

Communications & Outreach Plan

Accessibility Public Meetings

Launch date: September 2012

Prepared by: Sarah Roger, Strategic Communications

Approvals:

Name	Approved (Y/N) and/or signature	Date
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Accessibility Public Meetings

Situation Analysis

Overview

For the first time this fall, Metrolinx will be conducting public meetings to gather feedback on Metrolinx's Multi-Year Accessibility Plan. The Customer Experience Management Committee will serve as the internal sponsoring body for the public meetings as well as future accessibility initiatives.

The events are scheduled for:

September 13 – Oakville (West), Oakville Town Hall

September 20 – York Region (North), South Services Centre

September 27 – Toronto (Central), Metro Hall

East location TBD

The focus for the public meetings will be on current and future Metrolinx services (i.e. service attributes, challenges, future wish lists). Each meeting will:

- Provide attendees with a high-level overview of Metrolinx and the merger process with GO;
- Highlight the roles responsibilities and achievements of the Metrolinx/GO Accessibility Advisory Committee will be highlighted;
- A key spokesperson from each of the business/operating divisions will give an overview of their roles/responsibilities and projects. These presentations will be augmented by storyboards that attendees can view.
- End with a question and answer period.

History/background

As required under the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act (ODA), 2001*, Metrolinx produced an annual Accessibility Plan covering accessibility improvements for the current and following fiscal years. Under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), 2005*, Metrolinx is now required to hold public meetings to get input on the new multi-year plan to be posted by January 1, 2013. The multi-year plan covers accessibility improvement projects within Metrolinx and across our operating divisions: GO Transit, PRESTO and the Air Rail Link (ARL).

In recent years, the Metrolinx and GO Transit Accessibility Advisory Committees have provided input into the plan which was prepared jointly by Metrolinx's Research and Business Solutions (RABS), Policy, Planning and Innovation (PPI) and the Strategic Communications groups and posted and posted for the public on all corporate websites.

The AODA regulation specifies transportation service providers are required to hold public meetings on their plan:

4. (1) The Government of Ontario, Legislative Assembly, designated public sector organizations and large organizations shall, (a) establish, implement, maintain and document a multi-year accessibility plan, which outlines the organization's strategy to prevent and remove barriers and meet its requirements under this Regulation.

41. (2) Every conventional transportation service provider shall annually hold at least one public meeting involving persons with disabilities to ensure that they have an opportunity to participate in a review of the accessibility plan and that they are given the opportunity to provide feedback on the accessibility plan.

To reflect Metrolinx's broad coverage area, it has been determined four public meetings need to occur across the region to reach our customer base with disabilities. An online consultation component and/or teleconference will complement the public meetings to ensure those who cannot attend the meetings in person can still provide us their comments and suggestions.

Metrolinx's Community and Stakeholder Relations (CSR) group will work with the PPI and RABS groups leveraging their relationship with the Metrolinx and GO Accessibility Advisory Committees to organize the public meetings component of this project. The Strategic Communications and Graphics groups will provide communications support in the form of editing and laying out the 2012-13 Accessibility Plan.

Strategic Considerations

Dependencies and challenges

The public meetings need to occur no later than October 2012 in order to incorporate the public's feedback into the plan, as well as edit, translate and lay out, and get Board approval to meet the AODA regulation's deadline of January 1, 2013.

Contentious issues

The following are a few of the issues that Metrolinx staff anticipate will arise at the public meetings (a more comprehensive FAQ document will be prepared separately):

1. David Lepofsky of the AODA Alliance has been a vocal critic of the PRESTO farecard and has been quoted in the media that the card was not properly designed to be barrier-free for transit passengers with disabilities¹. This issue will likely arise at the public meetings so it is essential that a representative from PRESTO be in attendance to answer questions.
2. Concerns with local municipal specialized transit services may be an issue members of the public will want to address at the public meetings. Senior representatives from local municipal transit providers will be asked to attend to answer questions.
3. Questions related to the accessibility of the Toronto transit projects such as the Eglinton Crosstown LRT may arise at these meetings, particularly at the Toronto meeting on September 27 at Metro Hall and a representative from that project team will be asked to attend to answer questions.

¹ AODA Alliance calls on Ontario government to halt deployment of PRESTO smart card system until disability barriers are removed (<http://www.aodaalliance.org/strong-effective-aoda/08122010.asp>).

Strategic Approach

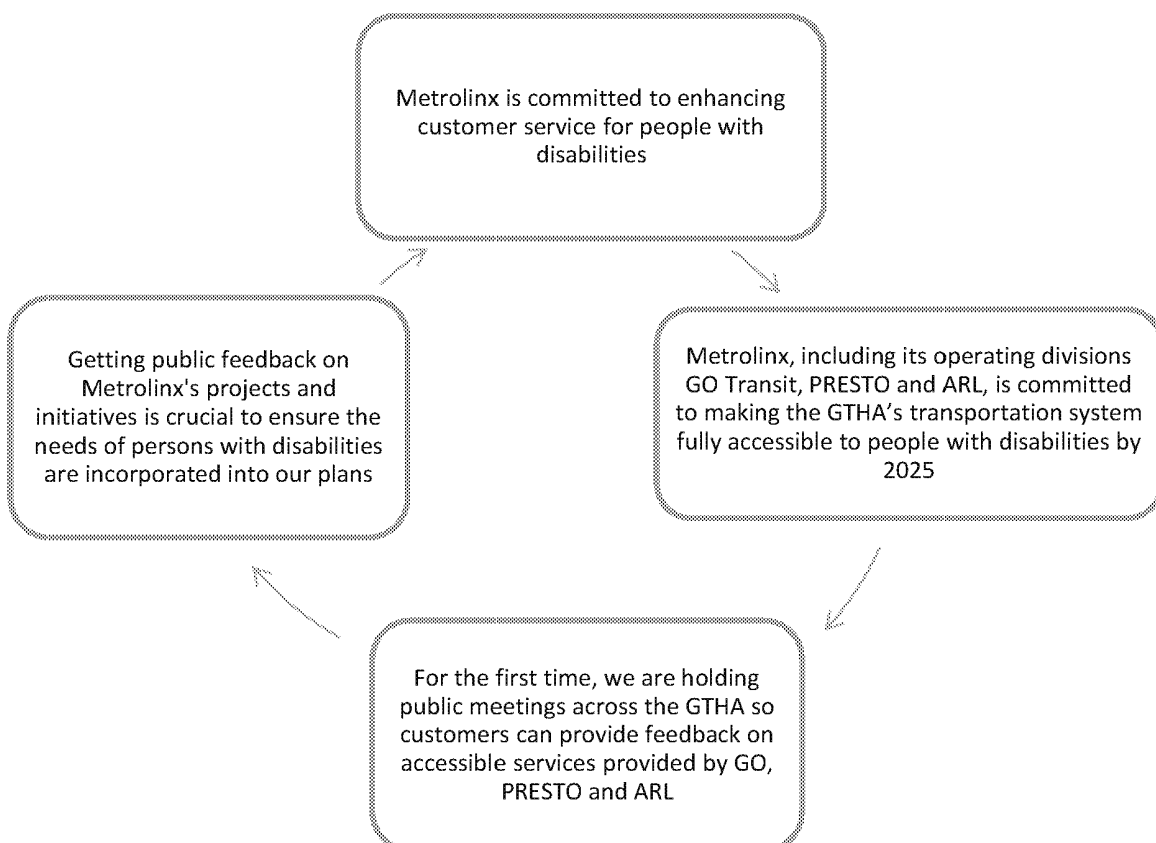
Metrolinx will hold four public meetings as well as an online and/or teleconference consultation process to allow the public to have an opportunity to participate in a review and provide feedback on the 2012-13 Metrolinx Accessibility Plan. The plan will be compiled by the PPI group, edited by Strategic Communications and laid out by the Graphics team.

The events will be promoted through stakeholder email distribution lists, social media, community paper advertisements, On the GO alerts and a news release recommending attendees pre-register online at metrolinx.com/accessibility.

Objectives

- To allow the public to have an opportunity to participate in a review and provide feedback on the 2012-13 Metrolinx Accessibility Plan.
- To communicate to the public and highlight recent accessibility improvements achieved by Metrolinx, and its operating divisions.
- To demonstrate our organization's commitment to meeting the AODA requirements.

Key Messages



Tactics and Timelines

Stakeholder outreach

Multi-faceted stakeholder relations strategy incorporating existing communication vehicles as well as targeted outreach to elected and community stakeholders across Metrolinx's coverage area, inviting them to participate and increasing promotional impact of paid and earned media strategy.

Stakeholder tactic	Responsible	Date
Story in summer issue of Metrolinx Report stakeholder e-newsletter	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Late July/early August 2012
Email blast to elected officials representing Central area requesting that they promote public meetings to their constituents	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Immediately prior (1-2 days) to publication of ad
Email blast to elected officials representing North area requesting that they promote public meetings to their constituents	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Immediately prior (1-2 days) to publication of ad
Email blast to elected officials representing West area requesting that they promote public meetings to their constituents	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Immediately prior (1-2 days) to publication of ad
Email blast to elected officials representing East area requesting that they promote public meetings to their constituents	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Immediately prior (1-2 days) to publication of ad
Email blast to community stakeholders requesting that they promote public meetings within their networks	Lisa Jones, Jeff Short, PPI & Silvan Bruno, RABS	Immediately prior (1-2 days) to publication of ad
Invitations to key representatives from the Province to attend each of the four meetings	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Concurrently with publication of initial ads
Reminder email – Central elected officials	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Concurrently with publication of reminder ad
Reminder email – North elected officials	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Concurrently with publication of reminder ad
Reminder email – West elected officials	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Concurrently with publication of reminder ad
Reminder email – East elected officials	Andrea Gusen, Stakeholder Relations	Concurrently with publication of reminder ad
Reminder email – community stakeholders	Lisa Jones, Jeff Short, PPI & Silvan Bruno, RABS	Concurrently with publication of reminder ad

Media outreach

News release highlighting Metrolinx's accessibility achievements over the past year and inviting the public to the public meetings being held in September and October 2012.

Media tactic	Responsible	Date
News release	Sarah Roger, Strategic Communications	August 16

Social media outreach

Promotion of the public meetings will be made on our social media channels

Social media channel	Tactic/content	Responsible	Date
Facebook	Post on the Metrolinx page shared by the PRESTO and GO Transit Facebook pages	Malon for Metrolinx Facebook page, Transit Reporters for GO, Brent McIntosh for PRESTO	Weekly leading up to meetings
Twitter	Tweet on the Metrolinx, PRESTO and GO accounts	Malon for Metrolinx Facebook page, Transit Reporters for GO, Brent McIntosh for PRESTO	Weekly leading up to meetings
Twitter	Metrolinx and GO retweet other positive mentions of public meetings e.g. retweet the Canadian Hearing Society's promotion of the event	Malon for Metrolinx Facebook page, Transit Reporters for GO, Brent McIntosh for PRESTO	As occurs

Marketing Plan

Placement of paid advertising in local papers one month prior to meetings in every region Metrolinx serves. Advertisements will be designed in-house, paid advertising space will be covered by Strategic Communications' advertising budget. Cost of ad spend TBC.

Tactic	Responsible	Date
Ad promoting pre-registration - West	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	August 16 (Four weeks prior to event)
Ad promoting pre-registration - North	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	August 23 (Four weeks prior to event)
Ad promoting pre-registration - Central	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	August 30 (Four weeks prior to event)
Ad promoting pre-registration - East	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	TBD
Reminder ad - West	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	August 30 (Two weeks prior to event)
Reminder ad - North	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	September 6 (Two weeks prior to event)

Reminder ad - Central	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	September 13 (Two weeks prior to event)
Reminder ad - East	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	TBD

Budget Implications

Cost item	Owner	Total cost	Budget
Producing materials in alternate formats	Andrea Gusen, CSR	Non-Responsive Information	CSR/PPI/RABS
Real time captioning	Andrea Gusen, CSR		CSR/PPI/RABS
ASL/ LSQ Interpreters	Andrea Gusen, CSR		CSR/PPI/RABS
Attendants	Andrea Gusen, CSR		CSR/PPI/RABS
Staging	Andrea Gusen, CSR		CSR/PPI/RABS
Catering	Andrea Gusen, CSR		CSR/PPI/RABS
Media buy	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing	TBD	CSR/PPI/RABS

Evaluation / Wrap-up

As this is the first year Metrolinx is holding public meetings on the Accessibility Plan, participant evaluation forms, attendance, calls to the call centre and tone of media coverage will be used as the benchmark future public meetings will be compared to.

Quantitative and qualitative measures to determine if communication objectives were achieved:

- Minimal number of complaints to Contact Centre about public meetings.
- Majority of media coverage to be neutral.

Appendix – Sample ad



Public Meeting

on Metrolinx's Accessibility Initiatives

You are invited to attend a public meeting to share your ideas on how to make the services of Metrolinx and its operating divisions, GO Transit, PRESTO and the Air Rail Link, better for people with disabilities.

September 13 at 7 – 9 p.m.
Oakville Town Hall – Room TBC
1225 Trafalgar Road, Oakville, ON, L6H 0H3

September 20 at 7 – 9 p.m.
York Region South Service Centre – First Floor, Training Room A/B
50 High Tech Road, Richmond Hill, ON, L4B 4N7

September 27 at 7 – 9 p.m.
Metro Hall – Room TBC
55 John Street, Toronto, ON, M5V 3C6

East event TBC
Metrolinx representatives will share the highlights of the organization's draft Multi-Year Accessibility Plan, including current priorities for improving accessibility across the region. Following this brief presentation, there will be a moderated session for sharing feedback, suggestions, ideas and questions.

Please register for the meeting closest to you at metrolinx.com/accessibility or at 1.888.438.6646 to let us know what accommodations you may require for the meeting.

If you cannot attend, but would like to contribute suggestions, visit metrolinx.com/accessibility to submit your feedback or call 1.888.438.6646.



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Audience and stakeholder map:

Audiences	Significance	Strategy/objectives	Tactics Tool	Responsible	Key messages	Supporting materials Tool	Responsible	Timeline
Metrolinx and GO Accessibility Advisory Committees	These groups guide major accessibility initiatives across GO and Metrolinx	Get their feedback on the format of the public meetings	Conference call	Lisa Jones, Jeff Short, PPI & Silvan Bruno, RABS	Metrolinx is committed to enhancing customer service for people with disabilities			May 2012
Political officials	To reach as many customers with disabilities every effort needs to be made to leverage the support of our political stakeholders	They can repeat our messaging in their own newsletters, websites, etc. Their support could manifest into local promotional activities.	Email blast	Stakeholder Relations	Metrolinx is committed to enhancing customer service for people with disabilities			July 19
Community stakeholders - Active Living Alliance for Canadians with a Disability - Active Living Coalition for Older Adults - ALS Society of Canada - Alzheimer Society of Ontario - Alliance for Equality of Blind Canadians - AODA Alliance - Canadian Association for Community Living- Toronto - Canadian Association of	To reach as many customers with disabilities every effort needs to be made to leverage the support of our community stakeholders	They can repeat our messaging in their own newsletters, websites, social media channels, etc. Their support could manifest into local promotional activities.	Email blast	Lisa Jones, Jeff Short, PPI & Silvan Bruno, RABS	Metrolinx is committed to enhancing customer service for people with disabilities Metrolinx, including its operating divisions GO Transit, PRESTO and ARL, is committed to making the GTHA's transportation system fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025 For the first time, we are holding public meetings across the GTHA so customers can provide feedback on accessible services provided by GO, PRESTO and ARL			July 19

Retired Persons/CARP • Canadian Association of the Deaf • Canadian Council of the Blind • Canadian Down Syndrome Society • Canadian Council on Rehabilitation and Work • Canadian Hard of Hearing Association • Canadian Hearing Society • Canadian Mental Health Association, Ontario • Canadian National Institute for the Blind • Canadian National Society of the Deaf-Blind • Centre for Independent Living in Toronto • Community Living Ontario • DisAbled Women's Network Ontario • Easter Seals Ontario • Erinoakkids Centre for Treatment and Development • Ethno-Racial People with Disabilities Coalition of Ontario • Guide Dog Users of Canada • Independent Living					Getting public feedback on Metrolinx's projects and initiatives is crucial to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are incorporated into our plans			
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Canada • Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario • Multiple Sclerosis Society of Ontario • Ontario Association on Developmental Disabilities • Ontario Community Support Association • Ontario March of Dimes • Spinal Cord Injury Canada								
GO Transit, PRESTO, future ARL customers			Metrolinx website including online registration form	Sarah Roger, Strategic Communciations	Metrolinx, including its operating divisions GO Transit, PRESTO and ARL, is committed to making the GTHA’s transportation system fully accessible to people with disabilities by 2025			July 30
General public			PINS	Brendan/Karen/Sa vio, Customer Contact	For the first time, we are holding public meetings across the GTHA so customers can provide feedback on accessible services provided by GO, PRESTO and ARL			Starting August 16
			On the GO alert	Brendan/Karen/Sa vio, Customer Contact		August 16 for all, week prior targeted to specific areas		
			Social media	Malon Edwards, Transit Reporters	Getting public feedback on Metrolinx’s projects and initiatives is crucial to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are incorporated into our plans			Starting August 16
			News release	Sarah Roger, Strategic Communciations		August 16		
			Community paper advertising	Zdenka Jasura, Marketing		Multiple ads starting August 16		
All Metrolinx employees	Staff are	Inform frontline	Department-	Respective	For the first time, we are holding	Job aid	Jason	July 19

	Metrolinx's greatest ambassadors in promoting initiatives and answering questions	staff in advance of any external communications to ensure they are equipped to answer questions in an informed and helpful manner	specific notices	department	public meetings across the GTHA so customers can provide feedback on accessible services provided by GO, PRESTO and ARL Getting public feedback on Metrolinx's projects and initiatives is crucial to ensure the needs of persons with disabilities are incorporated into our plans		Allen, Customer Contact	
		Communicating to all staff ensures they are aware of Metrolinx's initiatives, even if these efforts are not related to their daily work	NewsLinx	Sarah Roger, Strategic Communications				August 30 issue