Communication Update

To:	Mayor and Members of City Council
Date:	October 23, 2026
Subject/Report No.:	Launch of Community Engagement Activities for Phase 2 of the City Initiated Employment Area Review
Ward(s) Affected:	All
Submitted By:	Anita Fabac Director of Planning and Chief Planner Planning Division Planning and Economic Development Department
Signature:	

Summary

This Communication Update provides Council with an update on public engagement sessions planned for Phase 2 of the City Initiated Employment Area Review.

Background

In 2024 the Province made significant changes to how municipalities both plan for and protect employment areas from the establishment of sensitive land uses, such as housing, that can restrict the operations of traditional employment uses such as manufacturing. Through Provincial Bill 97, the *Helping Homebuyers, Protecting Tenants Act,* the definition of “Area of Employment” in the *Planning Act* was revised which narrowed the range and types of uses permitted within areas of employment. At the same time, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024) came into effect and contained the updated definition of “Employment Area” and associated policies. To address the changes to the provincial planning framework, the Planning Division is implementing a two-phased approach to ensure provincial conformity.

- **Phase 1:** aligns Official Plan policies with provincial legislation to achieve conformity and to ensure the applicability of provincial policies to protect employment areas from removal to permit sensitive land uses. Phase 1 is an interim measure to protect the integrity of established employment areas.
- **Phase 2:** will consist of a comprehensive policy review and update of all designated employment areas within the City to determine if portions may be removed to permit alternative land uses while ensuring the City has sufficient employment land to accommodate forecasted employment to the 2051 planning horizon.

On April 22, 2026, Council approved Official Plan Amendments for Phase 1 of the Employment Area Review, and adopted the recommendations of Report PED26034 which approved:

- Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment No. 252.
- Former City of Hamilton Official Plan Amendment No. 257.
- Former Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan Amendment No. 50.

Report PED26034 also included a recommendation to direct staff to proceed with Phase 2 of the Employment Area Review and undertake public consultation in accordance with the Consultation and Engagement Plan.

Urban Hamilton Official Plan Amendment No. 252 was appealed to the Ontario Land Tribunal and is not currently in effect. Official Plan Amendments No. 257 and No. 50 were not appealed.

Details

Phase 2 of the Employment Area Review includes several opportunities for engagement and consultation with interested property owners, residents and businesses. It is anticipated that Phase 2 will be complete by the end of 2027.

Engagement Opportunities:

At this time, the following engagement opportunities have been undertaken and/or are available:

1. **Engage Hamilton Webpage**

   The dedicated project webpage provides for a single project-specific forum to provide transparent and accessible background information on the project, conduct virtual engagement, and communicate how the feedback collected on the platform informs Phase 2 of the Employment Area Review. The Engage Page includes an informational project video that provides an explanation of the project, why it is being undertaken, objectives, process and implications.

2. **Letter to Landowners**

   Staff have prepared and will be mailing a letter (attached) to all landowners within designated employment areas to ensure that they are made aware of the project and are provided an opportunity to participate. Direct notification will proactively ensure that residents that may be affected by, or have an interest in, the project are able to participate in the process due to increased awareness.

3. **Phone Call with a Planner**

   A one-on-one phone conversation with a Planner provides a personal engagement opportunity to those who may want to understand the project better, ask questions, or discuss how future changes may impact them. The Planner will explain the project,

process, timelines, and listen to concerns or ideas that may not be easily captured through other engagement opportunities.

4. **Virtual Information Session**

   A Virtual Information Session will be held on November 19, 2026, from 6:00pm – 7:00pm and will be hosted by City staff. The session will provide an opportunity for residents to view a brief presentation from City staff to learn about the project, better understand how they can participate in the engagement process, and ask questions directly to City staff. A registration link to the Session is included on the Engage Page.

   A recording of the Virtual Information Session will be posted on the Engage Page to ensure that those who are unable to attend can view the staff presentation and answers to the question-and-answer session.

The Planning Division will be initiating additional engagement opportunities as the Employment Area Review progresses into 2027. Staff will inform Council of these events through subsequent Communication Updates and/or Reports to Planning Committee.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A – October 2026 Letter to Landowners