved

Submitted Question/Comment:

- There are many inaccessibility issues with GO transit. What plan does Metrolinx have for resolving all issues and how can someone like me help GO / Metrolinx prioritize plans to resolve its accessibility issues?
- How can i get involved with accessibility at Metrolinx?

Response:

- An accessible travel experience for all transit users is a priority for us at Metrolinx. The information collected through the built environment accessibility audit and AccessNow reviews will help Metrolinx highlight improvements needed to achieve an accessible network. If you have an experience that you would like to highlight to us we welcome you to participate in our feedback survey that will be provided following the meeting.
- There are many ways to get involved in accessibility at Metrolinx. We recommend attendance at the annual Accessibility public meeting, including participation in the meeting Question and Answer period and follow-up survey. We also welcome you to apply to be a member of our Accessibility Advisory Committee (AAC) when we have a public call for members. Lastly, we welcome you to email us at accessibility@metrolinx.com if you have any comments or questions related to the accessibility of your transit journey.

2.17 Website Accessibility

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What level of WCAG do you aim to achieve on your website?

Response:

- Currently, the standard followed is WCAG 2.0 AA. Where we can, we aim to achieve AAA.

2.18 Stations Transformation (Staff)

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Does [Metrolinx] have a plan to provide more staff and ensure that each station has at least one employee?

Response:

- In anticipation of the increase in ridership due to GO Expansion project and to ensure all our customers' needs are met now and in the future we must utilize self-serve technology to make the best use of our resources. As a result, our resources are assigned to critical areas based on, but not limited to, ridership patterns. Stations with lower ridership levels remain unstaffed as all stations are supported by advanced accessible self-serve technology such as the ticket vending machines, for example.

2.19 Track/Platform Signage

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Will you be doing something about the signs on the tracks? Sometimes they don't say which side the train is coming on.

Response:

- Digital Departure Signs located at platform level and at platform access entry points confirm train arrival time, direction of travel and departing platform. If your Station has not been updated with digital departure signage yet, you can also access departing platform information on the Go Tracker web app <https://www.gotracker.ca/gotracker/web/>. We are interested in hearing more about your specific experience and the location where the platform sign was inaccurate. Please email us at accessibility@metrolinx.com.

2.20 2SLGBTQIA+ Safety, Dignity, and Respect

Submitted Question/Comment:

- What is being done to ensure the safety and comfort of our 2S LGBTQIA plus customers?
- What are we doing to make sure that transgender customers are treated with dignity and respect, including the use of non-gender specific terms, non-gendered washrooms, and sensitivity training for staff?

Response:

- We understand very much how important safety is for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We are striving to ensure the safety of all our customers. As some of you may know, earlier this year, Metrolinx launched the text 77777 ability from your cell phones that will immediately connect folks with support in multiple languages if you require help. We are always also open to hearing from customers and employees as well that may have suggestions. In terms of training, we are really committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion and building the capacity of our staff. All our staff receive training on equity, diversity and inclusion to ensure that they have an understanding of the issues and the ongoing challenges that are faced by equity deserving communities, including Trans folks and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. We know that that includes highlighting the importance of using inclusive language, and non-gendered language. Throughout the year, we provide tools and resources to all our staff. We host webinars and workshops to support our employees to learn and create greater awareness about the importance of gender identity and the use of pronouns. It is something that we know and we recognize and we're striving to do all the time, and we know we're not perfect, but we are working to advance equity for our transgender customers, and we'll continue to do so as well. In terms of washrooms, we are encouraging all people to use the washroom that they feel is most suitable to them, and they are absolutely welcome to do so. We also have single use washrooms that can be used in some of our locations as well.

2.21 Covid Measures

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I just wanted to know obviously you know, respiratory illnesses and Covid going around and all these things. If you could comment on what Metrolinx is doing for that. I know there was talk about removing the barriers between the seats and on the GO trains or that was one of the things that I heard of recently. So just wanted to know how we're continuing to keep persons with disabilities safe on public transit and in regards to all these different respiratory things we have going around right now.

Response:

- We are in the process of removing the barriers on our buses and trains. When it comes to ensuring the safety of our passengers, specifically those within the accessibility coach. While we don't have a mask mandate in place anymore, we still encourage passengers, especially during flu season, to wear a mask, if possible, continue to sanitize following sanitization practices as best as possible, especially if they are experiencing symptoms, but ultimately as well as public health is also encouraged, if you are experiencing symptoms and it is possible to stay at home, please do so. But when it comes to traveling on our service, yes, we will continue to encourage passengers to follow the guidelines that were previously set out by public health and when it comes to wearing masks and again the sanitization practices. Again, it's not a mandate that's in place anymore, but it is something that we'll continue to promote.

2.22 DS-02 Universal Design Standard

Submitted Question/Comment:

- This may have been addressed earlier, but if the team could comment on the DS02 universal design standards in terms of its current or next publication update. Also curious in what design standards in addition to B651-18 or 23 are at the front of our minds for the inclusive design team.

Response:

- We have recently updated the Metrolinx Universal Design Standard to reflect changes in legislation, technological advancement, and emerging best practices for transit design. We are hoping to have it published within the next few months, and we would also like to make sure that we share that information with you. As soon as we can get it posted on our website, we will share that news through a new newsletter that we're going to set up. The Metrolinx Universal Design Standard has been informed by validated data from academic research, industry standards for accessible transit and international and national standards such as the CSA B-651 Accessible Design for the Built Environment, and ISO Standards such as 21542 Building construction -- Accessibility and usability of the built environment and ISO 23599 – Assistive Products for Blind or Vision Impaired Persons – Tactile Walking Surface Indicators. With regards to our inclusive design practices and protocols, we are continuously looking around the globe at different better practices that have come up, and one that we'd like to note is the British standard developed for neurodiversity: Design for the mind – Neurodiversity and the built environment Guide. We are actively reviewing these documents to see how we can incorporate the solutions into our projects and plans so that we can move the dial even further. We will continue to review, and refer to better practices that are happening, not just across Canada but also globally, so that we can make better decisions and support the needs of our customers.

2.23 Medical Equipment Disposal

Submitted Question/Comment:

- I haven't taken transit in a while, but I am wondering if there are sharps bins available at stations for people who need to dispose of medical equipment for medication.

Response:

- Maintaining a clean and safe environment is a priority for us. To that end, we make sharps disposal bins available in staff areas upon request to encourage safe practices around the disposal of needles and other sharp objects. They are also available inside many of the washrooms throughout our network.

2.24 Accessibility for the (d)Deaf Community

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Are there any plans to expand accessibility features for specifically the Deaf community such as ASL notifications for example?

Response:

- Our goal is to provide passengers with timely and accurate information relating to our service regardless of disabilities. As part of our Digital Signage Improvement Plan, some additional features will be incorporated into the departure boards throughout our network to increase the information that can be conveniently accessed by those passengers who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

2.25 Live Troubleshooting During the Meeting

Submitted Question/Comment:

- At the moment about 40 attendees don't have access to mics or cameras. This is unfair.
- Why are those attending this meeting as an attendee unable to access our mic or camera and prevented from contributing?

Response:

- To keep background noise at a minimum mics and cameras are turned off until attendees raise their hand. If you would like to ask a question live, please raise your hand by clicking the raise hand icon, or typing CTRL-Shift-K. And if you are calling in on the phone, you can press *5. These directions are also displayed on screen. When it is your turn you will be granted access to unmuting and opening your camera. If for whatever reason that is still not working, please make use of the SLIDO which serves as a backup/alternative in anticipation of any technical issues.

2.26 Resource Links

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Are you going to be able to provide the Links that you've given so far? There was several that I missed. I think it was one that Sarah gave, one of her first ones that I missed. For the regional specialized transit working group, I believe there's a link for that one.

Response:

- We are going to publish the recording of this meeting as soon as we can after the meeting occurs. We will post any links to any resources that we have referenced or that we think might be helpful as you're navigating through using GO Transit and UP Express. We will also include them in the summary feedback that we produce at the end of the virtual consultation. Please refer to the following links:
 - [Regional Specialized Transit Working Group](#)
 - [AccessNow](#)
 - [The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program](#)
 - [On the GO Alerts](#)
 - [GO Tracker](#)
 - [Metrolinx Accessibility Email Distribution List](#)

2.27 Others

Submitted Question/Comment:

- Access from #10 and Burnhamthorpe.

Response:

- We received a comment during the registration period that reads as follows "Access from #10 and Burnhamthorpe". If this was your comment and you are able to provide some more context could you please "raise your hand" or please email accessibility@metrolinx.com with your question.