



City of Hamilton
LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SUB-COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Meeting #: 23-002
Date: June 2, 2023
Time: 10:00 a.m.
Location: Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Carrie McIntosh, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 2729

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| 2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA | |
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- 9.1 Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update (PED23150) (City
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14. GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS

- 14.1 Items Considered Complete and Needing to be Removed:

- a. Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update
Addressed as Item 8.1 (PED21139) (today's agenda)
Item on OBL: C

15. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

16. ADJOURNMENT

4.1



LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES 23-001

10:00 a.m.

Friday, March 31, 2023

Council Chambers

Hamilton City Hall

71 Main Street West

Present: Mayor A. Horwath, Councillors C. Cassar, J.P. Danko, M. Francis, C. Kroetsch, M. Wilson and N. Nann

Absent with Regrets: Councillor T. Hwang

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REFERRED TO GENERAL ISSUES COMMITTEE FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. APPOINTMENT OF COMMITTEE CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR (Item 1)

(a) (Nann/Kroetsch)

That Councillor M. Wilson be appointed as Chair of the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee for 2023.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
 Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
 Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
 Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
 Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
 Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
 Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
 Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

(b) (Kroetsch/Cassar)

That Councillor Nann be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee for 2023.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
 Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
 Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
 Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
 Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
 Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
 Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
 Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

2. Schedule of Discussion Topics and Presentations for Future Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee Meetings (PED23091) (City Wide) (Item 9.1)

(Kroetsch/Cassar)

That Report PED23091 respecting Schedule of Discussion Topics and Presentations for Future Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee Meetings, be received.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
 Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
 Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
 Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
 Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
 Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
 Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
 Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) APPROVAL OF AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda.

6. DELEGATION REQUESTS

- 6.1 Sam Nabi, Hamilton Community Benefits Network respecting Recommendations for the Preservation and Creation of Affordable Housing in Hamilton's B-Line LRT Corridor (for a future meeting)
- 6.2 Mohammed Alshalalfeh and Karl Andrus, Hamilton Community Benefits Network, respecting HCBN's Community Engagement

Findings on Resident Aspirations and Wants for Community Benefits Related to the Project (for a future meeting)

(Cassar/Nann)

That the agenda for the March 31, 2023 Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee meeting be approved, as amended.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
Yes - Ward 5 Matt Francis
Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)**(i) July 18, 2022 (Item 4.1)****(Nann/Danko)**

That the Minutes of the July 18, 2022 meeting of the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee be approved, as presented.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

(d) DELEGATION REQUESTS (Item 6)

(Cassar/Kroetsch)

That the following Delegation Requests, be approved for a future meeting:

- (i) Sam Nabi, Hamilton Community Benefits Network respecting Recommendations for the Preservation and Creation of Affordable Housing in Hamilton's B-Line LRT Corridor (Item 6.1)
- (ii) Mohammed Alshalalfeh and Karl Andrus, Hamilton Community Benefits Network, respecting HCBN's Community Engagement Findings on Resident Aspirations and Wants for Community Benefits Related to the Project (Item 6.2)

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
 Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
 Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
 Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
 Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
 Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
 Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
 Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

(e) DISCUSSION ITEMS (Item 11)

- (i) **Inclusionary Zoning Along the LRT Corridor (Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee - Citizen Committee Report) (referred from AF&A Report 22-017, Item 9) (Item 11.1)**

(Kroetsch/Cassar)

That the Report respecting Inclusionary Zoning Along the LRT Corridor (Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee - Citizen Committee Report, be received and referred to Planning Staff for a report back to the Planning Committee.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
 Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
 Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
 Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
 Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang

Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar

(f) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

(Danko/Francis)

That there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:45 a.m.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 7 to 0, as follows:

Yes - Mayor Andrea Horwath
Yes - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
Yes - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
Yes - Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann
Not Present - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
Yes - Ward 5 Councillor Matt Francis
Yes - Ward 8 Councillor John Paul Danko
Yes - Ward 12 Councillor Craig Cassar


Respectfully submitted,

Councillor M. Wilson, Chair,
Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee

Carrie McIntosh
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk



INFORMATION REPORT

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| TO: | Chair and Members Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | June 2, 2023 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Abdul Shaikh (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6559 Chris McCafferty (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2320 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Abdul Shaikh Director, Hamilton LRT Project Office Planning and Economic Development Department |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the Council Meeting of August 12, 2022, Council approved the following direction:

Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update

- (i) That staff be directed to report back to the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee at the September 26, 2022 meeting, respecting how the project is being managed on behalf of the City, the design considerations, the City's policy frameworks that will be informing the design process and how the changes since 2019 can be incorporated into the design.
- (ii) That staff be directed to prepare the report in full collaboration with Metrolinx, in order to ensure it is a joint project.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 7

INFORMATION

The cancellation of the September 26, 2022, LRT Sub-Committee meeting precluded staff from satisfying Council's direction at that time. This information report addresses Council's direction through the governance frameworks established for this project. This information report also provides a design update of the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, including key modifications currently under consideration.

GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORKS

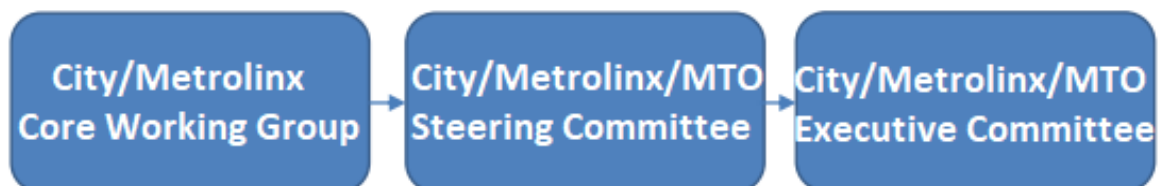
City-Metrolinx Governance Framework

In accordance with Section 17 of the MOU, the City and Metrolinx worked together and developed a City of Hamilton and Metrolinx governance framework, as shown in Figure 1. This framework will be used throughout the lifecycle of the project. The purpose of the City-Metrolinx governance framework is to accomplish the following:

- streamline intergovernmental relationships with respect to delivery of capital programs and projects that impact transit expansion;
- identify, escalate and resolve intergovernmental delivery issues affecting capital programs; and,
- provide structured forums for senior staff from each organization to advance shared objectives, seek strategic direction and input and guide collaboration between the partners.

The City-Metrolinx governance framework includes the formation of the City-Metrolinx Core Working Group, City-Metrolinx-MTO Steering Committee and City-MX-MTO Executive Team.

Figure 1: City-Metrolinx Governance Framework



SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 7

City-Metrolinx Core Working Group

The City Core Working Team, along with their counterparts from Metrolinx and LRT consultants, form the joint City-Metrolinx Core Working Group. In addition to workshops focused on specific design elements, the Core Working Group meets bi-weekly to discuss LRT matters. Representation from the City Extended Resource Team (CERT) is requested where deemed appropriate to the subject matter.

City-Metrolinx-Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Steering Committee

Comprised of General Managers, Executive Vice-Presidents, Directors and Senior Sponsor staff representing the City, Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation, the joint City-Metrolinx-MTO Steering Committee is responsible for the immediate oversight of the Working Groups and the resolution of issues escalated by them.

City-Metrolinx-Ministry of Transportation (MTO) Executive Committee.

Comprised of the City Manager, Chief Executive Officer, Associate Deputy Minister representing the City, Metrolinx and MTO, the joint City-Metrolinx-MTO Executive Committee is responsible for overall oversight of the LRT project and the resolution of issues escalated to them by the Steering Committee.

Internal Governance Framework

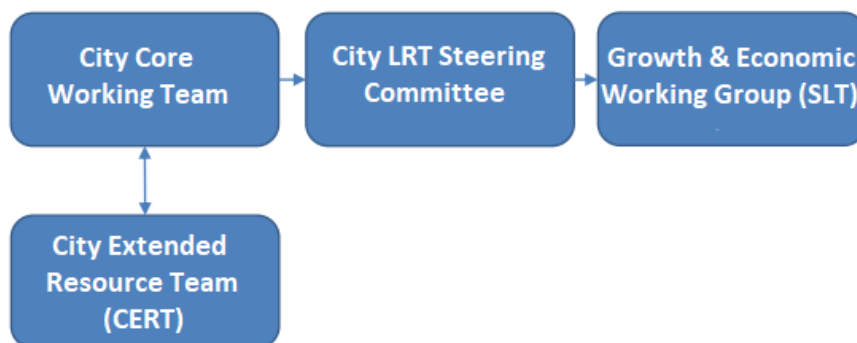
The LRT Project Office developed the governance structure, shown in Figure 2, to accomplish the following:

- establish a mandate for the LRT Core Working Team, being comprised of the LRT Project Office and other staff dedicated to the LRT project;
- develop principles for interactions with senior leadership and other divisions across the City;
- initiate mechanisms to facilitate LRT approvals from non-core staff; and,
- create a municipal escalation framework.

The governance framework includes the formation of the City Core Working Team, City Extended Resource Team (CERT) and the City LRT Steering Committee. The Steering Committee reports to the City's existing SLT Growth and Economic Working Group.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 7

Figure 2: Internal Governance Framework



City Core Working Team

The Core Working Team is comprised of LRT Project Office and staff who are dedicated to the LRT project but are embedded in stakeholder departments. Representation includes Hamilton Water, HSR, Traffic, Communications, Finance, Legal and Human Resources. These staff are deemed Persons Most Responsible and meet regularly to coordinate the actions of their respective divisions and solicit input from other City staff where necessary. The team provides input into the LRT design and procurement documents on behalf of the City.

City Extended Resource Team (CERT)

The City Extended Resource Team (CERT) is a resource to the Core Working Team where input or endorsement is required on items which are relevant to their respective divisions. CERT is composed of approximately 50 service area leads (Supervisors or Managers) who provide supplemental knowledge or services to the LRT project on a limited basis.

Light Rail Transit (LRT) Steering Committee

The LRT Steering Committee meets monthly with the Core Working Team and provides oversight and direction and endorses actions where solicited. The committee is comprised of the General Managers and key divisional directors from the Public Works, Planning and Economic Development and Finance and Corporate Services departments. The General Manager, Planning and Economic Development also serves as the Project Sponsor.

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Growth and Economic Working Group (SLT)

The LRT Steering Committee updates and reports to the existing Growth and Economic Working Group (SLT). Additionally, this Working Group provides direction on escalated matters as required.

The City's internal governance framework described above details how City staff is organized and aligned to ensure the City's interests are protected. The Core Working Team is responsible for evaluation of design modifications in advance of discussions with Metrolinx and working together with CERT members to identify issues and provide solutions. This framework ensures the engagement and input of appropriate City staff and facilitates a comprehensive and coordinated set of recommendations to the LRT Sub-committee and Metrolinx.

For example, the need to reevaluate the number and spacing of pedestrian crossing opportunities in the LRT corridor was identified by the City. Warrants and an initial set of criteria for them were generated by Transportation Planning staff. Together with the Core Working Team and CERT members representing Traffic, several additional locations for Intersection Pedestrian Signals (IPS) have been evaluated and prioritized for possible inclusion in the LRT project.

Another example is the accommodation of traffic during and post-LRT construction and the integration of the operational changes contemplated in the HSR (Re)envision exercise and network redesign. Initial workshops have taken place and a commitment has been made to continue discussions with HSR, Traffic, Transportation Planning and staff delivering the Main Street two-way conversion. Similarly, for enhanced streetscape opportunities, the working group invited staff from Planning and Climate Change Initiatives to explore opportunities for widening the boulevard and the installation of new trees.

The external and internal governance frameworks ensure City and Metrolinx staff are appropriately engaged in the development of the LRT project in a coordinated, collaborative way. Additionally, it defines the processes and requisite leadership staff who are empowered to adjudicate when staff from each party disagree.

DESIGN UPDATE

In 2007, the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) identified Higher Order Transit for the B-Line corridor. In 2011, the City and Metrolinx completed Preliminary Design and Feasibility Study through an Environmental Project Report (EPR), which identified Light Rail Transit as the preferred solution and completed the preliminary design of the corridor. In 2017, Metrolinx and City completed the EPR addendum, which included some modifications to the design completed in 2011.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) - Page 6 of 7

During Metrolinx's 2018 procurement process, City staff submitted the following reports which described specific changes which had been incorporated into the design:

- Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update (PED18116) received by Council on May 31, 2018;
- Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update (PED19100) received by Council on May 15, 2019; and,
- Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update and Other Metrolinx Initiatives (PED19100(a)) received by Council on December 4, 2019.

From project cancellation in 2019 and reactivation of the project in 2021, the City completed or initiated key City-wide guiding documents including the Vision Zero Strategy, Complete Street Design Guidelines, Climate Change Action Strategy, City-wide Transportation Master Plan, Main Street Two-Way conversion and the Truck Route Master Plan.

Since the reactivation of the project, the City and Metrolinx have established processes to reconfirm the original components of the design and identify the requisite revisions to address the current goals and needs of the City. Staff have provided updates on the design components currently under review in the following reports:

- Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Design Update (PED22118) received by the LRT Sub-Committee on May 16, 2022; and,
- Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Design Update (PED22118(a)) received by LRT Sub-Committee on July 18, 2022.

The reports further synthesized the specific components into 6 key themes:

- 1) Pedestrian Environment;
- 2) Cycling Facility and Connectivity;
- 3) Transit Connectivity;
- 4) Streetscape Elements;
- 5) Traffic Network; and,
- 6) Infrastructure Opportunities.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Governance Frameworks and Design Update (PED23139) (City Wide) - Page 7 of 7

During the current term of Council, staff provided an update on the review process and a schedule of information which would be brought forward at subsequent meetings in the following report:

- Schedule of Discussion Topics and Presentations for Future Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee Meetings (PED23091) received by the LRT Sub-Committee on March 23, 2023

The City LRT project website currently hosts the design drawings created by Metrolinx and City LRT staff in 2017 at the completion of the EPR addendum. Using these design drawings as a base, staff have created a set of plans in Appendix “A” to Report PED23139 with notes and annotations which identify some of the locations where modifications are under consideration and, more specifically, where revisions would be required to keep the LRT design in alignment with the six key themes being evaluated.

It should also be noted while efforts are being made to update the design to the current requirements, the design will continue to evolve during the detailed design stage when Metrolinx retains the project partners through procurement of the LRT project. City staff remain committed to providing updates to members of the LRT Sub-Committee throughout the evolution of the design. Further, as they are made available by Metrolinx and the Project Partner, staff will place revised drawings on the project website.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PED23139 - Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) – Design Illustration

Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project LRT Sub-Committee - Appendix 'A' June 2, 2023

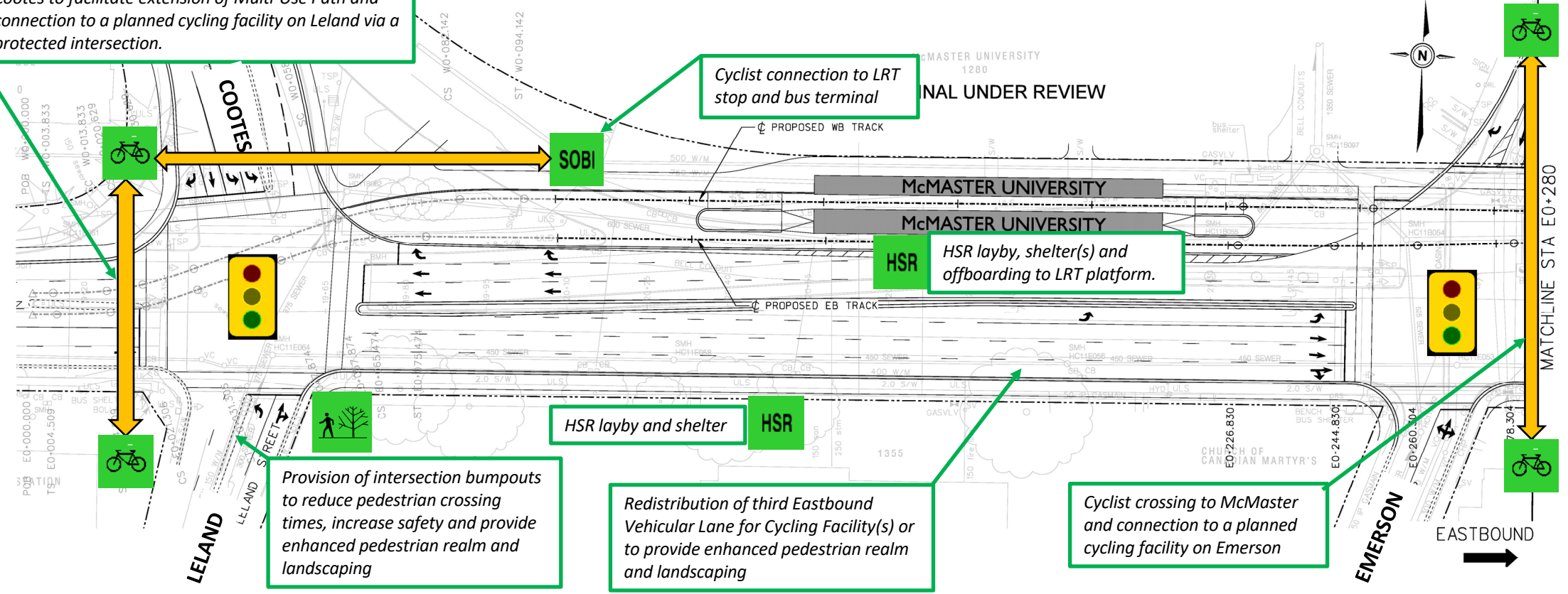
City Design Themes being Evaluated



Hamilton

Removal of dedicated SB to WB right turn lane on Cootes to facilitate extension of Multi-Use Path and connection to a planned cycling facility on Leland via a protected intersection.

MAIN STREET W



CITY DESIGN THEMES BEING EVALUATED:

Additional Pedestrian Crossings



Integration with HSR (Re)envision and/or Shelter Locations



Integration with Existing and Planned Cycling facilities



Placement of SoBi Hubs

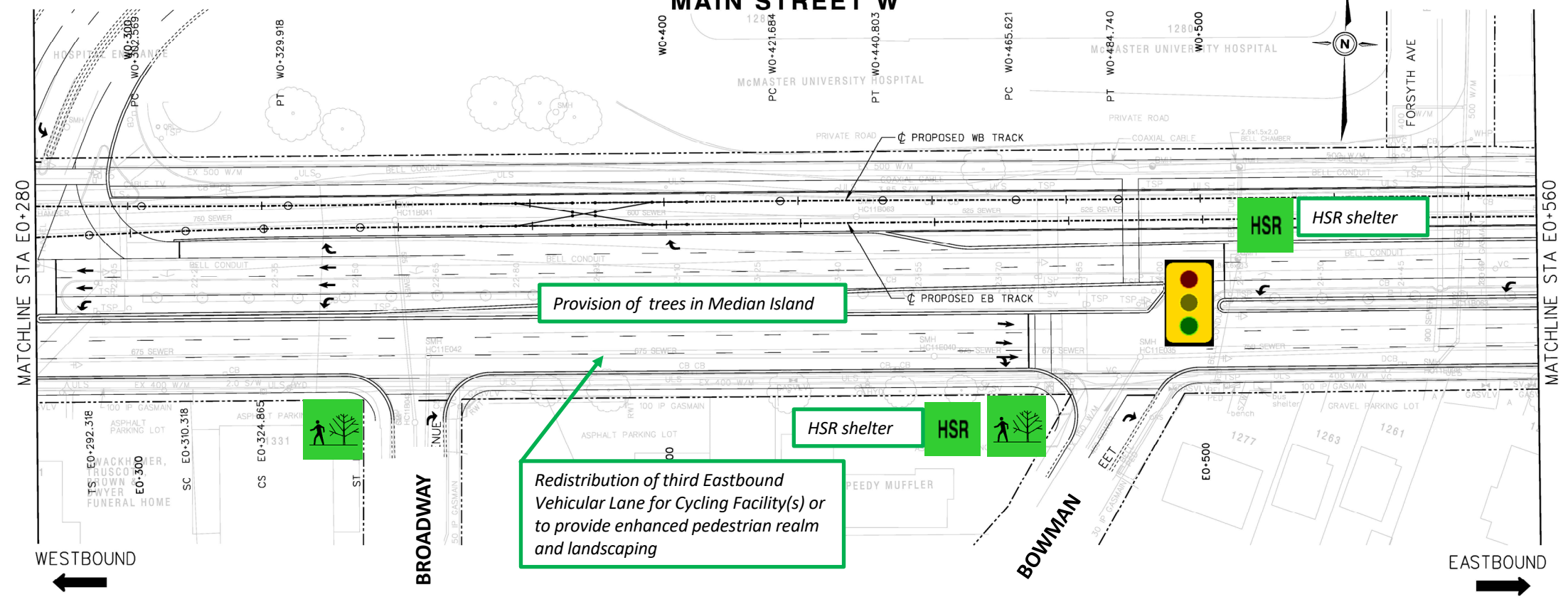


Provision of sidestreet bumpouts, tight radii and elevated crosswalks on minor streets to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, increase safety and create opportunities for enhanced landscaping and streetscaping.



Subject to further discussion with Metrolinx and Detailed Design

MAIN STREET W



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Additional Pedestrian Crossings



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Integration with Existing and Planned Cycling facilities



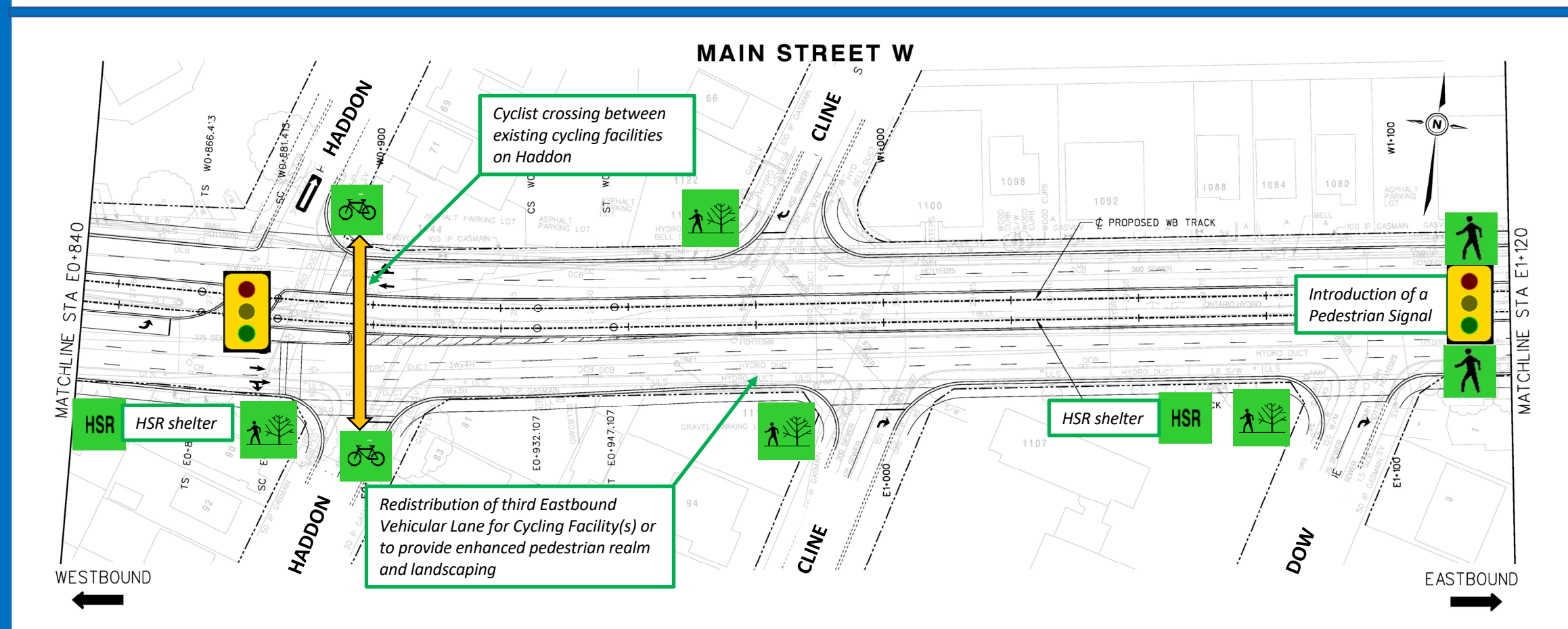
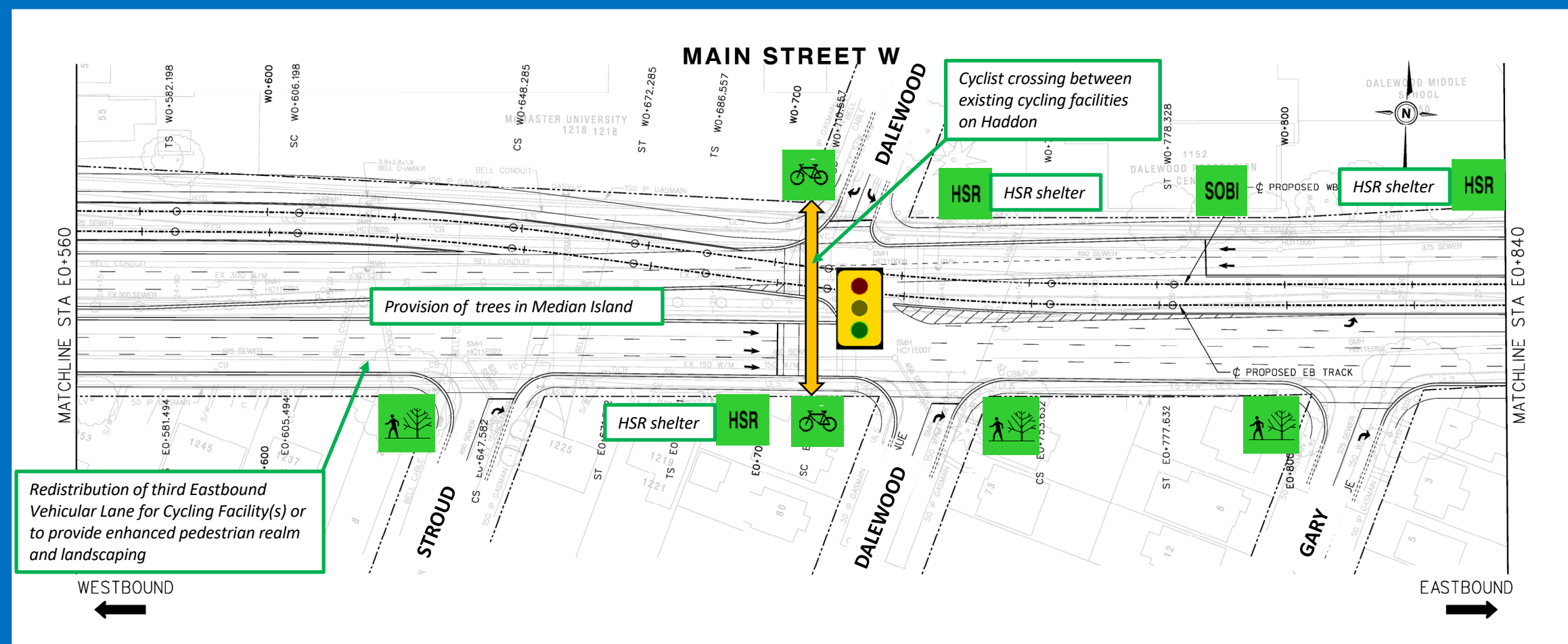
Placement of SoBi Hubs



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Subject to further discussion with Metrolinx and Detailed Design



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Integration with Existing and Planned Cycling facilities



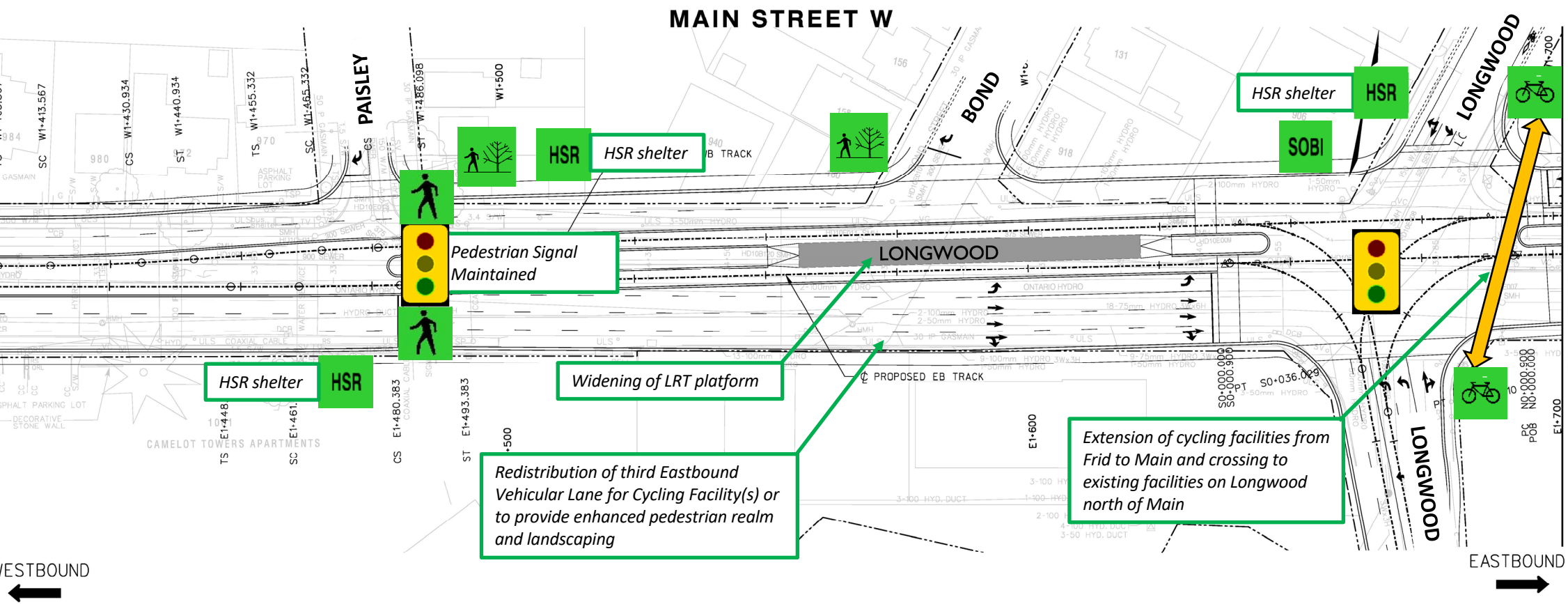
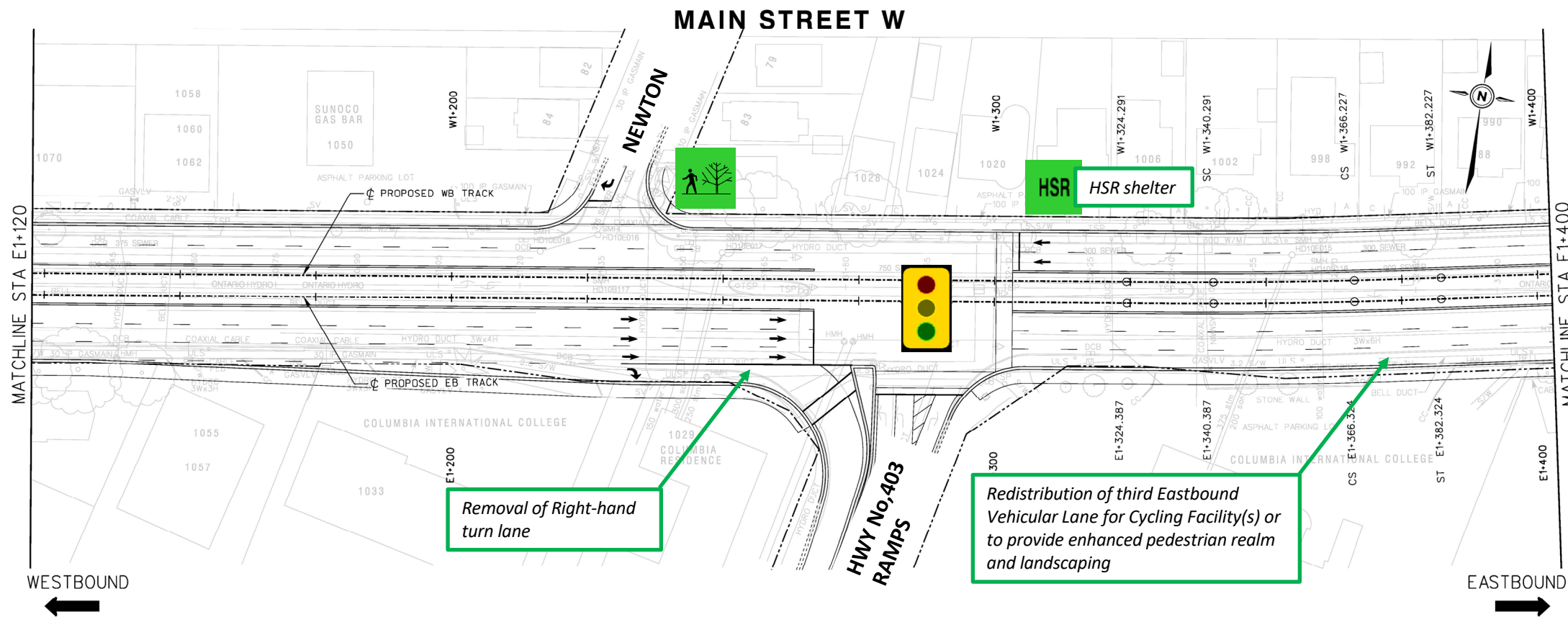
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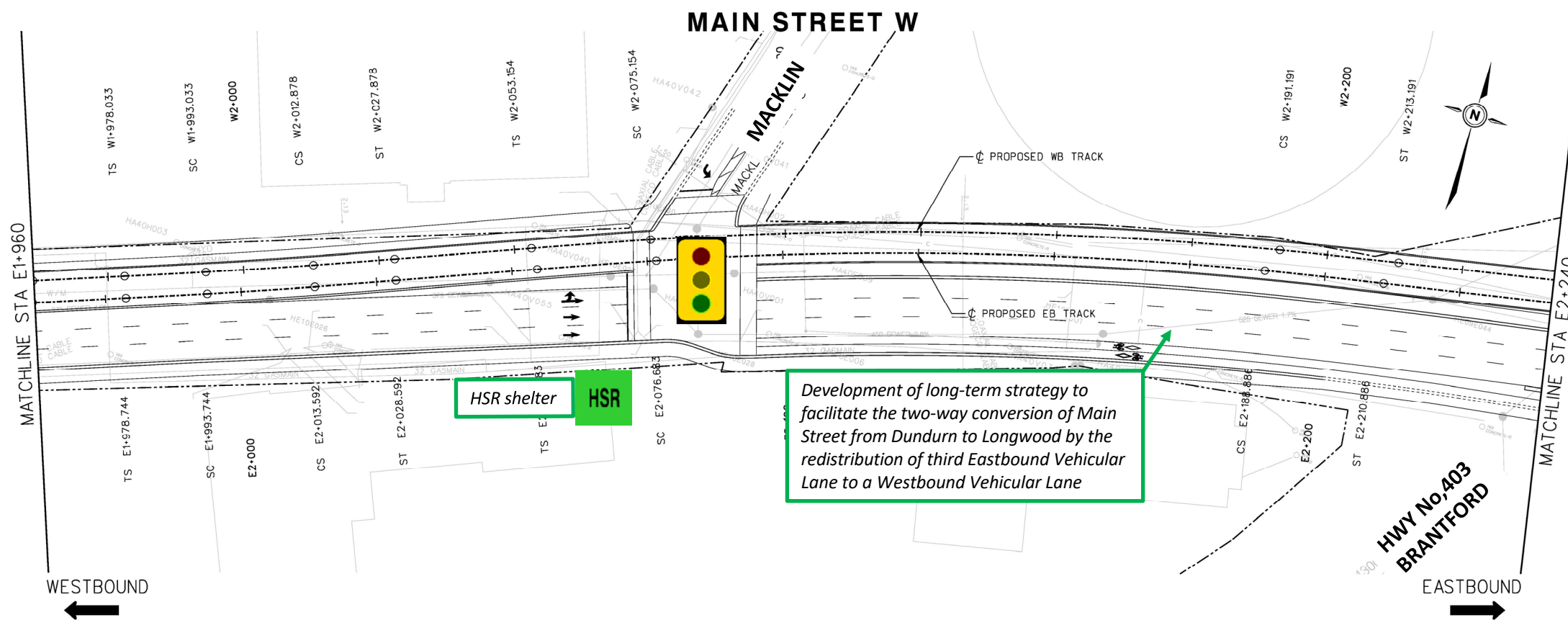
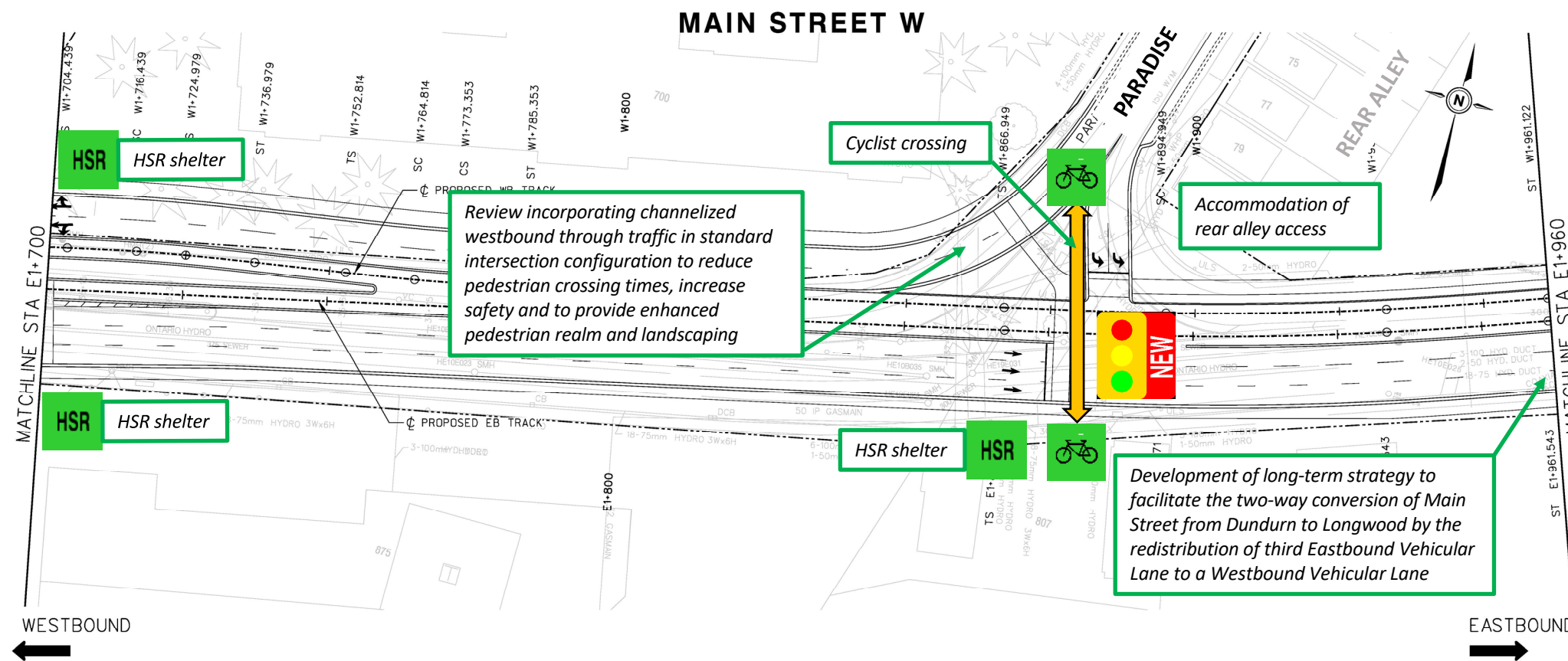
Placement of SoBi Hubs

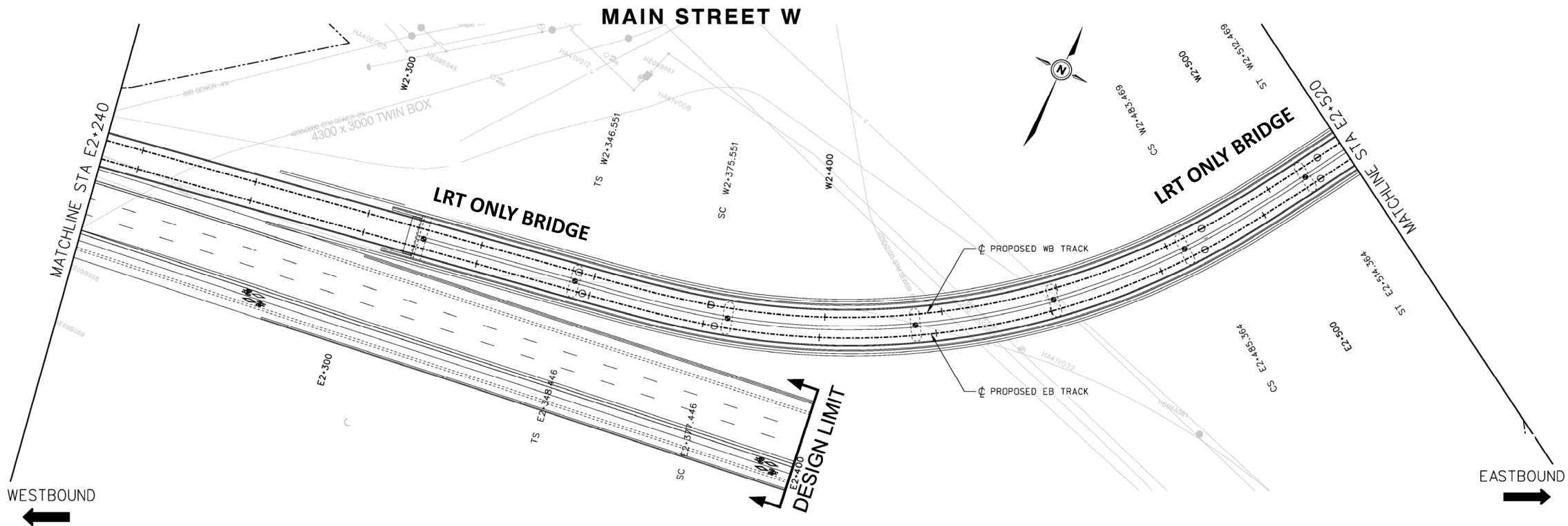


Provision of sidestreet bumpouts, tight radii and elevated crosswalks on minor streets to reduce pedestrian crossing distances, increase safety and create opportunities for enhanced landscaping and streetscaping.



Subject to further discussion with Metrolinx and Detailed Design





CITY DESIGN THEMES BEING EVALUATED:

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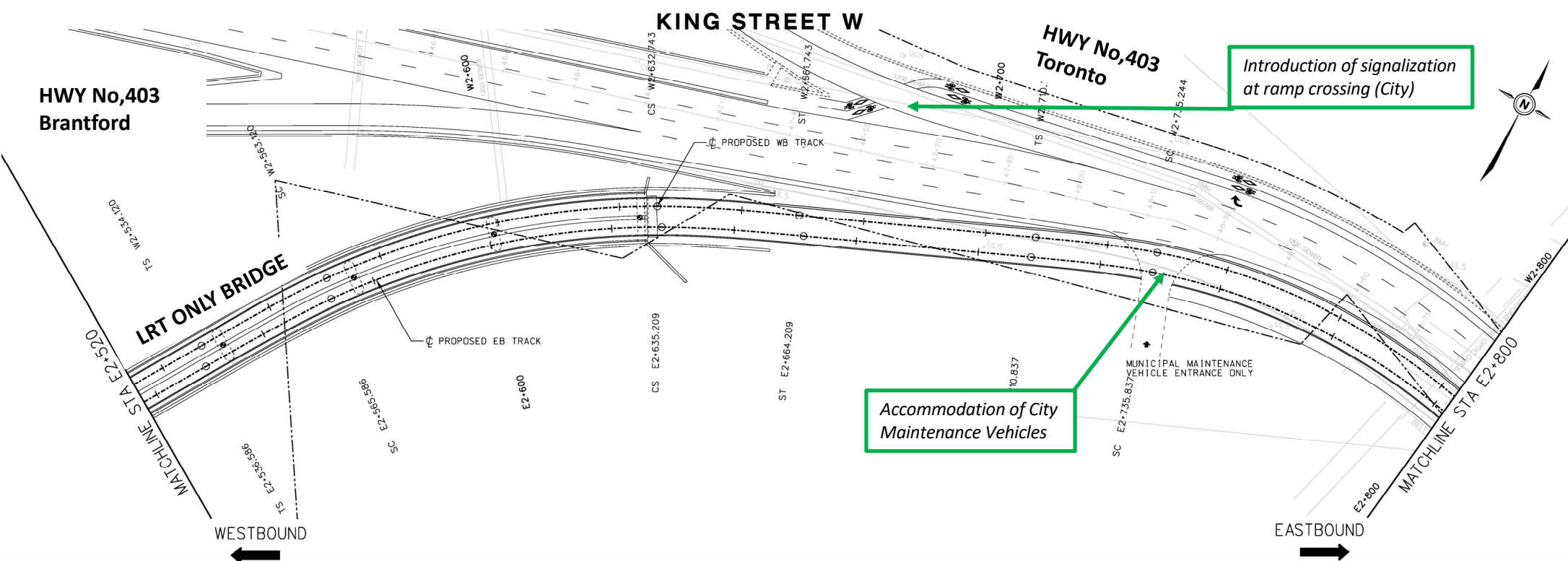
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Subject to further discussion with Metrolinx and Detailed Design



CITY DESIGN THEMES BEING EVALUATED:

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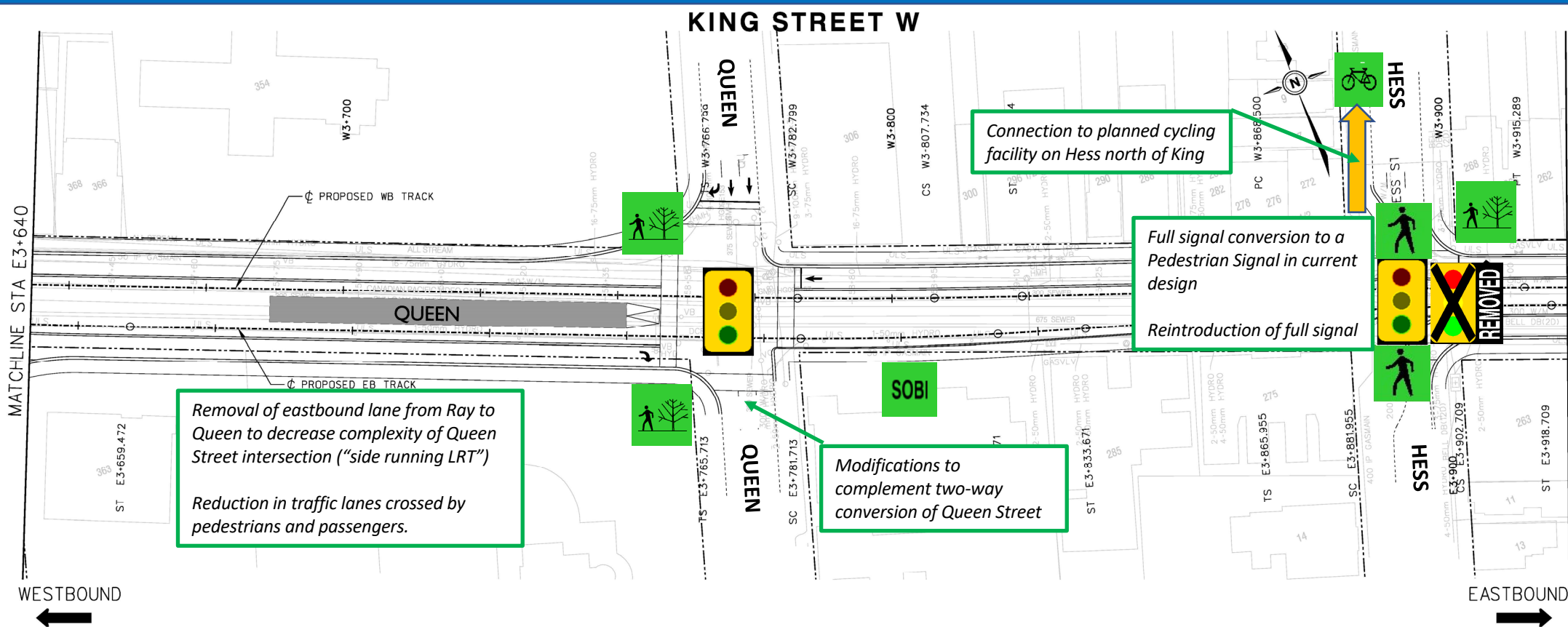
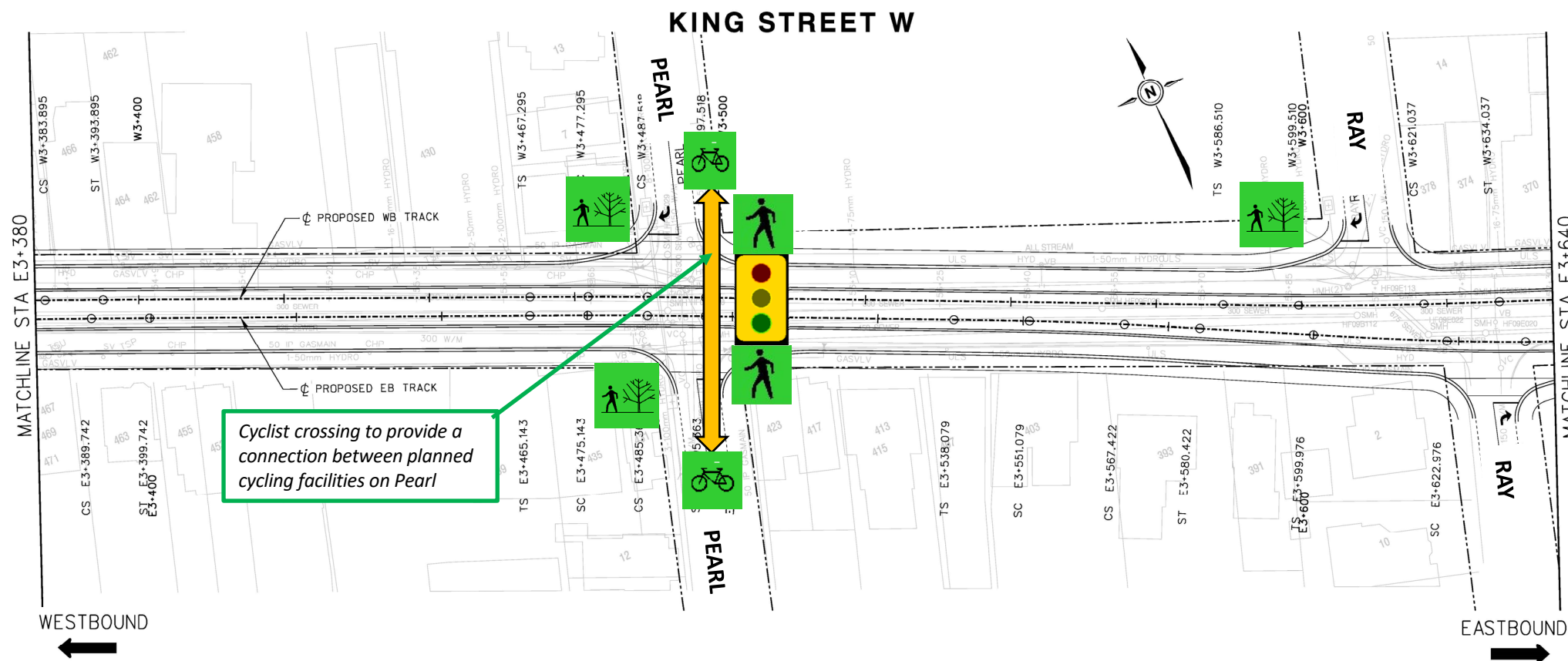
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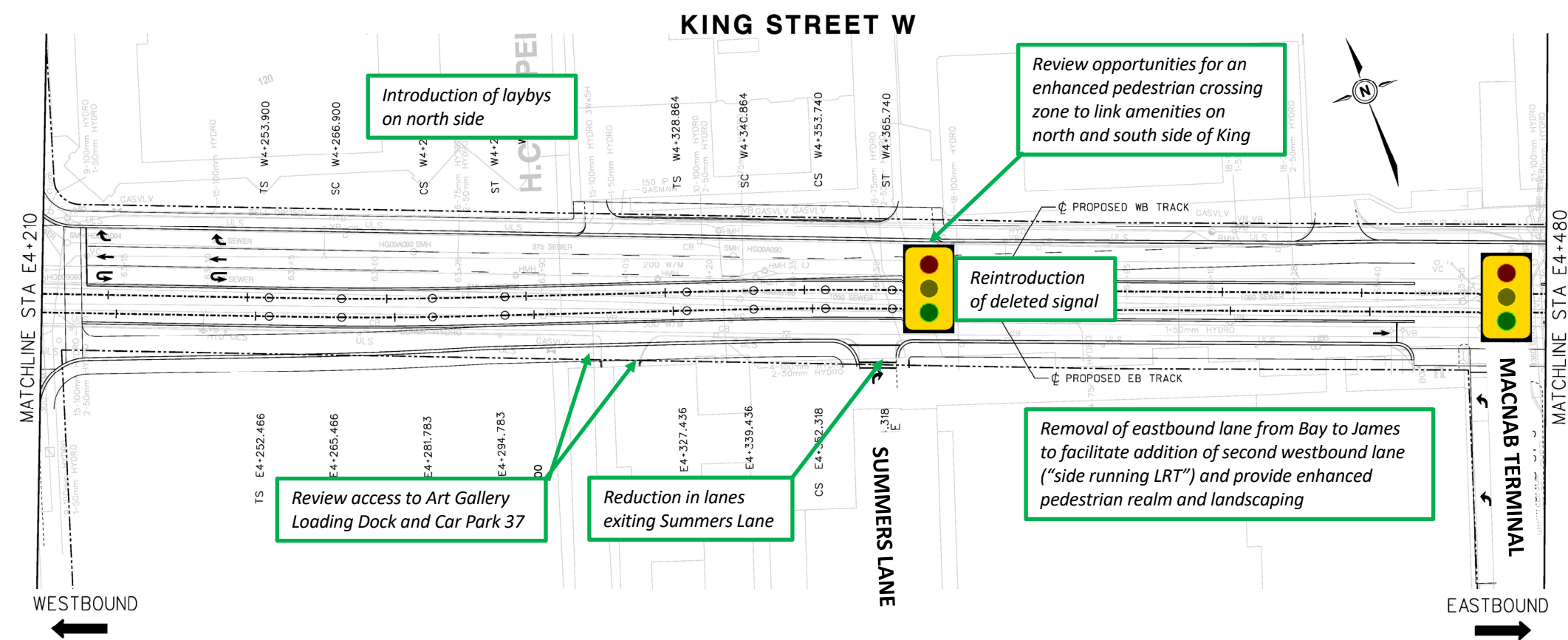
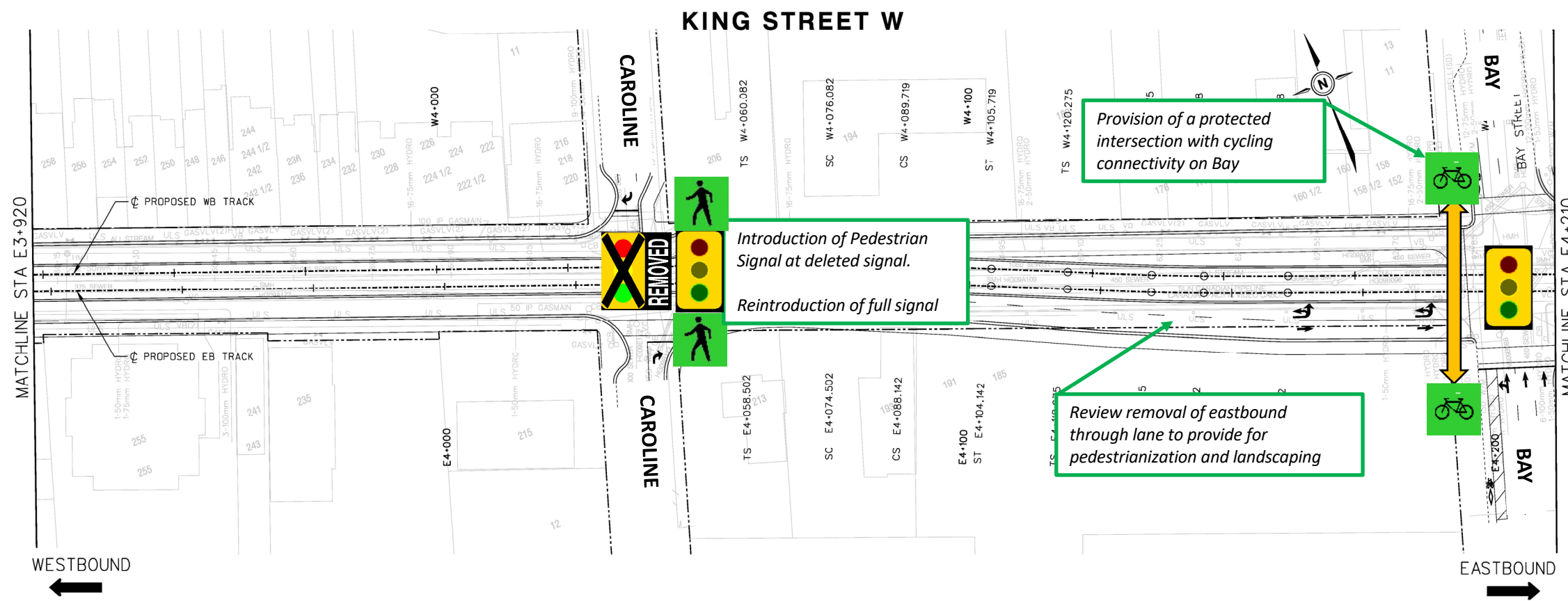
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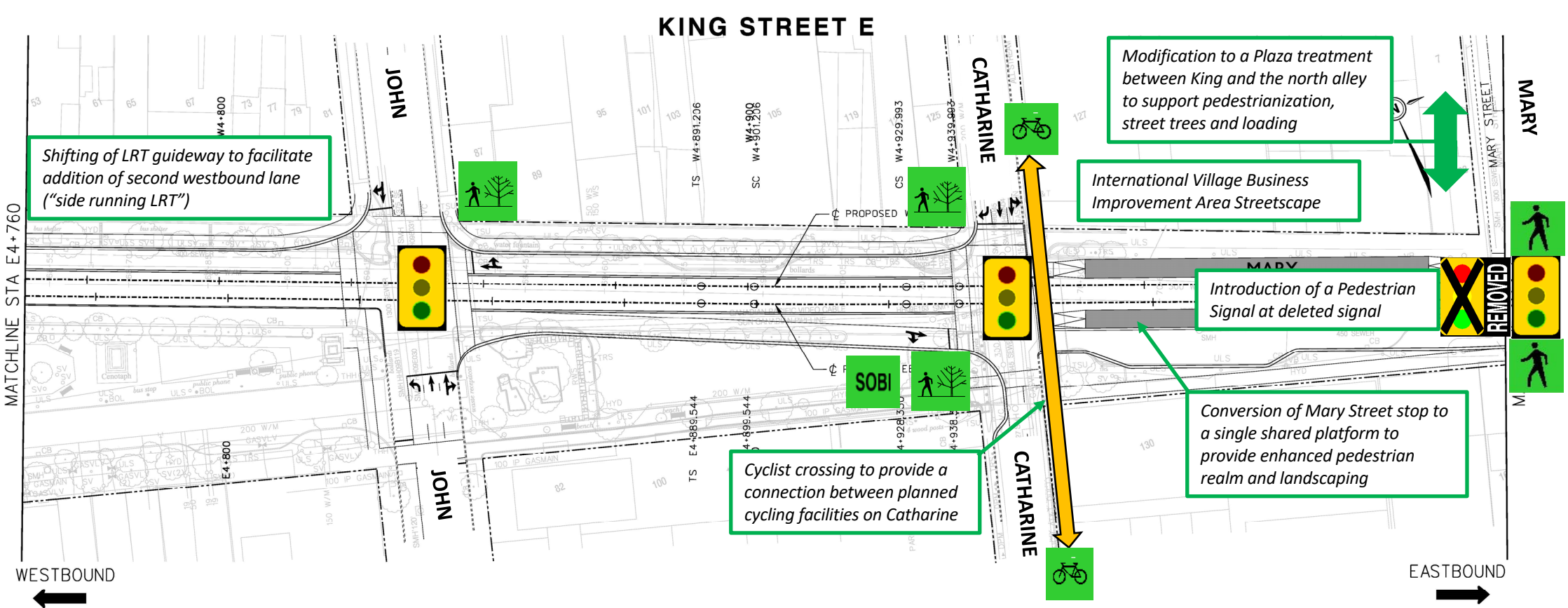
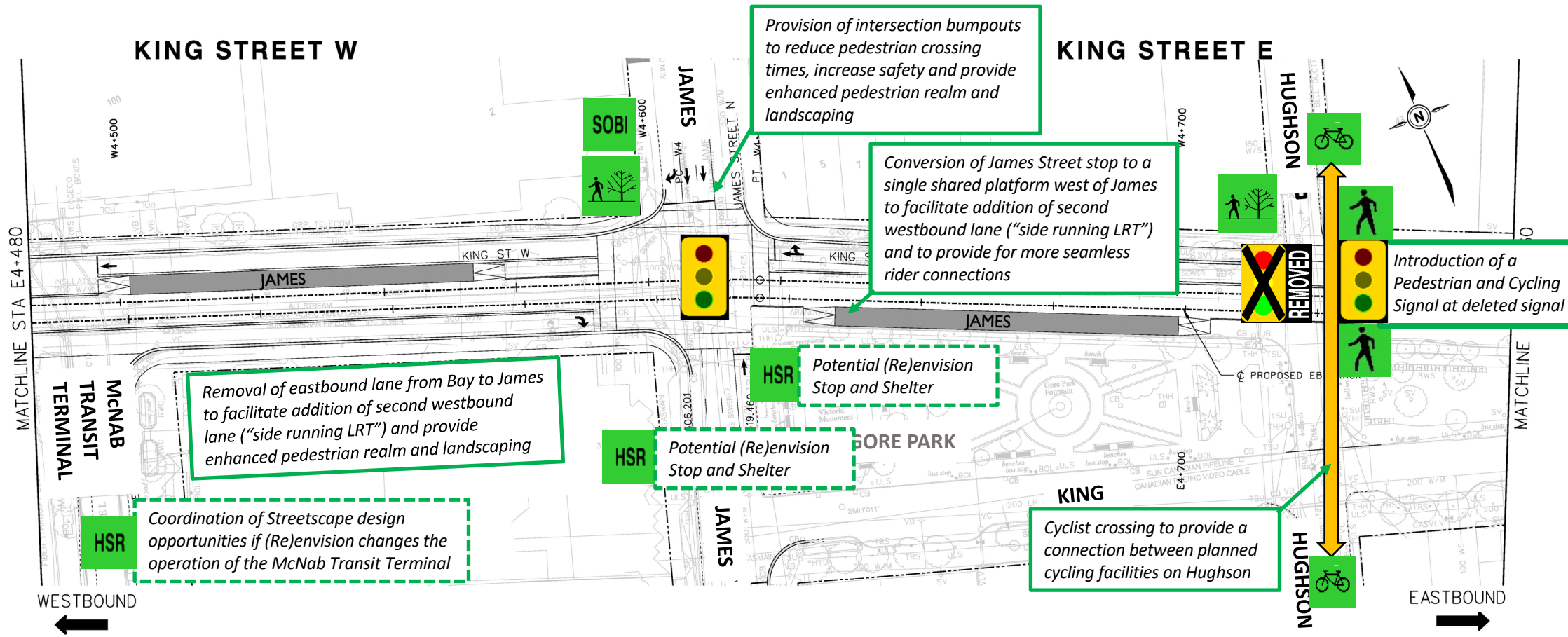


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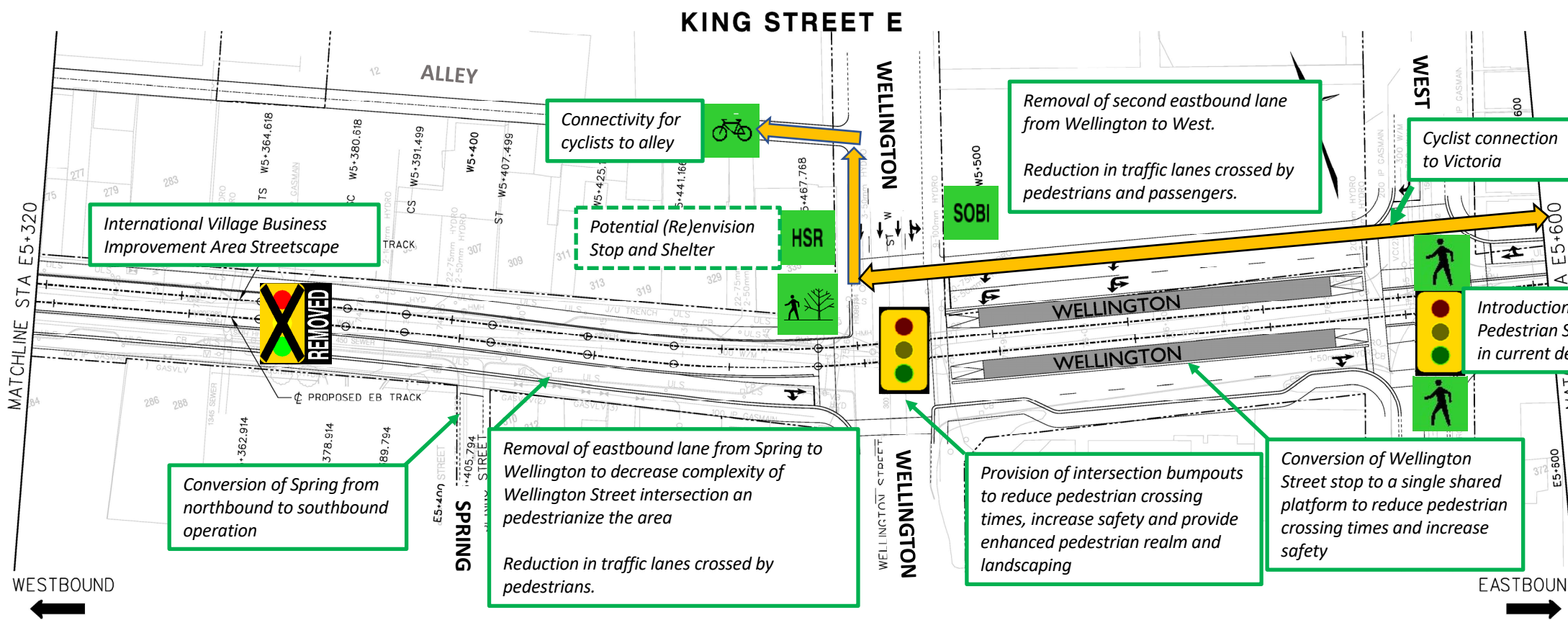
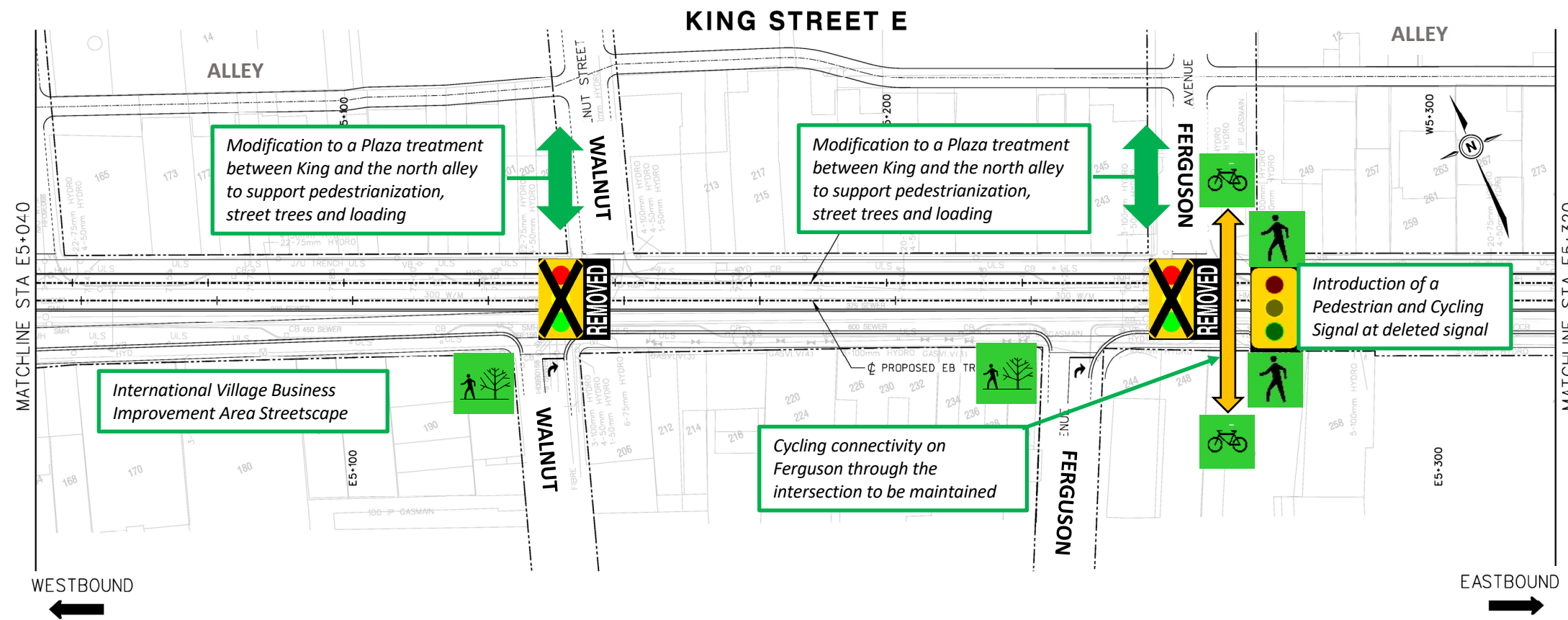


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Subject to further discussion with Metrolinx and Detailed Design



CITY DESIGN THEMES BEING EVALUATED:

Additional Pedestrian Crossings



Integration with HSR (Re)envision and/or Shelter Locations



Integration with Existing and Planned Cycling facilities



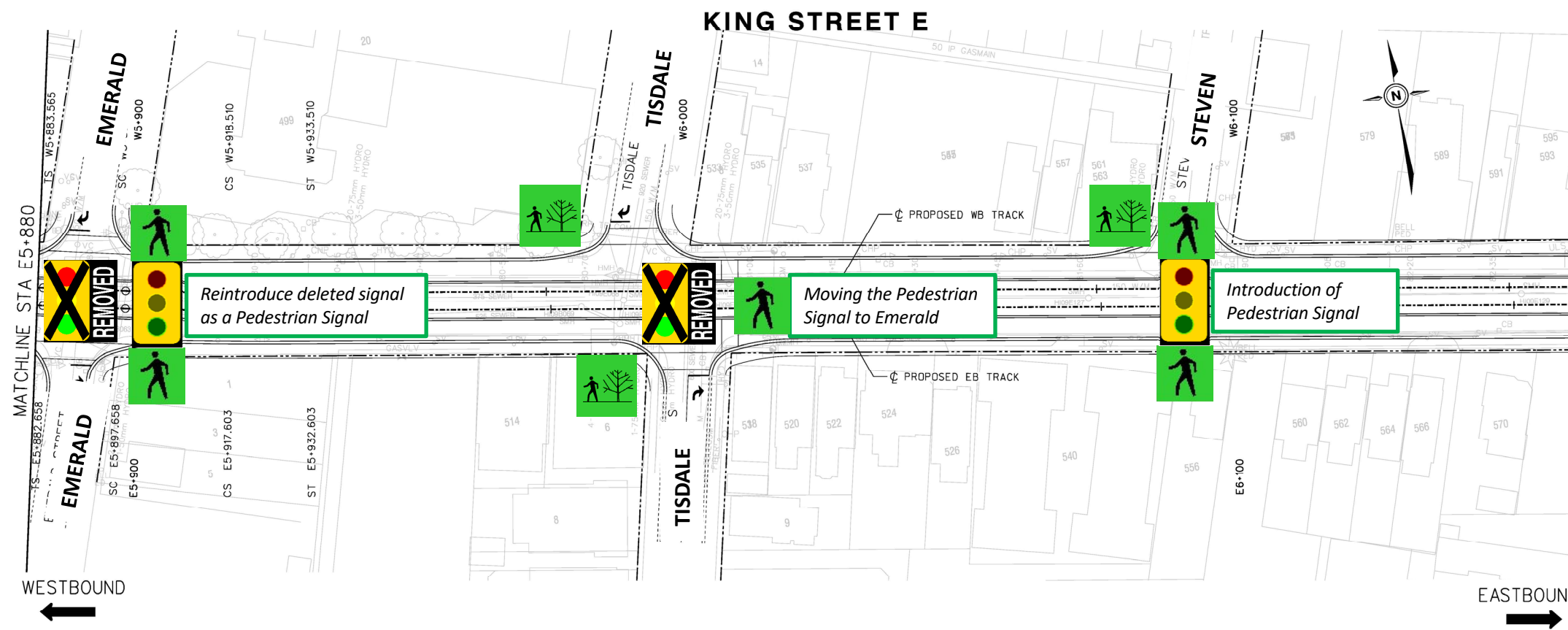
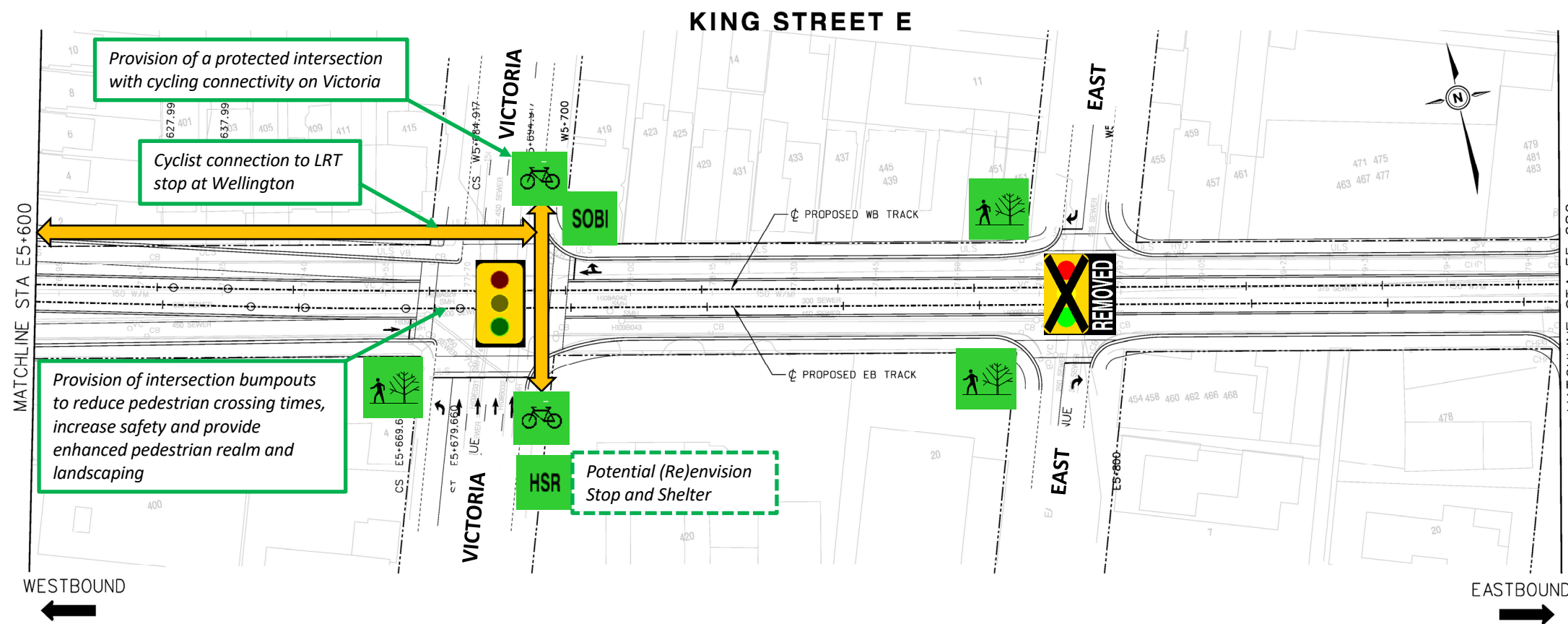
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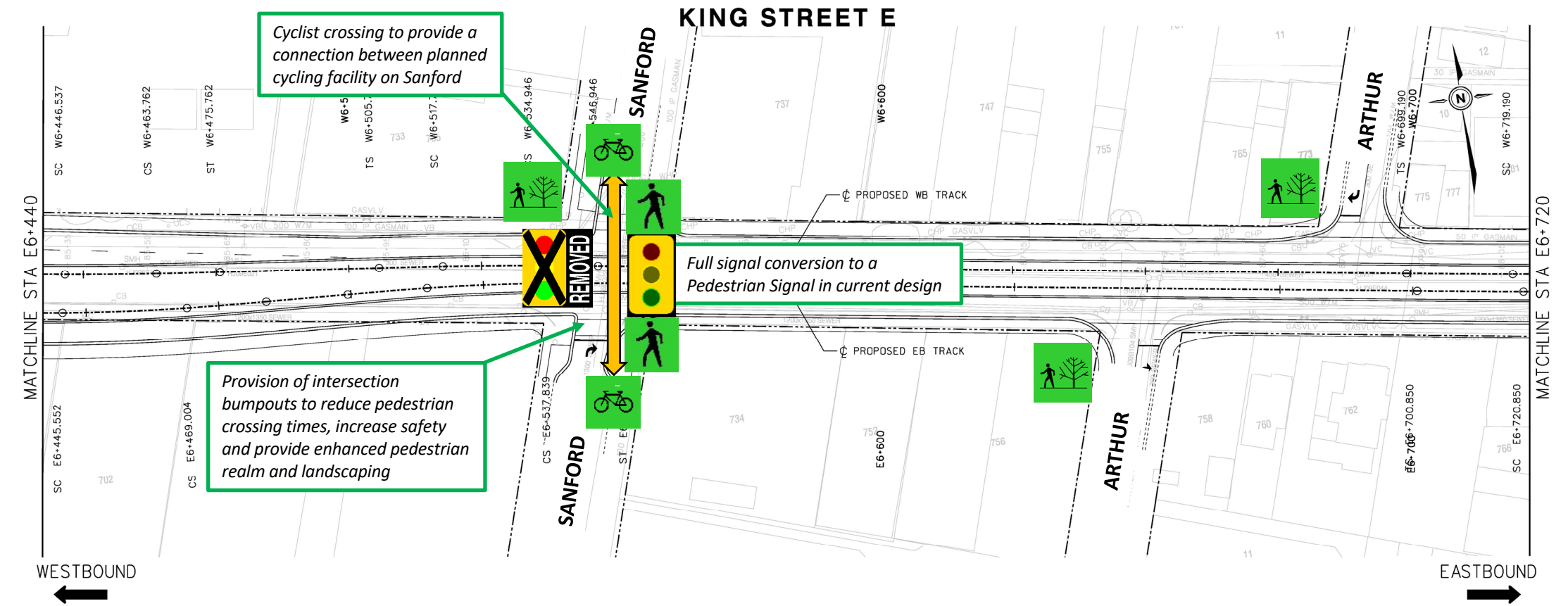
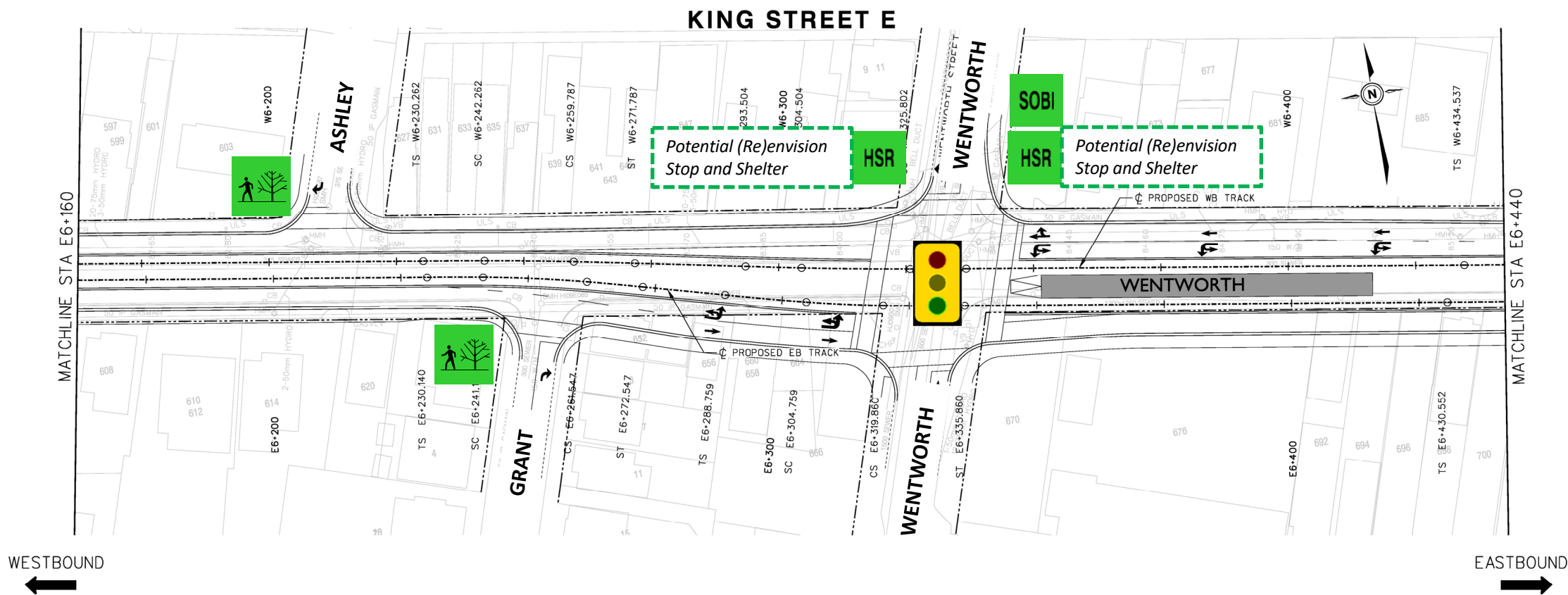
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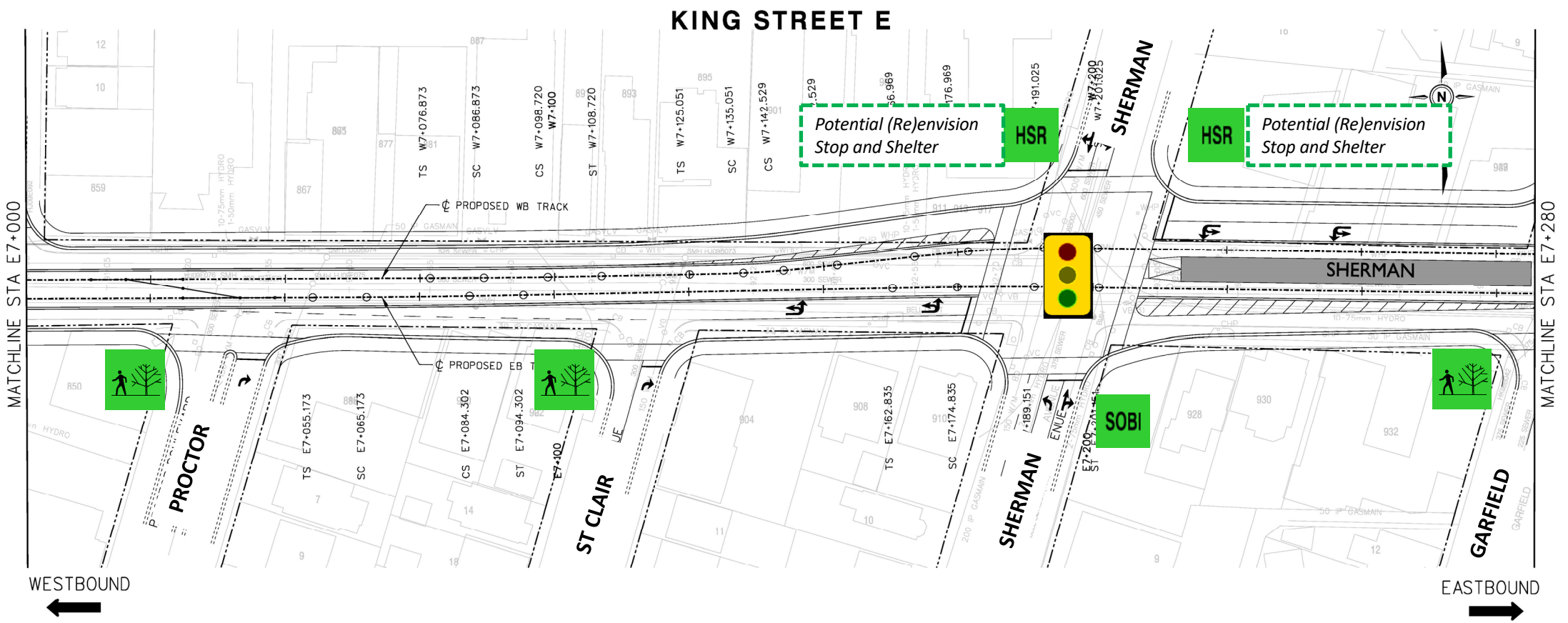
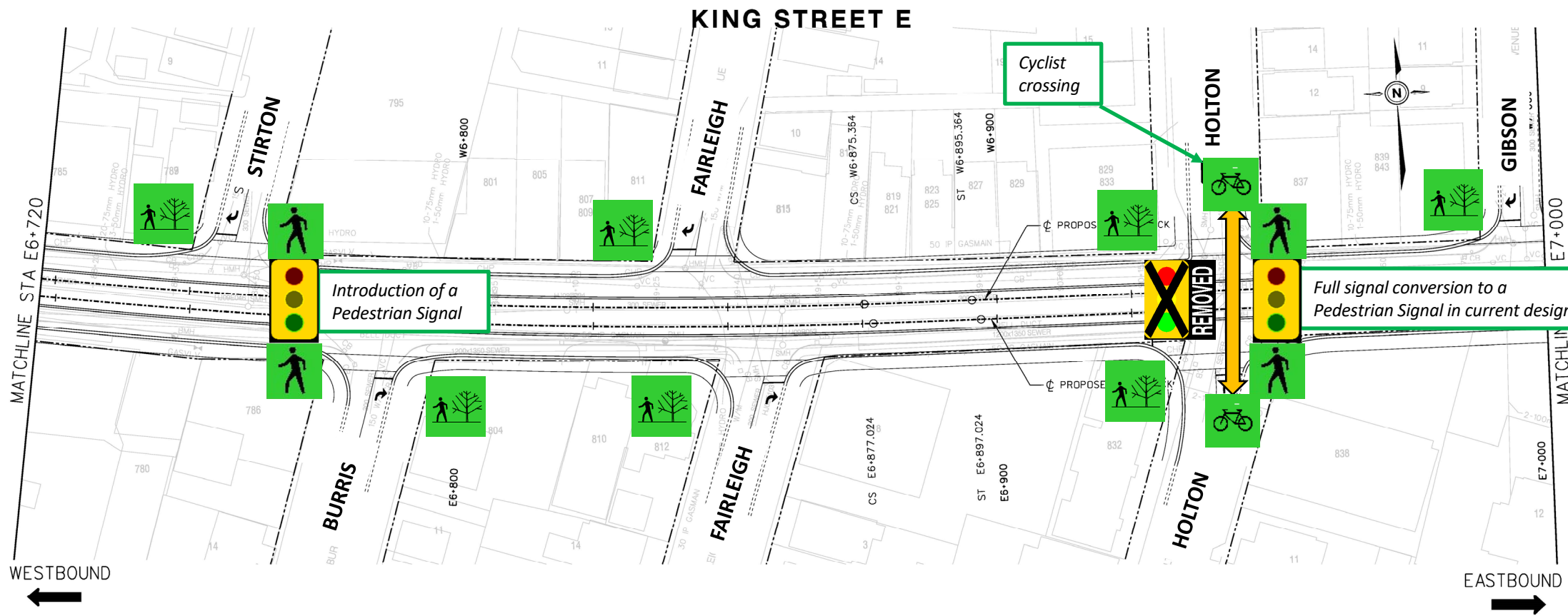
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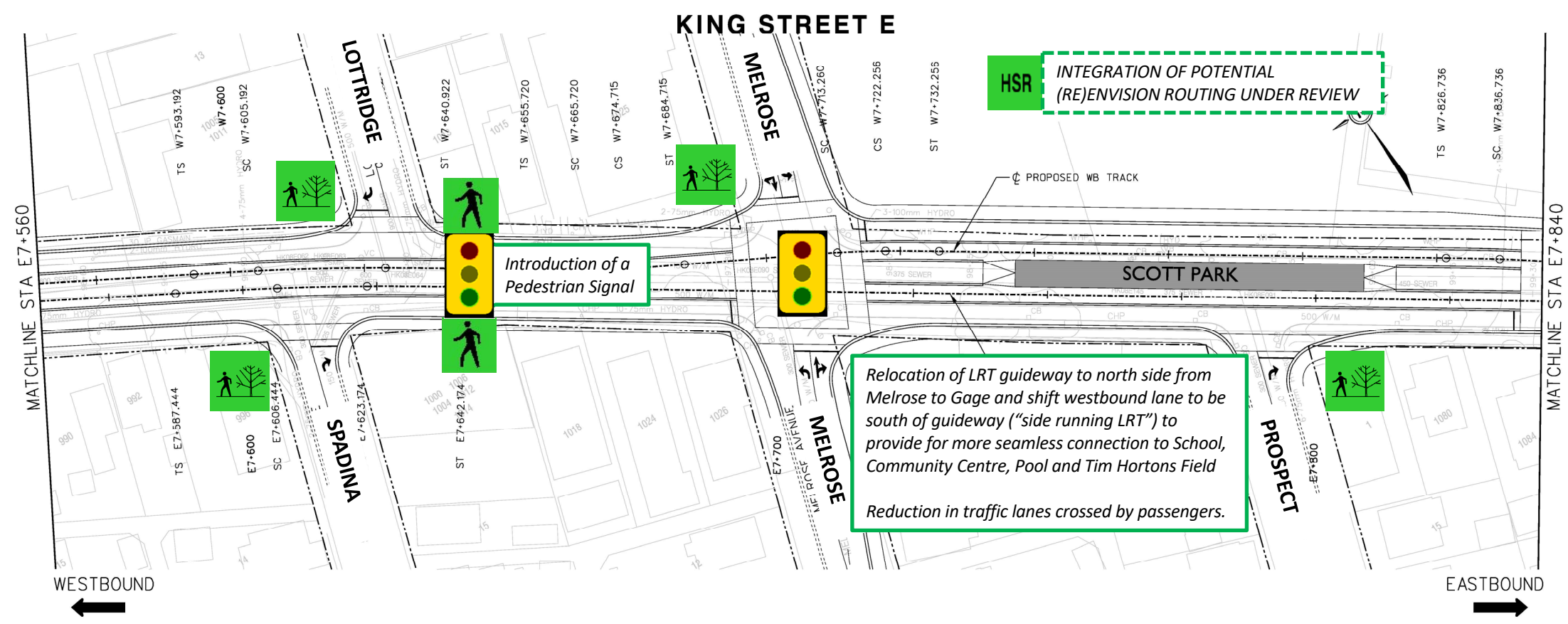
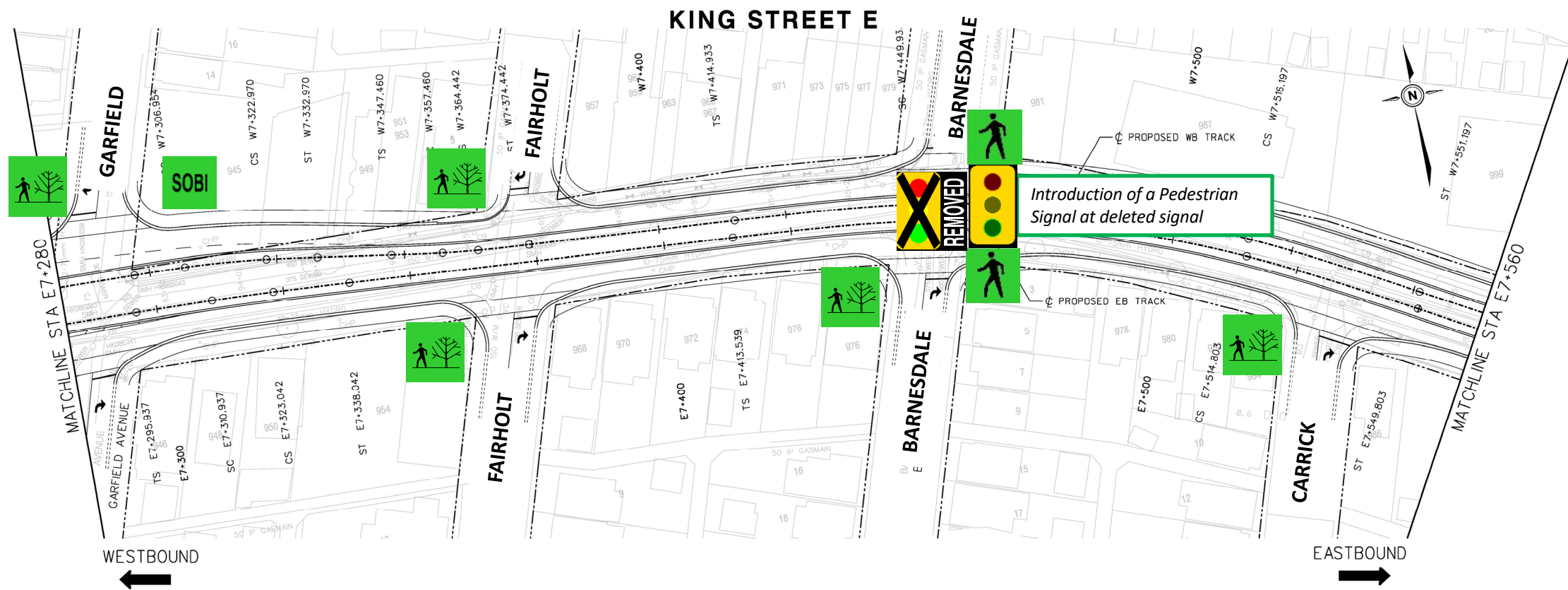
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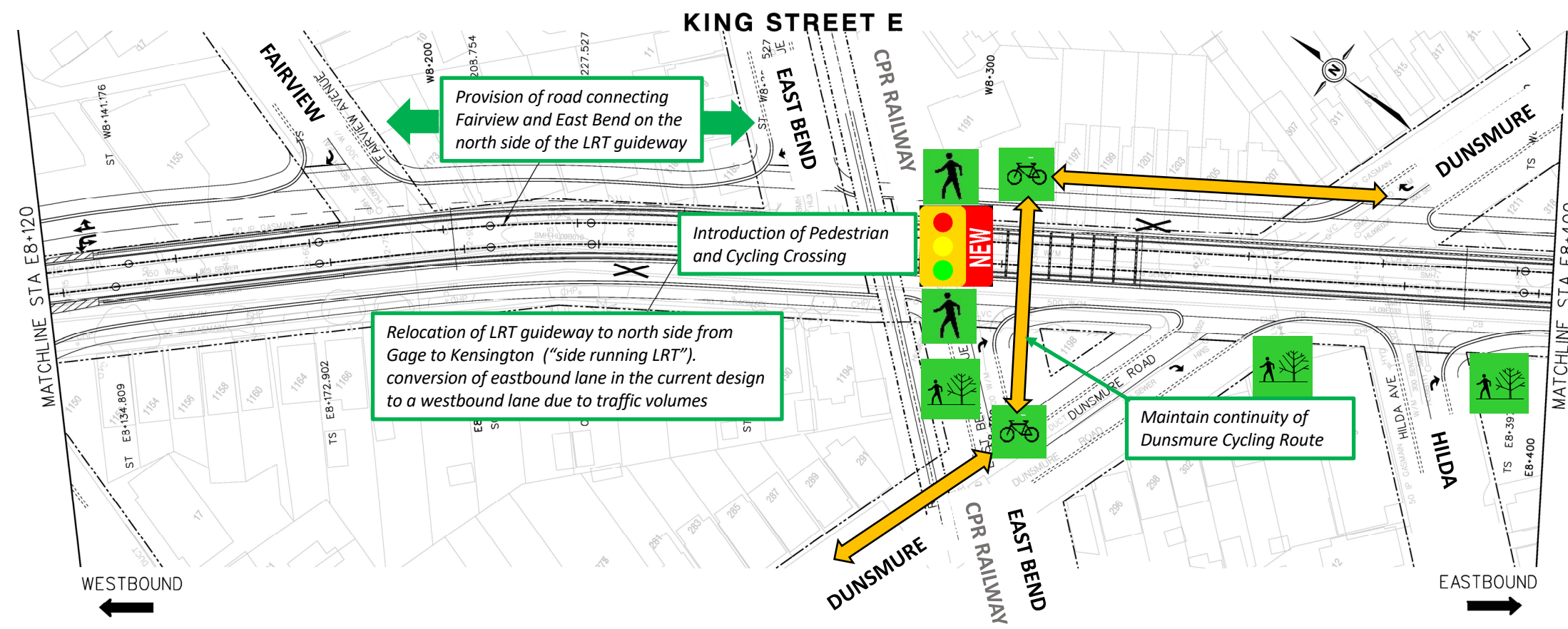
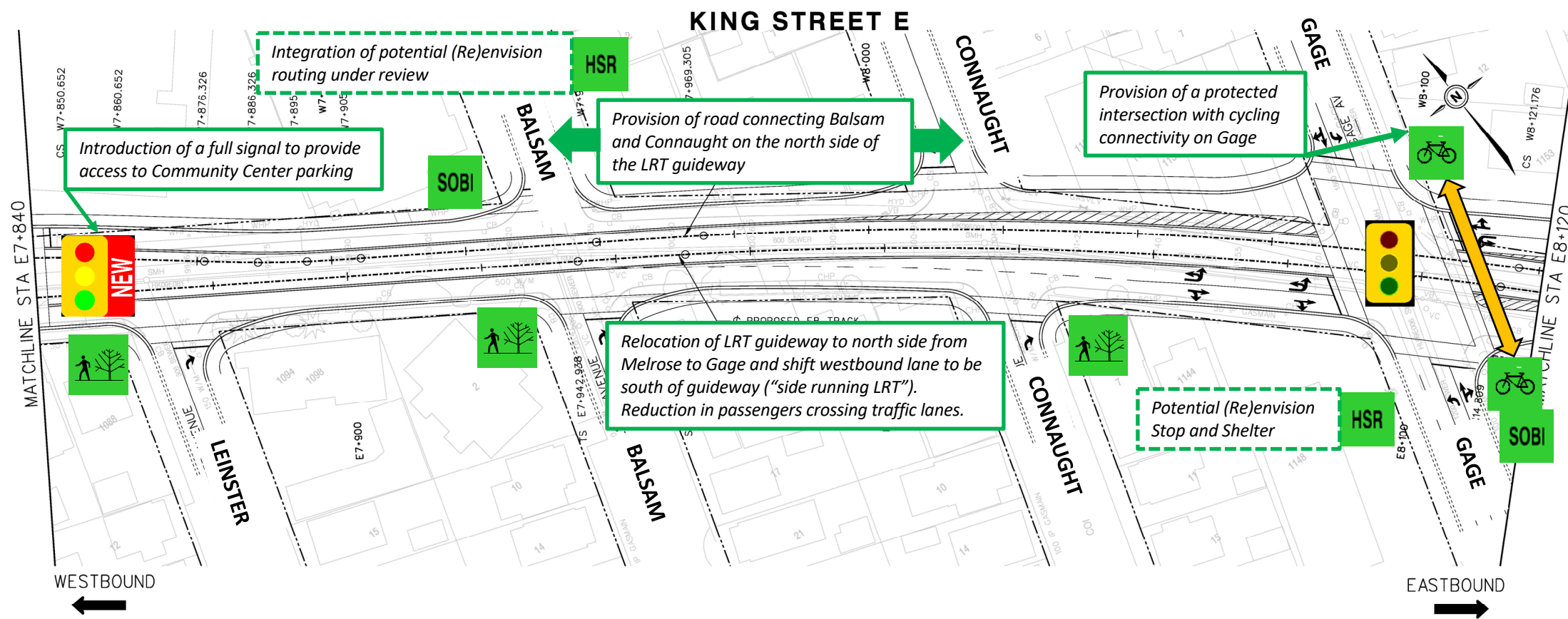
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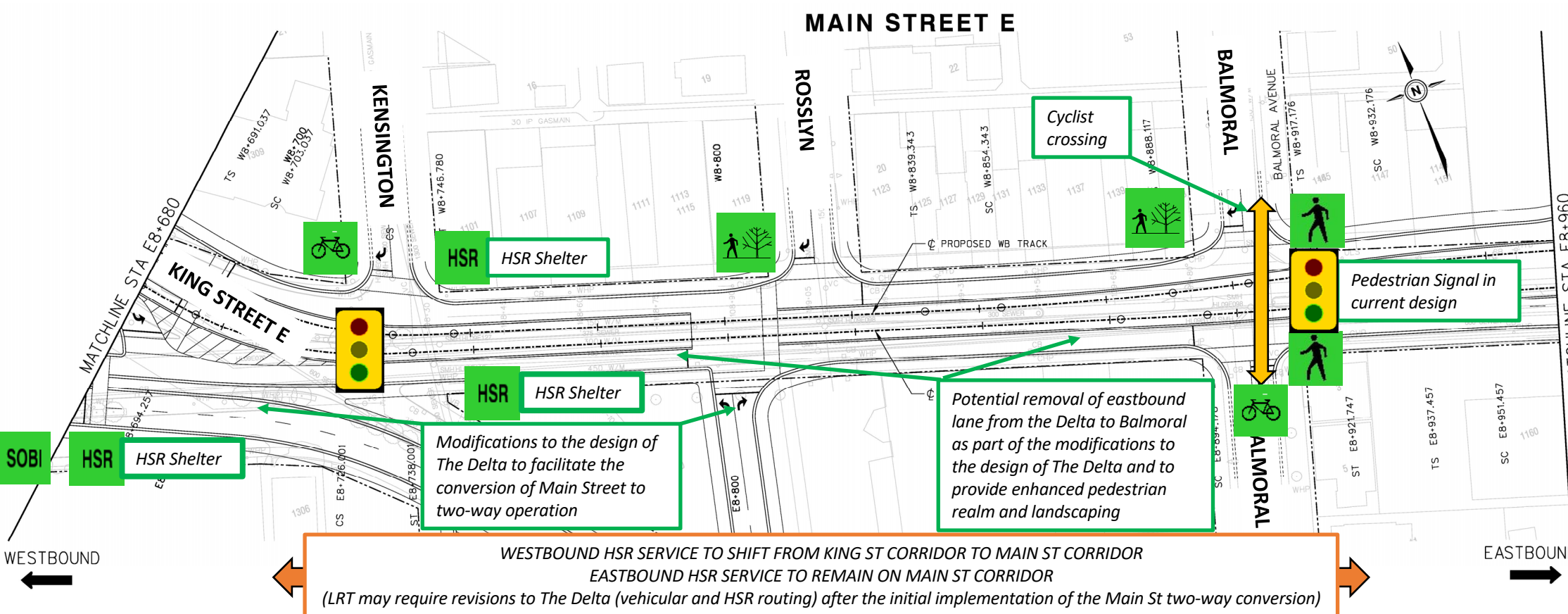
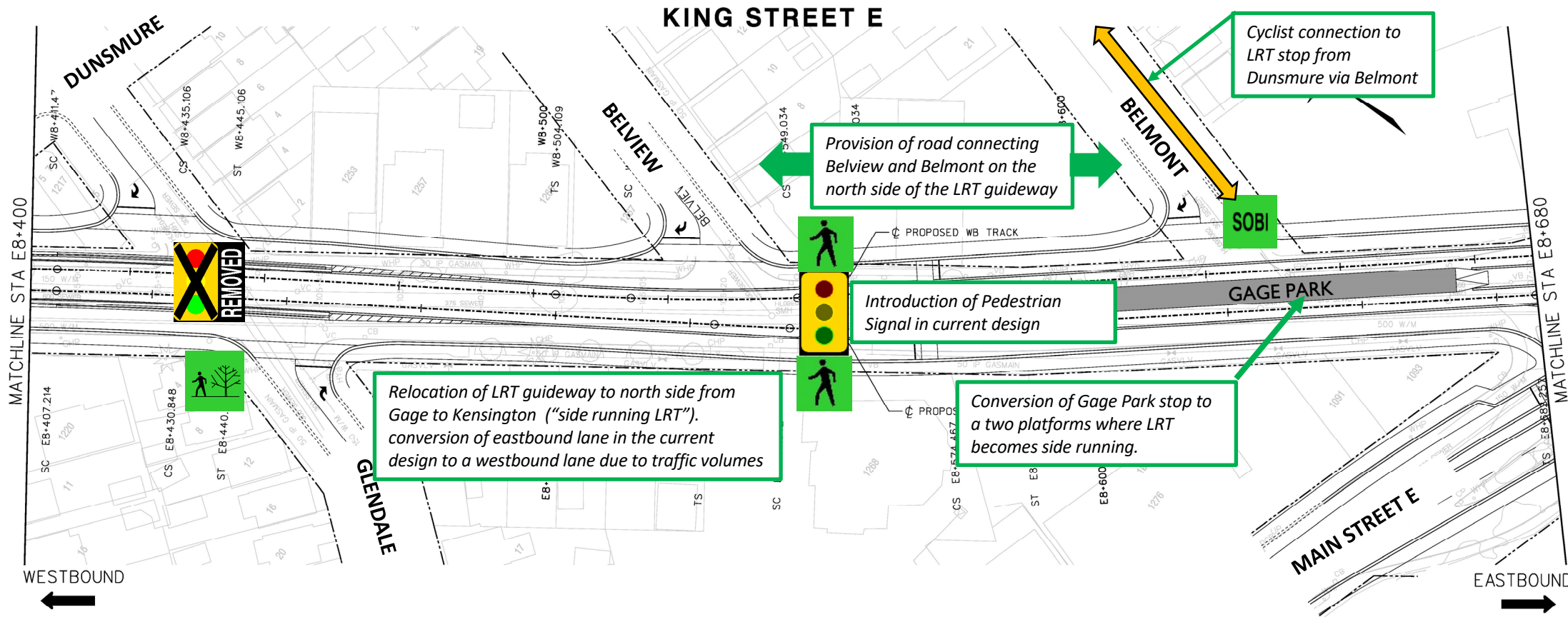
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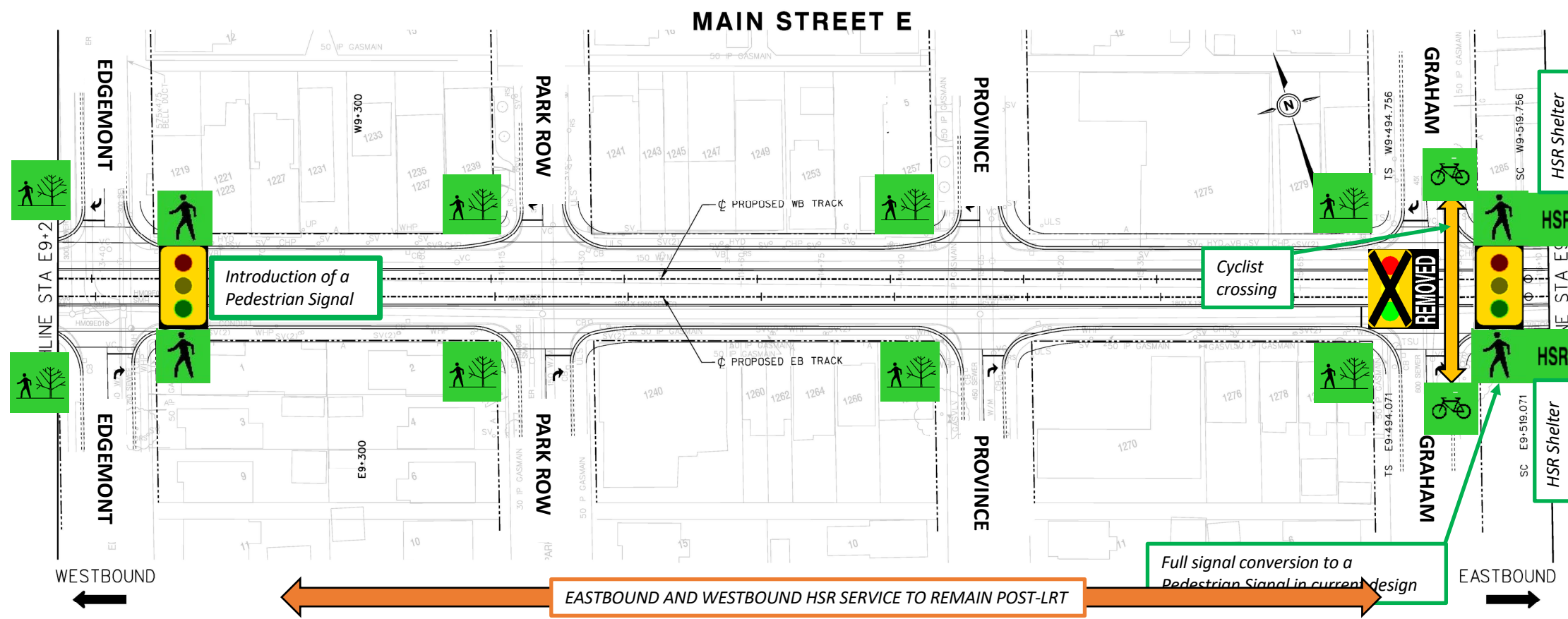
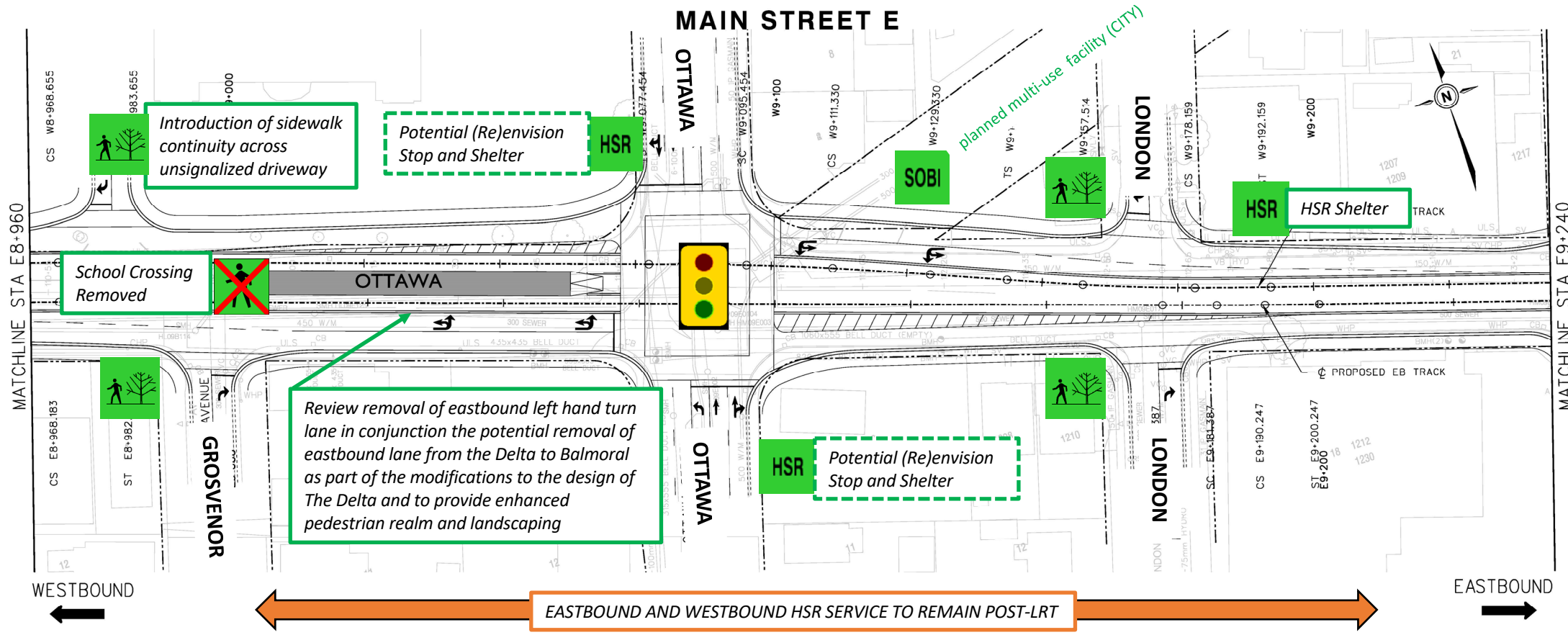
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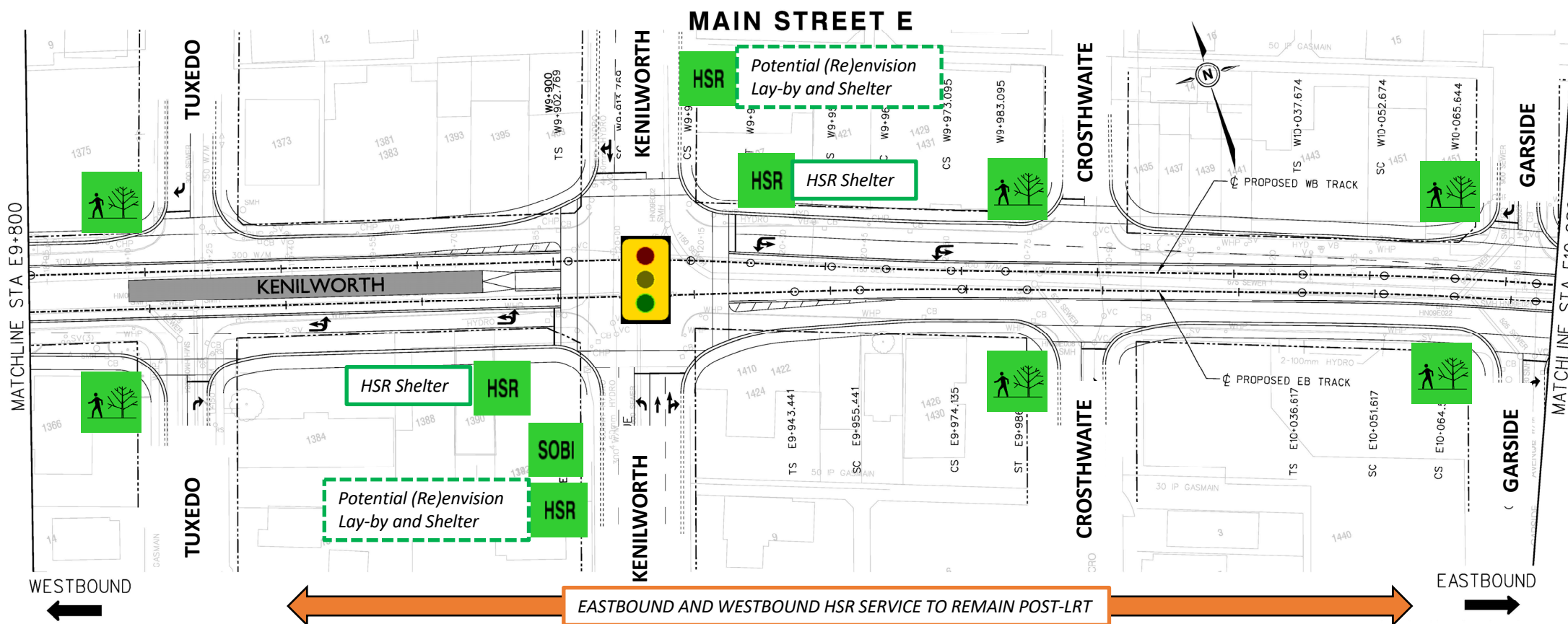
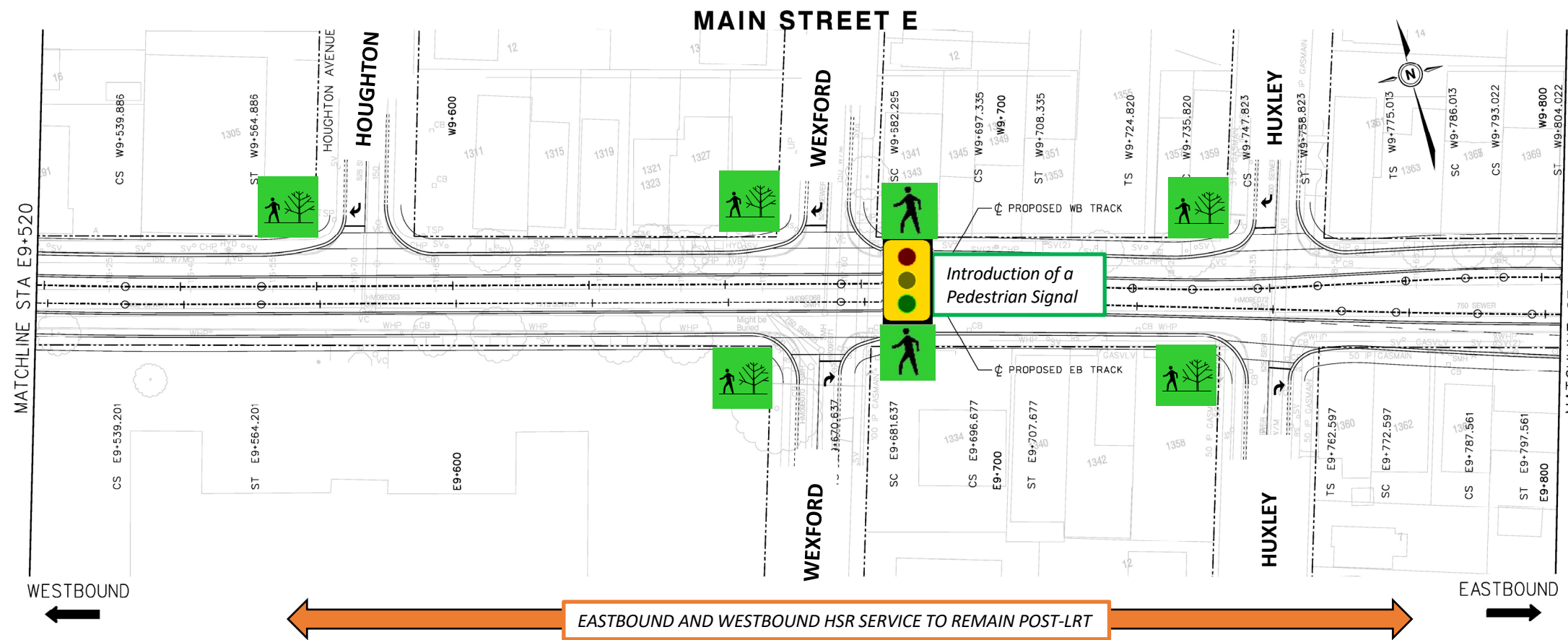
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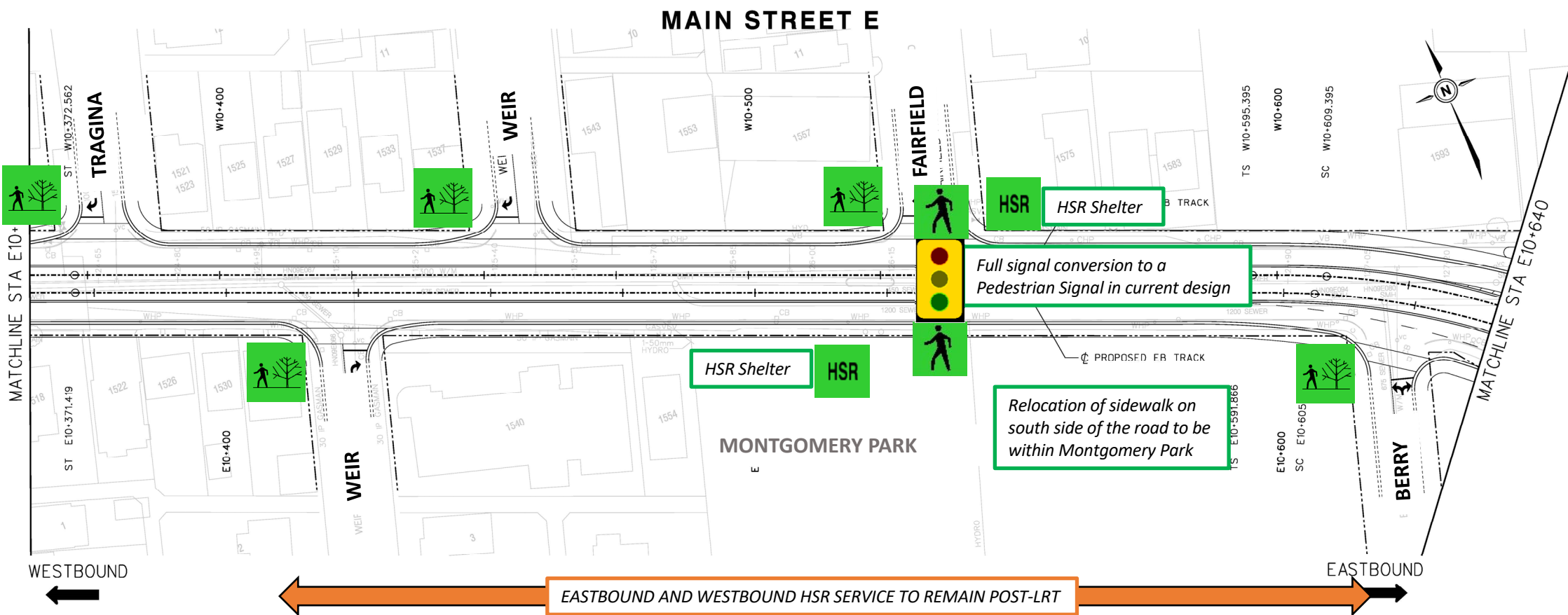
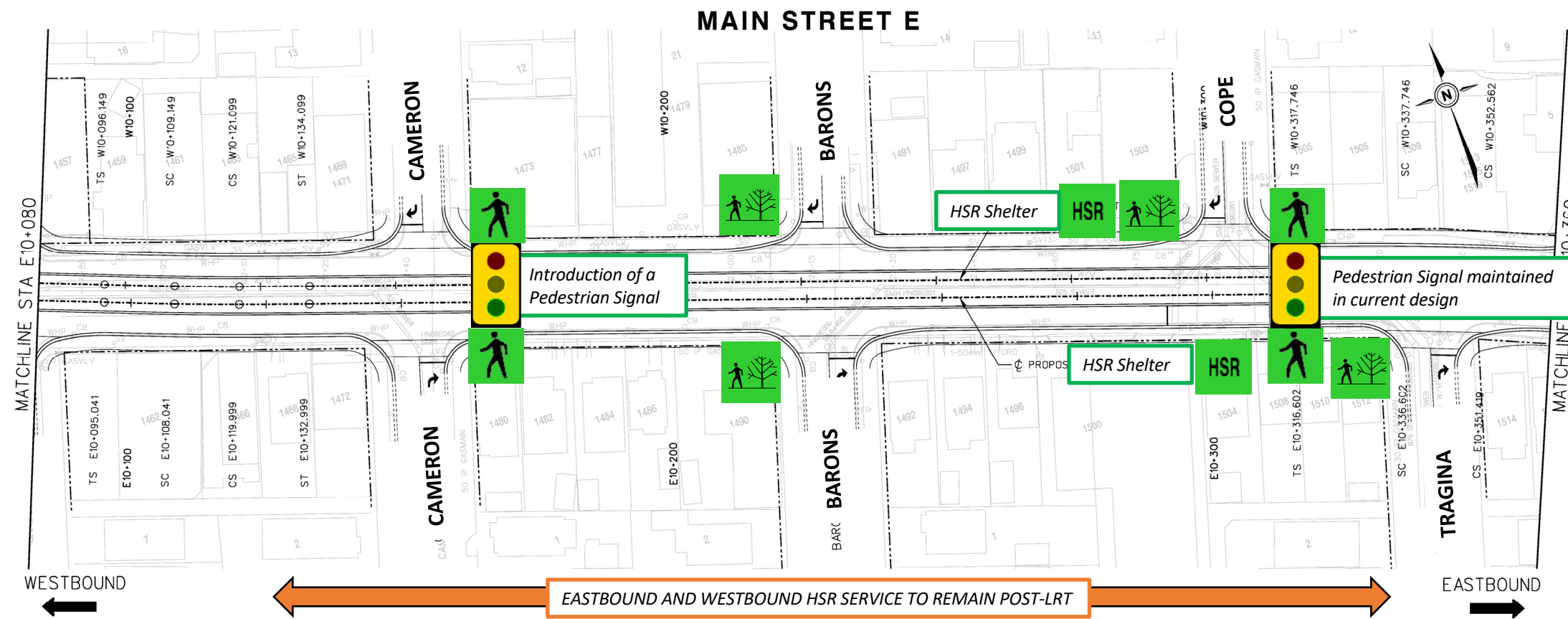
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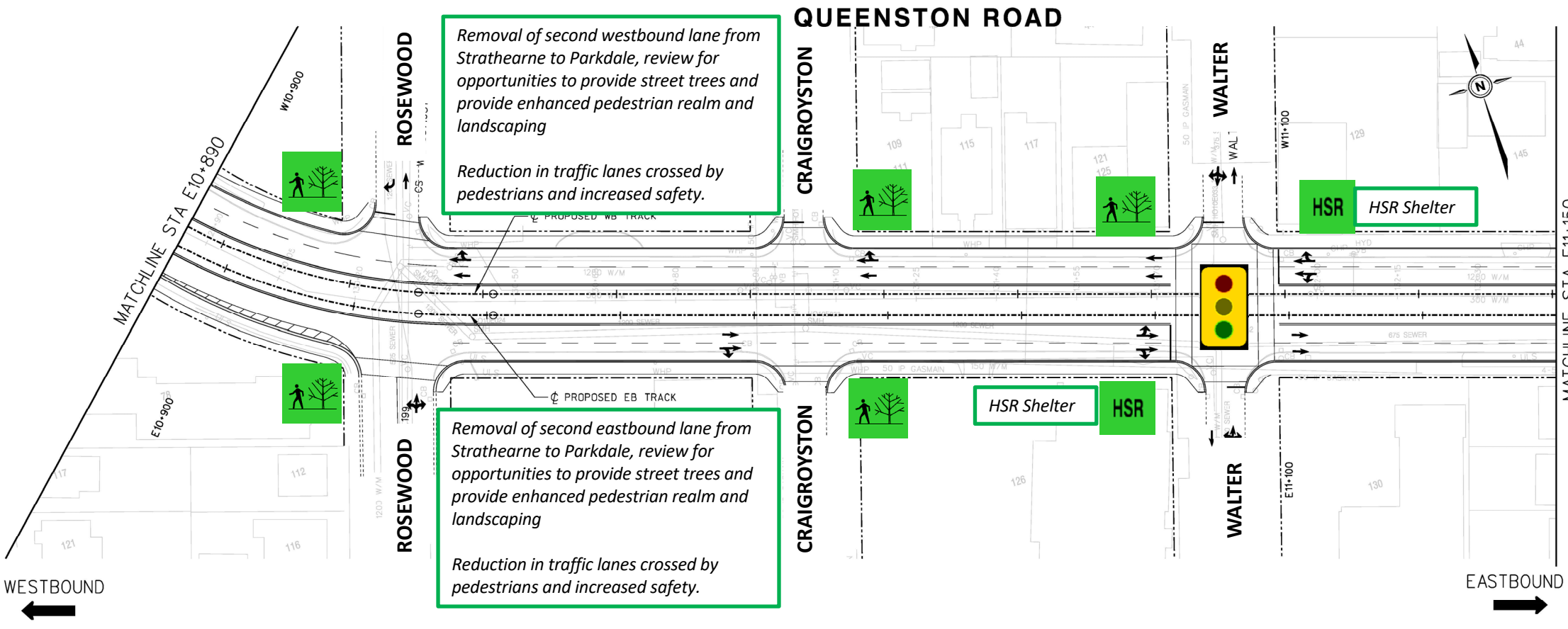
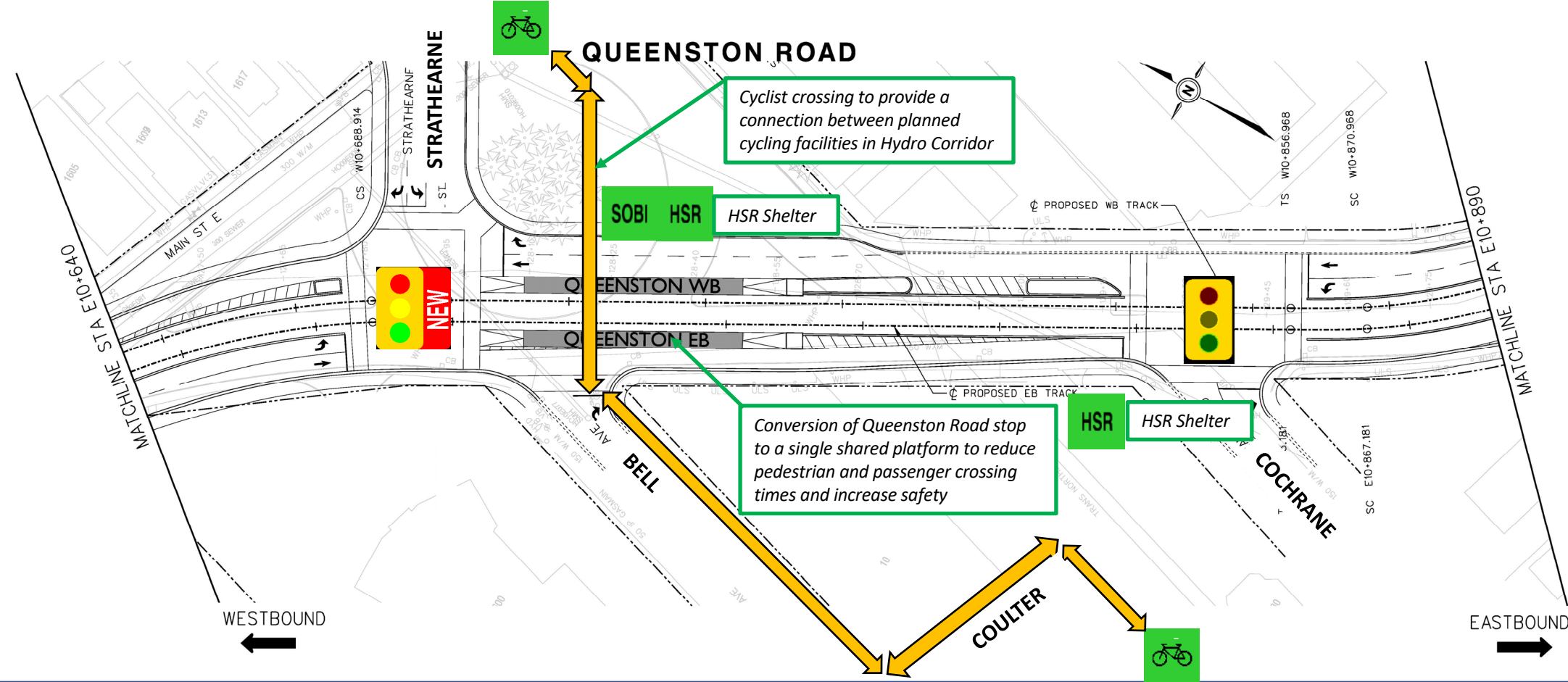
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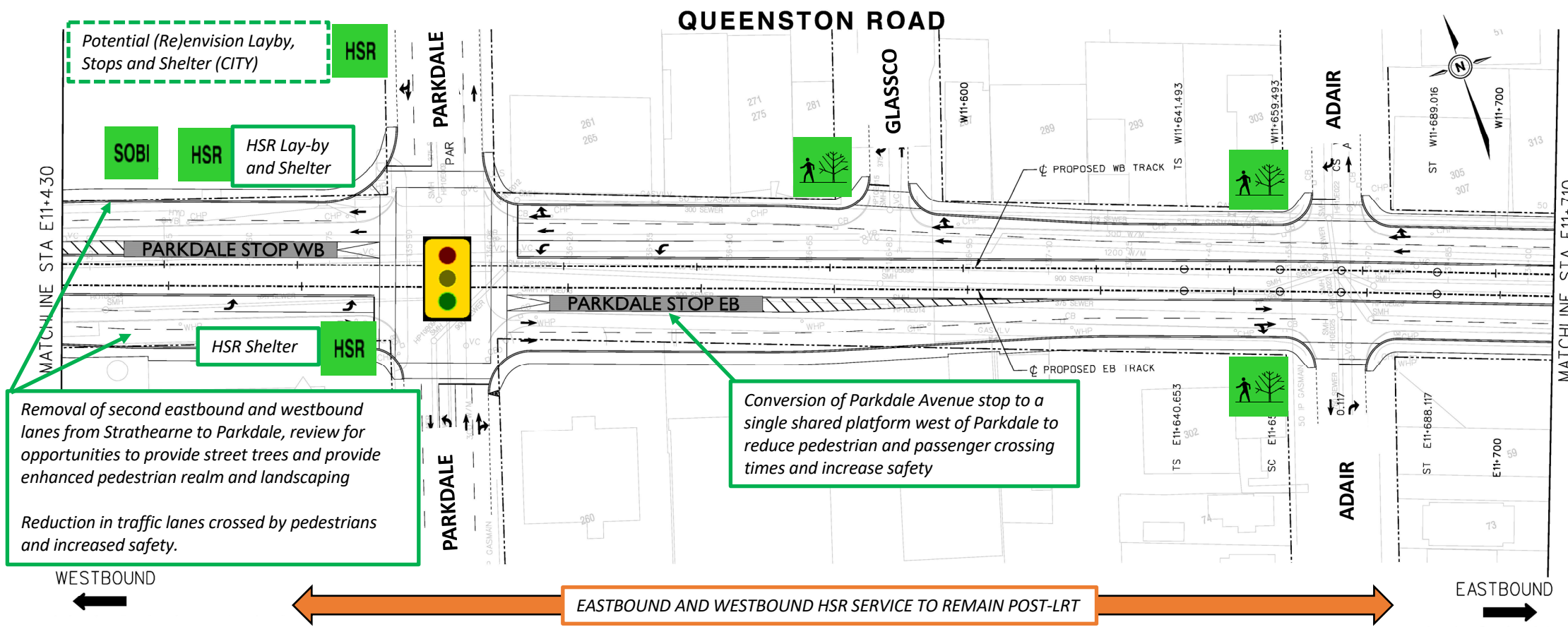
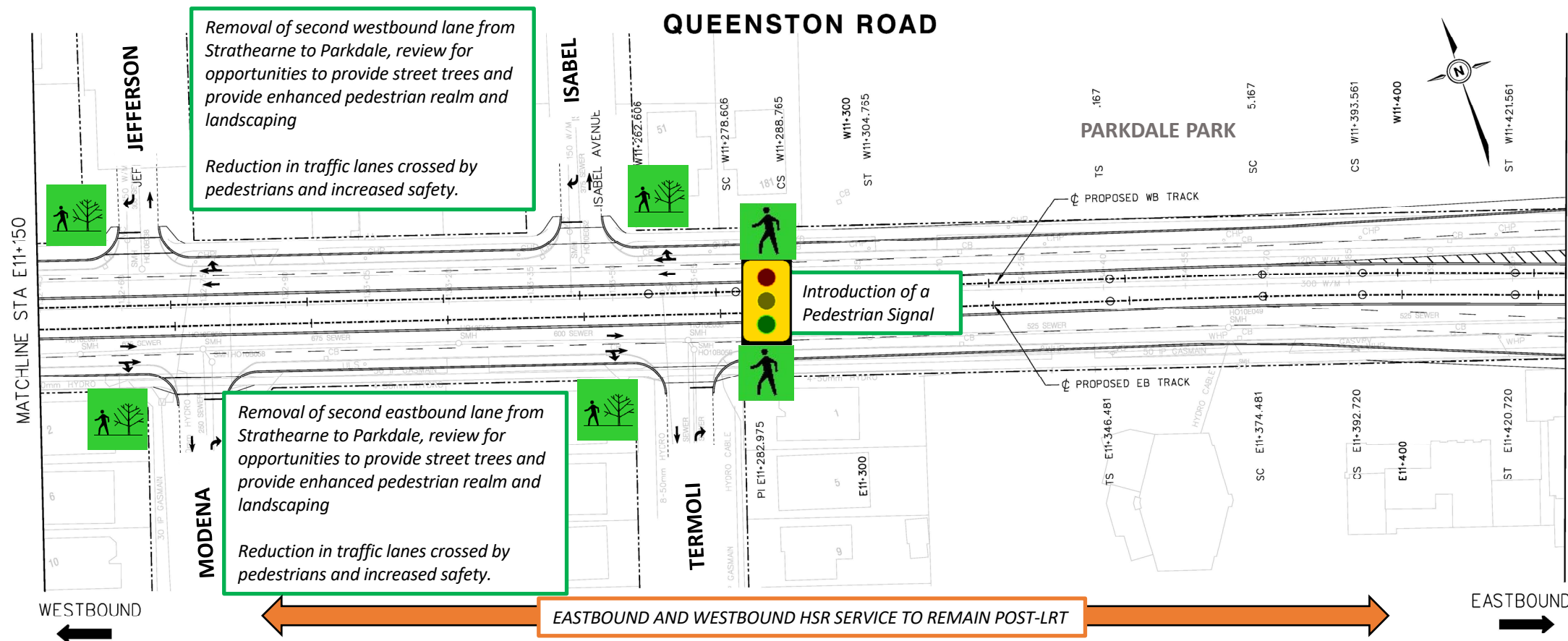
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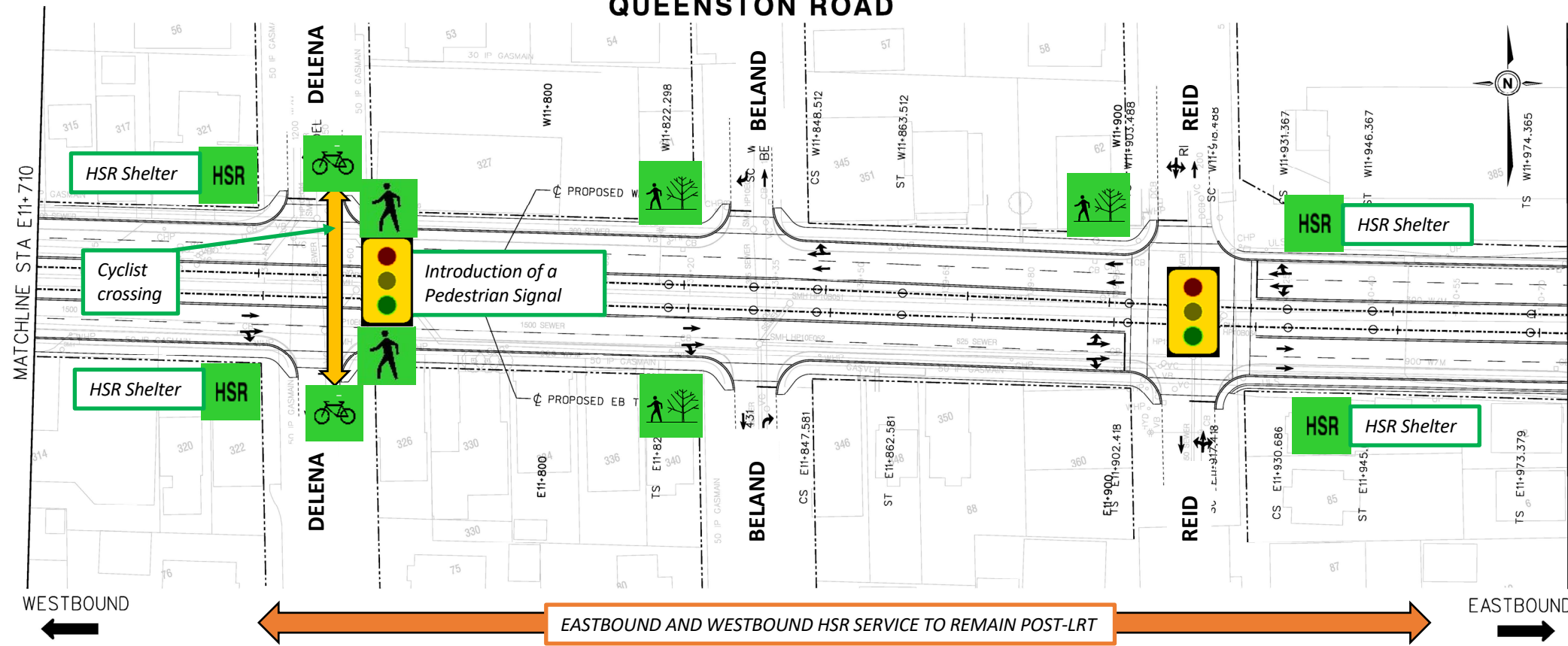


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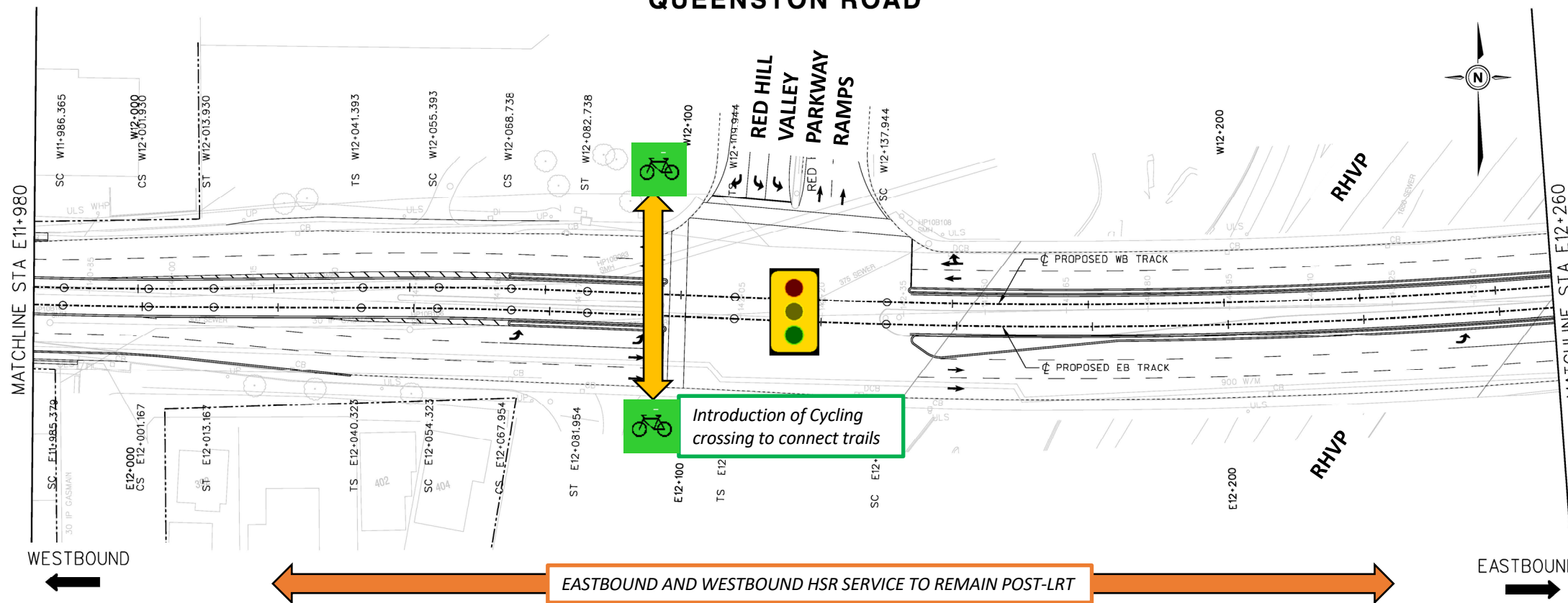


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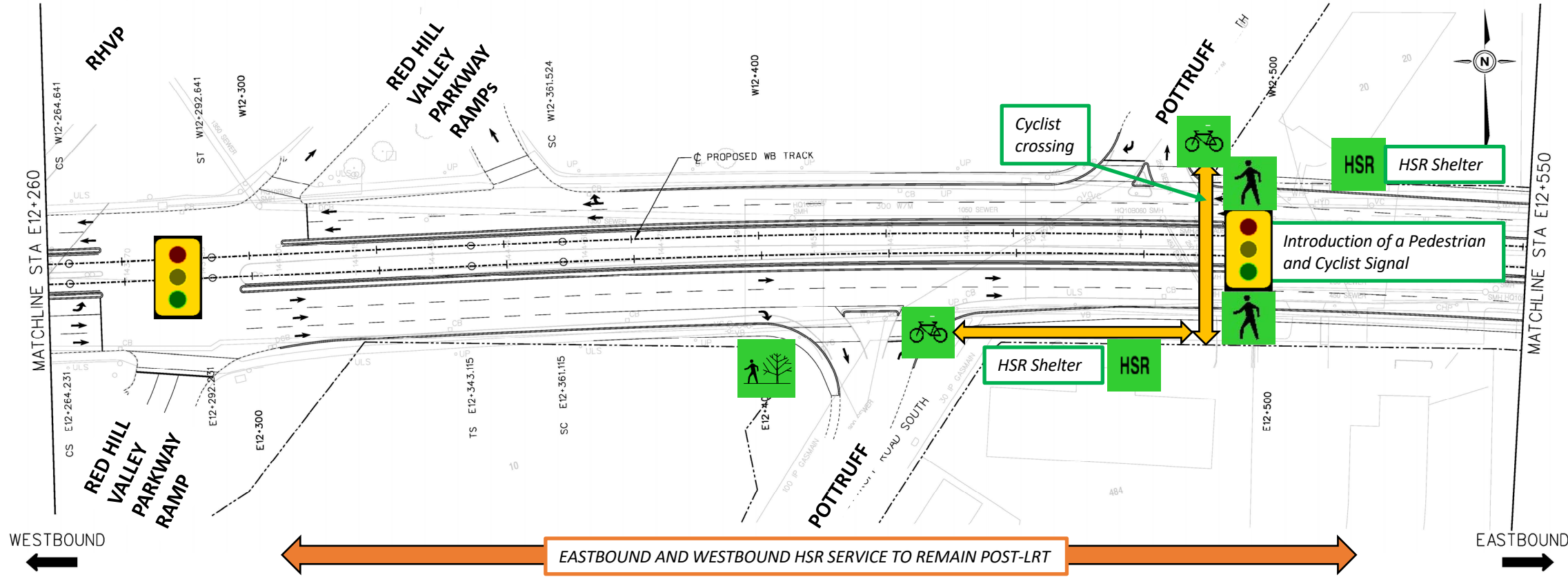
QUEENSTON ROAD



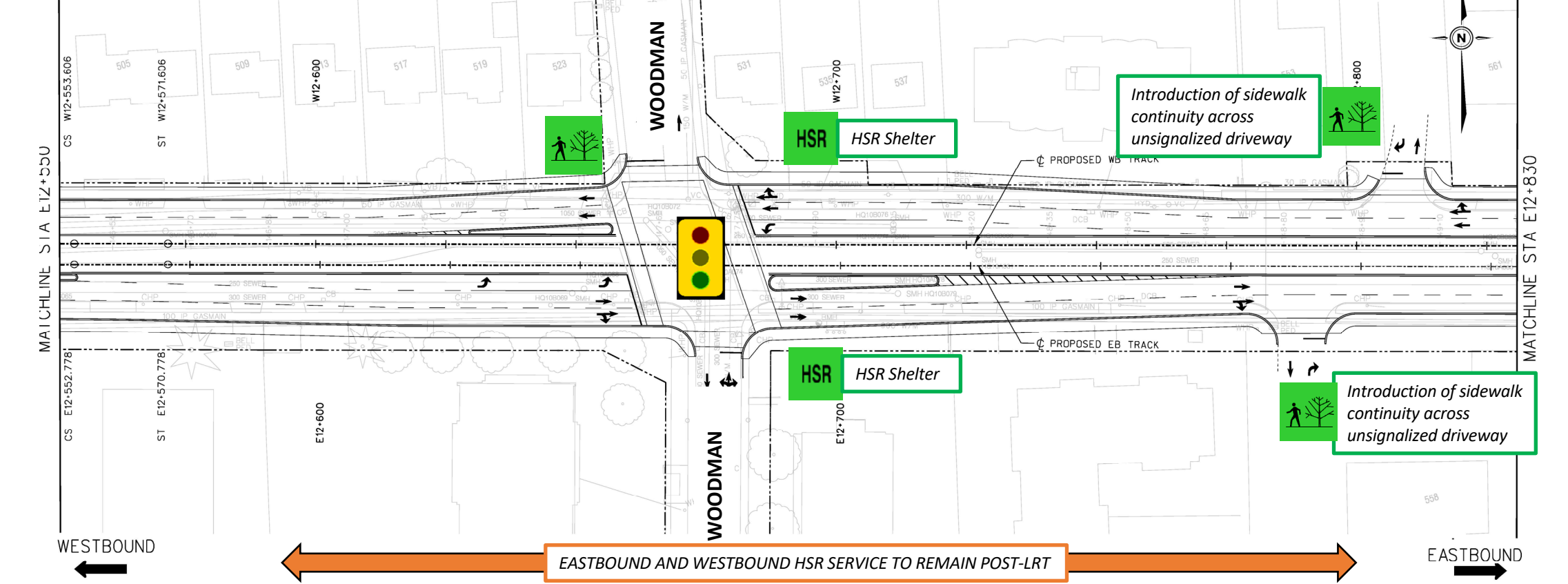
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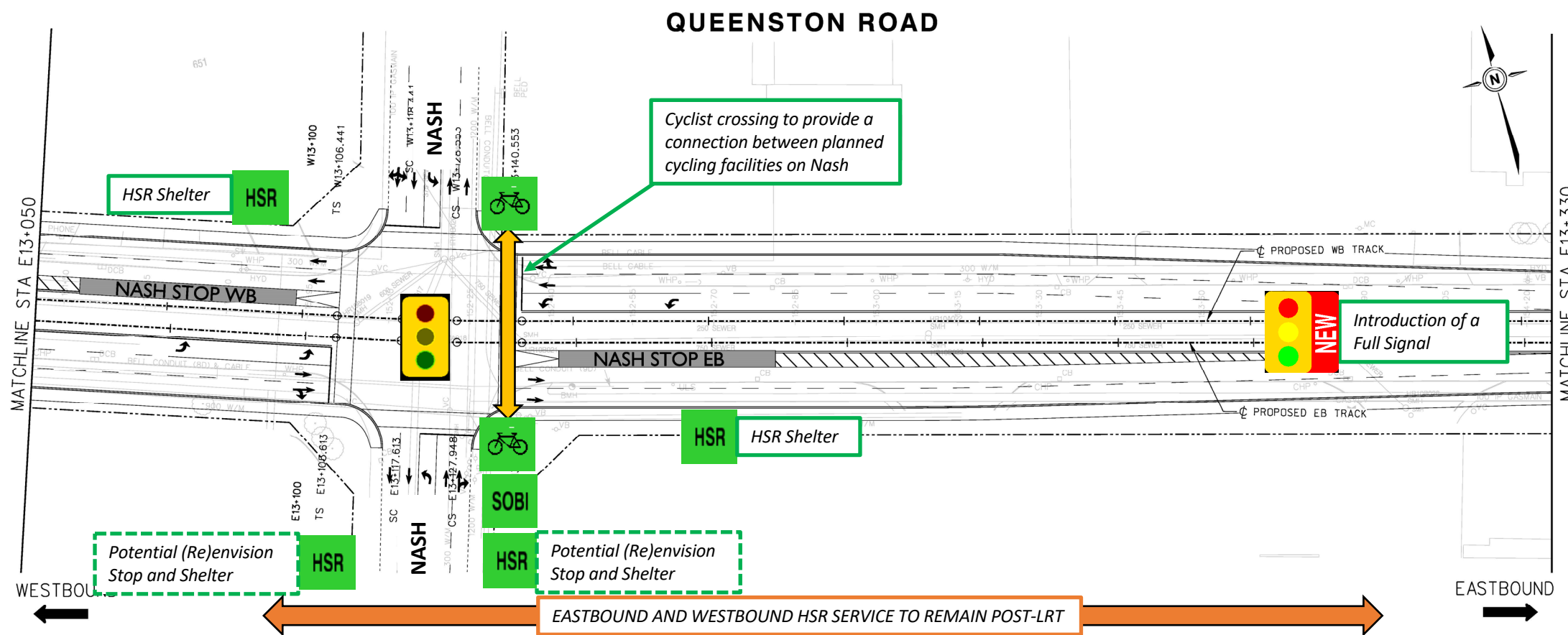
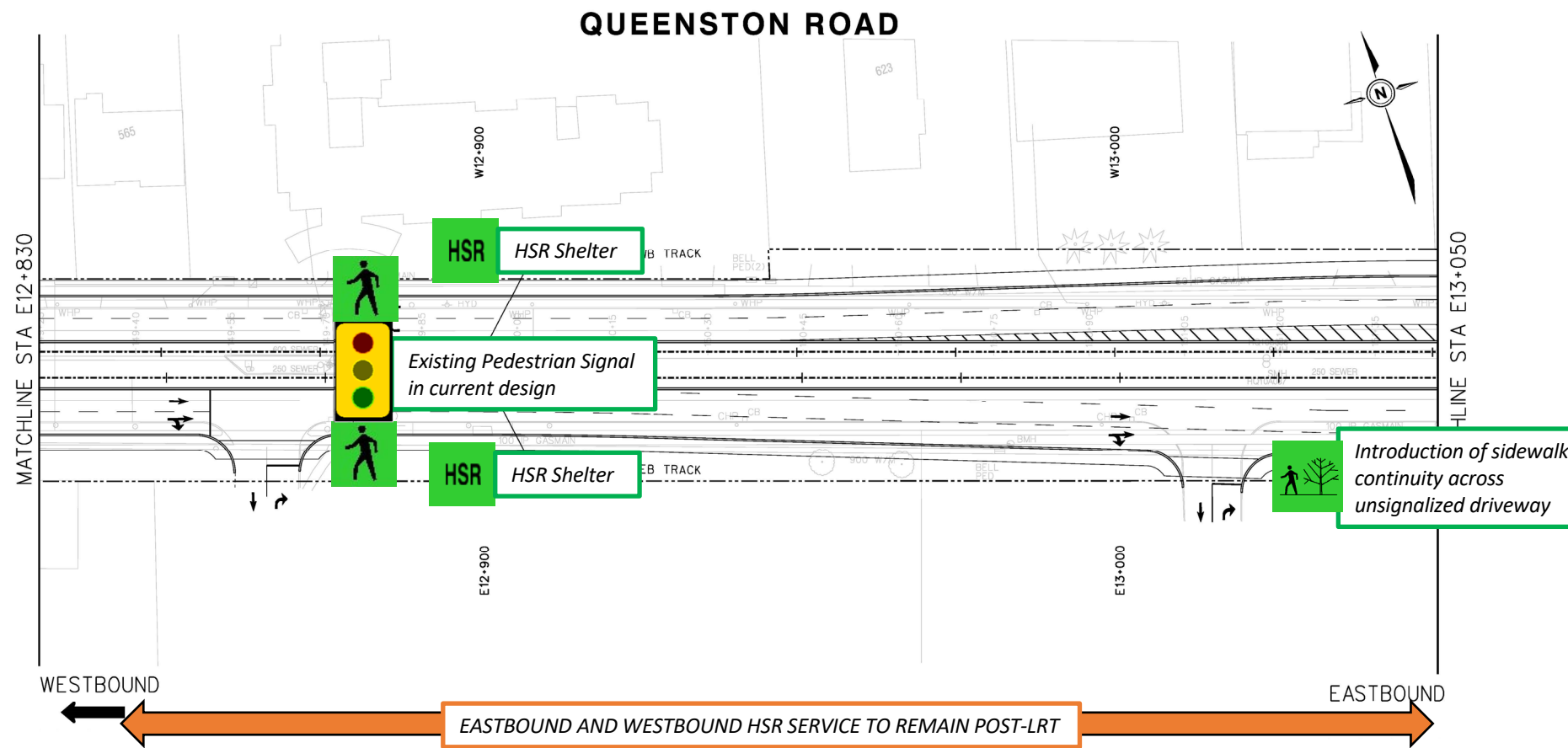
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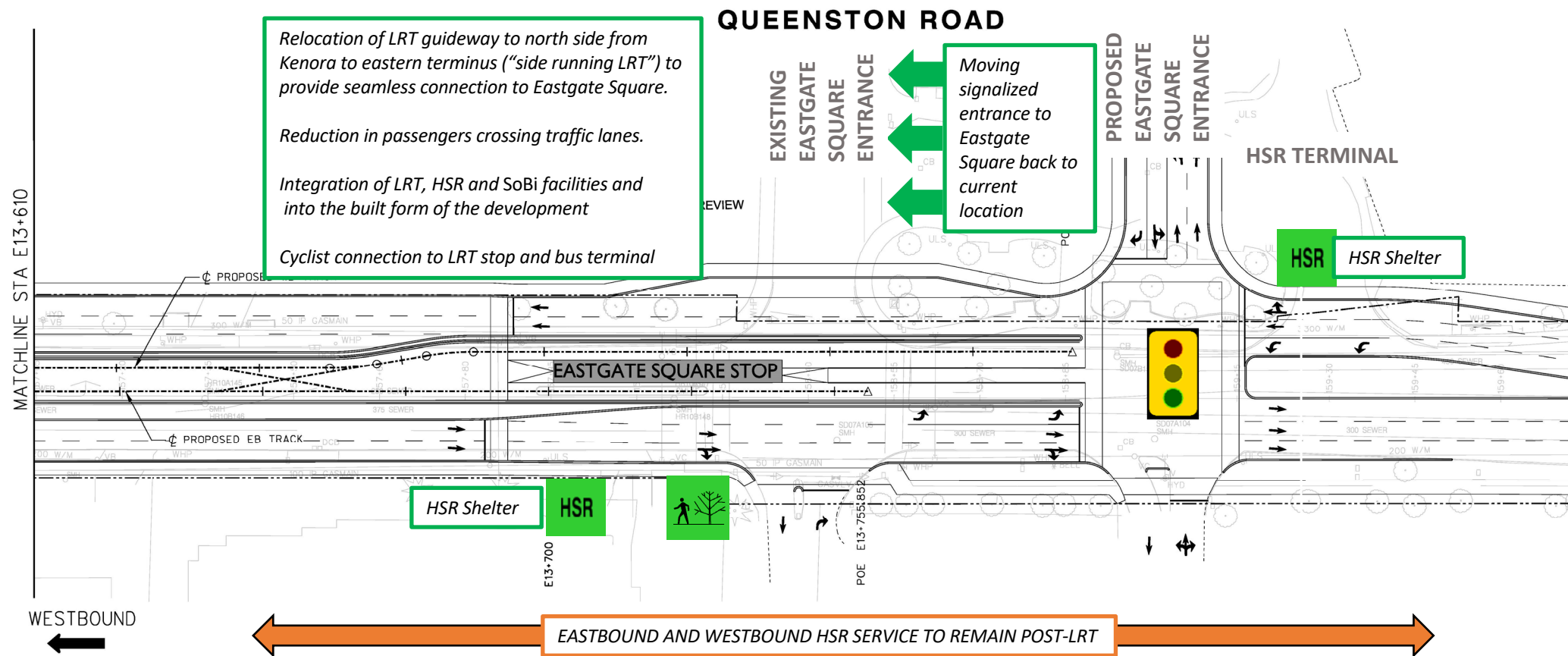
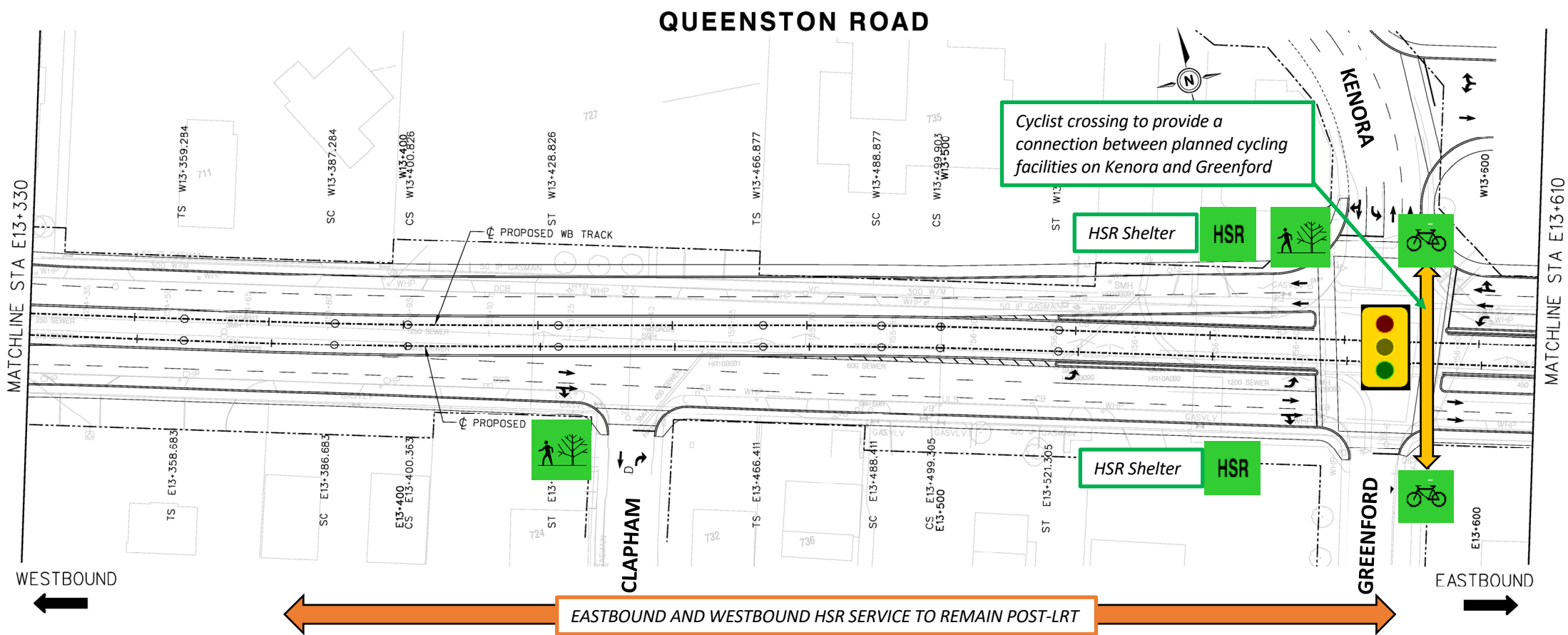
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Hamilton

**Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project
Design Update
LRT Sub-Committee
June 2, 2023**

Agenda

Design Update

- Project Overview
- City Policy Changes
- City Design Themes being Evaluated
- Other Design Considerations



Project Overview

- 14-km corridor, 17 stops
- 600-800m between stops
- Operations, Maintenance and Storage Facility at Chatham and Frid Street
- Capital funding from Federal (\$1.7B) and Provincial (\$1.7B) governments



Project Overview – LRT System Key Components



Light Rail Vehicles (LRVs)



Overhead Catenary System (OCS)



Guideway/Tracks



Operations, Maintenance and Storage Facility (OMSF)



Integrated Network



Electrical Substations

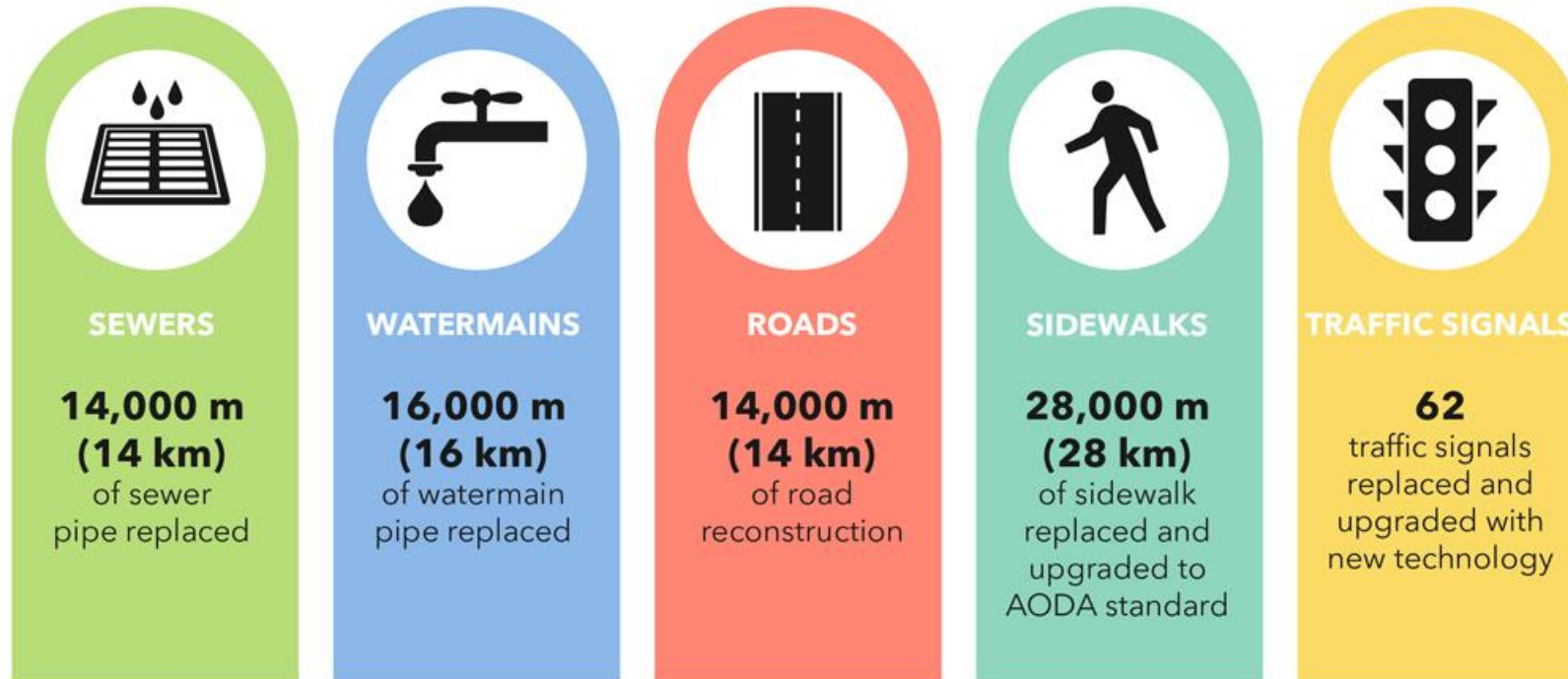


LRT Stops



Streetscape

Project Overview – Infrastructure Benefits



Note: Information is current as of December 2019 and may be subject to change.

City Policy Changes

Plans and Policies with Direct Impact

| Plan or Policy | Implications for LRT |
|---|---|
| Complete Streets Design Manual (2022) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes policies and guidelines which direct how streets are designed to facilitate Complete Streets Includes new guidelines for lane widths, curb radii, design speeds, etc. |
| Truck Route Master Plan (2022) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Removes selected N-S routes crossing King Street Implements max. four axle restriction for most downtown routes, plus King Street East |
| Main Street Conversion Project (2022) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approval to convert Main Street from one-way to two-way operations |
| HSR re-Envision Study (on-going) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identifies changes to local transit services including connections to LRT stops |
| City-wide Transportation Master Plan (2018) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Included updated Cycling Master Plan |
| Gore Standard: Hardscape Design Guidelines (2018) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gore Pedestrianization Initiative hardscape detailing |

City Policy Changes

Other Plans and Policies

| Plan or Policy | Implications for LRT |
|---|---|
| Hamilton Vision Zero Strategy (2019) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council approved policy to adopt Safe Systems and Vision Zero approach to design |
| Urban Forest Strategy (ongoing) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes actions that will contribute to better forest planning and management and support Hamilton's urban forest strategy |
| Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community Energy & Emissions Plan – includes actions to increase energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, sustainable transportation and green building practices among others Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan – includes actions like low impact development to increase community resilience to extreme weather |
| Parking Master Plan (2021) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides direction for public off-street and on-street parking, technology, and curbside management |
| Downtown Entertainment Precinct Plan (2021) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Land transaction to facilitate redevelopment of major downtown venues including Hamilton Convention Centre and First Ontario Place |
| Ontario Traffic Manual (OTM) Book 18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial manual that guides design of cycling facilities |
| Snow Removal | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Council has directed to snowplow along the transit corridors |

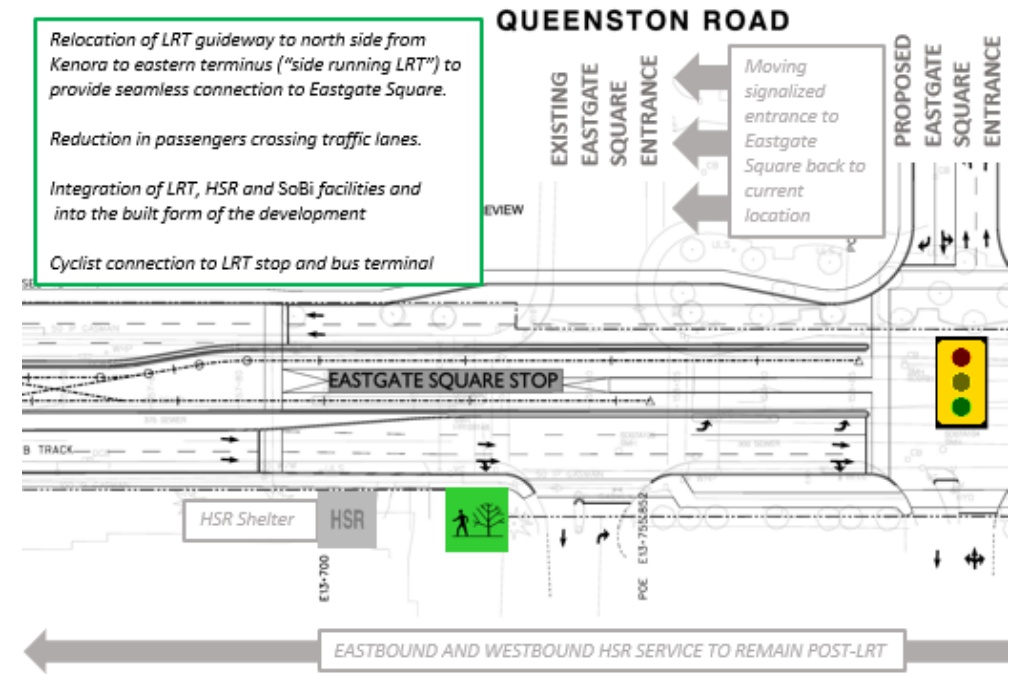
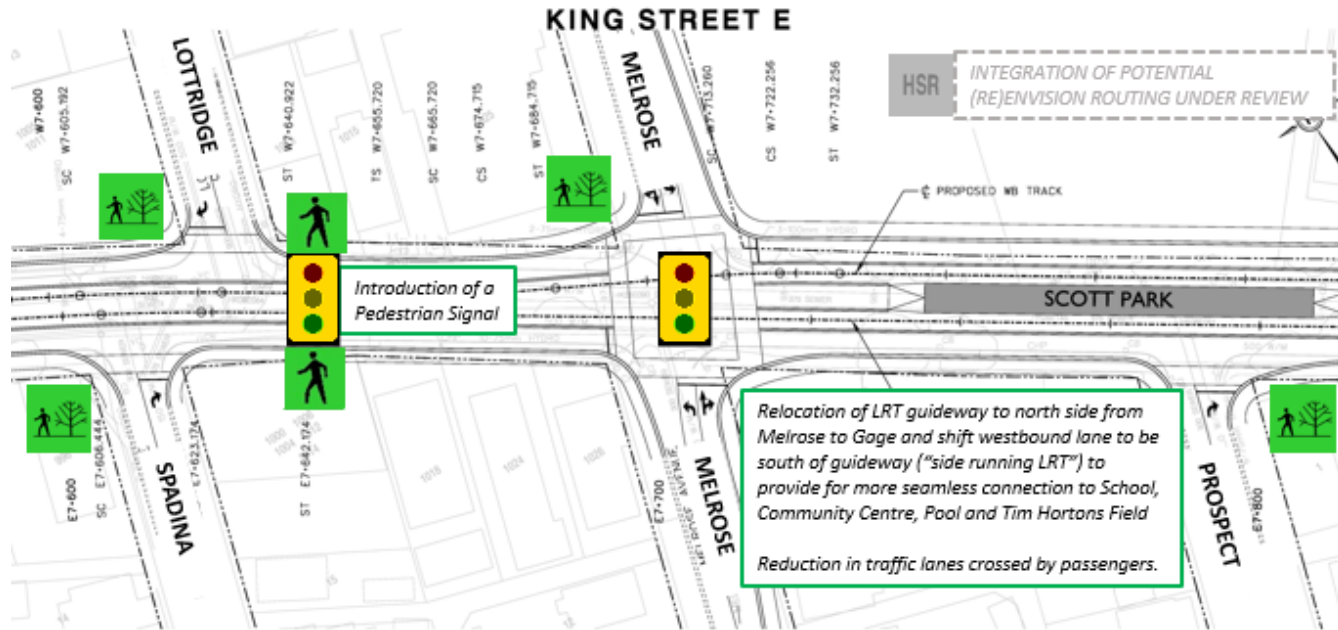
City Design Themes being Evaluated

City and Metrolinx are working together to update the concept design based on the following design themes:

- Pedestrian Environment
- Cycling Facilities and Connectivity
- Transit Connectivity
- Streetscape Elements
- Traffic Network
- Infrastructure Opportunities

City Design Themes being Evaluated

Pedestrian Environment Sample Concepts



See Sheet 15 of Appendix "A"

Introduction of Pedestrian Signal at existing school crossing

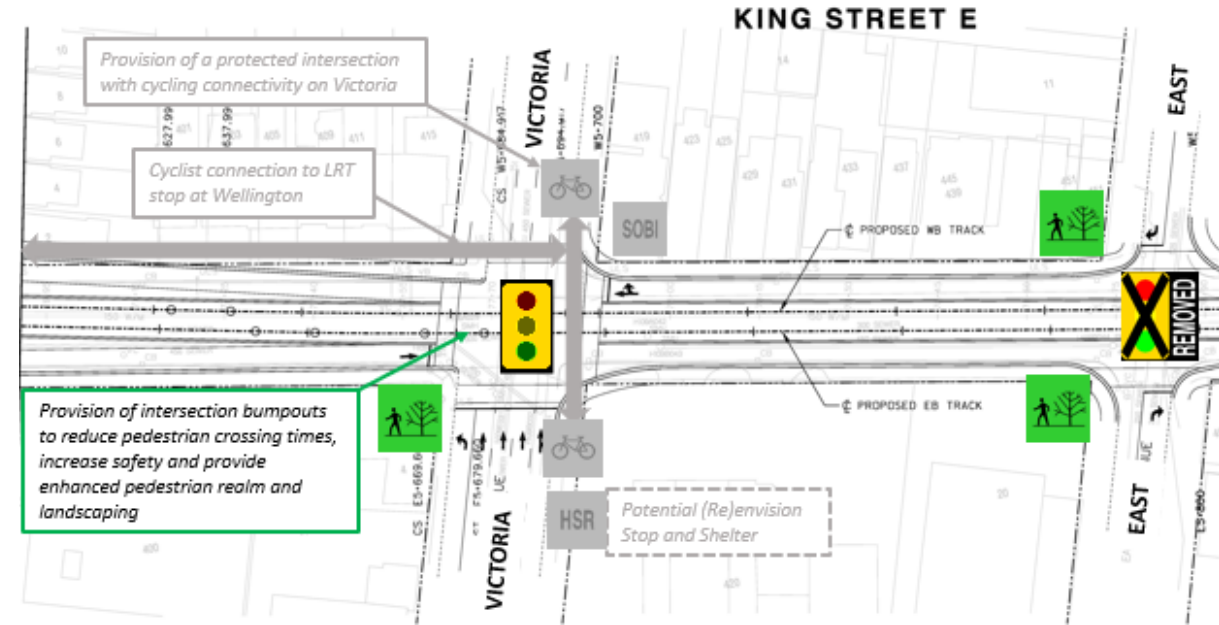
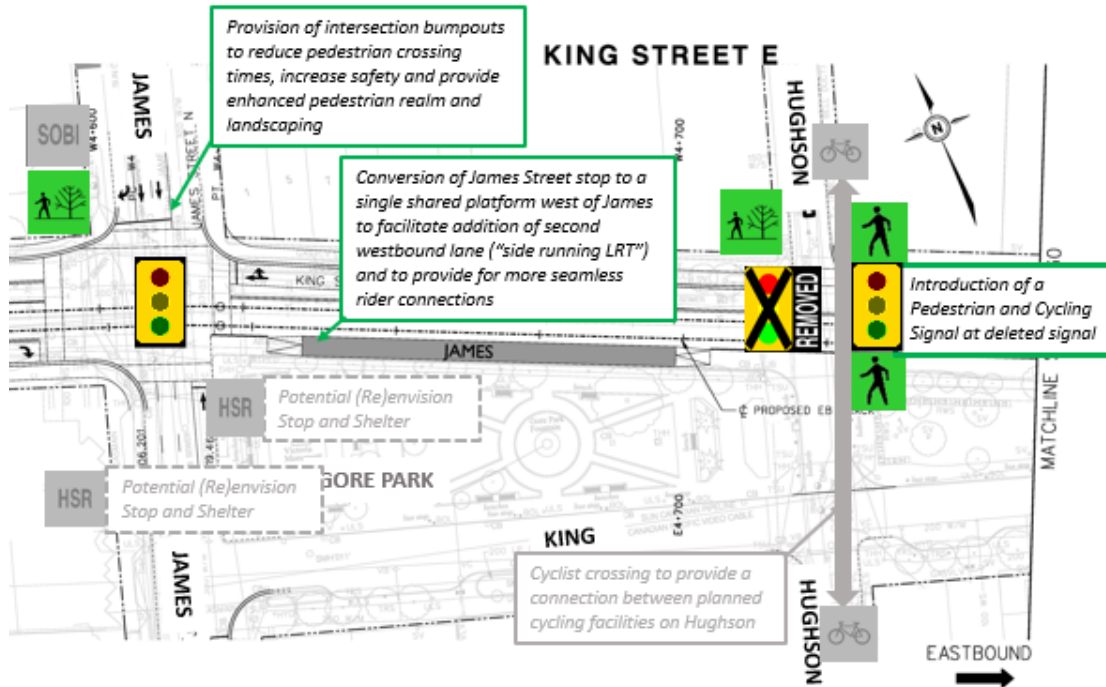
LRT shift to side-running to eliminate pedestrians crossing westbound traffic lane

See Sheet 26 of Appendix "A"

LRT shift to side-running to eliminate pedestrians crossing westbound traffic lanes

City Design Themes being Evaluated

Pedestrian Environment Sample Concepts - continued



See Sheet 10 of Appendix "A"

Introduction of Pedestrian Signal at the deleted vehicular signal at Hughson

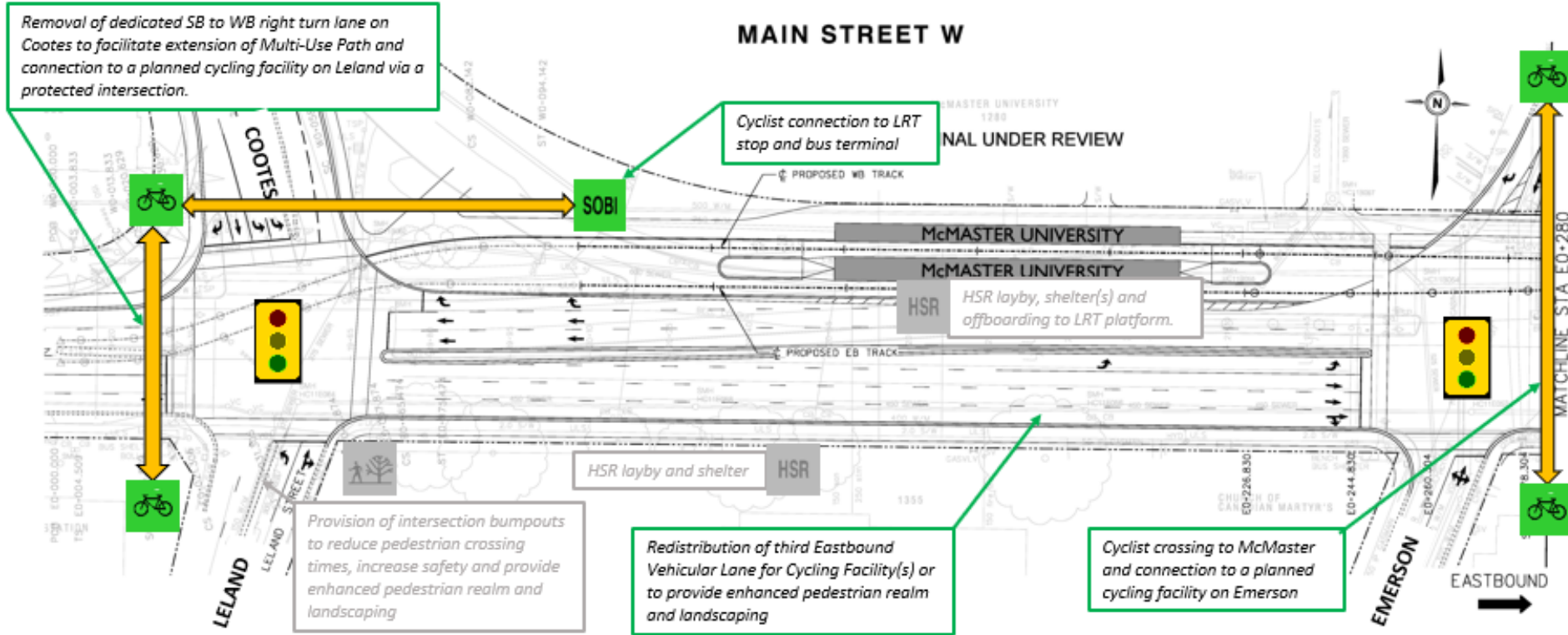
Incorporate bump-outs at James to increase pedestrian safety

See Sheet 12 of Appendix "A"

Introduction of bump-outs and integration of pedestrian, cycling and HSR

City Design Themes being Evaluated

Cycling Facilities and Connectivity Sample Concepts



See Sheet 2 of Appendix “A”

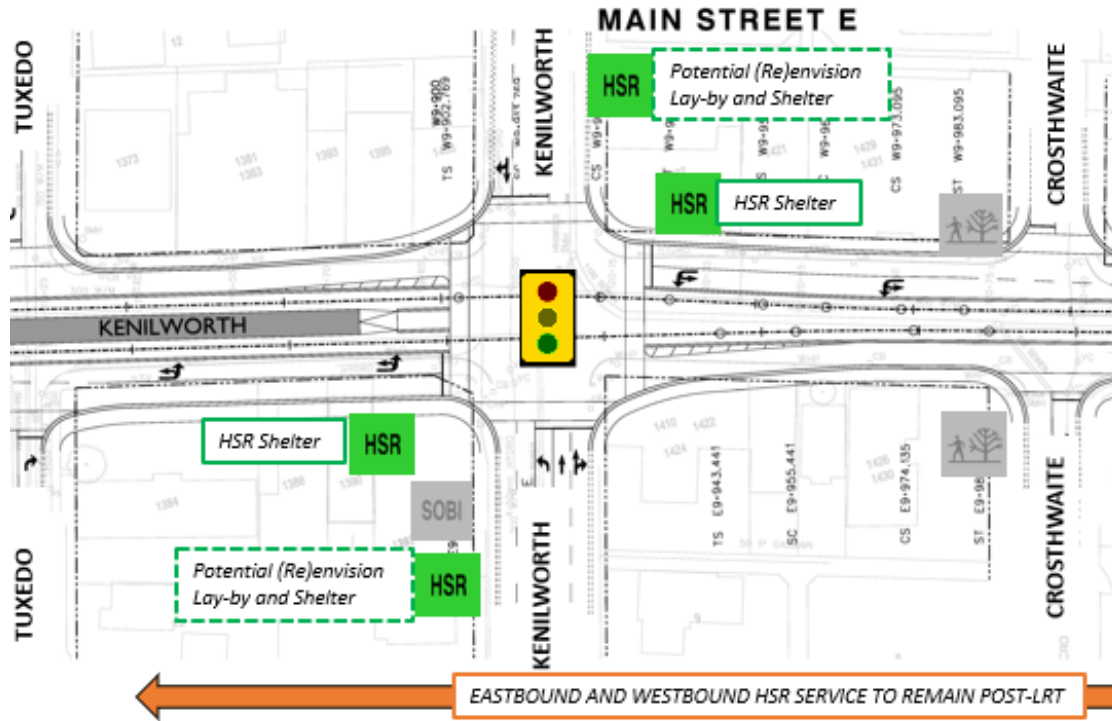
Removal of third eastbound vehicular lane and provision of eastbound and westbound cycling facilities

Extension of existing multi-use path on Cootes to Main, connections to a planned cycling facilities on Leland and Cootes

Connectivity to LRT stop and SoBi

City Design Themes being Evaluated

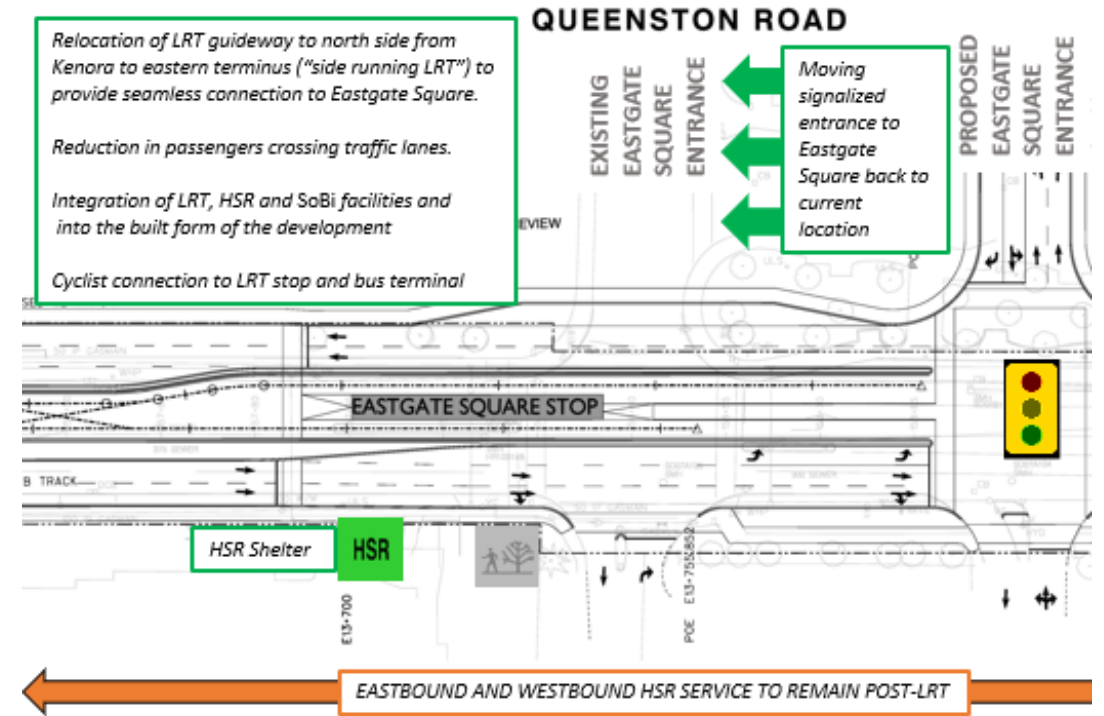
Transit Connectivity Sample Concepts



See Sheet 19 of Appendix "A"

Provision of shelters and/or laybys and integration of LRT with:

- existing HSR, (Re)envision and BLAST network (T-line) routing



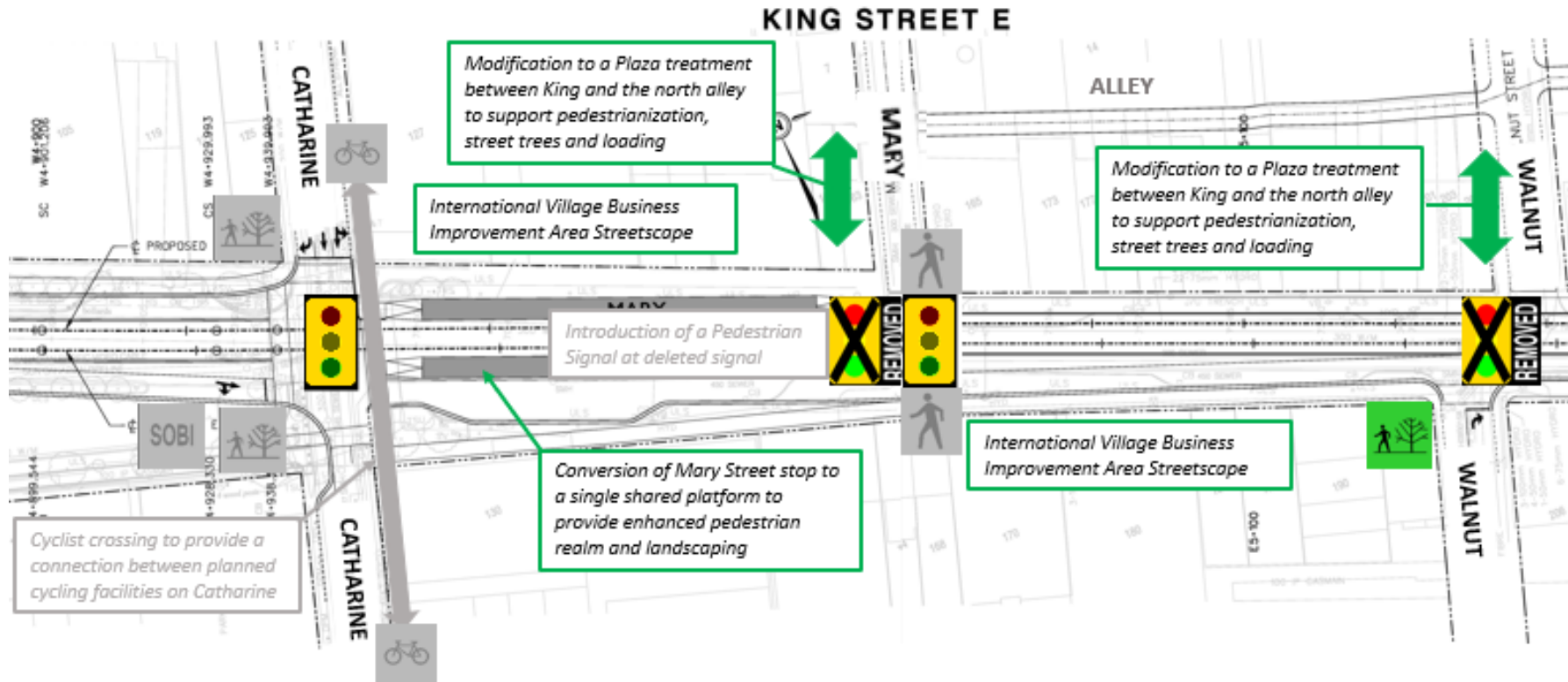
See Sheet 26 of Appendix "A"

Integration of LRT and provision of shelters and/or laybys:

- existing HSR, (Re)envision and BLAST network (S-line) routing
- potential site redevelopment

City Design Themes being Evaluated

Streetscape Opportunities Sample Concepts



See Sheet 10 and 11 of Appendix "A"

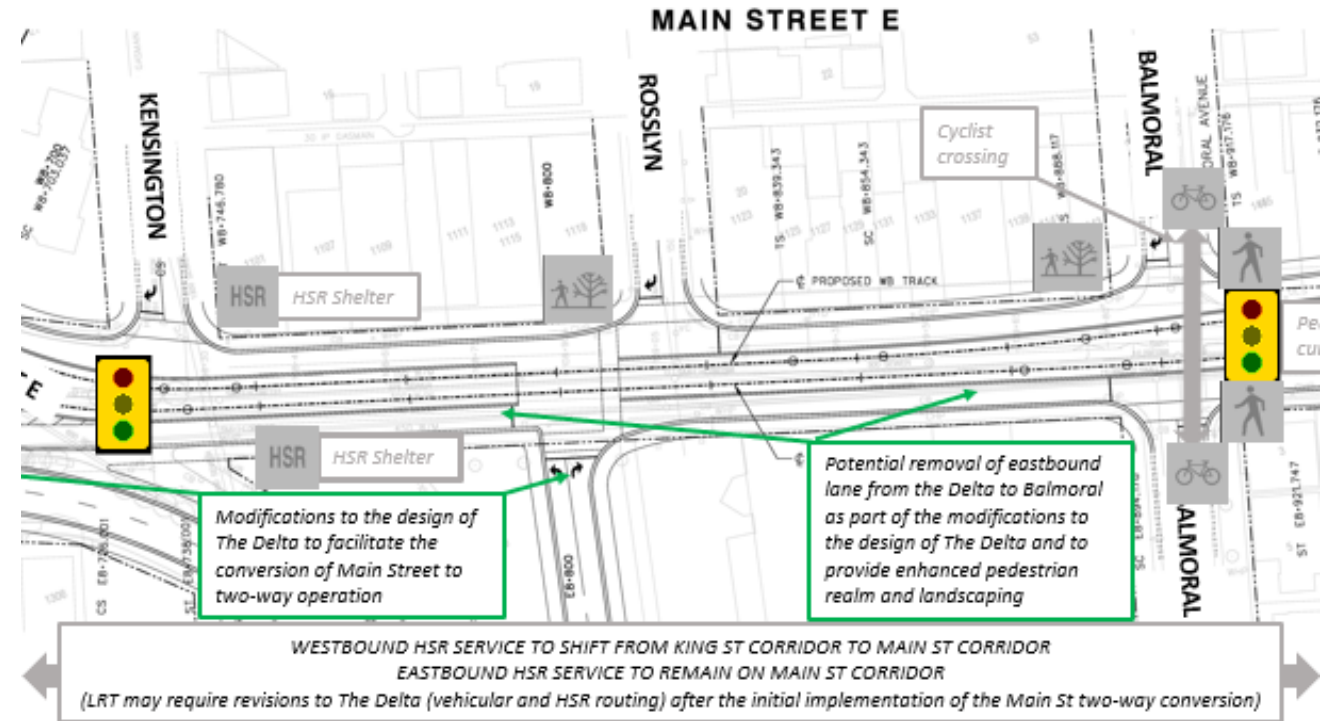
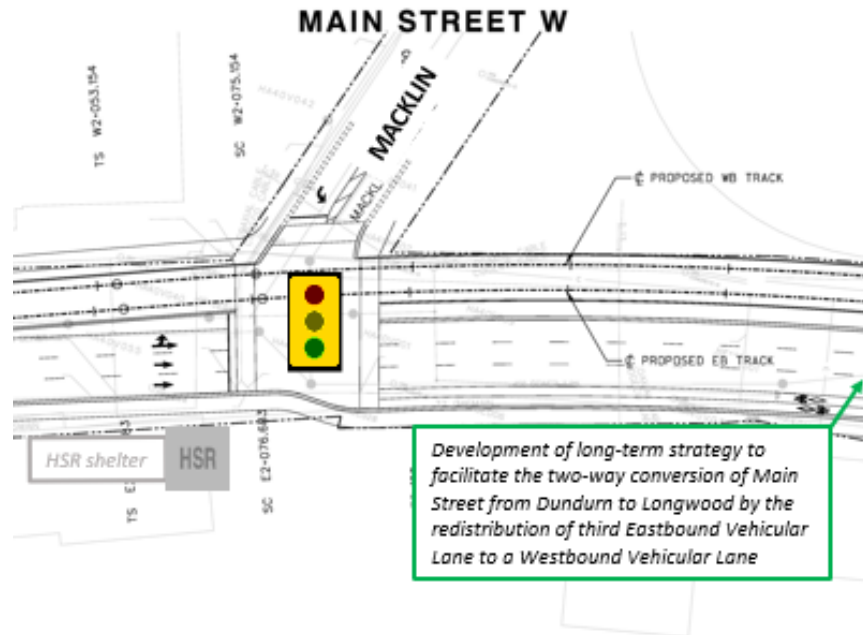
International Village Business Improvement Area Streetscape

Modifications to road segments between King Street and the north alley to support pedestrianization, greening and loading

Conversion of Mary Street stop to a single shared platform to increase pedestrianization of area and streetscape opportunities.

City Design Themes being Evaluated

Traffic Network Sample Concepts



See Sheets 5 and 17 of Appendix "A"

Addition of a westbound lane within the limits of the LRT project on Main Street

Development of strategy to facilitate the two-way conversion of Main Street from Dundurn to Longwood

Modifications to the design of The Delta and LRT corridor to facilitate the conversion of Main Street to two-way operation through the Delta

Other Design Considerations

- Other design considerations are currently being investigated with Metrolinx. This includes addressing Emergency Services and Accessibility requirements, consideration of Public Art and Digital Infrastructure requirements, and coordinating the LRT design with adjacent developments.



Hamilton

THANK YOU



May 2023

Hamilton LRT Community Benefits Engagement Report



Prepared for



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| Appendix B: Community Conversations (2019)_LRT, Employment, Community Benefits and Shaping Hamilton’s Future | |

Executive Summary

The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) is a community-labour coalition formed in response to the opportunities presented by the Hamilton Light Rail Transit project. Inspired by the Toronto Community Benefits Network and the successes of the community benefits movement across North America, it envisions Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a justice prospering economy. Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are a proven approach to achieving this vision. HCBN is funded by grant donations from the Hamilton Community Foundation, the Atkinson Foundation and the United Way of Hamilton Halton. The organization is dedicated to stakeholder engagement to bring forward residents' aspirations, concerns and hopes for the Hamilton LRT project.

Metrolinx has committed to a community benefits/supports program based on experience with and advocacy by the Toronto Community Benefits Network. Metrolinx has delivered community benefits on other LRT projects, such as the Ellington Crosstown and Finch West LRT. They have formally acknowledged HCBN as a community engagement stakeholder committing to the delivery of community benefits/supports through four pillars: Pillar 1 – Employment Opportunities, Pillar 2 – Local Business Supports, Pillar 3 – Public Realm Improvements and Pillar 4 – Community Improvement Supports. The exact nature of what those pillars will deliver has not been clarified at the time of this report. HCBN, its members and partners expect Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton to develop a Community Benefits Working Group, as they have with other transit projects. This working group should be used to help with the co-development and implementation of the Metrolinx-identified pillars and required plans (with subcommittees for each).

To date, HCBN has conducted 15 community engagement sessions, both virtually and in person. HCBN has also undertaken multiple online surveys with 2317 responses from residents of Hamilton. The engagement results to date are presented in detail in this report and the companion report from McMaster's Research Shop titled **Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT**. The engagement feedback is broken into nine emerging themes and listed in order of priority: Affordable housing, Transportation Connections, Local Employment and Training Opportunities, Environmental Impact, Local Procurement and Business Support, Accessibility, Community Spaces and Public Arts. This continuing engagement is being used to help shape the advocacy undertaken by HCBN.

During engagement sessions and online surveys, respondents provided a wide array of community benefits ideas. "Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT" summarizes that data, including a demographic and equity-seeking data breakdown. The McMaster report was limited in providing context and distinguishing scope to minimize redundancies and create clarity this report breaks down the residents' aspirations and the stakeholders that could be responsible for their delivery.

The Hamilton Light Rail Project (LRT) represents a generational opportunity to reshape 14 kilometres of the lower city. This historic government investment in rapid transit is already spurring massive private sector transit-oriented development (TOD) along the line. Residents engaged with for this report already see properties bought and demolished for new condominiums, rental properties renovated and tenants displaced and boarded-up buildings and shops. This ongoing transformation has left many asking, "What benefits will this project bring?" Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton must commit to hearing resident aspirations for the project, live up to the Hamilton LRT's promise and deliver on as many Community Benefits as possible openly and transparently. This report presents the resident feedback from the first round of HCBN's community engagement.

Project Background

On May 13th, 2021, the Federal Government and the Government of Ontario came together to announce a \$3.4 billion investment in constructing the Hamilton Light Rail B Line from Eastgate Mall to McMaster University. On June 23rd, 2021, Hamilton City Council directed that staff "meet with Metrolinx, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) and other governmental entities, as required, to prepare a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit project. On September 8th, 2021, city staff brought the Memorandum of Understanding to the General Issues Committee for debate and a vote. In that report, the City of Hamilton and the Province acknowledge and included in clause G that:

"The Province continues to recognize the critical importance of building affordable housing near transit stations and maximizing high quality jobs and benefits for communities adjacent to or affected by the Project. The Province will work with the city and community stakeholders to endeavour to determine how best to support these goals of affordable housing and community benefits as part of transit project delivery."

All parties signed that Memorandum on September 22nd, 2021.

Metrolinx, in a December 19th, 2022, letter to the Hamilton Community Benefits Network laying out their Community Benefits/Support pillars, wrote:

"We recognize the importance of a robust and holistic approach to maximizing the benefits of our construction projects in communities across the Greater Golden Horseshoe. We will remain engaged with the Hamilton Community Benefits Network as we continue our mission to improve and expand public transit across the region."

Hamilton's \$3.4 billion LRT system is back on track and will transform the City of Hamilton for a generation. This transit project has the opportunity to be very different from previous Ontario major transit investment projects due to many unique factors in Hamilton. The transit construction area is through the City's most dense and economically challenged portions. It is also one of the last areas of significant affordability in the City of Hamilton, with a high density of tenants living in grandfathered low-rent units. It is home to many immigrant and racialized-owned businesses, contains the highest density of disabled residents in Ontario, and has a high density of urban indigenous peoples. It is imperative that the project delivers not just the words written in Clause G but concrete community benefits that are developed publicly and transparently through a signed Community Benefits Agreement(s).

Introduction

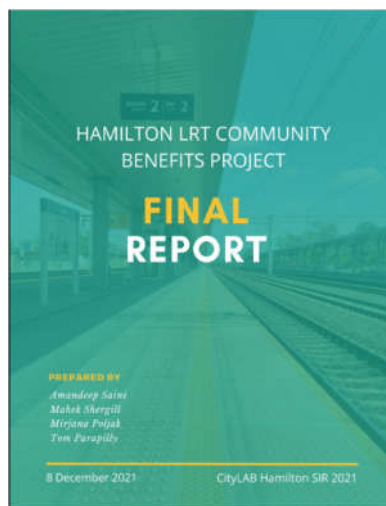
The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) was initially established in 2017 as a community-labour coalition. HCBN was developed in response to the opportunities presented by the original announcement of full capital funding from the Ontario Government for the Hamilton Light Rail project. Consisting of 63 members and partners — including unions, not-for-profits, social enterprises, community groups, neighbourhood associations, transit advocates and environmental organizations — HCBN envisions Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a prospering economy. By advocating for Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) in significant city infrastructure projects, HCBN aims to produce positive and equitable outcomes for underserved and disenfranchised communities in the City of Hamilton. CBAs are agreements between governments, developers and coalitions of community organizations that address a range of community concerns and needs, including (but not limited to) ensuring residents benefit from significant developments. In particular, HCBN sees CBAs as an opportunity to help mitigate adverse impacts on local communities due to the construction of large-scale infrastructure projects. For example, CBAs can include advocating for affordable housing and design and neighbourhood improvements for a

project. CBAs can also foster local workforce development by creating job opportunities for the local community and, in tandem, incentivizing training delivery programs to facilitate access to these jobs.

In April 2014, Metrolinx established a Community Benefits Framework and committed to include a community benefits program for the Toronto Transit Projects, including the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, Finch West LRT and Hazel McCallion LRT in Mississauga. Those Community Benefits included commitments to hard targets and monitoring for employment outcomes to provide training and employment opportunities in the unionized trades and professional, administrative and technical positions. They are working with the Islamic Society of Toronto to bring a new Darus Salaam Mosque and community hub to Thorncliffe Park (Hazel McCallion LRT) and with the City of Toronto to donate land for the creation of a Finch Arts and Community Hub (Finch West LRT). Metrolinx incorporated the historic Kodak Building as part of a station (Eglinton Crosstown). They also created a fossil fuel-free green energy backup power facility in the Mount Dennis neighbourhood (Eglinton Crosstown) and a section of green tracks (Eglinton Crosstown). All projects include locally sourced materials and small businesses and social enterprises contracts. Metrolinx also undertook a community-based art project in Hamilton, animating 5 locations along the Corridor. These are some of the many examples the HCBN hopes to build on with Metrolinx and the City for the implementation of a Community Benefits Agreement for the Hamilton LRT project. These examples, and others from other North American CBAs, were presented to residents we engaged with to frame our core question: “What Community Benefits should HCBN advocate for from the Hamilton project?”

CityLAB Semester in Residence (SIR)

The CityLAB Semester in Residence (SIR) is a social innovation hub that brings together post-secondary students, academics, civic leaders, local community organizations and the City of Hamilton to address real-world challenges facing the city. From September 28th, 2021, to December 8th, 2021, McMaster University students Amandeep Saini, Mahek Shergill, Mirjana Poljak, and Tom Parapilly (referred to as the CityLAB Project Group), worked with HCBN to engage residents in conversations about their needs, concerns and desires for the LRT. The CityLAB project group refined the tools and techniques that HCBN would use to engage in outreach and survey. They provided a toolkit for a comprehensive engagement strategy engagement around community benefits. The project group worked with HCBN to co-host the first two community engagement sessions in November 2021. This work can be reviewed in the 156-page ***City Labs Hamilton LRT Community Benefits Project Final Report***.



Methods:

To date, HCBN has conducted 15 community engagement sessions, both virtually and in person. HCBN has also undertaken multiple online surveys with 2317 responses from residents of Hamilton. Our first Community Engagement session occurred in 2019 at the Hamilton Public Library before the pandemic and the project's cancellation. It was attended by ~140 residents and provided a foundation for future engagements. Between the cancellation of the project, a reconsideration of funding, the restarting of the project and the pandemic, there was a delay in resuming the engagement process. In November 2021, HCBN re-engaged Hamilton residents and conducted two community dialogue events. While the HCBN typically relies on in-person community dialogue sessions as the optimal method of engaging residents, the sessions in November 2021 had to be conducted virtually due to COVID-19 health directive mandates. The two virtual community dialogue sessions were conducted via scheduled Zoom calls and were attended by 50 Hamilton residents.

Zoom was the chosen virtual platform due to the ease of its accessibility, as attendees only needed to follow a meeting link to attend. Zoom also provided automatic closed captioning, which increased accessibility for persons living with disabilities. The breakout room feature on Zoom helped split attendees into focus groups, allowing us to facilitate small-group conversations. Questions were designed to guide breakout conversations, incorporating elements from the Appreciative Inquiry Model of public participation. To record the contributions of attendees, a platform called Google Jamboard was utilized during breakout sessions. Google Jamboard enabled the designated CityLab student notetaker to use virtual sticky notes and share their screen to display the recorded ideas to attendees — allowing them to engage those ideas and build upon them. This method of virtual community engagement was then utilized in subsequent dialogue sessions with the membership of local non-profit organizations. The aim was to gather input from experts and leaders in their respective work areas. A dialogue session was held with Environment Hamilton on April 6th, 2022, consisting of the HCBN and Environment Hamilton teams and community members. Cycle Hamilton also co-hosted a dialogue session on April 14th, 2022. Another dialogue session was held with Spectrum's newcomer group on May 18th, 2022. On June 13th, 2022, HCBN conducted a dialogue session at the Neighbour to Neighbour's community action workshop, consisting of an HCBN member and organizational clients. Three online sessions were co-hosted online with ACORN at their June meetings of the three ACORN Chapters, Downtown, East-End and the Mountain. Two sessions were conducted with YMCA Hamilton Job seekers online through Zoom. Lastly, the First Unitarian Church and HCBN conducted an in-person dialogue session on June 22nd, 2022, comprised of the HCBN team and community members. The participants' contributions to these virtual dialogue sessions were documented via Google Jamboard and will be detailed in this report's Community Focus Group section.

It is important to note that this report was produced following a recent re-introductory meeting between members of HCBN and the Metrolinx project team, as well as the release of Metrolinx's four (4) pillar community benefits strategy. Metrolinx has not expanded on how it plans, as of this report, to implement those four pillars, so in reviewing community feedback, we broadly interpreted what might fall into those categories. McMaster Research Shop reviewed the survey and community engagement data and created the report **Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT** (attached as Appendix A). That report could not differentiate which feedback was relevant to Community Benefits and which might be out of scope. To provide better clarity, HCBN reviewed all the data gathered and aligned the feedback into categories which may be in scope with Metrolinx's four pillars, a policy or process the City of Hamilton might undertake, opportunities for affordable housing from the project and improvements or capital investments the City of Hamilton could make to the Corridor's built form. This report relies heavily on the online data gathered during our surveys.

Surveys:

HCBN designed three surveys with similar but slightly different questions and response categories, distributed them, and collected their data between January 2021-March 2022. A combined analysis of these three surveys was conducted for questions with the same or similar wording; however, segregated analyses were conducted for questions with different response categories. This report details the number and percentage of respondents who selected each response option for quantitative questions. For qualitative questions, themes were developed to code each response, which was used to provide a count for the number of times each theme was mentioned. Community Benefits negotiations and processes are not fully formalized. HCBN undertook a reasoned approach to assigning scope based on previous projects, understanding of municipal issues and our expertise. At HCBN, we cannot fully decide what is in scope for whom and hope all parties will, in good faith, implement as many resident aspirations and ideas as possible. A breakdown of the survey results was also undertaken by McMaster's Research Shop and is attached as a compendium report in **Appendix A: Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT**.

Community Focus Groups:

The HCBN conducted one large focus group in 2019 and community focus groups from November 2021-December 2022. Each focus group was scheduled for 1.5-2 hours and consisted of breakout rooms focusing on community benefits areas, including housing affordability, accessibility, environment, and arts and community. Guided questions were used to prompt attendees. During the online sessions, the team documented the contributions of attendees by recording breakout sessions, preparing transcripts and taking notes on Jamboard during the discussions. During the in-person sessions, notetakers were assigned to document conversations, post-it notes were gathered, and paper surveys were distributed and gathered. Data were categorized based on themes and summarised for accessibility.

Limitations:

HCBN originally scheduled community focus groups to take place in person; however, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the events were moved online, creating concerns regarding their reach. Several focus groups were cancelled due to low enrollment. The bulk of this report focuses on presenting the survey findings since collecting survey data online surmounted the challenges and safety concerns raised by COVID-19.

Community Benefits Theme Priorities

Residents were asked to rank their top 5 community benefits priority areas from 9 themes: Affordable Housing, Transportation Connection, Local Employment and Training Opportunities, The Environment, Business Support (Shop Local/Local Procurement), Accessibility (Physical and Economic), Preserving Historic Character, Community Spaces and Public Art. In each of their top 5 community benefits priorities, they were asked to provide examples or ideas they would like to see implemented. We broke these themes down into areas that Metrolinx might support under their four pillar Community Benefits/Supports plan, those that might be City of Hamilton policies, those which might require the City to modify its built form (possible capital investments), and lastly, affordable housing requests which might deal with Metrolinx-owned land.

Affordable Housing:

[Table 1: Community benefit ideas related to affordable housing](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|---------------------------|
| Affordable Housing geared to low income | 106 |
| Inclusionary Zoning | 68 |
| Variety of housing options | 57 |
| Housing-related regulations | 44 |
| Revamping or destroying old buildings | 36 |
| Building new homes | 23 |

Respondents identified affordable housing as the community benefits area of the highest priority. As the national housing crisis intensified over the last five years, Hamilton residents have disproportionately felt the brunt of this issue. The Corridor is already experiencing the natural flow of capital and investment expected from transit-oriented development (TOD) in an area where a rapid transit investment is being made. The LRT should bring transformative change to the city through employment opportunities and connecting communities. However, the TOD along the Corridor has not been equitable so far. As the project progresses, the Hamilton LRT has the potential to further exacerbate the housing crisis by displacing low-income residents and incentivizing landlords and developers to set high rent rates. These impacts can be mitigated with sound policy, investment in affordable housing and regular engagement with the communities most affected. Here are some of the relevant resident requests most commonly mentioned as community benefits related to affordable housing:

[Community benefits covered in Metrolinx pillars:](#)

- Community Benefits Working Group with a specific Affordable Housing working group to explore how Affordable Housing will be created as part of project delivery (including available and potentially available surplus land).
- Protection of artists from the effects of gentrification in the downtown area, providing them with alternative live/work spaces.

[Affordable housing within Metrolinx scope:](#)

- Provide tracking and listing of all available land which will be surplus for HCBN and Hamilton is Home.
- Surplus land to be donated to the city and local non-profits for the purpose of building deeply affordable housing units.
- Metrolinx should use any profits from property sales along the route to build affordable and sustainable housing.
- Build affordable Housing above station stops.

- Provide substantial tenant support, including rent subsidies, moving costs, etc. to displaced tenants (establish and advertise a firm policy, not a case-by-case bases).
- Replace twice the number of housing units that must be demolished during construction and take steps to ensure that housing of equal or lower rent is made available to residents.
- Develop a policy for affordable housing as part of project delivery: working with local non-profits to develop mixed-income rental units, in partnership with the provincial and federal government, with funding from Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and Infrastructure Ontario (IO).
- Force any developer who buys Metrolinx land to build a % (25+) of the units as market-affordable rentals.

City Policies:

- No sale for the private use of any city-owned land on or around the Corridor.
- Surplus land to be designated for affordable housing development.
- Require all new developments within a certain distance from the LRT to have a minimum percentage of affordable housing units (Inclusionary Zoning).
- Policies to prevent renovations and demovictions.
- Vacant home/lot tax.
- Increase city funding for social services with a housing-first model.
- Increase social housing (City Housing Hamilton) investment to build more affordable units along the Corridor.
- Many comments expressed concerns about encampment eviction.

City Built Form (Capital):

- Build more supportive and transitional housing.
- Support tiny homes/shed project.
- Buy apartments facing development from private market.



Indwell Rudy Hulst Commons 47-unit Affordable Accessible Housing Building near Future Kenilworth LRT Station Stop

Transportation connections:

[Table 2: Community benefits relating to transportation connections](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Infrastructure design (bike lanes, crosswalks, bike locks, bus shelters) | 114 |
| Increase access across Hamilton (multiple stops, multiple areas) | 71 |
| Connect with multiple modes of transportation | 61 |
| Safety | 43 |
| Snow Removal | 27 |
| Connect to areas outside Hamilton | 11 |

Through the surveys and community focus groups, the consensus communicated was that the LRT project can only achieve its intended purpose if there is an intentional effort to connect it to other modes of transportation that Hamilton residents currently use. Multi-modal transport in the City of Hamilton will positively impact mobility justice, disability justice, traffic congestion and the environment. Safety was also mentioned frequently in the context of pedestrian protections from automobiles, pedestrian crossings, wider sidewalks and adequate lighting, and snow removal was cited as a pressing concern. Below are some of the most commonly mentioned community benefits ideas for Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton.

[Transportation connection within Metrolinx scope:](#)

- Community Benefits Working Group to explore how Transportation connections, concerns and enhancement opportunities apply and will be delivered by the Metrolinx Pillars.
- Installing flood lights, traffic calming and other safety measures to make streets around LRT stations and stops more walkable.
- Hamilton Bike Share/SoBi Bike Share Stations at Each stop.
- Must have signal priority.
- Build wider sidewalks.
- Create many more pedestrian crossings over the LRT.
- Easier Connection to Hunter and West Harbour GO Station (minibus for those with luggage, children, or disability).
- Make Dundurn Plaza a GO BUS Hub.
- Make Rapid Transit Connection between Dundas Highway 6 BRT and Hamilton LRT.
- Secure Bicycle Parking at stops.
- Connecting the line to more GO transit stations, east terminus should be confederation GO.

City Built Form (Capital):

- Create the infrastructure to connect the LRT route to bike lanes, bus routes and commuter parking lots.
- Adjust city roads to de-prioritize car traffic and make walking much safer.
- Additional bike lanes separated from cars.
- Re-engineering HSR to properly feed LRT properly, redeploying and expanding HSR services in the suburbs like Stoney Creek and Waterdown.
- Places to sit between station stops (benches, tables at parkettes).

City Policy:

- Initiatives to increase rider education to facilitate easier route planning.
- Coordinated LRT schedules with HSR
- Ability to bring bikes on trains.
- Policies to ensure that bus shelters and areas surrounding LRT stations and stops are adequately shovelled and maintained.
- Free parking at LRT stations, using LRT ticket as a parking ticket.
- Many expressed concern about adequate and frequent snow removal to access the system.

Local training and employment opportunities:

Table 3: Community benefits relating to local employment and training opportunities

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Focus on creating job opportunities and hiring individuals and businesses from Hamilton | 65 |
| Fair employment conditions (permanent, liveable wage, benefits etc.) | 26 |
| Prioritise inclusion of equity-seeking groups | 25 |
| Paid Internships and Apprenticeships | 24 |
| Encourage skilled trades | 23 |
| Partner with local education institutions to provide training opportunities | 15 |
| Provide barrier-free opportunities (opportunities that don't reduce ODSP benefit, no age limit, and accommodate different levels of education) | 13 |
| Focus on youth | 9 |

Metrolinx has a proven track record of providing employment opportunities through transit project construction on the Finch West and Eglinton Crosstown. It is also listed as one of their core Pillars of Community Benefits. Metrolinx is expected to work with HCBN partners and members to build on that success, with increased hard targets and expanded opportunities for our most marginalized to secure employment outcomes from this project. The success of employment outcomes can only be achieved with public reporting and monitoring, as well as the direct inclusion of Workforce Development agencies and Trade Labour unions in Hamilton. The LRT will allow many Hamilton residents to move around the city freely, empowering people to gain employment with fewer geographical barriers. It is an investment in the future of Hamilton and its economy.

Additionally, the construction and operation of the LRT is a source of employment and career opportunities in and of itself. Community members have expressed a keen interest in seeing the employment opportunities and training go toward those who need it most in Hamilton. Metrolinx has a proven track record of providing employment opportunities through transit project construction on the Finch West And Eglinton Crosstown; it is also listed as one of their core Pillars of Community Benefits. Metrolinx is expected to work with HCBN partners and members to build on that success, with increased hard targets and expanded opportunities for our most marginalized to secure employment outcomes from this project. Below are some of the most commonly mentioned community benefits asks for by Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton:

Community benefits asks covered in Metrolinx pillars:

- Prioritize marginalized groups in job opportunities and training
- Set higher targets for project employment of marginalized groups than previous Metrolinx Projects for contractors (more than 15% for Trades and Professional Administrative and Technical jobs)
- Transparency on the exact language and requirements going into the RFPs and contracts
- Community Benefits Working Group with an Employment Subcommittee to manage oversight, monitoring and concerns arising from Metrolinx's pillar commitment.
- Clarity on the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholders and Project Co
- Ensure local contractors are involved
- Use of Social Enterprise businesses
- All jobs produced by LRT construction and operation pay at least a living wage
- Have positions be full-time permanent
- Partnering with workforce development agencies, unions and Mohawk College for training
- Encourage youth to have careers in the LRT
- Offer small businesses support to hire young graduates

City Policy:

- Have the LRT be run by the Hamilton Street Railway with ATU 107 workers
- All other operations needed (snow removal, garbage, street maintenance etc) be kept inhouse and unionized positions with CUPE 5167



Protestors in Front of City Hall Rallying to Keep Transit Public (Hamilton Community News)

Environmental Impacts:

Table 4: Community benefits ideas regarding the environment

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Protect and create green spaces | 60 |
| Renewable/clean energy sources | 38 |
| Enhance urban canopy | 36 |
| Environmentally-friendly construction | 35 |
| Electric LRT cars/ other vehicles | 18 |
| Promote walking/cycling | 9 |
| Multi-sort bins | 8 |

Hamilton has declared a climate emergency; the effects of more extreme weather are felt across the City every year. One of the most significant positive impacts of the LRT will be its environmental impact by reducing traffic and enabling more people to utilize green electric rapid public transport. An easy Community Benefit for Metrolinx would be using a fossil fuel-free green energy backup power facility as they did on the Eglinton Crosstown. Hamilton residents have clarified that they want this project to be as green as possible. One of the significant concerns we heard was over tree removal and the lack of green space across the Corridor. The destruction of the tree canopy was considered unacceptable to many respondents. Replacing the trees off the Corridor, even at a rate of 3 to 1, does little to prevent the Hamilton LRT corridor from being a concrete desert. Residents identified a need for pollinators, green roofs, green tracks, garden patches, parkettes and more through the Corridor. The construction and dust, noise, stormwater runoff and disruption were also of concern; foresight and intentionality are critical when planning phased construction. The daily operation of the LRT can also present negative environmental repercussions if there is a lack of green infrastructure, separated stormwater, sourcing and amenities.

Metrolinx Pillars:

- Community Benefits Working Group to explore how Environmental Impacts, concerns and greening opportunities apply and will be delivered by the Metrolinx Pillars.
- Green space and infrastructure along LRT corridor and construction sites.
- Have an accountability process through a "green report card" to grade the environmental impact of each aspect of the LRT project.
- Consultation with community stakeholders and environmental groups.
- Construction should include as many sustainably sourced materials as possible.
- Separation of Storm Water from Combined Sewer.
- Replacement of all green spaces and trees that were removed due to the LRT project, with an accountability process to keep residents updated.
- Redundancy and backup power systems should not run on fossil fuels.

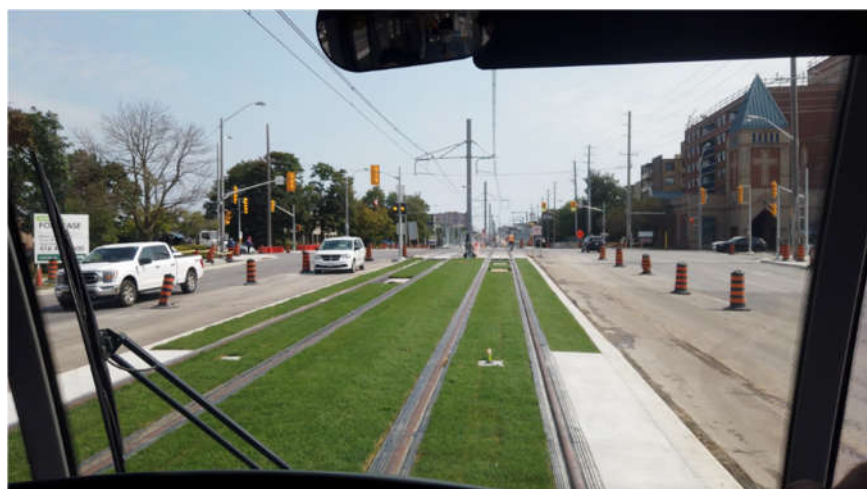
- Transit Shelters that provide full protection from extreme heat and cold (heated and airconditioned).
- Climate-resilient infrastructure that protects from extreme heat and cold.
- Multi-waste disposal bins and water bottle filling stations at every station.
- Protection of existing Trees and enhancement of urban canopy.
- Green tracks where possible.
- Green or solar roofs on stations, transit terminals and O&M facility.
- Small surplus land to be used for parkettes, pollinator gardens.
- Less asphalt and concrete, more permeable and drainage-friendly landscape.
- Deliberate effort to "DePave" cement areas around stations for natural landscaping.

City Built Form (Capital):

- Build additional green infrastructure along LRT corridor, urban canopy enhancement as construction opportunities.
Building recreation parks and community spaces near stations.
- Repurposing empty houses and lots, instead of expanding urban boundary.
- Public washrooms that utilize grey water.
- Less asphalt and concrete, more permeable and drainage friendly landscape.
- Connect Bus stops, bike lanes and walkable streets to LRT stations.
- Terminus lots to encourage car to LRT transportation, with fares discounted with parking receipt.

City Policy:

- Prioritize medium and high-density housing, as well as multi-purpose buildings in the downtown core.
- Missing Middle zoning by right up to 3 km either side of Hamilton LRT.
- To maximize the positive environmental impact intended with the LRT project, electric powered buses should be used to bring people to stops and stations.
- Allowing bikes on the LRT.
- Support cycling in the City in policy and by funding SoBi.
- Funding community tree planting campaigns, community gardens, and green spaces in areas in the city that need it.



Green Tracks on Metrolinx Line 5 Eglinton Crosstown

Physical and Economic Accessibility

[Table 5: Community benefits ideas for physical accessibility](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Clearing snow on the roads and sidewalks | 27 |
| Accessibility features for LRT cars and stations (platform design, curb depressions, ramps) | 23 |
| Greater wheelchair accessibility | 14 |
| Accessible signage and audio information | 13 |
| Implementing wider walkways/entrances inside the LRT and sidewalks | 9 |
| Concerns about treatment of unhoused, mentally ill | 7 |
| Public transit connecting to LRT stops | 5 |

[Table 6: Community benefits ideas for economic accessibility](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Affordable fares and passes | 70 |
| Free or discounted fares for specific populations | 49 |
| Free transit for everyone | 29 |
| Fares tied to income-level | 14 |
| LRT fare comparable to HSR bus fare | 11 |
| No Fare Enforcement | 7 |

Comments around economic and physical accessibility rate high in the minds of those who filled out a survey: 18% of our survey respondents identified as a person with a disability and 22% identified as elderly. Even before operations begin, residents are concerned about how meaningful their mobility needs will be considered during construction. Some comments expressed disappointment at how the City of Hamilton's contractors handle accessibility accommodation during construction, and residents fear this project may trap them in their homes. A meaningful process to address mobility challenges in near real-time with contractors and subcontractors will be necessary. We also commonly heard from respondents was how accessible the LRT would have to be to benefit Hamilton residents meaningfully. Many Hamilton residents face considerable systemic obstacles due to physical or mental disabilities; some expressed that LRT can significantly improve their lives, but only when their issues are given special consideration and consistently consulted. Another concern we heard clearly was around the impact that policing and fare enforcement might have in Hamilton. Residents noted we have little history in Hamilton of having "cops on buses" to police when someone cannot afford to pay or is having a mental health crisis. Hamilton has an opportunity to be a leader in investing in alternative methods of administration of fare payment. In our survey and consultation sessions, some residents argued that having social workers or system navigators would be a better alternative and better use of fare revenue than paid special constables to issue prohibitive fines or "inflict violence on transit riders." Economic accessibility was also a significant concern; some feared the LRT might cost more than standard HSR fare, and others expressed interest in free or low-cost transit.

Community benefits asks covered in Metrolinx pillars:

- Community Benefits Working Group to explore how Economic and Physical Accessibility concerns and opportunities apply and will be delivered by the Metrolinx Pillars.
- Having an accessibility coordinator on staff to develop best practices for disability functionality, project and site review with consultation from local disability justice groups such as the Disability Justice Network of Ontario (DJNO).
- App for reporting instances of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disability Act (AODA) failures by contractors and sub-contractors during construction.
- Process for speedy correction of identified mobility barriers with regular public reporting
- Ensure that the LRT is barrier-free and has a low floor walk-on/off.
- Ramps, elevators, and wide entrances at all LRT platforms and trains.

Station design:

- Rest areas and benches at station stop.
- Using curb cuts for mobility devices and baby trolleys.
- Engage in a consultation process with DJNO and other local groups, throughout process to ensure any adjustments needed are possible.
- Disability mobility tours and public education materials.
- Braille signs and guiding sounds for visually impaired.
- No anti-homeless architecture.
- All weather protection.
- Heated sidewalks.

City Built Form (Capital):

- Public transport infrastructure that supports easy connections for people with physical disabilities to take pedestrian paths and busses to the LRT.
- Building wider sidewalks to allow access for mobility devices.
- Additional accessible pedestrian crosswalks along the LRT route.

City policy:

- Address the issue of lack of snow removal on sidewalks around the City.
- Ensure that transit signs are made more visible and kept up to date.
- Seating prioritized for the elderly, expecting mothers and those with physical disabilities
- Ensure that mid-road LRT stops are fully accessible.
- LRT transit fares should be consistent with HSR.
- LRT transit should be free.
- Free ridership for seniors, OW or ODSP recipients.
- Discounted/free fares for K-12 and university students.
- No predatory loss prevention/fare evasion tactics.
- No Fare Enforcement/Policing model for non-payment of fare.
- Explore alternative models for social supports on the Hamilton LRT, such as social workers and system navigators vs. Special Constables, violence and massively prohibitive fines (200-300\$+ for a 3\$ missed fare).
- Facilitate easy ticket transfers between HSR and LRT.
- Accepting multiple methods of payment, not only presto.

Shopping Local and Business Support/Local Procurement

Table 7: Community benefits relating to supporting local businesses

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Financial support for existing or new small businesses along LRT corridor | 54 |
| Allocate more space for local businesses to open or expand | 20 |
| LRT stops near businesses | 19 |
| Local procurement for LRT | 14 |
| Advertise/promote small businesses along Corridor | 12 |
| Maintain access to businesses during construction | 12 |

Construction of the Hamilton LRT project will significantly impact the businesses located on the Corridor. Metrolinx has shown some interest in addressing these impacts with the LRT Ready 4-part business readiness series hosted by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce during the previous iteration, which was an excellent first step. However, coming out of the pandemic, businesses on the Corridor will face substantial challenges during construction. Metrolinx and the City must do all they can to provide support, including street performances, public space animation, festivals, and direct business support. Metrolinx must commit to working with not only the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce and BIAs but other organizations supporting black and women-owned businesses, especially businesses that may fall out of the catchment area. Once completed, the LRT project will undoubtedly bring business and tourism to areas surrounding the Corridor, positively impacting the local economy and workforce in Hamilton. However, the construction and operation of the LRT will also adversely affect businesses unless thoroughly accounted for. There were also notable community benefits asks regarding social procurement, the job and training opportunities produced by the LRT project, and how they could be directed to benefit equity-seeking groups.

Community benefits asks covered under Metrolinx pillars:

- Community Benefits Working Group to explore how Shopping Local and Business.
- Support/Local Procurement concerns and opportunities will be delivered as part of Metrolinx's Business Support Pillar.
- Consider financial support for local businesses experiencing interruptions due to LRT construction.
- Engage in social procurement, especially with businesses owned by marginalized groups.
- Use not-for-profit social enterprises where possible for project needs.
- Clear communication in advance with businesses about closures and access issues.
- Wayfinding Signs during and after construction.
- A Metrolinx-funded business grant fund where businesses can apply and receive a monthly stipend for construction inconvenience.
- Consider financial compensation for businesses if planned road/services closures go beyond previously stated timeline.
- Provide promotional materials indicating the businesses available at each stop/station.
- Using local labour and resources wherever possible.
- Undertake local procurement as much as possible.
- Work with Project Co subcontractors and local businesses to provide shop local information to workers (to drive business for example to restaurants in the area).

City Policy:

- Consider financial support for businesses impacted by LRT construction.
- Consider tax breaks or deferrals for businesses experiencing interruptions during construction.
- Advertising breaks for businesses on HSR busses when they are affected by construction.
- City comprehensive buy local campaigns.
- Consider Planning out districts at different parts of the Corridor to group certain types of businesses (like Hess Village).

Community Space, Places and Art

[Table 8: Community benefits ideas for community spaces](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Greens Spaces and parks | 64 |
| Community hubs and recreational centres | 41 |
| Spaces for people experiencing houselessness | 32 |
| Free community spaces | 29 |
| LRT/bus shelters | 24 |
| Pedestrian-only streets | 8 |
| Public Washrooms | 7 |

[Table 9: Community benefits ideas for public art in spaces](#)

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Commission local artists | 38 |
| Beautiful the City | 25 |
| Take inspiration from other cities | 10 |
| Promote history of Hamilton | 8 |

A significant area of community benefits that residents shared their ideas around was related to community spaces, places and public art at station stops. Residents often referenced the example of a donation of land towards the Finch Arts and Community Hub as a potential community benefit; for many years, the community and residents have been pushing towards creating a 2SLGBTQIIA+ Community Hub in the Lower City. Preserving the City's historic character and telling of Hamilton's history through art and placemaking was very important. Although not included, a whole section on preserving Historical Character emerged as a theme which gave substantial feedback given around the importance of Hamilton's History and Hamilton's historic places. Many wanted to see art installed at station stops and along the Corridor representing the past of those spaces and places. We also heard about the importance of indigenous peoples, and some wondered if art from those groups could appear on the Corridor. The spaces and places that make up the stations and spaces between the stations drew particular interest. Residents imaged custom station design (disliked the idea of "cookie cutter stops"). Public art displaces, parkettes, gathering places, community gardens, adjoining alleyways and additional parkland was frequently mentioned. Many residents see the LRT as an opportunity to connect the city together through community spaces that give children and youth a recreational outlet while housing vital social services for disadvantaged groups. Many residents also expressed concerns about the areas affected by the construction of the LRT and demanded that the spaces be beautified during its construction. The idea of a "hellscape of construction and garbage" weight heavily in the minds of residents' responses received.

Community benefits asks covered under Metrolinx pillars:

- Land for a 2SLGBTQIIA+ Hub.
- Green outdoor spaces for people to rest and socialize.
- Bike stations and SoBi stations.
- Well lit, climate resilient sheltered stops that can accommodate large numbers.
- Thoughtfully designed community spaces with local public art.
- Stations can be event venues for pop-up food, music, public interest.
- Station tours for kids and other groups that may need it.
- Greening of areas adjacent to stops and between rails.
- Have electrical and phone boxes be painted by local artists.
- No designs should have anti-homelessness (hostile) architecture.
- Ensure that there are public washrooms at stops and stations.
- Water fountains and water bottle filling stations.
- Prioritizing pedestrian spaces over roads and lots for cars.
- Integrating LRT design with historical characteristics of surrounding areas.

City Built Form (Capital):

- Improve quality of community hubs and recreational centers near LRT stations.
- More bus shelters.
- More public amenities, for example fountains, splash pads, community gardens, benches, public barbecues, gathering areas.
- Develop an Alley use strategy (multi-modal transportation paths, art, and beautification on those adjacent to Hamilton LRT corridor).
- Increase the number of community spaces, libraries, early years centres.
- Creating and improving green spaces along downtown corridor.
- Have better lighting along the mini-park trails that run through residential areas.
- Installing interactive city maps and educational materials at stations to guide people to landmarks and business areas (way finding).
- Parking Spaces near LRT Stops for carshare.
- Building more shelters for houseless residents.

City policy:

- Facilitate mental health support, youth spaces, and social services along LRT stations.
- Subsidized daycare facilities along LRT for working parents to utilize.
- Parking lots should be built underground, leaving more ground spaces.
- Make the community hubs more accessible and promote their use.
- Ensuring that city architecture is not antagonistic to houseless residents.
- Incorporating Park spaces into mixed-use mid-rise developments.

Community Focus Groups

This section will describe the results from the online and in-person community focus groups conducted in Hamilton in the East End, Stoney Creek, Mountain and Downtown areas. Included in this section are ideas and emerging themes from:

- A community dialogue session was held on January 16th 2019, with an attendance of around 140 Hamilton residents.
- Two virtual community dialogue sessions were held on November 22nd and 25th of 2021, with a total attendance of 50 Hamilton residents.
- Virtual dialogue sessions were conducted with members of ACORN Hamilton, Environment Hamilton, Cycle Hamilton, a Spectrum Newcomer group, Neighbor to Neighbor and the First Unitarian Church between April-June of 2022.

Most dialogue sessions consisted of breakout rooms or tables designated for focused discussions around the following main themes: housing affordability, accessibility, environment, transportation connection, and arts and community. The contributions of virtual participants were documented using Google Jamboard and have been incorporated in the themed sections summarized below.

[Housing Affordability](#)

Many participants expressed concerns about how the LRT would affect housing affordability. Participants from all focus groups stated that transit-oriented affordable housing developments should be along the LRT corridor. Feedback from two focus groups suggested housing people in vacant homes and prioritizing people experiencing homelessness or from low-income backgrounds for housing. Participants from two focus groups also suggested building high-density affordable housing units and implementing inclusionary zoning policies. One group suggested implementing a vacancy tax for empty buildings. Participants from Environment Hamilton stated that new housing should be built to rigorous green standards to create a climate-resilient, sustainable city. The same group also suggested changing the tax structure to encourage higher-density development along the corridor. Some participants felt that surplus land should be donated to be returned to indigenous communities. Participants from all focus groups suggested consistent consultation with displaced tenants and low-income individuals who may be affected by the LRT project to ensure that they know their housing rights and hear their concerns.

[Physical and Economic Accessibility](#)

Participants discussed features that could promote physical accessibility on the LRT. Participants from all focus groups indicated that ramps should be installed at all stations. Two groups mentioned having wider doors and designated seating areas for the elderly, pregnant individuals, people using wheelchairs and other people with disabilities. Three groups mentioned that it should be possible to raise and lower the LRT as needed. Participants from two groups stated that there should be audio signals for the visually impaired. One group suggested that service animals and pets should be allowed on the LRT, that there should be charging ports for devices, and that sloping sidewalks should be designed for those with mobility devices.

Participants from three groups raised concerns about the process of LRT construction. These groups expressed that the City should consider how detours will be created during construction, how to communicate these changes to City residents, and how to ensure pathways are accessible during construction. One group suggested that ramps and sidewalks should remain accessible to people during construction.

To promote economic accessibility, participants from all focus groups suggested having affordable fees to accommodate low-income folks. Participants from three focus groups suggested free LRT access for people receiving benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). One group suggested free ridership for seniors and children under 13, while another suggested student discounts. Participants from two focus groups suggested extending the time on transfers. Participants from one group recommended that LRT fares be comparable to the HSR system.

Environment

Participants from all focus groups suggested that there should be other parks and green spaces along the LRT route. Participants mentioned that creating outdoor, green spaces would be a valuable addition for local businesses. Three groups mentioned putting a street tree replacement plan into place to make up for the lost canopy along the LRT route. There was a consensus that there is a need for planting more trees, while one group suggested that trees should be installed with an underground support system to ensure they last a long time.

One group suggested reducing fumes and particulate matter in the downtown core should be a key priority. Participants from one group mentioned that there should be efforts to reduce the current number of vehicles on the road. Similarly, two groups said the need to increase walkability, while three groups mentioned accommodating cyclists using bike lanes and spaces to store bikes on the LRT. One group discussed implementing a proper garbage and recycling system along the Corridor at LRT stations. Several participants stated that backup generators should not consume diesel or fossil fuels.

Employment and Training Opportunities

A common theme mentioned by participants was the employment and training opportunities produced by the Hamilton LRT project, with the most significant concern being “Who would get those jobs?” Most participants expressed that they felt that new jobs should go to youth and members of marginalized groups in Hamilton, in addition to training programs to “uplift those on the fringes of society” Concerns were also raised about the nature of the LRT jobs, whether they would be decent work, unionized and pay at a minimum living wage. Participants expressed that these details would be something that must be included in the CBA.

Transportation connection

Participants discussed ensuring that the LRT route is interconnected with the HSR, bike lanes, walkable spaces and other modes of transportation. Many concerns overlapped with themes of physical and economic accessibility and community spaces. A primary concern was that the LRT needed to be connected to other affordable transportation methods to benefit low-income residents truly. Some participants also mentioned that the LRT should be accessible to people taking DART buses. SoBi bike-share stations should also be coordinated with stops and stations, and the LRT should accommodate

riders who wish to bring their bike on board. Many participants noted that LRT stations should be age-friendly and accessible.

Arts and Community

Participants from three focus groups suggested that the LRT could offer opportunities for local artists to do community-centred artwork at stations and on buildings along the Corridor. Some people expressed that the art should be meaningful to Hamilton and the surrounding communities. Participants from one focus group recommended licensing buskers to prevent them from being disturbed by authority figures such as the police (Toronto has a similar system). Some participants felt that concerts and cultural performances on block streets would be something they would like to see. A commonly expressed idea was to have wayfinding signage for local art and community hubs at stops and stations and educational materials on the area's history. Participants also expressed that they wanted multi-use areas for communities to be able to book for events and gatherings.

Additional concerns regarding the LRT project

Participants were asked to list any additional concerns they had about the LRT project that should be communicated to Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton. These concerns are summarized in Table 10.



Group Photo from January 2019 Engagement Sessions

Project Concerns

[Table 10: Concerns regarding the LRT project](#)

| Concerns | Number of Times Mentioned |
|--|---------------------------|
| High cost/exceeding budget | 80 |
| Disruption to individuals/ businesses along the LRT corridor | 58 |
| Traffic congestion | 42 |
| Limited reach across Hamilton | 28 |
| Timely completion | 26 |

The Hamilton LRT project has undergone many alterations, political debates, a cancellation, renewed funding, and challenges. HCBN asked residents if there were any specific concerns we could pass on to Metrolinx or The City of Hamilton. We heard many. Complete text copies of those responses have been provided to both organizations to review as part of their ongoing engagement/FAQ/public information communication. Below, this report highlights some of the overarching concerns heard during engagement events (online and off) and in the survey data. Much of the HCBN feedback given, either fears about the project or even some suggestions for Community Benefits from the public, indicate that public awareness of the project is deficient. Many residents have misinformation, no information, or a general lack of understanding about how the project will be delivered. HCBN believes that both the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx need to do far more to engage with the broader public about this massive transformative project. Also, aside from our Community Engagement events and online survey, the general public has not had a chance to provide feedback on the project since its cancellation in 2019. Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton must pursue an intensive community engagement strategy to be proactive and ahead of possible project concerns before construction begins. Once the significant project construction begins, City and Metrolinx can only react to the negative feedback from construction. Many project elements will be "set in stone," or at least in design, and difficult to alter.

1. [High Cost/Exceeding Budget](#)

Participants expressed that Hamiltonians are worried that LRT will go over budget. Some people have argued that Hamilton "can't afford this," and should be cautious about building an expensive LRT. One individual claimed that the "LRT started as a \$1b grant without much reference to inevitable cost over-run. Now it is already \$2.3b and the cost benefit is getting lower." Metrolinx must communicate publicly that the Province will cover cost overruns, declare how much the City of Hamilton will cover for Operations and Maintenance, and be as transparent as possible with costs.

2. Disruption to individuals/businesses along the LRT corridor

Many participants were concerned about how the construction of the LRT would disrupt their neighbourhoods. For example, one respondent mentioned they were concerned about "construction worries, blocking my transportation access to work/out of my neighbourhood, workers taking over (already limited) parking in my area". Others were concerned about local businesses: "Construction can be extraordinarily disruptive to businesses and use of an area. Some form of financial assistance might be needed to keep local businesses alive through the process. Locke St. and Concessions St. were cited as examples of disruption to businesses during a major street reconstruction. "Let's avoid doing that to other areas." Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton should make explicit public declarations of not only the business supports they plan to put into place, but an announcement of precise construction scheduling, work with the Chamber, BIAs and HCBN to develop a concrete plan for a business to contractors communication of issues and support.

3. Traffic Congestion

People expressed that they are worried that the construction of the LRT would cause traffic congestion. One individual stated they are "worried about construction and how difficult it will be to get around in the city." Similarly, another individual mentioned that "we have a car culture problem in Hamilton. This needs to be addressed before construction." The previous project did traffic modelling in 2018, which no longer represents the new reality of Two-Way street conversions, the new Truck Route, or traffic calming projects. The City of Hamilton and Metrolinx need to display the new traffic flow patterns for the route, host public information sessions and advertising, and anticipate modal shifts as the Hamilton LRT project moves car trips to transit trips and other transportation modes.

4. Limited Reach Across Hamilton

Participants were concerned about the LRT route's limited reach. Respondents were concerned about how it would not service areas such as the Mountain, Stoney Creek, and Ancaster. One individual noted that "it [LRT] is no use to me. I will never use it too far from my residence and is servicing the wrong area. It should run from the farthest point in the East to the farthest point in the West." The new Hamilton Street Railway reimagine project contains many positive route changes, new rapid transit lines, and general transit alignment in Hamilton with the Hamilton LRT. The City once the plan is finalized needs to provide public information advertising the recent changes, conduct outreach and education sessions, and help residents understand how the HSR and LRT will work interactively to connect to points across the City—advertising a clear timeline for the completion of other rapid transit projects (such as the A-Line BRT) or priority signalling and bus lanes for the other proposed rapid transit lines.

5. Timely Completion

Many participants had little confidence that the project would be completed in a timely manner. One individual hoped it "does not take an exceptionally long time to build to minimize disruption." The consensus among respondents was that the LRT project needs to be completed quickly. The current project iteration seems "distant" and "like it will never get started". Residents constantly ask, "when will we see shoves in the ground?" Metrolinx needs, as soon as possible, to post and advertise timelines for each stage of the project, broadcasting transparently when each phase of the project will be underway, down to the month. Hamilton residents would like to know when each section of their neighbourhoods will be torn up and for how long.

Key Takeaways

This research aims to identify the community benefits priorities of Hamilton residents we have engaged to help inform our policy and advocacy work. This report is presented as a reference of items that might make up a community benefits agreement (CBA) for the Hamilton LRT project or addendums to improve the overall project. The most significant key takeaway from this report should be the establishment of a framework for how Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton intend to handle the commitment they have both made to Affordable Housing and Community Benefits. Currently, when HCBN talks about Community Benefits (Agreements), we can only do so in very broad strokes, citing examples from other projects across North America. Although this provides a blank canvas for residents to imagine the transformation of the Hamilton LRT corridor they envision, it provides difficulties in managing expectations and framing residents' requests in what is possible. This report aimed to bring forward only ideas we heard that apply to the project. This report summarizes the first round of resident feedback HCBN has gathered to date. It is important to note for Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton, the HCBN alone cannot be responsible for resident engagement and outreach. This report represents only our first round of ongoing resident engagement. This Summer/Fall, HCBN is launching a new round of in-person engagement sessions and surveys. Through our public engagement sessions and online surveys, the HCBN From our first round of engagement survey, respondents indicated that their top four priority areas for a CBA are in the categories of Affordable Housing, Transportation Connection, Local Employment and Training Opportunities, and The Environment.

Survey respondents provided a variety of community benefits ideas. Some of these ideas, ordered by the number of times respondents mentioned them, include:

- Designing LRT infrastructure to accommodate the use of multiple modes of transportation, i.e., bike lanes, crosswalks, parking spaces.
- Providing affordable housing geared to income.
- Increasing access to the LRT from across Hamilton.
- Ensuring that fares are affordable and enforcement equitable.
- Inclusionary zoning (i.e. a percentage of all new developments should be allocated to affordable housing).
- Prioritizing job creation for Hamilton residents so that people can live and work in Hamilton.
- Protecting green spaces.



Screenshot of Jam Board from Nov 2019 Engagement Session

The Hamilton Community Benefits Network envisions Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a just, prospering economy. Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) are a proven approach to achieving this vision.

Conclusion

These findings should be vital to informing the City of Hamilton LRT sub-committee in the deliberations regarding LRT community benefits. HCBN is committed to serving as a significant community stakeholder throughout the process of working with the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx to develop and implement a community benefits agreement that is equitable, inclusive, and beneficial for all Hamilton residents. Additional community engagement and consultation will be conducted by HCBN in the coming months through in-person sessions and updated online surveys to continue to inform our advocacy and policy work. The organization hopes to refine Hamilton residents' demands through further surveys and engagement. HCBN also plans to hold ward-specific community engagement sessions and outreach to underrepresented groups to ensure that the community benefits asks are holistically presented to the LRT subcommittee. HCBN is conducting engagement as part of its core mandate to help understand resident requests and to shape further and inform our policy and advocacy work. As an organization, however, we are small, with only three full-time staff depending on funding from private foundations: The Hamilton Community Foundation, Atikison and the United Way of Hamilton and Halton. It is important to note for Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton, the HCBN alone cannot be responsible for resident engagement and outreach.

Throughout the project, HCBN will continue to engage with as many residents as possible to help direct our actions and demands from a Community Benefits Agreement and project-specific Community Benefit Asks. As an organization, HCBN is hampered by a lack of clarity on what and how Metrolinx will deliver its four (4) pillar Community Benefits/Supports. There is also a general lack of clarity on the process for responding to the resident ideas and demands provided to HCBN through our engagement. Will the City of Hamilton make additional investments toward Community Benefits in the project? What is the process being undertaken around the use and disposal of Metrolinx-owned land? Who is deciding what affordable housing will be built? Is this process transparent? Clause G of the Memorandum of Understanding lays out the principal importance of Affordable Housing and Community Benefits; however, it does not put forward a transparent public process for how those objectives will be met. This project must commit to more than “community engagement theatre,” as some residents worry, but to concrete community benefits that are developed publicly and transparently delivered through a robust signed Community Benefits Agreement(s).

A large, stylized graphic of a person in shades of pink and grey, positioned on the left side of the page. The figure is composed of simple geometric shapes: a grey base for the body, a grey circle for the head, and a pink arc above the head representing hair or a hat. The figure is facing right.

Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT

Prepared for
Hamilton Community Benefits Network

In
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Executive Summary

The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) advocates for the use of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) in major city infrastructure projects. CBAs are agreements between governments, developers and coalitions of community organisations that address a range of community concerns and needs, including (but not limited to) ensuring residents benefit from major developments. In particular, the HCBN believes CBAs are a way to mitigate the impact to local communities by large scale infrastructure projects.

The HCBN approached McMaster Research Shop to help conduct community focus groups and to analyse a community survey identifying priority areas and ideas for a CBA for the Hamilton LRT.

Survey respondents indicated that their top four community benefit areas were Affordable Housing, Transportation Connection, Local Employment and Training Opportunities, and The Environment.

Survey respondents provided a variety of community benefits ideas. Some ideas that were mentioned most often are listed below:

- Designing LRT infrastructure to accommodate use of multiple modes of transportation i.e., bike lanes, crosswalks, parking spaces;
- Providing affordable housing geared to income;
- Increasing access to the LRT from across Hamilton;
- Ensuring that fares are affordable;
- Inclusionary zoning (i.e., a percentage of all new developments should be allocated to affordable housing);
- Prioritising job creation for Hamilton residents so that people can live and work in Hamilton; and
- Protecting green spaces

Community focus groups also highlighted potential community benefits ideas:

- *Housing affordability*: Provide affordable housing along the LRT corridor by housing people in vacant homes and building more affordable housing units.
- *Accessibility*: Include accessibility features such as wide ramps and doors, and audio signals for visually impaired people. Accommodate low-income folks with affordable fare, and provide free ridership for those on ODSP and seniors.
- *Environment*: Plant more trees and create green spaces along the LRT route.
- *Arts and Community*: Provide opportunities for local artists to do artwork on stations and buildings along the LRT corridor. Consider licensing buskers.

These findings can be used by the HCBN to inform their CBA for Hamilton LRT and to advocate for community needs at the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx.

Introduction

The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) “envisions Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a prospering economy” (HCBN, n.d.). They do this by advocating for the use of Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) in major city infrastructure projects. CBAs are agreements between governments, developers and coalitions of community organisations that address a range of community concerns and needs, including (but not limited to) ensuring residents benefit from major developments. In particular, the HCBN sees CBAs as an opportunity to help mitigate the impact to local communities by large-scale infrastructure projects. CBAs can include advocating for affordable housing and raising local voices to bring design and neighbourhood improvement additions to the project. CBAs can also foster local workforce development by creating job opportunities for the local community and, in tandem, incentivizing training delivery programs to facilitate access to these jobs.

A major proposed infrastructure project is the planned LRT development in Hamilton. The HCBN is in the process of conducting community consultations around what a CBA would look like for this development project. The HCBN plans to prepare a report for the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx with the results of the consultations and the proposed elements of a CBA. The HCBN approached the McMaster Research shop for support with data collection, distilling community feedback into themes, and writing a report of the findings.

Methods and Limitations

Methods

The HCBN conducted a survey and community focus groups with the Hamilton community to identify their community benefit priorities and ideas.

Survey

The HCBN designed and distributed the survey. The Research Shop team analysed data collected from January – March 2022 and reported the findings. We analysed findings from three versions of the survey with slightly different questions and response categories. We conducted combined analyses of the three survey versions for questions that were the same or similar in wording. However, we segregated analyses for questions that had different response categories. For each question, we reported the number and percentage of respondents who selected each response option. For qualitative questions, we developed themes that we used to code each response and provided a count for the number of times each theme was mentioned.

Community Focus Groups

The HCBN conducted community focus groups from January – March 2022. Each focus group was scheduled for 1.5 - 2 hours and consisted of 2 breakout rooms focusing on community benefits areas including housing affordability, accessibility, environment, and arts and community. The Research Shop team supported the online focus groups by recording breakout sessions, preparing transcripts, and taking notes on Jamboard during the discussions. We categorised data based on themes and summarised them. The HCBN also provided notes from a community focus group held in 2019 which we included in our analysis.

Limitations

The HCBN originally scheduled community focus groups to take place in person; however, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the events were moved online and created concerns regarding their reach. Several focus groups were cancelled due to low enrollment. We mainly reported findings from focus groups conducted with different branches of one organisation. While the intent was to analyse transcripts from each community focus group in conjunction with notes taken on Jamboard, we were not able to obtain several recordings and transcripts due to a lack of consent from participants and other technical difficulties, which prevented us from including direct quotations from participants. Instead, we relied primarily on Jamboard notes taken during the session, which summarised each unique community benefits idea that emerged from the group discussions. These notes were limited in detail and we were not able to ensure their completeness where transcripts were missing.

Findings

Survey

Participant Characteristics

There were a total of 2,317 respondents across all 3 versions of the survey.

To provide context around understanding of community benefits, participants were asked about their familiarity with the term “community benefits agreements”. Across all three surveys, most respondents indicated that they were “not so familiar” (29%) or “not at all familiar” (38%) with community benefits agreements (Table 1).

Table 1: Familiarity with “community benefits agreements”

| Response | Count | % |
|--------------------|-------|----|
| Extremely familiar | 85 | 4% |

| | | |
|---------------------|-----|-----|
| Very familiar | 162 | 7% |
| Somewhat familiar | 518 | 22% |
| Not so familiar | 673 | 29% |
| Not at all familiar | 876 | 38% |

Participants were asked to indicate how long they had been Hamilton residents. In Surveys 1 and 2, most respondents (58%) indicated that they have been residents of Hamilton for over 25 years (Table 2a). Similarly, in Survey 3, most respondents (72%) indicated that they had lived in Hamilton for 10 years or longer (Table 2b).

Table 2: Amount of time as a Hamilton resident from a) surveys 1 and 2 and b) survey 3

| a) | Time | Count | % | b) | Time | Count | % |
|----|-------------|-------|-----|----|-----------|-------|-----|
| | 0-1 years | 54 | 5% | | 1-5 years | 12 | 14% |
| | 1-5 years | 143 | 12% | | 6-9 years | 12 | 14% |
| | 6-9 years | 71 | 6% | | 10+ years | 61 | 72% |
| | 10-25 years | 239 | 20% | | | | |
| | 25+ years | 693 | 58% | | | | |

Across all 3 surveys, 1,015 respondents identified themselves as part of an equity-seeking group (Table 3)¹.

Table 3: Respondents from equity-seeking groups from a) surveys 1 and 2 and b) survey 3

| a) | Response | Count | % | b) | Response | Count | % |
|----|--------------------------|-------|-----|----|---------------------------------|-------|-----|
| | Person with a disability | 174 | 18% | | Person with a disability | 8 | 13% |
| | Black | 19 | 2% | | Black or Person of Colour | 4 | 6% |
| | Indigenous | 17 | 2% | | Indigenous | 1 | 2% |
| | Person of Colour | 75 | 8% | | Women | 46 | 73% |
| | New Immigrant | 14 | 1% | | LGBTQ | 6 | 10% |
| | Women | 576 | 61% | | Elderly Person | 15 | 24% |
| | LGBTQ2S+ | 111 | 12% | | Person Living with Homelessness | 1 | 2% |
| | Elderly | 208 | 22% | | Low Income/Fixed Income | 17 | 27% |

¹ Responses add up to more than 100% because participants could select more than 1 response

| | | |
|--|-----|-----|
| Person experiencing houselessness | 7 | 1% |
| Low income/fixed income | 189 | 20% |
| Precarious income/vulnerable employment (e.g., gig work) | 40 | 4% |
| Single-income family | 199 | 21% |

| | | |
|----------|---|----|
| Newcomer | 1 | 2% |
|----------|---|----|

Participants were also asked about their employment status. Across all 3 surveys, most respondents (54%) indicated that they were gainfully employed (Table 4).

Table 4: Employment status

| Employment Status | Count | % |
|--------------------|-------|-----|
| Gainfully Employed | 711 | 54% |
| Underemployed | 72 | 5% |
| Unemployed | 31 | 2% |
| Student | 34 | 3% |
| Retired | 381 | 29% |
| Other | 98 | 7% |

Hamilton Community Needs

Several survey questions were asked to gain an understanding of general concerns affecting the Hamilton community.

Survey results showed that most respondents “strongly agree” (57%) or “agree” (31%) that there is a gap between the rich and poor in the City of Hamilton (Table 5).

Table 5: "There is a gap between rich and poor in the city of Hamilton"

| Response | Count | % |
|----------------------------|-------|-----|
| Strongly agree | 729 | 57% |
| Agree | 396 | 31% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 122 | 10% |
| Disagree | 24 | 2% |
| Strongly disagree | 12 | 1% |

Most respondents (98%) believed that there is a need in Hamilton for long term, good, permanent jobs (Table 6).

Table 6: "Do you believe there is a need in Hamilton for long term, good, permanent jobs?"

| Response | Count | % |
|-----------------|--------------|----------|
| Yes | 1265 | 98% |
| No | 21 | 2% |

Most respondents "strongly agree" (69%) or "agree" (21%) that the cost of housing in the city is too high (Table 7).

Table 7: "The cost of housing is too high in the city"

| Response | Count | % |
|----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Strongly agree | 888 | 69% |
| Agree | 271 | 21% |
| Neither agree nor disagree | 93 | 7% |
| Disagree | 29 | 2% |
| Strongly disagree | 4 | 0.31% |

31% of respondents "disagree" and 22% of respondents "strongly disagree" that they have a voice in the growth and development of the city (Table 8).

Table 8: "Do you feel you have a voice in the growth and development of the city?"

| Response | Count | % |
|-------------------------------|--------------|----------|
| Strongly agree I have a voice | 31 | 2% |
| I agree I have a voice | 275 | 21% |
| I neither agree nor disagree | 298 | 23% |
| I disagree | 398 | 31% |
| I strongly disagree | 283 | 22% |

Community Benefits Priorities

Participants were asked to rank their top 5 community benefits priority areas, where 1= top priority and 5= lowest priority.² In surveys 1 and 2, based on average rank, survey respondent's top priorities were Affordable Housing (1.77), Transportation Connection (2.75) and Local Employment and Training Opportunities (2.97) (Table 9a). On average, survey 3 participants rated Transportation Connection (1.46), The Environment (1.55), and Affordable Housing (1.56) as their top priorities (Table 9b).³

Table 9: Community benefits priority areas from a) surveys 1 and 2 b) survey 3

| a) Community Benefits Area | Average Rank | b) Community Benefits Area | Average Rating ⁴ |
|---|--------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Affordable Housing | 1.77 | Transportation Connection | 1.46 |
| Transportation Connection | 2.75 | The Environment | 1.55 |
| Local Employment and Training Opportunities | 2.97 | Affordable Housing | 1.56 |
| The Environment | 2.97 | Accessibility (Physical and Economic) | 1.74 |
| Shopping Local and Business Support/Local Procurement | 3.23 | Local Employment and Training Opportunities | 1.82 |
| Physical Accessibility | 3.24 | Community Spaces | 1.86 |
| Economic Accessibility | 3.32 | Shopping Local and Business Support/Local Procurement | 2.05 |
| Preserving Historic Character | 3.54 | Preserving Historic Character | 2.48 |
| Community Spaces | 3.59 | Public Arts | 2.57 |
| Public Arts | 4.32 | | |

² Participants were asked to rank their top 5 community benefits areas for Survey 1, and all 10 for Survey 2. We took only the top 5 rankings for Survey 2 and combined them with Survey 1 results before calculating the average rankings.

³ In Survey 3, participants were allowed to rate multiple areas with the same priority level (e.g., participants could choose to rate affordable housing and transportation connections as a 3), whereas for Survey 1 and 2, they had to rank each community benefits area.

⁴ Survey 3 asked participants to rate community benefits options on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest priority and 5 being highest. Survey 3 responses were re-coded so that 1=highest priority and 5= lowest priority to ease interpretation alongside Survey 1 and 2 results.

Ideas for Community Benefits

In addition to ranking their priorities, participants were asked to provide their ideas for community benefits for their top priority areas. In the following sections, we elaborate on community benefits ideas that were suggested for each area.

1. Affordable Housing

Respondents identified 6 community benefit ideas related to affordable housing (Table 12).

Table 10: Community benefit ideas related to affordable housing

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Affordable Housing geared to low income | 106 |
| Inclusionary Zoning | 68 |
| Variety of housing options | 57 |
| Housing-related regulations | 44 |
| Revamping or destroying old buildings | 36 |
| Building new homes | 23 |

Affordable housing geared to low income

Respondents indicated that housing is expensive and needs to be more affordable. Many commented on the injustice of low-income families and young people being unable to afford housing. Participants suggested that housing should be affordable for those with entry-level jobs and indicated that there are many homeless people who need homes but can't afford them. Respondents suggested that having more subsidised housing available in Hamilton would help the low-income population and decrease homelessness.

Inclusionary Zoning

Respondents suggested that a percentage of all new developments should be allocated to affordable housing. One individual said the following on the survey: "A percentage of units (say 20%) in new developments should be affordable (50-60% of market rates); the affordable units need to include housing for singles, couples and families." Another individual suggested that 25% of all new development should be affordable, specifically in the downtown area. Participants emphasised having affordable housing along the LRT route because low-income individuals require access to public transit. One respondent suggested the following: "A maximum number of affordable housing units along the corridor should be secured so that housing on the LRT path is not gobbled up by middle- and high-income people. Working class folks should be able to reap the benefits of renewed transportation infrastructure." Several respondents suggested that there needs to be affordable housing for people displaced by LRT construction.

Respondents indicated that more mixed-income areas should be developed: “Increase subsidised housing and have it within established communities, not separate slums.”

Variety of housing options

The survey indicated that Hamiltonians want a variety of types of housing available for low-income individuals including additional rental options, multi-dwelling low-rise buildings, and smaller homes. Similarly, respondents suggested creating communal living apartment buildings with smaller private space and more shared areas. Similarly, respondents also suggested having multi-use buildings (e.g., library and apartments) and co-operative/multi-family housing.

Housing-related regulations

Respondents indicated that there should be a cap and more control on the prices of housing and rent (housing prices and rent should not continue to increase). Respondents suggested that there should be taxes in place on vacant properties, and that there should be funding in place for cooperative housing development. Some respondents disagreed with the legalities of renovictions: “Stop "renovictions" from being legal. Give housing security (somehow) to those of us who rent.” Respondents indicated there should be incentives in place for people to buy affordable houses, especially for first time buyers.

Revamping or destroying old buildings

Respondents indicated that old buildings, warehouses, schools, and homes should either be revamped into new housing units or destroyed to make space for new homes. One respondent said, “Renovate old boarded up/ crumbling buildings into single family units, build community living spaces for single people in their 20s.” Another individual suggested “building homes and apartments in all abandoned properties downtown and inner City.”

Build new homes

The survey showed that individuals want additional affordable housing to be built. One individual said they wanted “more homes being built in empty city spaces - city density preserves agricultural land and open spaces and helps with clean air.” Another individual commented that they wanted “more 'city housing' (Hamilton housing) units. Entice builders to create high-volume low-cost units.” Another person commented, “Build more housing, more apartments that would support families.”

2. Transportation Connection

Regarding transportation connection, survey respondents identified 5 major ideas (Table 11).

Table 11: Community benefits relating to transportation connections

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Infrastructure design (bike lanes, cross walks, bike locks, bus shelters) | 114 |
| Increase access across Hamilton (multiple stops, multiple areas) | 71 |
| Connect with multiple modes of transportation | 61 |
| Safety | 43 |
| Connect to areas outside Hamilton | 11 |

Infrastructure Design

Respondents felt that infrastructure design should take multiple modes of transportation into consideration. Respondents suggested building additional bike lanes that are protected from cars. For instance, respondents noted challenges of crossing the bridge across the 403 by bike because of car traffic. Respondents wanted the city to have separate bike lanes similar to Ottawa street. Respondents stated there should be more bike stations to store bikes safely near transit stations throughout the city. Respondents noted that infrastructure should be created to promote walking by creating additional sidewalks, lighting up walking spaces, and having clearly marked pedestrian lanes. Respondents also recommended building more parking lots for commuters who use public transportation to reduce street parking. Respondents want vehicles to be able to drive along LRT rails, similar to the rails in the Toronto area.

Increase Access Across Hamilton

Participants indicated that public transit should include stops and stations across the city to facilitate transportation for all Hamiltonians without needing a personal vehicle. Respondents stated that there should be an emphasis on transportation in rural areas and in underprivileged communities who have the most need for public transportation. Respondents suggested that there should be more transportation available from areas such as Binbrook, Winona Barton Hannon, Caledonia, Upper Centennial, Ancaster and Dundas to popular areas such as Jackson Square and Limeridge mall. Similarly, respondents suggested adding transit connections from the mountain and other suburban areas in Hamilton. Respondents also stated that there needs to be more frequent transit available at busy areas such as at Hamilton Go Station, Centennial Parkway Go Station, and West Harbour. An individual stated: "We need lots of trains that run at all times of the day and night, weekends and holidays included. I shouldn't need to check a schedule; I should just know it'll be there."

Connect with multiple modes of transportation

Respondents stated that the LRT needs to connect with multiple modes of transportation, including buses, bicycles, and walking. Respondents suggested having bike stations at all stations. Participants stated that it should be possible to walk from

one transit station to the next. Respondents indicated the need for connectivity between GO transit, HSR and the LRT throughout Hamilton with a particular emphasis on ensuring connections to get across the mountain.

Safety

Respondents indicated the need for safety when taking the bus or LRT, particularly when exiting trains and finding connections with other modes of transportation. Respondents indicated that having more sidewalks and barriers separating them from vehicles could promote safety for cyclists and pedestrians. Respondents noted that King & Queen is not a safe intersection for pedestrians.

Connect to areas outside of Hamilton

Survey respondents emphasised that the LRT should provide easy connection from Hamilton to other regions including the Greater Toronto area, Waterdown, Grimsby, and Niagara. Similarly, participants suggested improving connections from LRT to areas such as Dundas, Burlington, and Ancaster.

3. Local Employment and Training Opportunities

Survey respondents identified 8 community benefits ideas regarding local employment and training (Table 12).

Table 12: Community benefits relating to local employment and training opportunities

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|----------------------------------|
| Focus on creating job opportunities and hiring individuals and businesses from Hamilton | 65 |
| Fair employment conditions (permanent, liveable wage, benefits etc.) | 26 |
| Prioritise inclusion of equity-seeking groups | 25 |
| Paid Internships and Apprenticeships | 24 |
| Encourage skilled trades | 23 |
| Partner with local education institutions to provide training opportunities | 15 |
| Provide barrier-free opportunities (opportunities that don't reduce ODSP benefit, no age limit, accommodate different levels of education) | 13 |
| Focus on youth | 9 |

Focus on creating job opportunities and hiring individuals and businesses from Hamilton

Respondents felt that these new opportunities should prioritise hiring of Hamilton residents and businesses i.e., that employment opportunities should enable Hamilton residents to live and work in Hamilton. One respondent suggested that “a number of available positions should be set aside for individuals who have lived in the city for a

certain time period (10 to 20yrs)". Similarly, someone suggested that there should be a "policy to hire 70% local".

Fair working conditions

Respondents identified the need for employment opportunities to have fair working conditions. Respondents noted that jobs should provide a living wage that allows people to pay for rent, groceries, and other essential needs, and provide benefits. They indicated that new job opportunities should be full-time, permanent positions and that contract or part-time positions should be limited in number.

Prioritise inclusion of equity-seeking groups

Respondents noted that members of equity-seeking groups should be prioritised for training and employment opportunities. Respondents suggested that Indigenous peoples, newcomers, people with severe mental illness and physical disabilities, low income people, single parents, or people who are unemployed or underemployed should be prioritised for these opportunities.

Paid internships and apprenticeships

Respondents noted that there should be more paid internships and apprenticeships. Specifically, respondents felt that these opportunities should be used to engage local employers in training and ultimately hiring individuals.

Encourage skilled trades

Survey respondents suggested that opportunities should focus on encouraging people to take up skilled trades (welding, carpentry, plumbing, manufacturing etc.) and that these opportunities should focus especially on recruiting more youth and women.

Partner with local education institutions to provide training opportunities

Respondents suggested that training opportunities should be offered in partnership with local educational institutions including McMaster University, Mohawk College, and local secondary schools. Respondents suggested that training programs offered through these institutions could be focused on LRT maintenance, skilled trades, and green technology.

Provide barrier-free opportunities

Respondents noted that new training and employment opportunities should reduce barriers associated with them. Respondents noted that there should be entry-level opportunities that have fewer requirements around education and experience. One respondent stated that opportunities should "allow people with EI, OW, and ODSP to continue to be paid their benefits..." Some participants also noted that opportunities should not just be reserved for youth, believing that they should allow people of all ages to benefit from opportunities. Respondents also indicated that training opportunities should be free or low-cost.

Focus on youth

Some respondents felt that training and employment opportunities should focus on youth to ensure that they can develop skills, network, and contribute to the local economy.

4. The Environment

Respondents identified 7 major ideas relating to the environment (Table 13).

Table 13: Community benefits ideas regarding the environment

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Protect and create green spaces | 60 |
| Renewable/clean energy sources | 38 |
| Enhance urban canopy | 36 |
| Environmentally-friendly construction | 35 |
| Electric LRT cars/ other vehicles | 18 |
| Promote walking/cycling | 9 |
| Multi-sort bins | 8 |

Protect and create green spaces

Respondents noted that existing green spaces such as the greenbelt, conservation areas, and parks should be protected. Respondents indicated that they do not want developments to destroy green spaces and wanted additional green space to be created along the corridor.

Renewable/clean energy sources

Respondents indicated that they do not want fossil fuels to be used for the LRT. Respondents also suggested that solar panels should be installed at LRT stops and shelters where possible.

Environmentally-friendly construction

Respondents indicated that they want environmentally friendly construction practices used for the LRT. Respondents indicated that recycled or recyclable materials should be used to build the LRT and that construction should minimise greenhouse gas emissions and pollution as much as possible.

Enhance urban canopy

Respondents indicated that they wanted to improve the urban canopy in Hamilton. Respondents suggested implementing green roofs at transit stops and bus shelters and planting more trees along the LRT route.

Electric LRT cars/ other vehicles

Respondents suggested that the LRT cars should use electric power. They also recommended using electric buses to connect people across the city to the LRT. Some respondents indicated that there should be electric car charging ports installed across the city.

Promote walking/cycling

Respondents noted that the LRT should be used to reduce the use of cars and promote active transport such as walking or cycling. Respondents indicated that there should be more bike lanes and pedestrian zones along the LRT corridor.

Multi-sort bins (garbage, recycling, etc.)

Respondents stated that the LRT route should have multi-sort bins for recycling and garbage to reduce litter and promote recycling.

5. Shopping Local and Business Support/Local Procurement

Survey respondents identified 6 community benefits ideas regarding supporting local businesses (Table 14).

Table 14: Community benefits relating to supporting local businesses

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Financial support for existing or new small businesses along LRT corridor | 54 |
| Allocate more space for local businesses to open or expand | 20 |
| LRT stops near businesses | 19 |
| Local procurement for LRT | 14 |
| Advertise/promote small businesses along corridor | 12 |
| Maintain access to businesses during construction | 12 |

Financial support for existing or new small businesses along LRT corridor

Many respondents indicated that there should be financial support for small businesses along the LRT corridor. Respondents suggested several ideas for support such as providing tax breaks or reducing taxes, implementing rent control for commercial spaces, and providing rent subsidies for small businesses to open near the LRT. Respondents also suggested providing grants to support small businesses, in addition to financial support reserved for businesses owned by women, racialized people, Indigenous people, or people with disabilities.

Allocate more space for local businesses to open or expand

Respondents stated that there should be space along the LRT corridor reserved for local businesses to open or expand. Specifically, one respondent suggested “rezoning to allow for more retail business, restaurants etc”. Some respondents suggested reserving vacant buildings for businesses or requiring that new developments include retail and grocery stores.

LRT stops near businesses

Survey respondents indicated that they want LRT stops to be within walking distance of retail, local cafes, restaurants, personal care services, and other businesses. Respondents felt that having LRT stops nearby could make businesses more accessible to patrons and consequently increase their revenue.

Local procurement for LRT

Respondents suggested that raw construction materials for the LRT project should be obtained from local Hamilton companies. They also suggested recruiting local consultants, engineers, and contractors for the project.

Advertise/promote small businesses along LRT corridor

Respondents indicated that small businesses should be supported with advertising. They suggested that the LRT cars or bus shelters should provide free advertising for small businesses to help them compete with larger corporations.

Maintain access to businesses during construction

Respondents stated that businesses should remain accessible during construction. One respondent suggested that: “... closures/access issues [should be] communicated to all businesses well in advance so they can plan.... [S]mall access routes [should be kept] open for maintaining community pickup windows for some businesses that may be harder to access at times”

6. Physical Accessibility

Survey respondents identified 6 community benefits ideas relating to physical accessibility (Table 15).

Table 15: Community benefits ideas for physical accessibility

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Clearing snow on the roads and sidewalks | 27 |
| Accessibility features for LRT cars and stations (platform design, curb depressions, ramps) | 23 |
| Greater wheelchair accessibility | 14 |

| | |
|--|----|
| Accessible signage and audio information | 13 |
| Implementing wider walkways/entrances inside the LRT and sidewalks | 9 |
| Public transit connecting to LRT stops | 5 |

Clearing snow on the roads and sidewalks

Respondents highlighted snow removal as a key concern. Many respondents suggested that snow should be cleared at LRT stations and surrounding walkways and roads to ensure accessibility for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.

Accessibility features for LRT cars and stations (platform design, curb depressions, ramps)

Respondents emphasised the importance of accessibility features for LRT cars and stations, with some explicitly stating that compliance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) should be prioritised. Respondents recommended the use of curb depressions, ramps, and railings. Respondents also suggested including space to store collapsed strollers on the LRT.

Greater wheelchair accessibility

Respondents suggested that new developments including commercial or residential spaces should increase accessibility for wheelchairs, which could entail building wide doorways, hallways, and open spaces. Respondents also suggested ramps or lifts wherever there are stairs.

Accessible signage and audio information

Respondents suggested that there should be auditory signals at crosswalks, announcements at stations, and the use of braille for people who are visually impaired. Respondents also suggested signage that is clear and uncluttered. For example, respondents recommended ensuring that route schedules are easy to read.

Implementing wider walkways/entrances inside the LRT and sidewalks

Survey respondents recommended having wider walkways for people who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other mobility devices, and to accommodate people with strollers.

Public Transit connecting to LRT stops

Respondents noted that public transit should connect to LRT stops. One individual stated: "There should be public transit available between LRT stops (e.g. King St bus)... many with physical disabilities would find it difficult to walk long distances to get to and from the LRT stops."

7. Economic Accessibility

Survey respondents identified 5 community benefits ideas relating to economic accessibility (Table 16).

Table 16: Community benefits ideas for economic accessibility

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|---|---------------------------|
| Affordable fares and passes | 70 |
| Free or discounted fare for certain populations | 49 |
| Free transit for everyone | 29 |
| Fares tied to income-level | 14 |
| LRT fare comparable to HSR bus fare | 11 |

Affordable fares and passes

Respondents highlighted the importance of affordable fares and passes to ensure that individuals from all income levels can access the LRT service. Some respondents suggested that fares should not be greater than \$3.

Free or discounted fare for certain populations

Many respondents suggested that fares should be discounted for certain populations including low-income individuals, children, seniors, students, and recipients of Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Some respondents also suggested that discounted fares should be available for frequent riders.

Free transit for everyone

Many respondents suggested that public transport should be free for everyone to discourage the use of cars. One respondent suggested following Calgary's example: "...Calgary light rail offered a downtown section free of charge to commuters ... and very high parking rates to discourage cars, ensure use of LRT through 10 blocks downtown where all condos [are] being built."

Fares tied to income-level

Some respondents suggested that the fares should be tied to income level: "Fare rates according to income tax brackets, allowing people in the lower income bracket [to] pay less for public transit...."

LRT fare comparable to HSR fare

Some residents proposed that the LRT fare should be comparable to the current HSR bus fare.

8. Preserve Historic Character

Respondents identified 4 community benefits ideas to preserve Hamilton’s historic character (Table 17).

Table 17: Community benefits ideas to preserve historic character

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|---------------------------|
| Do not demolish historic buildings | 68 |
| Maintain existing building facades/ build around existing character | 39 |
| Historic/aesthetic requirements or rules to protect old structures or for new buildings and structures | 17 |

Do not demolish historic buildings

Respondents overwhelmingly did not want historic buildings to be demolished. Instead, they wanted historic buildings to be preserved, maintained, or converted for other uses such as “interesting living spaces”.

Maintain existing building facades/build around existing character

Respondents wished for building facades to be maintained and for new development to be done around existing structures. One respondent noted: “Some historical storefronts are worth preserving, even if everything behind the facade is new. Other buildings should try to fit with the local character rather than bring a jarring new look, e.g. glass and metal when existing buildings have stonework.”

Historic/aesthetic requirements or rules to protect old structures or for new buildings and structures

Survey respondents felt that there should be requirements to ensure protection of historic structures. One respondent suggested implementing “...urban design guidelines that either outright preserve or subtly replicate older buildings....”

9. Community Spaces

Respondents identified 7 key ideas for community spaces (Table 18).

Table 18: Community benefits ideas for community spaces

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|--|---------------------------|
| Greens Spaces and parks | 64 |
| Community hubs and recreational centres | 41 |
| Spaces for people experiencing houselessness | 32 |
| Free community spaces | 29 |

| | |
|-------------------------|----|
| LRT/bus shelters | 24 |
| Pedestrian-only streets | 8 |
| Public Washrooms | 7 |

Greenspaces and parks

Green spaces and parks were mentioned by respondents as an important community space, overlapping with the environmental community benefits section.

One respondent noted a lack of green spaces along the LRT route: “Green areas are important. The LRT route has very few green spaces, especially starting at Main and Dundurn Street: I think the first one east of Dundurn is Gage Park then Montgomery Park.” Respondents also mentioned a need for parks and playgrounds for children and for pets, in addition to more hiking and bike trails.

Community hubs and recreational centres

Respondents also suggested that community hubs and recreation centres should be integrated with the LRT station and connect people to community organisations and services. Other recommendations for recreation included having event halls, arenas, sports facilities, community fridges and pantries, daycares, and pop-up markets.

Spaces for people experiencing homelessness

Respondents felt that community spaces should be welcoming for people experiencing homelessness and be used to link people to services. One respondent suggested “creating a designated area for encampments so [people experiencing homelessness] can be safe and stable even if they aren’t ready for shelters (or shelters aren’t appropriate for them).”

Free community spaces

Respondents identified the need for community spaces where people are not required to spend money. One respondent suggested having “early years centres, libraries, [and] drop-in spaces...” which do not charge people to enter.

LRT/Bus Shelters

Respondents stated there should be shelters at all stops, and that they should be enclosed and heated to protect people against variable weather conditions. They also suggested that shelters should have sufficient capacity to accommodate a large number of people and that they should provide seating. Respondents noted that there should be open areas for wheelchairs, walkers, and strollers and that shelters should be well-lit to ensure safety.

Pedestrian-only streets

Some respondents wanted “more pedestrian-only streets”. They also felt there should be pedestrian areas surrounding parks and stores along the LRT corridor.

Public Washrooms

Respondents also suggested that public washrooms be available at LRT stops. One respondent suggested that the public washrooms should have 24-hour availability.

10. Public Arts

Regarding public arts, survey respondents identified 4 community benefits ideas (Table 19).

Table 19: Community benefits ideas relating to public arts

| Idea | Number of times mentioned |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Commission local artists | 38 |
| Beautify the city | 25 |
| Take inspiration from other cities | 10 |
| Promote history of Hamilton | 8 |

Commission local artists

Survey respondents indicated that local artists should be commissioned to create art for transit stations, parks, and other public spaces. Respondents stated that there should be a focus on hiring local artists who come from marginalised communities such as Indigenous, black, and other racialized communities. They also indicated that young people and local schools should be engaged in creating the artwork. Respondents suggested encouraging performing arts (e.g., buskers) at LRT stops.

Beautify the city

Respondents indicated that artwork would beautify the city, attract new life and business, and make the city more welcoming overall. Specifically, respondents stated there should be more artwork in the downtown area, which could include designing creative transit stops and making infrastructure look aesthetically pleasing (e.g., streetlights and benches). Respondents indicated they want artists to develop murals—one respondent suggested that artists could create murals of the various waterfalls in the city.

Take inspiration from other cities

Respondents suggested that Hamilton should take inspiration from other cities that have incorporated art into their urban landscape. Respondents indicated that every new building should have a piece of artwork on its property, like Montreal's new buildings. Similarly, Montreal's metro stations are creative and unique, and respondents indicated that Hamilton should follow their example. Respondents suggested allowing graffiti in Hamilton via graffiti contests, similar to areas in the United Kingdom.

Promote history of Hamilton

Respondents indicated that the artwork should represent the history of Hamilton and showcase the diversity and various cultures in the city, including Indigenous peoples. Respondents noted that the artwork should capture the uniqueness of each community in Hamilton. Respondents also suggested that the artwork could reflect the past and present, or communicate the envisioned future of Hamilton.

Community Concerns Regarding the LRT project

Participants were asked to list any additional concerns they had about the LRT project that should be communicated to Metrolinx and the City of Hamilton. These concerns are summarized in Table 20. We elaborate on each concern below.

Table 20: Concerns regarding the LRT project

| Concerns | Number of Times Mentioned |
|--|---------------------------|
| High cost/ Exceeding budget | 80 |
| Disruption to individuals/ businesses along LRT corridor | 58 |
| Traffic congestion | 42 |
| Limited reach across Hamilton | 28 |
| Timely completion | 26 |

1. High Cost/Exceeding Budget

The survey indicated that Hamiltonians are worried that LRT will go over budget. Some people have argued that Hamilton “can’t afford this,” and should be cautious on building an expensive LRT. One individual claimed that the “LRT started as a \$1b grant without much reference to inevitable cost over-run. Now it is already \$2.3b and the cost benefit is getting lower.”

2. Disruption to individuals/businesses along the LRT corridor

Survey respondents were concerned about how the construction of the LRT would disrupt their neighbourhoods. For example, one respondent mentioned they were concerned about “construction worries, blocking my transportation access to work/out of my neighbourhood, workers taking over (already limited) parking in my area”. Others were concerned about local businesses: “Construction can be extraordinarily disruptive to businesses and use of an area. Some form of financial assistance to keep local businesses alive through the process might be needed. Locke St. was an example of how to harm an area during major street reconstruction. Let’s avoid doing that to other areas.”

3. Traffic Congestion

The survey indicated that people are worried that the construction of the LRT would cause traffic congestion. One individual stated that they are “worried about construction and how difficult it will be to get around in the city.” Similarly, another individual mentioned that “we have a car culture problem in Hamilton. This needs to be addressed before construction.”

4. Limited Reach Across Hamilton

Respondents were concerned about the LRT route’s limited reach. Respondents were concerned about how it would not service areas such as the Mountain, Stoney Creek, and Ancaster. One individual noted that “it [LRT] is no use to me. I will never use it too

far from my residence and is servicing the wrong area. It should run from the farthest point in the East to the farthest point in the West.”

5. Timely Completion

Many respondents had little confidence that the project would be completed in a timely manner. One individual hoped that it “does not take an exceptionally long time to build to minimise disruption.” The consensus among respondents was that the LRT project needs to be completed quickly.

Community Focus Groups

This section will describe the results from four community focus groups at the following ACORN meetings: East End, Stoney Creek, Mountain, and Downtown. We also included ideas from a focus group held in 2019. Each focus group consisted of breakout rooms which covered the following themes: housing affordability, accessibility, environment, and arts and community.

Housing Affordability

Participants expressed concerns about how the LRT would affect housing affordability. Participants from all focus groups stated that there should be affordable housing along the LRT corridor. Feedback from two focus groups suggested housing people in vacant homes and prioritising people experiencing homelessness or from low-income backgrounds for housing. Participants from two focus groups also suggested building additional affordable housing units and implementing inclusionary zoning policies. One group suggested implementing a vacancy tax for empty buildings. Participants from all focus groups suggested meeting with displaced tenants and low-income individuals who may be affected by the LRT project to ensure that they are aware of their housing rights and to hear their concerns.

Accessibility

Participants discussed features that could promote physical accessibility on the LRT. Participants from all focus groups indicated that ramps should be installed. Two groups mentioned having wider doors and designated seating areas for the elderly, pregnant individuals, people using wheelchairs and other people with disabilities. Three groups mentioned that it should be possible to raise and lower the LRT as needed. Participants from two groups stated that there should be audio signals for blind folks. One group suggested that service animals and pets should be allowed on the LRT, that there should be charging ports for devices, and that sloping sidewalks should be designed for those with mobility devices.

Participants from three groups raised concerns about the process of LRT construction. These groups expressed that the city should consider how detours will be created during construction, how to communicate these changes to City residents, and how to ensure pathways are accessible during construction. One group suggested that ramps and sidewalks should remain accessible to people during construction.

To promote economic accessibility, participants from all focus groups suggested having affordable fees to accommodate low-income folks. Participants from three focus groups suggested free LRT access for people receiving benefits from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). One group suggested free ridership for seniors and children under 13, while another suggested student discounts. Participants from two focus groups suggested extending the time on transfers. Participants from one group recommended that LRT fare should be comparable to the HSR system.

Environment

Participants from all focus groups suggested that there should be additional parks and green space along the LRT route. Participants mentioned that creating outdoor, green spaces would be a valuable addition for local businesses. Three groups mentioned planting more trees, while one group suggested that trees should be installed with an underground support system to ensure they last a long time.

One group suggested that reducing fumes and particulate matter in the downtown core should be a key priority. Participants from one group mentioned that there should be efforts to reduce the current number of vehicles on the road. Similarly, two groups mentioned the need to increase walkability, while three groups mentioned accommodating cyclists using bike lanes and spaces to store bikes on the LRT. One group discussed implementing a proper garbage and recycling system along the corridor at LRT stations.

Arts and Community

Participants from three focus groups suggested that the LRT could offer opportunities for local artists to do community-centred artwork at stations and on buildings along the corridor. Participants from one focus group recommended licensing buskers to prevent them from being disturbed by authority figures such as the police (Toronto has a similar system).

Additional concerns regarding the LRT project

One group raised additional concerns such as going over budget, construction delays, and disruptions to the community (e.g., noise and negative effects on local businesses).

Key Takeaways and Next Steps

This research aimed to identify community benefits priorities of Hamilton residents to inform a community benefits agreement (CBA) for the Hamilton LRT project. Survey respondents indicated that their top four priority areas for a CBA are Affordable Housing, Transportation Connection, Local Employment and Training Opportunities, and The Environment.

Survey respondents provided a variety of community benefits ideas. Some of these ideas, ordered by the number of times they were mentioned by respondents, include:

- Designing LRT infrastructure to accommodate use of multiple modes of transportation i.e., bike lanes, crosswalks, parking spaces;
- Providing affordable housing geared to income;
- Increasing access to the LRT from across Hamilton;
- Ensuring that fares are affordable;
- Inclusionary zoning (i.e., a percentage of all new developments should be allocated to affordable housing);
- Prioritising job creation for Hamilton residents so that people can live and work in Hamilton; and
- Protecting green spaces

Respondents indicated several concerns regarding the LRT construction including its high cost and potential budget overruns, disruption to individuals and businesses along the LRT corridor, and traffic congestion.

Community focus groups also highlighted several potential community benefits ideas across 4 themes: housing affordability, accessibility, environment, and arts and community. Participants recommended providing affordable housing along the LRT corridor by housing people in vacant homes and building more affordable housing units. Participants also suggested that the LRT should include accessibility features such as wide ramps and doors, audio signals for visually impaired people, and allow service animals and pets to ride the LRT. Participants also indicated that the LRT service should have an affordable fare to accommodate low-income people and provide free ridership for children, seniors, and individuals on ODSP. Participants suggested planting more trees and creating green spaces along the LRT route. Participants felt that the LRT construction should provide opportunities for local artists to do artwork on stations and buildings along the LRT corridor and that the city should consider licensing buskers.

There are some limitations to this research. Where and how the survey was distributed, as well as its contents, could have influenced who filled it out. The vast majority of respondents were long-term residents (>10 years) and a large proportion also self-identified as belonging to an equity-seeking group. Most who filled out the survey indicated they were gainfully employed. Observing these patterns, we are unable to conclude that the results are representative of all Hamiltonians; rather, the results may reflect the views of a politically and socially engaged subpopulation. Similarly, the community focus groups were conducted mainly with individuals from one organisation. While the original intention was to conduct community focus groups with more members of the Hamilton community, many of these focus groups were cancelled during the study period due to low enrolment. It is therefore unclear whether the focus groups were representative of the broader Hamilton community.

These findings can be used by the HCBN to inform their CBA for Hamilton LRT and to advocate for community needs at the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx. The large survey sample size and demographic information collected opens up the opportunity for further subgroup analyses (e.g., to investigate the concerns of racialized, LGBTQ+, and/or

Indigenous people independently). Future community consultation processes could involve partner organisations and advertising across diverse demographics to widen the perspectives involved in the research.

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Appendix B: Community Conversation (2019)



Community Conversation:

LRT, Employment, Community Benefits and Shaping Hamilton's Future

Event Summary

HAMILTON COMMUNITY BENEFITS NETWORK

Karl Andrus

1/18/2019



Community Conversation – Event Summary
 January 16th, 2019 – Hamilton Public Library
 6:00pm - 8:30pm

About HCBN: For almost three years, the Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) has built a broad, city-wide coalition of labour, community groups/hubs and social enterprises, residents, and marginalized groups to help bring Community Benefits Agreements (CBAs) to Hamilton’s government and private development projects. HCBN is a collective made up of representatives from the Hamilton Building Trades, the Immigrant Working Centre, the Hamilton District Labour Council, the YWCA, Hamilton Food Share, Environment Hamilton, and many more organizations in Hamilton that envision Hamilton as an inclusive, thriving city in which all residents have equitable opportunities to contribute to building healthy communities and a prospering economy. HCBN sees Community Benefits Agreements as a proven approach to achieving this vision. With a mandate from Hamilton City Council and the Province of Ontario, we have begun discussions with Metrolinx and City of Hamilton staff about a Community Benefits framework for the Hamilton Light Rail project. Our organization is looking to build on the success of the Toronto Community Benefits Network with a “made in Hamilton” agreement that is tailored to our city’s needs.

The Project: The Hamilton Light Rail Transit project proposes to construct 14 km of rapid transit service down existing streets in Hamilton’s urban core. Passing along King Street and Main Street from McMaster University in the West End of the city to Eastgate Mall in the East End of the city. It will connect some of the highest-density areas in the city with an east-to-west Rapid Transit system. Travelling down the center of the road for most of the length, the system will be curb separated — with a separate bridge over the 403 — to provide 6-minute peak time service much faster than existing transit options. The line itself stretches through some of the most challenging neighbourhoods in the city. The project will require the procurement of up to 91 properties along the line. Unlike other LRT/Metrolinx projects, land acquisition has been a significant requirement for construction. The neighbourhoods and their residents along the line represent high densities of marginalized residents. The increased challenge of rising property rates is already seeing the displacement of low-income renters along the corridor. Coupled with the existing challenges of gentrification, the potential for Community Benefits to directly improve the lives of those living on the corridor is very high. Although the project brings with it challenges, the HCBN believes only a strong community-based Community Benefits Agreement will maximize the benefits of this project for residents along the corridor and in the city as a whole.

Outreach and Accommodation: To make the general public and interested residents aware of the community conversation event, extensive advertising was used in social media. The event posting on Facebook garnered 60 “going” participants, and over 375 “interested” persons. Tickets were also available free through Eventbrite. Moreover, the event was widely shared across many local Facebook and Twitter groups. A \$50 advertising budget was also utilized to reach followers of HCBN’s Facebook page. With help from volunteers from Acorn Hamilton, approximately 500 posters were placed along the LRT corridor and downtown. We also contacted our partner organizations and members, requesting they share the event with their networks. The Hamilton Public Library Central Branch was used to hold the event due to its close proximity to major public transit lines and accommodation facilities (washrooms, doors, etc.). Childcare was



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also provided with a pre-written request and Childcare coverage was donated by the Immigrant Working Center (IWC) for approximately 12 children. Light snacks, coffee and water were provided.

The Event: The event was very well attended despite the cold weather. There were approximately 140 or so people at the event. 105 email addresses were gathered from those interested in volunteering or being added to our distribution lists. Attendees were seated in tables of 6 to facilitate a more relaxed and intimate environment conducive to the sharing of information. Members of the HCBN board and other volunteers were seated at each table to observe the conversations and record feedback. Feedback forms were available for all attendees. The structure of the event was divided into two stages: presentations from invited guests and a moderated workshop with each of the tables. The workshop prompt was to “frame a vision for the city, community benefits and specific asks for the Hamilton LRT project.”

Matthew Green, Former City Councillor Ward 3, Executive Director, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion

“When I was a city councillor, I would witness the most vulnerable, while we were doing billion-dollar development permits... living in tents.”

Matthew Green led the group in a land acknowledgement and gave a brief summary of the importance of CBAs in the creation of “a playing field between power structures and community members.” Green gave a good background of community benefits beyond the LRT and took aim at every single development project across the city. He touched on some themes that were to later emerge in discussion groups: local employment, inclusionary zoning, sage neighbourhoods, green infrastructure, and opportunities for small businesses so that money that comes to Hamilton stays in Hamilton. He stressed the significance of organizing in the demand for a seat at the table. The collaboration between governments, stakeholders, and residents is a way to assert community power and to ensure what happens in the community *is what we want to happen*.

“Anger can paralyze us, let us do something with it today for a better future.”

Jennifer Miller, Director of Social Investment, Atkinson Foundation

“Community Benefits has a particular approach: it’s not just about going to lobby government, it’s about generating power in communities”

Jennifer Miller from the Atkinson foundation introduced the group to the broad history and concept behind Community Benefits Agreements. She spoke about making sure we have economic and democratic power for those that have historically been left out of decision making. She discussed the different facets of Community Organizations and Benefits, looking at the hard shift towards becoming an actual part of the development process. Some groups, residents, and members of a Community Benefits group might be occupying buildings or engaged in protest, others in negotiations; Miller states that “it is important to hold space for both within an organization.” Miller looked at the idea of Community Benefits in the United States within the context of the beating of Rodney King and the LA Riots exploding afterwards. People were energized to act. Local unions worked *with* community members, and said things needed to change. They



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created the first living wage ordinance, the gold standard for Community Benefits Agreements, including jobs, community assets, parks, chapters, and access to affordable housing — including its construction. Miller emphasized that local campaigns utilize laws, policies, and agreements, while requiring the building of coalitions.

“We are...working with people on the inside, putting pressure on the outside, to ensure economic development needs meet community needs.”

**Kumsa Baker, Campaign Manager, Toronto Community Benefits Network and
 Troy Moussa, Community Organizer, Toronto Community Benefits Network/Rexdale Rising!**

“The movement for community benefits in Toronto started in a room like this one, with community members, organizations, labour, all coming together to talk about opportunities in Rexdale”

Kumsa Baker and Troy Moussa took turns taking the group through the struggles of various Community Benefit projects they had worked on with the Toronto Community Benefits Network and the Rexdale Rising Campaigns: The Finch West LRT, the Woodbine Casino, the Eglinton Crosstown LRT, and the Parkdale People’s Economy movement. Each of these successful community projects built on each other. While the Eglinton LRT had only aspirational targets, harder targets were set out for Woodbine Casino. Community Support and resident engagement was needed for all projects, but especially for the Woodbine Casino, where political will in support of CBAs was necessary. Wins included commitments from between 10% (Crosstown LRT) and up to 40% in the Woodbine Casino for employment targets. Considerations such as childcare, community spaces, and affordable housing were also discussed around the various organization campaigns. The key message was for the need to create a critical body and mass support to influence the outcomes to more favourable CBAs. Organization, communication, and framing the “good planning possibilities” require equity-seeking communities and having them at the table. Decent work, affordable commercial spaces, affordable housing, and community access are some of the desired outcomes of CBAs.

“How can we ensure that the community can hold the City and developers accountable to agreements forged? ...[one method is] quarterly meetings, with regular updates to the community and CBAs oversight.”

Mike Wood, Chair, Hamilton ACORN, Downtown Branch

“Fighting for change creates better living.”

Mike Wood discussed some of the challenges residents along the Hamilton LRT corridor are feeling, with increased interest from development groups and displacement pressures. They talked about some of ACORN’s successes in building community power door-by-door — by speaking to individuals and families around Hamilton about the issues they face, like unaffordable rents, unreliable transit, lack of community spaces. Mike believes CBAs are an important tool for an affordable city, not a tent city. He also discussed some of ACORN’s community organizing success around inclusionary zoning and meeting with ministers to fight for change.

“By building power within the community, we can get things done!”



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Resident Workshop, Moderated by Alejandra Bravo, Director of Leadership and Training at the Broadbent Institute

Each table was asked to consider the example Community Benefits models and consider the problems they were trying to take on:

- What are our benefits, not the projected benefits?
- What do we see as benefits as individuals and as a community?
- What challenges may be generated by the project?
- Who do we need to consider as this project moves forward?
- What are the concerns that could be generated in the communities and with residents on the line?

Each table was asked to discuss these points with assistance and moderation from HCBN Board of Directors facilitation and other volunteers.

Next the group was asked:

- What is our vision for Hamilton?
- How do we see the Hamilton LRT in that vision for Hamilton's future?
- What Community Benefits will help shape you and your communities' vision of the city of Hamilton?
- What can we do with the opportunities of this project to help shape that vision?
- How do we make sure no one is left behind?

Each table took about 20 minutes or more on each of these key discussion topics to unpack views of the city and the future of Community Benefits in Hamilton especially around the LRT. Discussions were very respectful and quite lively. Each group generated a mountain of feedback, recorded by notetakers at the table, with general specific priorities mounted to post-IT Notes.

The groups then submitted all this feedback, as well as feedback forms available on every table, back to the Hamilton Community Benefits Network team for review. General themes emerged with a great deal of overlap at all tables. The information was condensed into the following general themes:

Affordable Housing (32 comments): Affordable housing was by far the largest concern and request around CBAs at the event. Many of the feedback comments touched on affordable housing and concerns around affordability and displacement. Every table agreed that the cost of housing in the city was leading to displacement. Thoughts were shared about who mitigates the risk of a project that is gentrifying the area. Concerns were raised about *who* is benefiting from the development in the city. Rent-geared apartments, stronger and more connected neighbourhoods, and zero displacement policies were considered priorities for the assembled group. The use of parking lots for housing, higher density housing, inclusionary zoning tools, enforced property standards, and increased shelter beds and social service supports all came out as themes. Transit-oriented development and hard goals on the building of true affordable housing along the LRT corridor was clearly loud demand from the group for a CBA. New units and making sure that all the



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city's most vulnerable groups, especially on the LRT corridor had access to safe, acceptable, and deeply affordable accommodation was loudly proclaimed by the group.

Community Spaces: (Stations, stops, Shelters, Parks, Community Hubs, etc.) (24 comments): From the event, the theme of community spaces was the second largest consideration around CBAs. There was some overlap with comments in this section with affordable housing, the environment, and other CBA themes. There were suggestions for community hubs, plazas with affordable activities, and other public assets that would improve quality of life and create healthy, resilient communities emerged as trends. Free indoor/outdoor spaces, local destinations, sports, entertainment industry, and local theatre were all seen as needed in a CBA around infrastructure to improve the city. The need for community-based hubs, and spaces along the LRT corridor was the most commonly discussed benefit but some concerns appeared in this topic around traffic flow, as well as complete and safe streets during and after construction. Finally, each group made a small note around station stops, making sure the transit hubs are safe, warm, and welcoming.

The Environment (21 comments): This category also saw overlap with community spaces and affordable housing, as well as other topics. Traffic concerns, less cars, more bike lanes, more trees, and the loss of trees on the LRT corridor appeared to cross most discussions at the community tables. Sustainable, locally sourced goods, roof-top gardens, rain gardens at stations, interlocking pavement, greenspaces, and less cars emerged as conversation points around CBAs, and the Hamilton LRT specifically. Many comments asked for complete streets, improved traffic flow, and the need to look at the entirety of city traffic flow as opposed to neighbourhood by neighbourhood. The possibility of more community garden spaces, flowers, and less pavement also emerged. The need for cycling, walkability, and better transit crossed into this topic as well. The need for Complete Streets and more trees was agreed by every table to be a Community Benefit requirement.

Accessibility (17 comments): This category talked not just about physical AODA compliance, but all forms of accessibility, including economic accessibility. Comments around fares/discounted Presto cards and passes topped the list, as did stop distances, and engagement and project involvement of Indigenous peoples and culture. This theme included an overarching vision of equality for everyone regardless of income. Accessibility concerns around affordable housing, and the system itself, were overlapping themes.

Shop Local and Business Support (11 comments): It was generally agreed by the tables that revenue from development in Hamilton should stay in Hamilton. Most tables listed local business support as an ask for a CBA. Several tables also discussed having as much local procurement as possible, as well as procurement that is inclusive and environmentally friendly. Some overlap with the environment and accessible areas was mentioned in concerns about business owners being displaced. Losing businesses due to construction restrictions was the top concern among the tables.

Employment (11): Jobs topped the list at every table for feedback. Concerns about who would get those jobs, including thoughts they should go to young adults (youth) and marginalised adults. The inclusion of local training programs to drive decent work and uplift “those on the fringes of society” was a top priority. Financial investment in education, job readiness, and training and employment opportunities was listed.



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Concerns were raised about the LRT jobs themselves, if they would be unionized, decent work, and not just more low paying gig jobs. Hamilton Living or Fair Wage is a must in any employment considerations from CBAs.

Transportation Connection (9 comments): In some form or another, each table discussed making sure the system interconnected with HSR, Sobi Bike Share, Walkability, and other transit systems. Concerns mirrored those within the accessibility theme. Would the LRT be affordable for youth? Low-income residents? Students? Older adults? Many noted that the station design must be age-friendly and accessible. These overlapped with concerns from the community spaces theme. The biggest concern in this category was how the LRT system specifically (and other development projects broadly) would integrate with the vision of Complete Streets for the City of Hamilton — connect to existing systems and be affordable.

Public Arts: (7 comments) At the event, seven people indicated that local artwork at each stop should be included in the CBA. They wanted that art to be meaningful to Hamilton and its history. Concerts on blocked streets, cultural activities in communities and community feedback on the types of public art to be selected also were discussed. Finally, the general trend seemed to be that arts and arts support from CBAs was an important topic — overlapping with employment (artists and a precarious career). Hamilton Arts for and by Hamiltonians was an important theme in this topic group.

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Halton & Hamilton



Strategies for affordable housing in Hamilton's B-line corridor

Prepared for the Hamilton Community Benefits Network

[Recommendations for equitable transit-oriented development.](#)

Policies, processes, tools and strategies for all levels of government to build and maintain affordable housing in Hamilton's B-line Light Rail Transit Corridor.

Sam Nabi, B.E.S



Social Planning and
Research Council of
Hamilton



HAMILTON COMMUNITY
BENEFITS NETWORK
building capacity through building communities

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1 Introduction

This report brings together perspectives from housing providers, program managers, tenant advocates and real estate developers, while also considering academic and community-based research on the topics of transit, gentrification, displacement, and affordability. It is rooted in the experience and context of Hamilton residents, while taking lessons from other similar jurisdictions such as Waterloo Region and Toronto.

Academic research, media articles, as well as first-hand interviews were used to gather input from a wide range of sources. We thank all the participants who graciously provided their time to discuss the shared goal of creating and preserving affordable housing in Hamilton's B-Line Corridor. A list of references is available at the end of this report.

I would like to thank the following people who agreed to meet with me for interviews. Their experiences and insight across the housing continuum helped shape the findings and recommendations in this report:

- Al Fletcher, Manager, Investment in Affordable Housing/Neighbourhood Development, City of Hamilton
- Dr. Brian Doucet, School of Planning, University of Waterloo
- Chris Erl, Postdoctoral Fellow, Toronto Metropolitan University
- Greg Tedesco, Social Policy Analyst, City of Hamilton
- James O'Brien, Senior Project Manager Housing & Homelessness, City of Hamilton
- John Schuurman, Business Development Coordinator, Flourish
- Kumsa Baker, Director of Community Benefits Campaigns, Toronto Community Benefits Network
- Medora Uppal, CEO, YWCA Hamilton
- Michelle Diplock, Manager of Planning & Government Relations, West End Home Builders' Association
- Olivia O'Connor, Head Organizer, ACORN Hamilton
- Rudi Wallace, VP Grants & Community Initiatives, Hamilton Community Foundation
- Sean Botham, Manager of Development, CityHousing Hamilton
- Sean Ferris, CEO, Habitat for Humanity Hamilton
- Violetta Nikolskaya, Senior Analyst, Programs and Advocacy, YWCA Hamilton

While these interview subjects provided important input and context from their various perspectives, nothing in this report should be considered to represent their personal opinions or those of their employers.

This work builds on my report from 2011, titled "Affordability in Hamilton's B-Line Corridor", which was written while I was a Planning student at the University of Waterloo. During this time, I was employed in the City of Hamilton's LRT office and helped conduct public information sessions. I also surveyed the length of the proposed LRT route to identify sensitive land uses, and became familiar with the neighbourhoods along the B-Line corridor.

The recommendations from the 2011 report were focused on cost-effective interventions taking advantage of Hamilton's relatively cool real estate market. These included a land acquisition fund, tax increment financing, tax abatements for affordable housing, and waived parking requirements.

These strategies continue to hold relevance for preserving and creating new affordable housing. However, the increase in real estate investment and skyrocketing rents in Hamilton's housing market over the past 12 years means that these proposed interventions will be less effective than if they had been implemented in 2011.

I am grateful to the Atkinson Foundation, Hamilton Community Foundation, and the United Way of Hamilton Halton for providing funding to the Hamilton Community Benefits Network that made this report possible. I would also like to thank Ward 3 Councillor Nrinder Nann's office for helping to fund this report.

The purpose of this report is to propose a wide range of strategies and interventions that all three levels of government can employ to help preserve and create affordable housing in Hamilton's B-Line corridor. Some of these interventions require significant cooperation between levels of government; others can be achieved separately. While the scale of the housing and homelessness crisis looms large, there are tangible actions we can take to improve the experiences of Hamiltonians.

2 The housing continuum and affordability

The housing continuum is a concept used by policymakers to group different kinds of shelter. It typically ranges from homelessness on one end of the spectrum, to market-rate ownership housing at the other end.

For the purposes of this report, the distinction between renters and owners at the market-rate end of the continuum is not particularly important. What concerns us more is affordability: a homeowner with an unaffordable mortgage may not have as much housing security as someone who is renting in a home that is affordable based on their household income.

We have grouped the continuum into three sections (temporary housing, non-market housing, and market housing) to help categorize the different challenges they face, and policy interventions that may be needed to address each of them specifically.



Temporary housing ———— | ——— **Non-market housing** ———— | ———
Market housing

Housing continuum categories for the purposes of this report

2.1 Temporary housing

This includes homelessness, emergency shelters, and transitional housing.

For residents at this end of the spectrum, encampment support and emergency shelters are necessary tools for harm reduction, but their place on the housing continuum should never be considered a permanent home. These are not long-term solutions for residents.

The United Nations describes the human right to housing as: “... shelter, a space to sleep in your own bed, with your own roof, a place where your person and possessions are safe is a human right.”

Unfortunately, due to the lack of shelter beds and inadequate shelter accommodations, homelessness and encampments have become a larger part of the housing continuum in Canadian cities. Rather than criminalize residents who camp in parks, we should take a harm reduction approach that provides necessities such as water, washroom access, garbage collection, and fire safety equipment to these communities, while working directly with them to find appropriate shelter and housing options.

Other temporary housing providers (emergency shelters and transitional housing) are squeezed by the lack of non-market housing. This results in people needing to stay in temporary housing longer than necessary while they search for accommodation or spend years on the City's community housing wait list.

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed the cracks in mass shelter models. Sheltering people in communal rooms with little personal space, security or privacy was untenable in the face of a novel respiratory virus, and some shelter providers pivoted to repurposing unused hotels and other single-occupancy accommodations to keep people safe. This approach not only addressed public health concerns related to COVID-19 but provided residents with a more successful environment in which to seek stability, safety, and take steps to find a permanent home.

It costs less overall to keep people housed, when their situation is precarious, than to wait until they present at a shelter. Typically, case management supports are provided for up to five years. Other supports required depending on the resident could include childcare, transit, and transportation, advocating and navigating through bureaucracy, mediating relationships, and safety planning.

Currently there is little information gathered at the municipal level about how, when, and where residents are being displaced when they encounter housing supports. While details may be gathered for individual case notes, there is still a long way to go in understanding the broader patterns of displacement that may not show up in Census data.

There are intersections between people who use drugs and people who require emergency shelter or temporary housing. Addictions and mental health supports are required to successfully keep people housed. This could look like medical practitioners on site in a transitional housing environment providing care, support staff, case workers, or even safe consumption sites that are integrated into housing. YWCA's Safer Use Drug Space at Carole Ann's place is an example of this model in Hamilton.

The number of people who are precariously housed or homeless are now rising outside of Hamilton's downtown core. This is not necessarily due to a desire to be in other neighbourhoods, as people have services and communities they need to be in touch with close to downtown. There are conflicting pressures pushing and pulling residents: the preference to have peace and stability, versus the need to not be totally isolated. If a shelter is too far outside of the downtown, people will sometimes refuse to go there because transportation and access to system of support is too difficult.

2.2 Non-market housing

This includes supportive housing, social housing, community housing, cooperative housing, and any affordable housing operated by the state or a non-profit.

This category includes City-operated community housing (typically rent geared-to-income), co-operative housing, and housing operated by non-profits whose mandate is to provide affordable housing or supports.

These housing providers typically have a mission to provide affordable housing, and there is little risk of renoviction, demoviction, or above-guideline rent increases.

The main challenge for this segment of the housing continuum is to replicate the model and increase supply, as well as maintaining the supply of units that already exists. There are challenges with maintenance and upkeep due to chronic underfunding and an overreliance on individual fundraising efforts. Since the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent economic downturn, charitable giving has dropped sharply across Canada. Furthermore, expiring capital funding agreements mean that some providers could cease operations, reducing the availability of affordable and supportive housing when the need keeps increasing.

Hamilton's Housing Needs Assessment states, "the large number of households on the centralized wait list for community housing, which indicates the existing stock of affordable and subsidized rental housing in Hamilton is not sufficient to meet the need in the community."

Affordable housing developers and non-profit housing providers can take advantage of multiple grant streams by going above the minimum requirements for energy efficiency, such as LEED certification. Non-profit housing providers such as YWCA and Indwell have achieved this. CMHA should further explore ways to combine environmentally friendly design choices with affordable housing. Some of the efficiency improvements will also help make operating costs more affordable in the long run.

A series of interviews conducted by Jennifer Craig and Mary-Elizabeth Vaccaro with women transitioning out of homelessness revealed that they did not necessarily want to live in the central core areas where they are visible in the community and where they have relationships with people who may pose risks to their well-being or compromise their safety.

Key considerations include a need for permanent co-housing, with independent space and privacy for residents, but with shared communal spaces that can facilitate peer support, especially for populations such as women and gender-diverse people who have experienced chronic homelessness. The physical design of the housing should prioritize safety and security, but it is also particularly important for the home to be located centrally enough to existing formal or informal support networks. The residents should be able to connect with the neighbourhood on their terms and have a safe and private living space that prioritizes security and independence.

Access to nature and green space was also listed as a major desire for women and gender-diverse folks who have lived experience with homelessness. Communal but private green space, such as community gardens in a co-housing model, can provide a dual purpose of privacy and community-building.

2.3 Market housing

This includes affordable and unaffordable housing in the private market, whether rented or owned.

Most housing falls into this category. It is a precarious and contradictory thing — Doucet illustrates this in an article titled *Housing is both a human right and a profitable asset, and that's the problem*: “To make cities affordable, upzoning will need to consist primarily of new social housing and other forms of ownership such as co-ops and rent-controlled apartments that are off limits to speculators.”

The main threats to renters in market housing are demovictions, renovictions, and above-guideline rent increases. For homeowners, a spike in interest rates and mortgage payments could also present challenges for those in low- or moderate-income households.

Market housing can be an important part of a non-profit housing provider’s portfolio. Victoria Park Community Homes is currently building 266 units of housing, at 80 to 125% of average market rent. About 100 tenants in other homes, who have been living in more supportive environments but can now manage their own, will move to these units and free up some of the space in Victoria Park’s more deeply affordable and supportive end of the spectrum.

High interest rates and the rising cost of land are current major barriers for increasing the supply of market housing.

3 Defining affordability

An honest definition of affordability must be anchored in residents' actual incomes, not the price of homes currently selling or renting on the private market. Using an income-based definition of affordability ensures that we create policies and programs based on peoples' financial means, rather than investment activity in an economic sector that is rife with speculation.

Hamilton's Housing Needs Assessment states, "In Hamilton in 2022, even the average condominium price would not be affordable to the majority of households with moderate incomes."

Interviews conducted with City of Hamilton planning staff, social profit enterprises, non-profit housing providers, and tenant advocacy groups found universal agreement that an income-based measure of affordability is the appropriate one. Generally, *affordable* means that shelter costs should not exceed 30% of a household's income.

The definition of Core Housing Need used by Statistics Canada takes a target of 30% of gross household income and compares it against both average market rate and a household's actual rent as part of the calculation to determine whether someone is in Core Housing Need.

In its 2022 report, the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force stated, "People in households that spend 30% or more of total household income on shelter expenses are defined as having a 'housing affordability' problem."

The Affordable Housing Challenge Project advocates for a definition of affordability that is 30% of income for low- and middle-income renters, and that 50-100% of development on surplus public land should be set aside for affordable housing.

Conversely, not all of Hamilton's policies line up with this established consensus. Hamilton's Municipal Housing Facilities By-law includes a definition of "affordable housing" that only includes market-based targets. This should be removed and replaced with an income-based measure.

The City of Hamilton's Housing and Homelessness Action Plan contains two different definitions of affordability: One that is an income-based definition and another that defines *affordable* as "125% of the CMHC average market rent". These two definitions are incompatible and there is no direction given for how to decide which definition to use in a given context.

Ontario's recent changes to the Provincial Policy Statement, as well as measures contained in Bill 23 and Bill 97, eschew the long-standing income-based definition in favour of a market-based one. It re-defines *affordable* as 80% of average market rent. This is the wrong approach and does nothing to measure a household's ability to afford shelter. This approach is at odds with the way that service managers, housing providers, and tenants themselves define housing affordability.

There has been much confusion about the definitions of terms such as “affordable housing”, “housing affordability”, and “attainable housing” over the years. The Province’s messaging around Bill 23 interspersed these phrases without clearly defining how they differ from one another. While it has announced plans to develop a “standardized approach to determining an affordable price or rent”, the Bill’s definitions only define affordability based on a target of 80% of market rate. There is no affordability definition based on income, contrary to the analysis of its own Housing Affordability Task Force and the best practices of municipalities and housing providers.

It would benefit all housing providers, governments, and residents to have a clear and transferable definition of affordability grounded in household income. Based on the examples provided above, as well as the experience of Hamilton housing providers, it must be based on 30% of household incomes, rather than a market-based measure.

The general public is skeptical of the effectiveness of the Province’s policies in Bill 23 and related measures. 79% of those surveyed in a random sample of Ontarians by SPR Associates believed these measures would have no impact on affordable housing. Ontario’s recent moves to re-define affordability has not garnered the confidence of the population. It isn’t only housing and environmental advocates that disagree with this approach: only 17% of planners and 10% of professional civil servants believe affordable housing could result from these Provincial changes.

3.1 Considering geographic disparities when defining affordability

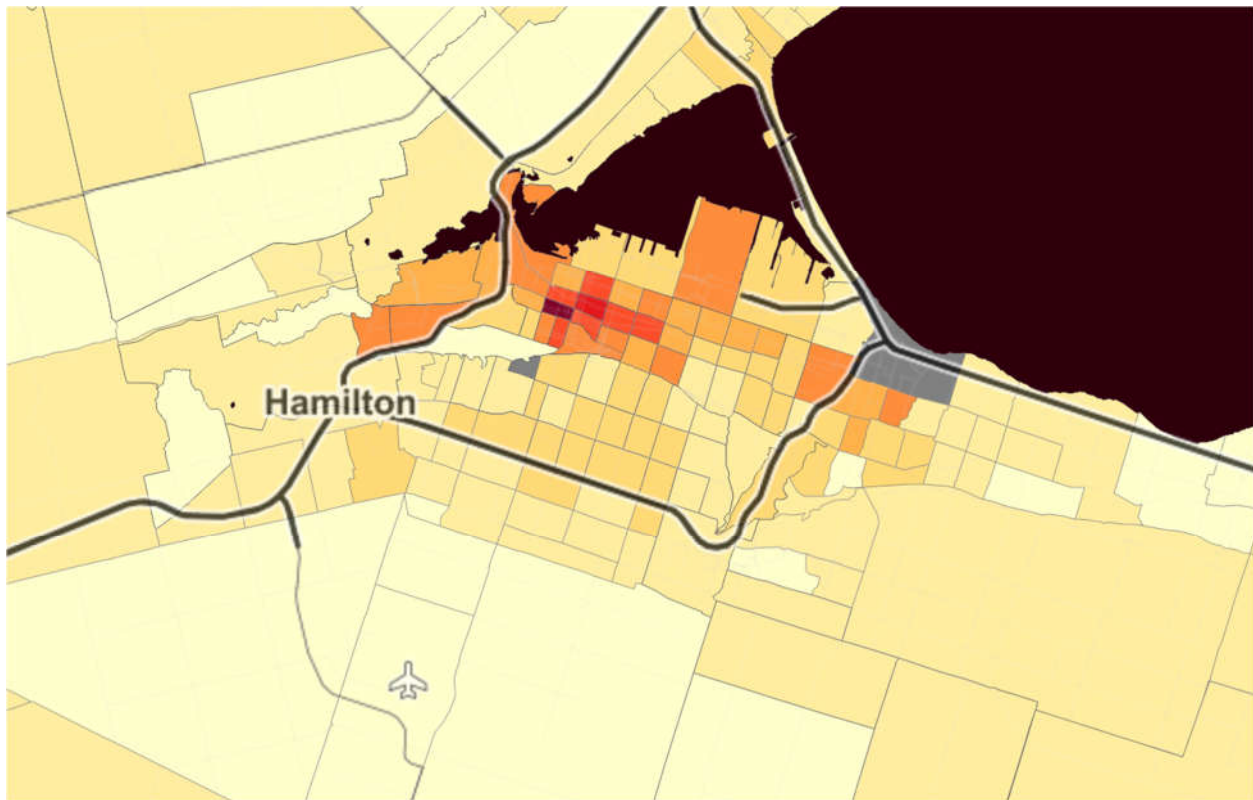
What is considered *affordable* can also look different depending on a household’s demographics and the type of housing that meets its needs. It makes sense that an affordable rent for a low-income household is different than what a high-income household can bear. There are also geographic differences in incomes within a given real estate market area. In areas along the B-Line where gentrification and displacement is happening most rapidly, the average household income is lower than that of the city as a whole.

As transit station areas are targeted for redevelopment and an influx of higher-income residents, the definition of affordable needs to be updated to be more granular, and to focus on average incomes in smaller geographic units, such as Census Tracts, instead of the entire city-wide rental market.

Thus, when creating strategies to preserve or build new affordable housing along the B-Line corridor, the definition of *affordable* ought to be tailored to incomes in this specific area, not just for the city as a whole.

For example, in the 2021 Census, the median household income in Census tract 0037.00 (parts of Durand/Kirkendall North/Strathcona) was \$32,400. In tract 0017.00 (Kirkendall South/Chedoke Park), median income was over four times as much, at \$141,000. For the city as a whole, the median household income was \$86,000.

For a home to be considered affordable for the average household of tract 0037.00, it would have to cost \$810 per month or less, whereas an affordable rate based on the city-wide household income would be \$2,150.



Prevalence of Low Income (LIM-AT) by Census Tract, 2021 Census (censusmapper.ca)

3.2 Defining affordability for residents receiving income support

Residents who receive income support from Ontario Disability Supports Program (ODSP) or Ontario Works (OW) are allocated a shelter allowance between \$375 and \$522 per month. This money cannot be used to pay for expenses other than rent. If their landlord does not collect the full amount, the remainder is forfeited. This creates a de facto minimum rent for charitable and supportive housing providers and represents a cash transfer from the Province to non-market housing providers. While some ODSP/OW recipients live in private market housing, the shelter allowance isn't enough to cover private market rent in Hamilton, especially for new leases. Even if an ODSP recipient used their entire basic needs allowance combined with the shelter allowance, leaving nothing for other living expenses, the income would still not be enough to afford rent in most cases.

Many supportive and charitable housing providers set their rental rates no higher than the shelter allowance amount, so as not to burden their tenants and to meet their charitable objectives. If the Province increased the shelter allowance, it would disproportionately benefit charitable housing organizations and help them better cover their operating expenses.

Rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing represents the vast majority of tenants living in social housing. In these homes (e.g. community housing units operated by CityHousing Hamilton) rent is calculated as 30% of gross monthly household income before tax. RGI homes guarantee permanent affordability for a household based on their ability to pay.

Results of consultations outlined in the Hamilton LRT Community Benefits Engagement Report (May 2023) specify RGI housing units as one of the most important ideas that was mentioned most often from workshop participants. The development of integrated, mixed-income communities was also important to the respondents.

3.3 Defining thresholds for low- and middle-income households

Hamilton's Housing Needs Assessment identifies a method to determine the overall target for affordable housing in the region. It calculates a separate number for ownership affordability and rental affordability, using the lesser of an income-based or market-based approach. The target is meant to determine affordability specifically for low-and-middle-income households, not high-income households. Therefore, it scopes the calculation to households at the 60th percentile.

Using an affordability target based on the 60th percentile of incomes creates a definition that is only affordable to upper-middle-income residents; it represents the *maximum* rate to be considered affordable, a number which is still out of reach for most middle- and low-income households.

For example, if a household's income is at the 45th percentile, an affordability threshold set at the 60th percentile will still be out of reach for them.

The lack of affordable housing for low-income residents is dire, and strategies for increasing affordability should consider additional measures to target low-income residents specifically. Hamilton currently has a shortfall of 8,000 homes which are needed at rates of \$800 per month or less.

The provincial government should take into account the increased operating costs of non-profit housing providers, in particular extra costs due to the pandemic and recent inflation.

* * *

Recommendations: All levels of government

- All levels of government and housing providers should define affordable housing, broadly, at 30% of gross household income. Any market-based definitions of affordability should be replaced with income-based ones.

- To the extent that market-based rental rates are used in policy or funding agreements, they should not be referred to as “affordable”. Instead, use the words “below-market”, or e.g. “80% of average market”. These figures are not based on a resident’s ability to *afford* shelter; hence they should not be called *affordable*.
- When designing programs to increase the supply of affordable housing, create separate targets for low-income households and moderate-income households. Define affordable housing for moderate-income households as 30% or less of gross household income for households at the 60th income percentile, and define affordable housing for low-income households at the 30th income percentile.

Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- The Province should index the ODSP/OW shelter allowance to the current operating costs of non-market housing providers. This rate should also be indexed to inflation.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- For policy interventions in the B-Line corridor, use a baseline of household incomes scoped to the specific Census tracts located in the B-Line corridor, not a city-wide average income.
- Update the Municipal Housing Facilities By-law with an income-based definition of affordable housing.
- Update the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan with an income-based definition of affordable housing, and remove the market-based one.

4 Hamilton's rental market

Hamilton, like other cities in Ontario, is experiencing an increase in inequality as middle-income households are increasingly replaced by low- and high-income households. Other cities with industrial economies, such as Kitchener-Waterloo, have experienced the most rapid increase in segregation since the 1970s.

When analyzing trends in the rental market, it is important to differentiate between *vacant rents* (newly-built units or empty ones currently looking for a tenant) and *occupied rents* (units where a tenant may have been living there for many years, potentially subject to rent control).

When looking at statistics from the CMHC, market average rents and home prices are typically calculated based on combined vacant and occupied rents. In a rising real estate market, new builds that offer below-market or market average rent could actually be significantly less expensive than the average *vacant rent*. On average, vacant rents in brand-new units are 1.5 times higher than the existing average market rate.

Furthermore, there are vacant rental units that may not be counted as part of the *vacant unit rent* statistics, as the property owner is not actively seeking a tenant or is holding the property as an investment. These units are not considered to be “in the universe” of the rental market, even though they could potentially house someone.

Some measures of vacancy rate count these empty homes that are not on the market (i.e. the Census), while others do not (i.e. CMHC).

Another difficulty in analyzing rental data, especially at smaller neighbourhood scales, is that vacancy rates published by CMHC are sometimes only available for buildings with three or more units. This excludes information about secondary suites and other forms of gentle density. Therefore, depending on the source of the data, the vacancy rate can present an incomplete picture.

The more affordable a home is, and the fewer number of bedrooms, the lower the vacancy rate. In Hamilton, one-person households are overrepresented in rental households. In Hamilton, new rental construction is increasing, but these are not affordable unless built by a non-profit.

Hamilton's Housing Needs Assessment states that the need for rental units is not being met by the current real estate market, with an increasing share of rentals being fulfilled through the secondary market. The secondary rental market creates much higher rents, and less housing security for tenants. It also points out that most new homes are geared to the ownership market. This exacerbates the affordability crisis for renters, who are more likely to live in unaffordable accommodations and are significantly more likely to experience Core Housing Need than homeowners.

Core Housing Need in Hamilton has dropped slightly (from 13% to 11%) between 2016 and 2021. However, the population increased by 6% and the average household income increased by 25% from \$69,024 to \$86,000. More research is needed to determine whether the drop in

core housing need may be attributed to an influx of gentrifiers bringing the average up, or temporary pandemic-related income supports, rather than a sustained improvement in the material conditions of Hamilton’s low-income residents.

Federal tax policy has a large role to play in creating incentives for the financialization of rental housing. Currently, Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) do not pay corporate taxes. This status allows them to out-compete other landlords and purchase more real estate, all in service of providing the highest return to their investors.

Motion 71, presented to Parliament in 2022, proposes to close this tax loophole and attempt to reverse the pattern of REITs buying up housing. Adopting this motion is one of the most significant ways that the federal government can stem the rising tide of financialized ownership in the housing market, and use the revenue generated to fund affordable housing.

There is an assumption that, when a household improves its financial situation, it will move to a new home with a higher rent that it can now afford. However, the experience of charities like the YWCA tells a different story. YWCA Hamilton works with clients in transitional housing to prepare them for good-paying jobs: some clients earn \$60,000 a year. However, these successful clients have no desire to “move up” to a market-rate home. They have developed a deep connection with community in this so-called “transitional” housing, and now do not want to leave. Simply building more market-rate homes, even those that are affordable to a household making \$60,000 per year, will not free up capacity in subsidized homes. This points to the need for mixed-income communities built on a cross-subsidy model that can offer residents stability through various stages of life.

Building housing at below-market rates is possible; taking advantage of funding such as the Rental Construction Financing Initiative, even for-profit developers can build homes that meet the needs of lower-than-average income households. Whereas a typical market-rate development looks for a profit margin between 9-15%, below-market housing can be created by the private sector without subsidies with a 6-8% profit margin. A typical non-profit development would seek a 5% net revenue to cover administration expenses.

For a typical mid-rise housing development with below-average rents, the cost of land makes up between 10-12% of the total project cost. For ownership housing, government fees, including HST, make up 25-30% of the sale price of a unit.

* * *

Recommendations: All levels of Government

- Develop targeted interventions for single-person households, low-income households, and renters.

- Develop funding programs to encourage below-market housing and non-market housing with profit margins below 8%.

Recommendations: Government of Canada

- CMHC rental market reports should report both *vacant* rent and *occupied* rent separately, as well as the overall average market rent.
- CMHC should include rental data for all housing forms in its neighbourhood-level reports, including small-scale, accessory dwellings, and gentle density.
- Align definitions of vacancy rate between the Census and CMHC rental market reports. Reporting of vacancy rates should indicate how many empty homes are not actively seeking tenants (i.e. being used for short-term rentals or being held as an investment asset).
- Remove the exemption on corporate tax from REITs and discourage the concentration of financialized real estate ownership.

Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- Strengthen tenant rights with respect to assigning and subletting leases: landlords should not be able to unreasonably refuse an assignment or sublet.
- When signing a lease, require disclosure of the amount of rent charged to the previous tenant, with an appeal mechanism for unreasonable rent increases.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Continue to study potential confounding variables with regard to Core Housing Need fluctuations in Hamilton.

5 National Housing Strategy

The government of Canada's National Housing Strategy (NHS) is an \$82-billion collection of programs that are meant to create more affordable housing.

The majority of funds disbursed by the NHS are in the form of loans. While they do offer low interest rates, recipients take on financial liability in an uncertain funding environment, and these loans are tremendously limiting for non-profits who struggle to get adequate funding for their core operating expenses.

NHS programs require the creation of "net new units", meaning that a housing provider who purchases existing homes that were at market price and makes them available at affordable rates would not qualify. In one case, Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region purchased a triplex which had been rented at market rates, and used it to provide transitional housing to three families. Since these were not considered "net new units", the organization was not eligible for mortgage support through the NHS.

The Ontario Non-Profit Network, in its "State of the Sector" report, concluded the following after surveying over 1,500 non-profits across Ontario:

- "Two-thirds of all organizations identified inflation and decrease in donations as the most significant factors challenging their organizations."
- "Over and over again, the sector has critiqued short-term and program- specific funding as they do not cover general operating costs necessary for non-profits to deliver their programs and services"

5.1 Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)

The rapid housing initiative (RHI), one of the NHS programs, provides an opportunity to address inequities for specific marginalized populations. Despite its unique ability to target the most vulnerable, it is the least prolific of the three main NHS programs, with only 4,800 units created, compared to 10,100 units created under the co-investment fund and 20,000 units for the rental construction financing initiative (RCFI).

The RHI is better able to balance inequities by considering personal income, not household income, which helps more single-person households qualify. It also uses the average incomes of those in "severe housing need" as a baseline, rather than overall average incomes.

City of Hamilton's housing services have been able to use RHI funds to support specific groups that were overrepresented in homelessness statistics, such as Indigenous residents and women. The ability to prioritize for marginalized populations is a strength of the RHI.

The RHI funds 100% of a project's costs, avoiding the need for organizations to apply for a mortgage and secure other funding. Conversely, the co-investment fund requires applicants to secure financing up front and then get reimbursed afterward. The co-investment fund's

approach hurts smaller organizations, especially housing providers that may not have their own in-house real estate development expertise.

An analysis by Indwell from London, ON showed that an RHI investment of \$82.5 million could functionally end street homelessness in that city over a period of four years.

5.2 Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI)

Another NHS program, the Rental Construction Financing Initiative (RCFI), requires applicants to keep a reserve worth 25% of the project cost, which is the largest barrier to this program being used more by non-profit and market developers alike. This is a much larger contingency than most construction projects typically use, and it blocks otherwise financially healthy builders from pursuing concurrent builds as a large chunk of their cash is tied up.

The RCFI program has never been used to build homes in Hamilton, though housing providers in other municipalities have been able to make use of its funds. In 2020, the city of Newmarket received funding through RCFI to build 216 homes, making it the first new privately funded purpose-built rental apartment tower in Newmarket since the mid 1980s. In Toronto, over 4,000 purpose-built affordable rental homes have been built with the assistance of the RCFI.

* * *

Recommendations: Government of Canada

- The NHS should expand its eligibility criteria to include programs which are creating net new *affordable* units by converting existing market-rate units.
- There should be a new stream of funding through the NHS to proactively renovate units to passive home standards, which will ease the long-term operational costs of non-market housing and alleviate high maintenance and repair costs in the future.
- Transition to stable, long-term, and flexible operational funding for non-market housing that reflects the true cost of delivering services and programs.
- The federal government should explore more grant streams for registered charities. The federal government could also consider purchasing an equity stake in charitable projects, instead of giving loans.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Develop an affordable housing reserve fund that can provide guarantees for project contingencies, in order to accelerate the rate of construction through programs such as

RCFI and free up working capital of housing providers, especially non-market housing providers.

- Develop a financing plan to leverage land owned by CityHousing Hamilton, City of Hamilton reserve funds, and the RCFI program to build thousands of new rental homes at 80% to 120% average market rent. This strategy could create a large number of needed rental units in a price range not currently being served by the private market (the average *vacant* rent for new units is approximately 150% of AMR). The municipality could become a major player in mid-market rentals, which it can use as a predictable income stream to maintain and expand existing RGI housing.

6 Zoning and building code

6.1 Inclusionary Zoning (IZ)

Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) is an attempt to capture the increase in land value of new development for social purposes. It requires homebuilders to set aside a portion of units as *affordable* for a specified number of years. However, it is a tool that comes late in the process of gentrification. IZ does not have mechanisms to help people who have already been displaced, or to maintain the level of affordability that existed on a site prior to redevelopment.

Due to the province's prescribed market-based policy framework for IZ bylaws, municipalities have typically targeted the upper-middle-income range for this tool. This approach seeks to minimize the impact of IZ requirements on the profitability of market-rate housing.

Therefore, IZ is not being seriously considered to help people at or below the poverty line. In Hamilton, IZ cannot meet the needs of low-income residents without being combined with additional subsidies.

Despite the shortcomings of IZ, municipalities should take advantage of this tool to the full amount permitted by the province (maintaining affordability for 5% of units over a maximum period of 25 years), while understanding that it is not enough on its own. IZ is one tool that can chip away at a much larger problem.

When implementing IZ in ownership (i.e. condominium) developments, there is a greater need to ensure that the home stays affordable, especially if the first owner chooses to sell. There is a risk that an "affordable" home could be flipped as an investment and cease to contribute to the stock of affordable housing. This is why, in both rental and ownership scenarios, it is helpful to ensure that IZ units are owned by non-profit housing providers. In the case of Habitat for Humanity, the charitable organization holds the mortgage and can ensure affordability for a household in need for the long term.

According to the City of Hamilton's Land Needs Assessment, there are an estimated 51,540 row houses and apartments that will be built between 2021 and 2051. If 5% of all these new units were subject to inclusionary zoning, that would represent a total of 2,577 new affordable units over 30 years. This is nowhere near enough to fill the need for mid-market affordable housing, much less the 5,716 households on the City's wait list for community housing.

According to CHEC, Hamilton has lost 29 affordable rental units for every 1 new affordable rental unit added, representing a loss of approximately 1,900 social housing units over the last 22 years. Any increase in social housing must also recognize the importance of preserving the stock of existing affordable housing. If we fail to look at both sides of the equation, we will continue to bail water out of a leaking boat.

The redevelopment of Pier 8 in Hamilton, known as Waterfront Shores, includes 5% affordable ownership units. These are constructed by the developer, and then turned over to Habitat for

Humanity. The charity holds mortgages with payment terms according to residents' ability to pay, at no more than 30% of income.

Inclusionary Zoning approaches the affordability crisis from the opposite angle as cross-subsidies. Most notably implemented in Vienna, Austria, cross-subsidies fund affordable units by adding above-market-average units in the same building. As a whole, the building's operational budget breaks even without the need for outside funding. With IZ, we ask "How much of a market-rate building can we subsidize without affecting profit?", whereas cross-subsidies ask, "How can we incorporate higher-rent units to support the required quantity of social housing?"

The City of Hamilton's Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee published a report on October 27, 2022, about IZ along the LRT Corridor. Looking at examples in the United States, the committee recommends the implementation of a housing coalition, a forum for negotiation; and incremental enactments, first in the B-Line area then to the city at large. Access to low- and medium-income households, as well as accessible units, are a priority. It also identifies the need to "create a housing action coalition, including but not limited to developers, community organizations, neighbourhood groups, environmentalists, low-income housing activists, and local businesses."

Inclusionary zoning is less useful in areas where developers would need to apply for increased height and density to achieve transit-oriented development. That is to say, municipalities should upzone an area to allow more density as-of-right before implementing IZ.

In Hamilton, the properties immediately adjacent to the B-Line have been upzoned, but other properties within walking distance to stations still have low-density former zoning restrictions. If a developer needs to apply for a rezoning for increased density, reduced parking, or to change the allowed land use, Inclusionary Zoning becomes yet another "expense" to account for in the development's pro-forma and may tip the balance against a viable project, reducing the ability to use IZ as a tool for capturing value uplift.

Globally, we see that larger and hotter real estate markets can support more IZ rates. It is therefore irresponsible for the province to specify a cap of 5%, when places like downtown Toronto, and many of the growth centres in the GGH could support much higher rates. This limitation pushes affordable housing out to areas with less infrastructure, transit service, and social supports, thereby encouraging sprawl with all its attendant fiscal and environmental problems.

When the City of Toronto looked at the financial impacts of different IZ rates, it found that locking in a 25-year commitment to affordability would reduce the land value of the site by 20 to 30%, while mandating affordability in perpetuity would only produce an additional negative land value impact of 1% to 3%.

As Ontario's Bill 23 limits IZ to a maximum rate of 5%, one way that municipalities could help preserve existing affordable homes is to pursue aggressive upzoning: by requiring that the minimum number of units on a lot is at least 20 times the current number. Therefore, 5%

inclusionary zoning could ensure no loss of affordable units in theory. However, this approach may discourage mid-rise and small-scale intensification. This is an unfortunate situation where the provincial government's extreme hampering of inclusionary zoning rates requires a similarly extreme zoning reform to counteract the potential loss of housing. It also speaks to the limits of zoning and land use planning alone as tools that municipalities can use in the effort to maintain affordable housing.

6.2 Legalizing gentle density

Secondary suites, and up to 3 units in an existing dwelling, are now permitted by the Province's policy changes in Bill 23. The Province should expand this rule to allow for 3 units as-of-right in multiple buildings on the same lot, not only within an existing building envelope. This restriction has the perverse effect of encouraging the splitting up of family-sized units into 1-bedroom and bachelor suites, which is the same market of residents served by the majority of new construction. Without further amendments, this policy may have the effect of actually reducing the choice of family-sized units for residents in Hamilton's growing and desirable neighbourhoods.

Bill 23 also exempts residential buildings with 10 units or less from site plan control. For smaller projects, regulatory certainty is a must, as smaller builders do not have the money to fight an appeal or change their development concept to the same degree as a larger-scale project would.

To help speed up the planning approvals process and reduce neighbourhood opposition to development, municipalities could explore creating pre-approved designs (e.g. massing plans and site plans) that are vetted by city staff and community groups in advance of a development occurring. This could allow a developer to proceed directly to the building permit stage if they choose a pre-approved design.

For non-profit housing providers, especially those that enter into funding agreements with the municipality to provide affordable housing, the lack of in-house development expertise is a limiting factor. Municipalities could build in-house capacity to help facilitate the creation of site plans for these housing providers.

Upzoning low-density neighbourhoods can provide more missing middle housing options. These solutions typically target the middle- and higher-income earners who are unable to qualify for a mortgage due to bidding wars and constrained supply in desirable neighbourhoods. However, upzoning on its own does not necessarily target lower-income residents. It must be paired with right-of-return policies and Inclusionary Zoning or other measures to ensure affordable rents post-redevelopment.

6.3 Cost of parking

The cost to build one parking spot can be anywhere from \$30,000 to \$80,000. Reducing parking requirements in a holistic way, through parking sharing agreements and even setting maximum parking rates, is key to affordability.

Habitat for Humanity Hamilton built a townhouse project with 8 units on Niagara Street. If parking requirements had been waived, or if a parking sharing agreement was reached with neighbouring properties, 11 units could have been provided.

The West End Homebuilders Association recommends eliminating parking requirements along Major Transit Lines and in MTSAs, as well as in the downtown area.

A map of underutilized space in Hamilton produced in 2021 by volunteers, and published on the Downtown Sparrow website, shows that there are over 3,300 acres of underutilized space in the city — many of which are parking lots.

Efforts to eliminate parking should be paired with mechanisms for the city to ensure that the cost savings are actually passed on to create affordability; or that the additional units created by the freed-up land area be dedicated to affordable units in agreements registered on title. Even if this goes beyond what the municipality can require of most private landowners, this could be achieved by establishing higher standards for affordability on publicly-owned land.

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Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- Remove the cap of 5% and 25 years on municipal IZ policies.
- Require IZ agreements to be registered on title, to ensure permanent affordability. This could include ensuring that IZ units be sold or donated to a registered charity.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Given the small 5% cap on dwellings eligible for Inclusionary Zoning, a portion of these units should be subject to deeper affordability targeted to incomes at the 30th percentile.
- Pursue aggressive upzoning and right-of-return policies in tandem with Inclusionary Zoning in currently-affordable neighbourhoods, to ensure that no loss of affordable housing occurs as a result of redevelopment.
- Create a housing action coalition as recommended by the Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee.
- Enable parking sharing agreements to reduce the need for new parking infrastructure for affordable homes.
- Explore opportunities for new housing that incorporates a mix of incomes so that projects can operate via cross-subsidies without the need for external funding.

7 Development Charges and Community Benefits Charges

Development Charges (DCs) have been used as an effective way to compel federal funding into Hamilton from other levels of government. The co-investment fund, for example, would allow the federal government to match funding in the amount of DCs waived by the municipality.

The Hamilton is Home coalition approached the city in 2022 to ask for a waiver of Development Charges to build 3000 apartments in the next three years. When approached with this coordinated ask, the city refused to forgo the Development Charges.

Ontario's Bill 23 eliminates DCs for non-profit housing. The federal government should continue to recognize these waived fees as part of the municipal contribution toward the co-investment fund. The infrastructure and public realm costs of development still need to be paid by the city, so although they are not allowed to collect funds from non-profit and affordable developments, it should still be counted as a municipal contribution for the purposes of matching grants.

The advent of Bill 23, and the corresponding reduction in Development Charges and Parkland Dedication Fees, requires municipalities to re-assess their revenue tools. Hamilton should remove the following non-statutory exemptions to its CBC bylaw:

- Downtown Hamilton CIPA reduction (40% discount on CBCs payable)
- Residential Facility or Lodging House reduction (50% discount on CBCs payable)

Arbitrarily reducing the eligible CBC collected, which applies to new buildings that typically house higher income households, will create an undue burden on Hamilton's general tax base, worsening the effects of rising cost-of-living for residents in existing buildings.

A City of Hamilton staff report on CBCs shows that collecting the maximum eligible amount of charges is still insufficient to fund the CBC-eligible expenses in the City's capital program. If the City chooses to continue with further non-statutory exemptions, it will worsen this imbalance. (Report FCS22015 (b), p. 58)

The report also shows that there will be an estimated 3,235 units built over the next ten years that will be eligible for CBCs inside the Downtown Secondary Plan area. This represents land value of \$76,299,000. If the 40% CIPA exemption is maintained, this could result in a loss of revenue of \$1.22 million. (Report FCS22015 (b), Table 5)

Seeing as the CBC reserve fund is projected to have a \$5-million shortfall, removing the CIPA exemption could make a significant contribution to balancing that budget.

Bill 23 removes Housing Services as eligible for DC collection. The City should re-assess its DC bylaw to reflect this reality, and not forgo revenue that it is entitled to by issuing extra exemptions.

The City should also amend its DC bylaw to remove Development Charge exemptions in the downtown CIPA area.

Exemptions in development fees in downtown areas arise from a sense that the market must be given incentives to build in this area. However, Hamilton's downtown is a hot real estate market, spurred on by the recent public investment in light rail transit. The municipality does not need to forgo revenue unnecessarily to attract development. Other factors, such as national interest rates, are more likely to predict real estate activity than development fees.

There is no justification in the CBC Strategy, or the associated staff report as to why the 40% exemption for properties within the Downtown CIPA is necessary, other than to indicate that it aligns with the DC bylaw. Considering the removal of regulations and speeding up of timelines ushered in by the Province, the more permissive zoning along the B-Line corridor, and the significant public investment in the B-Line LRT, this exemption is not necessary to catalyze development in Hamilton's downtown.

As for the 50% reduction for residential facilities or lodging houses, the city should consider alternative means of encouraging these housing forms, such as increased program funding or rent supplements, to ensure the financial benefit is passed on to the tenants of these housing forms, rather than benefitting the landowner alone.

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Recommendations: Government of Canada

- The federal government should count mandatory Development Charge exemptions towards the municipal contribution for matching grants, such as the National Housing Strategy's co-investment fund.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Remove all non-essential exemptions to Community Benefits Charges, and remove the Development Charge exemption for the downtown CIPA area.
- Implement area-rating for Development Charges to encourage redevelopment within existing built-up areas where infrastructure already exists.

8 Housing Sustainability & Investment Roadmap

A report passed by Hamilton City Council on August 11, 2022, sets expectations for the ongoing Housing Stability & Investment Roadmap (HSIR): “report quarterly on prioritized actions underway and overall plan progress, and by end of Q2, 2023, bring forward a draft of the Housing Sustainability and Investment Plan”.

This plan is structured to avoid placing the burden on the City itself for being the primary actor responding to the housing crisis, instead declaring that, “Given the current financial pressures at all levels of government, the exponential increase in residential land values, home resale values, lack of affordable housing, increased materials and labour costs, supply chain delays, there is an urgency for all parties to collaborate and identify and act on opportunities to drive positive change.” This too-broad focus waters down the urgency for the City of Hamilton to identify quick actions that it can accomplish.

The report goes on to state, “this Plan is not about targeting a single population demographic but improving the housing continuum across the entire spectrum.” Having such an expansive mandate will mean that the most difficult problems — affordability for the lowest-income Hamiltonians, efforts such as reversing the loss of publicly-owned social housing, and funding new opportunities such as Land Trusts — risks being easier to ignore.

An update was presented to the Emergency & Community Services Committee on December 1st, 2022. It recognizes the need to prioritize actions, and sets out an objective for creating an evidence-based assessment and gap analysis of actions to support the following goals:

- Creating new affordable housing
- Acquiring and retaining existing affordable housing
- Delivering appropriate supports

While all participants can agree that different approaches are required to meet these differing goals, the update does not adequately address the potential for conflict between them. For example, CityHousing Hamilton has divested itself of smaller buildings in its portfolio to reduce its operational overhead. It has engaged in partnerships with third-party housing providers in redeveloping CityHousing properties, handing over ownership of public land in the process. As a public entity, CityHousing Hamilton and The City of Hamilton should recognize that they have a unique ability to use public land and municipal financing tools (i.e. bonds, lower interest rates) to build their in-house capacity for growth and service excellence over the long term. The current approach appears to be rooted in a sense of limited capacity.

In April 2023, the City passed a motion to allocate \$5.7 million to repair a backlog of 476 CityHousing units by December 2024. The HSIR should chart a path forward for sustainable funding of maintenance so these backlogs do not accumulate in the future.

As a result of Bill 23, up to 3 units are permitted as-of-right on a residential lot. CityHousing should re-evaluate its strategy of selling off single-family homes in light of this potential for gentle density on its low-rise properties.

The HSIR report briefly mentions assets, but does not distinguish between public and private assets, and falsely puts the municipality on the same level as community partners. Municipalities have more tools at their disposal and should see their role as central to solving the housing crisis.

There are considerable gaps in funding available to bring building standards to a fully functioning level in CityHousing buildings. To go beyond “plugging holes” and actually improve quality of life with investments such as air conditioning, feels out of reach for CityHousing staff.

While some maintenance has been provided on CityHousing vacant units through a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, This is a drop in the bucket as only 7 homes have been repaired through this partnership with support from students and volunteer labour.

In Waterloo, Supportive Housing of Waterloo a building at 144 Erb St E was successfully maintained as affordable housing through NHS and City Contributions, the building was sold to a supportive housing charity with an agreement on title that the existing tenants would not be displaced or have their rents increased beyond the annual guideline amount for a period of at least 2 years.

Affordable housing providers are exiting the market, and for some it may be too late. Most of the funding terms expire after 20 years. The City should review all of its agreements and understand the risk of providers exiting the market in the near and medium term, so that we can use new agreements or find willing buyers to lock in affordable housing.

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Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Immediately stop the sale of any City-owned land pending the outcome of recommendations from the HSIR and the April 7th, 2022 strategic plan to secure land for affordable housing along Hamilton’s future LRT line.
- In the HSIR, prioritize the use of public land, assets, and funds to build non-market housing.
- In the HSIR, prioritize the use of zoning reform, parking reform, and streamlined approvals to encourage market housing.

9 Land acquisition

The need for public land ownership is made more urgent by the fact that the Province, through Bill 23, Bill 184, and other measures, has hamstrung local governments' ability to collect development charges, community benefits charges, and regulate affordability and tenant protections in the private market. To go above and beyond the statutory minimums, municipalities should look to enforcing higher standards on land that it owns.

Public investment in major infrastructure project, like LRT, provide massive incentives for development and economic activity. At the same time, they cause a localized spike in land value, increasing the barriers for housing providers to participate.

While renewal and renovation efforts are important, we must also turn our attention to the fact that almost no new rental housing that is affordable to low- and moderate-income households has been built in the last 30 years. A robust land acquisition strategy is one way to spur new affordable developments.

Rather than considering land disposition, as CityHousing Hamilton has done in recent redevelopment projects, the City should consider a leasehold system based on public land leasing that allows for private-public partnership in the development of housing, while the City keeps ownership of the land asset and can use it as leverage for future financing.

Hamilton's Affordable Housing Funding Program was adopted in January 2023. It commits a \$4-million annual budget to create affordable housing opportunities. These funds, combined with other resources such as the Hamilton Future Fund, could be used as seed funding for RCFI contingencies, land acquisition for long-term leases, and other initiatives that help create affordable housing while maintaining a revolving fund that can grow into a large endowment over time.

Acquisition is one of the most challenging aspects for non-profit housing providers, and areas where people are being displaced are where the competition is most fierce. Some non-profit housing providers have found success in bidding on contaminated sites and then cleaning them up, but this presents uncertainty and additional risk related to the cost of environmental remediation.

The cost associated with Environmental Assessments and cleanup are major barriers to non-profit and affordable housing developers acquiring land. A land acquisition strategy should take these aspects into account and consider offering a fund to assist non-market housing providers in acquiring contaminated sites.

The Affordable Housing Challenge Project proposes "enacting a right-of-first-refusal policy that enables non-profit housing organizations to take on the stewardship of any affordable housing units built on surplus public land, with considered priority given to Indigenous-led organizations and other organizations serving equity-seeking groups".

Community Land Trusts are another non-profit model that could be used to serve the needs of the neighbourhood. They are an important, non-governmental, piece to the housing puzzle that

prioritizes resident leadership and independence. Cooperation with government could look like land transfers, assistance with the development process, and cooperation on funding requests to other levels of government.

A land acquisition strategy can ensure affordability before, during, and after redevelopment. When compared to other tools, like a land value tax, it presents less disruption for affordable commercial uses in low-density strip malls where important neighbourhood amenities are located. Tools like a land value tax create a strong upward pressure on residential and commercial rents in urban areas, and can make gentrification worse. Land acquisition makes it more likely that multiple public priorities can be solved at once.

Some non-profit housing agencies own significant land, which can be intensified. They should develop their own land acquisition and land use plans to see how they can approach infill development with minimal disruption to existing tenants.

An endowment, or Urban Wealth Fund, could be created in the style of Vancouver's Housing authority. It would pool assets and cash reserves together into one coordinated fund with the purpose of acquiring land and leveraging investment in affordable housing. This strategy prioritizes long-term financial stability and discourages selling off land. Revenue from land leases would be put back into the fund. While land leases prevent the non-profit leaseholders from building equity due to the land value uplift, this strategy could be paired with a commitment from the City to use the equity to direct more investment for those same agencies.

The City's ability to borrow at low interest rates gives it a particular advantage against market and non-profit developers. It should use this advantage to attract matching funds and enable financing to deserving projects.

When public services, such as housing or utilities, have their own dedicated income stream to cover debt servicing costs, they can be considered "self-supported debt", as distinct from "taxpayer-supported debt". This gives the ability for governments to massively expand social housing, without risking their credit rating. When the initial debt is eventually paid off, housing and the land on which it sits remains as a valuable asset that can be leveraged again to finance future projects.

A major factor in the success of the Putman Family YWCA, and the reason why it could be built so quickly, is that YWCA Hamilton already owned the land. With a combination of land assets, fundraising, reserves, and philanthropy, the organization was able to fund this project and build it within 3 years.

If YWCA Hamilton is to repeat this success, a missing piece of the puzzle is land. This is a situation where a revolving loan fund or land banking initiative can help. At a small rate of return, such as 3%, a revolving loan fund could enable non-profit and community organizations to access funding for buying land and building affordable housing.

Indwell has created supportive housing developments using co-investment from complementary municipal infrastructure, like a fire hall and library, inside a mixed-use

development in St. Thomas. Combining the cost of new infrastructure with a housing project helps save capital expenses in city departments and make better use of scarce land and funds. The City should look at further opportunities for integrating municipal facilities when evaluating housing projects.

9.1 Metrolinx-owned land in the B-Line corridor

Apart from city-owned land, there is a significant amount of land owned by Metrolinx in the B-Line corridor. While the land was purchased to make way for tracks, platforms, and other LRT infrastructure, there will be surplus portions of land left over once the project is built. This land represents a timely resource that could be used toward the provision of affordable housing. Unfortunately, Metrolinx does not have a good track record of prioritizing its surplus land for social good. Between January 2021 and September 2022, none of Metrolinx’s surplus land went toward affordable housing.

According to Ontario’s realty directive, Metrolinx does not need to offer surplus land to municipalities or eligible not-for-profits if the land is “not separately viable”. Under these circumstances the land may be sold to an adjacent property owner. This policy introduces a dangerous loophole where a minister can avoid circulation by declaring a property “not separately viable”. This determination of viability should come after all agencies are circulated and have a chance to comment, not before. The Province should also allow municipalities an appropriate runway of time to assemble financing before land is declared as surplus.

As municipalities are one of the first to have a claim to surplus land, they should also create policies that prioritize the acquisition of land for affordable housing, at below-market rates or for free.

In Toronto, residents rallied to obtain surplus land from Metrolinx as part of the Finch West expansion. Land that would have been vacant, adjacent to a transit operations facility, will now become a much-needed community hub. Through negotiations with the City, the Community Hub Organizing Committee, and Metrolinx, land has been transferred to the City at no cost. This shows that Metrolinx does have significant discretion in its ability to transfer surplus land for community benefit.

Organized communities are key to achieving something like a public disposition of land for community benefit. Royson James, writing in the *Toronto Star*, states: “The process is long and frustrating. But grassroots support forged from community consultations — while labour-intensive and laborious — will be the fuel that keeps the project alive when it inevitably butts up against obstacles such as lack of funding.”

The province’s 2022 Housing Affordability Task Force recommended the creation of an Affordable Housing Trust from a portion of Land Transfer Tax Revenue (i.e., the windfall resulting from property price appreciation) to be used in partnership with developers, non-profits, and municipalities in the creation of more affordable housing units. This Trust should create incentives for projects serving and brought forward by marginalized groups.

The task force also suggested that all future government land sales, whether commercial or residential, should have an affordable housing component of at least 20%.

* * *

Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- Broaden the criteria for declaring surplus land owned by Metrolinx, and consider the social benefit of land that is donated or sold at below-market rate to community groups, municipalities, and charities.
- Use a portion of the Land Transfer Tax to fund land acquisition for affordable housing.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Expand the scope of the Affordable Housing Funding Program to include a revolving loan for RCFI contingency, and for land acquisition for leasehold arrangements that go beyond the Province's minimum standards for affordability.
- Give first right of refusal for surplus public land to non-profit affordable housing providers and community land trusts.
- Adjust the terms of reference for the Affordable Housing Site Selection Committee to discourage divestment of land and pursue a system based on public land leases instead.
- Leverage budgets of all City departments, not just Housing Services, by seeking co-investment of affordable housing with other municipal infrastructure such as fire stations, paramedic stations, libraries, and community centres.
- Develop a strategic land acquisition fund to purchase land for affordable housing in anticipated Major Transit Station areas. This fund should seek to purchase land as early as possible in the planning process, before land values increase dramatically.

10 Displacement

Hamilton has a rapidly increasing rate of income inequality. This is a problem in many urban areas, but Hamilton's rate is increasing more than that of Toronto, Kitchener-Waterloo, and other cities in Ontario. Low-income residents cluster in the downtown, north, and east ends of the lower city. Affluent areas are clustered in the west end near McMaster University. The LRT will make it more desirable for high-income residents to move to new areas of the lower city and commute toward the university. This will put increased pressure on low-income residents of the lower city who will be competing with new arrivals for limited housing. So, it's important that we increase housing supply while ensuring that we don't lose existing affordable housing along the corridor.

To this end, Hamilton's Emergency & Community Services Committee approved a suite of recommendations on April 20, 2023. These include increasing the Tenant Defence Fund and expanding its eligibility to include tenants impacted by N12 notices. Staff have been asked to report back with further proposal to expand the Fund's scope and flexibility. Staff were also tasked with reporting back on a "full suite of options to halt renovations" including a landlord licensing model based on Toronto's RentSafeTO and a renovations by-law.

Tenants who are displaced in the B-Line corridor tend to look for temporary accommodation within the neighbourhood where possible, even if it means crashing on a friend's couch or accepting an apartment in worse condition than the one they left. There is a strong desire to stay in the neighbourhood.

Many forms of displacement, such as moving to a smaller home in the same neighbourhood, or moving in with roommates, are not able to be measured by statistics based on Census Tract boundaries. This is why displacement modelling must be augmented with observations from the services closest to those with lived experience of being forced out of their homes or communities.

Toronto's Tower Renewal Partnership has made strides in involving residents themselves in the process of rehabilitating apartment buildings. Resident perspectives on common areas and public space are valuable, however, "renewal" also means displacing tenants for renovations — no matter how inclusive the consultation process is, we risk carrying out renovation by another name. We must create conditions for residents to stay in place where possible and to maintain long-term affordability.

Any renewal, upgrades, or revitalization of existing affordable rental buildings should use practices such as renovating units piecemeal, working with the natural turnover rate of the building, and offering tenants renovated units at the same rent. Considering that upgrades to appliances, windows, and insulation can improve the operational costs of a building, and that other retrofits like removing lead paint are a landlord's responsibility to the health and safety of its tenants, revitalization should not be used as an excuse to increase rent for existing tenants.

In CityHousing Hamilton's Jamesville redevelopment, 91 RGI units were demolished, and 46 new ones were built on site. (A further 114 units operated by Indwell will be included on site at

rates of 50% below market average.) The remaining 45 CityHousing units are planned to be relocated to another site close by, in the Bay & Cannon area. In the meantime, residents have been relocated to other CityHousing Hamilton properties. Residents who were relocated may not want to be displaced twice; the years-long delay between being evicted and being rehoused can uproot communities. In this case, the temporary loss of social housing supply also served to worsen the backlog of CityHousing’s waiting list.

10.1 Displacement from Metrolinx-owned land

Metrolinx estimates 90 full property acquisitions are required to build the LRT, 30 of which are residential properties. In a 2019 project update to council, Metrolinx claimed that 55 residential units on 15 residential properties had been acquired so far, with 66 residents needing support. It is unclear how many residents left without obtaining support. While Metrolinx mentions that 15 of these units were unoccupied, more investigation is required to understand whether tenants were displaced by former landlords, legally or illegally, prior to the sale.

Metrolinx’s financial assistance includes “assistance to tenants for the direct costs associated with the mutual termination of a lease.” This is a lower standard than the tenant support standards advocated for by organizations such as ACORN Hamilton. More information is needed about whether tenants were able to be relocated to a home in the same neighbourhood at similar rent, if they so choose.

King Street Tenants United estimates the total number of impacted residential units is 180, not 55. They estimate that a displaced tenant would pay an increase of \$379-\$706 per month. They said, “Given that Hamilton has an apartment vacancy rate of 3.1%, it’s hard to believe that 27.3% of apartments purchased by Metrolinx had been sitting vacant for a long time prior to purchase.”

10.3 Tenant protections and rental licensing

Recently, Ontario has struck down rental replacement bylaws in cities such as Ottawa. Without the ability to regulate renovictions, municipalities will have to find other ways to support tenants. This could include increasing funding to paralegal clinics, proactively investigating non-compliant landlords, and informing tenants of their options to fight against illegal evictions.

Practices such as buyouts (e.g., cash for keys), illegal eviction notices, renovictions and demovictions are common and poorly tracked. Municipalities can also inform residents of their rights with public education campaigns in local media and on public transit.

In 2020, Ontario’s Bill 184 introduced several changes to the Residential Tenancies Act that should be reversed. The province could introduce new legislation including:

- Restoring the right to a full eviction hearing for tenants who are unable to fulfil repayment agreements
- Revoking the ability of landlords to bring former tenants before the Landlord Tenant Board

- Revoking the ability to deem illegal rent increases as legal after 12 months

Rapid Rehousing programs often arrive too late in the cycle to prevent eviction. Stronger eviction prevention and rent stability programs could help provide an upstream intervention.

ACORN Hamilton has suggested the following standards to protect tenants: a strong tenant assistance and rental replacement policy that includes responsibilities for landlords to help tenants find new accommodation, financial support for moving, and the right to return to the redeveloped unit at the same rent and the same number of bedrooms. They advocate for a rental replacement ratio of 1:1, or 30% of the units in the new building, whichever is larger.

Expanding portable housing allowances is another measure that could help tenants navigate an unfair housing system, especially when renovations and demovictions are so prevalent. As of 2021, only 1,416 households benefit from rent supplements and housing allowances in Hamilton. This does not include the Residential Care Facilities Subsidy Program which offers supportive housing.

Rent supplements can help tenants whose rent-to-income ratio is creeping up and ensuring that they are able to stay in their neighbourhood, before they require more serious housing interventions or complex supports.

New rentals that arise from the secondary market of condos result in less tenant security, more turnover, and create a situation where investors are competing with people who want to own a home to live in.

Some cities have introduced landlord registries or landlord licensing programs. Montreal's landlord registry requires disclosure of information such as how much rent is being charged. However, the registry does not include all housing types. Toronto's RentSafeTO is a more proactive model, which includes accountability measures for responding to tenant service requests, and maintenance of property standards.

Reflecting on LRT-related displacement and gentrification in Waterloo Region, Doucet (2021) observes: "While legally, tenants have the right to return to their units at the same rents after renovation, many are not aware of this, and by the time they realize their options, the units are already rented."

Patterns of demoviction, especially in apartment buildings, result in the demolition of family-sized units to accommodate more bachelor and 1-bedrooms, or conversely, the demolition of small units to combine and re-shape them as larger upmarket rentals. In both of these scenarios, the resident cannot return to the same unit they left because it no longer exists.

In Ottawa, a memorandum of understanding was reached with the redevelopment of Manor Park to secure tenant rights. The landlord agreed to provide affordable housing, which is defined using an income measure. Anti-displacement provisions ensure that current residents get ample notice of planned construction, that they have the right to relocate to a similar unit at the same or lesser rent in the case of their unit being under construction; and that moving costs will also be covered.

The Manor Park MOU is also notable for including a clause that commits to Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) of 10% even if the City’s IZ bylaw is not approved. Measures like this show a measure of good faith, and provides an example for municipalities to follow when they issue RFPs or enter into agreements with housing providers.

When it comes to preventing displacement of non-residential units such as neighbourhood commercial uses and community spaces, we can take inspiration from the Parkdale Community Benefits Framework. It sets out standards for “mom and pop” retail stores and community spaces, proposing that these are made available with smaller unit sizes and at affordable rents. The framework describes the need for fine-grained square footage requirements for commercial elements of new buildings, rather than having one large commercial space that is inaccessible to most prospective tenants. Rent subsidies could also be explored to help shops that would otherwise be displaced afford to locate in new redevelopments in their existing neighbourhood.

In Hamilton, the Putman Family YWCA integrates its programming with a childcare centre across the street that is also operated by the YWCA. They are also creating a women's entrepreneurship centre, a senior’s centre, a makerspace, and a space for young people to study and have a homework club.

* * *

Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- The province should reinstate rent control for all buildings, and tie annual rent increase guidelines to changes in incomes for renter households (not to inflation).
- Require a 1:1 replacement of units at the current size and rent in new developments.
- Explore property tax incentives to ensure existing businesses and community uses have an option to return to spaces at a similar size and rent.
- Reverse anti-tenant provisions in Bill 184, including restoring the right to a full eviction hearing, revoking the ability of landlords to bring former tenants before the Board, and revoking the ability to legalize illegal rent increases after 12 months have passed.
- Expand the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program eligibility to capture those impacted by the recent closure of the Social Infrastructure Fund Housing Allowance.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- Ensure the Hamilton Housing Benefit meets the criteria for 30% of a tenant’s income, not just an average market value.

- Embed anti-displacement policies in all MOUs and RFPs.
- Establish a landlord registry and licensing regime to prevent demolition-by-neglect and to ensure adequate living standards in all rental buildings
- Improve data collection through the rapid rehousing program to identify localized patterns of displacement within neighbourhoods.
- Increase funding to legal clinics assisting tenants with displacement-related issues.

11 Transit access

Community consultation detailed in the “Community Benefits for Hamilton LRT” paper from April 2022 specifies access to LRT from across the entire city as one of the most important ideas mentioned most often from workshop participants. Detailed design items such as crosswalks, bike locks, bus shelters, were identified as well as higher-order improvements such as comprehensive snow clearing and complete network coverage of all neighbourhoods.

For public transit to succeed at helping make someone’s life more affordable, in terms of allowing them to live without the costs associated with car ownership, that transit must be convenient, reliable, and go to the places where people’s commuting destinations and daily errands are.

A report from Environment Hamilton notes that the overlap between good transit service and low-income neighbourhoods is “fortuitous”, and that it is not guaranteed to continue overlapping with the areas of highest need (i.e., lowest income). Income levels are something that HSR should look at intentionally when designing a transit network that serves those who need it most.

The need for this proactive approach to transit service is evident as we see that the number of low-income residents is rising faster in upper Hamilton and outlying areas than in the lower city. Without convenient, reliable transit access, these residents will suffer even sharper effects of income inequality as the lack of public transit forces them to spend more money on transportation than if they were able to live in the lower City.

A study of transit use during 2020 showed that, as pandemic restrictions took hold, transit use declined most among high-income residents, while low-income residents continued to rely on transit. This illustrated that low-income residents may not have other convenient or affordable transportation options. Also, it shows that cuts to service will disproportionality impact low-income residents.

While the introduction of LRT will necessitate a reorientation of the bus network to efficiently feed into LRT stops, there is a need for HSR to examine ease of trips across its entire transit network, not just the B-Line, to determine how it can best serve lower-income communities all across Hamilton and their employment destinations.

Residents in supportive housing become connected with employment opportunities that are spread out across the entire city. Employers in retail, catering, and manufacturing are not necessarily on frequent transit lines or concentrated in major nodes. Creating a transit network with better coverage is an effort to increase accessibility and address inequality. HSR should leverage the new LRT to create a “spine” that connects seamlessly with a frequent grid network of transit lines.

According to Environment Hamilton, “ridership “has been steadily decreasing” and hundreds of hours of bus service has been cancelled due insufficient demand”. These service cuts threaten to exacerbate income inequality by basing a network design on demand, rather than access. We

do not expect roads to pay for themselves; we should similarly not expect the transit network to create net revenue for the City if it means reducing access to opportunity for our residents.

Transit access is also a question of disability justice. Buses and LRT trains can accommodate wheelchairs and those with physical disabilities. But if the schedule is reduced, trips become less convenient, transit stops are not maintained in winter, or if the sidewalks to and from the stop are not cleared, we are failing as a community to uphold the principles of universal access.

During the construction of Waterloo Region's LRT, residents in Kitchener's Traynor-Vanier neighbourhood found their pedestrian access to adjacent commercial and employment destinations cut off by the new light rail transit line. While pitched as a way to improve active transportation, the project failed to consider the needs of pedestrians in one of the city's lower-income neighbourhoods.

This also happened in Waterloo's Conestoga station, the transit line's north terminus, where only one access point to the station platform was constructed, forcing many pedestrians into a significant detour to use the train.

* * *

Recommendations: Government of Ontario

- Establish neighbourhood liaisons to proactively identify issues related to quality of life and service continuity during the construction phase of major transit projects.

Recommendations: City of Hamilton

- In transit network planning, prioritize coverage and access to low-income neighbourhoods and neighbourhood commercial nodes, not only major employment areas with high ridership.
- Work with neighbourhoods immediately adjacent to LRT stops to ensure active transportation infrastructure is well-designed and maintained all year round.

12 Conclusion

The affordable housing crisis is a multi-faceted problem with many different causes. We can point to the financialization of real estate, exclusionary zoning, the hollowing out of social supports, the loss of rent control, the failure of wages to keep up with the cost of living, and changes to development fees, among other causes. The patterns of gentrification and displacement around major transit stations are also complex.

As multiple levels of government with overlapping areas of jurisdiction seek to tackle this issue, there is a tendency to prioritize planning, coordination, and strategizing over action. Governments are cautious of taking action without first securing partnerships with other levels of government, the non-profit sector, or private developers. This approach to the housing crisis has generated some success, but it fails to meet the scale of the problem, especially for low-income residents. The biggest threat right now is the opportunity cost of delay, as Hamilton's housing market heats up and the LRT construction progresses, as tenants are displaced and the emergency shelter system is strained for capacity.

This report presents 55 recommendations. They all work toward the same goal, but they do not require governments to work together. They can be implemented today by public servants and political leaders who understand the urgency of the housing crisis, and the value of public assets.

In 2011, I presented recommendations for preserving affordability in the B-Line corridor. Had the City of Hamilton implemented tools like tax increment financing and land banking 12 years ago, it would be better positioned to meet the affordable housing needs of residents in the B-Line corridor.

While comprehensive multi-stakeholder strategies are necessary to a long-term solution to this housing crisis, they should not be used as an excuse to delay.

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Affordable Housing in Hamilton's B-Line Corridor

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August 2011

29 August 2011

To Whom It May Concern:

This report, entitled “Affordable Housing in Hamilton’s B-Line Corridor”, was prepared as co-op work term report for the City of Hamilton. I was employed as an Assistant Transportation Planner in Hamilton’s Rapid Transit section. The rapid transit team is working closely with Nodes & Corridors Planning staff, which allows for the joint development of transportation and land use planning as the B-Line rapid transit project moves forward. The purpose of this report is to explore the tools that may be most useful for preserving affordability in the housing market around a new rapid transit line.

This report represents my sole opinion. It does not reflect the views of the City of Hamilton, nor should it be interpreted as a staff recommendation.

I would like to thank the following people for their assistance during the research phase:

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- Paul Johnson and Vimal Sarin, for their valuable insight into Hamilton’s current affordable housing market.

Should you wish to contact me with any questions or comments regarding this report, please send an email to skinabi@uwaterloo.ca.

Sincerely,

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Summary

The purpose of this report is to identify tools that may be useful for preserving the affordability of housing amid rising land value in Hamilton's B-Line corridor. The B-Line is identified as a primary corridor in Hamilton's Official Plan, meaning that it is a preferred location for increased density, population growth, and increased transit service.

Hamilton is currently planning for rapid transit in the B-Line, which will bring many social benefits to the residents that live in the immediate influence area. However, the proximity to rapid transit is very likely to raise rents and property taxes, potentially displacing low- and moderate-income households. Hamilton is in need of policy tools to preserve the current affordable housing stock and ensure that new development provides affordable options.

This report examines housing affordability from a land-use planning perspective at the local level. The current policy environment, demographic statistics, and housing market data are analyzed to determine which strategies might be most useful for the different sections of the corridor.

Case studies of other North American cities are discussed, so as to judge their applicability for Hamilton.

Due to Hamilton's current "cold" investment climate, it is recommended to pursue development incentives such as tax abatements, unbundling of parking, and an

acquisition fund to encourage development, especially the redevelopment of surface parking lots in the Downtown.

As the market heats up, Hamilton will be in a position to use more aggressive methods to ensure affordable housing such as inclusionary zoning and tax increment financing. These tools must be in place as early as possible, to ensure that Hamilton is well-equipped to preserve affordability when investment in the B-Line begins to accelerate.

1 Introduction

This report is based on the following premise: it is important that affordable housing be served by rapid transit to provide reliable access to jobs, services and amenities. The demographic groups that most need affordable housing (e.g. New Canadians, low-income households, and fixed-income seniors) are also those that will benefit the most from rapid transit.

Often, the announcement of a new rapid transit line, especially if it is the first rapid transit line in a city, causes rents and property taxes to increase due to a speculative rise in land value. Such an increase in housing costs may prevent low and moderate households from staying in their homes. Also, it may make the construction of new affordable housing less likely. (Thorne-Lyman et al., 2008)

There are many ways to approach the affordability problem that rapid transit can create. One way is on the demand side: by providing income supplements, tax credits and grants, households that would otherwise be priced out of the market can afford to live close to transit. This report will not explore these demand-side methods. The focus will instead be on the land-use planning and policy tools that can be used to maintain and increase the *supply* of affordable housing near rapid transit.

In Hamilton, as in all Ontario municipalities, affordable housing is a responsibility shared by multiple levels of government, though municipalities are the front-line service providers. (Keys to the Home, 2004) As later sections of this report will

explain, much of a municipality's capacity to ensure an adequate affordable housing supply is related to the amount of provincial and federal funding available.

This report provides recommendations to the City of Hamilton's Nodes and Corridors Planning staff, for the purpose of guiding the integration of affordable housing policies in the B-Line Corridor Secondary Plan. However, as this report's findings may prove useful to staff in a range of departments, from Planning to Public Works to Housing and beyond, it is intended to reach a broad audience that may not be familiar with technical terms. To this end, terms that may be unclear have been defined in the Definitions section.

1.1 Assumptions

It should be noted that while the future of light rail transit (LRT) in Hamilton is uncertain, the B-Line corridor is a defined primary corridor in the Hamilton Urban Official Plan. Primary corridors are the focus areas for intensification, population growth, and increased transit service in the City of Hamilton. These areas are intended to be pedestrian-friendly, transit-oriented, dense, and vibrant places. (Council-Adopted Urban Hamilton Official Plan, 2009)

At the provincial level, two major reports (MoveOntario 2020 and The Big Move) have identified the B-Line as a major rapid transit corridor. In its Benefits Case Analysis, Metrolinx identified LRT as the mode of rapid transit that would bring the most benefits to the B-Line. (Hamilton King-Main Rapid Transit Benefits Case, 2010) Hamilton city council also directed staff to focus on LRT in Phase 2 of the Rapid

Transit Feasibility Study. (Rapid Transit Feasibility Study - Public Consultation Update, 2008) Therefore, although council has yet to make a final decision on the preferred mode of rapid transit on the B-Line, the projections and assumptions in this report will be based on LRT.

It is also assumed that when LRT is confirmed for the B-Line, the investment climate will change dramatically from a largely “cold” market to a “hot” market, enabling a wider array of tools for maintaining affordability.

2 Policy Environment

The summaries in this section explain how this report fits in with the larger policy goals of the Federal Government, Provincial Government, and the City of Hamilton.

2.1 Provincial Policy Statement

The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement affirms the need for "establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households". Furthermore, planning authorities are required to facilitate "all forms of housing required to meet the social, health and well-being requirements of current and future residents, including special needs requirements". Higher densities should be encouraged, in order to "support the use of alternative transportation modes and public transit in areas where it exists or is to be developed". (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

These provisions give strong support for the inclusion of affordable housing near rapid transit, so as to maximize the social benefits for those residents.

2.2 MoveOntario 2020

A precursor to The Big Move, MoveOntario 2020 identified Hamilton's B-Line as a rapid transit corridor with expanded service by 2020. This plan, which included rapid transit projects across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, was intended to

be fully funded by the provincial and federal governments. However, that funding arrangement has since lapsed. (Office of the Premier, 2007)

2.3 The Big Move: Regional Transportation Plan

This report, which was published in 2008, identified five rapid transit corridors in Hamilton, including the B-Line (from McMaster University to Eastgate Mall). The City of Hamilton used these five lines to create the City's "BLAST" network, a plan for the expansion of rapid transit over 25 years. The B-Line is the first priority of this plan, and is intended to be completed within 15 years.

2.4 Provincial & Federal Affordable Housing Funding

Upper levels of government are the largest financial contributors to affordable housing in Hamilton. Very few affordable housing projects are realized without funding from upper tiers of government.

Both federal & provincial governments have contributed funding to various affordable housing programs in Hamilton, including the Hamilton Affordable Housing Partnership Initiative (HAHPI) and the Community Rental Housing Program. (Housing Support Programs for the Development of Affordable Housing, City of Hamilton, 2011)

In 2002, the Community Rental Housing Program received \$489.42 million from provincial and federal governments, which leveraged the construction of 159 new affordable units. In 2005, a further \$15.25 million was committed for the City of

Hamilton under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Agreement. Hamilton saw 162 new affordable rental units as a result of this investment. (Housing Support Programs for the Development of Affordable Housing, City of Hamilton, 2011)

The Ontario Government has also promised new funding that will, if re-elected, be allocated to affordable housing initiatives throughout the province. Details of such funding are currently unavailable. (Sarin, 2011)

2.5 Hamilton Housing Policy

Hamilton spends \$32 to \$33 million annually on subsidized housing, mostly through CityHousing Hamilton, the City's affordable housing agency. (Keys to the Home, 2004)

CityHousing Hamilton has recently sold 90 of its rental units to tenants, thereby converting some rental units to affordable ownership units. This has the benefit of stability for the residents in CityHousing's buildings that wish to own their home. It also provides a source of revenue for CityHousing. To replenish the rental supply for the approximately 3,000 people on the waiting list for rental units, CityHousing plans to construct 2 new units for each one that has been sold. This is an ambitious but necessary plan, as no new rental housing has been constructed in the B-Line by CityHousing over the last 18 years. (Sarin, 2011)

The City of Hamilton waives development charges for new affordable residential developments that qualify for federal or provincial funding. New construction

under the Community Rental Housing Program, for example, would qualify for an exemption from development charges. (Keys to the Home, 2004)

2.5.1 Keys to the Home

Hamilton adopted this housing strategy in 2005, which lays out broad policy goals for affordability. It makes a number of recommendations, including the need for policies on the following topics: condominium conversions, maintenance of Hamilton's dwelling stock, intensification, housing supply, accessory apartments, and development costs. The report states: "Official Plan policies should articulate the concept of an affordable housing continuum and the objective to facilitate the provision of a wide range of housing forms to meet the diverse housing needs of current and future Hamilton residents of all backgrounds and lifestyles." (Keys to the Home, 2004)

Since the adoption of this policy, some progress has been made on these objectives. The New Hamilton Urban Official Plan includes provisions for as-of-right accessory apartments, an initiative that will vastly increase the availability of legal affordable housing in the city, while ensuring the safety and security of tenants. Construction costs are the single largest barrier to investment development, causing lagging investment in the B-Line (Johnson, 2011). As for condominium conversions, Hamilton has not yet enforced a distinct policy. The issue of condo conversions has not been particularly harmful to affordability in the B-Line, mainly due to the high vacancy rate in the city. (CMHC Rental Market Report, Hamilton and Brantford CMAs, 2010)

2.5.2 Council-Endorsed Social Assistance Report

In July 2011, Hamilton city council was presented with a report on the need for an evidence-based social assistance policy. Council approved a motion to encourage the provincial government to adjust social assistance benefits based on evidence, rather than ideology. (Wong, 2011) This signals a desire for council to provide adequate social assistance to its residents based on evidence, which suggests that a strategy for preserving affordable housing along the B-Line corridor would find support in council.

2.5.3 Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS)

This document breaks down the population projections that Hamilton must reach to fulfil its obligations under the provincial Places to Grow Act. The preferred growth strategy envisions a nodes and corridors structure that projects an additional 58,400 residential units within the existing urban boundary by 2031. 26,500 of these units are to be intensification developments. (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy: Growth Report, 2006)

This intensification target is within the possibility of current market conditions, as identified by Clayton Research. GRIDS reserves major nodes and corridors as the places where a majority of intensification should occur. The downtown node, which makes up a portion of the B-Line, is expected to absorb 10,000 of these new intensified residential units. (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy: Growth Report, 2006)

To improve the affordability of the corridor, aggressive policies to increase the supply of affordable units must be adhered to. The “hot” investment climate that LRT would bring to the B-Line would allow for the intensification targets to be met while including provisions for affordability.

2.5.4 Inclusionary Zoning and Density Bonusing

Inclusionary zoning and density bonusing are two approaches to encourage the development of affordable units in desirable housing markets.

Hamilton does not currently have an inclusionary zoning policy in place, and therefore cannot require a certain proportion of new residential units to be affordable. While Hamilton lacks this useful tool, new affordable units built with HAHPI funding are required to keep units affordable for a specified period of time – usually 20 years. (Sarin, 2011)

Density bonusing is possible in Hamilton, though it is not used currently because there is not enough market demand. Developers are very unlikely to exceed the city’s height limits, so there must first be a desire for dense construction before density bonusing becomes a viable tool for increasing the supply of affordable housing. (Johnson, 2011) The introduction of rapid transit in the B-Line could provide such a catalyst, seeing as property values are highly likely to rise with the introduction of LRT. (Pollack et al., 2010)

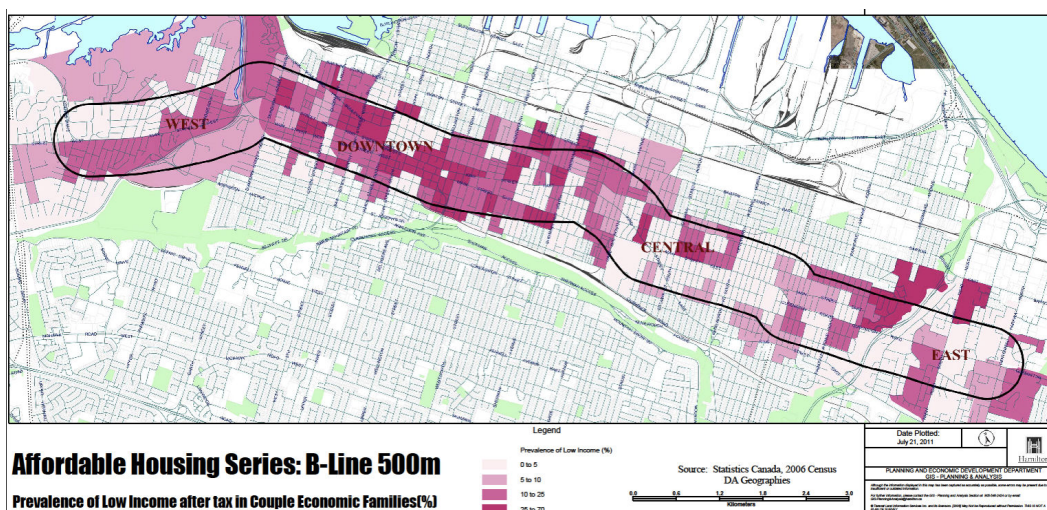
3 Impact of Affordable Housing on Ridership

Levels

Some of the literature that was reviewed for this report concluded that mixed-income (as opposed to fully market rent) transit-oriented development ensures stable ridership levels. This is based on the assumption that higher-income households are more likely to own personal vehicles, and therefore will use transit less often. (Austin et al., 2008)

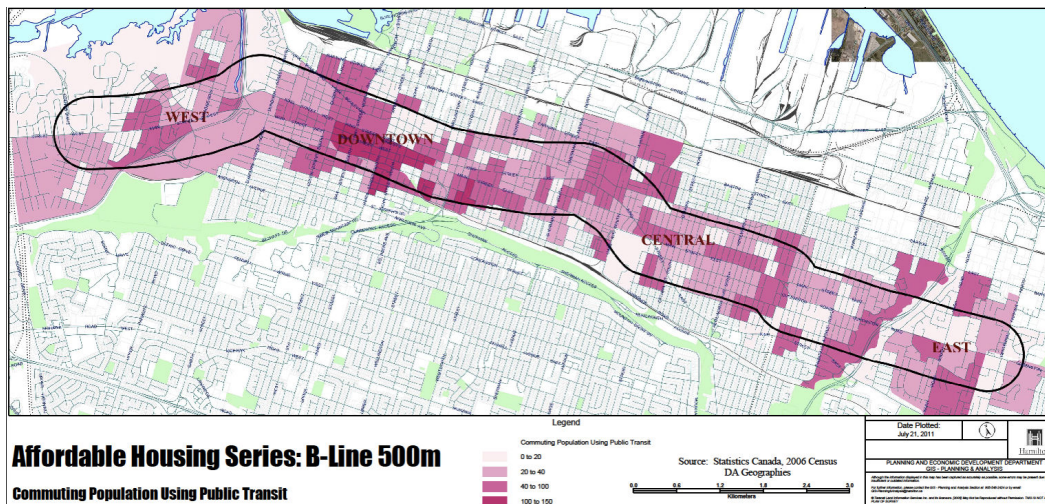
The conclusion drawn above seems to be supported by the congruency of spatial trends in income and public transit use in Hamilton, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2.

Figure 1: Spatial Distribution of Low Income in the B-Line



Source: City of Hamilton, Planning and Economic Development Department

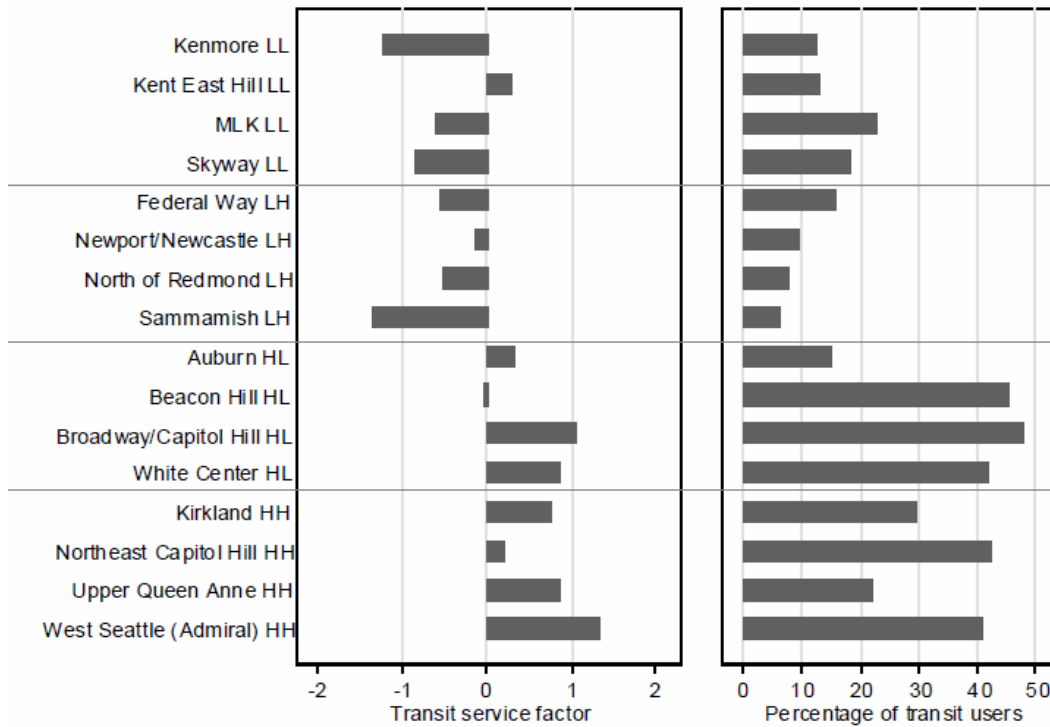
Figure 2: Spatial Distribution of Public Transit Use in the B-Line



Source: City of Hamilton, Planning and Economic Development Department

One might conclude that this spatial relationship is causal, but a study conducted at the University of British Columbia offers a different explanation: walkability as a lurking variable. A survey of Seattle neighbourhoods (Lachapelle, 2010) did identify a relationship between income level and transit use, but the correlation was only significant in neighbourhoods with low walkability, i.e. areas with a suburban street layout (Fig. 3). In neighbourhoods with high walkability (i.e. traditional street grid), levels of transit use between low- and high-income households were similar. As the B-Line corridor is generally a highly walkable area, the amount of affordable housing would not appear to significantly affect ridership levels.

Figure 3: The Effect of Income and Walkability on Transit Use



Note: LH: Low walkability and high income; HL: High walkability and low income; etc.

Source: Lachapelle, 2010

The City of Denver has experienced a similar trend that supports Lachapelle’s conclusion: Residents of that city’s walkable LoDo neighbourhood tend to drive less and use transit more often than residents in more suburban neighbourhoods, even though the proximity to transit may be identical. (Belzer, 2007)

From these studies, it can be concluded that affordable housing is not absolutely necessary to ensure high ridership along the B-Line. However, this fact does not mean that affordable housing should be relegated to transit-poor areas. The lower rates of vehicle ownership among low- and moderate-income households mean that they are necessarily more dependent on other modes of transportation, such as

public transit. Therefore, every effort should still be made to preserve the affordability of housing in the B-Line corridor.

4 B-Line Spatial Characteristics

The B-Line traverses the main east-west arterials of Hamilton's lower city – Main Street West, King Street, Main Street East, and Queenston Road (Fig. 4). While the neighbourhoods it travels through differ widely in character, they do have some things in common.

Figure 4: B-Line Corridor showing West, Downtown, Central, and East Sections



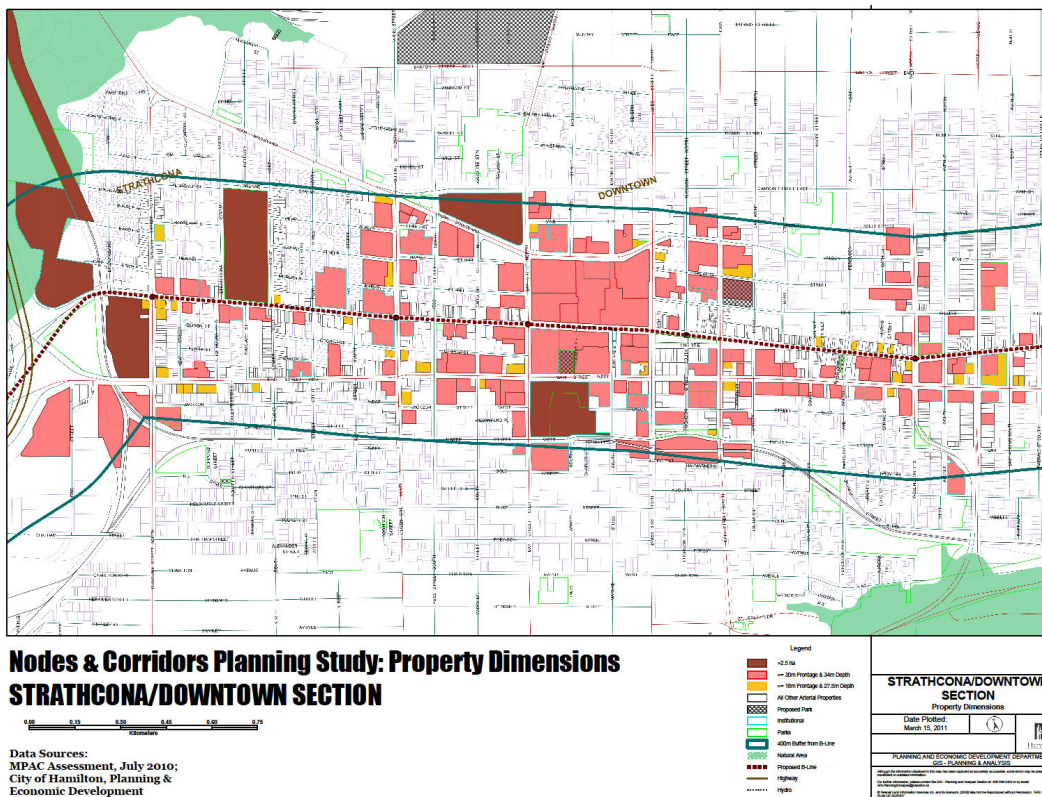
Source: Nodes and Corridors B-Line Background Report

4.1 Parcel Size and Vacant Lots

Foremost among these similarities is the scarcity of vacant land. As noted in some of the case studies that will be examined, the availability of large developable vacant parcels can significantly increase the potential for new development near rapid transit lines.

In July 2010, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) conducted an assessment of land parcel sizes along the corridor. It identified a number of parcels that are large enough to accommodate mid-rise development. (Fig. 5) Mid-rise development potential is important for affordable housing, because it is usually only fiscally viable to construct affordable housing with 50 or more units. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)

Figure 5: Land Parcels Large Enough for Mid-Rise Development in the B-Line



Source: Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (2010)

The map in Figure 5 shows the most built-up area of the B-Line, with many lots (orange, red and pink) large enough for mid-rise development. However, only one of these parcels is a truly vacant lot (southwest corner of Queen St. and Napier St.). All

the other large parcels in the B-Line corridor have existing uses, such as public parks, existing buildings, and surface parking lots. As the development of public parks is not an option, new construction along the B-Line must make extensive use of redevelopment and infill. This may deter investment in the B-Line due to increased costs for remediation and redevelopment.

In the downtown, where there are many surface parking lots within the immediate influence area, redevelopment of these parking lots presents the greatest opportunity in the corridor for transit-supportive land uses and high density development.

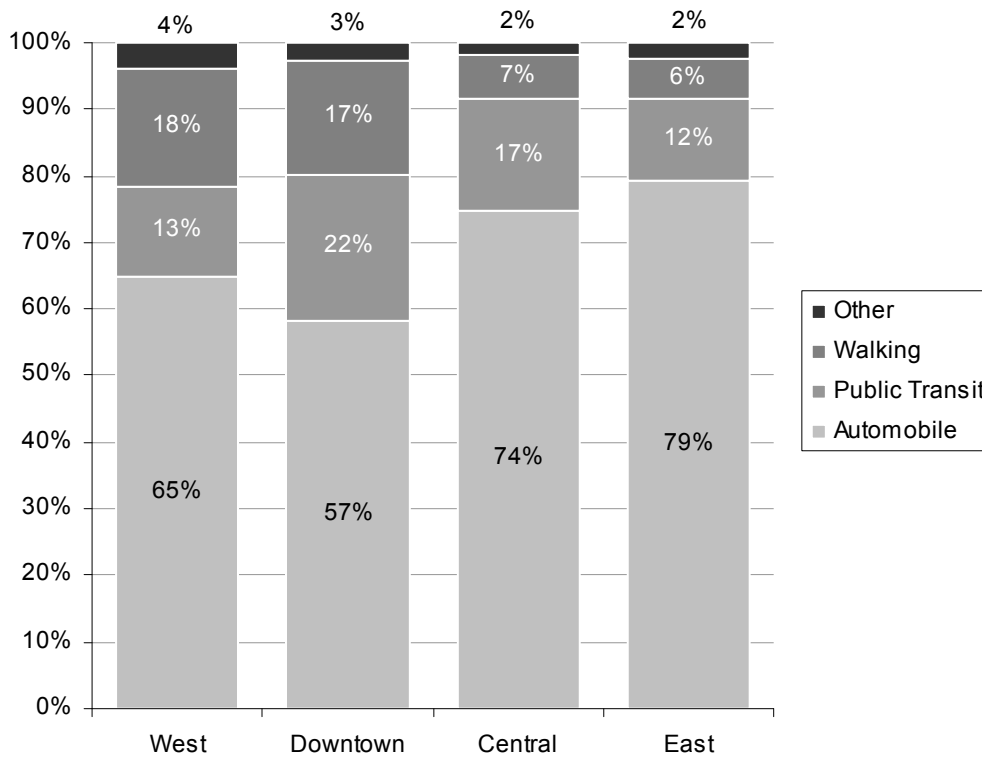
To further incent mid-rise development, new larger parcels may be created by reassembling neighbouring residential properties at key locations along the corridor to make higher density development more feasible.

4.2 Transit Use and Mode Share

The B-Line is currently the best-served area of the city in terms of transit. Four bus routes run along the corridor, with north-south bus connections at nearly every major intersection. Hamilton Street Railway, the city's transit operator, conducted an operational review that found over 80 passenger boardings per capita in the B-Line corridor for the 2007 fiscal year – the highest rate of any corridor in the city (see Appendix A). The introduction of rapid transit in the B-Line corridor will bolster its role as the city's central transportation artery. (HSR Operational Review, 2010)

Within the B-Line corridor itself, the mode share of commuters varies significantly. The downtown section has the highest use of public transportation, while automobile use is most prevalent in the more suburban east end. (Fig. 6) A rapid transit line may make public transport a more viable alternative for commuters in the east and central sections of the city, where travel by automobile is most prevalent.

Figure 6: Mode of Transportation to Work



Note: "Automobile" includes drivers and passengers. "Other" includes Bicycle, Motorcycle, Taxi, and other modes.

Source: 2006 Census (Statistics Canada)

The above chart represents only the mode of transportation to and from work, and does not represent the proportion of people that use transit for leisure, shopping, appointments, or other activities.

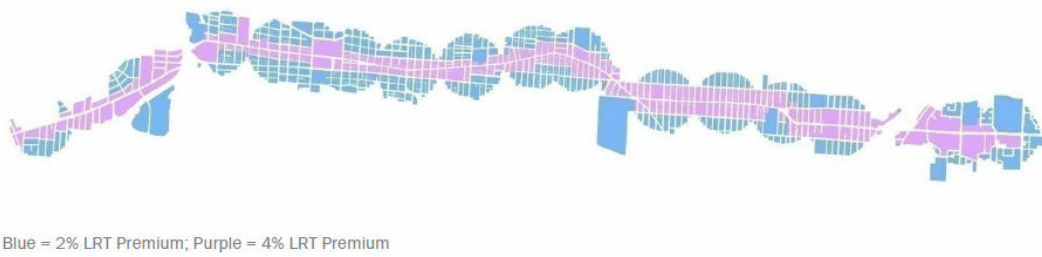
4.3 Influence of LRT on Property Values

Two examples are given to justify a 500 m buffer zone as the area of immediate influence for property values. In Portland, Oregon, an increase in property values of 10.6 per cent was observed for homes within 500 m of the LRT line. Similarly, office space rents in Toronto command a 10 per cent premium if they are within 500 m of a TTC subway station. If we assume that Hamilton will experience a similar increase in rents and property values within 500 m of the B-Line, we can put specific programs in place to protect the affordable housing stock in that area. (IBI Group, 2009)

A cost-benefit analysis released by Metrolinx estimated the potential value uplift along the B-Line corridor. A 500 m catchment area was used. Based on a comprehensive review of approximately 150 studies, a full LRT system in Hamilton would be directly responsible for an increase of 2-4 per cent in land values of non-vacant residential properties within the catchment area. This uplift includes only the effects directly attributable to the light rail infrastructure itself, and does not take into account the additional increase in property values attributable to zoning changes, land use policy, or other City initiatives. (Hamilton King-Main Rapid Transit Benefits Case, 2010)

These findings were echoed in a report on value uplift by the Canadian Urban Institute, though it used a different catchment area (Fig. 7).

Figure 7: Estimated Value Uplift due to Rapid Transit



Source: Hamilton B-Line Value Uplift and Capture Study (2010)

The B-Line Background Information Report , prepared by Hamilton's Nodes & Corridors staff in 2010, also defines an immediate influence area of 500m from the proposed rapid transit right-of-way. It is in this catchment area that all demographic information, including income and housing statistics, is measured.

5 Hamilton's Housing Market

Residential properties within the immediate influence area are far from uniform. There are several distinct neighbourhoods, each with its own character, traversing the length of the B-Line. To simplify the analysis, this report will split the corridor into four sections: West, Downtown, Central, and East. These are the same sections that were used in the demographic analysis for the Nodes & Corridors B-Line Background Information Report. (See Fig. 4)

Over the past few decades, a lack of new rental construction, coupled with the conversion of some rental units to condominiums, has resulted in a decrease of the number of renter households in Hamilton. (Mayo, 2011)

That said, the introduction of LRT is projected to be responsible for an increase of 3,755 square metres of single-family residential housing and 245,458 square metres of multi-residential housing along the B-Line corridor within 15 years of operation. This increase is over and above the investment that would occur in a business-as-usual scenario. (Hamilton B-Line Value Uplift and Capture Study, 2010) There is definite opportunity to leverage that investment to address the deficit of affordable rental units.

In terms of housing tenure, the majority of downtown properties – 79 per cent – are rented. This compares to 43 per cent for the west section, 38 per cent for the central section, and 47 per cent for the east section. While both rental and owned properties can be subject to affordability concerns, in the Downtown section the high

prevalence of rental properties necessitates a different strategy than the other segments of the corridor. (B-Line Background Information Report, 2010)

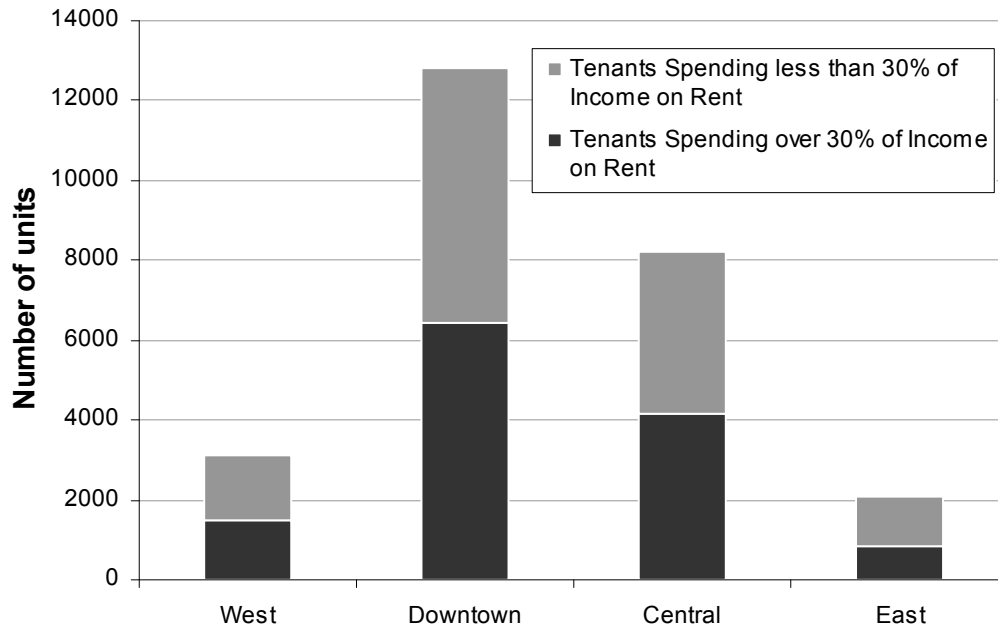
A 2010 study by the Canadian Urban Institute found that investment in LRT would result in higher rents and property values, as well as additional infill development. The study compared the station areas along the B-Line to similar station areas in Dallas, Portland, and Minneapolis - all cities that had a similar economic climate as Hamilton has today before they built their LRT. The station areas with the greatest development potential, according to the study, are Gore Park (Downtown), McMaster Innovation Park (West), and Scott Park (Central). (Hamilton B-Line Value Uplift and Capture Study, 2010)

The Nodes & Corridors B-Line Background Information Report identifies specific properties, mostly fronting directly on the corridor, that have uplift potential for new mid-rise development. The criteria for such development is that lots be at least 18 metres wide and 27.5 metres deep. Along the B-Line, especially in downtown Hamilton, opportunity for development on vacant lots of this size is extremely limited. This means redevelopment and intensification will have to play a much greater role in the transformation of the B-Line corridor.

The 2006 census reports that 19 per cent of homeowners citywide spend more than 30 per cent of their income on major payments for their home. For renters, 44 per cent are in that situation. For the B-Line in particular, about 25 per cent of owners and half of renters are living in accommodation that is not affordable. The most

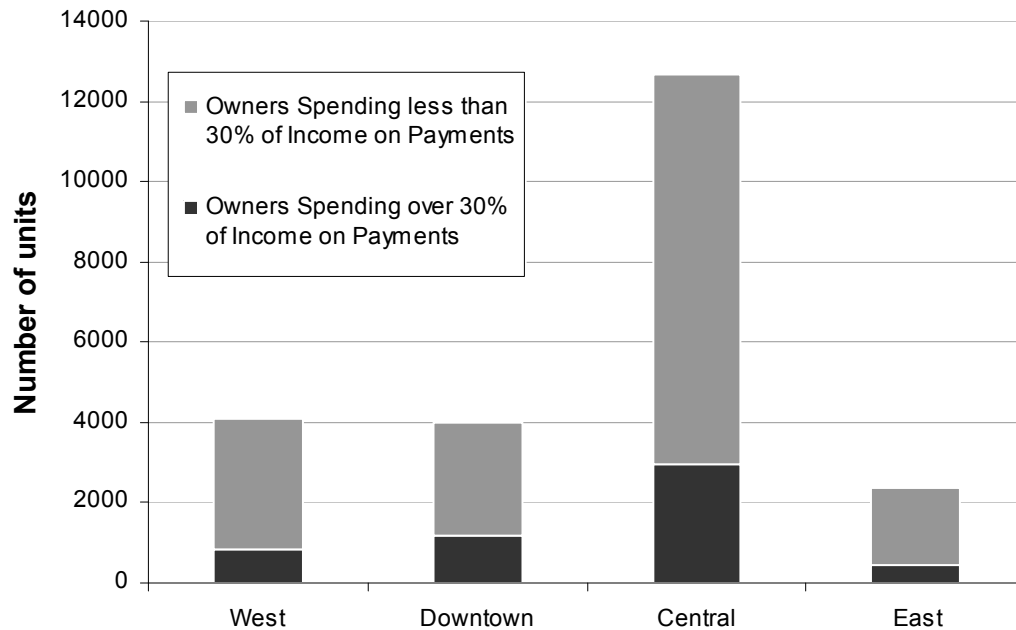
affordable area of the B-Line is the east end, with the downtown being the least affordable. (Figs. 7 & 8)

Figure 7: Rental Affordability in the B-Line



Source: 2006 Census (Statistics Canada)

Figure 8: Ownership Affordability in the B-Line



Source: 2006 Census (Statistics Canada)

In total, the number of rental dwellings slightly outnumbered the number of owner-occupied dwellings in the B-Line corridor, but overall the type of occupancy (tenancy vs. ownership) is evenly split along the B-Line. The exception is downtown, which has more than three times as many rental dwellings as owner-occupied ones. Therefore, an affordable housing strategy for the B-Line must take into account both rental and homeownership needs.

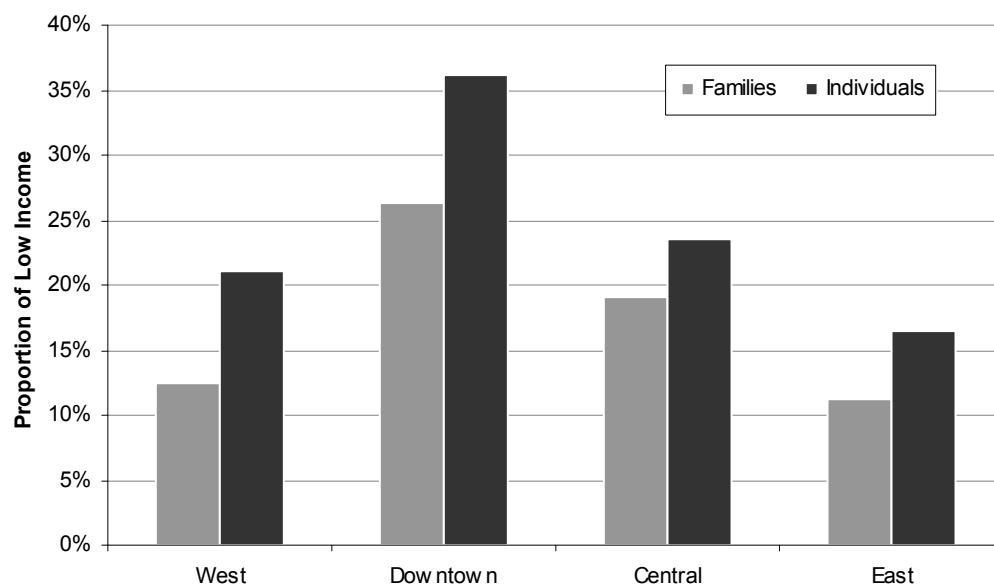
This data suggests that the preservation of existing affordable housing would do best to focus on owner-occupied dwellings, while new affordable developments should be focused on rental units.

5.1 Poverty Concentration

Hamilton suffers from a concentration of low-income neighbourhoods, some of which are found along the B-Line. Unchecked gentrification of the B-Line corridor would push Hamilton's low-income residents into even more concentrated areas of poverty. In fact, this is exactly what happened with the gentrification of Locke Street in the late 1980s and 90s. As the area became more affluent, residents and businesses were priced out of the market and forced to move to areas of Hamilton where poverty was already prevalent. (Johnson, 2011; Sarin, 2011)

While the low-income threshold is not a direct indicator of poverty, no exact measure of poverty currently exists, so it is the closest approximation available with census statistics. Figure 10 shows the prevalence of low income in the B-Line.

Figure 10: Prevalence of Low Income in the B-Line



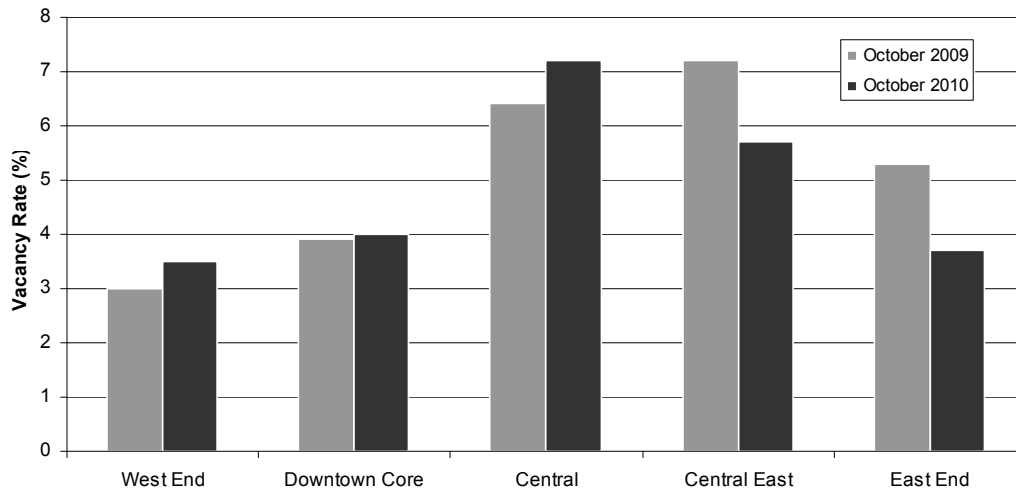
Source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

The high concentration of low income in the Downtown section means that rising property values have the potential to displace many existing residents. New residential development in the Downtown area should therefore ensure a mix of incomes.

Paul Johnson, the Director of Hamilton's Neighbourhood Development Services, has said: "It's really important, for social and political reasons, to address inequities between areas." (Nolan, 2011) The incorporation of affordable housing policy in the B-Line Corridor Secondary Plan aims to do that. Hamilton is extremely divided along geographic lines and a focus on the B-Line - the area of the city with the most problems with housing affordability - will help alleviate those inequalities.

5.2 CMHC Statistics

According to statistics from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Hamilton's vacancy rate is very high in the zones traversed by the B-Line corridor (Fig. 11). A vacancy rate of 2-3 per cent is generally considered a healthy rental market. (Council-Adopted Urban Hamilton Official Plan, 2009) The zones through which the B-Line corridor traverses exceed this rate across the board.

Figure 11: Private Apartment Vacancy Rates

Source: CMHC Rental Market Report, Hamilton and Brantford CMAs (Fall 2010)

The geographic areas in the above chart do not correspond with the influence area of the B-Line, and is therefore a rough approximation of the properties within the defined corridor. Nevertheless, this chart shows that a lack of rental supply is not necessarily the cause behind the B-Line's affordability problem.

Paul Johnson, Director of Neighbourhood Development, suggests that the problem isn't a lack of supply, but a lack of affordable supply. High construction costs make it difficult for developers to offer affordable rental units and still make a profit. Therefore, many units sit empty as their rents are too high for many people to afford. (Johnson, 2011)

Due to this predicament, it might be possible to increase the supply of affordable housing without constructing any new units, simply by subsidizing vacant units to allow property owners to offer more rent-geared-to-income units.

5.3 Condominium Conversions

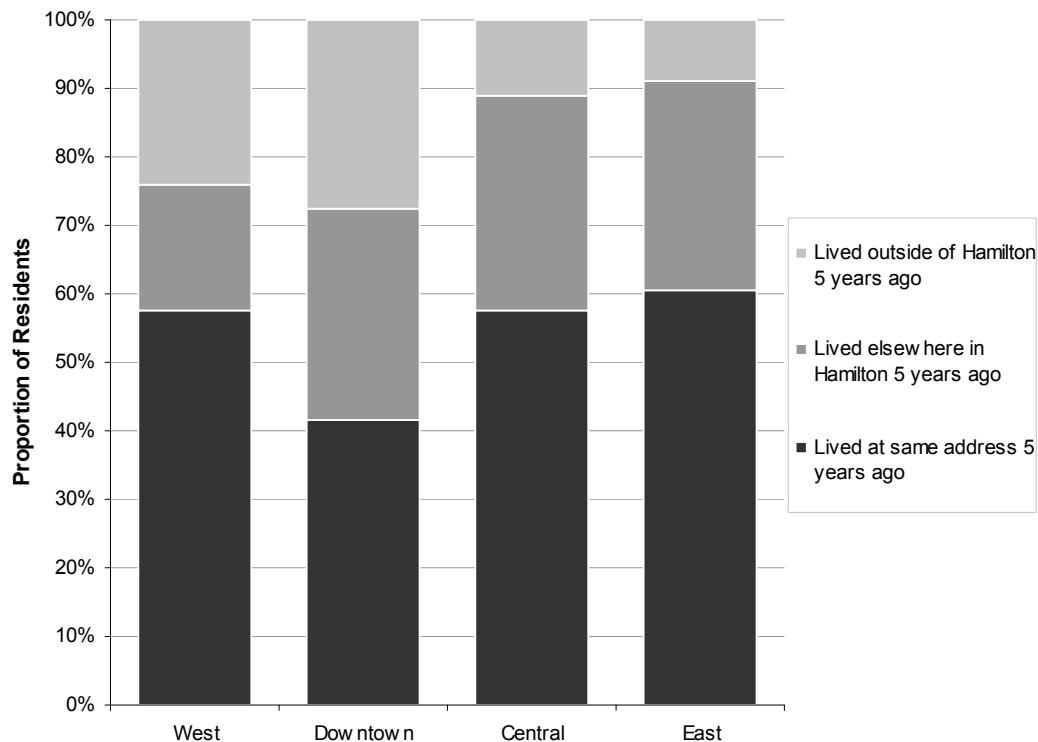
Since 2007, eight condominium conversions have taken place in the B-Line corridor. They were all apartments, and they mostly occurred within the downtown area. (Condominium Conversions, City of Hamilton, 2010)

The New Urban Hamilton Official Plan includes provisions for protecting affordable housing against condominium conversions. If a conversion is not supported by at least 75 per cent of the existing tenants, it can only pass if it will keep the rental vacancy rate above 2 per cent, and if the current market rent of the units is not significantly below average. (Council-Adopted Urban Hamilton Official Plan, 2009)

These provisions are a step forward from the previous Official Plan, but they do not protect subsidized or rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) units from condominium conversion. Using market rent levels as a baseline excludes the RGI units, and therefore does not encourage mixed-income development. Not only do condo conversions reduce the amount of rental units, they are most effective, under the new Official Plan, at removing the affordable units for mixed-income developments.

5.4 The Importance of Neighbourhood Stability

Using the Mobility and Migration data from the 2006 census, a picture of the B-Line's neighbourhood stability emerges (Fig. 11).

Figure 12: Neighbourhood Stability in the B-Line

Source: 2006 Census (Statistics Canada)

Predictably, the Central and East sections are the most stable areas of the B-Line. This can be explained by the high concentration of students in the West section, and the transient nature of the downtown section. Newcomers to a city often arrive in the downtown core before finding a more permanent accommodation.

Two conclusions can be drawn from this chart. First, with the exception of the students that dominate the West section, 30 per cent of B-Line residents (6 percentage points above average) moved there recently from elsewhere in Hamilton. This speaks to the desirability of living near the B-Line, which is the city's best-served area for transit (HSR Operational Review, 2010). Second, the highest proportion of affordable ownership housing is found in the most stable sections of the B-Line (i.e.,

Central and East), as was shown in Figures 7 and 8. Real estate speculation may upset this delicate balance, therefore it is imperative to protect the existing housing stock against a sudden increase in homeownership costs.

6 Preserving Affordability near Transit in Other Jurisdictions

The following section categorizes various tools for preserving affordability near transit that are used by other jurisdictions. There are four categories:

1. Enabling funding: creative methods of financing new affordable development;
2. Preservation: protecting the existing affordable housing stock;
3. Development incentives: tools that encourage developers to build affordable units; and
4. Transportation-housing affordability index: integrating the cost of travel with the cost of housing in planning to fully capture the entire picture of affordable development.

Planning policies can be very effective at mitigating against the meteoric rise of land values. However, to be effective, these tools must be in place well in advance, so as to properly plan for the long-term protection of affordability. (Pollack et al., 2010)

Minneapolis-St. Paul's new light rail line, the Hiawatha, which traverses some low-income neighbourhoods not unlike the B-Line, nevertheless saw immense investment into these areas because it was the first LRT line in the city. Similar rapid transit projects like the Indigo line in Boston and the West line in Denver didn't

provide as much uplift because there were already other LRT lines in place. This bodes well for the B-Line's potential to generate value uplift. However, the Hiawatha also traverses large developable formerly industrial lands, which is an added bonus for easy development. (Thorne-Lyman et al., 2008)

6.1 Enabling Funding

6.1.1 Acquisition Funds

A cautionary tale about land value increase can be found in the experience of the Lakewood Housing Authority, which bought a parcel of land that had been acquired by a real estate speculator, held for 8 days, and sold at a 69 per cent markup. When housing authorities and affordable developers fail to act quickly to secure land, speculation can significantly drive up the cost of affordable housing. (Thorne-Lyman et al., 2008)

6.1.1.1 San Francisco

The San Francisco Bay Area has established a mixed-income Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) acquisition fund. It serves to encourage the development of new affordable housing in areas close to transit. It is estimated that 50 per cent of future housing demand in transit-serviced areas will come from low-income households, but those are the same areas that have little vacant or underutilised land, compared to their counterparts that are not served by transit. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)

The fund covers the costs of property taxes and other fees until a site is ready to be developed. Short-term funding can be allocated to facilitate mixed income transit-oriented development in "hot" markets where speculation is driving up the cost of vacant land. In a complementary fashion, long-term funding can be set aside for "cold" market properties that will be held for several years until mixed-income TOD is a financially viable development opportunity. This helps to keep the land price from increasing too quickly, which facilitates the development of better quality mixed-income development with a higher proportion of affordable units. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)

In essence, the fund's money (provided by multiple investors but largely the municipal government) is used to acquire property outright or give low-interest loans for affordable housing developers to acquire property, before real estate speculation makes the cost of land skyrocket. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2010)

The fund is used to temper the boom and bust nature of the San Francisco region's real estate markets. It makes it easier to integrate affordable housing in "hot" markets, giving developers an incentive to build mixed-income developments rather than completely market-rate units. For vacant properties that have gone unused for years as a result of low investment potential, the fund can help finance projects that are proactive about land acquisition. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)

A developer who wishes to buy land near a proposed transit line for affordable housing may not have the details of the project finalized, nor have funding for

the project itself, but wants to make an offer to acquire the land. Under the acquisition fund, she can be quickly granted a loan with deferred interest payments to cover the costs of securing the land and paying property taxes until the affordable housing project is ready to be built. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2010)

There are conditions, however, that may limit the fund's applicability to dense urban corridors. It favours areas that have large undeveloped parcels, so as to make the construction of new affordable development (which typically need at least 50 units) more feasible. Though it is geared towards development within nodes and corridors, it seems to be most effective in suburban industrial areas where investment is lacking. (Center for Transit-Oriented Development, 2008)

6.1.1.2 Denver

From now until 2030, 40 per cent of new housing demand near transit in Denver will come from low-income households. Mixed-income TOD initiatives help to meet that demand and, in the process, create true affordability by minimising transportation costs. Proximity to a transit network increases the number of employment opportunities available, which makes the region more economically competitive because its workers have choice. (Belzer et al., 2007)

Due to federal and state budgetary constraints, affordable housing subsidies are decreasing. Affordable developers don't have the necessary capital to hold land speculatively. Further, the rezoning process is lengthy and hinders the redevelopment of old buildings into mixed-income TOD. (Belzer et al., 2007)

Another innovative idea is to allow the transit authority to purchase land. This requires less bureaucracy than a traditional land acquisition fund. With the transit authority acting as a developer, it can ensure that mixed-income, dense, TOD is built near transit hubs - the kind of development that encourages ridership. (Belzer et al., 2007) Despite its effectiveness in theory, this method has been subjected to a legal challenge in Denver and requires that available land is plentiful near proposed transit stations. (Thorne-Lyman et al., 2008)

In Denver's West Line, the transit authority had the ability to hold land for purposes other than direct transit infrastructure. While this power is useful for ensuring transit-oriented development in proximity to the stations, it caused concern among property owners, who found that they were getting a less-than-anticipated price when they sold their properties to the transit authority. There is also a more general concern that the transit authority is overstepping its bounds with the ability to put commercial and residential projects on its "surplus lands". Colorado House Bill 1278 was subsequently proposed, limiting the transit authority's ability to buy land to only public transit purposes - not even park-and-ride facilities would be allowed. The bill has been postponed indefinitely and not signed into law, but it merits reflection when deciding which organizations should have land-use control in TOD projects. (Thorne-Lyman et al., 2008)

6.1.2 Tax Increment Financing

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) has been widely used in the United States for decades, and has become recognized as one of the best ways for cash-strapped municipalities

to spur investment in their communities. (Cunningham, 2009) In terms of affordable housing, TIF can be used to capture future property tax revenues, which are used to fund the up-front costs of affordable developments. Winnipeg and Calgary have recently used TIF to revitalize neighbourhoods. Manitoba's Community Revitalization TIF Act, which enabled the tool for use in Winnipeg, specifies affordable housing as one of the investment recipients.

The government of Manitoba stated in a press release: "This would mean that incremental property tax increases in the zone would be placed into a separate fund for time-limited period to pay for infrastructure and other economic supports in the zone. Once the zone is redeveloped, and the TIF zone is lifted the expanded tax base returns to the municipality, the province and the school division." (Government of Manitoba, 2008)

Calgary's Community Revitalization Levy is essentially a Tax Increment Financing tool that has proven successful at spurring development in the city's historic downtown, catalysing new investment that has brought a surge of residents to the area. (Cunningham, 2009) While not specifically geared towards affordable housing, the city was awarded a Brownie Award from the Canadian Urban Institute for excellence in brownfield redevelopment – due, in large part, to the TIF funding that made such redevelopment possible.

6.2 Preservation

When looking at the breakdown of income levels of transit riders, it is clear that transit riders are skewed to the lower end of the scale. Transit plays an important role in the job security of poorer households. An analysis on commute costs by the Brookings Institute found that for the working poor, driving to work used 8.4 per cent of their pay, compared to 5.8 per cent if they were able to take transit. (Pollack et al., 2010)

In the multivariate analysis undertaken by this report, the three variables most closely correlated with new rail transit infrastructure were: an increase in median gross rent, an increase in in-migration, and an increase in motor vehicle ownership. It is very unlikely that transit would cause a significant decrease in housing values or rents. (Pollack et al., 2010)

In areas that implement LRT, the rate of in-migration is nearly 5 per cent greater than that of the transit service area as a whole. There are significant increases in population (20%), median household income (nearly 80%), owner occupancy (nearly 150%), median housing value (500%), and percent of households with 2 or more cars (over 50%). (Pollack et al., 2010)

These statistics speak to the potential for low- and moderate-income households to be displaced by a new LRT line. In light of this, techniques for the preservation of affordable housing are of utmost importance.

6.2.1 Rent Control, Tenant Eviction Protection, Right of First Refusal, and Condominium Conversion Control

The City of Calgary, like Hamilton, has an affordable housing policy based on a spectrum of housing need that ranges from “No Shelter” to “Market Housing”. The city’s Office of Land Servicing & Housing creates incentives and develops policy to encourage affordable and entry-level housing opportunities. However, like Hamilton, Calgary lacks the supply of affordable housing to meet its demand. It lists the conversion of rental units to condominiums and the lack of new rental construction as two significant barriers to this goal. (Learn About Affordable Housing, City of Calgary, 2011)

A “just cause” eviction policy can help prevent the loss of affordable rental units by bolstering the rights of tenants to stay in places that are affordable and convenient for them. (Austin et al., 2008) The New Hamilton Urban Official Plan will help in this regard by affirming the right of tenants to live in accessory apartments without fear of eviction by city bylaw officials.

Rent control measures that are tied to Transit-Oriented Development could be targeted to Downtown Hamilton, where there is a high proportion of rental units. This would aid in maintaining affordability. A robust condominium conversion policy could add to this by allowing former tenants to have the first opportunity to buy new condo units at the same rate as their former accommodations. The benefit to this would be that developers can redevelop a rental building into condos with more

units. The existing tenants would be guaranteed a spot, and the new residents would pay market rent.

Montgomery County, Maryland offers the right of first refusal to the city's housing commission. Nonprofits have second right of refusal. Permanent affordability is the goal with this policy, and has made it a model for other jurisdictions to follow. (Belzer et al., 2007)

6.2.2 Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary zoning preserves affordability by mandating that new residential construction include a proportion of affordable units. They may be part of a general affordable housing policy, or negotiated on a site-by-site basis as Community Benefit Agreements. (Pollack et al., 2010)

While inclusionary zoning only deals with the construction of new units, it has been classified as a “preservation” tool because it actually deters development rather than incentivizing it. Inclusionary zoning puts restrictions on residential development in a specific area which may limit its profitability. Therefore, this is a tool that only works in “hot” real estate markets, where developers are willing to make concessions in order to construct new residential units.

Some municipalities allow developers to pay cash-in-lieu of affordable units, to fund the construction of more affordable units elsewhere in the city. (Curran and Wake, 2008) In Hamilton, such an allowance would not be advisable, because the intent of

an inclusionary zoning tool would be to preserve affordability in a specific geographic area – the B-Line.

6.3 Development Incentives

In cooler markets, incentives are needed to attract affordable development. Punitive measures such as inclusionary zoning are effective only when there is pent-up market demand for construction. As this is not currently the case in the B-Line, Hamilton must make creative use of development incentives to encourage the construction of new affordable housing.

6.3.1 Revised Parking Requirements

Parking requirements can be changed to facilitate the development of new high-density affordable units. By no longer requiring that each unit have a designated parking space, the cost of parking is disassociated from the cost of housing. Such a system encourages two things: it lowers the price of housing, making it more feasible for affordable units, and it encourages the use of other modes of transportation, such as rapid transit. This disassociation, called unbundling, has been found to reduce vehicle ownership in other jurisdictions by 10-20%. (Litman, 2011)

As innovative as these changes may be, however, the capital cost of parking as a proportion of total construction costs is not significant enough to spur affordable development on its own, at least not in Hamilton's current investment climate. (Sarin, 2011) While unbundling parking can play a part, other tools are clearly necessary to encourage the development of transit-oriented affordable housing.

6.3.2 Reduced Fees and Simplified Rezoning Process

Lowering brownfield remediation costs for affordable developers is a good way to ensure affordable infill development, especially in complicated downtown areas such as the B-Line. If improvements to water supply infrastructure, for example, are necessary, the developer can avoid paying those costs by designating a proportion of units as affordable housing.

Incentives can be as simple as waiving all fees and expediting development reviews for affordable housing that is served by transit, as is done in Austin, Texas. Similar programs exist in Portland, Denver, and Boston. (Zimmerman et al., 2009)

Without TOD-specific zoning, the zoning amendment process is lengthy and a barrier for developers. Adding more conditions for affordability might just turn developers away. (Belzer et al., 2007)

To promote the development of affordable housing, Calgary has appointed a single facilitator to manage any necessary rezoning at the same time as the development application is being reviewed. This streamlines operations and reduces the number of administrative hurdles for developers of affordable housing. (Contact Affordable Housing, City of Calgary, 2011)

6.3.3 Property Tax Abatement

The City of Portland has implemented a property tax abatement for transit-oriented development. Projects must be high-density, mixed-use developments within a designated geographical area. The city has also implemented a separate tax

abatement program for affordable rental housing. In both cases, property owners are protected from any increase in property taxes for a specified length of time – up to 10 years. (Portland Housing Bureau, 2011) Freezing property taxes allows for rents to remain stable, which makes living near rapid transit more viable.

While a tax abatement is similar to the aforementioned Tax-Increment Financing, it subsidizes the operating costs of a development, rather than providing upfront capital funding.

6.3.4 Bonusing

Density bonusing allows municipalities to negotiate with developers for the inclusion of affordable units in exchange for higher density. This would contribute to additional units along the corridor which further encourages rapid transit. If the developer doesn't want to manage the affordable units, it can sell to a local affordable housing organisation. An elimination of time limits on how long the units need to stay affordable for would ensure permanent affordability. (Belzer et al., 2007)

Bonusing can also apply to reduced parking requirements. Los Angeles gives density bonuses and reduced parking requirements for affordable housing in order to encourage new affordable residential development. (Zimmerman et al., 2009)

6.4 Housing and Transportation Affordability Index

There are significant benefits to integrating mixed-income housing with transit-oriented development. Unlike the affordable housing commonly constructed out

near the city limits or close to industrial lands, mixed-income TOD ensures the availability of affordable housing near affordable transportation. The proximity to transit increases access to jobs for those without a car, which tend to congregate along strong transit corridors. (Austin et al., 2008)

Illinois has developed a Housing & Transportation Affordability Index, which provides quantitative benchmarks in order to direct funding for transportation and housing assistance to areas where affordability is at risk. It's a measure that builds in transportation costs into the affordability picture and would be a very useful tool for deciding where to focus affordability initiatives. (Zimmerman et al., 2009)

Despite having an LRT line, Calgary has not included a transit component in its affordable housing strategy. Hamilton can learn from the innovations of Calgary's land use planning and housing policies, and build upon it by adding rapid transit into the mix.

7 Conclusions

Rapid transit will attract investment and raise property values.

Hamilton is currently in a “cold” housing market, but the investment climate will rapidly heat up once rapid transit along the B-Line corridor becomes certain. As one local developer stated, “No one is going to run in and buy up all this stuff on a dream.” (Macleod, 2011) Developers need certainty that LRT will be in place before they begin investing in new residential construction.

The substantial amounts of surface parking, especially in the downtown section, will have high development potential. The impending flurry of new residential units means that Hamilton will soon be in a position to use tools such as density bonusing and inclusionary zoning that may have deterred developers in the past.

Up-front construction cost is the largest hurdle for affordable development.

Hamilton currently waives development charges for new affordable units, but it has not been enough of an incentive to spur affordable development in the B-Line. More ambitious incentives like removing parking requirements, covering the cost of parcel reassembly, and covering infrastructure improvement costs are necessary to encourage affordable developments.

Affordable housing policies should not exacerbate the concentration of poverty in small areas.

While existing affordable housing should no doubt be preserved, the influx of residential development should aim for mixed-income dwellings that offer low- and moderate-income households choice in where they live along the corridor. Policies should encourage the coexistence of market rent units, rent-gear-to-income, rentals, and ownership units.

Affordable housing tools must be in place before the market is ready.

Hamilton's current low vacancy rate and affordable ownership housing in the B-Line should not be cause for complacency. Hamilton's affordable housing tools are not presently robust enough to address the challenges that lay ahead as increased development occurs along the B-Line corridor. Without the adequate policies in place ahead of time, affordability in the B-Line may worsen, further exacerbating the concentration of poverty in small pockets throughout the city.

8 Recommendations

Surface parking lot acquisition fund for mixed-income housing.

Due to the lack of truly vacant land in Hamilton's B-Line, a land acquisition fund such as the one in the San Francisco region will not likely increase the supply of affordable housing along the B-Line. However, this model could be modified by focusing on the redevelopment of surface parking lots (rather than the development of vacant land) into mixed-income developments.

Tax increment financing and property tax abatement.

Through the use of tax increment financing, Hamilton can use future tax revenues to encourage affordable development in the transition from a "cold" market to a "hot" market. A TIF zone for the B-Line would redistribute the property tax increases in one part of the B-Line to other parts, so as to diffuse the concentration of poverty.

Once a successful TIF has expired, further tools may be needed to protect affordable housing prices from skyrocketing. A tax abatement program, not dissimilar to the one in Portland, is recommended in order to give homeowners and developers of affordable housing the confidence to improve their properties without fear of increased property taxes.

Waived parking requirements.

Parking unbundling, in and of itself, does not give developers a significant cost savings. However, it is still a tangible cost reduction for new construction, and, combined with other initiatives, could make the difference between a vacant parking lot and a vibrant, mixed-income apartment in Hamilton's downtown.

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Glossary

Affordable

- a) in the case of ownership housing, the least expensive of:
1. housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 2. housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 per cent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area;
- b) in the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:
1. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30 per cent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households; or
 2. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.

(Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Immediate Influence Area (also Corridor, B-Line)

A 500-metre catchment area around the rapid transit line, identified by the B-Line Background Information Report and the IBI Economic Potential Study as the area within which property values are strongly influenced by rapid transit infrastructure.

In this report, the terms “corridor” and “B-Line” are analagous with the immediate influence area.

Low and Moderate Income Households

In the case of ownership housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for the regional market area; or in the case of rental housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 per cent of the income distribution for renter households for the regional market area. (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Primary Corridor

Areas, such as the B-Line, that are intended to provide major transit services and dense built form. These corridors already have rapid transit routes or are planned to include rapid transit in the near future. (Draft Urban Structure Plan and Official Plan Policies, 2008)

Rapid Transit

Limited-stop, high frequency transit service that operates in an exclusive right-of-way with signal priority over cross-traffic at intersections.

Regional Market Area

The area defined by the New City of Hamilton single-tier municipal borders. (Provincial Policy Statement, 2005)

Secondary Plan

Secondary Plans provide direction for future development, by means of land use plans and policies. They are adopted by amendment into the Official Plan, to ensure that their intent is binding. (Secondary Plans, City of Hamilton, 2011)

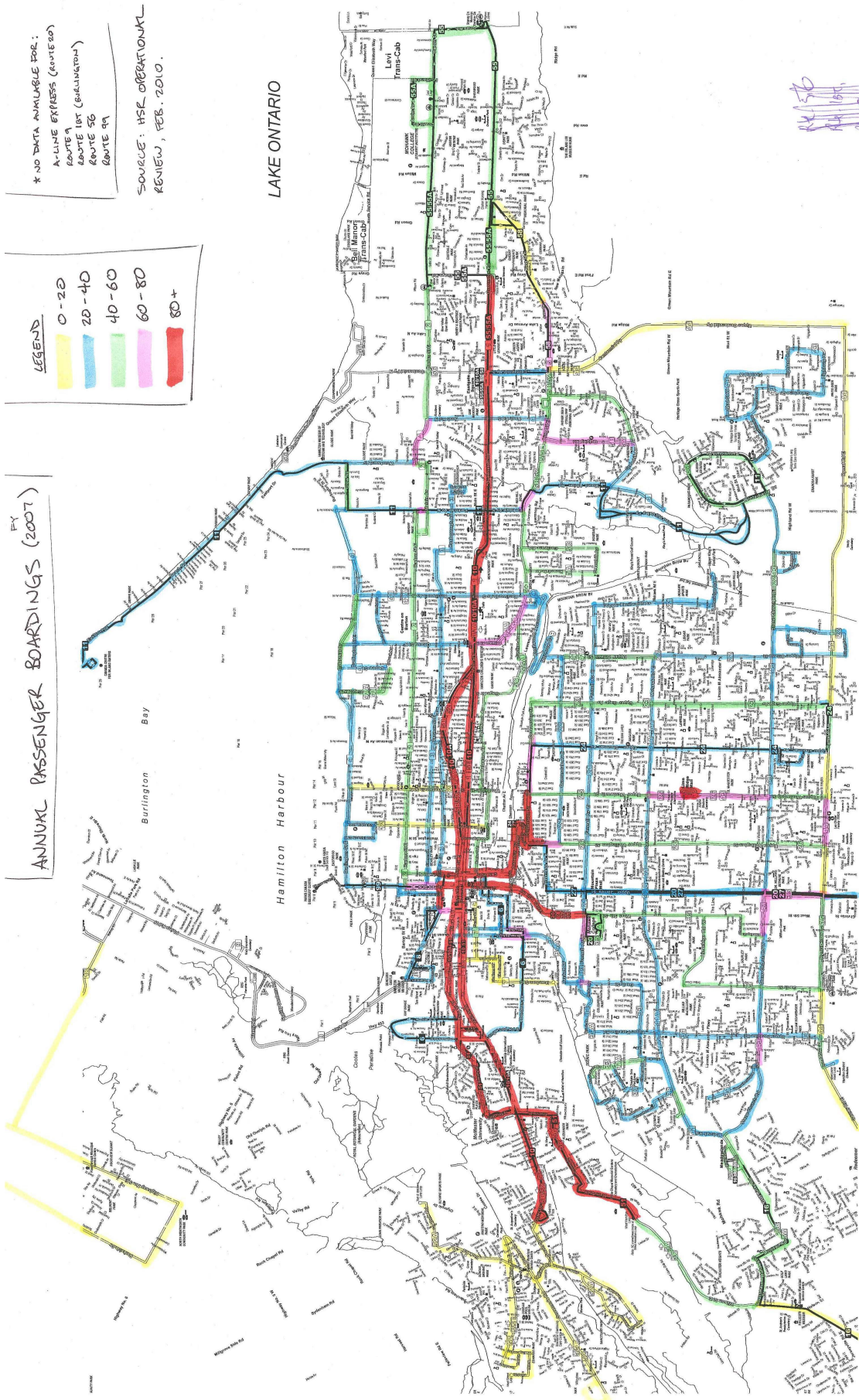
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Development that promotes increased access and usage of transit through mixed use development, higher densities, and providing a high level of amenities in a pleasant, walkable area. (Transit Oriented Development, City of Hamilton, 2011)

Vacancy Rate

The proportion of units in a given area that are currently unoccupied and available to be rented immediately. (CMHC Rental Market Statistics, Spring 2011)

Appendix A





INFORMATION REPORT

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| TO: | Chair and Members Light Rail Transit Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | June 2, 2023 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update (PED23150) (City Wide) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Abdul Shaikh (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6559 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | Abdul Shaikh Director, Hamilton LRT Project Office Planning and Economic Development Department |
| SIGNATURE: |  |

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

On September 15, 2021, City Council ratified a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Metrolinx and the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) to move forward with the 14-kilometre Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) project. The MOU contemplates a series of agreements and protocols which would be negotiated and executed after the execution of the MOU. Such agreements and protocols are to be incorporated into the MOU as “schedules” to the MOU and are as follows:

- Schedule A: Train Operator Services Agreement;
- Schedule B: Municipal Funding Agreement;
- Schedule C: Commissioning and Acceptance Protocol;
- Schedule D: Fare and Non-Fare Revenue Matters;
- Schedule E: Staffing Agreement;
- Schedule F: Municipal Infrastructure Agreement;

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update (PED23150) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 5

- Schedule G: Real Estate Protocol;
- Schedule H: Permits, Licenses and Approvals;
- Schedule I: Communications Protocol;
- Schedule J: Dispute Resolution Protocol; and,
- Schedule K: Governance Protocol.

Report Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Memorandum of Understanding (PED21176), received by Council on September 15, 2021, provided the City Manager with delegated authority to negotiate and execute the Staffing Agreement.

Furthermore, staff provided updates on the agreements and protocols through Information Report Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update (PED21176(a)), received by Council on March 30, 2022. Report PED21176(a) authorized and directed the City Manager to execute the Communications Protocol and provided the City Manager with delegated authority to negotiate and execute the Governance Protocol and Real Estate Protocol.

Executed Agreements and Protocols**1. Communications Protocol**

The Communications Protocol sets out the roles of the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx and the City for all communications related to the LRT project. The Communications Protocol is applicable to the pre-procurement phase and has been executed by the City Manager pursuant to the delegated authority provided in Report PED21176(a).

The Communications Protocol will require future amendments for the procurement and construction phases of the LRT project.

2. Governance Protocol

The purpose of the Governance Framework is as follows:

- to streamline intergovernmental relationships with respect to the delivery of capital programs and projects that impact transit expansion;
- to identify, escalate and resolve intergovernmental delivery issues affecting capital programs; and,
- to provide structured forums for senior staff from each organization to advance shared objectives, seek strategic direction and input and guide collaboration between the partners.

SUBJECT: Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update (PED23150) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 5

The Governance Protocol has been executed by the City Manager pursuant to the delegated authority provided in Report PED21176(a).

3. Staffing Agreement

The Staffing Agreement creates temporary and permanent full-time equivalents (FTEs) for the City to work on the LRT project, provided there is no levy impact.

The Staffing Agreement has been executed by the City Manager pursuant to the delegated authority provided in Report PED21176.

4. Preparatory Activities Agreement

In addition to the agreements and protocols contemplated in MOU, Council authorized and directed the Mayor and City Manager to execute a Preparatory Activities Agreement (PAA) pursuant to Report Preparatory Activities Agreement - Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) (PED23050), received by Council on March 29, 2023. The PAA outlines the process which obliges the City to deliver certain municipal infrastructure works required before major LRT construction can begin and obliges Metrolinx to fund the required City staffing costs and the actual construction costs for such preliminary infrastructure works. A work authorization form is required prior to commencement of each enabling work project.

Roadmap of Future Agreements and Protocols

There are several agreements and protocols staff continue to negotiate with Metrolinx. Many of these agreements and protocols require technical input, and some may not be finalized until the LRT project has been awarded, following the Province's completion of the procurement process. Staff will continue to engage with Metrolinx and intend to report back to Council as further agreements and protocols are developed, which is anticipated to be in Q4 2023.

The following provides a brief description of such agreements and protocols:

1. Real Estate Protocol

The Real Estate Protocol addresses the transfer of lands from the City to Metrolinx, (to build LRT) and from Metrolinx to the City (for example, for transfer of future road allowances). It does not address how Metrolinx will acquire lands from third-parties or dispose of lands to third parties.

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Council has provided delegated authority to the City Manager to negotiate and execute the Real Estate Protocol pursuant to Report PED21176(a). As of the date of writing this report, the City and Metrolinx are working toward finalizing the Real Estate Protocol, with anticipated execution in Q2 2023.

2. Municipal Funding Agreement

The Municipal Funding Agreement sets out the terms which will govern the payments for operation, lifecycle and non-lifecycle maintenance costs related to the Hamilton LRT project. Metrolinx and City staff are currently working to develop a term sheet respecting the Municipal Funding Agreement. Staff anticipate being able to provide an update to the LRT Sub-Committee on this agreement in Q4 2023.

3. Permits, Licenses and Approvals

The Permits, Licenses and Approvals protocol sets out the provisions applicable to processing the City's permits, licences and approvals pertaining to the LRT project and the City's role as regulatory and planning authority related thereto. Metrolinx and City staff have recently started working to develop a term sheet respecting the Permits, Licenses and Approvals Protocol. Staff anticipate being in a position to provide an update to the LRT Sub-Committee on this protocol in Q4 2023.

4. Commissioning and Acceptance Protocol

The Commissioning and Acceptance Protocol sets out the requirements for commissioning and acceptance of infrastructure owned by the City and the step-by-step process pertaining to such commissioning and acceptance. This protocol is scheduled for 2024.

5. Fare and Non-Fare Revenue Matters

The Fare and Non-Fare Revenue Matters Agreement sets out the fare and certain non-fare revenue to which the City is entitled to compensate the City's obligations for the payment of operations and non-lifecycle maintenance for LRT. This agreement is scheduled for 2024.

6. Municipal Infrastructure Agreement

The Municipal Infrastructure Agreement sets out the terms applicable to "additional City infrastructure" the City may request Metrolinx build as part of the LRT project (at the City's sole expense). This agreement is scheduled for 2024.

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7. Dispute Resolution Protocol

The Dispute Resolution Protocol sets out a process to expedite disputes with a view to ensuring construction delays are reduced or eliminated. This protocol is scheduled for 2024.

8. Train Operator Services Agreement

The Train Operator Services Agreement is an agreement between Metrolinx and the City related to the City's Operational responsibilities. Work on this agreement will begin once the LRT's operator(s) have been confirmed. This agreement is scheduled for 2024-2025.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.