

Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Area-Specific Planning Project Engagement Plan

September 2021

Background

Burlington is in the next phase of city-building as it approaches full build-out of the urban area. The undertaking of area-specific plans (ASPs) for Burlington's Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) represents the City's continuing implementation of its vision for appropriate intensification and the protection of established neighbourhoods by focusing future population growth to key areas, and in particular a focus around higher order transit.

The completion of ASPs for Burlington's MTSAs is identified in [Burlington's Strategic Plan 2015-2040](#), 2018-2022: [Burlington's Plan: From Vision to Focus](#), and the [Burlington Official Plan, 2020](#), as well as [Halton Regional Official Plan Amendment \(ROPA\) No. 48](#) and the [Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019](#). In July 2016, City staff brought forward a report PB-48-16 titled "Burlington's Mobility Hubs Workplan" which mapped out the delivery of four ASPs and was unanimously supported by City Council.

In 2017, the ASP work was initiated through the Mobility Hubs Study, which included visioning, public engagement and technical studies. This resulted in draft precinct plans for each study area around the Aldershot, Burlington and Appleby GO Stations. These draft precinct plans were released for feedback as preliminary and subject to change, due to on-going technical studies, as well as Council, community and stakeholder feedback. In July 2018, staff presented draft precinct plans to Council for comment through staff report [PB-65-18](#). The draft precinct plans were not endorsed, nor approved by City Council.

The Mobility Hubs Study was then placed on hold in Q1 2019 to allow for a shift in focus to emerging planning priorities, including the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review, the scoped re-examination of the adopted Official Plan and the Interim Control Bylaw Land Use Study.

The MTSA Area-Specific Planning Project will build upon and advance the work undertaken through the Mobility Hubs Study. It is important to note that there are a number of key differences that resulted in significant changes to the scope and considerations of the work. This work includes the completion of all required technical studies, further public and stakeholder engagement and the completion of three (3) area-specific plans, as well as the associated implementing Official

Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments and other implementation strategies which may be required. To learn more about the project, check out the work plan report posted in the documents library on the Get Involved Burlington website.

This is your opportunity to help shape the policies that will guide development in the MTSAs. To include as many voices as possible in this important conversation about the future of MTSAs in Burlington, the City will be hosting several engagement activities designed to give the community an opportunity to provide meaningful input. There are also a number of other City initiatives and projects occurring at the same time as the MTSA ASP Project, which may influence and complement each other including the City's Integrated Mobility Plan, Housing Strategy and Climate Adaptation Plans among others. These projects will stay connected to ensure alignment. Information on these various City projects can be found on [Get Involved Burlington](#).

Engaging people on issues that affect their lives and their city is a key component of democratic society. Public involvement encourages participation, actions and personal responsibility. Burlington's commitment to public engagement is reflected in its [Community Engagement Charter](#), adopted by City Council. The Charter establishes the commitments, responsibilities and concepts of the relationship between the City of Burlington and the citizens of Burlington related to public engagement. The goal of community engagement is to lead to more informed and, therefore, better decision-making.

The following plan provides a roadmap of the engagement activities that will take place over the course of the project, highlighting at which points in the process engagement will take place, who will be engaged and the level of engagement. The plan also clearly defines which aspects of the process the City and public can influence throughout the discussion.

Project Overview

- On May 17, 2021, staff hosted a [City Council workshop](#) to familiarize Council with the work previously completed under the Mobility Hubs Study and to introduce the MTSA ASP project as the next phase of the area-specific planning process.
- On June 8, 2021 [Council endorsed](#) the work plan and proposed terms of reference for the Major Transit Station Area area-specific planning project.

Decision Statement

At the beginning of an engagement process, it is helpful to know, “what is the decision to be made?” A decision statement clearly identifies:

- what decision needs to be made;
- who is the decision maker; and
- when the decision is required.

The decision statement for the MTSA ASP project is as follows: “By June 2022, Burlington City Council will vote to adopt amendments to the Burlington Official Plan, 2020 to incorporate Protected Major Transit Station Area (MTSAs) area-specific plans to guide development and investment around the Burlington, Appleby and Aldershot GO Station Areas. Amendments adopted by Burlington City Council will then be forwarded to the Region of Halton for approval.”

Summary of Stakeholders

A stakeholder is anyone who has an interest or concern about a specific topic. To identify the stakeholders for the MTSA ASP Project, a mapping process will be used to confirm all the people who are affected by this work, those who have influence or power over the work and those that have an interest in its outcome, based on the stakeholders previously identified through the Mobility Hubs Study. It is expected that various individuals and groups will be identified across the following categories:

- Residents and resident groups (including newcomers, young families and young people)
- Government and public service providers (internal and external)
- Indigenous Communities
- Businesses and business groups
- Private and non-profit community service providers
- Media
- Community organizations; special interest, advocacy, and activism groups
- City Advisory Committees and arms-length city agencies
- Development industry
- *Major facilities*¹ within or adjacent to study areas
- Elected officials

¹ Major facilities: means facilities which may require separation from sensitive land uses, including but not limited to airports, manufacturing uses, transportation infrastructure and corridors, rail facilities, marine facilities, sewage treatment facilities, waste management systems, oil and gas pipelines, industries, energy generation facilities and transmission systems, and resource extraction activities (Provincial Policy Statement, 2020)

Objectives of Engagement

The following objectives provide a clear understanding of what the public engagement will strive to achieve through the community discussion about the MTSA ASP Project:

- Provide relevant information about the project, decision-making process, and how the public can provide input and feedback;
- Work with City communications and engagement staff, as well as consultants, to provide a coordinated approach to engagement, communication and evaluation of the MTSA ASPs and their implementing policies.
- Provide multiple channels for people to provide meaningful input virtually and, if and when possible, in-person at appropriate decision points;
- Create an ongoing record of what is said during engagement opportunities and make it available to the public throughout the process, so they can track the progress of the project, including reports back to the community that highlight how feedback was or was not incorporated into the final recommendations to Council;
- Gather meaningful input from members of the community whose voices are historically underrepresented in conversations about city issues;
- Establish a project page on getinvolvedburlington.ca as the main online platform for up-to-date information about the project and upcoming engagement opportunities;
- Use clear, plain language in the delivery of the Engagement Plan to inform the public about what can and cannot be influenced through the MTSA ASP Project.

COVID-19

The City of Burlington continues to take appropriate action to prioritize the health and well-being of our community and staff. Our goal is to keep the public and staff safe and help minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Following Provincial and Public Health directives, the City is currently offering engagement opportunities virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will do so until direction is given by the Province and Public Health allowing in-person engagement. The intent is to offer both virtual and in-person engagement opportunities where and when possible.

Policies and Factors That Cannot be Influenced

In every public engagement process, it is important to be aware of the things that cannot be influenced: either because they are beyond the City's control (for example things that are required by regional or provincial policy or law), or because they are outside the scope of the project as set out in the Council-approved work plan. In discussing the Major Transit Station Area (MTSA) Area-Specific Planning (ASP) Project, the following aspects are considered 'givens' and will not be included in engagement activities:

1. Planning policy at the local municipal level is informed by legislation, policies and plans such as the Planning Act, Provincial Policy Statement, Growth Plan, Halton Region Official Plan, Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan and others.
2. City Council can adopt proposed amendments to the Burlington Official Plan, but Halton Region is the designated approval authority. Halton Region may modify City-proposed amendments prior to approval and, if appealed, the approved amendments may be subject to further change through the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal, except for Protected MTSA policies and zoning regulations protected from appeal under the Planning Act.
3. This study is focused only on the Downtown Burlington Urban Growth Centre/Burlington GO MTSA, Aldershot GO MTSA and Appleby GO MTSA. MTSA boundaries and the corresponding minimum growth targets that have been set by Region of Halton through its Municipal Comprehensive Review. Adopted Halton Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48 updates the Regional Structure and includes formal boundaries for each of the MTSAs within Halton Region. Once approved by the Province, these boundaries and targets cannot be appealed.
4. Urban Growth Centres (UGCs) are strategic growth areas that are planned as Regional and Local focal points for accommodating significant population and employment growth. Provincial policies set out minimum density targets for these areas, which are implemented through the Regional Official Plan, and then through the Burlington Official Plan. Adopted ROPA 48 includes an adjusted boundary for the Burlington Urban Growth Centre (UGC). If approved by the Province, the adjusted UGC boundary will center around the Burlington GO Station Area.
5. In 2017, a new policy framework for "Protected Major Transit Station Areas" (PMTSAs) was established in the Planning Act, R.S.O 1990. PMTSAs are a municipal tool used to support Higher Order Transit infrastructure around Major Transit Station Areas by establishing minimum density targets and transit-supportive land uses which are protected from appeal.

In accordance with Planning Act section 16(16), once identified in an upper-tier municipal official plan and approved by the Province, PMTSA policies cannot be appealed. Similarly, once implementing policies and zoning have been enacted at the lower-tier municipal level, the prescribed policies, for example permitted land uses, maximum height etc., cannot be appealed. PMTSAs may also require Inclusionary Zoning to support affordable housing objectives. Specifically, official plan policies may authorize Inclusionary Zoning by authorizing the inclusion of affordable housing units within buildings or projects containing other residential units, and by providing for the affordable housing units to be maintained as affordable housing units over time.

6. This project will build upon and advance the draft precinct plans developed through the former Mobility Hubs Study in 2018. However, as these plans were released as preliminary and were neither endorsed nor approved by City Council, they are subject to change based on further public engagement and the completion of technical studies.
7. Certain aspects of this project will be informed by the outcome of various technical studies, many of which are required by legislation and policy. These technical studies are undertaken in accordance with established criteria and completed by qualified experts.
8. The Burlington MTSA's are complex, previously developed areas with multiple landowners. The City does not have control over the speed of change related to development. Property owners decide when and if they will develop or redevelop their property.
9. The implementing Official Plan Amendments must be adopted by City Council by June 2022.
10. The implementing Zoning By-Law Amendments must be approved by City Council by December 2022.

Project Stages and Engagement Milestones

At a [Special Meeting of Council](#) on June 8, 2021, City Council endorsed the work plan for the MTSA ASP Project. The key project stages and associated engagement milestones are presented below. For each project stage, the engagement plan identifies where public input will take place, who will be involved in the engagement and what level of engagement will occur. The different levels of engagement are based on the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)'s Public Participation Spectrum, which is also a component of Burlington's [Community Engagement Charter](#). The shaded areas in the table below indicate project stages where significant engagement opportunities will take place.

The tactics that will be used for public involvement in the MTSA ASP Project reflect the feedback provided to the City in the May 17, 2021 Council Workshop. Relevant feedback from related projects has also been considered, including the new Burlington Official Plan, the Scoped Re-Examination of the Downtown and the Interim Control By-Law Land Use Study. These tactics will be further refined by the MTSA ASP Project Steering Committee.

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
May to Sept 2021	1) Develop Engagement Plan	Refine and Finalize Engagement Plan	Gather feedback regarding the draft Engagement Plan. Refine and finalize the Engagement Plan using input from interested or affected individuals and groups. The Engagement Plan will also be finalized in collaboration with the Project Consultant.	Get Involved project page Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics Subscriber Email	Consult interested or affected individuals and groups Involve City Council
		Release Final Engagement Plan	Share the final Engagement Plan and report back about how feedback gathered informed the process.	Get Involved page Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics Subscriber Email	Inform

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
August to Sept 2021	2) Review and Present Background Materials	Release Background Information Memo	Share information about the history of the project, previously completed work (including technical studies), applicable policy frameworks/guidance materials, and confirm project givens.	Get Involved project page Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics Subscriber Email	Inform
August to Dec 2021	3) Develop Preferred Precinct Plans	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
August to Dec 2021	3a) Supporting technical studies	Release completed technical studies	Share information about the completed technical studies, once available.	Get Involved project page Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics	Inform
August to Sept 2021	3b) Develop preliminary preferred precinct plans and policy/zoning directions	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Mid-Sept to Dec 2021	3c) Conduct public, agency and stakeholder engagement	ENGAGEMENT LAUNCH Lead interactive engagement opportunities on the	Gather feedback on a range of issues including precinct policies (e.g. height, built form, land uses) and objectives, precinct boundaries, and	City Get Involved calendar Get Involved project page	Consult/Involve Residents and resident groups (including

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
		preliminary preferred precinct plans, and policy/zoning directions	policy/zoning directions to inform the preparation of the recommended preferred precinct plans.	Media release City Update ad Twitter, Instagram Facebook + FB Event Homepage backer e-newsletters Encouraging community partners to share information with their contacts City-wide Information Mailer Engagement Tactics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey • Virtual meeting(s) • Workbook 	newcomers, young families and young people) Community organizations; special interest, advocacy, and activism groups Government and public service providers (internal and external) City Advisory Committees and arms-length city agencies Private and non-profit community service providers Businesses and business groups Indigenous Communities Development industry Elected officials
		Recommendation Report: Present recommended preferred	Share the recommended preferred precinct plans and policy/zoning directions, as	Get Involved project page	Consult Council

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
		precinct plans and policy/zoning directions to Council for endorsement at a public meeting in December 2021	well as information about how feedback gathered informed the process.	Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics	
Dec to June 2022	4) Area-Specific Plans	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Dec to March 2022	4a) Area-Specific Plans Development	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
April to June 2022	4b) Conduct public, agency and stakeholder engagement	Lead interactive engagement opportunities on the proposed Official Plan Amendments	Share the final report and three Area Specific Plans as well as gather feedback on proposed associated Official Plan Amendments. Feedback gathered will be used to inform the potential modifications to the proposed Official Plan Amendments, if required, which will be brought forward through a recommendation report.	City Get Involved calendar Get Involved project page Media release City Update ad Twitter, Instagram Facebook + FB Event Homepage backer e-newsletters Encouraging community partners to share information with their contacts	Inform/Consult Residents and resident groups (including newcomers, young families and young people) Community organizations; special interest, advocacy, and activism groups Government and public service

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
				Engagement Tactics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Online consultation on draft documents • In-person engagement such as pop ups, going to where people gather in and around the 3 Major Transit Station Areas • In-person meeting(s) 	providers (internal and external) City Advisory Committees and arms-length city agencies Private and non-profit community service providers Businesses and business groups Indigenous Communities Development industry Elected officials
		Statutory Public Meeting to present Area Specific Plan and final project report findings, including proposed Official Plan Amendments, to Council	Share the Area Specific Plans and proposed implementing policies, and how public input informed the process.	City Get Involved calendar Get Involved project page Media release City Update ad Twitter, Instagram Facebook + FB Event Homepage backer	Inform/Consult

Timing	Project Stage	Engagement Milestone	Message	Tactic(s)	Level of Engagement
		Recommendation Report: Present ASPs and final project report for Council approval, and present proposed Official Plan Amendments for Council for adoption, in June 2022	Share the final Area Specific Plans and proposed implementing policies. Share information about how feedback gathered throughout project stage 4b), including the statutory public meeting, informed the final recommendations.	Get Involved project page Get Involved weekly newsletter/Hot Topics	Consult
July to Dec 2022	5) Zoning and Urban Design Guidelines Development	To be undertaken in accordance with statutory requirements- details to be determined at the outset of Stage 5			

How the City Will Collect and Respond to Feedback

Throughout the engagement process, City staff will diligently collect and record all input provided by stakeholders. All input will be recorded by theme into response tables, showing in detail how the comments were considered and how they did or did not shape the study process, the Area Specific Plans and their associated implementing Official Plan amendments recommended to Council, and why.

Evaluating the Engagement Process

Throughout the MTSA ASP Project, City staff will capture interim feedback on the engagement process through measures such as feedback/satisfaction surveys. This will allow for ongoing and incremental evaluation of engagement efforts and will support an iterative process where feedback may influence the engagement process throughout the project.

To assist in measuring how the public participation contributed to the final project decision to be made, the following will be used to evaluate the overall public participation process.

1. Once the project is complete, measure the degree to which community members felt they:
 - a. Understood the project's process and its limitations
 - b. Understood how the feedback they provided influenced the outcome of the City Council approval.
2. Evaluate each form of engagement. How did each of the engagement approaches used help to achieve the engagement objectives?
3. Analyze how the feedback received about the forms of engagement informed new or alternative approaches to the overall public participation process as the project moved forward.