

**To:** Metrolinx Board of Directors  
**From:** Laura Cooke  
*Chief Communications Officer*  
**Date:** September 12, 2019  
**Re:** **Communications Quarterly Report**  
**June 28, 2019 to September 12, 2019**

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## Recommendation

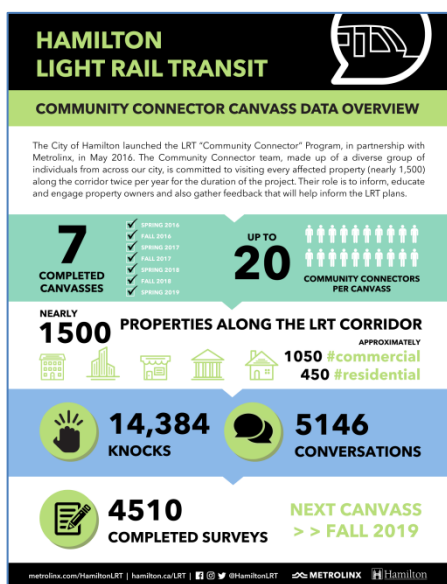
That this report be received for information.

## Recent Highlights

- The Communications division had a very active summer with participation by our community relations teams at events across the region including Canada Day celebrations, food festivals, meetings and transit-related presentations.
- Our *Metrolinx News* site broke another readership record in July, with more than 57,000 views of the news happening at and around Metrolinx.
- The media team provided communications support and handled media inquiries related to two high-profile issues: the business case for the Ontario Line and Metrolinx's



Metrolinx was well represented at this Canada Day pop-up event.



expression of interest offering for naming rights to our assets, properties and services.

- We shared great news that the closure of Leslie St. at Eglinton Ave. due to Crosstown LRT construction finished early, and re-opened two weeks ahead of schedule - earning positive coverage from several media outlets.
- In collaboration with our colleagues in Finance, we tabled the 2018-19 Metrolinx Annual Report with our Board in June and have since submitted it to the province.
- Community Connectors in Hamilton completed their seventh survey along the 14-km LRT corridor. More than 4,000 residents completed the survey, providing insight into the areas of interest for those impacted by the project.

- A video campaign for the Hurontario LRT earned close to 3 million impressions while on display at Square One Shopping Centre from June 24<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup>.

Here are our engagement numbers since June:

- 11 public meetings
- 181 stakeholder briefings
- 1138 interactions related to GO Expansion & Rapid Transit projects (including emails, phone calls and walk-ins)
- 189 e-blasts
- 103,353 direct-to-home communications
- 50 blog posts



GO Expansion & Crosstown teams at a pop-up in Maidavale

### Community Relations

Our teams proactively engaged communities in project areas throughout the quarter.



The Finch West LRT Team in the community with the Alstom vehicle mock-up

- The Toronto West community relations team engaged more than 600 people at several events throughout the summer months, including the Duke Eats Festival, Fusion of Taste Festival, Tastes and Sounds of Jane and Finch and the Black Creek Farm Festival. Community pop-ups were held at York Gate Mall, Rexdale Community Hub, Jane-Finch Mall, York Woods Library and Albion Library. The team also made a transit presentation at the Norfinch Care Community in July.

- Our teams partnered with TTC community relations staff to educate the public about the GO Expansion program, Crosstown construction, and the

TTC's Line 2 subway expansion program at a pop-up in Maidavale.

- In Halton region, teams attended the Dorval Crossing Civitan Farmers Market and the Burlington Central Library to share project updates.
- We partnered with Transit Safety, Customer Care and VIA Rail for public education about rail safety at the Chesterton Shores level crossing. The team engaged more than 230 children and adults at this August 2<sup>nd</sup> event. Other safety outreach activities were conducted at Streetsville Mermorial Park in Peel Region, and through participation in the Toronto Police Division 31 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Safety Day held on August 16<sup>th</sup>.



We partnered with VIA Rail for a safety exhibit

## Communications Planning

- Communications planning remains a critical function of the division to ensure clear messaging on announcements, proper timing and effective coordination of events with MTO and the various lead departments across Metrolinx. For this quarter, we executed communications plans and coordinated joint announcements with MTO in support of:
  - ground-breaking for the Highway 401/409 tunnel project, which once completed, will enable more service to Kitchener.
  - September GO Transit service changes.

## Stakeholder Relations

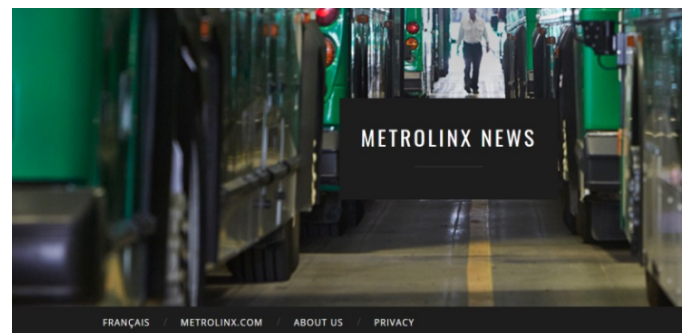
- On July 25<sup>th</sup>, Metrolinx hosted 22 provincial leaders from Vietnam for a presentation and tour of Union Station. The delegates were participating in a 10-day study program in Toronto and expressed interest in learning more about public-private partnerships and regional transit integration. A similar tour was conducted for a delegation from BNSF Railway which operates commuter services in Chicago, Seattle and New York. In addition to Union Station, this team also visited Metrolinx's Network Operations Centre and the Willowbrook rail maintenance facility.
- We hosted a career and motivational chat with a group of children aged 8 to 15 from the Trust 15 program, a community-based organization that promotes positive behaviour through mentoring and engagement with role models. Metrolinx CEO Phil Verster and Duwayne Williams, VP of Engineering and Asset Management, met with the children.



Phil addresses Trust 15 kids visiting Metrolinx for a career chat and Union Station tour.

## Media Relations and Newsroom

- From June to September, we received 380 media calls. Key areas of interest were the Ontario Line business case, a serious assault on one of our bus drivers, the introduction of our Safety team's new canine unit, and a major change in pedestrian routing at Union Station.
- There was considerable media interest in the effect of extreme weather on transit service, and positive



coverage from content developed by the media team to help explain why there can be slower train service during heat waves.

- Strong readership continues for *Metrolinx News*, despite an expected lull during summer months. Since the end of June we've produced 32 original pieces of content and logged more than 57,000 views. Among the most popular features were a photo-story explaining GO Transit customers' best pedestrian route at Union Station for accessing the interim TTC entrance, as well as a story on our partnership with ride-sharing firm Lyft. The Ontario Line business case story also attracted significant attention and views.

## Internal Communications

- On June 24<sup>th</sup>, the team coordinated the first ever Ask SMT Anything which gave employees an opportunity to engage with senior management on a wide range of issues. The meeting was live-streamed and got generally positive reviews from employees. There were 590 individual participants, and more than 300 questions were posted before and during the live-stream. Answers to all questions have now been shared with staff through digital channels and the team is planning the next event in what is foreseen to be a regular series.
- We developed communications strategies related to risk management, sustainability, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.
- The team is supporting the indigenous relations unit on a plan to build awareness and educate employees on the use of Land Acknowledgement. Earlier in June, several Metrolinx employees at one of our downtown Toronto work locations participated in an interactive blanket exercise, which simulated the story of Indigenous Peoples.
- We continued to work with Human Resources to craft engaging and effective communications to employees on a number of initiatives, including Pay for Performance and the rollout of new MyHR intranet functionalities. The team is also in the process of planning an overhaul to the Ideas@Work platform.



Metrolinx senior executives respond to questions from staff at the first Ask SMT Anything held in June.

Respectfully submitted,

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