



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	December 4, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update and Other Metrolinx Initiatives (PED19100(a)) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Kris Jacobson (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6396
SUBMITTED BY:	Kris Jacobson Director, LRT Project Office Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

At their meeting of May 15, 2019, the General Issues Committee (GIC) received Report PED19100 which provided an overall update on the Hamilton B-Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project (ratified by Council on May 22, 2019). The Report provided high level information related to project schedule, project spending, proposed design modifications, property acquisition and community engagement activities. The Report also provided a general overview of how the project was expected to proceed over the next year (12 month look ahead).

After receiving Report PED19100, staff were directed to report back to Committee with a further update and more fulsome presentation respecting the status of the LRT project. As this Report and the accompanying presentation are intended to support/supplement the May 15, 2019 Report (PED19100), much of the information contained within that previous report will not be repeated. Instead, only new or updated information will be provided in this report to minimize confusion between the two versions.

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.

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In addition to the LRT project, staff would like to take this opportunity to update Committee on several on-going Metrolinx initiatives within the City including Regional Rail, the Confederation GO Station and the Frequent Rapid Transit Network.

Project Schedule

The project schedule remains unchanged. Bid submissions are expected in Spring 2020 with contract award occurring later in 2020. The schedule for “early works” projects related to utility, water and sewer relocation (funded by Metrolinx) will start in 2019 and 2020. City led “early works” projects include the following:

1. Main Street East, Delana Avenue to Rosewood Road – Watermain and sewer relocation;
2. Sherman Avenue, King Street East to south limit – Watermain relocation;
3. Wentworth Street, King Street East to Wilson Street – Watermain relocation; and,
4. York Boulevard, Dundurn Street to Hess Street – Bike lane and intersection improvements.

Project Spending

As of the end of September 2019, Metrolinx has spent \$162 M and committed another \$22 M towards the project (total spent + committed = \$184 M). This includes expenditures dating back to 2007, including costs to complete the original environmental assessment in 2011, the environmental assessment update in 2016/2017, preliminary and ongoing engineering design work, tender preparation, staff time and property acquisition. To date, Metrolinx has spent approximately \$80 M on property acquisitions.

Further and related to the above, staff were directed by GIC at the May 15, 2019 meeting to request a complete accounting of all Light Rail Transit (LRT) expenditures; delineating capital, operating, personnel and communications, from Metrolinx. While a response from Metrolinx is forthcoming, it’s important to note that all City expenditures to date have been approved by Metrolinx and comply with the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City and Metrolinx. A copy of Schedule A of the MOA, outlining the eligible cost criteria for the project, has been attached as Appendix “A” for reference.

Additionally, staff were directed by GIC at the May 15, 2019 meeting to provide documentation outlining the Province’s policy related to inflationary cost escalation and how that policy affects the Province’s original funding commitment. Staff have requested this information from the Province and will follow-up with a report to GIC once the information is received.

Property Acquisition

As outlined in previous reports, approximately 90 full property purchases and 300 partial property purchases (a few metres or less) will be required along the LRT corridor for construction. To date, 60 full properties have been purchased on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis. 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 6 months.

Community Engagement

The project team continues to engage and consult with various stakeholders, external agencies, neighbourhoods and the public. The Hamilton LRT Community Connectors completed two canvasses of the corridor in 2019 (spring and fall), visiting over 1,400 properties along the LRT route. Business owners provided valuable input through surveys that will help shape future business support and construction mitigation strategies before and during construction. Construction, parking, loading/deliveries and accessibility continue to be the main concerns expressed by those along the corridor. The next canvass will occur in spring 2020.

Travel Demand Management

Recognizing that construction will have a significant impact on the way people travel across the lower city, Metrolinx and the City have agreed to shift the responsibility for travel demand management (TDM) from the proponents to the City. Given the City’s experience with TDM and sustainable mobility programs as well as our local knowledge and relationships with many of the City’s largest employers through Smart Commute Hamilton, keeping the program “in-house” will result in better outcomes. The program will be administered through the Sustainable Mobility Section of the Transportation Planning and Parking Division who will work collaboratively with the LRT team (City and Metrolinx).

Collectively, the team will deliver community and workplace engagement, social marketing and infrastructure changes, as required, to minimize/mitigate the impacts that LRT will have on businesses, commuters and those living near the construction. The strategy will include personal travel planning, behaviour change and social marketing techniques to provide residents with vital project and routing information. All modes of transportation will be accommodated in travel planning, but efforts will be made to shift commuters to consider more sustainable modes of transportation such as walking, cycling, transit, and carpooling where possible.

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The first phase of this multi-year strategy is currently underway and involves research and data collection about existing travel patterns and collaboration with major employers and other stakeholders to help inform future phases of the strategy.

Other Metrolinx Related Initiatives

In addition to LRT, staff continue to work with our partners at Metrolinx to deliver a broad range of transportation initiatives that are vital to achieving the mobility and climate change goals of both the City and Province. The following will provide a brief update on these initiatives.

Regional Rail

In March 2018, Metrolinx adopted the 2041 Regional Transportation Plan (2041 RTP) for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The 2041 RTP identifies three Regional Rail projects within the City of Hamilton:

- Confederation GO Extension (West Harbour GO – Confederation GO);
- Niagara GO Service (Confederation GO – Niagara Falls GO); and,
- Lakeshore West 15-minute GO Service Extension (Aldershot GO – Hamilton GO).

Further details on these projects were provided by Metrolinx in their December 2018 GO Expansion Full Business Case. A summary of that Business Case and the implications for the City can be found in Report PED19061 received by Public Works Committee on March 19, 2019.

Since 2018, there have been several enhancements to rail service benefitting the City. Currently, there are a total of eight GO Rail trains that leave Hamilton in the morning peak and return in the afternoon peak; four from Hamilton GO Centre and four from West Harbour. There is no GO Rail service from Toronto to Hamilton in the morning or from Hamilton to Toronto in the evening.

Metrolinx is currently working with CN on the required infrastructure investments as well as long-term agreements needed to provide further service expansion into Hamilton. This includes completion of a third track along the CN corridor which will help unlock additional capacity.

Confederation Station

Work on the Confederation Station, located at Centennial Parkway and Goderich Road, has been on-going since 2018. In the short term, this station will serve GO Bus trips only. Work on the rail infrastructure to support a GO Rail station is continuing, and the current timeline for completion of a full GO Rail Station is 2022/2023.

Frequent Rapid Transit Network

Following the completion of the 2041 RTP, Metrolinx has been working through a process to prioritize the Frequent Rapid Transit Network (FRTN). Within the City of Hamilton, there are eight corridors either planned or in development. These include:

- Confederation Extension/Niagara Extension (GO Rail – Peak Only)
- Lakeshore West Extension to Hunter Street/West Harbour (GO Rail – 15 min two-way)
- B-Line Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- L-Line (Aldershot-Waterdown) (Priority Bus)
- A-Line (LRT/BRT)
- S-Line (Garner/Rymal/Centennial) (Priority Bus)
- T-Line (Mohawk) (Priority Bus)
- Dundas Connector (Priority Bus)

Of the projects comprising the BLAST network (excluding the B-Line which is already committed), the A-Line scores the highest in terms of advancing to the next stage.

As outlined in Report PW19083/FCS18048a, the A-Line is part of the City's request for funding under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). If successful, the funding would cover the initial investments in infrastructure, transit signal priority and stop enhancements along the corridor.

Staff will continue to provide updates on these projects as they progress.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" – Schedule A of Memorandum of Agreement, Capital Cost Eligibility Criteria Metrolinx-Owned Rapid Transit Projects.

KJ:jrb