



# METROLINX

An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Une agence du gouvernement de l'Ontario

**To:** Metrolinx Board of Directors  
**From:** Judy Pfeifer, *Vice President, Strategic Communications*  
**Date:** February 10, 2016  
**Re:** **Strategic Communications: December 2015 – February 2016**

---

## RECOMMENDATION

That this report be received for information.

## MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

### Strategic Communications: 2015 in Review

Expanding the public's understanding of Metrolinx's role, the projects the organization delivers, as well as engaging with the communities Metrolinx serves were the major focus points of 2015. This past year also saw the launch of several new communication platform and channels.

Strategic Communications launched a Regional Tour to engage and educate the public about our projects and mandate directly within communities across the region.

The team launched the [Metrolinx Engage](#), the Metrolinx digital platform to grow engagement across the region in support of projects and policies.

New stakeholder and corridor committees were established across the region to engage with elected officials, businesses, large public sector employers, students and social service agencies to advise on the implementation of the Regional Express Rail program.

These new initiatives build upon the ongoing work of ensuring public awareness of all milestones, media relations and stakeholder relations.

## MAJOR EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Crosstown Tour

In December, key stakeholders were invited to take a tour of the tunnel beneath Eglinton Avenue at the Allen Rd launch site. This gave the twelve participants an alternative perspective from the unavoidable impacts of roadwork above and tunnelling below. Beyond the media and local elected officials, notable attendees included a nearby resident and Business Improvement Area Chair, both of whom have felt an impact from the construction of the Crosstown project.

Participants posted tweets, photos, and videos of the tour, citing

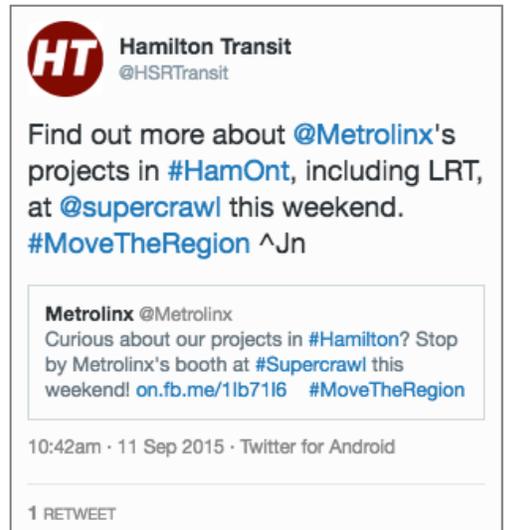


progress and expressing excitement for the project. TVO's Steve Paikin published a comprehensive [blog post](#) about his experience with videos and links to the Crosstown website.

### Regional Event Tour

The 2015 Regional Tour represented a first for Metrolinx; a corporately-coordinated grassroots outreach aimed at building awareness and trust by connecting the entire Metrolinx brand family and projects back to the regional plan.

The approach aimed to educate and encourage local engagement through a fun and family friendly activation in communities affected by current or upcoming transit projects. Staff spoke with over 116,000 visitors over 55 days at 13 unique festivals and events. Based on over 850 visitor surveys, respondents cited an increase in their positive understanding of Metrolinx from 65% to 95%.



### MEDIA & DIGITAL STRATEGY

Media Relations averaged 40-65 media calls per week this quarter and media impressions increased in spite of the holidays—up 15-20%. Stories often receive very broad coverage by major media as well as local media. We continued to use social media as a key channel with the public and stakeholders to keep them informed on transit projects. We had a solid performance this quarter, averaging 4,000 mentions across our social media channels.

### MARKETING & BRAND

A recently completed direct content initiative with the Toronto Star provided the organization with the opportunity to reach new audiences in a unique manner through six full-page editorial articles. Through personal stories and investigative reporting, these full-page pieces centered around the positive benefits – both at the personal and regional level – of a modern, efficient and integrated transportation network.

The work with Metro continued with 10 placements, ending with a [year in review](#).

**A LOOK BACK WHILE WE MOVE FORWARD**

*At Metrolinx, finding ways to help you spend more time living and less time commuting is at the heart of what we do every day.*

Here are just a few highlights from 2015.

**More GO kicked off 2015**  
Expansion plans for the Richmond Hill line gathered steam with the start of construction for the new, six-story GO Station.

**Stouffville Corridor Doubles up**  
Between Agincourt and Midland GO stations, we're adding more tracks for more service in the communities of Stouffville, Markham and Scarborough.

**Go places with Triplax**  
Triplax launched as the official online trip planner for the STPA. Launched in partnership with all 11 regional transit services, Triplax helps you find the best route from A to B or C, D and E!

**Ready, Set, GO!**  
A \$1.2-billion plan to transform existing GO commuter rail system was announced. The plan will provide electrified service with 15-minute frequencies in core areas—both directions, on weekdays, evenings and on weekends.

**Hamilton LRT Moves Forward**  
\$1 billion in funding was announced for the new Hamilton LRT which will link McMaster University, West Harbour GO and Queenston Canal. We welcome for these students to miss class!

**UP Express Opens UP**  
On June 8, Union Pearson Express (UP Express) opened for service, connecting a fast and reliable trip 25 minutes every 15 minutes between Union Station and Toronto Pearson. Now it connects you to the airport. You have to try it.

**Welcoming West Harbour GO**  
The new West Harbour GO Station opened in Hamilton on James Street North on time to provide transit service for key Pan Am events. Now it connects you to the rest of the region.

**Crosstown Goes West**  
The Kingston Crosstown LRT (Crosstown) began their journey westward towards King Street. The Crosstown will link Oshesha to Mount Pleasant with 20 stops, connections to buses, subway and GO, and carry up to 5,000 passengers per hour.

**viveNext Rapidway on Davis Drive**  
There's a new study on Davis Drive with stations from Yonge to the 404, creating a connected, shared downtown for Newmarket.

**Even More GO**  
If the added service on the Lakeshore East West and Union lines wasn't enough, GO introduced new evening weekday train trips between Brampton and Toronto and increased bus service to Pearson Airport.

**A New Home for GO Trains**  
The construction of a new maintenance facility in Durham region has started. The facility will service and store up to 25 GO buses, which means more reliable service for you.

**More PRESTO on TTC**  
You can already use PRESTO on fare payment card, across 11 transit systems, including 26 TTC bus routes. By year-end, PRESTO will also be welcomed on all checkout for on-board time and an easier commute.

**Digger Bikeshares**  
Thanks to a lot more wheels to go around after the announcement of a \$42 million partnership with the Toronto Parking Authority, this will double the size of the current Toronto network.

**Smart Connects**  
Commuters connected with the Smart Community program to explore new transit options, such as the benefits of taking transit, carpooling, cycling or teleworking.

**York Concourse to a GO**  
Metrolinx and the City of Toronto recently opened the newly renovated York Concourse at Union Station with 62,000-sq-ft of space, with a glowing glass atrium which was completed this summer.

**Hello World!**  
This summer marked the largest international sporting event in Canada's history. GO Transit offered special service to the 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games and our own historic ambassadors welcomed thousands of visitors.

**Humintario LRT 20 KM and 22 stops**  
Thanks to \$1.4 billion in funding, the Humintario LRT will connect Mississauga up to Brampton and more nice people faster than ever before.

**Opening** **Funding** **Service Expansion** **Milestones** **Starts**

**JAN** **FEB** **MAR** **APR** **MAY** **JUN** **JUL** **AUG** **SEP** **OCT** **NOV** **DEC**

**METROLINX**  
An Agency of the Government of Ontario

We're not done yet. Explore our plan to move the region forward at [metrolinx.com/moving-forward](http://metrolinx.com/moving-forward)

## COMMUNITY & STAKEHOLDER RELATIONS

### Regional Express Rail

Community relations and communications activities have continued along all corridors, including support for active construction on the Stouffville and Kitchener corridors and Transit Project Assessment Processes (TPAPs) underway for the Lakeshore East and Barrie Corridors. More than eight public meetings were held in November and December, as were a number of stakeholder meetings. Work is underway for a series of 14 regional open house meetings in the first quarter of 2016, as well as digital engagement and stakeholder outreach in support of the launch of the electrification, Lakeshore East, and Davenport TPAPs.

### Rapid Transit Projects

On the Crosstown project the team hosted two tunnel tours as well as 12 stakeholder meetings. This includes regular standing meetings with local stakeholders, including elected officials and Business Improvement Area(s) representatives. As the project prepares for long-term station construction, an additional recurring meeting has been added along the alignment, and the new partner, Crosslinx Transit Solutions, are participating in the meetings.

On the Finch West Project, the team invited 45,000 households and businesses along the corridor to three information meetings to share the reference concept design for the future stops, the maintenance and storage facility, and details on public realm elements.

Work has begun on communications and community relations activities for the Hamilton project. Recent meetings with the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce have helped inform the communications planning. Together with the City of Hamilton, we have established a communications protocol that was shared with the City Council's LRT Sub-Committee.

### Stakeholder Relations

The Stakeholder Relations team coordinated the second round of the Stakeholder Forum and the seven Corridor Committee meetings with over 100 stakeholders attending from across the GTHA. The focus was on providing an update on the progress along each of the corridors, an update on electrification, updates on station analysis as well as the fare integration policy work.

Tracking was completed on the federal election and as part of its federal government strategy, Metrolinx has begun outreach activities to brief all new MPs. Metrolinx has also met with the Federal Minister of Infrastructure & Communities.

There was also engagement with more than 125 stakeholders, correspondence with more than 45 elected officials, and staff monitored over 50 reports before municipal councils.

---

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Pfeifer  
 Vice President, Strategic Communications  
 416-202-5902  
[judy.pfeifer@metrolinx.com](mailto:judy.pfeifer@metrolinx.com)

