



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Open for Business Sub-Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 8, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Light Rail Transit Corridor Business Update (PED24074) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Jessica Scott (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7208
SUBMITTED BY:	Abdul Shaikh Director, Hamilton LRT Project Office Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the October 26, 2023 Open for Business Sub-Committee meeting, Council directed Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) staff to report back on the plan for working with the small business community along the LRT corridor and terminal points leading up to and during the construction.

INFORMATION

As the project owner and responsible for project delivery, Metrolinx has developed a program of supports and benefits to the community, which may include programs dedicated to employment opportunities and supporting local business during construction. These programs are typically included in Metrolinx capital contracts.

LRT project staff continue to work with other City divisions to continue to build mitigation strategies, update data and seek feedback, attend committees, and connect with community partners as plans and opportunities for future collaboration are identified.

Community Benefits and Supports Program – Metrolinx

Metrolinx Community Benefits and Supports will be implemented and delivered through a four-pillar program to mitigate impacts on local communities and businesses.

- Pillar 1: Employment Opportunities - Promotes apprenticeship training and workforce development opportunities for local communities and equity seeking groups including 10% hiring targets for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Colour), women, apprentices, and requirements for an anti-racism policy.
- Pillar 2: Local Business Supports - Builds and fosters relationships with local businesses to minimize and alleviate business disruptions and reduce the economic impacts as a result of construction, for example through shop local initiatives and procurement from local businesses.
- Pillar 3: Public Realm Improvements - During the design and development phase of our projects, we are finding ways to leave the surroundings in an improved state when construction of the project creates temporary disruptions.
- Pillar 4: Community Improvement Supports - Working with communities as a connector to the right decision-makers to make improvements to public spaces surrounding transit project construction, where no funding is available.

Community and Stakeholder Engagement Activities

- Walking tours in International Village and Downtown Business Improvement Areas;
- Collaboration with corridor Business Improvement Areas, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce on future business support strategies;
- Briefings with local stakeholders, including major employers;
- Regular email newsletters (Metrolinx);
- Dedicated LRT Communications and Engagement staff available to residents, stakeholders and the business community; and,
- Metrolinx Hamilton LRT Community Office at The Royal Connaught (opening soon).

Community Connector Canvass

The LRT Community Connector Program was launched in May 2016. The Community Connector team, made up of a diverse group of individuals from across the city, is committed to visiting every affected property on the corridor. Their role is to inform, educate and engage property owners and gather feedback to help inform LRT plans. Connectors also staff event outreach booths and pop-ups at residential towers on the corridor to share project information. Following re-initiation of the project, the program was relaunched in Fall 2022. The Community Connector program is staffed and overseen by Metrolinx.

In Winter 2024, the Community Connectors conducted a survey in the International Village Business Improvement Area to collect data from businesses about current parking, loading and delivery operations to help inform LRT planning and design. The LRT project team is also developing an alleyway strategy and will use the data collected to inform future plans.

Additional canvasses of the LRT corridor, and adjacent commercial corridors, in 2024 will be determined by Metrolinx and shared by LRT project office staff when known.

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.

In collaboration with City staff, Chambers of Commerce and Business Improvement Areas, Metrolinx is developing engagement opportunities and future business preparedness sessions. Future business supports for the construction period may include signage and wayfinding programs, which will be coordinated with businesses and Business Improvement Areas.

LRT project office staff will continue to cascade information to the City's Business Improvement Area liaison, and other relevant divisions in the organization, to ensure visibility of ongoing or future engagement and note available business preparedness sessions, programs and opportunities as available.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PED24074 – Hamilton LRT Project Update & Community Benefits and Supports Program Overview
(Metrolinx – June 2, 2023, LRT Sub-Committee)