

Project Agreement - CityLAB Semester in Residence Fall 2023

Due Date: Draft Due Thursday, September 21, 2023. Final Document Due Thursday, September 28, 2023.

Introduction: The role of the project agreement is to document the expectations for the project, define objectives, clarify constraints or limitations, and outline responsibilities to ensure clarity for the project. Students are responsible for ensuring that all sections of this agreement are complete, with the knowledge that this agreement will be referenced throughout the semester. This agreement will form the structure of the final academic report.

Project Summary. The Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) strives to connect multiple non-profit organizations in the city for policy and advocacy work relating to affordable housing at a municipal level, tenant rights, socially conscious transport developments, and more. Currently, their main focus is addressing the environmental and social implications of the 14-kilometre Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) project that Metrolinx has ignored. Our group will take an interdisciplinary approach to re-envision what the LRT corridor could look like regarding greening opportunities and social and economic solutions for displaced low-income residents. We will also provide policy recommendations for future proposed major transit projects, such as the A-line in Hamilton, by better envisioning an already existing project.

Project Team

Project Team Students: Diana Samanou, Griffin Kinzie, Hannah Horlings, Isabela Sipos, Kiana Craig, Simon Batusic

Karl Andrus (HCBN Community Benefits Manager) - Karl will provide the most recent information surrounding the LRT project and guide us into what actions the HCBN might take. He will be a guiding partner that will be involved in providing updates and check-ins.

Randy Kay(CityLAB SIR Outreach Director) - Randy will help with outreach for our project partners through CityLAB connections and CityLAB social media. This will help us meet other community partners and obtain data needed through community outreach.

Hannah Elgersma (CityLAB Project Coordinator) - Hannah has knowledge about previous CityLab projects and is willing to aid how we navigate and address the complex problems of our project using her prior experience.

<p>Project Overview (to be informed by working directly with project advisors and CityLAB SIR teaching team)</p>	<p>Context</p> <p>After years of contentious debate, in 2021, the City of Hamilton recommitted to its Light Rail Transit (LRT) project on the account of and through the funding of \$3.4 billion dollars by the federal and provincial governments (Government of Ontario, 2021). This 14-kilometre LRT corridor with 17 stops will run along King Street from McMaster University to Eastgate Square, a route currently served by the 10-B Line Express HSR bus (City of Hamilton, 2023). Metrolinx, the crown corporation governing the project, has committed to providing fast, cheap and reliable transportation while ignoring the environmental and social implications the LRT will have on Hamilton and its residents. The LRT development will serve as a foundation and guideline for five future major transit projects in Hamilton, including the A-Line. Formed in 2017 in response to the opportunities presented by the Hamilton Light Rail Project, the Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) has and continues to advocate for community dialogue and social-environmental considerations around the B-Line LRT project.</p>
	<p>Problem</p> <p>The B-Line LRT will result in extensive changes to Hamilton’s urban landscape for upwards of 30 years. Unfortunately, its proposed development disregards several social and environmental implications, raising concerns about equity and climate justice. Recent population census tracking along the LRT shows that this area has some of the highest concentrations of low-income, racialized and marginalized populations, including Indigenous communities, in Hamilton (Statistics Canada, 2016). Gentrification and a loss of affordable housing from this project will continue to displace these residents. Additionally, there is a lack of climate mitigation plans for the LRT corridor, such as the removal of 600 trees, according to Karl Andrus (2023). Although this LRT will shape future transit developments in Hamilton, the project is seriously lacking in design recommendations from a climate justice perspective and consideration of the potential consequences of not adequately addressing community needs. Furthermore, student voices in Hamilton have been lacking in the community engagement and consultation efforts around this transit project.</p>
	<p>Design Challenge</p> <p>How might we, as CityLab SIR students with partners, identify the deeper social and environmental consequences caused by the creation of the B-Line LRT transit system? How can we also ensure that sustainable and</p>

community-friendly policies are created that take into account the destruction and displacement of the many surrounding physical and social infrastructures?

In Scope (what fits within the resources and time we have available for this project?)

- Determine what social environmental concerns are not being addressed within the B-Line LRT plan.
- Bring a fresh lens to imagine and ideate a new transit corridor through the community where the B-Line LRT is set to be built.
- Propose ideas and plans for the five anticipated future HSR projects to ensure that issues of climate change, green spaces, tenant justice, and marginalized populations are considered.
- Consider the ways that capital-driven systems might change the physical area that it gets built in.
- Focus attention on what happens to the landscape of lower-income neighbourhoods when major construction results in gentrification.
- Engage with Undergraduate and Graduate students in Hamilton to learn what this demographic would like to see from a major transit system.
- Create a report that influences future transit policies by researching the work of other communities and related resources to determine what the best version of the LRT could look like in Hamilton.

Out of Scope (what doesn't fit within the resources and time we have available for this project?)

- While future B-line LRT construction will contribute to issues around gentrification, housing displacement, tree removal, and more, the timeframe that we have (three months) will not allow us to interact directly with these issues. Instead, we will ideate and bring a fresh lens to how these issues could be approached in the future.
 - I.e., We will not be interacting directly with Metrolinx to change the entire course of the current B-line LRT project. We do not aim to change Metrolinx's plan for the B-Line; Rather, we aim to identify gaps in the project that will influence future LRT projects, such as the A-line, in a positive manner.
- Create and disseminate large-scale *quantitative* surveys to analyze those affected by gentrification and environmental impacts.

<p>Goals (what are three to five objectives that this project will aim to achieve within the semester)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bring awareness to the ways that new urban transit developments might influence climate and social issues throughout the neighbourhoods in which these projects are implemented. This will hopefully influence the designs of further development. 2. Visualize what an ideal LRT system would look like in Hamilton if resident needs and the social and environmental implications are taken into consideration. 3. Engage with Hamilton postsecondary students to learn what is important to this diverse demographic when it comes to local transit developments. 4. Create a final project that contributes to bettering the B-Line LRT transit project regarding the climate crisis in Hamilton and/or the surrounding community. 5. Synthesize our findings, vision and recommendations for the LRT project into a comprehensive, accessible and easily digestible summary for community members.
<p>Background Research (what research will be required to pursue the challenge)</p>	<p>Research will form the large early majority of the work for this project and will exist under various disciplines.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - As light rail transit is becoming a widely used form of transport, our group aims to investigate recent LRT systems across many municipalities to gauge similar implementations that could be made in Hamilton. - Our group aims to research the current City of Hamilton policies and roadmaps impacting major decisions around LRT developments and those impacted. For example, zoning laws, climate and environmental policies, future infrastructure development planned along the corridor (condos, sidewalks, water piping, transit stations, etc.), and more. - We will seek out available, local, and tangible technologies or organizations which might be implemented for social and climate benefit. - We will research renovation and eviction rates along the B-Line corridor and affected communities not accounted for by zoning laws to understand the current severity of displaced people. - We will explore and analyze CityLab's past student projects with HCBN which include findings from community surveys in 2021 about what community benefits residents want to see from the LRT.

<p>Relevant Stakeholders (Who are the key stakeholders that might be engaged in this process - *note that you are not expected to know all stakeholders at this point, but rather to begin thinking critically about who to engage)</p>	<p>Metrolinx Hamilton LRT Project Coordinators. Oversees the construction of LRT. They provide the blueprints, engineering knowledge, and urban planning required to make the LRT happen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bought land for proposed expansion and will sell leftover land to private developers. - Solely focused on developing the light rail line to expand the connection between and within municipalities in Ontario. <p>Hamilton City Council. Votes on policies determining approval, funding, and other transit methods to connect the City of Hamilton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are the main form of communication between residents and the LRT project (considering the democratic process and accountability). - Can influence the design and development of the LRT (e.g., more trees, choice of materials, etc.). <p>City Staff</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responsible for coordinating replacement of city assets. <p>Hamilton Residents (especially the residents that live within 10 metres of the LRT property line)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiencing displacement and a loss of affordable housing along the LRT corridor. - Will be served by the LRT when travelling East to West in Hamilton for school, work, recreation, etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I. Students: The LRT is set to be affordable and connects downtown with McMaster University (consult with the McMaster Student Union). - II. Seniors: May use the LRT to get to recreation centres, appointments, and retailers. - III. Middle-aged residents: May use the LRT to commute to work and to attend events at various venues such as the Tim Hortons Field and FirstOntario Centre (consult with Barton Street Battalion soccer group). <p>Lobbyist Groups. Have a say in the effects (positive or negative) that LRT will have on multiple factors. For example:</p>
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- I. Environment Hamilton advocates for trees to be incorporated into the LRT plans to mitigate the Urban Heat Island Effect.
- II. HCBN advocates for more affordable housing along the LRT corridor.
- III. Developing companies will lobby to secure more property and change zoning bylaws to build bigger high-rises and commercial space.

Other Non-Profit Organizations.

- McMaster Accessibility Office.
 - McMaster has valuable property along the LRT corridor that they refuse to sell.
- Non-profits that deal with Hamilton's homeless population (encampments, residents, resources, etc.).
 - They have low-income housing and shelters along the LRT line. They will have good insight into how the LRT will affect low-income citizens and knowledge of strategies that could reduce the amount of displaced residents.

<p>Pursuing Equity Diversity and Inclusion (What are the key EDI considerations needed for this work? Are there equity-deserving groups or voices missing from this work? What are the voices or groups we are already hearing from? What barriers or power imbalances need to be addressed?)</p> <p>What are the internal/external decisions and philosophies you will be using to adhere to anti-racism & anti-oppression?</p>	<p>There are several voices that the LRT project has historically ignored, for example, those of racialized or marginalized communities, including Indigenous Peoples and low-income residents along the transit corridor. The power imbalances between these groups, the government and private developers must be addressed in our work to develop a sustainable, equitable, and just transport project.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Our group is committed to respecting and understanding the considerations for meeting equity, diversity and inclusion in and out of the group. - We understand the varying identities and perspectives our group members possess when going into this project, the bubbles we are a part of, and perspectives that we as students may be oblivious to. Our group aims to be as open as possible to such perspectives, attempting to recognize our own knowledge's bounds and biases. - Our group is committed to understanding the perspectives and needs of most affected demographics and raising the voices of marginalized, often silenced groups at risk of underrepresentation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For example, communities marginalized on the basis of Race /Gender /Income /Age /Sexuality /Ability /Religion. - In the context of community engagement, our group will keep accessibility at the forefront of our final deliverables. For example, we will employ visual aids and use simple, accessible language in our content.
<p>Timelines (What needs to be done during Phase 2, Phase 3, and Phase 4 of the semester)</p>	<p>Phase 1: General Research (September to the beginning of October)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research the LRT plan and the plans that Metrolinx has set up to this point in their development plan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze the 2016 Environmental Standards Report and the Metrolinx Sustainable Design Standards. - Research the demographics of the city of Hamilton, current and projected ridership numbers. - Start to arrange logistics surrounding the residents that will be involved with the focus groups. This will be done by posting flyers and knocking

on doors, then coordinating the times of the focus groups for the residents that we picked.

- Research other LRT Systems and the alternative approaches they have taken.
- Look at future projections in the City of Hamilton and surrounding areas to see the consequences of LRT.
- Looking at environmental data and identifying additions that can be made to the LRT to promote sustainability (Green roofs, solar panels, etc.).
- Will use dialogue to help create design and vice versa.

Phase 2: Project Drafting (Beginning of October to Mid-November)

- Conducting an engagement event with Hamilton postsecondary students
- Incorporate our ideas and projections into the project.
- Begin visualizing an ideal LRT system.
- Categorize our research to meet our project objectives (e.g.: five pillars, social, economic, environmental, etc.).
- Plan out who will do what for the final report.
- Start to think of the deliverables we will use.
- Use our goals to help direct where our report will go.

Phase 3: Project Writing and Deliverables (Mid-November to Early December)

- Writing the report and editing it.
- Design the accessible deliverable for community members.
- Create a comprehensive report summary with visuals and infographics accessible to the public.
- Create a literature review.
- Editing the report.

Phase 4: Finalizing (Beginning of December)

- Presenting the report on showcase day.
- Will continue to ensure project management in receiving tips and critiques from colleagues to add improvements for future CityLab groups.
- Delegate our findings at the December LRT subcommittee meeting.
- Finalizing and publishing the infographic and other deliverables.

Deliverables (what are the anticipated tangible outputs/outcomes that will be achieved by Phase 4)^[1]

Anticipated Outputs:

1. An accessible deliverable that can be easily understood by community members.
 - **Community summary paper** including infographic and visual elements (3 pages max)
 - Will illustrate the main findings of our formal report so engagement is high.
 - Inform the community of our environmental upgrades, **housing solutions and programs available to them**, and overall physical changes of the B-Line LRT project.
2. Formal report outlining an idealized LRT project to be examined by stakeholders (i.e., Metrolinx, City Staff, other organizations and committees involved, etc.) along with recommendations/comments on the following:
 - What changes will happen?
 - Social implications
 - Climate injustice
 - Neighbourhood impacts
 - Impacts on vulnerable residents
 - Climate adaptation and mitigation
 - Challenges that occur when altering the urban core
 - Green the LRT corridor
 - Missed opportunities
 - Human experience utilized as a tool to showcase affected demographics, influenced by our two focus groups

Anticipated Outcomes:

- For community members to understand the implications they may face as the urban core is dramatically altered.
- Influence municipal policy decisions around the LRT project to include our recommendations.
- Influence Metrolinx's B-line project while it is in the preparation stage.
- Influence Metrolinx's A-line project (and other proposed LRT projects) in its conception stage.

<p>Resources (What resources, if any, are available to pursue this project – e.g. staff time, budget)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff time: Karl Andrus has committed to biweekly meetings with our CityLAB team to collaborate and build on our ideas. - Resources that Karl Andrus will share with us (TBD). - LRT plans and proposals. - Close proximity to City Hall (home of the City Council). <p>Budget:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$300 available to us from CityLAB - \$200 available to us from the HCBN
<p>Risk (What are some possible risks of this project? How might these risks be mitigated/addressed if they arise?)</p>	<p>Biased Sampling in Primary Research (Engagement Session with Students)</p> <p>We will be working with a diverse group of people who might be affected or may have varying opinions on the B-Line LRT. Because of this, we run the risk of exploiting or focusing our attention on specific populations, creating an unfair focus (e.g., hearing from only Pro-LRT candidates who have vast knowledge of the topic does not give us all sides of the story). This risk can be mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Advertising engagement session to diverse student groups/associations. - Administer a sign-up form to obtain demographic information about attendees. From there we will be able to understand if the data we collect has been affected by selection bias. <p>Time Crunch</p> <p>Our project is limited to the CityLAB Semester in Residence time frame, and we will have only begun our project in early October. This limits our time worked to three months (beginning of October to the beginning of December). This may result in rushed research and finalizing the project. To avoid/address this, we can do the following;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Utilize the phases we have laid out in this project agreement to ensure we are not falling behind in timing. - Prioritize efficiency in our collaborative work sessions by outlining our meeting agendas in advance. - Focus on what is in the scope of the project (outlined in this agreement). - Decrease our amount of final deliverables, if need be. <p>Faulty or Biased Secondary Research</p>

	<p>As proposed community benefits will be subject to secondary research, such as evaluations of other local municipalities, adapting a strong yet applicable research base is a priority. It is important that this research informs but does not drive the purpose/shape the goal of the project. Understanding the place of this research is critical as it may conflict with other directives established by primary research or other means.</p> <p>Misinterpretation of the Project Purpose and Goals Leading to an Inappropriately Defined Problem Statement or Design Challenge</p> <p>With our project, we run into the risk that the main problem we are trying to address and the goals of the project in partnership with HCBN are not interpreted correctly. This will affect how we define our problem statement and the solutions, recommendations or deliverables we put together. This risk can be mitigated by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closely collaborating with HCBN stakeholders to continuously address the purpose and goals of the project and whether or not they are being met. - Treating it as a ‘living problem statement’ that is tweaked over the course of our project as we learn more about the social and environmental implications of the LRT and the needs of the community. <p>Limited Budget</p> <p>With a limited budget, we might not be able to complete all tasks or go on trips to understand our project. For example, providing food to our focus group attendees to incentivize people to participate. Although it would be preferable, we have designed our project not to include activities that are expensive. However, if we did have a budget, we could better understand the problem we are trying to solve and come up with better solutions. This risk can be addressed by outlining a specific budget for all components of our project and discussing what the HCBN and CityLab can provide us with.</p>
<p>Learning Objectives (What does your team want to learn through this process?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an understanding of the complexities of large-scale development, such as transit systems, as well as the implications that are created due to urban disruption from these projects. ● Develop skills in project management, dialogue, and city planning to successfully fulfill deliverables.

<p>How will we work together?</p>	<p>Meeting Frequency and Process (How often will we meet? How will we delegate tasks? How will we share and rotate meeting roles?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A record of what is discussed and tasks decided upon at each meeting should be kept under Meeting Minutes in a shared Google folder <p>Meeting frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Group work periods approximately twice a week. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can be increased if workload becomes heavier. - Weekly group check-ins on Mondays. - Biweekly meeting with project partner (Karl Andrus) on Wednesday afternoons. <p>Task Delegation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use the skills map to match strengths to project roles.
	<p>Communication (How will we stay in touch? What platform will we use to share files, manage deadlines, etc.):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - WhatsApp platform to communicate as a group. - In-person during scheduled work sessions. - We will also communicate via Email, in particular, when including the HCBN and other associations. - Biweekly Feedback Form on Google Forms.
	<p>Conflict Resolution (How will we address challenges as they arise?):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conflicts between individuals or within the group as a whole will be communicated between group members and mediated by other group members/more neutral members. - In extreme scenarios necessitating more than group discussion, conflicts may be raised/mediated with program advisors or relevant superiors.
	<p>Principles of Community Engagement (What principles will guide our work?):</p> <p>1. Relationships</p> <p>Successful partnerships must be built on trust and respect. By building relationships, we can get an inside look into what the community actually needs and obtain resources that we would otherwise be unable to get. We will do this by always listening and holding to our promises with our community partners.</p>

2. Reciprocity

We will always work together as we know that working with others can achieve more than just ourselves. As everyone is living in the same city, it is only beneficial if we deliver valuable feedback to the LRT project stakeholders. As it is in their best interest as well, they will hopefully give us recommendations and maybe implement our ideas into theirs.

3. Equity

LRT can add equity to the City of Hamilton by giving everyone a chance to travel from Eastgate to McMaster safely. However, we must keep in mind that not everyone has access to the LRT due to location, and many people will be displaced. We will demonstrate equity to everyone we speak with and serve the community by keeping in mind that everyone deserves equal access to information, accessibility, and viewpoints.

4. Continuity

We understand that there are many different stakeholders involved. We will put in our best effort to balance all viewpoints, even if some show opposition. By balancing and accommodating all schedules, continuity will be the same for all parties across the spectrum.

5. Openness to Learn

We will be open to seeking new information and studying past projects that can give us more context into our own project. By doing this, we might add new recommendations through the connections that are made in the process.

6. Commitment to Act

While creating systems and infrastructure contains many complexities within the design process, it is important to address the ways that positive change can be incorporated. Our recommendations are there to get Hamilton residents the best possible outcome through the LRT. We will do this by adding environmental and social-economic policies. We hope they can be implemented so they can *act* for the benefit of everyone. We will aim to work around obstacles to promote good change.

Principles of Equity Diversity and Inclusion (How will we reflect a commitment to EDI within our work together as a group?):

Incorporating EDI considerations into our primary research (Engagement Session with Students):

- Advertise event to a diverse group of students through contacting:
 - Black Student Success Centre

- Indigenous Student Services
- MSU Pride
- Student Accessibility Services
- etc.

Incorporating EDI considerations into our final deliverables:

- Final deliverables (particularly our 3-page community summary infographic) must be accessible using things like described visuals, simple language and typeface, colour considerations for the colour-blind, and more.

Addressing de-colonization throughout our project completion:

- We aim to first educate ourselves on the impacts of colonization in Hamilton and along the B-Line LRT Corridor.
 - For example, understanding the economic system we are in is a byproduct of colonization.
- In our final recommendations, we will not silence voices or recommend pushing marginalized groups out of the proposed LRT corridor and surrounding areas.
- This transit system is being developed on stolen land, it is important that we take into consideration that before land was forcefully taken, sharing the land was preferred. We can make attempts to bring this process of discussing and including Indigenous voices to continue to share the land as it was once wished.

Examples of how we may incorporate EDI into our final deliverables or recommendations to the City:

In our final report, we will include recommendations to the City of Hamilton and Metrolinx on how LRT can be more accessible. These ideas can ensure that people with physical disabilities, language barriers, and economic/geographic barriers are accommodated as best as possible.

Ideas:

- Having signs in multiple languages.
- Create bylaws to ensure that the proposed track level LRT is non-negotiable to ensure those that have physical disabilities can access transit from street level.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that fares do not rise, remaining at an affordable level for all income groups to access. <p>We will make sure we are following the community engagement principles listed above when looking at this topic to promote diversity and inclusion.</p>
Roles	Students: Kiana Craig, Diana Samanou, Simon Batusic, Isabela Sipos, Hannah Horlings, Griffin Kinzie
	Instructors: Randy Kay, Darina Vasek, Elizabeth Bang, Kojo Dampsey
	Project Advisors: Karl Andrus

References

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