

City of Hamilton Hate Mitigation Project Community Engagement Plan

For submission to the Audit, Finance & Administration
Committee (AF&A)
February 2020

Context

Hamilton's vision is to be "the best place to raise a child and age successfully." It also describes itself as a "safe, caring and supportive city" and a "thriving, vibrant place...where diversity and inclusivity are embraced and celebrated."¹

Given the rise in reported hate-related incidents in Hamilton, the City of Hamilton is exploring ways the municipality can contribute to ensuring the community lives up to these positive aspirations it holds for itself. It is doing so by learning from other communities' experiences, creating a supportive policy context, building on previous community recommendations and listening further to the community through an engagement process that will unfold during the late winter and spring of 2020.

City staff and the consulting team will engage the public and key community stakeholders to gather input on the current situation, within the context of articulating a vision of the kind of community people want to co-create. This feedback, along with additional best practices research, will be used to develop recommendations for the City of Hamilton's Hate Mitigation Policies and Procedures.

This document describes how that community engagement will occur.

Principles

The engagement process is being designed within the context of Hamilton's Public Engagement Charter and with the following core principles in mind:

- People should be able to participate in decisions that impact them
- Participation should be easy, with opportunities designed to be accessible and inclusive

¹ Values as articulated in *Our Future Hamilton*

- Requests for input should be meaningful, such that the feedback will actually influence decision-making and build on previous recommendations rather than simply repeating them
- The City will adopt the stance of a listener
- Engagement will be designed to incorporate a variety of perspectives in as balanced and neutral a way as possible.
- The plan will be flexible within fixed resource constraints.

Suggested Engagement Process (March to May 2020)

Phase 1 – Initial Co-creation of Possibilities

Format	Purpose	Specifically whom?
1. Focus groups	To gather initial input and to develop/test questions.	Racialized, faith based, Indigenous and LGBTQ2S+ groups.
2. Online survey	Anonymous feedback throughout the engagement phase, with content informed by initial focus groups. Sage Solutions will administer the survey, City will promote it.	Anyone, but with targeted marketing to build awareness and reach.
3. Equip local leaders to host conversations	To increase reach and allow conversations to happen with trusted peers.	We provide questions to local groups and they send us back notes summarizing responses. Also invite their folks to complete survey. Incentives?
4. On-site interviews	To reach out to people where they are, who may not otherwise initiate engagement.	"On the street" conversations at public gathering places in urban and rural communities across Hamilton. Invitations to complete online survey will be included.
5. Key informant telephone interviews	To reach key leaders in greater depth, particularly those who have been unable to participate otherwise.	As required/advised.

6. Community events	City staff and consulting team to attend existing community events, with permission, and listen well.	TBD
7. One-on-one interviews with known activists	To hear from those known to be directly involved in extremist action	City to provide names and facilitate safe contact.
8. Collaborative white boards	To make engagement more visible, friendly, easy.	Ask a different question each week for 6 weeks – Consulting team to provide questions, City staff take photos of responses in supervised public locations such as libraries and community centres.

Phase 2 – Validation

Format	Purpose	Specifically whom?
1. “Advisory Group” check-in	Sense-making workshop to review findings thus far.	Informal advisory group as per project kick off.
2. Town Hall meetings	Present preliminary findings and recommendations for an additional round of input/refinement.	Open to the public.

Information to share during engagement opportunities

- Definitions
- Context for this project – why it’s happening and what the goals are, such as:
 - Listening
 - Shared understanding
 - Public education
 - Build trust
 - Live up to our values
 - Equip our leaders to lead well
 - Develop robust policy
- In order to increase:

- Public safety
- Welcoming public spaces
- Higher community trust
- Living up to community values, including of inclusion, diversity, safety
- Expectations/boundaries
- Educational messaging

Sample questions to ask during engagement

- What has been your **experience** with hate crimes and hateful behaviours in Hamilton?
- What **responses** to it have you experienced or witnessed?
- **If you witnessed** a hate crime such as ... what do you think you would do?
- **How extensive do you think this problem is?**
- What do you think are the **root causes** of hateful behaviours in Hamilton?
- Hamilton has described itself as a community that is safe and caring, where diversity and inclusion are embraced and celebrated. How closely are we **living up to those values?**
- What do you **wish were true** about Hamilton when it comes building an inclusive city?
- What is your **best advice** about specifically what should be done to create that desired future?
- **Whose responsibility** is it to do what you've suggested?

Next Steps

1. Confirm representation of various audiences (organizations and individuals) including:
 - Racialized communities
 - Faith-based groups
 - LGBTQ2S+
 - Indigenous people
 - School boards and postsecondary institutions
 - Yellow vests and other extremist groups
 - Anti-hate groups
 - Police services
 - Newcomers
 - General public
 - Others

2. Draft specific content and facilitation plans for each component
3. Confirm roles and responsibilities of Sage Solutions staff and City staff for each element
4. Co-create a communications/outreach plan, with related collaterals