

To: Metrolinx Board of Directors
From: Jennifer Van der Valk
Chief Communications Officer (A)
Date: June 24, 2021
Re: **Communications Quarterly Report**

Recent Highlights

The Communications division has continued efforts to build positive partnerships and improve both the quality and frequency of engagement with stakeholders, customer residents and our communities.

Building trust and collaborative partnerships

Our recently launched “We are here for you” campaign has helped to inform our approach to engagement. This quarter, our outreach has included:

- Meeting with city officials in Halton Region about the Dundas Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the project’s first public engagement in April.
- Reaching out to elected officials and municipal partners to update them on the provincial announcement about progress towards two-way all-day GO train service on the Kitchener line.
- Active Ontario Line community consultations, including discussions with Leslieville and Riverside residents and informational e-newsletters and mail drops on updated plans and how these will better serve the community.
- Virtual Open Houses and dedicated community table engagement with Thorncliffe Park residents and business owners on the Ontario Line alignment, the proposed Maintenance and Storage Facility and our plans to support relocation of local businesses.
- Delivery of 19 presentations to about 450 students in the Hurontario LRT project area, building awareness, understanding and excitement with the riders of the future.
- Eglinton Crosstown West Extension virtual open house events to facilitate project update discussions as well as a session focused on introducing the Building Transit Fast Act/Transit Corridor Lands.
- Metrolinx staff participated in 21 virtual speaking events. Our experts were featured in discussions on innovation, safety, COVID-19 response, Transit Oriented Communities, LRT and subway projects.
- In May, the provincial and federal governments announced a commitment to fund the Hamilton LRT, leading to increased inquiries about possible property acquisitions, route alignment, employment opportunities and requests for information from residents and media.

Summary of our engagement numbers for the period of April to June:

- **65 virtual public meetings** with participation by more than 17,698 people
- **303 virtual stakeholder briefings** with approximately 1,717 attendees
- **3,065 interactions** related to Subway program, GO Expansion and Rapid Transit projects (correspondence, emails, phone calls)
- **9,639 e-blasts** (construction notices & weekly/bi-weekly/monthly eblasts)
- **455,100 direct-to-home communications**

Growing our digital reach

- Metrolinx News produced more than 120 features and continues to see strong year-over-year audience growth, with more than 1,000 subscribers following our every story. We are increasing our number of original features - bringing greater awareness to our construction projects, as well as operational and service delivery updates.

Proactive and responsive communications and media relations

- The media relations team responded to 388 media calls which is an approximate 13% decrease over the previous board period, but approximate a 15% increase from the same period last year.
- While COVID-19 related calls have declined, there has been more interest in other transit-related issues such as the Ontario Line Maintenance and Storage Facility location, Don Valley Layover environmental impacts, Yonge North Subway alignment, and tree removals in Small's Creek.
- Metrolinx was featured in 1,968 broadcast news stories and 2,696 online news stories. The team also arranged five interviews for the CEO and other members of SMT.
- Communication strategy was planned in preparation for the opening of Bloomington GO Station.
- Internally, we shared updates about COVID-19 vaccine availability, communicated employee support resources, introduced our 2021-22 strategic objectives and led an all-staff CEO Town Hall with more than 2,200 people.
- Production of the 2020-21 Annual Report was a key deliverable for Corporate Communications this quarter.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Van der Valk
Chief Communications Officer (A)
416-202-7634
Jennifer.vandervalk@metrolinx.com