



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 15, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update (PED19100) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

At its meeting of May 31, 2018, Council received report PED18116 which provided an overall update on the Hamilton B-Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project. The report provided high level information related to proposed design modifications, property acquisition and community engagement activities. The report also advised Council that the project had entered the procurement phase with the issuance of the Request for Proposals (RFP), introduced Council to the three pre-qualified bid teams (the proponents) and provided a general overview of how the project was expected to proceed over the next year (12 month look ahead).

In late June 2018, a moratorium was placed on property acquisition along the corridor as part of broader spending controls implemented by the Province. Not knowing how long the moratorium would last, the proponents slowed the development of their bid submissions.

On March 28, 2019, Mayor Eisenberger and the Minister of Transportation, the Honourable Jeff Yurek, met to discuss various joint transportation initiatives including

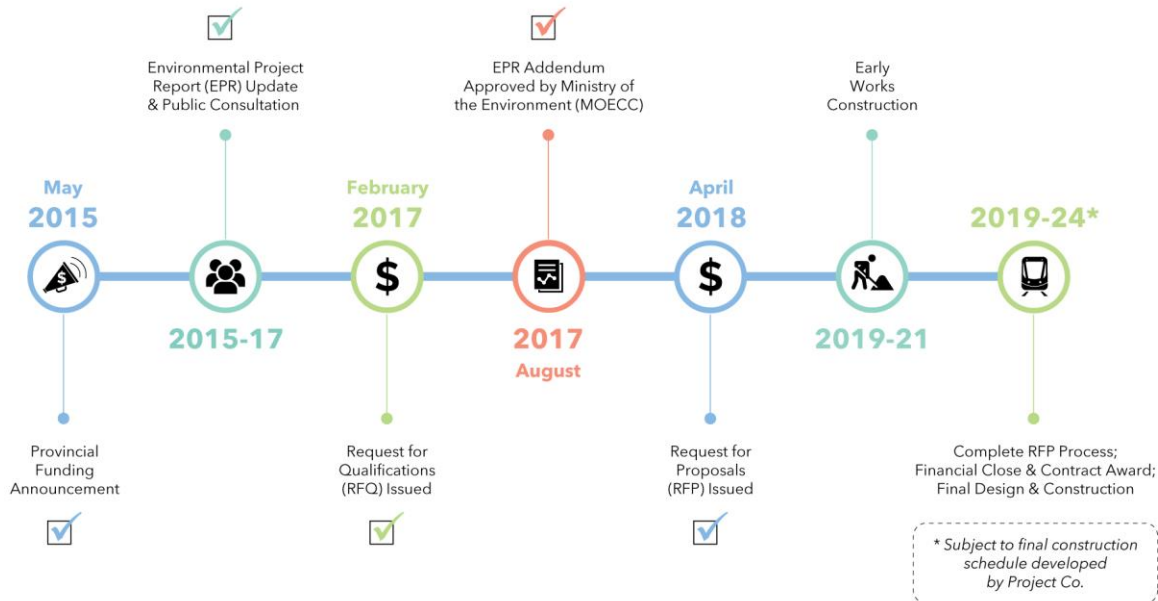
the Hamilton B-Line LRT project. As a result of that meeting, the Minister reconfirmed the Province's original funding commitment to the project, removed the moratorium on property acquisition along the corridor and extended the deadline for the proponents to submit their bids in response to the RFP. The Province's commitment to the project was further stated in the Provincial Budget released on April 11, 2019.

Project Schedule

The RFP to deliver the project using the Province's Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Maintain (DBFOM) procurement model was issued to proponents on April 13, 2018. Initially, bid submissions were expected in Spring 2019 with contract award occurring in Fall 2019. The first year of major construction was scheduled for 2020 with some "early works" related to utility, water and sewer relocation starting in 2019 and 2020. Construction was expected to be substantially complete in 2024 with service commencing shortly thereafter. While estimates/assumptions associated with construction and "in service" timing have been provided in the past, it's important to note that the actual sequencing and timing of construction, testing and commissioning will be determined by the proponents through the RFP process.

With the moratorium lifted, the deadline to receive the bid submissions from the proponents will be extended. As such, bid submissions are now expected in Spring 2020 with contract award occurring later in 2020. The schedule for "early works" related to utility, water and sewer relocation remains unchanged with work starting in 2019 and 2020. Figure 1.1 illustrates the updated project schedule.

Figure 1.1 – Updated Project Schedule



Project Spending

As of the end of March 2019, Metrolinx has spent \$151 M and committed another \$20 M towards the project (total spent + committed = \$171 M). This includes expenditures on the project dating back to 2007, including costs to complete the original environmental assessment in 2011, the environmental assessment update in 2017, preliminary and ongoing engineering design work, tender preparation, staff time and property acquisition. To date, Metrolinx has spent approximately \$75 million on property acquisitions.

Property Acquisition

As outlined in report PED18116, approximately 90 full property purchases and 300 partial property purchases (a few metres or less) will be required along the LRT corridor for construction. Prior to the moratorium, the Property Acquisition Unit (PAU) was actively engaged in acquiring properties on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis and had successfully purchased 58 full properties. With the moratorium lifted, the PAU is once again engaging with property owners along the corridor. Although reasonable efforts continue to be made to negotiate voluntary purchases with all affected property owners, expropriation will most likely be required in some cases. If necessary, the expropriation process will begin at some point over the next 12 months.

Demolition & Tenant Support

In order to prepare the lands for future construction and expedite the construction schedule, building demolitions will commence this Summer/Fall. Although a demolition schedule has not been finalized, Metrolinx will begin with structures that are currently vacant and will progress as new properties are acquired and readied. Prior to any demolition taking place, Metrolinx will notify surrounding businesses and residents as well as the affected Ward Councillors. The notice will advise of the demolition to take place along with timeframes, sequencing and any anticipated public impacts (noise, dust, sidewalk closures, traffic disruptions etc.). As always, staff will work with affected property owners, the Ward Councillor and Metrolinx to anticipate and mitigate disruptions where possible.

Through the acquisition process, there will be (and have been) situations where properties are purchased with existing residential tenants. When these situations arise, a team of dedicated staff from the City and Metrolinx work with affected residents to ensure that they remain informed, engaged and supported throughout the process. The team provides one-on-one support to all affected residents in an effort to facilitate a seamless transition into new housing that accommodates the needs of the individual or family.

To date, Metrolinx has acquired 15 residential properties containing approximately 55 residential units. Of the residential units acquired, 40 were occupied and housed a total of 66 residents. The team has successfully found new housing for 43 residents and continues to work with the remainder to find appropriate accommodations. As new residential properties are acquired (approximately 15 additional residential properties), the team will continue to facilitate this process. Appendix "A" to Report PED19100 provides a summary of the tenant support program being used on this project.

Design Evolution

Unlike traditional road construction projects where design work is largely complete prior to tendering, the DBFOM process requires the proponents to develop their own design based on constraints and performance expectations contained within the project specifications. While the general layout illustrated in the Environmental Project Report (EPR) is used as a guide, the proponents are afforded some freedom and flexibility to modify and adjust the design within set limits. Ultimately, all designs submitted by the proponents must comply with the project specifications and meet the spirit and intent of the EPR.

As the project matures, the overall complexity and confines of the corridor present new challenges and opportunities to the project team. The project team is continually working to advance and refine the proposed conceptual design and provide guidance to

the proponents. In some instances, adjustments are required to resolve underground utility conflicts or potential property impacts while in other instances they're needed to improve user experience and safety, support transit-oriented design principles or simplify operations. Report PED18116 received by Council on May 31, 2018, documented previous adjustments made to the original conceptual design.

Since that time, further adjustments have been made to the conceptual design to address/support emerging challenges and opportunities. One adjustment involves removing the eastbound traffic lane on King Street West between Ray Street and Queen Street to minimize impacts to the Scottish Rite Club property as well as improve the station stop and intersection design at Queen Street. The adjustment will also support the two-way traffic conversion of Queen Street between Main Street West and King Street West recently approved by Council. Another adjustment involves shifting the LRT guideway alignment on King Street East between Gage Avenue and Melrose Avenue from centre-running to side-running (north side). The adjustment will simplify traffic movement at the Gage Avenue intersection and will provide improved station layout and a direct connection to the new Bernie Custis Secondary School and Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre (users will board/alight on the sidewalk rather than in the middle of the road). This station layout will better service high-demand special events at Tim Hortons Field as well.

In addition to these site-specific adjustments, the project team is continuing to evaluate various design elements along the corridor to improve operations and pedestrian crossing opportunities, particularly between Parkdale Avenue and Dundurn Street (e.g. corner radii). Similarly, the project team continues to review the need for dedicated left turn lanes for eastbound and westbound traffic at Kenilworth Avenue, Ottawa Street, Sherman Avenue and Wentworth Street. Eliminating the left turn lanes could provide an additional enhancement to pedestrian comfort and safety by reducing the length of pedestrian crosswalks and creating more space for wider sidewalks and boulevards around station stops (more space for people). It may also improve intersection operations and simplify traffic signal control. Dedicated left turn lanes would remain at all other signalized intersections along the corridor and left turn movements would still be permitted where the lanes were removed (a single lane allowing left turn, straight and right turn moves). This work is on-going and will continue to evolve throughout the procurement process.

Community Engagement

The project team continues to engage and consult with various organizations, external agencies, stakeholders and the public. On June 3, 2019, the Hamilton LRT Community Connectors will begin their 7th canvass of the corridor visiting over 1,400 properties along the LRT route. The Community Connectors, made up of a diverse group of individuals from across the City, are committed to informing, educating and engaging

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residents, property and business owners on our journey to implement LRT. This program is a “made in Hamilton” strategy that has become a model for community and property outreach and has been adopted as a best practice for other major Metrolinx infrastructure projects like the Hurontario LRT project. Appendix “B” to Report PED19100 illustrates the broad reach and effectiveness of the program.

Next Steps (12 Month Look Ahead)

Over the next 12 months, City staff will be supporting Metrolinx’s procurement process by responding to inquiries (Requests for Information) and meeting with the proponents at regular intervals to assist in the development of their designs and bid submissions. Information updates will be provided to Council throughout the RFP process advising of progress and significant developments. Staff will also report back to Council once the RFP closes with respect to the Operations & Maintenance Agreement. This is expected to occur in the Summer/Fall of 2020.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” – Tenant Support Strategy Fact Sheet

Appendix “B” – Community Connector Infographic

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