



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 20, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton Light Rail Transit Project Communications and Engagement Update (PED24150) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

N/A

INFORMATION

This report is being provided for information and provides a general update on LRT communications and engagement activities, as well as next steps associated with future project milestones.

BACKGROUND

Communications Protocol

The Communications Protocol, Schedule I to the Memorandum of Understanding, sets out the roles of the Ministry of Transportation, Metrolinx and the City for all communications with respect to the LRT Project. The Ministry of Transportation, working closely with Metrolinx and in collaboration with the City, will be responsible for coordination of major announcements and media events. Additionally, the Ministry of Transportation has overall lead and responsibility for final project communications.

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.

The protocol also acknowledges the City's need and ability to speak to LRT-related impacts to its own line of business as well as the need for the City to play a significant role on project related updates as needed. The protocol also recognizes Council's right to speak to LRT issues individually or as a group as needed, in line with their duties as elected officials in the community.

City and Metrolinx Communications and Engagement staff work collaboratively to prepare and share project information through their respective channels. The Communications Protocol for the pre-procurement period defines roles, responsibilities and expectations for both parties. Below highlights some of these roles. For the full document, please see Appendix A to Report PED24150, Project Development and Pre-Procurement Phase: Communications Protocol (January 2022).

Project Specific Communications:

- *The Ministry of Transportation, working with Metrolinx, has overall lead and responsibility for final project communications.*
- *Local communications are encouraged; however, for project success it will be integral for the Ministry of Transportation and Metrolinx to discharge overall leadership and coordination role.*
- *Hamilton City Council will be updated regularly throughout the project through one-on-one briefings and Council reports/presentations. Depending on the nature of the update, the parties will decide who is most appropriate to deliver the update.*
 - *It is within City Council's purview to discuss and deliberate impacts of the LRT during Committee and Council meetings.*
- *Metrolinx will take the lead on responses to the community and stakeholder inquiries about the project... If the inquiry is more appropriate for the City to respond to, Metrolinx will forward the inquiry to the City and requests to be copied on the response.*

Community Engagement

The City's LRT Project Office has staff dedicated to engaging the community and providing information in coordination with Metrolinx Community Engagement per the established Communications Protocol.

The goals and responsibilities of the community engagement function for Hamilton LRT are:

- To heighten awareness of the project and share information with elected officials, community/business stakeholders and communities;

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- To build and maintain collaborative relationships in the community with residents, businesses, organizations, and elected officials and their staff;
- To develop and implement strategic community engagement plans. Facilitate public conversations, information and engagement sessions;
- To represent community and stakeholder interests to internal project teams; and,
- To serve as frontline liaisons with stakeholders and elected officials, providing project information, conflict resolution and resident and business support before, during and after construction.

Types of Engagement

- Elected official briefings;
- Townhalls and open houses (virtual and in-person);
- BIA walking tours;
- Local partnerships;
- Printed materials, mailers, construction/demolition notices;
- Stakeholder meetings (e.g., BIAs, HCBN, Hamilton Chamber, etc.);
- Metrolinx ‘Transit in Your Community’ school presentations;
- Community events and pop ups;
 - Festivals (e.g., Open Streets, Supercrawl);
 - Library pop-ups;
 - Park pop-ups; and,
 - Bike Day and City of Hamilton cycling events (year-round);
- Metrolinx LRT Community Office;
- Social media and email newsletter; and,
- Corridor/neighbourhood canvasses.

Roles and Responsibilities

	Metrolinx	City of Hamilton
Event Coordination and Planning		
Event Staffing		
Townhalls and Stakeholder Presentations		
Stakeholder Meetings		
Community Benefits and Supports Program		
Resident and Media Inquiries		
Transit in Your Community		
Social Media		
LRT Webpage		
Major Announcements and Milestones		

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	Metrolinx	City of Hamilton
Newsletters		
Elected Official Briefings		
Council Briefings and Communication		
Community Connector canvass		

Yearly Engagement Overview (Metrolinx-provided)

Type of Engagement Activity	Number of Events	Number of Engagements, Persons Reached
Transit in Your Community sessions (2023-24 school year)	48	2351
LRT Pop-Ups, Events, Festivals (2024 YTD)	50	2334

The above data is collected by Metrolinx as the community engagement lead for the Hamilton LRT project. In addition to the engagement activities above, City staff and Metrolinx continue to meet with elected officials, community and business stakeholders.

Hamilton LRT Community Office

Metrolinx opened a Community Office in June 2024, at the Royal Connaught building, 116 King Street East. At the time of this report, Metrolinx Community Engagement staff is available Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. for walk-ins, and available by appointment. The Community Office is another way to engage the community in addition to events and canvasses, and will be used for hosting pop-ups, small events, and stakeholder meetings as the project progresses.

City and Metrolinx staff meet regularly to discuss engagement opportunities and opportunities to collaborate on information sharing through City and Metrolinx channels. Per the Communications Protocol, the City’s LRT Project Office coordinates information sharing through Metrolinx, triages resident inquiries and media inquiries where applicable, and notifies Councillors of local works, such as road closures or neighbourhood impacts related to early works led by the City. The City’s LRT Project Office attends and coordinates stakeholder meetings, represents the project at townhalls and information sessions, contributes to staff reports, and coordinates information sharing through City channels, such as web, social media and notes to Council. The City’s Manager, Communication and Engagement, LRT, and LRT Project Office staff as required, participates in or assists in the coordination of the below:

- Staffing events and pop-ups;

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- Elected official engagement;
- Document review for LRT project reports or projects with LRT-related information;
- Issues management, resident inquiries, media relations;
- Collaboration with internal teams, such as Sustainable Mobility, Transportation; and,
- Coordination of information sharing through Metrolinx, including social media and web.

Resident Inquiries, Media Requests

The Hamilton LRT Project Office manages and triages inquiries best suited to Metrolinx or City staff to answer and sets up appropriate project spokespersons to interview or respond to media.

The joint Communications Protocol for inquiries related to the Hamilton LRT project defines responsibilities for resident communications and engagement. City staff work collaboratively with Metrolinx community engagement staff in a shared office location and meet weekly to discuss issues and opportunities.

City Communications Channels

The below are opportunities and channels through which the City's LRT Project Office can share information with the community. Metrolinx-led project and campaign information will be shared by the Province and distributed by City staff per the approved Communications Protocol.

- City's News Roundup email newsletter;
- Social Media (@cityofhamilton – X, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram);
- Communications Update (web);
- Council and staff communications; and,
- Project updates to LRT Subcommittee.

Business Engagement and Support

Overview

In collaboration with City staff, Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas, Metrolinx is in the early stages of preparing business support strategies. Future business supports for the construction period may include signage and wayfinding programs, which will be coordinated with businesses and Business Improvement Areas. More information will be shared as the project progresses and construction schedule is known.

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The provision of Business Supports is part of Metrolinx 4 pillar strategy for community benefits. Please see Appendix “C” attached to Report PED24150.

Inter-departmental collaboration

LRT Project Office staff continue to work with Economic Development staff, including participating in the Downtown West Harbour Coordinating Committee, to share relevant updates, cascade information to the City’s Business Improvement Area liaison, discuss short and long-term placemaking and public art opportunities and connect with other relevant divisions in the organization, to ensure visibility of ongoing or future engagement opportunities.

Business Engagement Surveys – Metrolinx Canvass

In early 2024, Metrolinx community engagement in Hamilton conducted two business surveys, collecting information from businesses located in the International Village BIA (downtown), and businesses located on Frid Street, near the future LRT run-in track and OMSF site. The survey featured questions regarding current parking, loading and delivery operations which will help inform the planning and design of Hamilton LRT.

Business Support Next Steps

LRT Project Office staff brought forward a report to the Open for Business Subcommittee (April 2024), see Appendix “D” to Report PED24150, outlining business support programs and next steps. Conversations and collaboration continue as City and Metrolinx staff gather information and identify potential business support opportunities and measures to help mitigate the impacts of future construction. A comprehensive strategy to support local businesses will develop as the project evolves. More information will be available once construction schedules and timelines are confirmed. The delivery of Metrolinx-led business supports and initiatives will not be implemented until construction plans and schedules are complete.

Future Engagement Opportunities

There will be many additional opportunities to engage, inform and support the community as the project evolves. These engagement activities may include:

- Construction Liaison Committees – to be established by Metrolinx in advance of major construction;
- BIA Wayfinding and Signage programs – working with BIAs and area commercial districts to identify wayfinding opportunities during construction;
- Shop Local campaigns and events; and,
- Partnership with Chambers of Commerce and BIAs.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PED24150 - Project Development and Pre-Procurement Phase:
Communications Protocol (January 2022)

Appendix "B" to Report PED24150 - Memorandum of Understanding

Appendix "C" to Report PED24150 - Metrolinx Community Benefits and Supports
Program Overview (June 2023)

Appendix "D" to Report PED24150 – Open for Business Subcommittee Report, April 8,
2024