

**To:** Metrolinx Board of Directors  
**From:** Mark Childs, *Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Communications Officer (A)*  
**Date:** February 20, 2020  
**Re:** Marketing & Communications Quarterly Update

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## **Executive Summary**

The Marketing and Communications divisions are accountable for building ridership, revenue and building and protecting reputation.

The Communications team actively shares the Metrolinx story of how we're planning, building and operating to help make regional transit the easier, more convenient choice for residents.

Data, research and experience-driven customer insights inform our ridership and revenue growth plans.

Integrated communications and customer marketing strategies support each of our brands: GO, UP Express, PRESTO and Metrolinx. These plans drive ridership and fare revenue growth through the communication of benefits, event promotions and incentives that encourage travel at all times of the day and all days of the week, for a variety of customer journey purposes (why and where people travel). Marketing campaigns include:

- The 'Find your GO Time' campaign continues to reach new and existing GO customers positioning time on GO Transit as time well spent. The campaign was adapted to students with campus advertising and on-site activation, promoting the discounted student concession;
- Linking digital eTicket to GO events via digital channels and social media channels directed customers to our GO web pages and has resulted in ticket sales of 140,000 to date on the platform, with year-end volume expected to approach 200,000.
- Communications planning and media relations support was provided to support the pilot introduction of upgraded PRESTO machines at select locations and bus routes. The team also managed the coordinated announcement of service changes. A number of great stories were featured in the media, including a GO bus driver who came to the assistance of a young woman being stalked, and how we've winterized our fleet to improve performance in the harshest weather.
- Our 11th Metrolinx Town Hall was held on Feb. 6 in Burlington. These meetings offer dialogue with the public on the issues important to them.

GO brand and digital marketing campaigns have garnered both national and international award recognition for our campaigns in support of ridership, revenue and corporate safety priorities, such as:

### **AutoShow GO Bus activation and re-positioning campaign**

- American Public Transportation Association Award, First place - integrated campaign
- Canadian Marketing Association Award, Gold - Customer Experience
- Media Innovation Awards, Silver
- Advertising & Design Club of Canada Award, Bronze - Integrated Campaign

### **Metrolinx Safety Station Activation**

- American Public Transportation Association - AdWheel Award, First place

### **Kids GO Free launch**

- Advertising & Design Club of Canada Award, Bronze - Radio Campaign

## **Highlights**

In the third quarter (Oct. 1, 2019- Dec. 31, 2019), GO Transit ridership was 18.9M and UP Express ridership was 1.1M, for total ridership of 20 M. This is +4.9% higher than the same period last year. Third quarter off peak (weekday and weekend) boardings grew three times as quickly as weekday peak. This is driven by the new weekend services rolled out in the second quarter, as well as the new hourly two-way weekend train service on the Stouffville corridor rolled out Nov. 2. Both are supported by the roll out of the lower short distance fares, for trips under 10km and the continued impact of Kids GO Free.

Events continued to contribute to ridership increases for off peak travel. Promotional partnerships attracted 89,000 additional boardings with 4.4% sold as E-tickets

Marketing and Communications quarterly highlights:

- The Sunday Funday pilot provided customers with a e-ticket pass for \$10 This pilot has been well received by customers with ticket utilization growing steadily. Popular destinations have been Union Station, Niagara Falls, Exhibition and Aldershot stations.
- The GO partnership with the Toronto Santa Claus Parade, reached families and offered specially priced tickets for the day. The parade drove ridership of 15,600;
- GO made it easier for customers to get to the 'One of a Kind Show', Winter Edition, by offering combo tickets and a PRESTO Perk offer for a reduced admission that was redeemed by 2,700 people. In total, this event led to ridership of 19,800;



- GO Transit partnered with the Toronto International Boat Show for the first time in January including a promoted combo-ticket and a PRESTO Perk discounted admission offer. Early results include 1,353 combo tickets sold and 703 Presto Perks redemptions.
- In our first partnership year with the Toronto Wolfpack in 2019, we generated ridership of 23,000. Beginning in April 2020, GO will be proudly featured on the Wolfpack team uniform;



- Expressions of Interest have been posted for Food and Beverage at GO Transit and UP stations. A second Expression of Interest is being released for merchandising;
- In 2019, we have welcomed 24,000 new followers on social media. GO, UP & PRESTO social campaigns continue to engage audiences.
- UP Express's new content series has grown engagement on social, and the recent launch of #GOtransitreads social series has been well-received, with inaugural post outperforming 95% of other posts on our Facebook Page;
- The Communications teams responded to 430 media calls, actioned more than 780 pieces of correspondence, and facilitated more than 100 stakeholder briefings. There were 20 public meetings, including a series of meetings in Kitchener and Halton, to discuss the electrification process;
- Five Ontario Line public consultations were held in late January and early February. Media coverage has been balanced. Approximately 1,500 residents shared feedback and concerns with our project staff;
- Metrolinx News had a record breaking 617,000 page views in 2019, marking a 700 per cent increase in page views compared to 2018. The 350,000 visitors is a 1,100 per cent increase over last year;
- The community relations teams continued the signature Transit in Your Community series to bring more awareness and education of capital projects along rail corridors
- Metrolinx included land acknowledgements at recent community relations engagements in the Kitchener/Halton region.



**Community members check out the Ontario Line Open House in Riverside in January.**

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Childs  
 Chief Marketing Officer, Chief Communications Officer (A)