




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

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| TO: | Mayor and Members City Council |
| DATE: | December 9, 2025 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Hidden Disability Sunflower pilot program with Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| SUBMITTED BY: SIGNATURE: | Nancy Purser Director, Transit Public Works Department  |

The purpose of this Communication Update is to inform Council of the launch of the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower pilot program for customers of Hamilton's Transit Division, Hamilton Street Railway (HSR). This program supports customers with non-visible disabilities through improved awareness and staff training.

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Program is an internationally recognized initiative that helps identify and support individuals with non-visible disabilities. Non-visible disabilities can include, but are not limited to, conditions such as autism, anxiety, chronic pain, dementia, hearing or vision loss, epilepsy, learning difficulties, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health conditions. By wearing a Sunflower lanyard or wristband customers can discreetly signal that they may need additional time, patience or assistance while interacting with a service provider.

Starting December 16, 2025, HSR customers can pick up a free Sunflower lanyard or wristband at the HSR Customer Service Centre (36 Hunter Street East) or request one by mail by emailing hsrserve@hamilton.ca.

The Sunflower symbol is recognized and used across Canada and internationally in a variety of public settings, including airports such as John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport, hospitals and other service environments. It has also been adopted by several Ontario-based transit systems, including MiWay, Durham Region Transit and GO Transit.

Introducing this program on HSR complements the City's ongoing efforts to improve accessibility and inclusivity across municipal services. This program also enhances the customer experience by:

- Promoting dignity, inclusion and accessibility for customers with non-visible disabilities.
- Supporting HSR's commitment to providing an equitable and welcoming transit experience for all customers.
- Building greater awareness and empathy among both staff and customers.

Front-line Transit Division employees have received information about the program to ensure they can recognize the symbol and respond with understanding and support when assisting customers. Information was shared through staff notices, staff events, messages on internal TV screens, and distribution of Sunflower program information cards. Transit has also incorporated the Sunflower training into operator refresher training and new-hire onboarding training.

In addition to providing compassionate service, staff will be able to show their support by wearing a Sunflower Supporter lanyard, pin or wristband.

The community will be notified about this program through a robust communications campaign, events and advertising, including a bus wrap.

Following the launch, Transit will continue to promote the program through community partners, social media and regular customer communications. Feedback from customers and staff will be used to evaluate the pilot for broader expansion.

Further details about the Hidden Disability Sunflower program on HSR are available at: hamilton.ca/Sunflower.

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