



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	May 16, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Update (PED22117) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable.

INFORMATION

A broad range of project activities is currently underway on the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project. This information report provides a general update on project activities that are being undertaken in connection with the Project. Being the first LRT Sub-Committee report of this Term of Council, staff has set out a broad history of the Project from its initial funding announcement in May 2021 to the present.

Project Funding

On May 13, 2021, the Federal and Provincial Governments announced a \$3.4B joint funding investment to build the Hamilton LRT project. The LRT will run from McMaster University through the downtown core to Eastgate Square in Stoney Creek.

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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 LRT project. The Province will be responsible for capital costs associated with the construction of the LRT project, and life-cycle costs. Metrolinx will remain the owner of the project and will be responsible for project management functions, such as design, construction, property acquisition and public consultation. To take advantage of the coordination of works due to the reconstruction of the corridor, the City may add additional City infrastructures with the LRT project, at its cost.

The MOU provides that the City will pay for Operations and Maintenance for the LRT project (excluding the life-cycle costs). The City will be entitled to all farebox revenues and certain non-farebox revenues. Additionally, the LRT project will be included as part of Hamilton's overall ridership for the purposes of gas tax calculations on substantially the same basis as bus ridership.

Other Agreements

The MOU contemplates a series of schedules or agreements that would be negotiated and executed after the initial signing of the MOU. Council has provided authority or delegated authority for the following:

- Staffing Agreement (Report PED21176/CM21012/LS21034 Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) Project Memorandum of Understanding approved on September 8, 2021);
- Communications Protocol (Appendix A of Report PED21176(a) Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update approved on March 23, 2022);
- Real Estate Protocol (Protocol Respecting Property Interests to and from the City of Hamilton) (Appendix B of Report PED21176(a) Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update approved on March 23, 2022)
- Governance Terms of Reference (Appendix C of Report PED21176(a) Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update approved on March 23, 2022)

The remaining schedules, agreements, and protocols, include the following:

- Municipal Funding Agreement
- Commissioning and Acceptance Protocol
- Fare and Non-Fare Revenue Matters
- Municipal Infrastructure Agreement
- Permits, Licenses and Approvals
- Dispute Resolution Protocol

As stated in Report PED21176(a), Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreements Update, staff intend to report back to Council on the execution of the above agreements in the first quarter of 2023.

Project Procurement

Metrolinx is currently investigating the option of a two-stage procurement model for the Hamilton LRT project: the first stage being the utility and roadworks, and the second stage involves LRT infrastructure such as guideway, traction powered substation, and the operations maintenance and storage facility (OMSF). Metrolinx will lead the procurement process. It is anticipated the procurement process for the first stage (utility and roadworks) will start sometime this year, with major construction beginning in 2024.

While Metrolinx works on a procurement process, Metrolinx will also work with the City and third-party agencies for the design and construction of early works for the years 2022 and 2023. Metrolinx and the Province are currently investigating the overall project completion timelines, which will be provided to the LRT Sub-Committee when available.

Early Works

Prior to contract award for the LRT project, certain discrete early works projects, both on corridor and off-corridor, are planned. These works will help facilitate the handover of the corridor to the contractor/Project Co. Off-corridor watermain works, for example, are essential before the construction of major works along certain sections of the LRT corridor to ensure minimal disruption to water services. Currently, the following early works are being investigated:

1. Wentworth – Construction of a 500mm and 200mm watermain;
2. Sherman – Construction of a 300mm watermain; and,
3. Rosewood/Main – Construction of a 1200mm watermain.

The above works will be 100% funded by Metrolinx as part of the LRT project, including all off-corridor watermain works. It is anticipated that the design and construction of all off-corridor watermains and associated works will be undertaken by the City on behalf of Metrolinx. The work will generally be done on a like-for-like basis, but there will be an opportunity for the City to fund betterments of its infrastructure, e.g. increased capacity. The details are currently being negotiated with Metrolinx.

Property Acquisitions

The LRT project requires approximately 90 full property purchases and 300 partial property purchases (a few metres or less) for construction. To date, 60 full properties have been purchased on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis. City staff understand that Metrolinx will continue to negotiate on a “willing seller/willing buyer” basis, but will rely on the expropriation process, if it is necessary. Metrolinx will negotiate its own third-party real estate deals without the use of the City’s real estate or legal services.

Demolitions

To date, Metrolinx has demolished 30 buildings on the LRT corridor, in the interest of community safety and to prepare for LRT construction. Demolition activities will continue through the spring of this year. Metrolinx hand-delivers notices to adjacent residences and businesses impacted by this work and works with City staff to create awareness of neighbourhood impacts, including sidewalk and lane closures or HSR stop relocations.

Community Engagement and Communications

Since September 2021, Metrolinx has reconnected with many stakeholders to provide updates on the project. As the LRT project advances, Metrolinx and City of Hamilton LRT staff continue to meet with stakeholders and community organizations to share project updates and answer questions. Metrolinx has organized and attended various meetings and sessions in recent months to provide updates on LRT, both by request and as part of their re-engagement strategy.

Metrolinx and City LRT staff met with stakeholder organizations to discuss project updates and concerns related to the project. Questions were primarily related to LRT-adjacent roadway improvements, construction impacts, traffic and parking, and the OMSF.

International Village BIA (March 30)

- Construction timing and duration
- Traffic pattern changes and parking
- Use of alleyways for delivery, waste collection
- Business support opportunities (signage, wayfinding, marketing)

Ward 1 Neighbourhoods (April 7)

- Dundurn/King intersection improvements
- Operations, Maintenance and Storage Facility – LRV access, street improvements, traffic
- Guideway and platform safety
- Community engagement and outreach opportunities

McMaster Institute for Transportation & Logistics (MITL) Advisory Board: Re Truck Route Plan and LRT (April 19)

- City's truck route plan and LRT
- Campus Master Plan; connection and interaction of LRT and how it will impact campus life

Metrolinx and City LRT communications and engagement teams meet regularly to discuss engagement and pop-up opportunities to share project information with the community. City and Metrolinx staff will continue to collect community feedback and identify concerns and will work collaboratively to address opportunities and mitigate issues.

Additionally, in early April, transit shelter advertisements were installed at various HSR stops throughout the city to heighten awareness about the LRT project. Ads are also being installed at bike share hubs this spring.

Metrolinx is working with the City to reinstate the Community Connector program with the goal of canvassing the properties on the corridor later this summer. Metrolinx is also planning to open a community office on the corridor in 2022. More details will be shared over the coming months.

Affordable Housing and Community Benefits

City staff have continued to emphasize the importance of affordable housing and community benefits. Given the importance of this issue, the MTO and Metrolinx have acknowledged the critical importance of both of these in the MOU. Recital G of the MOU states:

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.

The Province will be initiating the working group meetings to begin exploring approaches for meeting the above objective.

At its meeting of April 6, 2022, Council directed through a motion, as follows:

That staff, in collaboration with the federal and provincial Governments and Metrolinx, be directed to establish a strategic land disposition and or acquisition plan along the Hamilton LRT corridor for the purpose of planning to deliver future municipal services including, but not limited to, parks, as well as non-profit affordable housing and report back to the General Issues Committee.

Staff in the Corporate Real Estate Office are finalizing a work program for the development of the Council-directed LRT lands strategy. Staff throughout all departmental divisions and agencies are being engaged and organized into working groups to ensure a comprehensive approach to identifying City requirements and metrics, and dialogue with key stakeholders has been initiated.

Staffing

As per the provisions of the draft Staffing Agreement, the City has recently submitted the draft interim 2022 staffing work plan to Metrolinx. The workplan includes both fully-dedicated staff as well as “task-based” staff. Dedicated LRT staff will spend 100% of their time on the LRT Project, and that the cost of such staff will be included as a Metrolinx project cost. Task-based LRT staff and consultants, were billing their time to the LRT project, based on actual time spent.

In Report PED21176(a) *Light Rail Transit (LRT) Agreement Update*, which was approved on March 23, 2022, it was noted that the City’s 2022 initial staffing requirement includes the following full-time positions:

- Director, LRT Project
- Manager, Communications LRT Project
- Manager, Design-LRT
- Manager, LRT Technical Services and Approvals Coordination
- Senior Project Manager, Subsurface Coordination
- Senior Project Manager, Water Distribution & Wastewater Collection
- Senior Project Manager, Urban Design and Heritage
- Senior Project Manager, Transportation Engineering
- Law Clerk
- Administrative Assistant

It was also noted in that report that the following positions, task-based LRT staff and consultants, are billing their time to the LRT project on a time-spent basis:

- Solicitor (full-time)
- Human Resources Specialist
- Business Administrator
- Senior Project Manager, Transportation Planning and Modelling
- Strategic Advisor, Mike Murray, Murray Advisory Services, (consultant)

It is envisioned that key City dedicated staff (e.g. the Director, LRT Project) will be co-located with Metrolinx staff at the Metrolinx offices at the Hamilton GO Centre at 36 Hunter Street East in Hamilton.

Additionally, the City and Metrolinx are currently reviewing what additional staffing needs the City may require in connection with the LRT Project in the short and medium terms.

Next Steps (12 Month Look Ahead)

Over the next 12 months, staff will engage in the following activities related to the LRT project:

- Recruiting the City dedicated staff in accordance with Metrolinx approvals;
- Leading the design and construction of off-corridor watermain works;
- Supporting Metrolinx and its consultants in the advancement of LRT project design;
- Developing schedules, protocols and agreements of the MOU;
- Providing City data to support Metrolinx's in modelling, business case development and other support for early/enabling works as required by Metrolinx and its consultants;
- Reviewing, approving and permitting the third-party utility works in the City's right of way as part of the early/enabling works;
- Supporting Metrolinx in the procurement process by participating in the development of project specifications, 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;
- Streamlining the City's standards and processes to expedite the City review and approval process for the LRT project; and,
- Working with the Province on affordable housing and community benefits programs.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Not applicable.