

ENTERPRISE

2.5

City of Hamilton

**Reimagining Public
Participation Draft**

May 19, 2022



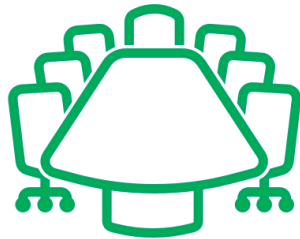
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[WHAT WE DID]

For this process we interviewed:



7 City Councillors, plus
the Mayor



8 members of the City
of Hamilton Senior
Leadership team



18 community
stakeholder
organizations

The process

- Assembled a service team for the City of Hamilton leaning on those with experience in public engagements and with the most local knowledge.
- Reviewed and provided input on the list of recommended community stakeholders to engage.
- Drafted questions that were targeted to each stakeholder group that recognized the inherent blind spots of our team and role in the process.
- Conducted one-on-one interviews with key partners and participants of the public engagement process.
- Compiled and analyzed responses to identify themes and areas of interest that were both positive and negative.
- Created a summary report that will be shared with Council at a later date.



[WHAT WE HEARD]

What is consultation?

The definition of consultation as told by interviewees

TO INFORM

People living in the city must be made aware — or at the very least have the avenues to be made aware — of the changes that are being proposed for their community, whether it is a new structure for a playground, the realignment of an intersection or the re-shaping of city boundaries.

TO LISTEN

Collecting thoughts and opinions from the community on a policy proposal or public project is critically important. Engaging citizens in the decision-making process is part of an open and transparent government, and helps residents build a sense of place in their community.

TO FOLLOW UP

Consultation is more than just the process of getting input. There are questions about how that input is going to be used, and ultimately the results of the consultation.



General Themes

- A consultation doesn't have to be about a specific policy proposal or project.
- The “Feedback Loop” is an area where the City can use improvement.
- There is a broad feeling that input provided ends up in a void and has no impact on recommendations or decisions.
- There is a feeling that Councillors often don't want to hear what residents and stakeholders have to say.
- Too often, a consultation is designed to meet bare minimum statutory requirements.
- The City can better utilize the engagement and digital tools available.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- Not enough representation; not enough authentic, genuine respect towards the needs of different, diverse groups.
- A broad call to engage groups who are under-represented, without specific outreach to desired communities, will likely be unsuccessful.
- City does not think about who it is trying to reach, and the best mechanism for reaching that constituency.

Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

- There are many engagement tools that could be used to encourage participating, but the City only uses a few.
- Lack of translation services, physical accessibility accommodations, closed captioning and/or sign language is a big barrier.
- Lack of diversity in City departments and on City Council; tends to reflect the groups/individuals who are consulted.

Perception of Public Trust

- City not seen to heed the advice or input of residents.
- The effort to hear has to be seen to be turned into action.
- It is part of human nature that those who are opposed to the final decision will feel that their voice wasn't heard.
- But when it gets to the level of City Council, there is definitely a perception that the relationship is paternalistic — Council will tell you what is best.
- There are good examples of neighbourhood planning projects incorporating public feedback into their reports, and public housing was cited as being effective at listening to the voices of its residents.

Our Team



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