



Volunteer Advisory Committee Review

Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee

November 21, 2024

Meaningful civic engagement is...

- A community-driven process to shape community
- Active participation in inclusive decision-making processes
- Open, collaborative dialogue, and engagement
- Focused on outcomes, capacity building, and civic education



Empowering individuals to work in partnership with the City to shape their communities.

What are Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs)?

- Comprised of passionate and civically-engaged residents (volunteers)
- They provide advice and recommendations on issues and policies
- Diverse in expertise on a range of local priorities
- Council-directed, supported by clerks and departmental staff
- Local Boards, subject to unique liability and expectations
- City of Hamilton currently has 14 VACs

Current Organization of VACs

Audit, Finance & Administration:

- Committee Against Racism
- Women and Gender Equity
- Immigrant and Refugees
- Hamilton Indigenous Advisory
- Mundialization

General Issues:

- Arts Advisory
- Climate Change

Emergency & Community Services:

- Hamilton Veterans
- Housing and Homelessness
- LGBTQ Advisory
- Seniors Advisory

Public Works:

- Hamilton Cycling
- Keep Hamilton Clean and Green

Public Health: Food Advisory

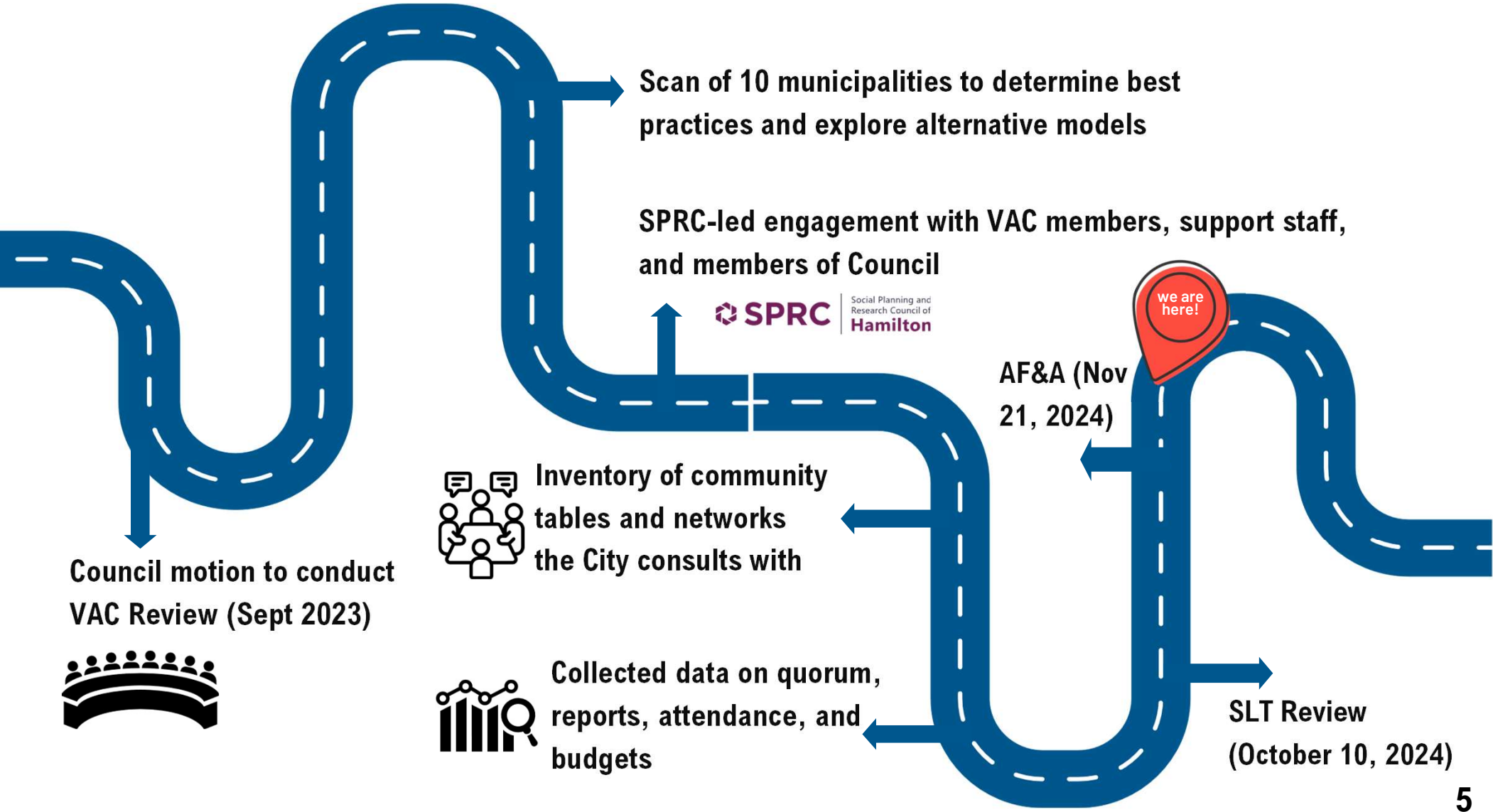
Purpose of VAC Review

- Last review conducted in 2015
- Motion to review VACs passed by Council in September 2023
- Supported by Term of Council Priorities
- Aligned with Public Engagement Policy



Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency

Outcome 2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving



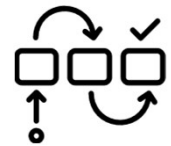
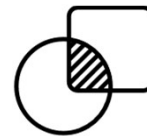
What We Heard



Feedback showed significant need for change along key theme areas of:

- 1 Meaningful Engagement
- 2 Transparency
- 3 Clarity

- 4 Culture
- 5 Structural Changes



What We Learned

- Trends show other municipalities reducing number of VACs
 1. Disbanding advisory committees
 2. Reformatted advisory committees
 3. Alignment with civic/public engagement best practices
- Training, orientation, and staff support is key to success
- Local Boards which VACs were recently determined to be, subject to higher liability

What We Recommend

- Eliminate VACs duplicating efforts of other community tables:
 - Committee Against Racism (Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Circle of Beads, Hamilton Anti-Hate Coalition)
 - Food Advisory Committee (Roundtable for Poverty Reduction)
 - Immigrants and Refugees Advisory Committee (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council)
 - Mundialization Advisory Committee (Planning and Economic Development Department / Government Relations Division)

What We Recommend

- Transition remaining VACs to Community Liaison Groups
 1. Aligned with municipal best practices
 2. Reduce barriers to meaningful engagement
 3. Better integrated with staff work plans
 4. Aligned with Public Engagement Policy and guidelines
- Increased training support for staff, VAC Chairs, and members
 1. Inclusive of liability and decorum expectations
 2. Public engagement principles and levels of engagement

What We Recommend

- VAC's transitioning to Community Liaison Groups:
 - Arts Advisory Committee (Tourism and Culture)
 - Climate Change Advisory Committee (Climate Change Initiatives)
 - Hamilton Cycling Committee (Active Transportation & Mobility)
 - Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee (Indigenous Relations)
 - Hamilton Veterans Committee (Heritage Resource Management)
 - Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee (Community Strategies)
 - Keep Hamilton Clean & Green Committee (Environmental Services)
 - LGBTQ Advisory Committee (Community Strategies)
 - Senior Advisory Committee (Lodges Division)
 - Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee (Housing/Housing Secretariat)

Thank you

