

2024

City-led Public Engagement Projects

ANNUAL OVERVIEW



CHAMPIONING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Public engagement plays an important role in contributing to municipal decision-making and city-building activities. Since 2014, when the Public Engagement Charter was adopted, the corporation has steadily advanced its public engagement practices. The 2022-2026 Term of Council also highlighted engagement as a priority. Within Term of Council Priority 3, Responsiveness and Transparency, Council defined a key outcome to be getting “*more people involved in decision-making and problem solving*”. **On January 24, 2024, Council approved Hamilton’s first Public Engagement Policy, demonstrating its commitment to meaningful and inclusive public engagement activities.**

The public engagement team, situated within the City Manager’s Office, supports staff across the corporation who manage and lead City-initiated projects. Key milestones in advancing our support for meaningful public engagement include:

- ➡ Growing the Public Engagement Community of Practice from 50 staff in 2019 to over 180 staff in 2024, with representatives from all Departments;
- ➡ Developing a Public Engagement Lending Library with over 50 types of items ranging from iPads to tents to easels and sticky notes, designed to enhance our engagement practices and implement an Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) lens;
- ➡ Launching a Public Engagement SharePoint site for internal project leads to share resources, plan engagement activities and identify opportunities for collaboration; and,
- ➡ Providing public engagement advice that supports the planning, implementation and follow-up of meaningful engagement that informs the project and establishes consistent and clear expectations for community participation.

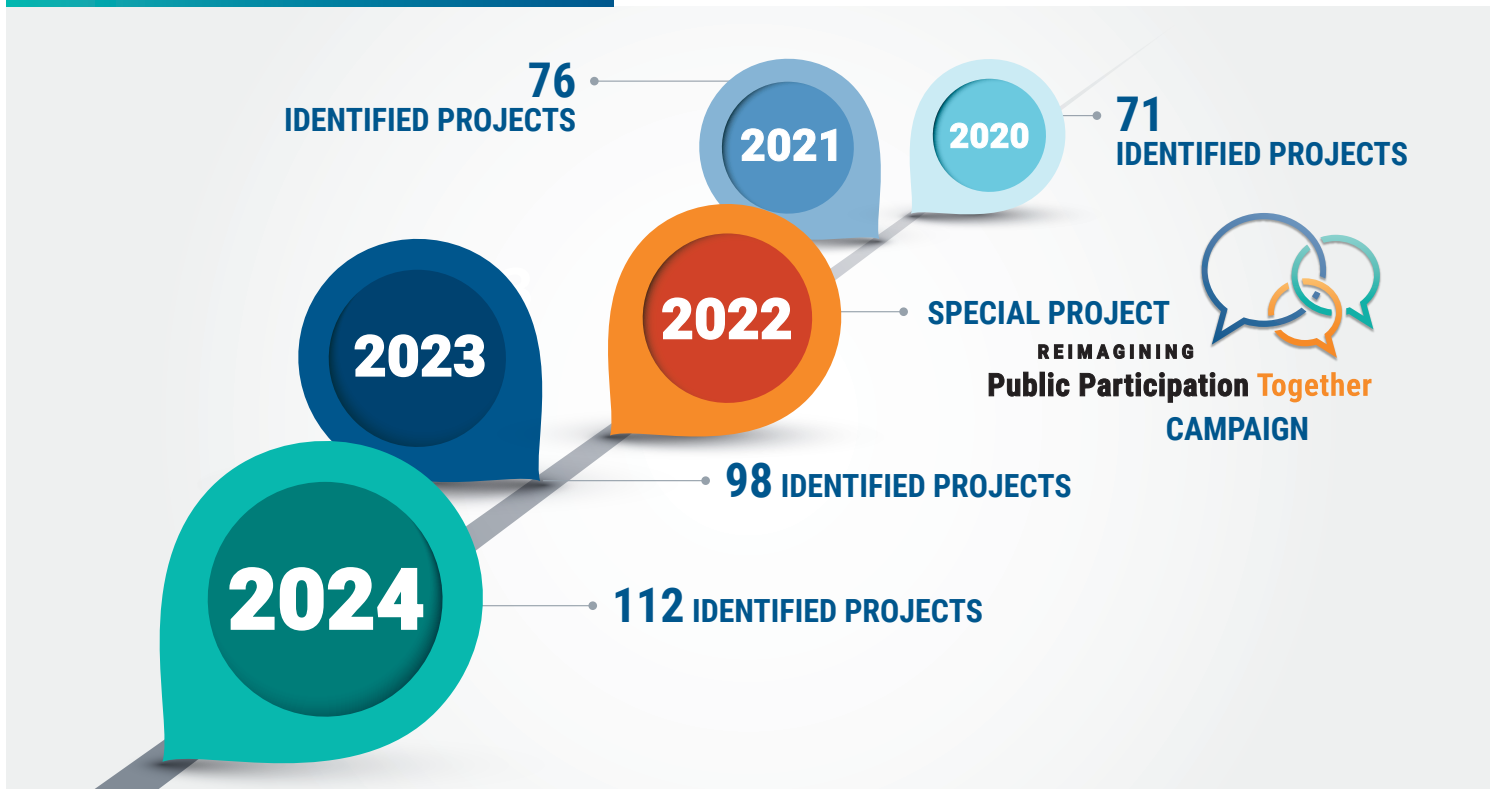
Why an annual survey?

The City’s annual internal public engagement survey identifies planned City-led projects and initiatives requiring any form of public engagement. The results of the survey are used to enhance corporate-wide public engagement planning, collaboration, implementation, evaluation, and reporting efforts. With the approval of Hamilton’s first public engagement policy, the survey results were instrumental in informing our pilot year by identifying projects that would test all aspects of the policy and contribute to our public engagement principles of continuously improving and adapting along the way.

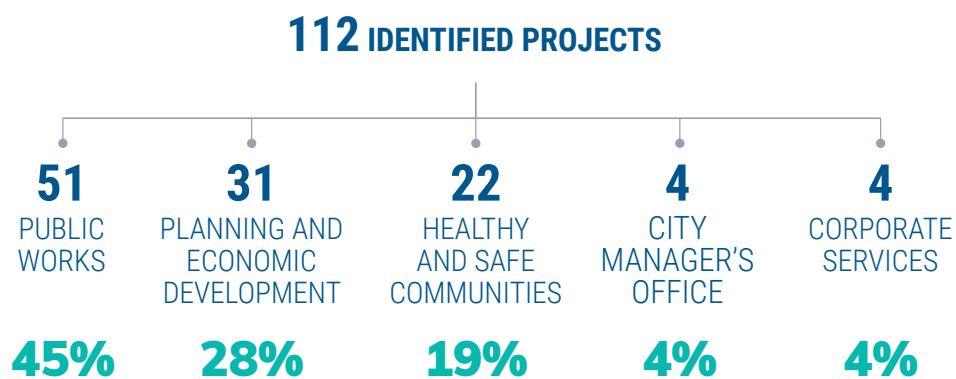
The City’s internal public engagement survey, supported by Hamilton’s Senior Leadership Team (SLT), was open for staff input from November 15, 2023 to December 15, 2023. A total of 112 City-led public engagement projects and initiatives were identified. The 2024 survey results demonstrate a significant growth in projects since 2020, increasing nearly 58%!



2024 SURVEY RESULTS



Distribution of Projects Between Departments





Project Categories



Legislated engagement is still a primary reason public engagement is undertaken, demonstrating an emphasis on civic engagement processes and fulfilling legal requirements for public involvement in decision-making processes. However, there has been a shift in projects from 2023, demonstrating both increases and decreases in priority, which may be due to corporate realignment in support of the 2022-2026 Term of Council Priorities and funding opportunities.

Also, interesting to note that fewer Master Plans were planned (with a reduction of nearly 50%), while at the same time, seeing an increase in capital construction which may indicate a shift from planning to implementation. When considered together, projects across City operations and capital construction demonstrate a significant investment in infrastructure development and a strong focus on service delivery.



TAKE NOTE

Public Works has seen a noticeable increase in survey participation, with Engineering Services identifying 24 distinct projects. This increase can be related to enhanced awareness of the public engagement team across the department and recruitment to the Public Engagement Community of Practice.

Highlight

HSR 150
Engagement Activities!





What does this mean? Understanding the trends

- **Diversity of Focus:** The 2024 survey demonstrates a diverse range of project categories, indicating a multi-faceted approach to municipal governance and community development.
- **Emphasis on Operations and Infrastructure:** 2024 projects included a focus on improving service delivery and enhancing physical infrastructure.
- **Commitment to Equity and Engagement:** There is continued attention to projects addressing equity-deserving communities and legislated engagements, underscoring commitments to social equity and public participation.
- **Strategic Planning for Future Growth:** Long-range planning and master plan development categories demonstrate efforts toward sustainable growth and development planning, aiming to shape the future of Hamilton.

Highlight

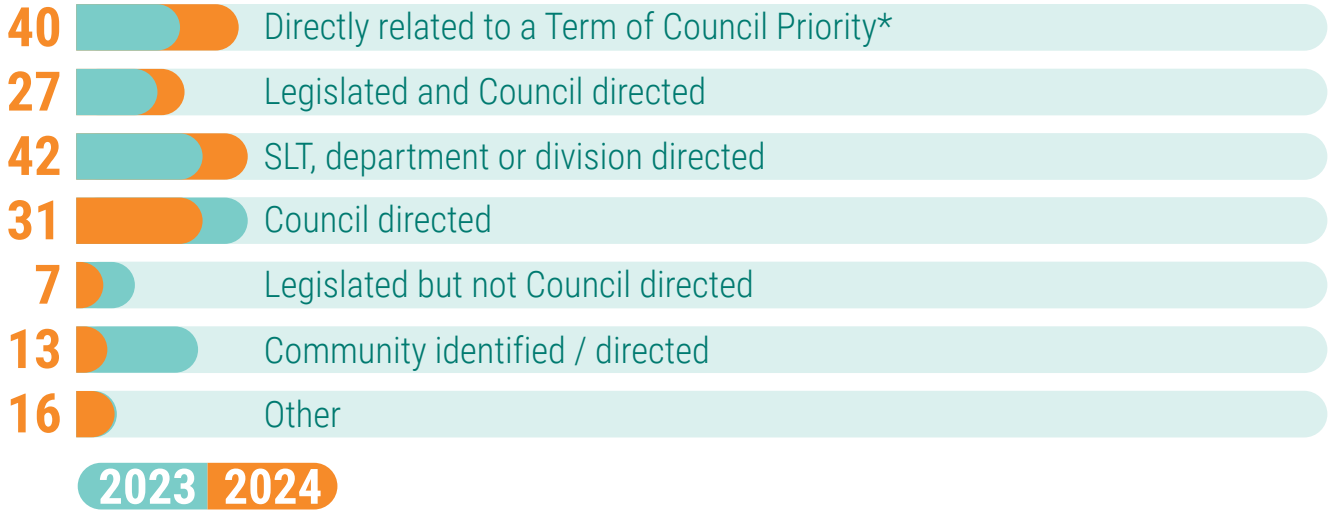


CWELCC (Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care) Access and Inclusion Framework Community Engagement

In Hamilton, the City continues to expand child care as part of the implementation of the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Child Care (CWELCC) plan. Through the Access and Inclusion Framework and in alignment with the principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, we established the importance of cultivating meaningful engagement with our families to ensure their voices were included in the program expansion. We leveraged well-established relationships with local community-based groups to lead engagement activities on behalf of the City. The opportunity to hear the voices of families has provided insightful feedback in determining how child care services can meet families' needs and address barriers they experience when accessing child care.



Strategic Direction



The majority of projects identified for 2024 are aligned to the 2022-2026 Term of Council Priorities. With Council clearly defining outcomes and measures of success, City departments have streamlined their operations and goals to the areas of focus identified by Council.

Legislative compliance remains important, with an increasing number of projects falling under both legislative mandates and Council direction. The most noticeable decrease occurred in projects being defined from the community. This may suggest a reduction in community-driven projects resulting from a shift in how community input is considered in identifying priority projects or a shift in the perceived needs or interests of the community.

TAKE NOTE

Overall, the stronger alignment of projects to Council's Priorities demonstrates optimization of resources and enhanced effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness towards addressing Hamilton's pressing community needs.

PRIORITY 1:
Sustainable Economic &
Ecological Development

34
occurrences

PRIORITY 2:
Safe & Thriving
Neighbourhoods

73
occurrences

PRIORITY 3:
Responsiveness
& Transparency

53
occurrences



2024 AT A GLANCE



The higher number of occurrences in Q2 compared to other quarters could be due to several reasons, including:

1. **Budget Cycles:** Many new projects or initiatives are initiated at the beginning of a fiscal year, which often aligns with Q2.
2. **Planning and Execution:** Q2 tends to be a period where plans made in Q1 are executed, including projects that have been approved or funded during the first quarter.
3. **Seasonal Factors:** For City-led Capital Construction projects, Q2 is ideal due to favorable weather conditions.

Projects taking place in Q3 are often able to take advantage of prime engagement opportunities, including outdoor festivals and park pop-ups, encouraging place-based public participation.





Engagement Methods



HYBRID:
89 OCCURRENCES



ONLINE ONLY:
12 OCCURRENCES



IN-PERSON ONLY:
10 OCCURRENCES



OTHER:
6 OCCURRENCES

1. **Strong Preference for Hybrid Engagement Opportunities:** Recognizing the importance of multiple methods when engaging with community, it is no wonder that hybrid engagement is preferred. The hybrid category indicates a significant preference for engagement planning and activities that combine both in-person and online elements. This supports accessibility and reduces barriers to participation.
2. **Engage Hamilton:** The City's continued investment in Engage Hamilton as its online engagement platform is highly valued by project leads and is a known site for information within community.
3. **In-person Interactions:** Where face-to-face interactions are considered essential or preferable, in-person engagement activities support community connections, enhance relationships and build trust among City staff and community members. It also supports efforts to reduce barriers to participation and addressing the digital divide for households that have limited or unstable digital access.
4. **Community Partnerships:** Using community partners is a valuable tool in raising awareness about a project and encouraging a wider variety of voices to participate, especially when targeted to equity-deserving communities. This underscores the value of planning for flexibility and creativity in engagement activities and tailoring them to meet specific project needs or community contexts.

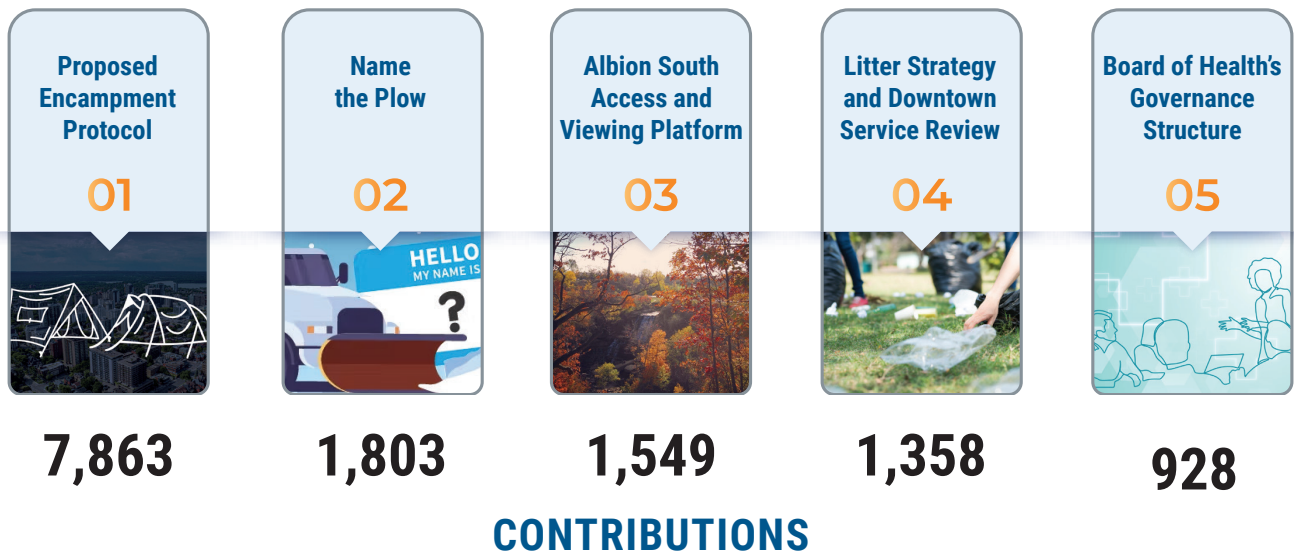
Overall, the 2024 results highlight the adaptability of engagement activities based on project goals, audience preferences, and situational factors. Hamilton's public engagement team is here to support City-led engagement planning and identification of engagement methods to effectively reach interested participants, balancing between online convenience, importance of in-person interactions, and innovative community involvement strategies.



ENGAGE HAMILTON IN 2023



Most Engaged Projects To-Date





Multiple Methods to Support Meaningful Engagement

Major Transit Station Areas



Quick
Polls



Forum -
Comments



Community
Mapping

Main Street Conversion



Community
Mapping



Forum -
Comments

Hamilton Future Fund Governance Review



Survey



Ideas

(re)Designed HSR Network



Survey



Community
Mapping



Questions

Litter Strategy and Downtown Service Review



Survey



Community
Mapping

Biodiversity Action Plan



Community
Mapping



Forum -
Comments



WHAT WE HEARD



PE Team is available to help

We are here to help! Have questions about public engagement? Want to understand how to add an IDEA lens to your engagement activities? Thinking of new ways to have community contribute to your project? Reach out to our team, join our Public Engagement Community of Practice, access resources through our Public Engagement SharePoint site or simply connect to find out how we can support you with your public engagement planning and activities. Email us at PublicEngagementTeam@hamilton.ca



Training

We heard from you! Over ¼ of you (26%) have experience with IAP2 training and over 70% are interested in participating in training workshops to enhance their skills!

STAY TUNED! As we work to develop an internal training program to support our culture of public engagement excellence, we will continue to share free or low cost training opportunities.

DID YOU KNOW? Our Public Engagement Community of Practice is another way to enhance your skills and learn new and exciting ways to engage from your colleagues and guest speakers. Join today!



Pilot PE Policy

2024 represents an exciting point in public engagement for the City. With Council approving the City's first public engagement policy in January 2024, we have established the values and principles that will contribute to enhancing our engagement practices. But we are not perfect. We want to test the policy and see how it can work and even be improved to help inform your projects through meaningful public engagement activities. If you are interested in learning more about our pilot year or would like to be featured as a pilot project, please reach out to the Public Engagement Team. Together, we can adapt and embrace new and improved engagement practices in Hamilton.



Cross-collaboration for Projects – festival participation, relationship building in community

We are working to tear down our silos and find synergies between our departments, divisions and projects. Our results demonstrate a willingness to engage in collaborative activities.



CityLAB HAMILTON

Our internal innovation hub, brings together student, academic, and civic leaders to co-create a better Hamilton for all. Interested in learning more? Let us help you get connected. Simply send us an email and we will facilitate a connection.



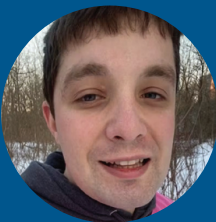
LET'S CHAT!

To receive a copy of the 2024 Public Engagement Project Inventory and to join the City's Public Engagement Community of Practice, please connect with our team.

In person at City Hall, 2nd floor in the City Manager's Office

Email PublicEngagementTeam@hamilton.ca

MEET THE TEAM



Blaze Forgie



Jocelyn Strutt



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hamilton.ca/engagement

