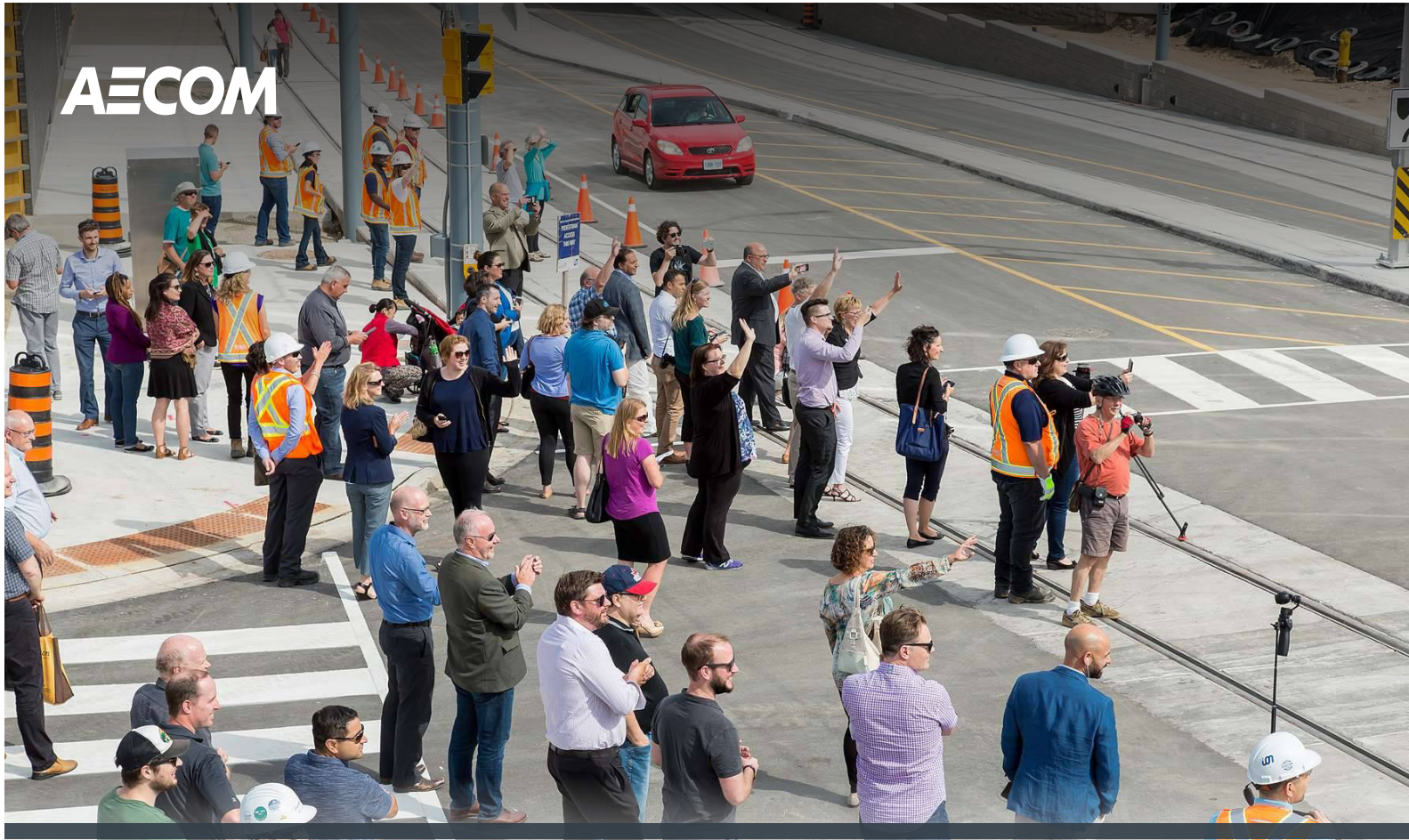


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ION Community Relations Keeps Construction on Track with Waterloo Region's New Light Rail Transit System

Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario Canada



Innovation

“This complex multi-year project demonstrates the value of engineering and community engagement professionals working together to ensure project deliverables are met, in a way that encourages and maintains the support of the community. At AECOM, we draw on this additional expertise when needed to ensure our projects have a social licence to proceed, raising the delivery of our engineering services to a new level.”

- Marko Prgin, Vice President Alternative Delivery, AECOM

Meeting Client Needs

"Throughout the design and construction of the Region of Waterloo's new LRT, Avril Fisker and her team of community relations and communication professionals worked directly with area businesses, residents and the media to help ease the inevitable concerns related to large infrastructure projects and to build enthusiasm for the future services. From the start, AECOM worked collaboratively with all of the GrandLinq consortium members, the Region and the area municipalities to build and execute the programs necessary to keep construction moving forward with appropriate consideration of the impacts to the community. Their efforts are key to GrandLinq's and the Region's ongoing success in establishing a new 19 km transit service that runs through two urban centres, in less than three years."

- Michael O'Neill, GrandLinq, General Manager





SUMMARY

The Region of Waterloo tasked GrandLinq Contractors – an Aecon/Kiewit partnership – to build a 19 km Light Rail Transit (LRT) through the heart of two urban centres. This \$818 million investment was the largest infrastructure project in the Region's history. AECOM's Community Relations Team was hired to keep the project on-track with support from the community. Three years and 5,000 community touchpoints later, the "ION" LRT system now stands as one of the Region's greatest accomplishments.



INNOVATION

To build ION, over 36 km of LRT track, 56 km of underground utilities (watermain, storm and sanitary), 56,000 m² of sidewalk and an overhead catenary system with 700 poles needed to be installed. All to connect two cities, in under three years, through the heart of two urban centres.

Construction of ION was the single-largest infrastructure project in the history of Waterloo Region – a community with over 500,000 residents – and completing this colossal investment was no easy task. GrandLinq Contractors (GLC) weren't the only ones tackling the difficulties of construction – the community also suffered its share. Daily, our Community Relations Team was the first point of contact between Regional staff, elected officials, the media, residents, businesses and GrandLinq staff with a goal to minimize construction impacts so this mega-project could keep moving forward.

Keeping this massive project on track wouldn't have been possible without seamlessly integrating the Community Relations Team within GLC's organization of engineers and crafts. Together, we needed to proactively plan, adapt and think differently to keep the support of the community.

Our Community Relations Manager was part of GLC's Senior Management Team, and our team always had a seat at the planning table to keep stakeholder needs top of mind. We worked hand-in-hand with the construction team to ensure stakeholder perspectives were understood and potential business risks and impacts were considered. Doing so meant GLC could focus efforts on finishing their work with fewer interruptions. To reduce complaints, we established communication protocols – good neighbour, issue management, service disruption and crisis – that were endorsed and communicated by construction leads to keep staff accountable to the community.

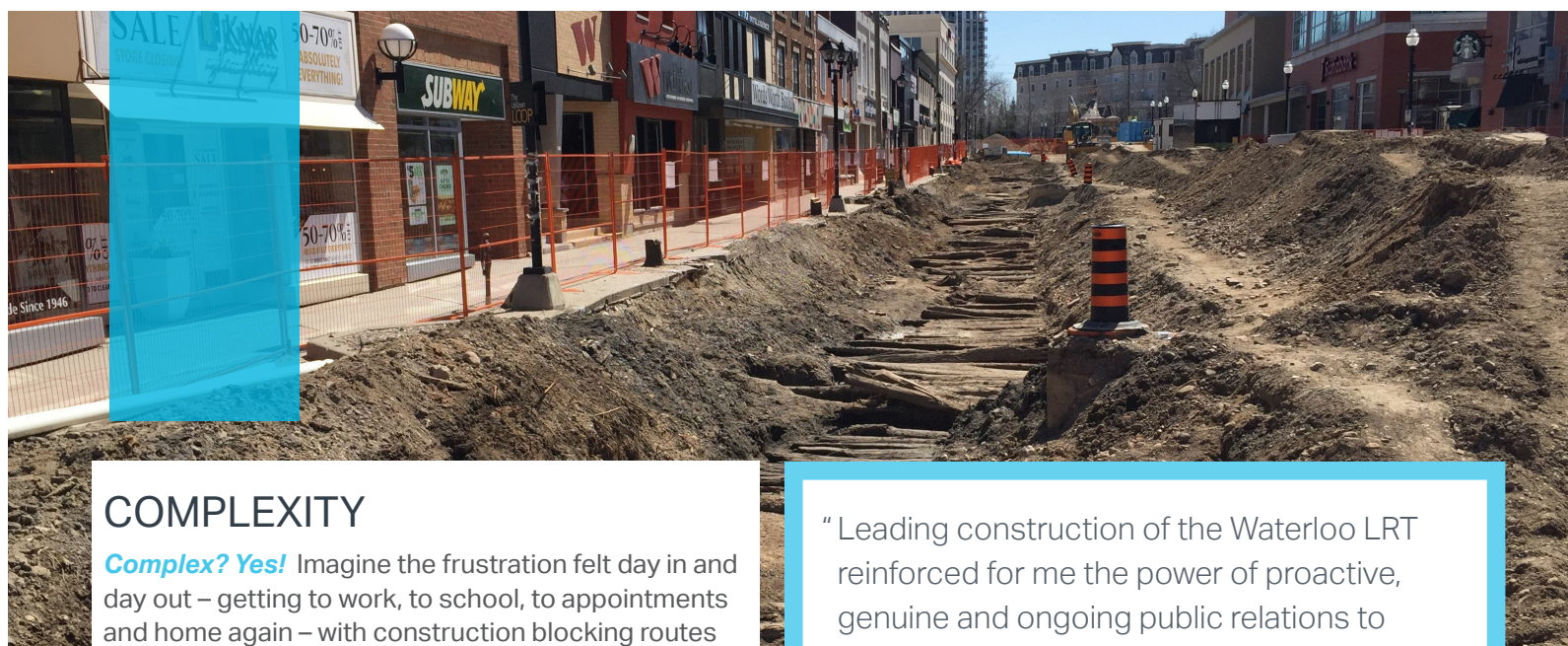
"This complex multi-year project demonstrates the value of engineering and community engagement professionals working together to ensure project deliverables are met, in a way that encourages and maintains the support of the community. At AECOM, we draw on this additional expertise when needed to ensure our projects have a social licence to proceed, raising the delivery of our engineering services to a new level."

Marko Prgin | Vice President Alternative Delivery, AECOM

When things did go awry – as they always do – our team led discussions with elected officials and senior Regional staff so they had the facts in-hand. Early-on, we also established relationships with media representatives, building trust through accurate and timely responses to general enquiries – these relationships paid off when urgent responses were needed.

Stakeholders need information and with the support of GLC Senior Management we proactively provided it, helping to avoid escalations and ease concerns. Construction staff worked alongside our team to deliver information, boosting our credibility within the community.

Our ability to integrate our Community Relations services, adapt and work differently garnered the results we were aiming for; trust and acceptance from the community. This allowed GLC to efficiently progress the build – from project kick-off through to substantial completion.



COMPLEXITY

Complex? Yes! Imagine the frustration felt day in and day out – getting to work, to school, to appointments and home again – with construction blocking routes and shaking up lives. With over 50 urban roadways impacted, access to over 700 businesses disrupted, service disruptions (planned and unplanned), unexpected archeological findings risking lengthy delays, and a huge heated-dome drawing media and community attention about costs, the largest infrastructure project in the Region would have derailed without proactive, effective and on-going communication.

Like any project of this size and scope, there was no shortage of complications:

- Unplanned service outages;
- Watermain and gas breaks;
- Construction delays;
- Inappropriate jobsite behavior; and
- Difficult stakeholders.

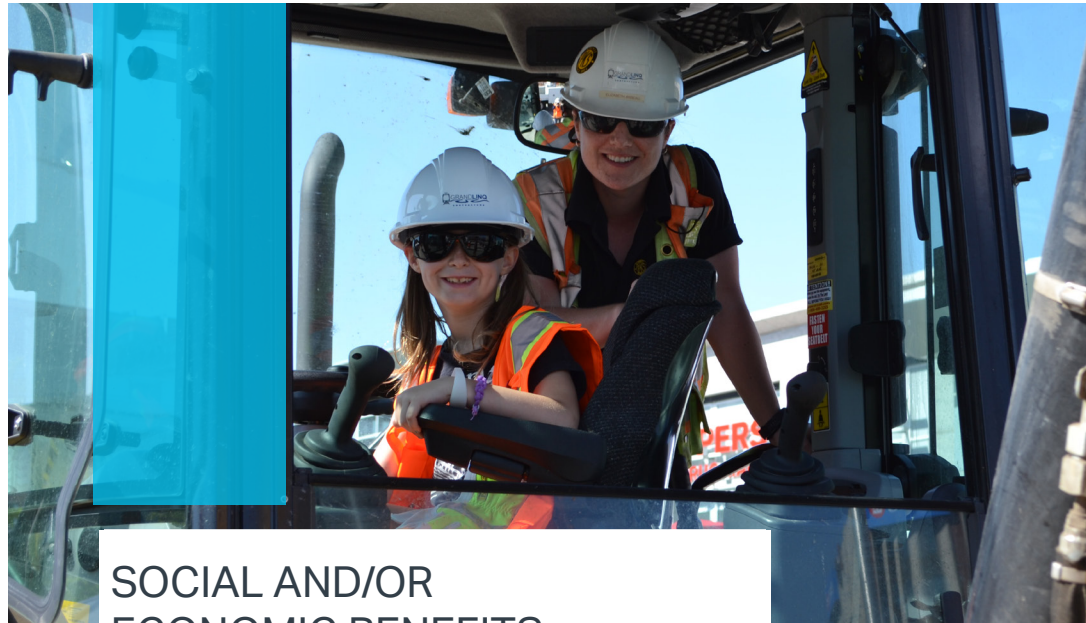
The difference was in the way we handled complications. For all, immediate steps were taken by our Community Relations Team to understand the predicament, provide accurate information to key stakeholders, and work with construction staff to resolve issues and mitigate impacts; all of which helped ease community concerns and build trust that GLC cares.

An example...GLC uncovered a 'Corduroy Road' dating back to the 1800s, delaying construction for nearly two months while an archeological investigation was completed. This stoppage could have resulted in GLC missing a significant milestone, so to get back on-schedule we partnered with local businesses to get letters of support for a noise by-law exemption which would allow us to make up lost time at night. With the businesses' backing, municipal elected officials approved the exemption enabling GrandLinq to complete their work on time.

"Leading construction of the Waterloo LRT reinforced for me the power of proactive, genuine and ongoing public relations to help drive successful outcomes. Without effective communication and community engagement, my focus would have been divided between getting the job built and managing the many stakeholders interested in the project – residents, businesses, senior staff, elected officials and the media. AECOM's team of community engagement professionals allowed me to focus my time where it was best spent...making sure we finished the job on time and budget, and to the satisfaction of the owner."

John Almeida | GrandLinq Contractors (Aecon),
Construction Manager





SOCIAL AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS

Effective community relations helped avoid costly construction delays, and allowed GLC to work in ways that saved money. For example, a shopping district in Waterloo needed new underground utilities, LRT track and infrastructure, and sidewalks. Business owners and elected officials initially demanded that the road remain open; making this construction a very lengthy endeavour.

Enter AECOM...using the trust we had already earned, we created an approach that worked for everyone. A complete road closure was to the advantage of GLC (hundreds of man hours and countless dollars would be saved), but the businesses needed convincing. We helped them see that because construction would move faster, the time spent impacted would be less – meaning less time with fewer customers, and doors and streets unimpeded during the critical Christmas shopping season. With this understanding the new plan was accepted, crews finished their work in the promised time, and the area businesses held a community road-open celebration.

Other examples of how our Community Relations Team, together with GLC, supported the economic viability of local businesses throughout construction include:

BIA Sponsorships

Designated customer parking was paid for and directional maps provided, and business advertising on construction hoarding was subsidized.

Community Events

The “Big Dig” brought people to shopping districts and encouraged community ownership of the new LRT system.

“As Executive Director of a thriving BIA, it was my job to help our members maintain vibrant and healthy businesses throughout ION construction. I could always count on AECOM’s Community Relations Team to consider impacts to local businesses, listen to our suggestions and come up with recommendations that would help reduce those impacts; all the while balancing the need to get ION built. Their commitment to transparency and providing timely information allowed them to establish strong personal relationships with both the UpTown BIA and many of our local business owners. Although construction is never easy or without its toll, this team’s presence helped our businesses feel heard, understood and engaged.”

Executive Director (Past),
UpTown Waterloo BIA | Patti Brooks

Service Disruption Coordination

Businesses need to be open even if disruptions are required. Our team worked with business owners to understand when best to plan an outage.

Advance Notice

Allowing businesses to plan their shipments and deliveries.



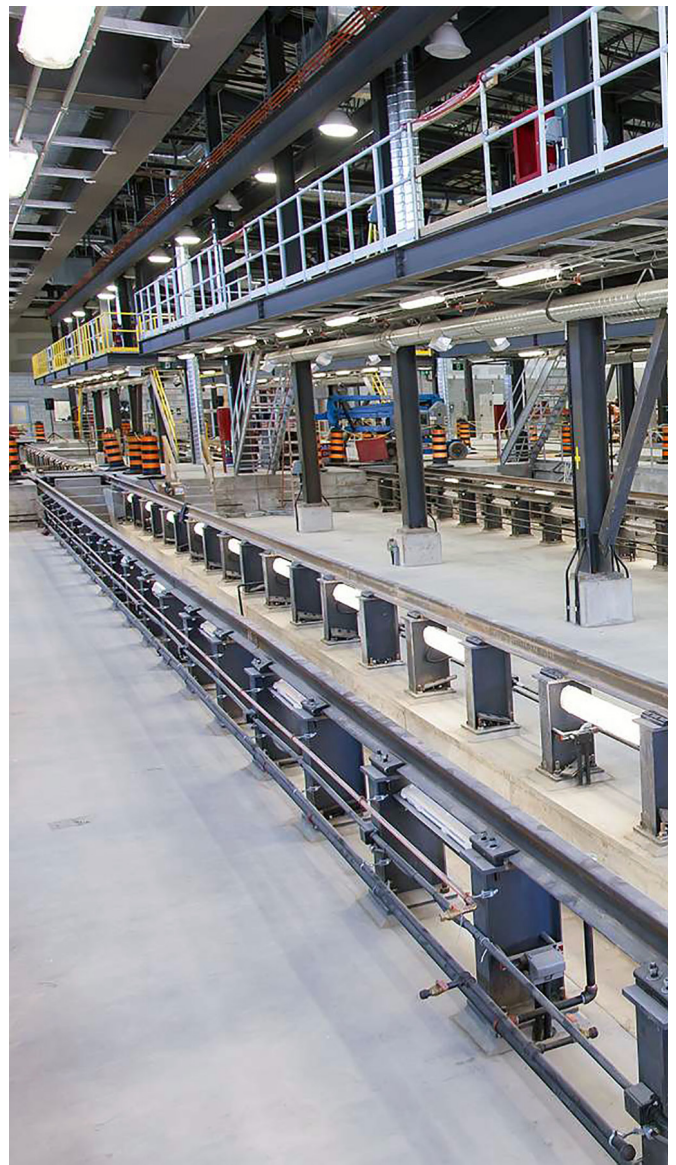
ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFITS

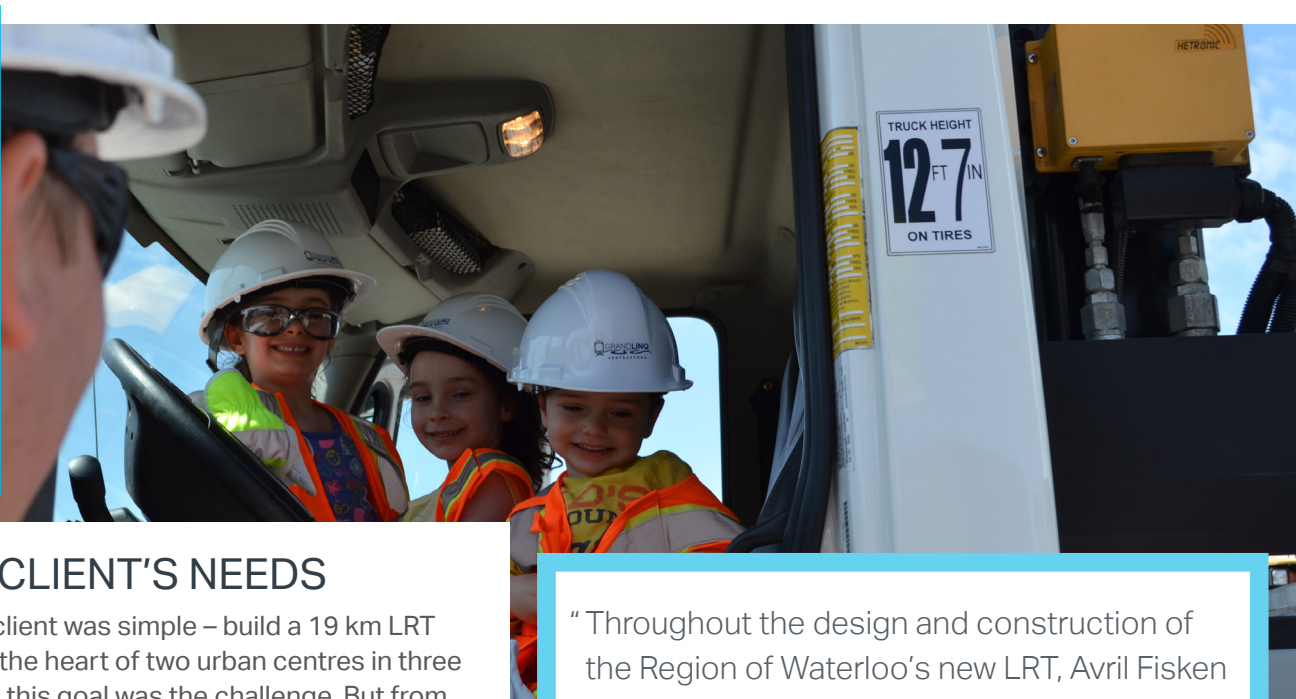
By ION's opening, more than 36,000 people will live within 600 m of an ION stop prompting about 25,000 daily rides. Moving more people, ION will reduce per trip greenhouse gas emissions, provide an alternative to car use and will be a more active form of transportation helping to improve our environment and our health.

During construction, our team worked with GLC to instill that being a 'good neighbour' was a requirement of the job. Our 'Good Neighbour Policy' – provided to staff at orientation – set the tone for minimizing construction impacts, including environmental nuisances caused by messy construction sites, littering, idling of vehicles, and unnecessary noise and vibration.

Our team was also key in resolving environmental issues with challenging or sensitive stakeholders along the ION route. For example, through an initial 'discovery meeting,' we developed an early relationship with a hospital adjacent to the route; whose staff were not only concerned about the inevitable construction nuisances but also had grave concerns regarding vibration and the potential impact to sensitive equipment.

To resolve their concerns and allow GLC to move forward with construction, our Community Relations Team worked with hospital staff to understand their needs and to translate engineering plans and results to a language they understood. Our efforts, enabled by strong relationships with hospital, GLC and AECOM engineering staff, allowed the environmental and engineering specialists to do what they do best, focus on the necessary technical work without the burden of conversations and potential conflicts with sensitive stakeholders.





MEETING CLIENT'S NEEDS

The goal of our client was simple – build a 19 km LRT system through the heart of two urban centres in three years. Achieving this goal was the challenge. But from the get-go it was readily apparent that our community relations efforts could build the community support that would help enable GrandLinq Contractors to achieve their lofty goal.

What enabled community support? In a nutshell, awareness about construction and the impacts in time for residents, business and elected-officials to make their own plans, and trust in GLC to appropriately consider and respond when impacts were avoidable.

Many different tactics were used to keep people up-to-date and engaged:

- A dedicated construction phone line, website and email address (4,000 inquiries);
- One-on-one meetings (over 500);
- Bi-weekly construction updates (during the full life of the project);
- Local sponsorships; and
- Participation in community events/presentations.

What else? Social media posts, disruption notices, video project updates, way-finding signage, factsheets and a project video for community events.

We know that projects like ION don't come up often. Building such a visionary and transformative infrastructure project wouldn't be possible without the commitment of the many disciplines involved – designers, engineers, craftsmen, and quality, health and safety, environment and community relations specialists. Each have different and important roles to play.

Our role was to build strong relationships so that GrandLinq Contractors could complete construction on time and budget, and to the satisfaction of the owner (the Region of Waterloo.) All parties involved agree we did that 'in spades' – pardon the pun.

"Throughout the design and construction of the Region of Waterloo's new LRT, Avril Fiskien and her team of community relations and communication professionals worked directly with area businesses, residents and the media to help ease the inevitable concerns related to large infrastructure projects and to build enthusiasm for the future services. From the start, AECOM worked collaboratively with all of the GrandLinq consortium members, the Region and the area municipalities to build and execute the programs necessary to keep construction moving forward with appropriate consideration of the impacts to the community. Their efforts are key to GrandLinq's and the Region's on-going success in establishing a new 19 km transit service that runs through two urban centres, in less than three years."

Michael O'Neill | GrandLinq, General Manager

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Construction Notice

Construction Update: Parking at Crowne Plaza Hotel Upper Deck

Construction of Stage 1 ION, the Region of Waterloo's light rail transit (LRT) service, is underway in select areas across Kitchener and Waterloo.

Starting on Friday June 26, for a period of approximately two to three days, crews will be working directly in front of your residence on Charles from Eby to Benton. During this time, we need to periodically interrupt access to your driveway. We request residents park across the street at the Crowne Plaza Hotel on the upper deck. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated in this matter.

Please visit the Hotel's reception desk to receive a complementary parking pass on the day(s) your access is impacted.

Please contact us if you have questions or require additional assistance. A GrandLinq Contractors representative will respond within one business day and will work with you to address any questions or concerns.

Building a light rail transit (LRT) service to support planned growth in Waterloo Region is an enormous undertaking and we recognize that this work will cause some temporary inconveniences.

We appreciate your patience as we work to bring ION to Waterloo Region.

What is ION?

ION is a visionary plan that will help shape the community for the future by bringing LRT to Waterloo Region in two stages. Stage 1 includes a 19-kilometre route from the Conestoga Mall transit terminal in Waterloo to the Fairview Park Mall transit terminal in Kitchener. Stage 1 also features 17 kilometres of adapted bus rapid transit (aBRT) from the Ainslie Street transit terminal in Cambridge to the Fairview Park Mall transit terminal in Kitchener. Stage 2 will see the Region convert the aBRT line to LRT, creating a seamless 37-kilometre route of LRT across the three urban centres – Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo. The Region is building ION aBRT. Construction of ION aBRT started in July 2014 and the service will begin operating in 2015.

About GrandLinq

In March 2014, GrandLinq was awarded the contract to design, build, finance, operate and maintain ION LRT in Waterloo Region. GrandLinq is a partnership of Plenary Group, Meridiam Infrastructure, Aecon, Kiewit and Keolis. The design and construction of ION will be carried out by GrandLinq Contractors, a joint venture of Aecon and Kiewit under a subcontract with GrandLinq.

Questions About Construction? 1-844-625-1010

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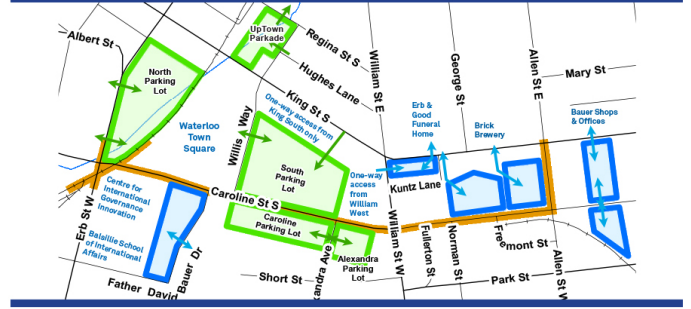
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Region of Waterloo

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Social and/or Economic Benefits

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About AECOM

AECOM is built to deliver a better world. We design, build, finance and operate infrastructure assets for governments, businesses and organizations in more than 150 countries. As a fully integrated firm, we connect knowledge and experience across our global network of experts to help clients solve their most complex challenges. From high-performance buildings and infrastructure, to resilient communities and environments, to stable and secure nations, our work is transformative, differentiated and vital. A Fortune 500 firm, AECOM had revenue of approximately \$18.2 billion during fiscal year 2017. See how we deliver what others can only imagine at aecom.com and [@AECOM](https://www.instagram.com/aecom).