

(Re)envision’s Guiding Principles and Key Activities Update (Re)envision Guiding Principles and Action Planning

Update October 2021

(Re)envision the HSR has been underway since 2019, and while the pandemic altered programmatic processes, the important work continued once appropriate adjustments to formats could be made.

1. Guiding Principles:

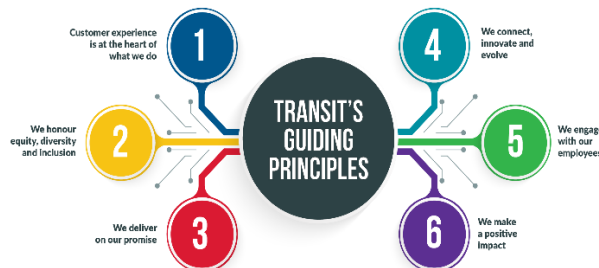
One of the most important tasks has been the development of 6 Guiding Principles that will shape the way transit is delivered in the City of Hamilton. The guiding principles were first made public in Information Report (PW20005(a)) in January 2020 and are listed below:

- Customer experience is at the heart of what we do
- We honour equity, diversity and inclusion
- We deliver on our promise
- We connect, innovate and evolve
- We engage with employees to improve customer experience
- We make a positive impact on communities, environment, and economy

Engagement activities were both digital, using the City’s corporate digital engagement platform and virtual, holding virtual meetings with dozens of community stakeholders and key divisions in the City such as Economic Development, Transportation Planning, and Transportation Operations and Maintenance Planning.

Digital engagement on the Guiding Principles revealed that the majority of responses (80%) were positive and described them as “excellent”, “thoughtful”, “inclusive”, “progress”, “foundational”, and “ambitious”. The 20% of responses that were critical included descriptors such as “not enough”, “unfocussed” and “vague”. Virtual engagement meetings with both internal and external stakeholders also revealed a high level of support, and that stakeholders are keen to hear about more detailed action plans.

Arising from these engagement activities, the Guiding Principles have been substantially validated, and will now form the foundation for action planning activities that are underway. Action plans will be shared in January 2022 as part of Transit Day.



As part of (Re)envision, there has been a focus on innovation and new ideas. The next section highlights some of these projects that are currently underway as a result of (Re)envision.

2. HSR myRide (one-year pilot in Waterdown)

The HSR myRide on-demand pilot launched in Waterdown on September 7, 2021 and was developed to test the feasibility of using advancing technologies as a potential solution to issues and opportunities identified through (Re)envision community input. Business stakeholders in Waterdown identified needs not met on existing conventional fixed route transit. HSR myRide places the customer experience at the heart of project. One of the goals of the project is to improve the customer experience through more direct trips, quicker journeys and shorter wait times.

The launch of the initiative included visits to over 60 business and community stakeholders in Waterdown, letters to 300 organizations, and an education bus for the first week that drove the former Route 18 Waterdown in order to ease the transition for customers. HSR myRide ambassadors assisted 60 customers in Waterdown by sharing news of the new service and demonstrating the app’s functionality. Enhanced customer service call taker training included booking rides for those who do not have smartphones or digital access to the app.

During HSR myRide’s first 21 operating days, 613 customers registered for the service and 360 customers tried the service at least once. Of the 360 customers who used the service, 65% have become repeat customers, requesting an average of six trips. More than 500 in-app reviews were received in September, with a 76% approval rating.

In addition, key metrics are trending positively including: an increased coverage area; improved on time performance; shortened customer travel times and trip lengths; reductions in total kilometers driven, hours operated, resources required (FTE and fleet), and service cost.

Staff will provide Council with a further update on Transit day with the findings from the first four months of operations. In addition, a recommendation report will be presented to Council in Q2 2022.

3. Pole-bench Pilot

Commencing in April 2021, pole and bench combinations were installed at existing stop locations throughout the city which meet the criteria of not having enough space for conventional benches. Customers will be able to test and provide further feedback on one of the 36 locations over the coming months.

The pole-bench pilot project was developed as an experimental solution to issues and opportunities identified through (Re)envision community input. Specifically, customers identified that comfort and amenities at bus stops are important factors when choosing to use transit services. Based on this feedback, and to improve the customer experience at existing bus stops where conventional benches cannot be installed due to a lack of space, HSR is pilot-testing a prototype combination of a bus stop pole and a bench for customer seating.

Feedback on the pilot is collected through a formal survey, accessed by QR codes located at the pilot stops, with 110 responses already received. The feedback will help evaluate the pilot

and ensures the voice of the customer is captured and assessed. The project has also featured social media engagement, with more than 500 interactions so far.

4. Travel Log Program

A travel log tracks the daily travel patterns of a customer over time, including where they board, disembark and transfer. A more robust understanding of how a customer uses the system provides better datasets for decision making and route planning. To conduct a travel log project, individuals are recruited to voluntarily participate in either a digital or printed travel log study. The information collected improves understanding of customer trips, transfers, and other travel observations.

HSR’s first travel log study took place in June 2021 and thirty-two customers were recruited for a two to four-week period. The study revealed that for every fare paid, 1.2 rides are taken within the two-hour transfer window. A larger study will begin in November 2021 to confirm the transfer ratio. Once validated, the ratio will be applied to more accurately calculate HSR’s ridership, noting that use of a transfer is not currently computed in ridership calculations.

Travel log findings are an important aspect of understanding the customer journey. HSR will periodically repeat these studies, no less than three times per year, to monitor changing travel patterns during the recovery from the pandemic.

5. What’s Next: Future Engagement and Voice of Customer Activities

(Re)envision provides a platform for internal and external stakeholders by giving an ongoing voice to customers. (Re)envision also identifies or amplifies strategic and collaborative opportunities that will ultimately grow ridership and strengthen the city’s overall sustainability. HSR is already embedding customer feedback and outreach activities into key projects.

Engagement activities will target key audiences including youth, students, seniors, persons with disabilities, non-digitals, newcomers, employers, and community organizations. Examples of planned activities include pop-up events at key locations (e.g.: terminals and major transit stops), educational events and field studies.

In addition to embedding the voice of customer into key projects, HSR is piloting a customer satisfaction survey project, conducting program surveys, developing a customer panel, and planning engagement activities to support the reconfiguration of the HSR network.

Engagement activities will continue to be virtual (digitally and by phone) until in-person engagement activities are safe to resume. HSR will base all engagement activities on the corporate public engagement framework and best practices.