

# Getting on Board

Learning from planning and engagement  
around rapid transit projects in Ontario

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March 2017



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*The findings presented in this report were gathered through background research and 23 interviews with residents, businesses, local groups, city staff, provincial agencies and elected officials from December 2016 to January 2017. Please see Appendix 1 for a full list of participants.*

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## Contents

Executive summary .....	4
Introduction.....	6
Getting on board: Infographic.....	8
Chapter 1: Public and stakeholder engagement .....	9
The importance of engagement .....	10
Engagement challenges .....	11
Success factors .....	12
Chapter 2: Achieving transit-supportive	
land use and design .....	19
The importance of land use planning and design .....	19
Tools for transit-supportive planning .....	20
Land use planning approaches in the case study communities .....	21
Challenges in transit-supportive planning .....	25
Success factors .....	25
Where we go from here.....	29
Appendix 1: Interview participants .....	30
Appendix 2: Case study projects .....	31





Participants at a stakeholder meeting for the Hurontario LRT.

## Executive summary

The current roll-out of rapid transit infrastructure in Ontario is one of the biggest infrastructure builds in the province's history, with over \$30 billion in investment from the Province of Ontario and major inputs from the federal and municipal governments. New transit projects are moving forward in an urban and social landscape characterized by greater public expectations toward governments, changing values around the environment, an increasingly diverse society, and rapid urban growth.

In southern Ontario, these new transit projects are part of provincial policies, now in place for over 10 years, aimed at managing growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) to protect farmland, build more complete communities, offer viable transportation options for moving around the region and encourage a shift to transportation modes other than the car.

With such significant investments at stake, it's important to get the process right. Support from the local community has proven to be a crucial ingredient for success. In this report, we examine engagement and planning processes around ongoing rapid transit projects in four Ontario communities to better understand the challenges and success factors associated with these efforts.

### What we found

Like all infrastructure, public transit projects have real impacts on the residents and businesses close to where they're built and, as such, are the source of legitimate local concerns. We found that transit projects are contentious in some communities, but conflict is generally rooted in disagreement about local priorities or disappointment in the process, rather than in opposition to transit itself. Although cities have identified transit corridors in their plans for a long time, stakeholders were not always part of that process, which can lead to questioning of the proposed project. As well, the length of the project design process and changes in municipal leadership

have presented new opportunities to cast doubt on past decisions. Without local support built through meaningful engagement and transparent responses to concerns, transit projects may not move forward.

Local actors – from city staff and elected officials, to residents and the business community – are taking strong leadership roles in forwarding the dialogue around these projects. They are using creative and effective approaches to engaging stakeholders, and doing lots of learning in the process. Residents are seeing growth and change in their communities, and recognizing that they need to take a role in shaping it.

At the same time, local municipalities are using a wide array of tools – from guidelines, to transit station area plans, to innovative zoning techniques – to implement the land use and design policies needed to encourage transit-supportive development in appropriate areas along their transit corridors.

## Success factors

We believe that communities across Ontario can learn from the innovations and best practices showcased in this report. 10 success factors summarize the most important recommendations that repeatedly emerged in our research.

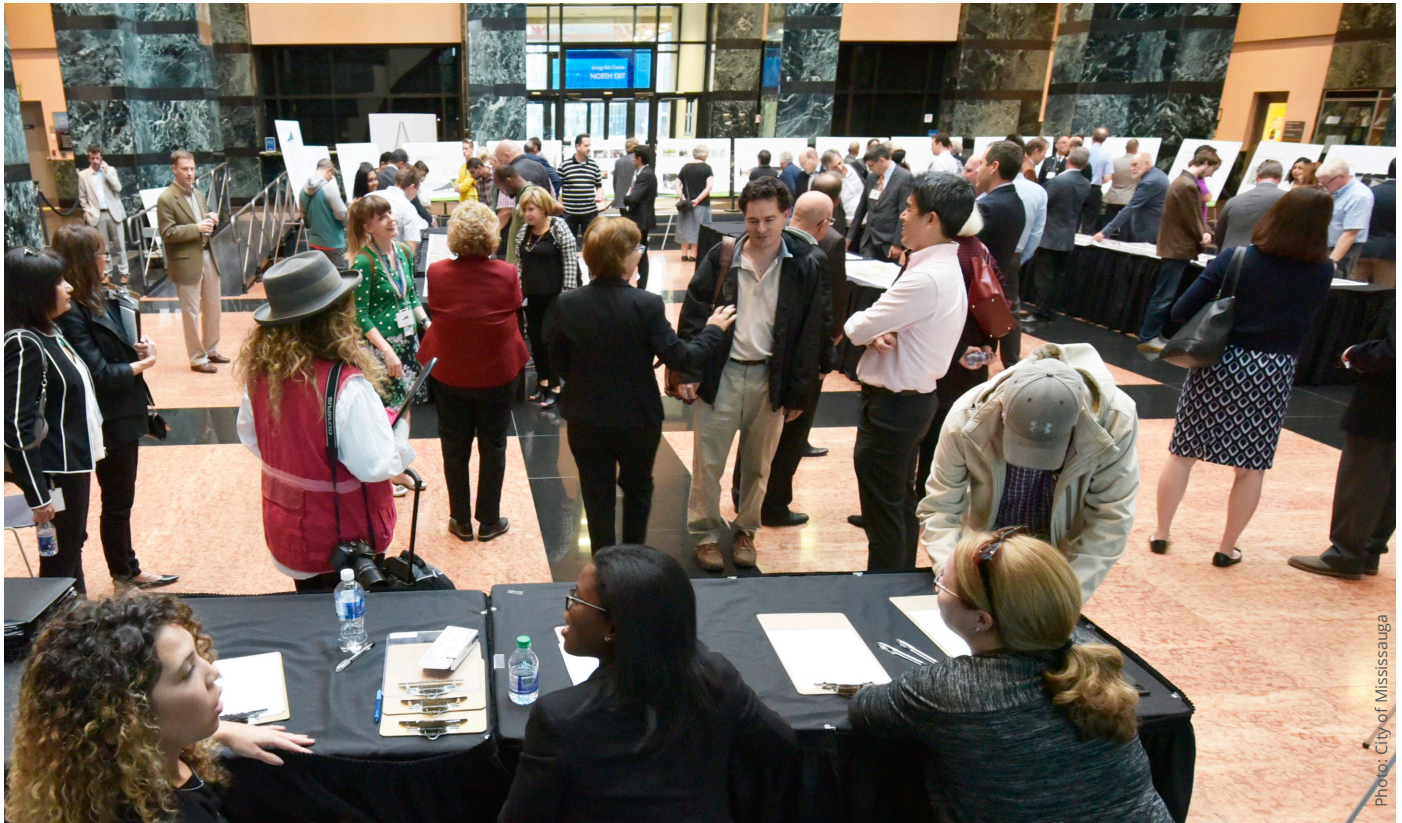
### Seven success factors for effective stakeholder and public engagement around transit projects

1. Engage early, engage well
2. Look at the big picture
3. Prioritize diversity and community
4. Keep it honest and visible
5. Plan for construction impacts
6. Embrace conflict
7. Encourage local leadership

### Three success factors for developing and implementing transit-supportive land use and urban design policies

1. Establish clear processes
2. Work with developers and landowners
3. Make it about the neighbourhood





Meaningful public and stakeholder engagement helps determine the success of a project

## Introduction

Offering transportation choices other than the personal car is a key part of building healthy, sustainable communities with diverse economic opportunities for their residents. Across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) and other Ontario cities, a number of exciting rapid transit projects are planned or underway. For example, a \$30 billion investment by the provincial government will electrify the GO regional rail system and support the build out of new rapid transit in several municipalities over the next decade, including in many places where there is currently little or no rapid transit.

In the GGH, these transit projects go hand-in-hand with land use policies, now 10 years old, aimed at managing growth in the region. Anticipating a population of 13.5 million people and 6.3 million jobs in the region by 2041, policies such as the Growth Plan for the GGH aim to protect farmland and reduce sprawl by building more compact communities and directing more growth to built-up areas. In turn, this more compact growth provides the ridership potential to support new rapid transit. The province's 2008 Regional Transportation

Plan (also called the "Big Move") identified new corridors for rapid transit to connect the region. Many of the transit projects from this plan are now moving forward – we examine some of them in this report.

With such significant investments at stake, it's important to get the process right. Meaningful public and stakeholder engagement, as well as transit-supportive land use policies, will determine the success of these projects. In this report, we present four case

studies that showcase local planning and engagement efforts around rapid transit projects in Ontario and examine lessons learned along the way. The case studies are: Hamilton Rapid Transit, Hurontario Light Rail Transit (LRT), Waterloo Region ION and the Ottawa Confederation Line. We chose these projects because they represent different regions, are at different stages of advancement, and have different project leaders. To learn more about the specifics of these projects, please see Appendix 2.

The report has two parts:

## **Chapter 1: Public and stakeholder engagement**

## **Chapter 2: Achieving transit-supportive land use and design**

In each chapter, we explore the importance of the given project stage, the typical challenges that arise, and the factors that have led to small and big successes in the case study projects.

## **Definitions**

### **Environmental assessment (EA)**

Many types of infrastructure projects must undergo an EA to ensure that governments and public bodies consider potential environmental effects before an infrastructure project begins. The EA process varies depending on the type of project, but all involve public consultation and require approval by the province before the project can proceed.

### **Official Plan (OP)**

Upper- and lower-tier municipalities must have an OP, which sets out general policy for land use. An OP deals with topics such as land use, housing, services and what parts of the community will grow. An OP must be updated every five years, ensuring that it respects policies set out by the province. Changes to the OP require public consultation and can be appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.

### **Rapid transit**

Rapid transit is defined by its higher passenger capacity and faster speeds compared to conventional transit, and involves separating transit vehicles from other traffic through dedicated lanes or grade separation. Subways, light rail transit (LRT) and bus rapid transit (BRT) are all considered rapid transit.

### **Transit Project Assessment Process (TPAP)**

TPAPs are a more streamlined form of EAs that apply to transit projects and can be completed within six months. Public consultation is required as part of the process. A TPAP is led by whichever organization is leading the transit project, which can be the municipality, a provincial agency, or a partnership. An Environmental Project Report (EPR) results from the TPAP process.

### **Transportation Master Plan (TMP)**

Many municipalities use a TMP to plan their transportation system in order to accommodate current and future needs. TMPs allow stakeholders to come together to identify priority transit corridors before individual projects move forward. TMPs are also a useful tool for municipalities to establish their own capital plans and seek funding from other levels of government for proposed transit projects.

## Getting on board: Infographic

The four case study communities each showed innovative ways to get communities on board and use land use planning to improve its transit projects. Here are a few examples of how teams brought these success factors to life.

### HURONTARIO LRT

Success factor:  
*Look at the big picture*



Mississauga City Hall has an LRT set up outside for people to explore



### OTTAWA LRT

Success factor:  
*Work with developers and landowners*




Ottawa holds working groups with landowners and developers on its transit-oriented development plans




### HAMILTON RT

Success factor:  
*Engage early, engage well*



Members of the Hamilton/Metrolinx team knock on doors of affected residents and businesses to share and gather information



### WATERLOO REGION ION

Success factor:  
*Establish clear processes*



Kitchener prioritizes project management principles in their land use planning process and track lessons learned throughout the process





# Public and stakeholder engagement

In this chapter, we look at the importance of public and stakeholder engagement, the challenges that come with it, and highlight seven key factors for effective engagement for transit project. They apply to any organization leading a transit project. The seven success factors of effective engagement are:



1. Engage early, engage well



2. Look at the big picture



3. Prioritize diversity and community



4. Keep it honest and visible



5. Plan for construction impacts



6. Embrace conflict



7. Encourage local leadership

## The importance of engagement

In today's world, public and stakeholder engagement is as important to infrastructure projects as technical design and construction. Residents and groups have rejected the assumption that "experts know best," and have come to expect to be more involved in the decisions that affect their daily lives and the future of their communities.

At the same time, public trust in Canadian institutions and governments has steadily declined in the last half-century. To be credible, governments — and the engagement processes they carry out — must demonstrate transparency and accountability.

On the whole, this new reality is good news for community building. Strong engagement processes can result in better decisions. Public input can bring insights that project staff might have missed. Further, by engaging in dialogues about infrastructure, through both formal and informal channels, communities and their leaders build knowledge and relationships that can be brought to bear on future plans and projects.

Is engagement for transit projects any different than for other kinds of infrastructure projects? The answer is both yes and no. Fundamentally, engagement for transit projects should adhere to the same principles as for any other projects. However, there are some realities about transit that make engagement particularly challenging:

- Transit and density are tied to emotionally charged issues such as the place of the car in the city, climate change, and how municipalities spend limited budgets. Discussions can easily become polarized.
- There are many technical aspects to transit and land use. This means that neutral and accessible information, and the tools for the public to interpret that information, are of utmost importance. It also means that this information can be easily manipulated.
- Transit projects are linear. This means that different areas and people are impacted, and the nature of the impact varies along the corridor.

**"There's so much emotion around transit with the debates that have gone on in the last few years. The most rational way to deal with it is to provide good data and information about technical work."**

– Yulia Pak, associate,  
Swerhun Consulting

**"The suburbs suffer from massive dearth of information. There really is no good community newspaper, and there's no opinion section in the news. People are going to have not known about the LRT."**

– Joe Horneck, co-chair,  
Western GTA Move Task Force

## Engagement challenges

Despite broad public support for transit expansion in general, transit projects affect different local groups in uneven ways, and can be a source of legitimate concern on the ground, leading in many cases to project uncertainty and delays. In the case studies, we identified a number of common challenges to which engagement processes need to respond:

### Perceived lack of transparency

Although the new rapid transit projects are in line with plans that have been in place in the municipalities for some time, not all stakeholders were aware of, or participated in, these plans. This has led, in some cases, to impressions that the transit projects are not in line with local priorities and they are imposed from above. Accompanying this reality has been an ambiguity, at least from the public perspective, about who has the responsibility to make decisions. In some cases, groups have felt that it is difficult to get information about project details or rationale. Local opposition is not necessarily anti-transit – rather, groups tend to question the projects on the basis of priorities, transparency and process.

### Reactive local councils

City councillors have a key role to play in transit projects. In Ontario, regardless of who initiates the transit project and leads the TPAP process (this could be an upper- or lower-tier municipality, a transit agency or a partnership), municipal councils must approve the project by council vote. Without their support, a transit project will not move forward.

When local concerns emerge, councillors react to their constituents, which can create uncertainty about the project's future. This uncertainty is compounded by the fact that the planning and construction phases span several council terms, meaning that transit projects become key election issues, and new elected officials can step in and change direction. This often leads to increased disenchantment from the public in the decision-making process around transit. Engaging and equipping municipal councillors must be a key part of a project team's engagement efforts.

### Who is a stakeholder?

One common definition of stakeholders is “persons or groups who are directly or indirectly affected by a project, as well as those who may have interests in a project and/or the ability to influence its outcome, either positively or negatively.”<sup>1</sup>

Almost everyone in a community will be affected by, or interested in, a transit project. If an individual or group expresses interest, they are a stakeholder. So, it is useful to use stakeholder identification and mapping techniques to determine how to engage each group.

When mapping stakeholders, it is important to also consider special and minority interests that might not be represented by the organized groups and institutions in a community. Engagement teams must ask: Is our stakeholder list representative of different cultural groups, genders and income levels in our community? What about future transit users?

### The impact of construction

Rapid transit projects usually have long periods of construction of five or more years, especially because cities usually seize the opportunity to replace underground infrastructure at the same time. Construction is disruptive for residents, can affect traffic and transit flows across the city, and is particularly challenging to businesses, who may suffer from a decline in customers during this time or even have to close their doors.

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1. International Finance Corporation (2007). *Stakeholder engagement, a Good Practice Handbook for Companies Doing Business in Emerging Markets*. [https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/938f1a0048855805beacfe6a6515bb18/IFC\\_StakeholderEngagement.pdf?MOD=AJPERES](https://www.ifc.org/wps/wcm/connect/938f1a0048855805beacfe6a6515bb18/IFC_StakeholderEngagement.pdf?MOD=AJPERES)



Almost everyone in a community will be affected by, or interested in, a transit project.

### Who is engaging?

It's not just project proponents that engage communities around transit projects. All kinds of civic and business groups and individuals play a role in sharing and collecting information. Sometimes, groups identify gaps in council directions and priorities that they wish to influence. By building knowledge and consensus among other groups in the community, and working with councillors, groups have succeeded in getting transit projects on – or off – the agenda at council. They have articulated alternative visions for the futures of their communities and alternative options for transit projects.

Groups and individuals today – at least from certain demographics – have increasing access to tools, such as social media, for engaging, mobilizing and organizing. On the other hand, they also face the challenge of limited access to project information, the limited resources of volunteer organizations, and competing for media attention with other demands. That being said, “traditional” organizing approaches – knocking on doors, holding kitchen table meetings – remain highly relevant for organizing around transit projects.

### Fear of the (transit) unknown

In most of the case study communities, rapid transit is new. This means that city planners, elected officials, businesses and residents have plenty to learn about the challenges and opportunities that rapid transit presents. A lack of knowledge across the board can lead to a fear of change and a fear of the unknown.

### Success factors

What is good engagement? There is a tendency to want to measure success by the number of participants. While maximizing participation is important, it can be limiting to rely only on this metric. Good engagement is more importantly about the effectiveness and substance of each level of engagement, for example: did the activities allow participants to learn about the project and get answers to their questions? Is there a large segment of the population that remains uninformed? Was a broad range of interests consulted and involved? Was feedback received used to influence final decisions, and was this reflected back to participants? The success factors identified below expand on these questions.





*Success factor:*

## 1. Engage early, engage well

Municipalities plan rapid transit corridors and higher-density areas years ahead of transit project implementation, yet it is difficult to solicit large levels of participation at the high-level planning stage. All too often, the project announcement – or the first day of construction – is the moment when many groups first learn about these plans. When the public is not involved in setting the long-term vision for the community, questions come up down the road about the relevance and priority of individual projects.

To address this, different types of engagement and relationships will be appropriate for different stakeholders, depending on their level of interest, influence and time. The right approach will also vary throughout the project lifespan. Project teams should start by clarifying their goals, and then choosing the right tools. Of course, the best way to determine how groups and individuals wish to participate is to ask them!

“It is easy to engage the ‘usual suspects’ but harder to engage others. Is the whole community really being involved? Traditional-style open houses are not the way: we must make a more concerted effort.”

– Paul Johnson, director, Light Rail Transit Office, City of Hamilton

### Examples of effective engagement

The engagement strategy carried out by the **Region of Waterloo** for its Community Building Strategy (CBS) laid the groundwork for the City of Kitchener’s extensive engagement program and land use plans that supplemented the CBS at the local level. This is an excellent example of linking the regional and local conversations.

As part of their downtown and gateway areas planning process, the **Cities of Brampton and Mississauga** organized a business symposium to understand the specific needs of the business sector. Developers, conservation authorities, transit agencies and residents also attended the symposium.

**Hamilton’s** Community Connectors program takes an effective “boots on the ground” approach, where

project team members make twice yearly visits to businesses and residents along the proposed LRT corridor to provide project information and help identify and respond to specific local concerns. In one case, a building owner had concerns about impacts to the building’s loading bay and the project team met with the owner to explore a design solution. Metrolinx is looking to expand the Community Connectors program to other projects.

The **City of Ottawa** recently established an internal team that is available to all departments to support their communication and engagement activities. This allows for the development of strong engagement expertise at the city while assisting program staff such as planners, with the engagement processes.



Success factor:

## 2. Look at the big picture

Once a vision is established, it's important to communicate how a proposed project will help achieve it. A given transit project might not serve all areas of the city, so it's important for residents outside of the service area to see how the project fits into the big picture.

In some communities, rapid transit is new to the scene and difficult to imagine. Residents are sometimes skeptical that the projected urban growth and increased ridership will be achieved.

As well, construction that's years away can seem too distant to be a concern. By providing contextual information and using visual and tangible communication techniques, project teams can help communicate the importance of the project to the community and make it "real". Information should be presented in a digestible and relevant way, recognizing that not everyone has the time or interest to read long reports and planning documents online.

"The best tool we have in our tool belt to address [the issue of fewer people being involved at the policy stage] is to make sure there is a clear narrative of the history: how did we get here and why. We need to understand the policy decisions that led to that place and communicate that back to participants."

– Ian Malczewski, associate, Swerhun Consulting



Metrolinx staff beside the model LRT outside of Mississauga City Hall

### Using visual and tangible communication techniques

In **Mississauga**, an actual LRT car has been set up outside of city hall and around the city at public events. Residents and passers-by can climb in, helping them to imagine what the LRT will look and feel like.

At a recent planning workshop and public open house organized by the **City of Kitchener**, participants built conceptual 3D models of future transit station areas. The city will digitize the models and share them online and at the next public information centre for comment and feedback.



*Success factor:*

### 3. Prioritize diversity and community

When forming their engagement strategy, project teams must consider the best way to reach different groups. They should ensure their stakeholder list is representative of different cultural groups, genders and income levels in the community, to ensure diverse perspectives are heard.

To ensure inclusivity, project teams should consider translating project materials and having multilingual staff at events. In line with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, they should also consider the physical accessibility of meeting spaces and the accessibility of communications materials. In

addition, to facilitate the participation of a broad range of groups, project teams should consider supports like providing childcare, snacks, or free transit passes at events and determine the most appropriate time of day.

In every community, local individuals and organizations have emerged as thought leaders who play a key role in forwarding the dialogue, regardless of their position on the project. These thought leaders can share information with, and gather feedback from, stakeholders that might otherwise not be involved.

#### Connecting with the community

The **Mississauga** transit team makes an effort to meet people by being present at community events. Their cut-out cardboard trains and colouring pages have been a hit with kids, and have helped to grow project awareness by drawing in families and offering a space where parents can contribute.

The **Metrolinx Engage** online platform gives opportunities to provide feedback on projects at whatever time is most convenient for the participant. In addition, Metrolinx' engagement program around

the Eglinton Crosstown includes community offices, dedicated community relations staff and employment programs.

The **City of Kitchener** engages through an online platform called "Engage Kitchener" to give the community and stakeholders an alternate platform to provide feedback. Through this platform surveys and questionnaires are created to reflect, as much as possible, questions asked at the in-person public engagement sessions.



Photo: City of Hamilton

Hamilton's Community Connectors program visits businesses and residents along the corridor to identify and respond to specific local concerns



*Success factor:*

## 4. Keep it honest and visible

Project visibility is very important, because the greatest risk to a transit project is a lack of public awareness about the project. If a resident learns of the project for the first time when the construction team arrives on their street, they are much more likely to raise serious concerns than if they have been “along for the ride” through the visioning and design process.

Project teams can increase visibility by building relationships with media, using social media, and speaking on a variety of public platforms. Even when the project is moving slowly, project

teams should continue to provide information and updates, and check in with stakeholders to see if there are any new concerns or questions.

Maintaining trust with stakeholders is also critical. To do so, project teams must be forthcoming and transparent with information on the project, its goals, potential benefits and risks, and the criteria that will be used to make decisions. Project teams must also communicate how stakeholders’ input has been incorporated or considered within the design process.

“We need to keep awareness up over the long term, since the project is still six years away from running on Hurontario. Construction will be a challenging period, so we need to increase and maintain excitement, and encourage people to talk to their friends and tell them that it’s coming.”

– Tim Lai, manager, LRT stakeholder communications,  
City of Mississauga

### Practices to maintain transparency

The **City of Ottawa** has a policy to create an “as we heard it” report after each public consultation. These reports contain a summary of feedback as well as verbatim remarks from participants and pictures of sketches and maps created at the meeting. This policy was a response to concerns from councillors that they were only seeing summarized high-level feedback, and ensures consistency in reporting.

**Hamilton** city council established an LRT subcommittee that has a membership of seven city councillors but also includes representatives of local BIAs, the Chamber of Commerce, educational

institutions and the local homebuilder’s association as advisors. This approach ensures that these stakeholders have direct access to information and can give detailed feedback on the project. For example, concerns from BIAs expressed through the subcommittee ultimately led to the revision of two LRT stop locations to better serve local needs.

An **engagement professional** shared that a critical first step of an engagement process should be to explicitly identify which parts of the project are actually open for input, and which are not.





*Success factor:*

## 5. Plan for construction impacts

Construction impacts can be partially mitigated and managed through programs that involve careful efforts to support affected businesses and accommodate their particular needs. This will involve additional financial and staff resources. Best practices range from the strategic phasing of construction to minimize road closures to concerted advertising and marketing campaigns to encourage customers to continue to shop on the corridor.

### Supporting businesses during construction

In collaboration with local business associations and municipal staff, the **York Region** Rapid Transit Corp. developed a business support program to help businesses along its rapidway corridors. This program highlights that businesses are open during construction; it includes signage, a marketing campaign, and other opportunities through local chambers of commerce and boards of trade.



*Success factor:*

## 6. Embrace conflict

Transit projects come with a lot of big questions about important issues, including how to share and allocate financial resources and public space. Transit impacts groups with different, and sometimes competing, interests. This often means that conflicts will arise, and can lead to unconstructive dialogue and damaged relationships. On the other hand, when recognized and addressed head-on, conflicts can be turned into opportunities to improve the project and devise innovative solutions to meet as many interests as possible, through techniques such as mediation.

### Conflicts turned into opportunities

When a disagreement between the National Capital Commission (NCC) and the **City of Ottawa** on a proposed LRT route reached an impasse, the NCC and the city formed a working group to resolve the conflict. They mutually agreed on a solution that involved tunneling part of the LRT. Participants in the working group attribute the group's success to having representatives with decision making power at the table, as decisions could be made on the spot.

One **public engagement professional** identified that if they anticipate conflict, they hold a series of “pre-consultation meetings” with key actors. This allows the team to gain a better understanding of the concerns and to ensure that the engagement process recognizes and makes room for those concerns.

**“Conflict is okay. We’ve been learning a lot about ourselves as a community.”**

– Paul Johnson, director, Light Rail Transit Office, City of Hamilton



Success factor:

## 7. Encourage local leadership

Since transit projects affect so many different parts of a community, city staff and project proponents don't need to carry the full burden of leading engagement and education - local groups, both formal and informal, play a key role in filling knowledge gaps and adding to the discourse. By sharing relevant information with their members and the public, producing stories, images and analyses, organizing speaker series, or holding meetings with project staff present, community leaders can be key contributors to engagement.

Communities tend to benefit the most when they have a diversity of engaged local voices with different functions. One local organizer described a "triangle" of groups: academic/content groups, to dig into the research and suggest solutions; policy/interest groups, who have an interest in transit but for whom it's not their core

business; and "boots-on-the-ground" groups, who can evaluate local needs, get people out to meetings and organize demonstrations. Through involvement on transit files, these groups build networks and develop knowledge that prepare them to contribute to other projects and issues.

City councillors can also become local leaders on transit issues. Project teams can work with councillors to provide them with the information they need to be a direct liaison with their constituents regarding the transit project. Councillors need to be able to respond to questions and concerns from their constituents and understand how the proposed policy meets local needs.

Finally, project teams can set up Stakeholder Advisory Committees for a given project. These committees are a great way to get early and continuous feedback, and to help get the word out.

*"We're hoping to be the go-between so we can understand [our members'] concerns and pass them on to Metrolinx and the city, so [the project] can be done in a way that benefits the neighbourhood."*

– Mary Furlin, director and treasurer, Credit Reserve Association (Minneola Residents' Association)

### Local leaders step up to the plate

Very early in the transit planning process, the **Hamilton Chamber of Commerce** established an LRT Task Force. One of the key roles of the task force has been to generate third-party information about the potential benefits of the LRT, particularly from a business perspective. They have published research through a partnership with the McMaster Institute for Transportation & Logistics (MITL).

Citizen-led groups such as **Raise the Hammer (Hamilton)**, **Citizens for a Better Brampton** and **Fight Gridlock in Brampton** have user-friendly websites that they update regularly with information and analysis. Raise the Hammer has several

dozen contributors and has been a key source of information beyond Hamilton, for groups organizing in other communities.

The Brampton-based group **One Brampton** produced a series of videos about the potential LRT project, one of which was produced in Punjabi in order to better reach the large segment of the Brampton population for whom Punjabi is a first language.

The **City of Mississauga** project team took their **councillors** to visit LRTs in other cities, helping them to visualize the possible outcomes in their own community and be ready to speak to their constituents about rapid transit.

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## Chapter 2:

# Achieving transit-supportive land use and design

In this chapter, we identify three success factors for developing and implementing transit-supportive land use and urban design policies. They apply to municipal planning teams leading land use policy updates.



### 1. Establish clear processes



### 2. Work with developers and landowners



### 3. Make it about the neighbourhood

## The importance of land use planning and design

If you live in an urban area in the province, you won't be surprised to hear that Ontario is experiencing rapid population growth. This reality is more and more visible through urban development trends, congestion, and rising housing prices. Ontario's growth is mainly concentrated in cities, and this trend is projected to continue for many years to come. For some places, like Mississauga, this has been a reality for a long time, while in others, like Hamilton, a recent surge in growth – including a return of young people to the city – has been a change in direction.

Rapid transit projects must be accompanied by updated land use regulations to enable transit-supportive development along transit corridors. Sufficient densities help to build complete communities while

also attracting new riders to the transit system. Rapid transit corridors also need good urban design (cycling infrastructure, greenspace, pedestrian amenities, etc.) to ensure safe and convenient access to the corridor by foot, bike and bus. Provincial policies like the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Metrolinx Mobility Hub Guidelines provide guidance for this type of planning.

While municipalities, provincial agencies or a combination may lead transit projects, local municipalities' planning departments carry out the detailed land use and urban design component. Therefore, it's important to consider how the planning processes for transit, and the associated land use changes, fit together.

## Tools for transit-supportive planning

When planning a transit corridor, many land use and design elements need to be considered, include building forms, heights, densities, mixed use, heritage preservation, public and green space, parking, community services, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure and accessibility.

Municipalities have access to many tools to shape these elements. Official Plans and zoning bylaws are the required regulatory framework, but many other kinds of policies can be used to guide growth and plan infrastructure. For example, Transportation Master Plans and rapid transit plans are used to lay out the transit network. Guidelines for urban design, tall buildings or transit station areas can be published to provide clearer direction to shape development and streetscapes.

Through changes to the Planning Act, the province has recently made additional tools available to municipalities for sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> For example, municipalities can:

- Establish minimum, not only maximum, heights along the corridor, and negotiate additional heights with developers in exchange for community services and amenities,
- Provide guidance on urban design elements such as pedestrian infrastructure, street trees and architectural details,
- Through the community planning permit system, offer a more comprehensive process for development approval in a specific area.

In addition, municipalities have tools for managing the planning process. For example, they can use interim control bylaws to temporarily freeze development in a

given area, or use a holding bylaw to temporarily prevent certain kinds of uses on a given site until they can carry out studies and consultation. Ultimately, municipalities must choose the right approach for their context.

Policies have to be reflected in the Official Plan and zoning bylaws to be enforceable. Updates to the Official Plan and zoning bylaws have legally required minimum consultation processes, although it is generally recognized that the minimum consultation requirements are not enough to ensure that the public and stakeholders have meaningful opportunities to get informed and provide feedback. In the case studies, we saw that municipalities are using innovative approaches to engage their communities around land use and design changes.

As with the transit design process, municipal councils have a key role in land use regulations, as they must approve the regulations before they come into force.

### Height and density bonusing

Height and density bonusing is a process whereby municipalities approve heights or density for a development over and above what the existing zoning bylaw allows, in exchange for additional services, facilities or investments from the developer. A municipality must have policies in their Official Plan that enable bonusing before this tool can be used.

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2. In recognition of the key role of municipalities in growth planning, the Province of Ontario has provided new tools that enable municipalities to achieve intensification and sustainable communities in new and exciting ways; for example through the Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act, 2006 (Bill 51), and, more recently, the Smart Growth for Our Communities Act, 2015 (Bill 73).



# Land use planning approaches in the case study communities

The following section highlights how each case study community approached land use planning, and the tools and plans they used. To learn more specifics around the transit projects mentioned in the case studies, see Appendix 2.

Case study community:

## Hamilton Rapid Transit

### City of Hamilton

The City of Hamilton began to lay the groundwork for rapid transit planning nearly a decade ago by identifying transportation nodes and corridors in its 2007 Transportation Master Plan. This plan laid out the foundation the “B-L-A-S-T” network which identifies five rapid transit corridors. Similarly, the Official Plan is based on a “nodes and corridors” structure that is translated down through other planning documents.

In 2013, the city conducted a planning exercise called “Rapid Ready,” which looked in detail at how to plan for rapid transit. This led to a five-year multi-modal transportation plan that identifies transit-supportive land uses, densities and designs as an essential ingredient for preparing for rapid transit. A 10-year local transit strategy followed in 2015, which builds upon Rapid Ready and provides short term actions for city council to continue developing the transit network, including operational improvements.

When the LRT was announced, the city applied an interim control bylaw to freeze development for one year in order to update regulations along the B-line corridor. This was particularly important because the existing zoning dated from the 1950s and as such, was not considered transit-supportive. The zoning bylaw update that resulted included a new designation for transit-oriented corridors, which includes requirements for built form and integration with the neighbourhood, as well as special provisions around stations. A minimum height of three storeys was applied in this zone as well as maximum parking and minimum bike parking.

The City of Hamilton faces some particular planning challenges along the LRT corridor, which has a very different existing character from end to end. Specifically, accommodating the required right-of-way in the downtown segment, which is already built up and has several heritage properties, has been challenging.

#### Major plans

- Transportation Master Plan (2007)
- Rapid Ready Plan (2013)
- Ten Year Local Transit Strategy (2015)
- Hamilton Urban and Rural Official Plans
- Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review
- Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan

#### Other tools

- Interim control bylaw & LRT corridor zoning designation
- Downtown Secondary Plan & station area Secondary Plans
- Tall Building Guidelines
- Transit-Oriented Development Guidelines

Hurontario LRT

City of Mississauga

The Hurontario LRT is the result of longstanding plans: the City of Mississauga identified Hurontario Street as one of its rapid transit corridors as early as the 1970s, although more concerted work began about a decade ago. The Hurontario/Main Street Master Plan, completed in 2010, confirmed this direction by integrating planning for rapid transit, intensified land use and enhanced urban design. It was the first time land use planning considerations were directly linked to the transportation objectives for the corridor.

Mississauga has a unique challenge in achieving suitable development along the downtown portion of the corridor, as its planning regulations have no height restrictions in the downtown which can create

a mismatch between the value of the land and the local demand for development. The land use planning process was used to protect some parts of the corridor to ensure context-appropriate development.

The City of Mississauga also has a suite of secondary plans, such as its Downtown21 Master Plan, which have served as tools to plan for transit-supportive design. In addition, in 2013, the city adopted a new planning framework for the downtown which included amendments to the Official Plan, a new downtown core local area plan, a zoning amendment bylaw and new built form standards.

Major plans	Other tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Interim Transportation Strategy (2011)</li><li>Hurontario/Main Street Master Plan (2010)</li><li>Downtown21 Master Plan (2010)</li><li>Mississauga Official Plan</li><li>Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Downtown Core Local Area Plan</li><li>Built form standards</li></ul>

## Waterloo Region ION

### Region of Waterloo

In 2003, the Region of Waterloo developed its Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) to determine where, when and how future growth should occur. The principles set out in the RGMS were then used to shape planning policies and decisions in the region, including the development of a new Regional Official Plan, which entails a significant increase in density compared to historical development, supported by the development of a rapid transit system.

The LRT technology was approved by regional council in 2009, and funding was approved in 2011. In 2013, the Region of Waterloo developed a Community Building Strategy (CBS) to establish, at a high level, how growth will happen around rapid transit stations. The CBS also provides information about the market opportunities around the station areas and beyond for actors interested in investing in the community. The market-related information has also been useful for municipalities in the region.

### City of Kitchener

The approval of local funding in 2011 confirmed for local actors, including developers, that the LRT project would be moving forward. In the City of Kitchener, the region’s CBS laid the groundwork for the Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS) initiative, which is a series of studies undertaken to provide direction for future transit-supportive development within ION station areas. The PARTS studies will establish stakeholder and public values and aspirations for the different areas, which will then be translated into station area plans and, ultimately, a new secondary plan and zoning for those areas. To ensure that all growth-related aspects are taken into consideration, and to ensure a predictable consultation process, the city chose to follow an EA process for the development of the PARTS plans.

A comprehensive review of the zoning bylaw is underway to update the existing 30-year-old bylaw to align with the city’s new Official Plan. Additionally, in response to concerns about the impact of growth on stable neighbourhoods near the transit corridor, the city is conducting a Residential Intensification in Established Neighbourhoods Study (RIENS).

One interesting challenge – and opportunity – in Kitchener is that many station areas currently have large, privately-owned parking lots. There are plans to implement new parking regulations city-wide through the comprehensive bylaw review. The city may also consider integrating height/density bonusing and holding bylaw provisions in regulations for certain areas to support transit-oriented development.

Major plans	Other tools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Growth Management Strategy (2003)</li><li>• Regional Transportation Master Plan (2011)</li><li>• Kitchener Integrated Transportation Master Plan (2013)</li><li>• Waterloo Regional Official Plan</li><li>• Kitchener Official Plan</li><li>• Updated Zoning By-law</li><li>• Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Regional Community Building Strategy (2013)</li><li>• Kitchener Planning Around Rapid Transit Stations (PARTS) studies</li><li>• Station Study Area Plans</li><li>• Secondary Plan</li><li>• Residential Intensification in Established Neighbourhoods Study (RIENS)</li></ul>

# Ottawa Confederation Line

## City of Ottawa

The City of Ottawa’s transportation objectives are outlined in its Transportation Master Plan, which was adopted in 2008 and later updated in 2013 along with a suite of other planning documents: an updated Official Plan (currently under appeal at the OMB), Infrastructure Master Plan, and cycling and pedestrian plans.

In response to development pressures affecting the city in the transit corridor, the city published a set of transit-oriented development guidelines in 2007 and urban design guidelines for high-rise housing in 2009. Further, in response to the planned LRT project, the city has reallocated density along the transit corridors, and more work to refine the regulations is underway.

A first series of six transit-oriented development plans were completed along the Stage 1 LRT corridor, which led to secondary plans and a new zoning designation. Features of the new zoning designation included minimum density and maximum heights to encourage appropriate densification, provisions to ensure activity along main streets, and built form considerations. Landowners, developers, residents’ associations, councillors and others were involved in this process through ongoing stakeholder groups.

The city also developed a unique approach to changing the zoning to response to the issue that a requirement for minimum density could have the unwanted effect of discouraging development if the rules are not matched to current market conditions. The new “TD” zoning offers a built-in exception for properties with existing development, allowing existing landowners to redevelop under the previous zoning if they wish, until the new regulations are triggered.

## National Capital Commission

Since the Confederation Line affects some federal lands, the National Capital Commission (NCC) is also involved. The NCC provided the City of Ottawa with a set of “capital principles” that provide an extra layer of guidance for the planning of station areas that affect federal lands.

### Major plans

- City of Ottawa Official Plan
- NCC plans & policies
- City of Ottawa zoning bylaw

### Other tools

- Neighbourhood studies/transit-oriented development plans
- Urban design guidelines for high-rise developments
- Urban design guidelines for transit-oriented development
- Flexible zoning change process



## Challenges in transit-supportive planning

Planning to accommodate rapid transit projects and unlock transit-supportive development is a process of guiding long-term change in a system with many moving parts. Some of the key challenges to developing policy for transit-supportive development that have emerged in the case study communities are:

### Planning frameworks are increasingly complex

As municipalities react to the reality of rapid population growth, dated infrastructure and changing patterns of work, their planning frameworks become increasingly complex. They produce an increasing range of plans, policies and guidelines that overlap with regional and provincial frameworks. This complexity, while to an extent unavoidable, makes the system difficult to navigate for the public, developers, and planners themselves.

### Transportation and land use processes are not connected

A related challenge is that the process of designing a transit project and the process of updating land use regulations tend to occur in silos, particularly when they are led by different levels of government or at least different departments within the municipality. The desire to keep the processes separate is sometimes driven partly by a desire to keep controversial debates about a transit project outside of the land use planning process. However, this situation means that the public have to participate in two different consultation processes, and this added time commitment could discourage engagement. Further, the same concerns tend to emerge across engagement processes.

### It's a new challenge

In most of the case study communities, rapid transit is new to the scene and growth pressure is reaching new highs. This means that municipal staff are in some cases grappling with the challenges of guiding transit-supportive development for the first time, and doing so on short timelines. Planners must determine how

general transit-supportive principles might apply to the particular context of their community.

The possibility of increased density tends to elicit concerns among local stakeholders, either because they doubt that the planned density will be achievable, or because they are concerned about impacts on factors like neighbourhood character, traffic and shading. On the other hand, residents in areas that have experienced a lack of investment tend to see transit-oriented planning as an opportunity to bring new services, amenities and life to their neighbourhood.

### Infrastructure isn't up to snuff

Many kinds of infrastructure are needed to support growth: sanitary and stormwater sewers, drinking water, transportation capacity, parklands, schools, hospitals, etc. Infrastructure limitations can sometimes be surprising: in Hamilton, for example, there were concerns that the municipal water distribution system wouldn't have sufficient pressure to distribute water to high-rise buildings. In addition, many elements are changing at once. Planning for parking can be a particular challenge, because the full impact of the transit project on mode choice is yet unknown. Planners must work with other departments and governments to consider all of these aspects when planning for growth.

## Success factors

The following success factors describe the ways in which municipal planning teams have met the challenges of planning for transit-supportive development in their communities.



*Success factor:*

## 1. Establish clear processes

To manage the multiplicity of considerations associated with changing regulations around land use and growth, project teams need clear and coordinated processes to make sure that nothing falls through the cracks. Environmental assessment processes and project management approaches are two examples of useful frameworks.

Planning teams and their partners should closely examine opportunities to integrate transit, land use and infrastructure planning initiatives in order to facilitate public participation across the range of projects underway and reduce the risk of information gaps. Since this is sometimes not

possible, other approaches to reduce complexity can be used. Teams can set up “one-window” access points for the public, so that information can be accessed in one place even where planning initiatives remain internally separated. It is also important to have representatives responsible for related projects present at consultation events in order to respond to public questions and provide accurate information.

Adopting a learning approach is a key component of the policy development cycle. Land use policy is always in evolution. Planning teams should measure the effectiveness of land use policies over time and adjust their approach accordingly.

“One thing we’ve learned is that it all comes together. We can’t think about schools, parks and sidewalks separately, or support services and transit. We heard this from stakeholders such as service providers...perhaps there is a move to a more holistic approach.”

– Yulia Pak, associate, Swerhun Consulting

## Managing complexity

The **City of Kitchener** has integrated project management expertise into their planning team and prioritized project management principles in their operations. This has allowed for better coordination of the various planning initiatives underway. The city has also developed an internal tool for tracking lessons learned throughout projects, not just at the end.

The **City of Ottawa** is carrying out many planning efforts at the same time to prepare for the LRT

project. One outward-facing approach to reduce complexity has been to organize project websites according to geography, so a user can access all of the planning projects in their neighbourhood in one place. The city also takes a “no wrong door” approach. This means that if they receive a comment from a member of the public that pertains to a different project than the one at hand, they forward that comment to the appropriate team, rather than disregarding it.



*Success factor:*

## 2. Work with developers and landowners

When planning teams use a targeted approach to involving developers and landowners as part of their broader stakeholder engagement process, they gain access to important information, such as the potential constraints of different sites, options for lot consolidation and new roads, and the

general acceptability of different policy options. Developers can be key champions of transit projects and new land use regulations.

### Developer outreach

The **City of Ottawa** has established working groups with landowners and developers to prepare them to navigate the new development requirements that will be specific to the transit corridor.

Through direct outreach and interviews with developers and landowners, the **City of Kitchener** was able to gather information about opportunities

to consolidate land and build new roads to improve the urban grid and test these opportunities with respect to anticipated development profits.



Photo: City of Ottawa

In Ottawa, a compromise led to part of the Confederation Line being tunnelled



*Success factor:*

### 3. Make it about the neighbourhood

When talking about density, many project teams have found that it is helpful to begin the conversation by discussing how growth presents positive opportunities to address existing issues in a neighbourhood and achieve a vision for the future of the area. It is very important to have champions of this idea among local councillors. As well, though transit-supportive land use often involves increasing the density, planning teams should communicate that it can also involve protecting heritage districts and stable neighbourhoods.

It is often the design – not density – that truly determines the fit of new developments into existing neighbourhoods. It is hard to be prescriptive about design, so newer approaches such as urban design guidelines, form-based codes and design review panels are increasingly useful tools.

“Hamilton is feeling that development pressure. It’s been such rapid change from five years ago to now. I think Hamiltonians have started to acknowledge that [growth] is coming, and they’re more interested in how it’s going to be integrated into the community.”

– Alissa Mahood, senior project manager, Planning and Economic Development, City of Hamilton

“Transportation and land use planning go together hand in hand. Transit-oriented development is about planning the best ways for a city to grow, facilitating housing, employment, and great transportation options like bus rapid transit and subways. With York Region’s fast growth, transit planning and urban planning will continue to work together, resulting in what vivaNext is all about: great cities and great transit that is smart and sustainable.”

– Mary-Frances Turner, president, York Region Rapid Transit Corp.

“It’s important to share with citizens that the question is, ‘do we manage development, or does development manage us.’”

– Councillor Tovey, Mississauga Ward 1



# Where we go from here

Investments in rapid transit are a key part of building liveable communities, providing transportation options and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As this report has shown, with the help of investment from all levels of government, provincial agencies and municipalities are making great strides toward building out the rapid transit network that Ontario needs. To do this, they are working to conduct meaningful public and stakeholder engagement and ensure their land use and design policies are transit-supportive, using an array of planning tools. Where project teams are able to gather, understand, and act on local concerns, and support local leaders in doing the same, they build relationships that underpin the success of the project – and ensure that it does truly meet local needs.

More transit infrastructure and additional land use changes are required to meet local needs and achieve the vision set out in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Regional Transportation Plan. As the case studies in this report have shown, project identification, design and implementation is not without its challenges, but it can be done well, and the process is worth it. When effective rapid transit projects succeed, we all benefit. The lessons learned so far can be applied across Ontario and beyond.

“We need to not use the tools of the past to solve the problems of the future. It is a reality that getting to the ‘future’ is often a painful process. You can be frustrated with the pain of today and it can still be the right future.”

– Ian Malczewski, associate, Swerhun Consulting

“When a city learns something, that lesson can propagate outwards and other cities can pick up on it.”

–Ryan McGreal, editor and member, Raise the Hammer

# Appendix 1: Interview participants

We are very grateful to our participants for their time and insight. Participation in this project does not necessarily constitute an endorsement of the findings expressed in the report.

- Martin Barakengera, senior land use planner, Capital Planning, National Capital Commission
- Craig Beattie, founding partner, Perimeter Development Corporation
- Chris Bejnar, co-chair, Citizens for a Better Brampton
- Chris Drew, co-founder, Fight Gridlock Brampton
- Mary Furlin, director and treasurer, Credit Reserve Association (Minneola Residents' Association)
- Joe Horneck, co-chair, Western GTA Move Task Force
- Paul Johnson, director, LRT project coordination, Light Rail Transit Office, City of Hamilton
- Tim Lai, Manager, LRT stakeholder communications, City of Mississauga
- Crystal Legacy, senior research fellow, Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University
- Cameron MacLeod, executive director, CodeRedTO
- Marc Magierowicz, planner, O-Train Planning, Stage 2, City of Ottawa
- Alissa Mahood, senior project manager, Community Planning & GIS, City of Hamilton
- Ian Malczewski, associate, Swerhun Consulting
- Aaron McCrimmon-Jones, project manager, Planning Division, City of Kitchener
- Ryan McGreal, editor and member, Raise the Hammer
- Shannon McKie, senior planner, City of Hamilton
- Yulia Pak, associate, Swerhun Consulting
- Alain Pinard, director of planning, City of Kitchener
- Jamie Robinson, director of community relations & communications for rapid transit projects, Metrolinx
- Huzaifa Saeed, policy and research analyst, Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Jillian Savage, planner II, City of Ottawa
- Carrie Slattery, strategic communications advisor, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation
- Jim Tovey, councillor, Ward 1 – Port Credit, Mississauga City Council
- Mary-Frances Turner, president, York Region Rapid Transit Corporation
- Katie Wall, TravelWise manager, Sustainable Waterloo Region
- Matthew Williams, project manager, LRT, City of Mississauga
- David Wojcik, president and CEO, Mississauga Board of Trade

## Appendix 2: Case study projects

Investments in rapid transit are a key part of building liveable communities, providing transportation options and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Recognizing this value, in recent years provincial, federal and municipal governments have collectively committed billions in capital funding to build new rapid transit. In the GGH, the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan has helped to guide these investments in order to build a connected region. Municipalities in and outside the GGH, like Ottawa, have been leading the charge on the ground.

Many of these new projects are happening in communities where there has never before been rapid transit. Municipalities and their citizens are grappling with the new challenges and opportunities that this presents, ranging from effective engagement, to managing construction impacts, to updating zoning bylaws. To learn more about these challenges as well

as to identify successful responses, we looked at four different rapid transit projects in communities across Ontario: Hamilton Rapid Transit, Hurontario LRT, Waterloo Region ION and the Ottawa Confederation Line. We chose these projects because they represent different rapid transit technologies, are at different stages of advancement, and have different project leaders.

Though each case study has a unique context and history, similar lessons emerged. For example, the need to engage early and often came up again and again. Our hope is that other communities looking to undergo similar projects can learn from their ongoing experiences.

# Hamilton Rapid Transit

The Hamilton “B-L-A-S-T” plan identifies five corridors for long-term rapid transit development. Two of these lines, B and A, are the first to move forward. Hamilton rapid transit corridors are also recognized in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan. Rapid transit on the east/west B-Line will be an LRT running along Main St./King St. between McMaster University and the Queenston Traffic Circle. A TPAP was completed

in 2011 for the B-line and an update to that TPAP is currently being completed. An RFQ was issued in early 2017, the RFP will follow in the summer of 2017 with major construction expected to begin in 2019.

The Province of Ontario recently announced its desire to support the planning, design and implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) along the north/south A-Line, that will link the harbour to the airport.

Where the project is currently at:



Capital funding	Project leaders	Length and technology
Provincial	<b>Transit project:</b> City of Hamilton and Metrolinx <b>Procurement:</b> Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario <b>Land use planning:</b> City of Hamilton	11 km LRT 16 km BRT (proposed)

## The context

When the Province of Ontario announced capital funding for new rapid transit in Hamilton in 2015, the city accelerated work on rapid transit planning in order to identify priority corridors. The funding announcement also spurred action among community members and groups like the Chamber of Commerce, BIAs, and new resident-led groups who mobilized in support of the project but who also had many questions and concerns.

Since that time, rapid transit has become one of Hamilton’s most contested issues. Some of the most prominent concerns include the choice of technology (BRT/LRT), route selection, impact on traffic and roadways, and the eventual operating costs, which will be borne by the municipality. Despite initial approvals by city council, some councillors have publicly contemplated revoking their approval – a situation that has kept some aspects of the project in limbo.

Capital costs for Hamilton Rapid Transit are funded entirely by the Province of Ontario. While municipalities have long been calling for more help on infrastructure investments, this arrangement has created a lack of clarity for local actors as to who is setting priorities and making decisions. This reality appears to have contributed to some of the local skepticism toward the project.

The debate is also playing out in a context of rapid change after a long period of relatively slow growth in Hamilton. The city is seeing an influx of younger residents, an associated uptick in urban development, and a shift in preferences for retail and transportation options. The rapid transit projects are thus part of a broader debate about future visions for the city and how it should respond to change.



# Hurontario LRT

The Hurontario LRT will be a 20-km LRT through Mississauga on Hurontario St. and into Brampton to the Gateway terminal south of Steeles Ave. The LRT will connect to GO Transit, Mississauga MiWay and the Transitway BRT, and Brampton Züm. Importantly, one quarter of the corridor passes through employment areas, opening up more transit options for commuters.

A TPAP was completed in 2014. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2018, with anticipated completion in 2022.

The Hurontario LRT passes through the Cities of Mississauga and Brampton, but in this report, we focus on activities in the City of Mississauga.

Where the project is currently at:



Capital funding	Project leaders	Length and technology
Provincial	<b>Transit project:</b> Metrolinx <b>Procurement:</b> Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario <b>Land use planning:</b> Region of Peel and Cities of Mississauga and Brampton	20km LRT

## The context

Like the Hamilton LRT, the Hurontario LRT project is also identified in the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and has full capital funding from the Government of Ontario. The response of communities in the two municipalities has been measurably different.

Mississauga has been experiencing rapid growth and densification for some time. Many recognize the LRT as being a positive part of growth, and generally elected officials have been champions for the project. However, some actors remain skeptical that the project will achieve its stated objectives. As well, the project hasn't had the kind of high-profile coverage that transit projects have seen in other communities. This means many residents may still be unaware of the project; new concerns may arise as the project

begins the more visible construction phase in 2018.

In contrast, the debate around Brampton's Hurontario LRT was high-profile and widely contested. Concerns include the impacts on Main St. (the proposed corridor) including the loss of traffic lanes and the addition of overhead wires, as well as the feasibility of anticipated ridership. Though some businesses and new resident-led groups emerged in strong support of the project, others have opposed the proposed route. Ultimately, these concerns were taken up by local councillors, resulting in a rejection of a large segment of the proposed project by council vote. As a result, the project currently terminates at Steeles Ave. rather than continuing north to the Brampton GO station. The city is now studying alternative routes.

# Waterloo Region ION

The Waterloo Region ION is the Region of Waterloo’s rapid transit system and when complete will link the region’s three cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge with an LRT system. The project was approved by regional council in 2009 and a more staged approach was later adopted. Provincial and federal funding commitments were made in 2010, and the region confirmed local funding in 2011.

Construction on Stage 1 began in 2014 and is set to be completed in 2017, It includes 19 km of LRT between Kitchener and Waterloo and 16 km of BRT between Kitchener and Cambridge.

In Stage 2, the BRT will be converted to LRT. Consultation on this stage was launched in 2015.

Though the ION system links three municipalities, this report focuses on actions taken by the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kitchener.

Where the project is currently at:



Capital funding	Project leaders	Length and technology
Municipal Provincial Federal	<b>Transit project:</b> Region of Waterloo <b>Procurement:</b> Public-private partnership (P3) led by region with Infrastructure Ontario as advisor <b>Land use planning:</b> Region of Waterloo and cities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge	19 km LRT and 16 km BRT (Stage 1) BRT converted to LRT (Stage 2)

## The context

From among our case studies, the Waterloo Region ION is unique in that the Region of Waterloo, an upper-tier municipality, is the project proponent. Initiated before the current wave of provincial investment in transit, the region is contributing significantly to the capital cost. This cost to taxpayers was initially a source of some local concern.

The prominent tech community in the region has generally embraced the rapid transit project and taken an active role in championing it. Some developers have also made a concerted effort to communicate the potential the project offers for the region.

Since construction is already underway, the Region of Waterloo is the most informative case in terms of understanding the potential challenges during this stage of a project. Impacts such as traffic disruption and road closures have affected some businesses on the corridor and have been a source of concern. While construction efforts continue, local municipalities are also focusing on updating their land use and design regulations to prepare for transit-supportive density. Municipalities such as the City of Kitchener are seeing new interest in development and investment in certain areas, catalyzed by the new LRT stations.

# Ottawa Confederation Line

A two-stage rapid transit project is currently underway to expand the O-Train, Ottawa’s light rail system. Stage 1, known as the Confederation Line, is a 12.5-km LRT running east-west with 2.5 km in a tunnel through downtown Ottawa. Construction began in 2013 and the project is expected to be operational in 2018. It is being carried out through a public-private partnership.

Stage 2 will involve extensions of the O-Train east, west and south. This component of the project is currently in the planning stages; construction is expected to begin in 2018 with completion in 2023. The project includes funding from the provincial and federal government.

Where the project is currently at:



Capital funding	Project leaders	Length and technology
Municipal Provincial Federal	<b>Transit project:</b> City of Ottawa <b>Procurement:</b> Public-private partnership (P3) led by city with Infrastructure Ontario as advisor <b>Land use planning:</b> City of Ottawa	12.5 km LRT (Stage 1) 50 km LRT total (Stage 2)

## The context

The City of Ottawa built a transitway system in the 1980s, which forms the backbone of a high-capacity BRT system today, much of which is in dedicated right-of-ways. The transitways were built with the intention of converting them to LRT in the future. This existing infrastructure creates a different context for LRT development than in the other case study communities. For example, the choice of route is less contested because it is already largely in place.

However, the LRT has not been without concerns. In some areas, the route passes by stable neighbourhoods where achieving compatibility and sensitive transitions become key considerations,

leading to concerns from local residents about the impact both during construction and operation. As in Waterloo, construction has had a large impact, particularly during tunneling work in the downtown segment. Another set of concerns also arose from the transit union who are concerned about the potential loss of jobs through technology change.


The City of Ottawa is an already complex and busy planning system, as major growth has been occurring for some time. Specific planning efforts around the LRT corridor have fit within this shifting policy landscape.

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