

TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION REPORT NO.

MEETING DATE: March 26, 2014

SUBJECT: TTC COMMUNITY RELATIONS ANNUAL REPORT

INFORMATION ITEM

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the Board receive this report for information.

FUNDING

The recommendation of this report does not have any financial impact.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of February 25, 2013, the Board adopted a Construction Projects Community Relations Management Plan and TTC Good Neighbour Policy for Construction Projects. Attached is the annual Community Relations report for 2013.

DISCUSSION

Community Relations efforts in 2013 focused on pro-active outreach for major capital projects including: Leslie Barns, New Second Exits Expert Advisory Panel, Coxwell Station Easier Access, Woodbine Station Easier Access, Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension, Pape Station Modernization, Dufferin Station Modernization, Ossington Station Easier Access, and Lawrence Station Fire Vents and other projects that are in the planning phase.

The community outreach on major TTC construction projects has ensured that community questions, concerns, and recommendations are clearly identified, evaluated and responded to throughout planning, design and construction. The Community Relations team is a bridge between communities, TTC construction staff and contractors.

By building early understanding and trust, and working diligently to incorporate community feedback and resolve concerns, the TTC can build projects more effectively with community support. This is especially important given that major projects with long term benefits may cause major inconvenience to our neighbours and customers during construction. The attached report summarizes community relations efforts throughout 2013.

March 5, 2014

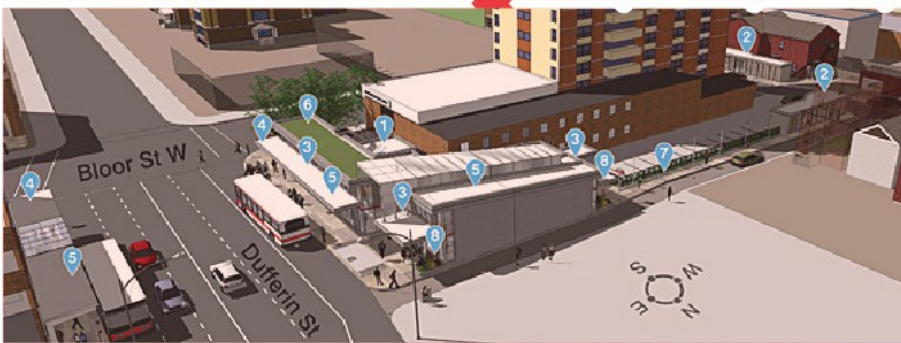
87-02-08

03078-5-89

Attachment: Appendix A – 2013 Community Relations Annual Report

2013 Community Relations Annual Report

Engineering, Construction & Expansion Department



March 2014

03078-4-419



TORONTO TRANSIT COMMISSION

Table of Contents

1	Introduction	4
2	Project Highlights – Working with Communities	3
2.1	Leslie Barns.....	3
2.2	Second Exits – A new way forward	5
2.3	Coxwell Station.....	6
2.4	Woodbine Station.....	6
2.4.1	City on the Move – Young Artists in Transit.....	7
2.5	TYSSE (Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension)	8
2.6	Pape Station Modernization.....	10
2.7	Dufferin Station Modernization.....	11
2.8	Ossington Station Easier Access	11
2.9	Lawrence Station Fire Vents	12
2.11	Looking forward and Response Times	12
3	Community Feedback	14
4	Project Communications	14
5	Conclusion	17

1 Introduction

The Community Relations staff are the bridge between local communities and construction teams who work on projects that make transit accessible and enhance customer service and safety. Retrofitting subway stations and expanding the system can cause significant inconvenience during construction for our neighbours and customers. Reducing disruption during major construction is an ongoing challenge that is taken very seriously by the TTC. Throughout the year, we engaged communities to bring local knowledge and concerns to the TTC project teams to improve project implementation.



The following report summarizes community relations work in 2013 for major projects and initiatives.

2 Project Highlights – Working with Communities

In 2013 over fifty outreach events, open houses, public meetings, and over two hundred smaller meetings and site visits were held for Engineering, Construction and Expansion projects. Feedback coordinated by community liaison staff helped lead to multiple improvements in the planning, design and construction of projects.

2.1 Leslie Barns

The scope of the Leslie Barns (and connection track) project is broader than the construction of a new streetcar facility and tracks running on Leslie Street from Queen Street to Commissioners Street. In fact, the project includes full scale underground infrastructure upgrades, such as new watermains and utilities as well as significant landscape improvements on both Leslie Street and Queen Street. A large scale project in close proximity to local residents, small businesses, major plazas, pedestrians and cyclists, thousands of TTC customers, and commuters presents a major challenge.

Extensive consultation was undertaken through the planning stages prior to construction, including regular meetings with local City Councillors. Fifty five large and small public and stakeholder meetings and outreach events were held during the planning process prior to 2013.

Prior to construction in 2013 (between January and May), 18 public and stakeholder meetings were held to get feedback on preliminary construction plans. On March 27 and May 13, 2013, TTC held meetings with the local community to get their input on traffic and construction plans, including transit re-routing. Prior to construction, many smaller meetings were held, including with the Leslieville BIA, Lake Shore area and Portlands businesses and the Parent Council at Bruce Junior Public School. The construction plan was enhanced by a number of important community and business recommendations arising from the meetings.



Community Office Opening Event – June 18

Subsequently, after construction started, a series of site walks were held with local residents and cyclists to enhance safety. Community and business feedback has helped TTC improve temporary transit routing plans during construction, signage and safety for cyclists, and helped our partners in City Transportation Services adjust signal timing to help traffic flow – an ongoing challenge. In addition to regular email and website updates, three newsletters with circulation to over 30 000 residents and businesses were distributed to keep the community informed about construction.

A project community office for the Leslie Barns officially opened at 1258 Queen Street East on June 18, 2013 and is staffed by two full time community liaison officers.

Construction Liaison Group

The Construction Liaison Group (CLG) for Leslie Street met five times between June and December 2013. The CLG brings local resident, business and school representatives together with TTC, City staff and local Councillors to discuss concerns about construction and work collectively to reduce impacts as much as possible. In 2013, the CLG helped to implement measures that improved safety and access, such as installing additional lighting, speed humps, and signage along the heavily used Lake Shore Blvd bike and pedestrian trail and the south side Martin Goodman Trail.



Cyclist signage on the south side of Lake Shore Boulevard at Leslie Street, the Martin Goodman trail remains open throughout construction



Cyclist safety walks have led to improved safety and signage at the temporary Lake Shore accesses to Plazas

2.2 Second Exits – A new way forward

The new Second Exit Planning and Consultation Program got underway in 2013 and was designed to:

- Build trust by establishing a transparent and credible process using third party experts.
- Deepen understanding of the need by using public education and communications.
- Broaden engagement to encourage informed dialogue through learning.

The three-phased program started with an objective development of the criteria and evaluation followed by the application of the evaluation framework on a site by site basis.

Phase 1 focussed on the development of an evaluation framework by third party experts, with input from the public. A panel was convened and met nine times throughout the fall of 2013 to develop the framework. TTC held a public meeting on November 19, 2013, followed by an online consultation, to obtain community feedback on the draft framework. The framework was approved by the Board at its meeting of December 19, 2013.

Phase 2 involves establishing local working groups who will select and evaluate location options using the evaluation framework. Local working groups will be set up for each of the stations involved, with the first one, Chester, scheduled for early 2014.

The final phase, design of second exits, will include community consultation on the architecture, urban design and landscaping.

Throughout the process, communications will be provided to the public regarding the opportunities for involvement as well as the outcome, reporting and decisions as a result of the process.

2.3 Coxwell Station

Heavy construction will begin in 2014 to make Coxwell Station fully accessible as part of its Easier Access Program. Proactive engagement with local residents, property owners and the broader community at an early stage ensured a smooth transition from design to construction.

In 2013, several meetings were held with residents who live directly beside the future construction to discuss the challenges and pro-actively solve concerns. A number of issues including parking and access were resolved to build understanding and support, before a shovel hits the ground.



2.4 Woodbine Station

At Woodbine Station, TTC is working to make the station fully accessible as part of the Easier Access Program, and is building a second exit to improve customer safety and convenience. Combining these two projects and completing them as one contract will help reduce the duration of construction impacts in the community. The project involved several property agreements and two property acquisitions; with a thorough consultation and regular dialogue with affected owners and the local community, the project got off to a positive start.

On April 18, 2013 a community open house was held to identify and resolve construction concerns prior to heavy construction beginning in 2014. As a result of the community consultation and meetings with local residents, businesses and community associations, construction plans were improved to provide vehicular access to local residents on Strathmore. An additional community consultation was scheduled for January, 2014 prior to heavy construction.

2.4.1 City on the Move – Young Artists in Transit

Bring together 15 aspiring youth with a professional artist, 50 metres of construction hoarding as their canvass, and you have the basis of this unique partnership between TTC, local youth and City of Toronto Art Services to celebrate the history of the community and hopes for the future. Plain construction hoarding will come to life with art work designed by youth, in consultation with the community. Toronto’s Poet Laureate will also have a presence in this work; a magnificent collaboration that TTC looks forward to building on at Coxwell and Woodbine Stations when they undergo construction to become accessible to all TTC customers.



Young artists proudly displaying their work depicting a busy street festival on the Danforth, capturing a moment in time before local transit expanded and increased the outbound and inbound flow of citizens, represented by the building of the subway below.

2.5 TYSSE (Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension)



The Toronto-York Spadina Subway Extension (TYSSE) project began early construction works in the beginning of 2010. By late 2010 both tunneling and station construction began for the extension. The new subway extension will extend 8.6 kilometres starting at the existing Downsview Station (future name Sheppard West) and ending at Vaughan Metropolitan Centre Station (Jane Street and Highway 7). The extension includes six new subway stations, a connection to the GO Transit Barrie Line, three new parking lots, a connection to the VIVA Rapidway on Highway 7, and five new bus terminals. The tunnel boring machines completed their tunneling work in November 2013. Work is at different stages of construction at all six stations.

TYSSE Public Information Centres (Community Offices)

Two CLOs staff the three Project Information Centres (PIC), located at 1120 Finch Avenue West, in York Lanes at York University and near the future Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) Station at Jane and Highway 7.

The York University PIC is currently shared with the York University Development Corporation and the PIC at VMC is in partnership with VIVANext. Numerous compliments are received for the PICs especially at York University as the CLOs also assist with providing both construction updates and TTC information.

In 2013, the CLOs attended the York University Transportation Day on campus. Hundreds of students approached the TYSSE booth for both project and TTC information. Parc Downsview Park invited TYSSE in December to participate as an information provider to approximately 200 members of the immediate community. The booth was well received and TYSSE has been invited to future events in 2014. TYSSE was also approached by York University to collaborate on a joint initiative to promote the subway extension on the construction hoarding facing “The Common” TTC/GO bus loop. We expect promotional signage to be up on the hoarding in early 2014. Thousands of students, staff and visitors to the University travel across The Common daily. VIVANext has also invited TYSSE’s CLOs to participate in open houses for the Highway 7 Rapidway in 2014 (dates to be determined).

The closure of northbound Keele Street at Finch Avenue West presents one of the major community relations challenges for the project. We have worked to lessen the impact of the closure through proactive and consistent communications with stakeholders, including business open signage, community newsletters, website and email updates, construction notices and one-on-one meetings with businesses.

To reduce construction inconvenience at the Schulich Building at York University, work was scheduled over the Christmas break and February Reading Week. With more regular interaction between the contractor and Community Relations staff, communication has improved with the University. Pro-active outreach has led to improvements for pedestrians and drivers including a new pathway at York U, and improved signal timing on York Boulevard. An art on hoarding project is currently in planning in partnership with York for installation in 2014.

Construction Progress Photos – December 2013



Downsview Park Station photo is a west view of concrete walls and formwork at the east end of the east building.



York University Station. Roof-top photo of York University Station Box.



Finch West Station. Photo of Keele Street closure northbound at Finch Avenue West. Station box openings on both the south and north sides of Finch Avenue West

The CLOs coordinated advanced communications with many neighbourhood residents, condos and York University to explain the importance of short term overnight construction to allow concrete pours for Finch West and York University stations. This work is specialized and is best performed after regular construction hours to enable the concrete to cure effectively. CLOs coordinated with contractors and the local City Councillor, and approval was granted for the noise by-law exemption to keep construction moving, in part because of the upfront, pro-active outreach.

2.6 Pape Station Modernization

The Pape Station Modernization Project began in Fall 2009 as a major update and renewal of all levels in the subway station. It included the addition of elevators, a second exit, new floor, wall and ceiling finishes, an expanded indoor waiting area, public art and a bicycle parking facility.

Due to the tight urban setting that Pape Station is located in, a number of the new features to be added to the station were in close proximity to residential properties.

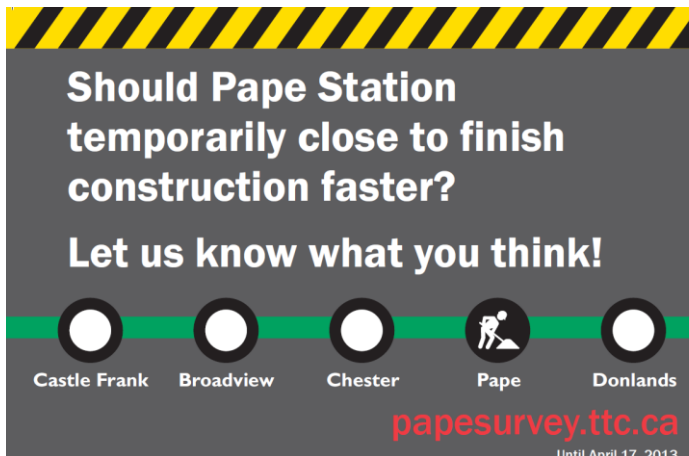
This resulted in a number of challenges during the various construction phases. The construction site in close proximity to residential properties, coupled with a project delay, caused many local residents to become frustrated with the project. The establishment of a community liaison officer for Pape Station created a single point of contact for residents and customers to source up to date project information in a timely fashion. Throughout 2013, local residents received many door-to-door visits, emails, phone calls and notices to keep them informed of upcoming work and the status of the project.



Pape Station Closure

In order to expedite construction and reduce impacts to the local community and TTC customers, TTC proposed a station closure in April, 2013. The TTC surveyed customers, residents and local businesses on their preferred option to advance completion of construction at the station, including a 12-day closure, six weekend closures or not closing the station at all. A communication plan was launched including on social

media, YouTube, TTC website, local newspapers, media, signs in the Station and through notices to the local community. The majority of those who responded to the online survey preferred that the TTC close the station for 12 days. This survey was the first of its kind at the TTC and was extremely helpful in gaining support for the plan. The closure and ensuing work were carried out over 12 days in late August. The reopening was welcomed by the community and customers alike.




Pape Station closure survey - postcard

2.7 Dufferin Station Modernization

The Dufferin Station Modernization Project began in 2010 as a major update and renewal of all levels in the subway station. It includes the addition of elevators, two second exits, new floor, wall and ceiling finishes, an expanded indoor waiting area, sidewalk canopies, public art and bicycle parking.

Similar to Pape Station, Dufferin Station is located in a tight urban neighbourhood, where construction activity finds itself in close proximity to local residents and businesses. As a result, a clear line of communication has been established between local stakeholders and the Project Team via the CLO. Advance notice of road and lane closures, TTC service disruptions and overnight work has been regularly transmitted to the community by the CLO.

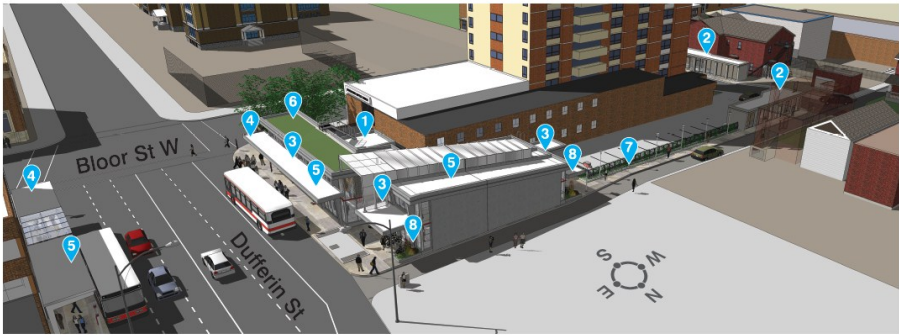
Improving Dufferin Station



projects.ttc.ca

For more information:
station.modernization@ttc.ca | 416-397-8696

New Station Features



- 1 Street level elevator for easier access
- 2 Second exits for safety and convenience
- 3 New entrances
- 4 Canopies over sidewalks on both sides of Dufferin Street
- 5 Cool roof for heat reflection
- 6 Green roof
- 7 Landscaped walkway
- 8 Bicycle parking areas with landscaping

Dufferin Station Signage

2.8 Ossington Station Easier Access

Work at Ossington Station will begin this summer and, once completed in 2016, the station will be fully accessible. To help reduce impacts to riders and adjacent residents, other necessary work will be incorporated, including, resurfacing the bus platform and repairs to the bus roadway. Engaging a local daycare centre whose clients may be impacted will help ensure that the transition from planning to construction is seamless. Outreach efforts have ensured the preservation of 3D artwork on the façade of the Network Childcare Building adjacent to the station and facilitated an access plan for family pick up and drop off. On June 13, 2013, a Community Open House was held to help identify and plan for any potential construction issues in the community well before shovels hit the ground in 2014. Early outreach led to plans for improve bike parking and streetscaping at the Delaware Avenue entrance.

2.9 Lawrence Station Fire Vents

Excavating a hole, 15 metres deep and large enough to fit several mid-sized cars is no easy task. Doing it in the middle of a dense urban centre at Yonge and Wanless Ave is a challenge but work is more than half way complete. TTC will be installing four large fans, each measuring the size of a small office that will provide enhanced safety for transit riders and employees. Re-routing traffic, flooding from broken

watermains due to weather and unstable soil conditions are just some of the challenges where TTC worked with the community to minimize disruption for residents.

Outreach efforts with the Yonge-Lawrence BIA have led to improved signage for businesses adjacent to the construction zone and local residents have been regularly updated leading to resolution of concerns with the contractor, such as fastening grates to reduce unnecessary noise and installation of additional lighting and convex mirrors to enhance safety.



2.10 Looking Forward and Response Times

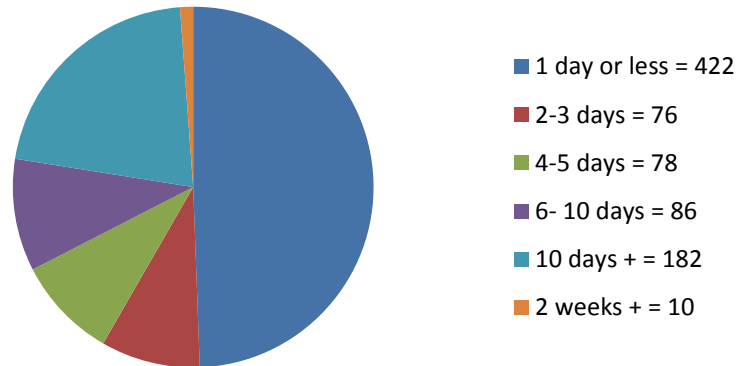
Consultation was planned early in the planning stage for a number of projects in 2013. The pro-active approach will continue into 2014.

The community relations team implemented a new system to help track and report on community relations in 2013. Statistics alone cannot explain the value that the Community Relations team provides the TTC in the planning, design and construction of projects. For example, a single proactive meeting with a local resident or business association can resolve vital issues such as waste collection, emergency access, water supply, or protection of property from damage during construction, but as a quantitative measure is a mere blip on the radar. However, the statistics demonstrate that the team is very diligent in resolving issues, and provides data for tracking trends and issues across projects. The following stats are intended to give a snapshot of the frequency of activities in 2013.

Community Liaisons had direct contact with just under one thousand people in 2013 to help resolve various planning and construction issues. Coordinating responses between different TTC and City divisions can be challenging and the liaisons help to cut through the bureaucracy. While responses are given immediately whenever possible, many issues involve complex questions and concerns.

Of 854 individual pieces of correspondence, 422 were resolved within one business day, 76 were resolved within 2-3 days, 78 were resolved within 4-5 days, 86 were resolved within 6-10 days, 182 involving other departments were resolved with two weeks, and only 10 (1.17%) required over two weeks – due to reliance on outside departments.

Response Time



3 Community Feedback

The best method to judge the effectiveness of the Community Relations team is to hear directly from our neighbours. The following is an example from a representative of the largest Leslie Street residential condominium regarding the efforts of the Community Relations team in 2013 on a very complex and impactful construction project.

“As a new year starts, I would like to take a moment to commend some of your team members for the fabulous work they did in the Leslieville community in 2013. In my opinion, David Nagler and his team of Elizabeth Garkowski and Niki Angelis at the Leslie Barns project community office exemplify the type of performance that Mr. Byford is striving to deliver throughout the Toronto Transit Commission.”

“The level of communication they have provided has been superb - timely, with a good level of detail, and easy to understand.”

“Their ability to respond to challenges with the project has been impressive. Unplanned project activities are clearly communicated to the affected parties, and after-hours contact information is provided.”

“David and his team are making a very positive contribution to the success of the project!”

4 Project Communications

The 2013 Community Relations Management Plan identified the aims of project communications, regardless of the scale or impact of a project, as:

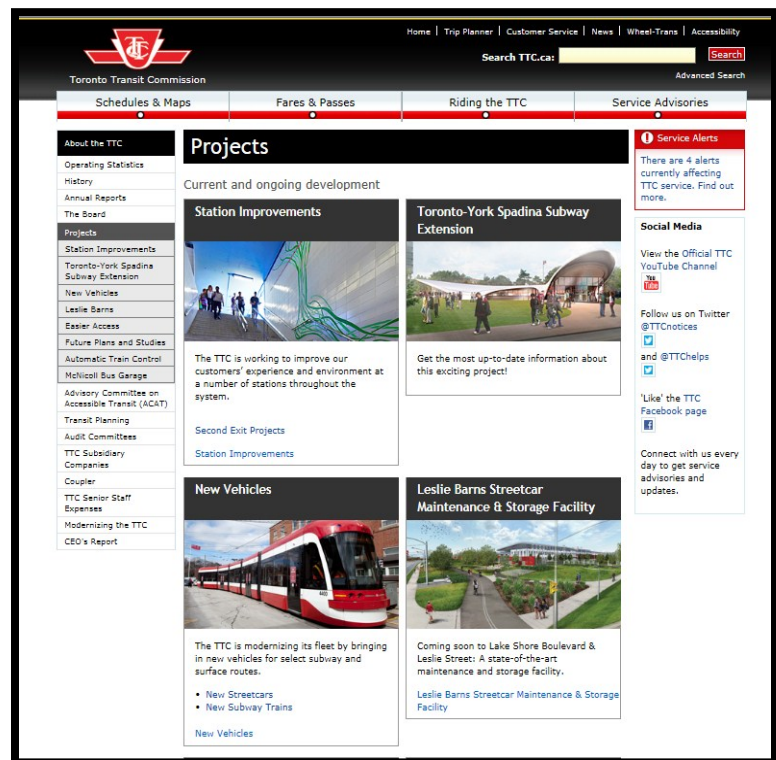
- Explain the benefits and context of the project
- Describe project activity
- Explain timing and status
- Acknowledgement of need for cooperation from community

Different tools were used to achieve these aims. All forms of communication, both online and print, combine excellent graphics - including photos, pictograms and renderings - with plain language, to provide stakeholders with the most useful and up-to-date information available.

Website

In 2013, the construction projects section of the TTC website underwent a review and redesign, enabling customers, residents and other stakeholders to easily access project-related information. Each station improvement project has its own web page within a main projects page that can be accessed through a direct link from the TTC home page or through the URL projects.ttc.ca.

Website traffic has shown that people are interested in TTC construction projects. In September 2013, for example, the projects section of the TTC site had 24,746 pageviews and 18,940 unique pageviews. In that month, the most popular individual project page was the Leslie Barns page, with 2,813 pageviews and 2,161 unique pageviews.



Brochures

Station improvement brochures were developed for several projects in the planning and construction stages, including Coxwell, Dufferin, Lawrence West, Ossington, Pape and Woodbine. Brochures were distributed in the community, at TTC events, provided to the local Councillor and posted on the project page of the website, and all brochures provided readers with information about the scope and benefits of the project and the steps TTC is taking to reduce the impacts of construction.



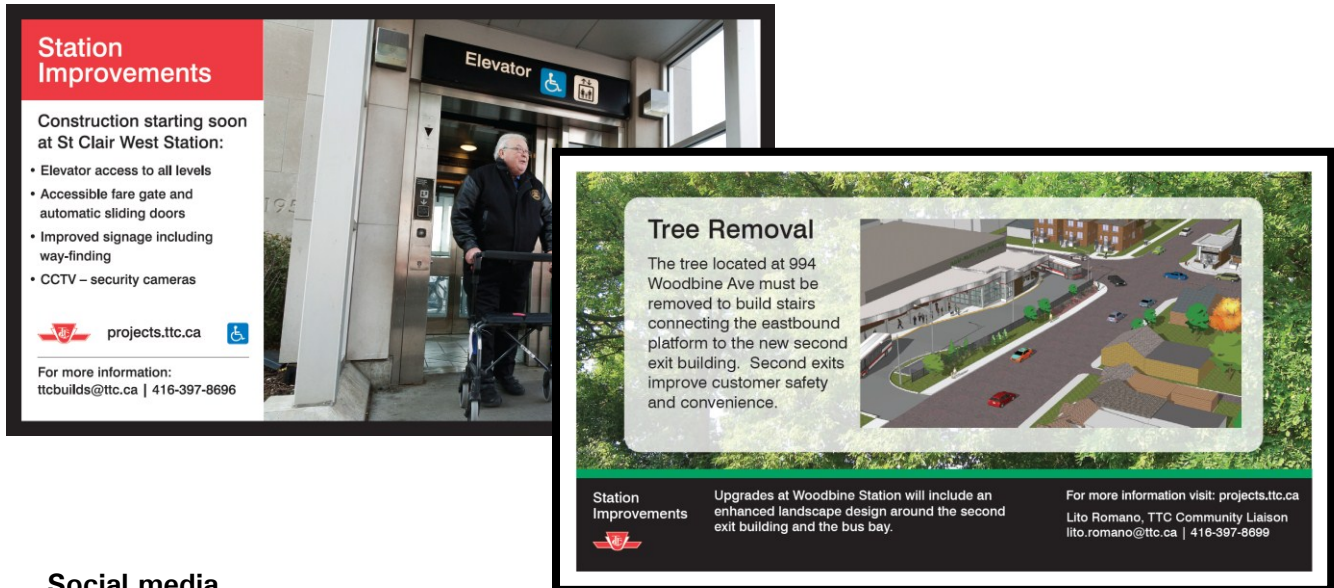
Ads

In 2013, community newspaper ad space was used to promote the benefits of the projects and to notify local residents of upcoming events and construction work that would affect their neighbourhoods. Ads were placed when the new elevator at Pape Station opened, after having used community newspaper advertising to inform residents and customers about the Pape Station closure, and previously about the online survey asking whether stakeholders wanted Pape Station to close in order to speed up construction.



Signage

ECE developed a proactive signage strategy with the goal of posting promotional and informational signs where construction work was either taking place or scheduled to begin in the near future. The types of signs include: project identification; coming soon; customized traffic management; alternate access; business open; and tree removal. As well, “red top” signs informing customers of construction impacts are developed and posted within subway stations wherever work is going on.



Social media

Social media played an important role this year with the Leslie Barns twitter account, which has 372 followers and has issued 184 tweets, both about construction and to promote the project and Leslieville businesses.

As well, TTC is very active on social media - @TTCnotices has more than 71,000 followers, and @BradTTC has more than 14,000 followers. TTC also has a popular Facebook page and YouTube channel, including the “Brad and Andy Explainer” video series. ECE used all of these methods to promote projects and provide important information to stakeholders. A “Brad and Andy Explainer” video was used to inform customers and residents about the closure of Pape Station, and a YouTube video promoted the “Sustainable Communities” award that TTC won from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for the revitalization of Victoria Park station project.



5 Conclusion

Proactive outreach at all stages of major TTC projects is essential to improve planning, design, and construction implementation. The TTC must do everything reasonably possible to reduce construction impacts and maintain open communication with our neighbours and customers. Community Liaison Officers as dedicated point persons for the public on major projects help identify issues early and resolve them. The Leslie Construction Liaison Group has proved to be an effective method to engage local stakeholders and reduce disruption on the Leslie Street project in 2013, and will be implemented for Woodbine Station and other major station projects in 2014. By engaging communities early and often, and improving plans based on community feedback, the TTC can reduce construction impacts and deliver challenging projects that make Toronto proud.