



Hamilton

City of Hamilton Report for Consideration

To: Chair and Members
Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee

Date: June 26, 2025

Report No: PED25152

Subject/Title: Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

- a) That the preliminary list of recommended indicators for use in the Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit as shown in Figure 1 Report PED25152 and further described in Appendix A, **BE APPROVED**.
- b) That staff **BE DIRECTED** to report in Q1 2026 on the Change Tracking Framework including baseline conditions and initial trends where available.

Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to recommend 38 preliminary indicators that can be used to track changes in a defined boundary over the course of LRT development, implementation, and operation.
- Recommended indicators build on the Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit that was outlined in Report PED24207 received by the Light Rail Transit (LRT) Sub-Committee on November 15, 2024.
- The recommended indicators are meaningful measures expected to provide valuable insights into economic, environmental, and social changes for the defined area of LRT or for the Influence Tracking Areas. They are associated with data that will be available and reported on a regular basis with no additional cost or resource implications.
- While not all future observed changes in the defined areas may be exclusively due to the LRT initiative, the recommended indicators will inform of the overall changes in key areas such as - but not limited to - access by transit, housing,

affordability and other key indicators of demographic shifts, mobility and active transportation infrastructure, safety, and business supports.

- Tracking changes in a defined boundary ultimately serves several important purposes, including but not limited to:
 - Allowing City service areas to ensure the benefits of Hamilton LRT are maximized;
 - Observing and comparing trends city-wide; and
 - Staff, Council, the public and Metrolinx are informed of changes to steer decision making.

Financial Considerations

The development of the preliminary list of recommended indicators has been supported by the existing staff in the LRT Project Office, in collaboration with staff from the identified service areas. These indicators do not have financial or resourcing implications. Moreover, they can be reported using the existing data sources and reporting tools at no additional cost to the respective service area.

In the future, new indicators that may be suggested will be evaluated for their financial and resource implications. As routine practice, implications relating to additional staffing, collection of data or new systems will be shared in future reports to this LRT Sub-Committee.

Background

At the September 20, 2024, LRT Sub-Committee meeting, it was approved by motion “that staff be directed to report back to the Light Rail Transit Sub-Committee respecting a Terms of Reference for establishing a baseline of measures that would enable the City to track changes over time with respect to a wide and comprehensive range of metrics including economic, environmental, and social metrics.”

At the November 15, 2024, LRT Sub-Committee meeting, Terms of Reference for a Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (PED24207), was approved and has been used as the basis for developing a framework and the associated set of indicators for tracking change in the Hamilton LRT boundary. Furthermore, staff were directed to continue to refine the change tracking framework and report back to the LRT Sub-Committee on a final set of recommended indicators as well as a reporting structure in 2025.

Key definitions:

Dimensions: Dimensions define the state of the Hamilton LRT boundary from the economic, environmental and social aspects. Like any other LRT initiative, the Hamilton LRT is anticipated to bring significant changes to these dimensions.

Indicators: Indicators define and explain dimensional changes in a qualitative or

quantitative manner. With the indicators, multi-dimensional quantitative changes are reported in a tangible or measurable fashion.

Metrics: Metric is a measuring system to measure changes (or impacts) in a quantitative manner for each indicator, where applicable.

Service Area: Division or Section within the City of Hamilton organizational structure that will be responsible for providing data for the defined frequencies and will provide interpretation.

Recommended Indicators: The recommended indicators are meaningful measures of change and are expected to provide valuable information on economic, environmental, and social changes. They are associated with data that will be available and reported at no additional cost and resource implications for the defined area of LRT or the Influence Tracking Areas per ward on a regular basis.

Analysis

This report outlines the results of the development and operationalization of a robust set of indicators and methodologies to track changes in the LRT boundary, which is a significant undertaking. Key considerations included the selection of the indicators as well as an assessment of data availability, frequency of measurement, resource requirements and reporting methods.

Development of indicators

The LRT Project will impact the surrounding areas through the delivery of LRT infrastructure. The effects have been analysed across three key dimensions: economic, environmental, and social. Each dimension has been broken down into measurable indicators for tracking over time, primarily focused on reflecting the impact of the LRT initiative at its different stages. The process of identifying and defining the indicators has been guided by the Council Priorities, city-building targets and best practices from municipalities with similar rapid transit implementation experiences.

With close coordination with key service areas, LRT Project Office identified and analysed more than 60 indicators. For every indicator, staff investigated the definition and key features - included in Appendix B - to assist with the generation of the preliminary list of recommended indicators.

LRT Influence Tracking Area

The LRT Area refers to a 14-kilometre (km) by approximately 1.6-km boundary identified for tracking changes. The length of this area was selected based on the span of the LRT, from McMaster in the west to Eastgate Square in the east, while the width of the area i.e. 1.6 km, was selected based on 800m distance that is comfortably

completed by walking in approximately 10 minutes.

The proposed boundary for the Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton LRT aligns with the subareas already identified and proposed by the City's Sustainable Communities from Planning in their Major Transit Station Areas (MTSA) Final Report, August 2023.

For every indicator explored to date, analysis was also conducted to confirm if reporting for the LRT Area may be sufficient or if it may be reasonable to break down into smaller areas referred to as LRT Influence Tracking Areas 1 to 5. Appendix C illustrates the LRT Area and the LRT Influence Tracking Areas per Ward i.e. 1 to 5, with boundaries consistent to the City's MTSA.

Finalizing preliminary list of recommended indicators

The LRT Project Office, in close collaboration with key City service areas, recommends a preliminary list of 38 recommended indicators as identified in Figure 1, with further elaboration provided in Appendix A.

Figure 1 – Preliminary list of recommended indicators

Economic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Employment - Land use mix - Land use scale - Active residential with store frontage - Vacant land - Grocery stores - Building construction activity - Municipal tax levy - Property assessed value - Business support - Grant applications
Environmental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cycling infrastructure and multi-use paths (MUPs) - Publicly owned parklands - Publicly accessible privately owned greenspaces - Trees (publicly owned only) - Trees (canopy area for private and public trees)
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Population - Demographic shifts (youth) - Demographic shifts (seniors) - Demographic shifts (households with children) - Transit mode share - Active transportation - Share of travel using micromobility - Access to employment by transit - Access to populations by transit - Door to door service for ATS customers - Outdoor patios (seasonal/temporary) - Affordability of home ownership - Affordability of rental accommodation - Supply of community housing - Traffic collisions (all types) - Traffic collisions (pedestrian and cyclist-related collisions) - Calls for police service (perceptions of safety) - Crime severity (overall, violent and property-related)
Cultural*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Public art - Heritage resources

* Per Cultural Plan 2013, cultural vitality recognized as the fourth pillar of sustainability – equal to economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental responsibility.

Soft sense of business experience

LRT Project Office has consulted with Metrolinx and confirms that Metrolinx will continue to conduct corridor canvases and surveys of businesses affected by the project to collect information and feedback that will help inform business mitigation plans throughout the project. The LRT Project Office will work with Metrolinx and their consortium as the project evolves and bring back updates to the LRT Sub-Committee as appropriate. Recognizing the City also surveys businesses as part of their economic development work, it is expected the City will receive comments or questions about the LRT project and will collaborate with Metrolinx to document that feedback.

Themed Indicators

The themed indicators are special areas of interest which may come forward due to unique circumstances or special inquiries. Hamilton LRT Project Office, in collaboration with service areas, may then focus on the topic of interest and explore that area through the development of themed indicators which may be a refinement of the recommended or new indicators to address those unique circumstances or special inquiries.

Data interpretation

Through the development of the framework, some indicators have been flagged for which the LRT initiative may not have direct influence. For these indicators, observed changes could be attributed in part to factors unrelated to LRT implementation and operation, such as City programs and policies, including those within the Hamilton LRT Area. Furthermore, economic, policy or other decisions from other levels of government, or extenuating circumstances may result in changes or other outcomes unrelated to LRT.

The data generation and reporting that will be used for this framework will be based on the data internally available to the City. The internal City service areas are the main sources of the data, including data interpretations and assumptions during the change reporting phase. Hamilton Police Service will generate data and interpretations for their respective indicators.

The recommended indicators are intended to show changes compared to their baseline or their previous status, at a particular point in time. A point-in-time observation is not a definite indication of how well an indicator may be performing. The timelines and phases of LRT development, implementation, and operation will be accounted for to draw fair and realistic conclusions that are aligned with the anticipated indicator performance.

This LRT Change Tracking Framework does not relate to and will not capture capital construction relating to the construction of LRT infrastructure, including costs relating to its operation and maintenance.

Consideration for Climate Justice and Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)

As part of our preliminary review of indicators, staff have identified opportunities to assess and determine how information relating to the Climate Justice Framework (in development) for such indicators could be collected, interpreted, and reported in a meaningful way as part of this framework. Similarly, application of the IDEA Framework can be used as a guide to inform existing indicators or identify gaps where additional indicators may be needed to reflect the experiences of equity-deserving populations. Embedding IDEA principles into the change tracking framework ensures that data collection and analysis are inclusive, that barriers to participation are recognized, and that outcomes can be meaningfully assessed across diverse communities. This dual lens of Climate Justice and IDEA helps to ensure that both environmental and equity impacts are considered in an integrated, systemic manner.

Regular validation or addition of new indicators

The type and definition of the indicators, their assumptions, and limitations, as well as the means of collecting and reporting data for the indicators are all subject to change and will depend on the dynamic and evolving built environment, changes in priorities, public needs and Council requirements. Furthermore, as the LRT area experiences changes over time, reporting boundaries may be adjusted to ensure changes are adequately tracked and reported in the most meaningful way. Staff will make every effort to minimize changes to indicators, to maintain the consistency to track changes in any given indicator over time.

Added Values

Further to key purposes of the framework - i.e., tracking changes in the LRT area, informing City service areas, decision-making and transparency to the public and the council - the framework is expected to:

- Inform how the LRT area will change compared to the remainder of the city;
- Assist City service areas in establishing key performance indicators where they are currently not available or require further development to support the LRT change tracking initiative; and
- Track and study the regular impacts of the LRT initiative which can guide planning initiatives for expanding other rapid transit programs in the city.

Other Indicators

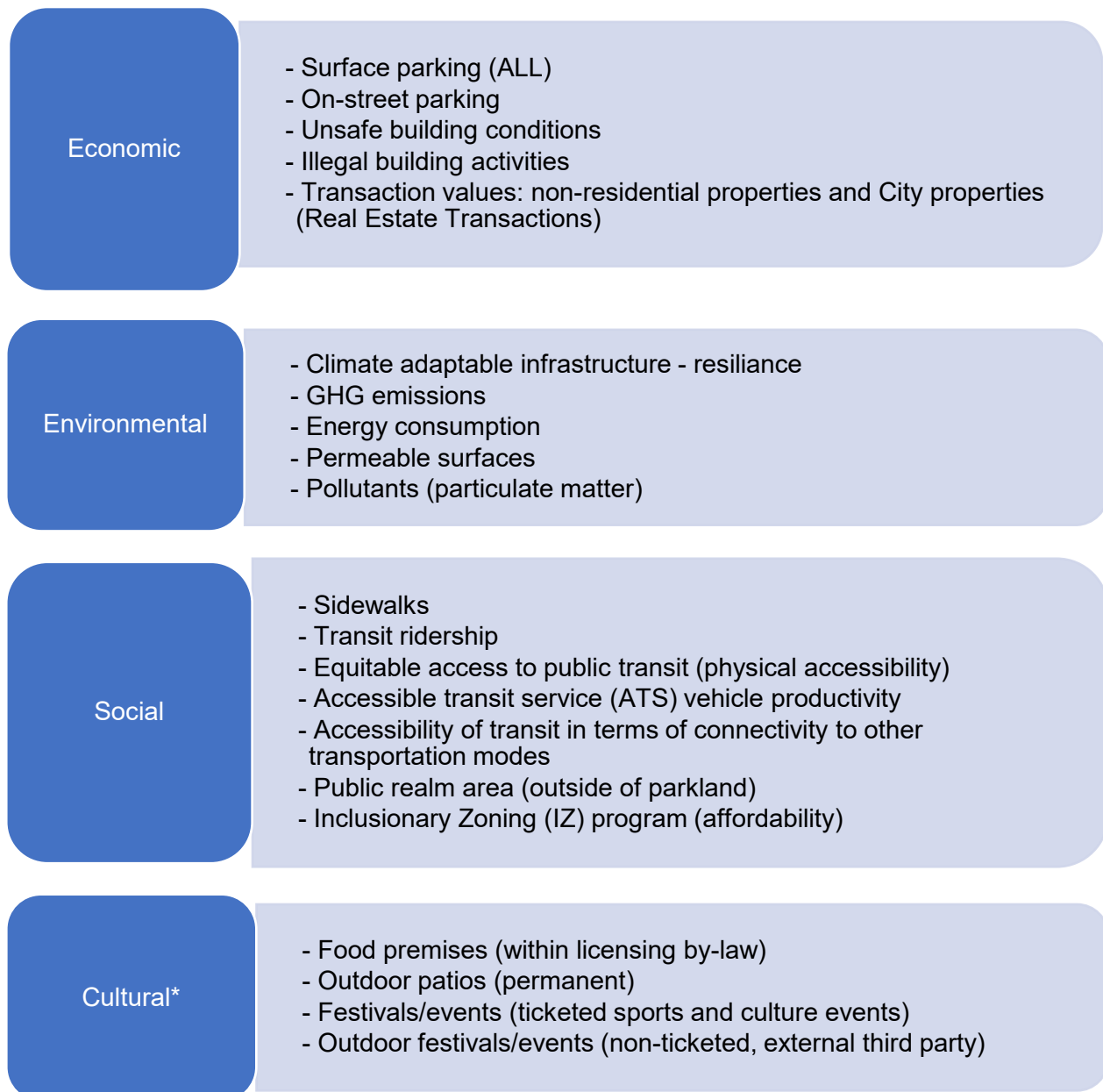
Working with applicable service areas, LRT Project Office considered and investigated several other indicators, as listed in Figure 2, that can't be recommended for change tracking due to, but limited to:

- not providing meaningful information regarding change;
- currently not tracked city-wide, hence staff, tools and data implications need to be further investigated and confirmed;

- draft policy or new policy which does not have a measurable means of change tracking yet defined;
- being more of a design consideration and not a trackable change indicator; and
- applicable to the LRT Operation phase only.

Staff will continue studying and further investigate these indicators and will determine if any new indicators can be recommended.

Figure 2 - Other Indicators Considered



* Per Cultural Plan 2013, cultural vitality recognized as the fourth pillar of sustainability – equal to economic prosperity, social inclusion and environmental responsibility.

Future LRT Sub-Committee Reporting Structure:

Pending approval from this Sub-Committee for the preliminary list of recommended indicators:

Baseline Report in Q1 2026

- Collect and generate data to establish baseline conditions;
- Investigate and assess how information relating to the Climate Justice Framework (currently in development) could be accounted for; and
- Continue investigating if additional indicators could be recommended.

Subsequent Change Tracking Reports

With baseline established, the subsequent reporting will occur informing of changes, where available, based on agreed frequencies at reasonable intervals, at key project peak stages or as required for themed indicators.

Opportunities for Data Collection and Presentation

Staff anticipate opportunities for future consideration of improved data presentation. Several tools for visual illustration of data, such as dashboards or colour-coded maps, can be explored once the initial reporting of changes has been deemed successful. Staff could leverage and incorporate current City-wide dashboards or maps to illustrate changes specifically within the LRT Area. Staff will also explore automated data reporting, data collection and compilation.

Alternatives

In the absence of a change tracking framework and its recommended indicators, the City would need to extend its collaboration with Metrolinx and seek their agreement to share data and information, if available. However, Metrolinx's type of information and its priorities may differ from those identified by the City and the City's Council Strategic Priorities, which would lead to gaps or limited visibility in key areas of change from economic, environmental and social aspects as defined by the City.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

The Hamilton LRT's Change Tracking Framework almost touches on all 2022-2026 Council Priorities, Outcomes & Measures of Success, in particular, Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency:

Outcome 1: Prioritize customer service and proactive communication – Proactively provide the public, Council and City staff, an unbiased and transparent line of sight to changes in key areas most important to the City.

Outcome 2: Build a high performing public service – Support the success of the Hamilton LRT project in the city, leverage opportunities that will arise to enhance public service today and in the future.

Outcome 3: Modernize City Systems – Provide an opportunity for the City service areas to identify and explore more efficient and reliable data sources and reporting tools that can be applied city-wide.

Previous Reports Submitted

- September 20, 2024 LRT Sub-Committee, [12.1 Establishing a Baseline of Measures respecting Getting Hamilton's Light Rail Transit on the Right Track](#)
- November 15, 2024 LRT Sub-Committee, [8.2 Terms of Reference for a Change Tracking Framework for the Hamilton Light Rail Transit \(PED24207\) \(City Wide\)](#)

Consultation

The development and finalization of the preliminary list of recommended indicators are owed to extensive internal and external consultation and coordination:

- City staff, their divisions and sections who were directly engaged in this process are identified in Appendix D
- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA)
- LRT Steering Committee, comprised of key divisional directors and General Managers
- Community Engagement & Climate Justice Working Group
- Mike Murray, Murray Advisory Services, the City's strategic advisor for Hamilton LRT Project
- Metrolinx.

Reports Consulted:

- Region of Waterloo's Monitoring Change in the Central Transit Corridor (CTC), [2022 Report](#)
- Major Transit Station Areas, Final Report Aug 2023 [Appendix "B" to Report PED23105](#)
- Getting Hamilton's LRT on the Right Track, CityLab Hamilton, December 2023 [Final Report](#)
- Equitable Transit-oriented Development: A New Development, The Hamilton Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Lab ([Final Report](#)) August 2024.

The LRT Project Office received initial feedback from the Climate Change Advisory Committee's Community Engagement and Climate Justice Working Group on May 7, 2025, including a discussion on the application of a climate justice lens when tracking for changes. Staff will advance the development of the Climate Justice Framework and will investigate how the current recommended indicators can be further explored, and

what other information is available that could be collected to achieve the intent of Climate Justice. An update on this progress will be provided in Q1 2026.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Detailed Description of Recommended Indicators

Appendix B: Indicator Definition and Key Features

Appendix C: LRT Area and the five Influence Tracking Areas

Appendix D: Persons Most Responsible - City staff, division, and section consulted.

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