



City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee

Date: April 11, 2025

Report No: PED24087(b)

Subject/Title: Recruiting Additional LRT Sub-Committee Advisors in Order to Facilitate Consideration of Climate Justice.

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

- 1) (a) That the Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference be amended to include additional Non-Voting Community Advisors to ensure that the LRT Sub-Committee's composition reflects the community **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Membership

The membership of the LRT Sub-Committee shall consist of the Mayor and (7) Councillors (consisting of Councillors along the B-Line corridor as well as additional Councillors that represent various interests, i.e. a representative of the mountain and the rural/suburban wards). Other representatives of the community – key stakeholders, will be asked to attend as advisors to the sub-committee. These can include but are not limited to (Chamber of Commerce, BIA's, HHHBA, institutional and business partners). ***Non-Voting Community Advisors that reflect the community from a climate justice point of view. These Advisors can include but are not limited to the Urban Indigenous community, Black community, women, gender diverse individuals, 2SLGBTQIA+, youth, seniors, newcomers/refugees, persons with disabilities, and low-income Hamiltonians.***

- (b) That staff **BE DIRECTED** to proceed with efforts to work with LRT Sub-Committee members to recruit up to six Non-Voting Community Advisors representing local organizations that offer support to frontline communities to the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee and to establish a Working Group in future if deemed necessary.

Key Facts

- This Report presents and assesses four governance options for including the voices and perspectives of frontline communities to enable climate justice considerations as part of decision-making during the implementation of the Hamilton LRT project.
- The recommended approach is to recruit additional Non-Voting Community Advisors to the LRT Sub-Committee and to establish a Working Group in future to delve more deeply into climate justice related issues if deemed necessary, as this option is straightforward to implement, brings community perspectives to the LRT Sub-Committee table (procedural equity), and requires minimal staff resources.
- The current LRT Sub-Committee Terms of Reference allows Voting Members to add new Non-Voting Community Advisors from specified categories at any time. An amendment to the LRT Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference is required to accommodate the addition of Non-Voting Community Advisors from organizations representing frontline communities.

Financial Considerations

There are no budget impacts or costs associated with the report recommendations. There are cost implications associated with some of the governance options assessed by staff.

Background

At the November 15, 2024, meeting of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee, staff presented Report PED24087(a), respecting Recruiting Additional LRT Sub Committee Advisors in Order to Facilitate Consideration of Climate Justice. This report was **REFERRED** back to staff for a report back to the LRT Sub-Committee with the direction to provide the LRT Sub-Committee with more governance options to consider in order to achieve the goal of integrating a climate equity lens reflective of the discussion of the LRT Sub-Committee at this meeting. Report PED24087(b) is the follow-up to Report PED24087(a).

Analysis

The Hamilton LRT Project is a major infrastructure project with significant opportunities for climate mitigation and adaptation, and numerous co-benefits, including a healthier, more vibrant, economically sustainable city. As the Hamilton LRT Project is advancing to implementation, direction has been given to ensure that this project considers the perspectives of frontline communities from a climate justice point of view.

Frontline communities are historically marginalized groups of people who are disproportionately impacted by a changing climate, as well as social inequity, including the urban Indigenous community, people with disabilities, low-income people, Black people, seniors, unhoused people, 2SLGBTQQA+, and youth. These populations have vested interest in the Hamilton LRT Project because of its potential for direct and specific impacts on their lives and experiences— to harm or to benefit.

Though the Climate Justice Framework being developed by the Office of Climate Change Initiatives is not yet completed and available to offer guidance to the Hamilton LRT Project, this project is an opportunity to begin to actualize Council's commitment to implementing climate action using a climate justice lens. This is achievable by applying three equity dimensions:

- **Recognitional Equity** - recognizing and prioritizing the needs of and opportunities for those frontline communities who are at risk of increased vulnerability;
- **Distributive Equity** - distributing climate action benefits and diminishing burdens across diverse frontline communities; and,
- **Procedural Equity** - factoring in municipal decision-making processes and who is involved in these processes to ensure the project reflects the needs, aspirations, and knowledge of impacted frontline communities.

This report addresses Procedural Equity specifically, in bringing governance options to be considered by the LRT Sub-Committee to ensure its composition includes community voices that can speak to climate justice.

Assessment of Governance Options

The following governance options were explored and developed as ways for bringing community voices to the LRT Sub-Committee to support climate justice considerations:

1. Recruit additional Non-Voting Community Advisors to the LRT
2. Sub-Committee
3. Establish a Working Group
4. Recruit additional Non-Voting Community Advisors to LRT Sub-Committee and establish Working Group in future if deemed necessary.
5. Strike a Task Force

For each governance option, operationalization, and the benefits and challenges associated with on-going administration and effective community involvement were considered. As Metrolinx is leading the project, consideration was also given to the City's role when assembling the above four options. These assessments were also

informed by research and by input provided through internal and external consultations. Assessments of options are summarized in Appendix B.

Based on the analysis in Appendix B, **Option 3: Recruit additional Non-Voting Community Advisors to LRT Sub-Committee and establish Working Group in future if deemed necessary** is recommended as the governance option that best facilitates procedural equity, normalization of climate justice considerations, fairness and inclusive participation, and that can be operationalized in a relatively straightforward manner without additional staffing and financial resources.

It is recommended that new Non-Voting Community Advisors to the LRT Sub-Committee represent local organizations that serve frontline communities; this could include paid staff or volunteers affiliated with these organizations.

In arriving at Option 3 as the recommended governance approach, staff consulted with City staff, community partners, various subject matter experts and staff in other Canadian municipalities. The information gathered is summarized below, with some analysis of how this input influenced recommendations made in this report. The City Clerk was consulted to gain a clearer understanding of the various governance structures that could be considered to help to identify which options would require amendments to the LRT Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference, and to understand requirements for additional resources to support each option. In summary, procedural complexity varies with each governance option, covering a spectrum from low in the case of a Working Group, to high where the establishment and operation of a dedicated Task Force is concerned. Staffing and other resource requirements also increase with the procedural complexity of these governance options.

Office of Climate Change Initiatives staff consulted with staff from the City's Communications and Community Engagement Division who completed the recent review of Volunteer Advisory Committees. Insights and expertise were shared regarding how to create safe, inclusive, and supported spaces for community engagement.

Staff from Ajax, Vancouver, and Kingston provided insights on effective governance models for engaging local organizations and residents. Ajax's Anti-Racism Task Force, composed of professionals with lived experiences, enables focused work but requires significant resources and procedural oversight. Vancouver staff highlighted the need to define participant roles to determine the best governance structure, suggesting that a Working Group model suits residents due to its informal nature. City of Kingston employs several Working Groups for this reason. These insights support Option 3 where a Working Group could be struck when more extensive direct community input is needed, such as during the detailed streetscape design phase of Hamilton's LRT project. However, the informality of this model on its own limits procedural equity, as it remains distant from the LRT Sub-Committee.

Staff also consulted with researchers from McMaster University and University of Toronto regarding best practices for community inclusion in local governance bodies,

particularly those focused on major infrastructure projects. Combined, their research demonstrates that community participation in infrastructure decision-making processes is itself a key factor in preventing negative impacts on frontline communities. It was noted that plans and projects developed with high levels of community engagement and support are more likely to be viewed positively by the broader community, generating greater community buy-in. Option 3 is supported by this finding as it achieves procedural equity by broadening engagement via the addition of Non-Voting Community Advisors to the LRT Sub-Committee. New Advisors can bring forward the specific interests and concerns of the communities they represent, opening the door to recognitional and distributive equity—the two other key dimensions of climate justice.

The Climate Justice and Community Engagement Working Group of the City's Climate Change Advisory Committee also provided feedback on the governance options under consideration. The Working Group feedback included calling for the addition of more than 6 new advisors to the LRT Sub-Committee table to ensure that all frontline communities are represented, acknowledging the challenges that can be associated with community member participation in formalized governance structures, and concern about the non-voting status of community advisors at the LRT Sub-Committee table. The Working Group expressed support for the Task Force option, explaining their belief that a task force would have the strongest influence on City decision-making processes. Appendix C includes the feedback provided by the Working Group.

The recruitment process for new Advisors would occur by invitation from voting members of the LRT Sub-Committee, in alignment with the Sub-Committee's Terms of Reference, and consistent with the process that was used to recruit existing Advisors. Consulting with the Clerk's Office, the recruitment process would entail that Staff would advise and support the Sub-Committee in identifying and determining which organizations to invite to participate on the Sub-Committee, via an Advisor. Once agreed to by voting Sub-Committee members, formal invitations would be sent, providing more details around the purpose and mandate of the Sub-Committee, including recognizing that the mandate of the LRT Sub-Committee is to focus on implementation of the LRT project, and inviting each organization to provide the Committee with a representative of their organization as an Advisor.

The previous report (PED24087(a)) included a sample list by equity categories of local social service agencies and community groups that support frontline communities. As trusted allies who know the needs and aspirations of the populations they serve, these entities are ideally positioned to assist in recruiting representatives to participate as Non-Voting Community Advisors who could bring frontline community perspectives. Consideration is also being given to valuable input provided by community partners including Hamilton Community Benefits Network, the Social Planning and Research Council, and the YWCA Hamilton regarding the demographics of frontline communities within and near the LRT corridor. The updated list of relevant agencies and organizations is attached as Appendix D.

Consideration could also be given to recruiting Non-Voting Community Advisors from other currently active, relevant City Advisory Committees including Climate Change Advisory Committee, Seniors Advisory Committee, Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities, and the Youth Steering Committee.

Alternatives

The LRT Sub-Committee could choose not to approve the governance option recommended in this report and select one of the other governance options. This could impact on the nature and effectiveness of the engagement effort, and it could introduce staffing and resource costs.

The LRT Sub-Committee could also choose not to approve any of the assessed governance options and forgo any effort to seek input from frontline community members. This could result in missed opportunities to engage residents in the early stages of the project that could help to avoid unintended impacts on frontline community members.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development

1. 3. Accelerate our response to climate change

The Hamilton LRT Project is a major infrastructure project that will reduce GHG emissions significantly and accelerate Hamilton's response to climate change. It is the City's commitment to lead with equity. The addition of new non-voting advisors from frontline communities to the LRT Sub-Committee will ensure that climate justice/equity is being considered to this end.

2. Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods

2.2. Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit, or car

The Hamilton LRT Project is predicted to decrease single occupancy vehicles, a good thing for the City of Hamilton's net-zero by 2050 target. The addition of new Non-Voting Community Advisors from frontline communities to the LRT Sub-Committee will ensure that from a mobility justice perspective, the specific needs of diverse frontline communities are being considered, ensuring these populations are supported by the outcomes of this project.

3. Responsiveness & Transparency

3. 2. Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving

This priority relates directly to the report recommendation that members/representatives of frontline communities join the LRT Sub-Committee, reflective of procedural equity, a dimension of climate justice.

Previous Reports Submitted

- Recruiting Additional LRT Sub-Committee Advisors in Order to Facilitate Consideration of Climate Justice (PED24087(a)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item). November 15, 2024. <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=428375>
- Applying a Climate Justice Lens to Light Rail Transit (PED24087) (City Wide). May 23, 2024. <https://pub-hamilton.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=408400>
- [Getting the LRT on the Right Track — CityLAB Hamilton:](https://www.citylabhamilton.com/s/CityLAB-HCBN-Final-Report-compressed.pdf)
<https://www.citylabhamilton.com/s/CityLAB-HCBN-Final-Report-compressed.pdf>
2023

Consultation

City of Hamilton Staff

- *Rebecca Banky, Project Manager, Community Inclusion and Equity Communications and Community Engagement Division, City Manager's Office*
- *Blaze Dumitrescu-Forgie, Program Coordinator, Public Engagement, Communications and Engagement Division, City Manager's Office*
- *Carrie McIntosh, Legislative Coordinator, Corporate Services*
- *Matthew Trennum, City Clerk, City of Hamilton*
- *Jesse Williamson, Project Manager, Strategic Youth Initiatives, Children's and Community Services Division, Healthy and Safe Communities*

City of Hamilton Committees

- *James Kemp, Chair, Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities*
- *Members of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, Climate Justice, and Community Engagement Working Group*

Municipalities Consulted

- *Iain Sullivan, Committee Clerk, City Clerk's Department, City of Kingston*
- *Yasmyn Belle, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer, Public & Strategic Affairs Town of Ajax*
- *Adriana Laurent, Senior Equity & Reconciliation Planner, Sustainability Group, Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability, City of Vancouver*
- *Lisa Brideau, Senior Sustainability Specialist, Sustainability Group, Planning, Urban Design & Sustainability, City of Vancouver*

Researchers

- *Dr. Steven Farber, Professor, Department of Human Geography, UTSC, Project Director, Mobilizing Justice, Interim Director, Mobility Network*

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- *Paty Romero-Lankao, Canada Excellence Research Chair Network for Equity in Sustainability Transitions (CERC NEST), Associate Director of Climate Positive Energy, Professor Department of Sociology, University of Toronto Scarborough*
 - *Léa Ravensbergen, Assistant Professor, School of Earth, Environment & Society McMaster University*

Local Organizations

- *Karl Andrus, Hamilton Community Benefits Network*
- *Sarah Mayo, Social Planning Research Council*
- *Gugu Mpofu, Black Owned Hamilton*

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Report PED24087(b) – Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee Terms of Reference

Appendix B: Report PED24087(b) – Assessment of Governance Options for including the voices and perspectives of frontline communities at the LRT Sub-Committee.

Appendix C: Report PED24087(b) – Community Engagement and Climate Justice Working Group of the Climate Change Advisory Committee: Review of the four proposed governance options for bringing additional community voices to the LRT Sub-Committee

Appendix D: Report PED24087(b) – Frontline Communities and Organizations List

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