

COMPLETE STREETS INTERSECTION  
MAKEOVER PROJECT

# TRANSITION REPORT

## PREPARED BY

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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This document provides a high level overview of the work completed by the Complete Streets Intersection Makeover Project (CSIMP) Team, in partnership with the Ward 1 Office, Councillor Maureen Wilson, and Sustainable Mobility City Staff Rachel Jonhson and Peter Topalovic. The CSIMP Team was composed of four students enrolled in the CityLAB Hamilton Semester in Residence (SIR) program in the fall of 2020: Foram Patel, Julia Menezes, Tanisha Palmer, and Sarnti Sornpaisarn. This report serves as a transition report, outlining project goals, accomplishments, key takeaways, and recommended next steps to provide future City staff with the ability to bring the CSIMP to completion.

### 1.1 PROJECT CONTEXT

Between 2018 and 2019 Hamilton City Councillor Maureen Wilson (Ward 1) witnessed a community-led intersection transformation while visiting Rochester, New York. Upon returning to Hamilton, Councillor Wilson enlisted the help of Hamilton City staff to learn more about Rochester's intersection transformation and about Complete Streets design. While Complete Streets intersection design is new to the City of Hamilton, other successful examples closer to home include a recently beautified intersection in Kitchener, Waterloo. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, City staff have been unable to allocate resources to the Complete Streets Intersection Makeover project in Ward 1. The CSIMP Team was tasked with planning and facilitating an online design charette to engage with stakeholders and ultimately come up with preliminary design elements to include in an intersection makeover.

#### 1.1 (a) What are Complete Streets?

Complete streets are streets that are safe and accessible to everyone. These streets work for all people who use them regardless of age, ability, or mode of transportation. Pedestrians, transit users, and motorists should all feel safe using this human-scale design. All Complete Street designs are unique, and aim to reflect and serve the needs of their community. Some aspects of Complete Streets design includes sidewalks, street murals, bike lanes, bus lanes, accessible bus stops, safe crosswalks, curb extensions, and narrower travel lanes.

### 1.2 SCOPE

The involvement of the CSIMP Team began on September 29, 2020 and concluded on December 9, 2020. Within the scope of the Fall 2020 semester, the CSIMP Team:

- **Developed** an informational video and graphic to provide context of the project to potential stakeholders.
- **Hosted** a virtual design charette with community stakeholders and City partners.
- **Compiled** findings from community engagement work into a recommendations report for City staff.

## 1.3 GOALS

The identified project goals included the following:

- **Inform** Ward 1 residents and community stakeholders about Complete Street design.
- **Create** engaging and adaptable methods of community engagement with Ward 1 stakeholders using a virtual design charette.
- **Summarize** feedback in a Recommendations report for City staff to use for further CSIMP implementation.

## 2.0 PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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The following section will highlight what the CSIMP Team completed within the project scope and outcomes. For the sake of this document, deliverables and outcomes are both qualitative categories. Deliverables are defined as the project's immediate outputs. Outcomes define the *learning outcomes* within the CityLAB SIR.

### 2.1 DELIVERABLES

The CSIMP team developed three key outputs during the course of this project: an information video and promotional material for stakeholders, a virtual design charette in partnership with the Ward 1 Office, and a [Recommendations Report](#) for City staff. An in depth synopsis of all the CSIMP deliverables can be found within the [Deliverables Report](#) document.

### 2.2 OUTCOMES

Throughout the course of the project, the CSIMP Team maintained a *positive and strong* working relationship with City staff who had previously worked with students in the CityLAB SIR program. Additionally, the Team built a new working partnership with the Ward 1 Office, and more specifically, Councillor Maureen Wilson. By hosting an online design charette, the CSIMP Team and City Staff developed a relationship with Ward 1 residents that will hopefully strengthen trust and collaboration through the continuation of the CSIMP in 2021. Through project work, the CSIMP Team also learned about the inner workings of the City of Hamilton, and about different internal relationships between City staff and Councillors.

## 3.0 LESSONS LEARNED

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This section provides an overview of the learning objectives identified by the CSIMP Team in the early stages of the project. Additionally, this section describes which lessons have been identified as key takeaways from both the SIR experience and the CSIMP work.

### 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To learn about Complete Street design and safe traffic principles
- To learn more about charettes as a practice of community engagement.
- To learn more about how community engagement work is done in the face of COVID-19.
- To develop project management skills.
- To learn more about how municipal project work moves from abstract idea to concrete community change.

### 3.2 LESSONS & KEY TAKEAWAYS

This section reviews the key takeaways the CSIMP Team gained while working on the CSIMP.

#### 3.2 (a) Project management

The CSIMP Team developed project management skills throughout the course of this semester, including but not limited to: creating weekly work plans, agendas, and assigning facilitation and note-taking roles for meetings with City Staff and CityLAB SIR instructors. Additional skills included time management and establishing a means of communication outside of working hours to ensure that internal deadlines were met.

#### 3.2 (b) Knowledge of Complete Streets Design

The CSIMP Team conducted research on Complete Streets design using resources from NACTO and a documentary from the [Rochester, New York Complete Streets Project](#) (Reconnect Rochester, 2019). The CSIMP Team also learned about Complete Streets design elements, protected intersections, the benefits of safe streets, and best practices for community engagement from a traffic infrastructure context.

#### 3.2 (c) Adaptability and Planning for the Unknown

Throughout the course of the project, the CSIMP Team experienced changing timelines. For example, in mid-November, the virtual charrette date and the scope of community engagement work was changed. Rather than an identified intersection within Ward 1, which was the original plan at the beginning of the project, the Team was tasked with engaging with Ward 1 stakeholders broadly about intersection design. Consequently, the CSIMP team learned the value of being adaptable and doing their best with the information at hand.

#### 3.2 (d) Promotional Material: Video and Infographics

The CSIMP Team worked collaboratively to utilize several different methods of online communication. The Team created an informational video for stakeholders to view before the virtual charrette event which provided the CSIMP Team with experience in video editing. The Team also learned how to create an Eventbrite page for charrette registration, how to draft professional emails to stakeholders, how to set calendar invites, and how to create and promote an infographic about Complete Streets design.

### 3.2 (e) Online Design Charette Best Practices

The CSIMP researched design charettes and online community engagement tools before conducting a community dialogue. The virtual charette planning process enabled several opportunities for growth. For example, the Team learned the importance of placing accessibility at the forefront of all planning, and included closed captioning at the event. Additionally, the Team strived towards simulating the creative, free-flow brainstorming that would traditionally be welcomed during an in person dialogue. Cultivating an inclusive and collaborative space online was a process that required significant practice, which the CSIMP Team gained through the CityLAB SIR Dialogue course.

## 4.0 NEXT STEPS

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In order for successful implementation and continuation of effective community engagement with Ward 1 residents, the CSIMP team has identified critical next steps.

### 4.1 SHORT TERM (3-6 months)

- **Identify** 4 intersections, 1 for each neighbourhood in Ward 1.
- **Assess** unique challenges that each of those intersections holds, including elements of importance for a complete street makeover.
- **Select** one intersection (out of the previous 4 identified) to be the first pilot project.
- **Conduct** community engagement in regards to the newly selected intersection.

### 4.2 MID TERM (1-2 years)

- **Finalize** the intersection design based on feedback from community engagement work. Community input will be the utmost priority throughout implementation.
- **Assess** whether community members will be permitted to paint and implement the intersection (based on COVID-19 restrictions).
- **Construct** a Complete Street intersection in Ward 1.

### 4.3 LONG TERM (2+ years)

- **Utilize** virtual design charette best practices and the CSIMP Team's recommendations report to guide future public engagement in regards to traffic infrastructure and areas of improvement from community members.
- **Leverage** the Ward 1 CSIMP as a template for future intersection makeover projects across multiple Wards, within the City of Hamilton.