2020 Final Report

Engage Hamilton | CityLAB SIR

Prepared by Interdisciplinary Students from McMaster Univeristy

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Executive Summary

In June 2020, Engage Hamilton (EH), an online platform was launched that was meant to compliment the different engagement tools and strategies the City of Hamilton uses to promote greater public engagement and make it easier for residents to participate in civic activities. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the platform has become the main source of public engagement, instead of being used as a complementary tool. This is due to the COVID-19 restrictions that were imposed by various levels of government which meant that all in-person public engagement had to be placed on hold in order to prevent the spread of the virus. This has prompted the city to host all public engagement activities online instead.

A group of four interdisciplinary CityLAB students were first introduced to the platform through a meeting with the city's Senior Project Manager of Community Engagement, Cindy Mutch. Through multiple on-going interactions with the city staff member, it was determined that the Engage Hamilton platform is currently hosting numerous decision-making projects. Such projects require residents to provide feedback on select city projects, policies, and initiatives. Input from residents is then gathered and passed onto city council and is utilized to inform decisions regarding policy implementation. For the project, CityLAB students were tasked with creating interactive and creative seasonal community-building projects to help build the online community on the Engage Hamilton platform as well as increase the platform's database. To elaborate, community-building projects are simple and fun projects that aim to facilitate a positive online space where residents can interact with one another by sharing their favourite food, place, or activity. Furthermore, the secondary objective of the project was to determine marketing strategies that could be implemented to promote the platform and prompt residents to engage with future public engagement projects.

Throughout the course of the project, students applied the knowledge that they had acquired through the program towards the implementation of community-building projects. Firstly, students utilized design-thinking skills during the research stage of the project. As part of this stage, students researched other municipalities within Canada in order to garner a better understanding of what community-building projects entail as well as determine the most successful tools used for engagement. Skills learned in design-thinking, specifically systems thinking was an asset during this stage as it allowed students to comprehend the impact community-building projects would have on public engagement at a larger scale by providing residents with the opportunity of voicing their opinions.

Once the seasonal ideas for projects had been finalized, a community dialogue with stakeholders, i.e. Semester in Residence (SIR) students, instructors, and city staff were held. At the dialogue, seasonal ideas for projects were shared with stakeholders and feedback was gathered regarding seasonal ideas as well as marketing strategies

to better promote the platform amongst Hamiltonians. During this process, knowledge and skills acquired from the dialogue component of the course enabled students to effectively facilitate a dialogue with stakeholders. Specifically, group members were able to engage stakeholders into discussion by practicing critical reflexivity as well as deep listening.

The community dialogue allowed students to solidify seasonal ideas for community-building projects as well as marketing strategies for the platform. As a next step, the group developed a list of recommendations that will be provided to the city in order to support the future work that will be done with regards to improving the platform. These recommendations include:

Seasonal Community-Building Project Ideas

Winter: Do You Want to Build a Frosty?
Spring: Flower Power
Summer: Festive Fiesta
Fall: Create Hamilton's Fall Drink of 2021

Marketing Recommendations

- o Diverse Advertising Strategies
- o Increasing Social Media Presence of Platform
- o Content Marketing
- o Leaderboard
- o Posting Success of Projects on Social Media
- o Showcasing Select Project Responses

Public Engagement Recommendations

Engage Hamilton Level
- o Engaging new participants and reaching into diverse communities.
- o Hiring Engage Hamilton ambassadors from diverse communities to help engage such communities in civic activities.
- o Providing updates on projects and responses in a timely fashion.

City Level
- o Must abide by the core principles of community engagement.
- o Ensuring that evidence-based decision-making is incorporated into the process of how resident feedback is utilized.

- o Clearly outlining the scope of the projects and explaining what is within reach of implementation for residents.
- o Investing in resources, such as human resources to better support the platform.
- o Prompting residents from diverse communities to engage on the platform by breaking down barriers to participation.

To further expand the potential of Engage Hamilton as an online platform, changes must be implemented in terms of how public engagement is carried out at various levels. The global pandemic has dramatically shifted public engagement due to the cancellation of in-person public engagement activities. As a result, the city has been tasked with adapting the Engage Hamilton platform in order to enhance public engagement online to meet the needs of the community during this unique time. The implementation of the proposed community-building projects and marketing strategies will aid the city in this current task by directing greater amounts of traffic onto the site in order to prompt an increased number of residents to participate in future public engagement projects.

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III. Acknowledgments

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We would like to personally thank our project manager, Dave Heidebrecht for his on-going support and feedback throughout the course of this project. Dave encouraged us to think about public engagement more broadly, and the long-term implications of our work specifically in terms of creating a positive impact within the Hamilton community. Dave also prompted us to evaluate group dynamics and foster relationships based on the principles of trust, respect, and reciprocity.

Moreover, we would like to thank City of Hamilton's Senior Project Manager of Community Engagement, Cindy Mutch, for her continuous support throughout all stages of our project work. Cindy provided us with the fundamental knowledge regarding the Engage Hamilton platform, and clearly outlined the goals and objectives of our project. Cindy also provided us with the necessary tools and advice to guide our research and dialogue implementation. Furthermore, we will always remain grateful for Cindy's constant encouragement and her kind words that never failed to make our days brighter.

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To conclude, we would like to thank the rest of the City Staff, guest speakers, organizations and all others who have played a role in making this project and our CityLAB SIR experience a memorable one.

1. Introduction, Problems and Challenges

1.1 Introduction

The City of Hamilton recently launched a new and interactive online public engagement platform called Engage Hamilton (EH). The best municipality online engagement platforms include a diverse range of projects that contribute to the goals of the platform. The goals of the platform are to inform residents about important city initiatives, gather feedback, measure analytics and usage, and build an online community. This report will review the project completed by the CityLAB Semester-in Residence (SIR) Engage Hamilton student group which determined strategies to expand the online community on the platform and increase the user database.

1.2 Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic has created a large disturbance on how public engagement occurs in the city. Typically, public engagement occurs in person at public consultations, board, and committee meetings. However, due to the pandemic, public engagement has shifted online to the EH platform.

1.3 Context

While the city has several decision-making projects planned for the remainder of the year and next year (i.e., projects that gather resident feedback to inform different phases or elements of projects and input is provided to city Council to inform a decision), there needs to be an increase of "community-building projects". Community-building projects are projects that are fun and simple which creates a positive space where residents can interact. This can include sharing their favourite place, food, or activity or something else that excites and unites them. These projects are critical as they are effective at building the online community by attracting different participants to the platform, which ultimately increases the platform's database.

1.4 Challenges/Goals

The EH team at CityLAB SIR was tasked with determining methods to acquire more Hamilton residents into the EH platform by creating community-building projects and novel marketing strategies and recommendations.

2. Background Information

2.1 Public Engagement

"The word public engagement comes from the word public which incorporates all identified stakeholders including residents, non for profits, community, and corporate organizations" (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Whereas "engagement is the act of involving the public in the decision-making process" (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Public engagement provides the opportunity for individuals to come together to discuss solutions to problems that affect society. Groups of participants are typically community members, business owners, non-profit organizations, and government officials. Their feedback helps to inform and influence public decisions. Continuing engagement online is crucial for the city as there is a greater need of communication within the community.

2.2 Overview of Public Engagement Charter of Hamilton

The purpose of the Public Engagement Charter sets the ground rules for local government on how the city should actively involve its residents in issues that affect their lives (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). This document lays out steps for creating engagement experiences which creates opportunities for mutual discussions, problem solving, and future planning for Hamilton's growth and success now and in the future (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). There are three key points which are outlined in the charter, these consist of:

1. "Improve participation in civic activities;
2. Improve interaction and participation between residents, stakeholders, elected representative, city staff; and
3. Create opportunities for making the City of Hamilton and its residents more accessible and accountable to each other" (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020)

The charter functions to cultivate a Hamilton that is informed, accountable, involved, transparent, inclusive, and engaged (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). It also informs the "Engagement Policy for the City of Hamilton, as this impacts the city's planning process and must be implemented by all city staff". (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). Lastly, this will inform the development of engagement tools to involve residents of Hamilton (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020).

2.3 Core Principles of Public Engagement
2.3.1 Introduction to Core Principles

For public engagement to be successful there are a few principles and beliefs that must be incorporated. The core principles of public engagement guide how public engagement is conducted in Hamilton to attain the vision and goals of the citizens and city staff (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). This is done with the feedback and responses of residents, since those impacted by city decisions have important contributions to make and should have the opportunity to influence the outcomes that impact their quality of life (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020).

2.3.2 Transparency and Trust

Transparency can be formed through the public accessibility of records created by city staff, and that these decisions are finalized after consulting residents so their input can help shape changes (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). Trust relies on opportunities given by the city for residents to be actively involved from an early stage until the end.

The CityLAB SIR group emphasized transparency and trust through facilitating a community dialogue where various stakeholders such as McMaster students, city staff, and city residents were able to provide their opinions and ideas regarding the projects. See Appendix B for the stakeholder mapping. This dialogue allowed people who will be impacted by public engagement in Hamilton to share their feedback. For stakeholders who were not able to attend the online community dialogue, they were given the opportunity to share their feedback through an online survey instead. When the project is passed onto city staff, there will be a continuation of trust and transparency as they will receive all feedback obtained through the different consultations along with community-building projects and a transition report. These documents will help establish a trusting relationship with the community engagement city staff.

2.3.3 Accountability and Action

Accountability and action in public engagement is when participants understand the responsibility of their actions, decisions, and roles, through their participants in discussions (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). Creating a project that can affect future decisions holds a lot of responsibility. Due to this, in the early stages of planning the project group established that each member had an important role to play, and everyone must actively participate in discussions and fulfill their role. Specifically, active participation was sought out during meetings with Cindy Mutch, as each member was given the opportunity to facilitate discussion. For

accountability and action to be established between residents and city staff, any actions or promises made must be fulfilled

2.3.4 Inclusion and Diversity

Inclusion and diversity are strengthened when people from different backgrounds work together and remove barriers to ensure that participation is inclusive, diverse, and balanced (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). The group was given the privilege to work within an interdisciplinary team as all group members came from different education backgrounds such as engineering, health science, life science, and social science. For this reason, everyone had different knowledge and approaches on ways to solve the problem. As a result, this contributed towards a better understanding of different outcomes since each member was able to incorporate knowledge from varying standpoints. The community dialogue with SIR students, instructors, and city staff welcomed a range of perspectives as everyone came from different socio- economic groups, ethnicities, race, educational backgrounds etc. The proposed projects will allow the city to gather feedback from a diverse range of individuals.

2.3.5 Create Opportunities for Active Participation

Active participation happens when ideas are shared, supported, and encouraged by the city (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). Throughout the creation process of projects and outlines, there were many opportunities given for group members to provide their personal opinions. A way the project allowed for active participation from Hamilton institutions, and organizations is through the incorporation of businesses in seasonal activities. For example, the project idea for the favourite fall drink will encourage residents to promote small cafes through their participation with the project.

2.3.6 Collaboration, Co-operation, and Share Purpose

The three core principles of collaboration, co-operation and shared purpose creates positive change by encouraging and strengthening collaboration of all stakeholders. (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). A sense of purpose for the project was achieved through the release of the online survey. The survey produced an opportunity to strengthen the collaboration amongst all stakeholders since it was released to the public and not just for individuals who took part in the community dialogue. It is through these engagement strategies that the project team was able to incorporate ideas from several stakeholders.

2.3.7 Ongoing Engagement and Open Communication

To have open communication the use of various methods and tools must be utilized to enhance opportunities to share outcomes of community engagement discussions (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). Throughout the process of finalizing the project the main goal was discovering ways to attract as many individuals as possible. This was focused on during the community dialogue as there were discussions regarding people's favourite activities during certain seasons. Gaining this knowledge benefitted the seasonal idea as it allowed the group to decide on ideas that were more popular amongst stakeholders. A way the project will encourage ongoing engagement is by having the projects remain on the platform for approximately three months. Since they will be available for a longer duration than other projects, feedback provided by residents will be more meaningful. At the end of each season, the city staff will summarize the findings and ways in which these projects will influence policy changes or positively impact the city.

2.3.8 Learning, Reflection and Evaluation

Learning, reflection, and evaluation are important because they guide recommendations that are carefully reviewed to determine how well the City of Hamilton is engaging with stakeholders (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). During the planning stages the group participated in reflective discussions regarding how the proposed project ideas will impact the city. Since the city will have enough projects to launch over the course of a year, there will be many occasions for city staff to implement their learnings into other community projects or websites that will positively influence public engagement in the city. For example, when individuals share their favourite garden location, the most popular options can be added to the Hamilton Tourism Website or on the EH platform as a blog post. Furthermore, having a greater goal for the information provided by Hamiltonians, will allow for careful review and regular evaluation of the City of Hamilton to determine if there is an increase in participation and feedback.

2.3.9 Capacity for Engagement

The capacity for engagement increases when participants' opportunities to provide their opinions to influence the outcome of decisions (Hamilton's Engagement Committee, 2020). The EH platform was created to create greater accessibility in terms of accessing important city information, as well as links to city documents such as the Public Engagement Charter, IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, Core Principles of Public Engagement etc. Being able to obtain this information easily enables residents to fully participate as they can enhance their understanding of certain goals the city

wants to achieve, or why certain decisions are made. The new projects that will be implemented on EH in 2021 will contain various engagement tools such as picture uploads, polls etc.

2.4 Principles of Community Engagement: Internal Association for Public Participation (IAP2)

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an association of members who work to improve public engagement in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public (International Association for Public Participation, 2020). The IAP2 association developed a Public Participation Goal Spectrum which guides the selection of the level of participation and public involvement in the public engagement process (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). These goals include inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower. Organizations should aim to stay on the right side of the spectrum as this indicates greater public involvement. The first goal is "inform" which means the organization provides individuals with adequate information to help them understand problems, alternatives and solutions (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). The next goal is "consult" which means the organization obtains feedback from decisions (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). Then there is "involve" which means there is direct work between residents and the organizations to ensure there are clear and consistent understandings of concerns and aspirations (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). The public must also be incorporated in all decisions to help identify the preferred solution (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). Organization must reach out to the public for advice and innovative solutions to incorporate them into the decisions. The last goal which has the most impact on decisions is "empower". Here, the goal is for the public to have the final opinion of decisions made (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). The decisions that are made by the community will be implemented.

With the understanding of the different stages or goals found within the IAP2, the EH platform is found between the stages of "inform" and "consult" (IAP2 International Federation, 2018). This is because the website is still in the early stages of development. As a new website, there is still a lack of engagement as many individuals do not know it exists. The city informs residents about surveys that will be posted on the website while providing ways to connect with city staff members. In order for the website to move along the IAP2 Spectrum to further involve citizens, they must improve communication with the community, and incorporate their critiques into recommendations.
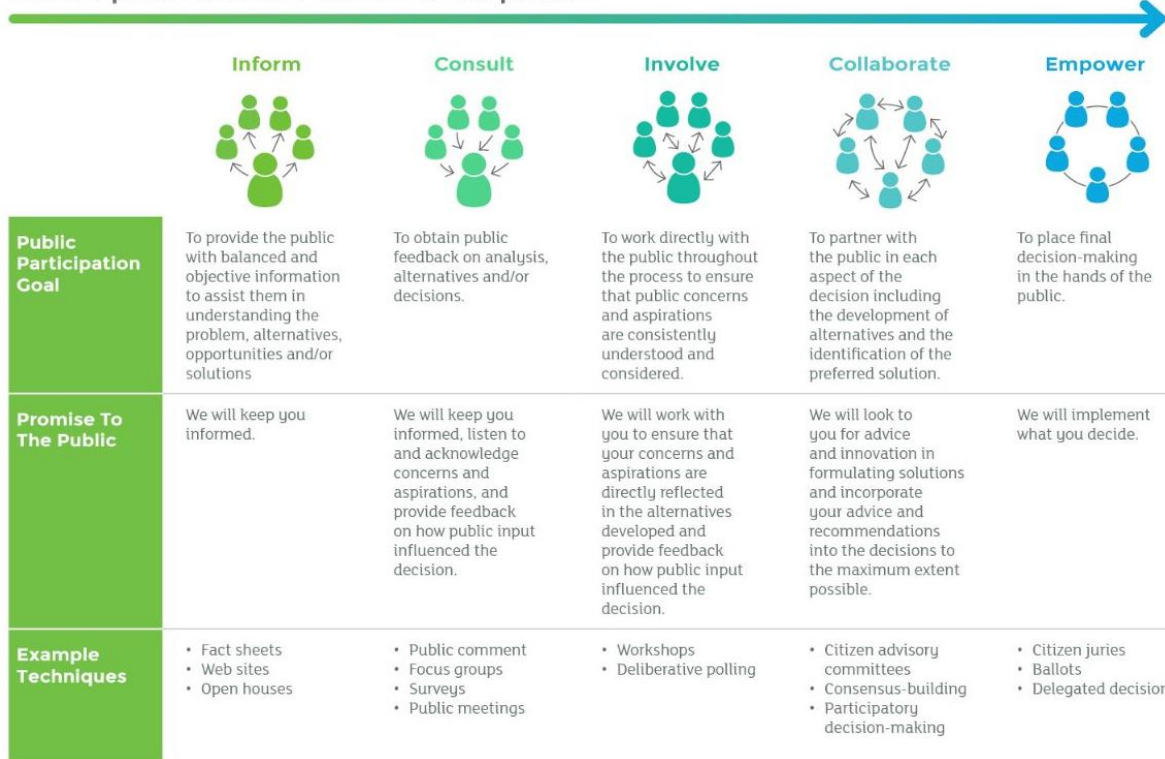
Figure 1. IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation (Patient Voices BC, n.d)

2.5 Public Engagement in Hamilton

The City of Hamilton has various methods to prompt residents to participate in public engagement. These methods include volunteering with local organizations, being a part of different boards or committees, joining the public consultation group which discusses local and city-wide subjects, and online engagement (City of Hamilton, 2020). The purpose of public engagement in the city is to provide residents with a platform to voice their opinions regarding community matters by providing their feedback on city led projects (City of Hamilton, 2020). Through consulting with residents, city staff can sense the needs of residents which subsequently helps the staff in determining what decisions need to be made in order to best support the community (City of Hamilton, 2020). The two main methods that the city utilizes in order to consult with residents is through in-person public consultation and online public consultation (City of Hamilton, 2020). Both methods produce the same result of gathering resident feedback on decision-making projects, but the process through which the feedback is gathered varies between the two methods (City of Hamilton, 2020). In-person consultation requires residents to attend a scheduled town hall meeting to provide input on community matters, as well as raise questions to city staff in real time (City of Hamilton, 2020). In comparison, online public

consultations are conducted using an online platform that residents can access through a computer, tablet, or cellular device with access to the internet (City of Hamilton, 2020). Projects are available online for resident input for the duration of a few weeks (City of Hamilton, 2020). Moreover, residents may also contact city staff for further inquiries if they wish to do so (City of Hamilton, 2020).

2.6 Overview of Engage Hamilton

The City of Hamilton launched the EH platform during June 2020 to engage the public regarding the various issues facing the community. The platform is an interactive tool that is meant to be used alongside various pre-existing tools and strategies to assist residents in providing feedback on numerous city-wide "projects, policies, and initiatives" (Engage Hamilton, 2020). As mentioned earlier, the platform is built upon the Core Public Engagement Principles as outlined within the Public Engagement Charter. These principles defined within the charter act as a promise to assure the public that resident input will be constantly sought out in order to maintain public involvement in city matters (Public Engagement Charter, p. 3).

Furthermore, to participate in these projects, residents must first register themselves onto the EH platform. The process of registration has been clearly outlined on the platform and requires residents to set up a "username and password", as well as share personal information such as their "email address, postal code, and age group" (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Since residents can create a username of their choice, they are able to engage with the projects on the platform whilst maintaining their anonymity (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Therefore, it can be inferred the platform does make a conscious effort to preserve user privacy when encouraging residents to participate online. The platform states that the feedback collected from the surveys is sent to the designated project managers assigned to the various projects, and the input residents provide is then utilized to inform a recommendation or decision (Engage Hamilton, 2020).

2.7 Impact of the Pandemic

The platform outlines that the feedback gathered online is used in conjunction with in-person public engagement events to inform city decisions (Engage Hamilton, 2020). In-person engagement has a long history of success in Hamilton. The most notable successes being the annual Our Future Hamilton Summit which has a track record of attracting 450 participants to discuss an issue pertaining to the community (City of Hamilton, 2020). However, amid the global pandemic, in-person public engagement has been put on hold. For instance, the Our Future Hamilton Summit was cancelled in 2020 to prioritize the safety of the public (City of Hamilton, 2020). This halt on in-person public engagement has impacted the effectiveness with which the city is engaging with the public. Therefore, to facilitate public engagement during the

pandemic, there is a greater need to get residents to provide online feedback on city matters using the EH platform. To accomplish this, community building projects must be implemented on the platform to increase traffic on the site, and ultimately encourage residents to provide feedback on future decision-making projects.

Moreover, considering the pandemic, it is also important to note the benefits of online engagement. As mentioned earlier, engaging residents through online means can substantially increase the amount of people reached (Engage Hamilton, 2020). This is primarily because communication and interaction online has become a norm in society, and the trends in the number of people engaging on online platforms increases on a yearly basis (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Therefore, by increasing the number of individuals reached, online platforms can gather greater resident feedback (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Furthermore, online platforms for public engagement facilitate a sense of community amongst participants because residents can engage with the platform in the long-term, as well as find all relevant information and updates on a single platform (Engage Hamilton, 2020).

2.8 EngagementHQ

In order to devise successful community building projects for the platform, it was imperative to first research the tools the platform was currently using as a means for online engagement. Therefore, the next step was to research the vendor of the EH platform. Specifically, EngagementHQ was consulted for research purposes. EngagementHQ is a service provided by bangthetable that supplies various levels of government and other organizations the tools needed to facilitate a platform for online engagement (bangthetable, 2020). The vendor, bangthetable, believes that in-person public engagement is flawed due to low attendance at meetings and inability to capture all (bangthetable, 2020). Therefore, the bangthetable team believed that the best way to interact with and gather feedback from the public was through online engagement. As a result, the team decided to launch EngagementHQ to support their mission (bangthetable, 2020). The most advantageous aspect of EngagementHQ is that it provides several tools for online engagement. Such tools include:

- **Forums:** Forums encourage interaction in a safe space amongst residents and creates the opportunity for residents to engage in conversation regarding various community issues (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Ideas:** This tool provides a "post-it" feature that residents can use to communicate their ideas (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Places:** This tool allows community members to provide their input by utilizing a map to "pin drop" their ideas (bangthetable, 2020).

- **Stories:** This tool allows community members to share important narratives which creates a space for understanding one another as well as the project at hand (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Guestbook:** This is a straightforward tool for residents to use to share their comments pertaining to a project (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Q&A:** This tool allows the platform to collect questions efficiently, as well as manage responses (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Polls:** This tool allows the platform to pose questions to the public and gather feedback swiftly in a highly organized manner (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Surveys:** A suitable tool for gathering feedback from residents and providing them with the opportunity to share their input in an organized manner (bangthetable, 2020).

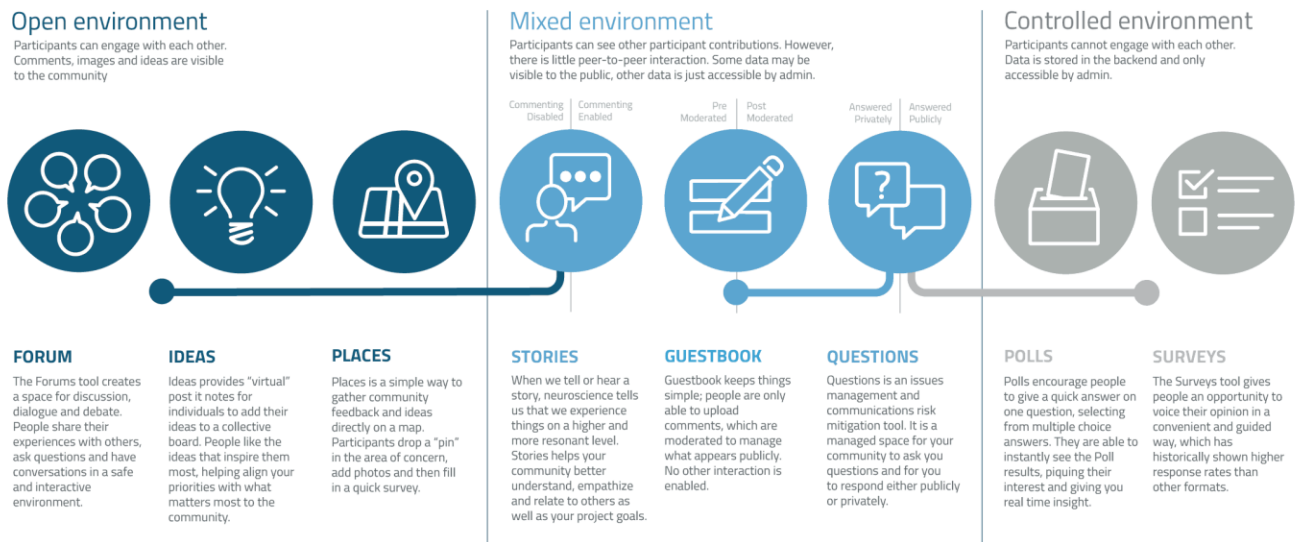**Figure 2. EngagementHQ Tools Spectrum, bangthetable**

2.8.1 Decision-Making Projects on EH

Currently, the platform hosts several decision-making projects, where residents are asked to provide their feedback on various "city projects, policies, and initiatives" primarily using surveys as well as a few other tools (Engage Hamilton, 2020). A few examples of decision-making projects featured on the platform include:

Sidewalk Snow Clearing

This project was launched during September 2020, and the purpose was to gather resident's feedback on community needs regarding clearing sidewalks in the winter. The city wanted to gather feedback at three levels: "inclusivity, accessibility," and finances (Engage Hamilton, 2020). The survey and Q&A tools were used to gather feedback. There was also a places tool on the platform where residents could use a map to view the three suggested "scenarios" in terms of sidewalk snow clearing (Engage Hamilton, 2020).

Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

All municipalities across the province were mandated by the "Province's Safer Ontario Act, 2018" to devise a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan by utilizing the guidelines provided by the province (Engage Hamilton, 2020). The objective of the plan was to build a community where safety, accessibility, and resident needs were prioritized (Engage Hamilton, 2020). The platform urges residents to provide their feedback on the development of this plan through utilizing the places and ideas tools to describe their views on safety and well-being specifically within the context of the communities that the residents reside within (Engage Hamilton, 2020).

Waterdown Community Node Secondary Plan Study

The Waterdown Community Node Secondary Plan is supposed to provide an outline for future developments for "the central Waterdown area" to create policies that will support the implementation of the proposed changes (Engage Hamilton, 2020). The creation of an outline of new developments is necessary when considering the rapid population growth within the Waterdown area. Therefore, the project was initiated to gather resident input on the future they envision for Waterdown specifically from an urban design perspective (Engage Hamilton, 2020). The tool used to gather resident feedback for this project was the survey tool (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Moreover, the city hosted a virtual meeting on October 15th to update residents about the second phase of the Waterdown project, as well as allow the project team to respond to any inquiries or concerns raised (Engage Hamilton, 2020).

2.9 Other Municipality Research on Community Building Projects

To garner a deeper understanding of community building projects, municipalities across Canada were researched. Throughout the research process, it quickly became

apparent that there were a limited number of municipalities in Canada that had launched community building projects on their platforms. It was inferred that a lack of community building projects likely stemmed from the fact that such platforms were relatively new and were likely in the initial stages of development for most municipalities. As a result, there were not many examples of projects to gather inspiration from to formulate ideas for projects to be launched on the EH platform. Nevertheless, the team did have success in locating a decent number of community building projects during the research stage. Appendix A contains images of the different municipality platforms.

2.9.1 City of Castlegar, British Columbia

The city has an initiative known as "Castle Guardians" (Castlegar Connects, 2020). This initiative is meant to provide local heroes the recognition for the work that they have done for the community (Castlegar Connects, 2020). Particularly, the focus is to allow locals to share what local community members have done considering the global pandemic (Castlegar Connects, 2020). After people have nominated their local heroes, the individuals nominated are then entered to win a weekly and grand prize (Castlegar Connects, 2020). This initiative was important because it allowed the municipality to facilitate a positive space where residents could interact with one another especially during a time when that has been compromised. Although, the platform did not garner a vast amount of engagement from residents (9 responses), the messages posted by residents were emotional which made reading the messages a worthwhile experience (Castlegar Connects, 2020). In terms of engagement tools, the platform utilized the stories tool to prompt residents to nominate their local heroes (Castlegar Connects, 2020). However, the platform did not appear to be utilizing other strategies or tools to increase engagement, such as the use of image uploads to aid residents in sharing their stories was not incorporated as part of the project.

2.9.2 City of Prince Rupert, British Columbia

The prompt that the city utilized for the project is "What is your favourite place to take in a view of Prince Rupert?" (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). The project was meant to encourage residents to share their favourite spots from where they could grab the best view of the oceans, mountains, or a beautiful sunset (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). With regards to engagement tools, the platform made use of the places and ideas tools and had a feature where people could directly upload an image of their favourite view in the city (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). The places tool allows residents to pin their

favourite spots in the city on a map, while the ideas tool provides residents with the opportunity to share some general thoughts but also provide insight on matters such as the significance of beach access, and the need for the restoration of trails in the city (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). In terms of engagement, there was more engagement from residents on the places tool (30 responses) in comparison to the ideas tool (3 responses) and the photos that were uploaded onto the website (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). It can be inferred that this may be because the places tool is easy to navigate and highly convenient to use (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020). One click takes the user to the larger map where residents can easily pin their ideal spots. Moreover, the project provides a clear and fun description of the project and includes a visual example using an image to exemplify the types of spots the platform is seeking residents to share (Engage Prince Rupert, 2020).

2.9.3 Region of Durham, Ontario

The online project can be found on the Your Voice Durham platform, and is called the Photo Challenge (Your Voice Durham, 2020). The main objective of the project was to get people to share images of their favourite places or people (Your Voice Durham, 2020). Along with the photo, residents were also asked to write a caption that best encapsulates the essence of the photo (Your Voice Durham, 2020). Residents could upload the image directly onto the website, or post on social media using the hashtag: #Picture Durham (Your Voice Durham, 2020). By examining the captions residents have currently provided for their images on the platform, such as "The orchestra in harmony" or "Life. It's about The Simplicity of it.", it is evident that the captions provide residents with the freedom to exercise their creativity (Your Voice Durham, 2020). The project also made use of the stories tool to include a brief description for their image (Your Voice Durham, 2020). Moreover, residents can comment on each other's posts which serves to facilitate positive interactions amongst residents. Based on the number of residents that have engaged with the project (20 responses) on the platform, this project appears to be one of the more successful examples of the community building projects researched (Your Voice Durham, 2020).

2.9.4 Colwood, British Columbia

The prompt for the project on the platform was outlined as "Help create a COVID-19 Photo Journal" (Colwood, 2020). The project was designed to prompt residents to upload images of any aspect of their experiences whilst living during the COVID-19 pandemic (Colwood, 2020). Some examples of what residents could share included

"hearts on windows", people tapping on "pots and pans", zoom calls, closing signages, or healthcare workers working during this time (Colwood, 2020). The objective was to create a journal to snapshot this moment of the pandemic in history (Colwood, 2020). The city was hoping that the community members would be able to use this journal as a means of reflecting on how the community united to cope with this unique experience (Colwood, 2020). Like the Region of Durham's example, this project also made use of the stories tool as well as picture uploads to encourage residents to engage with the project on the platform (Colwood, 2020). Residents were able to upload their images, caption the images, provide a description of their image if they desired to do so, as well as comment on each other's posts (Colwood, 2020). Furthermore, this project was another successful example of community building project as there were a good number of residents (19 responses) that engaged with the project on the platform (Colwood, 2020).

2.9.5 City of Waterloo, Ontario

The title of the project is called "Name Otis's new companion" (EngageWaterloo, 2020). Otis is a Waterloo Swan that was previously named through Engage Waterloo and made headlines in a variety of news articles and was the talk of the town. The objective of this project was to get residents involved in the process of naming Otis's companion that was recently spotted at Victoria Park with Otis (Engage Kitchener, 2020). To finalize the name, the project utilized the polls and picture uploads tools (Engage Kitchener, 2020). The project also encouraged residents to share any ideas for names that could be added to the poll (Engage Kitchener, 2020). The project has been completed, and based on popular vote, the companion has been named as Ophelia (Engage Kitchener, 2020). Ophelia creating just as much buzz as Otis, as this project was featured on a variety of online news outlets including CBC, Global News, Kitchener, The Record and iHeartRadio.

2.10 Best Engagement Tools

After a thorough analysis of community building projects led by various municipalities in Canada, it was determined that the following tools were the most effective in terms of engaging residents on online platforms:
- **Places**: The places tool is a highly convenient tool to use, and residents can easily pin their ideal spots on a map (bangthetable, 2020).

- **Stories**: Stories is an effective tool as it allows residents to elaborate on what they are sharing in terms of their image uploads, as well as include any narratives that they wanted to share (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Polls:** Polls is an effective tool, especially in the example of naming the Swan as it allows the city to collect feedback from residents in an organized manner to inform an immediate decision (bangthetable, 2020).
- **Picture Uploads**: Picture uploads are a popular feature on most platforms as residents can share their own images of places and it also provides individuals with an outlet for exercising their creativity. Moreover, picture uploads are an easy tool to use and is minimal work for participants (bangthetable, 2020).

3. Project Focus/Premise

3.1 Priority Challenge

The EH project group was tasked by city staff to formulate interactive, creative online engagement community-building projects ideas to help build the city's online community. Such projects need to be incorporated onto the site especially when all public engagement and consultation has been moved online in response to the global pandemic. Through enhancing strategies to increase traffic on the site, the city will be able to increase the platform's database in order to encourage residents to participate in public engagement projects. The input provided by residents will then be used to propose recommendations to city council.

3.2 Deliverables to the Project

Two methods the EH project group decided upon that would achieve the priority challenge are**:**

1. Seasonal ideas and ;
2. Marketing strategies

3.2.1 Seasonal Ideas

When deciding on a theme for community-building projects, the EH group decided that the best way to distribute the projects throughout the duration of the year would be through launching the projects on a seasonal basis. As stated previously, the community-building projects implemented on the EH platform will be available for approximately three months. Through launching the projects on a seasonal basis,

residents will be able to share experiences and stories as they occur in real time. Due to the nature of community-building projects there will be an increase in communication between participants as they will be encouraged to interact with each other on the platform.

3.2.2 Marketing Strategies

By providing new ideas on how to market the EH site, the city would see an influx in the number of people participating in public consultations. Marketing strategies are utilized as methods to attract new participants to interact with platforms. A few of these strategies include advertisements in public spaces, such as on buses, in bus shelters, or SoBi stands. Another marketing strategy would be to increase the social media platform presence.

3.3 How People Participate in Public Engagement

Prior to the pandemic, public engagement opportunities were held in person. In order to ensure the safety of residents, all engagement was moved online. Many online platforms are still in the early stages of implementing online engagement as the primary source of public consultation which exemplifies the need to enhance the Engage Hamilton platform, through the incorporation of community-building projects.

4. Dialogue/Community Engagement Principles

4.1 Respectful Relationships

Throughout the course of the project, the EH group members were able to establish numerous meaningful relationships. For instance, between group members, group members and instructors, groups members and Cindy Mutch, and group members and community dialogue participants. A key factor of respectful relationships is having mutual respect which leads to the relationships being a positive experience. The group demonstrated respect by emphasizing individuals' strengths instead of weaknesses. For example, if someone requested the completion of a task, it was done in a timely manner and by remaining empathetic towards other people's points of views (Queensland Government, 2020). Since the assignments consisted of multiple subsections, the sections were distributed amongst team members in order to complete assignments efficiently and on time. Since the project required a whole host of skills to complete tasks, each group member was able to showcase their strengths during the completion of these tasks. Through recognizing each other's strengths,

group members developed a deep appreciation for one another. It is important to note that while it may be challenging to understand varying perspectives and ideas, sometimes the ability to enter a conversation with an openness to listen is all that is needed to foster an environment of mutual respect.

4.2 Reciprocity

Reciprocity is when multiple parties are able to interact with one another in a manner whereby both parties are benefitted through the interaction. The EH group displayed reciprocity as both the city and group benefited from the project. The group benefited from the project through obtaining valuable experience in project management. On the other hand, the city will profit from the group's participation through the deliverables and transition report as they will acquire the findings and research needed to enhance the Engage Hamilton platform.

4.3 Equity

One of the main goals of the project is to increase the amount of participation on the EH website. With the installation of the seasonal projects, there is hope that there will be a more diverse group of individuals who will provide their feedback. It is important for city staff to treat everyone's responses with equal respect and consideration, as receiving different points of views can lead to a more beneficial outcome. People's social location such as; race, ethnicity, sex, gender, socio-economic status, etc. should not affect the integrity of their responses.

4.4 Continuity

The continuity of a project depends on the ongoing participation and feedback from various stakeholders. The city staff will ensure the continuation of the EH projects through the use of the 2021 timeline provided in the transition report. Group members can also continue their engagement with the project in future semesters by either volunteering for the EH platform or through courses.

4.5 Openness to Learning

This experience has strengthened the group's, instructors' and city staff's adaptability and openness to learning. As the pandemic interfered with in person experiences, everyone had to adapt to online options. This included, creating an online community engagement platform, and teaching CityLAB online. A way the EH group adjusted their learning was through the scope of the project. The original

scope was narrow as it only focused on outlining ideas to be launched on the EH platform. Through the research of other municipalities, the scope was broadened, as it was evident that there was a discrepancy between community feedback and the decisions made to implement policies within the city.

4.6 Commitment to Act

Hamiltonians have been explicit that their feedback has not been incorporated into decisions. This means that when residents provide responses the city staff needs to be accountable for their words and actions, as resident input should be prioritized when it comes to informing policy decisions.

5. Policy Implications

5.1 Implication on Decision-making Project Policies

Though the immediate goal of the project is to formulate community-building projects that can be launched on the platform on a seasonal basis, the implications of the projects span beyond building community. Participation from residents on these projects plays a vital role in terms of policy implications within the city. The community-building projects are being created on the platform to drive traffic onto the site, and ultimately expand the current database of the platform. Increasing website traffic is crucial to the platform because the main usage of the EH platform is to gather resident feedback on decision-making projects which is then used to inform decisions regarding select city initiatives and policies (Engage Hamilton, 2020). Therefore, by encouraging residents to register onto the platform through participating in the community building projects, the platform will be able to prompt residents to provide input on future decision-making projects that inform policy recommendations within the city.

5.2 Engage Hamilton and Public Engagement in Hamilton

Decision-making in government is a process in which evidence, from practical experiences and systematic research is combined with a complex collection of ideas, interests, and individuals. Civic engagement is fundamental to a well functioning democracy as residents, community partners stakeholders have a vital role in creating and realizing the city's vision and mission. As previously mentioned, Hamilton has created many opportunities for civic engagement through public consultations such as

the annual Our Future Hamilton summit, and board/committee meetings. EH is simply one tool in the larger repertoire of operations used to gather feedback from stakeholders, which is often first and most critical step in decision making. For these operations to be functional and sustainable, citizens must feel that their input is valuable, and the municipal government should adopt an evidence-based approach to decision-making. Evidence-based decision-making is a process for making decisions justified with the best available research and data and relevant contextual evidence. It reduces errors in judgement and increases accountability.

In Hamilton, elected representatives, and members of the government must shift to a more evidence-based approach, for citizens to feel like their feedback is important and continue to participate in civic engagement. The recent sidewalk snow-clearing clearance survey has been met with criticism due to its inability to properly incorporate resident feedback that was provided by around 2000 participants. Instances such as this results in costs to both the city, city staff and citizens who participated in the survey. For a platform such as EH, time and capital were invested to create the platform, which includes employing staff, to create, promote, track, and analyze data from the projects. Citizens who participated in the survey spent their own valuable time to provide their feedback. For all this capital and time invested, there must be an appropriate return-of-investment which is incorporating the data in decisions. The lack of inclusion may result in the breakdown of trust between citizens and the municipal government and prevent them from participating in civic engagement in the future. As a result, regardless of the success of the community-building projects, to ensure long-term success of the platform, and continuity of civic engagement, the city must adjust the process in which decisions are made, and ensure all feedback and data provided is used.

6. Design, Dialogue and Project Management Input Towards Project

6.1 Design

From the design lectures, the two main concepts that have impacted the outcome of the project are systems thinking and basic systems approach. These concepts work together as they both study interactions of smaller systems and how they influence a more complex system (Online Programs, 2020). Systems thinking is a way to analyze systems and their subsections to understand how they work together to reach a larger goal as a whole system (Rouse, 2020). For systems to function and behave,

there needs to be a balance and reinforcement of processes. These factors are important for the overall success of systems because if there is no balance there is a higher chance that the equilibrium can be disrupted. The institution that affects the project is the government of Hamilton. This project highlights the importance of understanding how EH fits and impacts the whole system of public engagement in Hamilton. It has been evident through research and the community dialogue that there is a gap within different parts of the system, mainly between community residents and city staff as many residents believe that their feedback is not being incorporated. To fix this the City of Hamilton must look at situations through a wider lens to understand the root of community concerns.

6.2 Dialogue

6.2.1 Photovoice and Storytelling

Photovoice and storytelling are two concepts that have been incorporated in the project. Photovoice is an approach in which people whose opinions are limited due to poverty, ethnicity, gender, race, class, culture, etc. can use video and/or photo images to capture and share their personal experiences (Rabinowitz, 2020). Storytelling allows for increased understanding of an issue through sharing personal experiences in the form of stories (Vasek, 2020). These two dialogue concepts emphasize the importance of the marginalized groups and their experiences. Using photovoice, residents can post pictures which have the potential to influence policy (Rabinowitz, 2020). These tools became critical elements in the project as they give a voice to those who are often unheard (Rabinowitz, 2020). Another benefit of using photovoice is that images can be understood by everyone regardless of language or culture.

6.2.2 Empathy and Social Awareness

For the success of group work and the outcome of the project their needs to be a sense of empathy and social awareness. Being socially aware is having the ability to understand and respond to the needs of others (Connelly, 2020). The three competencies of being socially aware are empathy, organizational awareness, and service (Connelly, 2020). Showing empathy towards group members was evident throughout the project, especially during moments when group tensions arose. Having empathy allowed group members to listen and understand each other's feelings, which positively impacted the group's dynamics. Organizational awareness is the ability to understand how groups and their decisions leads to change (Connelly, 2020). It was evident that the politics within the city's organization lacked assurance which affected the way residents engaged with Hamilton. By acknowledging this, the group was able to better analyze public engagement in Hamilton and understand the root

causes that must be resolved in order for EH to be successful. Lastly, service is appreciating the needs of individuals and having the ability to understand them (Connelly, 2020). In hopes of resolving the issue of doubt that locals have with the city, the group provided strategies and emphasized this problem to consolidate relations between residents and the city.

6.2.3 Critical Reflexivity

Critical reflexivity is a way in which people can reflect on individuals' biases which are brought into different situations (Cunliffe, 2004). There are two levels that people can be reflexive. The first level is being self-reflexive which incorporates individuals reflecting on their personal beliefs, values, relationships, while being critically reflexive integrates reflection upon policies, social structures, and biases of organizations (Cunliffe, 2020). The group was able to be self-reflective through being self-aware. Being self-aware means that individuals have the capability to recognize and understand emotions and learn how to control them in certain situations (Connelly, 2020). It was through the skill of self-awareness that during these situations, members were able to reflect on their thoughts and emotions and had the ability to take breaks to refocus.

In addition, the group faced many instances where past biases, values, and beliefs were challenged with regards to the city, especially since all members of the group reside outside of Hamilton. The group was able to exercise critical reflexivity through examining the city and how it engages its residents. Through this analysis, it became apparent that in order for the city to become critically reflexive in their engagement processes, city staff must practice deep listening. Deep listening requires that participants abandon past biases and enter a conversation where they can take in information without letting said biases impact this process (Bakken, 2015).

6.2.4. Social Norms

Social norms define acceptable behaviours and general rules that influence the understanding of people (The Decision Lab, 2020). It is through social norms that there is an innate sense of competition. Based on the concept of social norms, the idea of implementing a leaderboard was designed to motivate Hamilton residents to participate in EH projects. Displaying the number of people who have engaged with the project from different Hamilton wards will encourage participation as it promotes a sense of friendly competition amongst the residents from various wards in Hamilton. Within the project there was a hierarchy of people due to their role, experience, and knowledge of the project. All students of the group were in the same level, while the instructors and Cindy Mutch were above the group members in this hierarchy since they delivered instructions and details for the project. This hierarchy was a social

norm that directed the group's behaviours towards each other and created an understanding of everyone's actions.

6.3 Project Management
6.3.1 Goal and Agenda Setting

At the start of every week prior to starting assignments the group would establish an agenda for tasks that needed to be completed throughout the week. By doing this the group was able to set goals which helped to develop strategies that to perform at the required goal level (Riopel, 2020). When setting goals, the group followed five goal-setting principles: clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback, and task complexity. Each of these were met during the goal setting process.

Firstly, having clear and specific goals limited any confusion from arising at a later stage of task completion. Setting goals that were challenging enabled the group to push themselves out of their comfort zones in order achieve greater outcomes (Riopel, 2020). Furthermore, all groups members showed great commitment to the completion of tasks throughout the course of the project. For major assignments, the group received feedback on their submissions. The group utilized this feedback to adjust expectations surrounding a given task and revising the plan of action. In order to accomplish this, the group had to set goals that were aligned with the expectations of given task (Riopel, 2020).

6.3.2 Stakeholder Mapping

The importance of this exercise was to allow the group to determine what stakeholders would be invited to the community dialogue. During the research stage, the group had the opportunity to gain more knowledge on local Hamilton advertisement groups such as podcast groups based in Hamilton. In the end, the community dialogue only consisted of SIR students, instructors, and a few city staff (See Appendix B).

6.3.3 Creating Deliverables

As there was limited time and resources allocated towards the completion of the project there was a great importance of creating deliverables. These deliverables were thought of in the first month of the project as the group had to decide on what tasks were tangible within the time frame of the project. The main deliverables that were

outlined in the draft agreement were to research community needs and interest, generate ideas for community-based online engagement projects, develop and test draft project ideas and pitch project campaign/ ideas to members of the EH team. These deliverables were achieved and set the scope for the overall product of the project. For the project to be successful the group completed research on other municipalities that were hosting community building projects on their respective platforms to understand the needs and interests of communities. As a result of this research, the group was able to devise the main community-building project that will be launched on the EH platform in 2021. Lastly, the idea was pitched to community members and city staff during the community dialogue which allowed them to view a test draft of the appearance of what the project would look like.
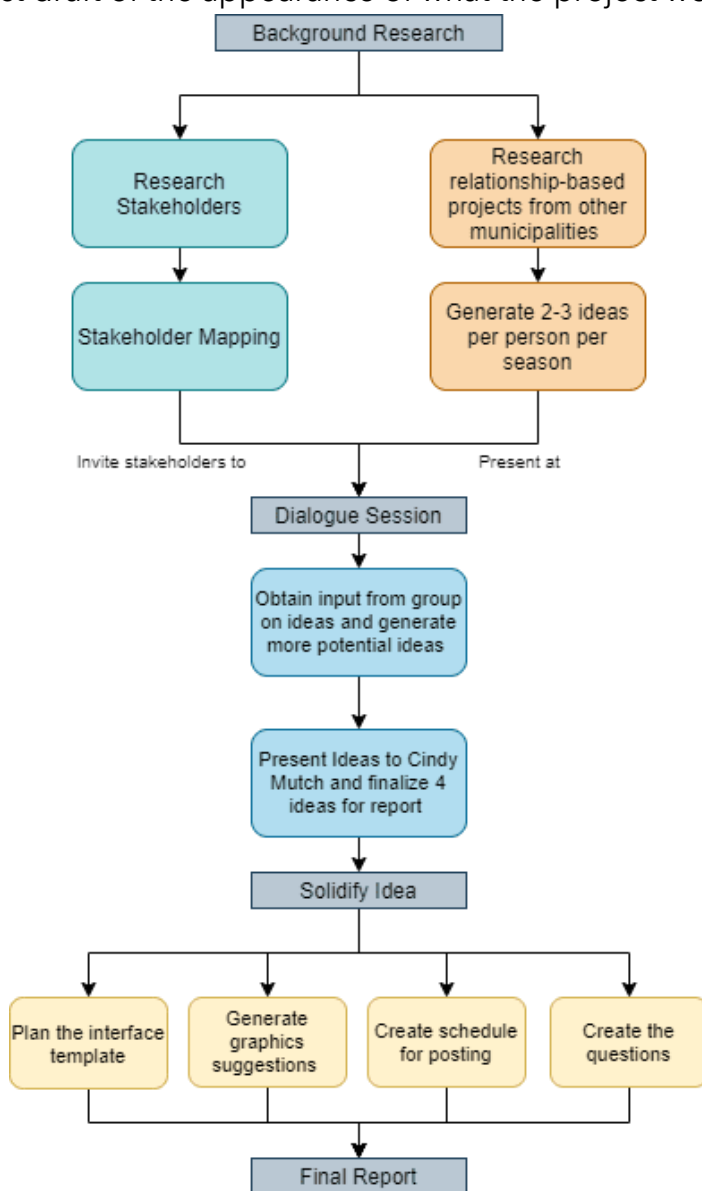
Figure 3. Flowchart of project tasks to produce final deliverables.

6.3.4 Time Management

The skill of time management was important for the completion and success of assignments and tasks. Time management not only helped with the results of assignments but also reduced stress since the tasks were scheduled and delegated. By having a defined schedule, the group was able to layout specific timelines for the planning and installation stages.

6.3.5 Delegation of Work

The significance of delegating work is that it can empower the team, build trust, and assist with strengthening individual and group skills (Conti, 2020). A way that delegation builds trust is by demonstrating that there is trust in group members' work. The reason the group distributed tasks amongst group members was because all projects needed to be completed by a certain deadline. The delegation of work also increases productivity. When the project is passed onto the city, the staff working on the EH website will need to delegate certain tasks as there is a timeline to follow. For the success of the project, certain aspects will be handed to people who possess a certain set of skills that are best suited for the task. For example, a professional graphic designer will be assigned the task of creating graphics for the website.

7. Community Dialogue Feedback
7.1 Idea Feedback
See Appendix E for additional seasonal

7.1.1 Winter:
Since winter is the first idea that will be posted on the Engage Hamilton, there was three ideas that were presented in the community dialogue.

Idea 1 Overview
Do you want to build a Frosty? Send us a photo of your snowperson!

User's can submit photos of the snowperson they created during the winter along with a caption/story behind it

Feedback

This idea was liked by the participants, as it allows people to increase their outside activity during the winter season. The lack of snow may hinder how effective this idea is, and if there is limited snow a backup plan should be established.

Idea 2 Overview
Ice Falls: What is the is best frozen waterfall you've seen?

Users would take and submit photographs of the different frozen waterfalls they've seen in the winter

Feedback

Participants also enjoyed this idea as people like to hike in Hamilton. Unfortunately, many felt that the safety around this idea was inadequate to allow for this to be an available option to the public. Others also commented that the website would not be able to adequately show the safety of the falls, and to show which waterfall trails are open or not, so this could be a deterrent for how many people visit the falls.

Idea 3 Overview
Café Wonderland: What is your favourite hot drink?
This project would incorporate the different cafes in Hamilton, and it would ask participants to upload a photo of their favourite drink as well as pin the café on the map that it's from.

Feedback

Participants liked this idea as it helped to promote local businesses, and with the mapping tool, residents would be able to see exactly where these cafés are, allowing others to visit the cafes. Participants also mentioned including other businesses such as restaurants into this idea, and if possible, develop a signature Hamilton winter drink that all participating establishments would serve to help promote the site.

All the comments made about the different projects helped to solidify and work out which project should be initially made, along with a Mentimeter poll that was done at the end of the session to choose the best winter idea. The idea chosen was "Do you want to build a frosty?' (See Appendix C)

7.1.2 Spring

Idea Overview
Pollen in the air: What is your favourite flower or plant?
Users can post pictures of their favourite display of flowers/plants and pin it on the map

Feedback

Some suggestions for the project were to have a clearer description of the ways people can engage and there would need to be restrictions added to eliminate privacy concerns of people taking pictures of private residences. The central points that would increase the number of individuals who would participate on the website are the following: instead of the website being known for online engagement it could be turned into a community hub with articles that people can reference for information about the city. Lastly, if someone posts a picture there should be an option to add and search hashtags. A few examples of hashtags that could be used are #waterfall, #trails, #gardens, #exercise, #quiet, etc.

7.1.3 Summer

Idea Overview
Fall Fiesta: What is your favourite summer festival memory?
Users submit a photo of their favourite summer festival memory

Feedback

The stakeholders believed that this idea was a great opportunity to inform people of festivals around the city that may have never heard of before. It was noted that festivals were already "Instagram-able" so sharing photos is a great wat to maximize publicity for festivals, as well as local businesses and farmers that are affiliated with the festivals. Another comment was that sharing photos is an easy task; therefore, it will be minimal work for participants to engage with the project. Moreover, there was a concern about the state of festivals during the pandemic and how they will be impacted. Participants suggested there should be a commenting feature where residents can share their thoughts on what other people have posted. Another suggestion was to provide support to less resourced festivals, as well as incorporate the use social media into the project.

7.1.4 Fall

Idea Overview

Be-leafing in Fall: What is your favourite location to view the fall colors in Hamilton?

Users will be able to use the mapping feature to pin the location in Hamilton they like to visit along with adding a photo of the location of the fall colours.

Feedback

The participants of community dialogue stated that this project idea is a great way to promote active living, as it encourages Hamiltonians to go outside and explore what nature has to offer in many of the natural spaces in the city. Despite this, many reported that although it might encourage them to go outside, there isn't much incentive for them to share a photo themselves and participate in the project. Another comment is that there is potential for people to mainly post the commonly visited areas such as Dundas Peak thus there would be diversity in responses. Suggestions were to frame the question as being "What is the most underrated place to view the fall colours in Hamilton?" which makes residents feel as if they have inside scoop, which others would benefit from through sharing.

7.2 Public Engagement Feedback
7.2.1 Reasons for Participating in Public Engagement

Most residents reported to be the most engaged when they know that their input and feedback would be directly used to inform an action. For those who have participated in community-building projects in the past, most of their feedback was used to directly inform a decision. An example that garnered a lot of attention and engagement in Toronto was the "Name the City Duck" campaign, where there were many news articles, and buzz circulating around the name. Though a simple concept, knowing that whatever input is given (through a poll feature) will be incorporated in the decision motivated them to participate.

For residents that have not participated in civic engagement in the past, their responses were opposite to the responses given by those who have participated, as they felt that their opinions and feedback would not be well integrated into the decision-making process. Many mentioned that they are simply not aware of any civic engagement activities such as public consultations or board and committee meetings.

They felt as if the city has not done an adequate job of promoting civic engagement opportunities, especially in their communities.

7.3 Marketing Feedback
7.3.1 Encouraging Participation

Engagement is very important for the city to receive public opinions on city decisions and matters such as policies, economic development, infrastructure etc. The main ideas compiled from the community dialogue regarding ways to encourage participation on the website included: creating a way of knowing how many people have interacted with the website and incorporating social media challenges to promote the website. Through the inclusions of challenges on social media platforms there will be an increase in the number of individuals who interact with the website.

7.3.2 Promoting Engage Hamilton

EH platform has limited participants due to the fact that it was recently created. To encourage more individuals to participate with the website and increase the sense of community, the website needs to be better promoted. During the community dialogue different ways to promote the website were brainstormed.

Outside of the use of online promotion, it is suggested that other promotional methods be sought out. For example, posting posters inside local businesses such as cafes, restaurants, boutiques, libraries, grocery stores, community centers etc., radio advertisements, ads on city owned vehicles such as buses and garbage trucks. Another way is to partner with festivals, schools, or local events. Other techniques that can be used involve having "influential" Hamiltonians post about EH explaining the website and its importance. Moreover, the platform can be promoted on social media platforms such as Tik Tok, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc. Lastly, word of mouth would be another technique that may be utilized to promote the platform. The focus would be informing the younger generations through school assemblies. To ensure the message of the website is communicated successfully, the schools can have competitions. The school's ideas can be included on the website, so residents can rate or score their favourite project. In addition, the city staff who oversee the website could provide co-op or placement opportunities within schools so they can incorporate different perspectives.

8. Survey Feedback

From November 17th to November 25th, 2020, the project team released a survey to the public asking them what excites them about Hamilton, to generate additional community building ideas. The survey also asked questions regarding how residents engage in civic engagement. In total 39 participants responded to the survey

8.1 Topics of Interest

The survey asked two questions to participants about things they like in Hamilton. The first question asked them what their favourite seasonal activity in Hamilton is, but allowing it to be broad for them to answer about all the seasons if they so choose. The second question asked participants to ask them what about Hamilton excites them. These questions provided a rough understanding on what types of topics participants would interact with on the EH site. From the results of both questions, many people talked about their love for being outdoors during the different seasons, and the way the city is structured. This ranged from going hikes on the many different trails to exploring different cafes or restaurants the city has to offer. This suggests that relationship-based projects that have outdoor elements will have the capacity to do well in terms of amount of participation.

8.2 Why Engage in Public Engagement

Around 29 (75%) participants responded by saying they participate in public engagement projects because they want to help the community. 16 (41%) participants, the second highest result, said that they take part in public engagement because of a friend or family member that also participates in public engagement. This shows the impact of social norms as people stated that the behavior of other people in their network, influenced their own behaviour and has driven them to participate in public engagement.
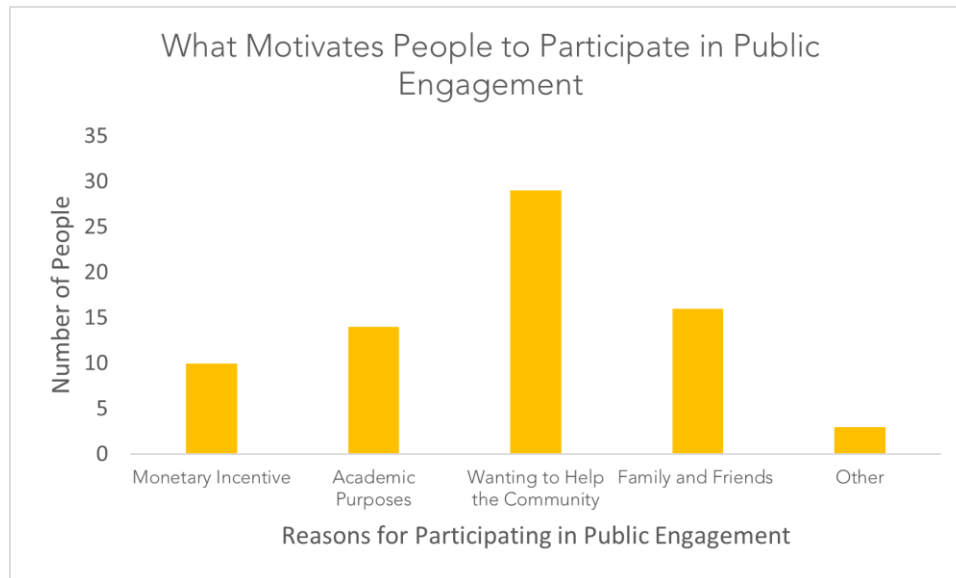
Figure 3. What Motivates People to Participate in Public Engagement

8.3 How they find out about public engagement projects

The final main question that was asked to participants of the survey is how they hear about public engagement projects, and the results from this question leaned heavily towards two answers. With 35 (90%) of participants choosing that they hear about public engagement projects through social media, it shows how important it is for project staff to broadcast about their projects to the different social media platforms that are available to us. This could include Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, which are the three top social media sites that allow for posts with descriptions. By expanding to be on more social media platforms, this would allow for more users to easily access the EH site to access project information. The second highest answer with 19 (50%) votes was through word of mouth.
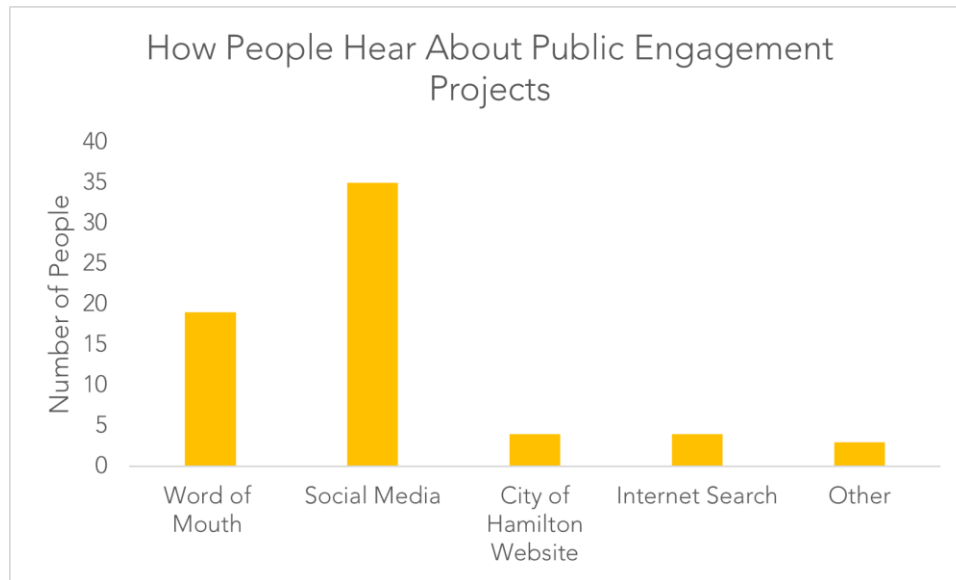
Figure 5. How People Hear About Public Engagement Projects

8.4 Additional Comments

Additional comments centered around the need for the feedback given in public engagement projects to be used and incorporated into the decisions made by the city instead of being ignored. Participants also commented that the city must work to reach a more diverse group of people, especially those who do not typically participate in public engagement projects This is to make sure that not just one small section of the community is being heard. Different strategies would need to be introduced to help different people, as everyone has their own form of barriers that may prevent them from participating. If the work is started to break down these barriers now, then in the future these issues will be much smaller.

9. Recommendations

Appendix D Contains the design and layout of community building project ideas. Appendix E contains list of additional seasonal ideas.

9.1.1 Winter Seasonal Idea

Two ideas for the Winter season are provided as it will be the first project to be launched on the platform.

Idea # 1

Title: Do You Want to Build a Frosty?

Prompt: Send us a picture of your snowperson!

Description: "The snow has fallen and the snow people are sprawling. It is time to go outside to go meet these friends and learn their story. Take a picture of the snow people you have created with those close to you and tell us a fun story about your new snowy friend".

Tools: The tools that would be used are the stories and images tool for participants to upload pictures of their snow people and add an optional story at the end. During the last two weeks, the poll tool would be included for participants to vote on the best snow people based on 3 categories: best snowperson, most creative and best story.

Explanation: The idea behind this project is that participants would go outside after a snowfall and build a snow person however they would like. After building their snow person, participants would post a picture of their snow person under the stories tab and provide a little story behind their creation. The story can be about how the snow person was created, or a story about the "life" the snowperson had before this snapshot was made, even giving them a name if they so choose. Afterwards, other participants would be allowed to post comments about the snowperson, to have conversations with others about what they like about the snowperson. Then, during the final 2 weeks that the project is intended to stay up, participants would then vote on their favourite creations in 3 categories: best snowperson, most creative and best story.

The purpose of this idea is for participants to go outside during the snow and hopefully to have a fun activity with their family or those close with them, and to share this online, as a way to show the strength of the community. The story telling aspect also allows for children to have a little fun. The only downside of this project is that it assumes that there will be ample snowfall throughout the season to allow for participants to build snow people. That is why if this idea is chosen to be the initial winter relationship building idea on the platform, weather reports should be consulted.

Idea # 2
Title: Lights Extravaganza
Prompt: Share your favourite night lights!

Description: The sun may be going down early during these winter times, but that does not mean the light has to disappear. Share some of your favorite light installations in the city, and tell us why you like them

Tools: The story and mapping tools will be used to allow participants to share their favorite light installations in the city.

Explanation: The main premise of this idea is that residents would use the stories tool to post pictures of light installations that they see throughout the city. This could include lights that the city puts up in some neighbourhoods, or lights that residents put up themselves for the holiday. The reason for this idea is to show that even though it gets dark outside during the winter months, the city is still lit up through the city or its

residents. Along with the story tool, the mapping tool on the site would also be utilized so that participants would be able to pin where they posted the picture (if it is from a public location), so that way residents that want to go see the light installation themselves would know where these locations are.

9.1.2 Spring Seasonal Idea

Title: "Flower power"

Prompt: What is your favourite display of flowers?

Description: "As seasons change from Winter to Spring, it is time for the rebirth of flowers, trees, plants, and animals. With the warming of weather and rain falls, the rebudding of nature begins. There is an increase of community beautification as gardens rebloom and forests brighten up as leaves and buds start to grow. There are many unknown locations that enhance the beauty of Spring in Hamilton".

Tools: Tools that are available to use are the mapping option, to layout areas within Hamilton that are great outdoor spaces to enjoy spring colours.

Explanation: The reason to have the idea be an outdoor option is so that it provides Hamiltonians the option to explore their neighborhoods, as well as increase their physical activity. These experiences will improve the sense of community as residents can increase their personal knowledge of areas to visit along with embracing the beauty of the City.

9.1.3 Summer Seasonal Idea

Title: Festive Fiesta

Prompt: What is your favourite Summer Festival?

Description: "Summer is time for festivals in Hamilton! We live in a city that has rich culture in the arts and music. Everything from the Artsfest Waterdown Summer Festival to the Festival of Friends can be found within the city. There is something for everyone! Share your favourite Hamilton festival memory! We want to see some of your most cherished memories from when you were completely embraced by the vibrancy of this city".

Tools: Stories tool and Picture Uploads

Explanation: Upon researching the city, it was evident that Hamilton is a city that has a rich history in the arts and music. The impact of the arts is reflected by the

numerous festivals that are held within the city. Everything from the Waterdown summer festival to the Festival of Friends is held within the city. In addition to these popular festivals, there is also the Fringe festival, the Dusk Dances festival that was held at bayfront in 2019, as well as the Con Bravo Geek Festival which is a festival for independent creators where people can enjoy gaming, webcomics, cosplay. There truly is something for everyone. For Hamilton, festivals were not only distinct to the city, but were also distinct to the season of summer as well. Therefore, it is believed that by sharing images from these festivals on the platform, the platform will be able to gather a collection of moments that celebrate the livelihood of the city during a time when that has been severely compromised. Moving forward, with the uncertainty produced by the pandemic, there is still a lot of unpredictability surrounding how these festivals will be held during the summer of 2021. However, regardless of how these festivals are held, residents will be encouraged to share memories from the past.

9.1.4 Fall Seasonal Idea

Title: Café Wonderland

Prompt: Help create Hamilton's Fall Drink of 2021!

Description: What is more soothing than wrapping your cold fingers around a piping hot mug of your favourite fall drink? Nothing. This year we are creating Hamilton's Official Fall Drink of 2021 and we need YOUR HELP to create and name our speciality drink.

Poll Questions:

What kind of milk would you like?
- Whole milk
- Skim milk
- Half and half
- Soy
- Almond
- Coconut
- No milk for me

Sugar?
- Yeah, just regular sugar
- Sugar in the Raw
- Splenda
- None for me, thanks

What type of hot drink?
- Hot cocoa
- Latte
- Drip coffee
- Latte
- Cappuccino

Any flavours?
- Pumpkin spice
- Gingerbread
- Hazelnut
- Vanilla
- Irish crème
- Caramel

Any toppings?
- Whipped crème
- Caramel drizzle
- Nutella
- Cocoa powder
- Nutmeg

Explanation: From the community dialogue feedback, the successful community building projects mentioned such as "Name the city duck" were simple, and united Torontonians together to name something that they could share and take pride in as "the city's duck". This can similarly be seen in the "Name the city swan" project in EngageWaterloo which was also highly successful. Participants reported to be the most engaged when they know that their input and feedback will be directly used to inform an action. A common theme of what people found exciting in Hamilton during the fall time was cafes, hot drinks and beverages. Due to the above reasonings, the initial idea was modified to "Create Hamilton's Fall drink of 2021". Many U.S states have an official "state drink". Ohio for example, lists Tomato Juice as the official beverage. This was used as inspiration to create this project idea. This would incorporate the element of using everyone's feedback directly in a poll, to determine the components of Hamilton's drink of the year. The city can collaborate with local coffee shops to offer the drink as limited edition so that there is a tangible product from the project. The coffee shops which choose to do so can be featured on the EH website on a post that says "Where to get Hamilton's fall drink of the year" which serves as promotion and exposure for the local cafes as well.

9.1.5 Suggested Project Timeline

Season	Phase	Date	Task
Winter	Initiation	Dec 9 - Dec 23	Review project details which include: tools, prompt, title, description and obtain approval by administration
	Planning	Dec 23 - Dec 30	Finalize project details, assemble team and devise timeline to design, construct and launch website for Jan 2021
	Execution	Dec 30 - Jan 13	Implement project on EH website and launch
	Promotion	Jan 14 - Feb 3	Promote project through social media
Spring	Initiation	Mar 8 - Mar 22	Same tasks as above
	Planning	Mar 22 - Mar 29	
	Execution	Mar 29 - April 12	
	Promotion	April 12 - May 10	
Summer	Initiation	Jun 7 - Jun 21	
	Planning	Jun 21 - Jun 28	
	Execution	Jun 28 - Jul 12	
	Promotion	Jul 12 - Aug 4	
Fall	Initiation	Aug 9 - Aug 23	
	Planning	Aug 23 - Aug 30	
	Execution	Aug 30 - Sep 13	
	Promotion	Sep 13 - Oct 4th	

Table 1. Suggested Project Timeline Given to City Staff

9.2 Marketing Recommendations
9.2.1 Diverse Advertising Strategies

One of the most common responses through the community dialogues as to why people have not participated in civic engagement projects in the past, is because they were unaware of the projects, and did not feel as if the city put effort in promoting them. With civic engagement, it is usually the same individuals, often belonging to similar social groups, that participate. To further engage residents of different demographics, EH should be promoted better, using a diverse array of advertising strategies. Diverse marketing also includes using different methods of marketing channels to appeal to various groups based on cultural differences, ethnicities, races, genders, religious beliefs, and more. Transit advertising is ads placed on modes of public transportation. This includes the sides and inside the HSR buses

along with the Sobi Stands. This targets both secondary and post-secondary students in Hamilton who use public transit, along with residents who don't own cars and use public transit instead. Community bulletin boards which can be found in libraries and recreation centres can also be used as a platform to advertise EH.

9.2.2 Increase Social Media Presence

EH currently does not have its own social media platforms to promote its projects. A larger social media presence is needed to gather more traction online and expose more Hamiltonians to the platform. Other municipalities, like Toronto have social media accounts such as Twitter (@GetinvolvedTO) to share important information about civic engagement with the residents of the city. Ultimately, with a strong online presence, the platform may be able to reach out to a wide array of residents to inform them about the EH platform and the projects that require resident input. This strategy is supported by the notion that social media is a powerful tool for marketing (Hooda & Hooda, 2018, p. 5). Marketing using social media is becoming an increasingly popular phenomenon for businesses as it allows them to garner the attention of the masses using social media platforms (Hooda & Hooda, 2018, p. 5). Moreover, most social media platforms are convenient to use and easy to navigate (Hooda & Hooda, 2018, p. 6). For example, platforms such as Facebook are not very costly when it comes to establishing an account on the site, and the process of creating advertisements is also extremely straightforward (Hooda & Hooda, 2018, p. 6). Thus, it is important for businesses to organize an online presence to not only gather the attention of various users on the platform, but also communicate with users to determine what they expect from the business or organization (Hooda & Hooda, 2018, p. 6). Therefore, by incorporating social media into the marketing plan, the platform will be able to bring public attention towards the success of select community building projects in order prompt residents to participate in future projects on the platform.

9.2.3 Content Marketing

Transforming EH to an online hub with blog posts and articles will encourage more residents to visit the site. An example of this is the Toronto blog, BlogTO. This is essentially content marketing which is a marketing technique of creating and publishing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract an audience and drive action. This can be in the form of blog posts for videos. An example of a company that uses content marketing is bangthetable, the creator of EngagementHQ. As research for this project, a google search of "Why people don't participate in civic engagement" returned the article "The psychology of citizenship and civic engagement" from bangthetable which provided valuable information. Though the content is not directly related to the company's products, it was able to gain traction to the company site and build familiarity. Creating blog posts on EH such as

"10 Best Summer Festivals in Hamilton to Visit" or "Top 5 Underrated Locations to View the Fall Colours" can use responses from previous projects and highlight them as examples. This can serve as an outlet to feature responses, which might encourage residents to participate in the projects and provide their input. It could also encourage local photographers to submit their photos, to be featured on the website as well.

9.2.4 Leaderboard

To incentivise residents to participate in the projects, it is suggested that a leaderboard be utilized. A leaderboard will be featured on the platform for each of the community building projects. The leaderboard will function to provide a ranking of the wards based on the number of residents that have engaged with the project. Since residents provide their postal code when registering onto the platform, their ward is already determined, and the leaderboard will be automatically updated. This will act as an incentive for residents to participate because they will be able to see the number of residents that have already engaged with the project in real time. Studies have shown that the most effective strategy for human motivation often stems from how individuals perceive their actions in relation to others (Vasek, 2020). Specifically, if an individual observes another person participating within a particular act, they will feel compelled to participate in that act as well (Vasek, 2020). This is because when large numbers of individuals behave in a particular way, that behavior translates into a norm that each person in society now must follow (Vasek, 2020). The concept of the leaderboard relies on the power of social norms to encourage residents to engage (Vasek, 2020). In addition, as previously mentioned, 40% of survey participants reported participating in civic engagement since people in their network have also participated, which further proves the effect of social norms to drive behaviour.

Moreover, the leaderboard indicates progress to residents by displaying the increase in residents engaging with the platform. This indication is often necessary because humans tend to monitor progress and the human brain is wired to process positive information rather than negative information (Vasek, 2020). This is advantageous from a marketing perspective because the process of placing progress in the spotlight will grab the attention of the residents, and subsequently prompt them to engage with the projects on the platform (Vasek, 2020).

9.2.5 Posting Success of Projects on Social Media

As a marketing strategy, it will be useful that once the community-building projects have been launched on the platforms, the trends in engagement amongst the various projects be analyzed to determine what projects were the most successful in attracting resident participation. After the most successful projects have been classified, it is recommended that the success of such projects be shared broadly using social media platforms. Similar to the leaderboard, this will display that many other

Hamilton residents are actively engaging on the platform and will motivate others to do the same.

9.2.6 Showcasing Select Project Responses

Another marketing strategy is to feature certain responses provided by residents in public or online spaces. For example, such responses can be shared on advertisements on SoBi stands or on blog posts. This will be beneficial because it will extend the reach of advertising beyond the use of social media. By featuring select responses in public and online spaces, the platform will be able to increase its reach to demographics that might not be active participants on the various conventional social media platforms. Moreover, similar to the leaderboard, this marketing strategy also seeks to set the social norm surrounding engagement with the platform (Vasek, 2020). Specifically, by seeing what other residents have responded with to the project, Hamilton residents will feel motivated to participate as well (Vasek, 2020). Furthermore, the display of select project responses will also incentivise residents to participate because they too would be provided with the opportunity to have their posts featured in front of a large audience.

9.3 Public Engagement Recommendations
9.3.1 Introduction

As previously mentioned, EH is simply one tool in the larger repertoire of operations used to gather feedback from stakeholders. Though community-building projects are the main objective for this project, their purpose is to drive engagement onto the more critical decision-making projects on the website. The implementation of the EH and community-building project recommendations alone will not produce the desired results. The online survey results show that 74% of citizens engage in public engagement projects because they want to help the community and make a difference. Citizens need to know that participation informs a specific action. For this to occur the way public engagement is being held in Hamilton needs to follow the core principles of public engagement set by the city and the city must use a more evidence based decision-making approach. Currently there is a policy gap between the core principles of public engagement and public engagement conducted in Hamilton and the following principles can be better practiced:
- Transparency and Trust
- Accountability and Action
- Inclusion and Diversity
- Ongoing engagement and open communication

The public engagement recommendations outlined in this section, will provide strategies to better incorporate these principles in public engagement in both the EH and city government level.

9.3.2 Engage Hamilton Level

One of the principles of community engagement – Inclusion and Diversity, was highlighted in both the survey and community dialogue. Participants felt that engagement efforts by the City of Hamilton must do a better job of engaging new participants and reaching into diverse communities. Often the citizens that participate in civic engagement and voice their opinions have the privilege of time and the mentality that their issues are of importance. Barriers to participation by communities of colour, non-English speakers, and low-income and LGBTQIA+ individuals must be overcome so that all Hamiltonians can feel safe and welcomed.

To do this at the EH level, a team of EH ambassadors hailing from diverse communities can be implemented. These ambassadors can serve as a liaison between EH and the communities and encourage community members to participate in online civic engagement. Having representation internally within the EH team itself, will lead to the platform and the staff behind the platform to appear more inclusive and accepting of all individuals.

In terms of language barriers, around 25% of Hamilton residents identify with a language other than English as their first language. Establishing a feature to translate EH to one of the top 20 mother tongue languages, would help to remove the language barrier that prevents non-English speaking residents from participating. To improve ongoing engagement and open communication, EH must provide more updates on the projects and responses in a timely fashion. According to bangthetable, many consultancy programmes promise that results will be published on a certain date but fail to follow through. It would be beneficial to set an estimated date for when respondents can expect to hear back about the outcomes of the project. On EH, there is inconsistency in this as some projects outline exact dates when participants can expect to hear back, and others don't. Despite setting deadlines, not all follow through. With the recent survey to develop the Economic Action Plan, there were no updates through emails sent to respondents. Publishing results on the site and emailing respondents updates is key to continue communication and encourage ongoing engagement.

9.3.3 City Level

In order to maintain transparency and trust, the city must ensure evidence-based decision-making is being incorporated into the process of how resident feedback is utilized. This is primarily because even though the city claims to incorporate resident feedback on projects and policy decisions, this is not always the case. As previously mentioned, with the recent side-walk snow-clearing survey, Mayor Fred Eisenberger stated that the "survey was "absolutely useful" but "but not scientific" (Moro, 2020). He also claimed that the data collected was not incorporated because the citizens' "opinion[s] really [wasn't] relevant to what the overall population thinks"

(Moro 2020). These statements were non-evidence-based claims which were said despite the overwhelming number of residents out of the 2000 citizens that completed the survey who advocated for more consistent sidewalk clearance (Moro, 2020). This discrepancy between resident feedback and policy implementation suggests a policy gap where the city does not seem to be fully abiding by the appropriate community engagement principles, such as transparency and trust, as well as accountability and action when requesting regarding decision-making projects on the platform (Moro, 2020).

To increase transparency, the platform may want to clearly outline the scope of the projects and explain what is within reach of implementation for residents. For example, with the sidewalk snow clearing project, there were timing and budget constraints that prevented resident feedback from being implemented into action (Moro, 2020). Even though this was the case, this information was never communicated with the residents when their feedback was sought out on the project (Moro, 2020). Therefore, to be transparent with residents, such information needs to be clearly communicated through the platform. Moreover, to maintain trust with residents, the city must make it a priority to utilize the feedback provided by residents to inform policy decisions.

Furthermore, to maintain accountability and action, the city must invest in resources, such as human resources and provide appropriate training to employees to best support the platform. Another suggestion would be to recruit city public engagement ambassadors or hire individuals from diverse populations in Hamilton to better support the wider communities in the city.

To maintain inclusion and diversity, and create opportunities for active participation, it is recommended that the city implements more opportunities to engage new participants onto the platform. Specifically, it is suggested that the city takes an initiative to engage diverse communities in the city. It is imperative that all voices within the Hamilton community heard and incorporated into the decision-making process. To achieve this, the city needs to remove barriers to participation for marginalized groups, this is particularly important when considering the benefits of civic engagement. Studies have shown that those that actively engage within their communities are more likely to lead healthier lives. Civic engagement can produce positive outcomes in terms of how people assess their self-worth, their interactions with others, as well as hold themselves accountable of their actions in society (Pancer, 2020). Moreover, the benefits of civic engagement extend to communities as well whereby having highly engaged members in a community can reduce the occurrence of crime and increase social cohesion amongst members (Pancer, 2020).

10. Relevance to City's Strategic Plans
10.1 Introduction to City's Strategic Plans

The 2016-2025 Strategic Plan was approved by council in 2016 and consolidates the city's vision, mission, culture which outlines conduct, and seven high-level priorities. The seven priorities are as follows:

- Community Engagement and Participation
- Economic Prosperity and Growth
- Healthy and Safe Communities
- Clean and Green
- Build Environment and Infrastructure
- Culture and Diversity
- Our People and Performance

These priorities are established to guide the city's decision-making surrounding the services provided to its citizens. The priorities were determined through conversations that took place during the Our Future Hamilton initiative that asked residents about their vision for the future of Hamilton, in combination with internal conversations with City staff. The recommendations presented in this report are in alignment with many of the priorities, and thus contribute to developing the vision that Hamiltonians have defined.

10.2 Community Engagement and Participation

Community engagement and participation means the City works to provide services and opportunities that promote civic engagement and pride. Part of this priority include removing barriers that prevent marginalized communities from participating in civic engagement. The recommendation of investing in community engagement city staff, and the implementation of EH ambassadors with diverse socioeconomic and cultural characteristics, will help achieve this priority.

10.3 Economic Prosperity and Growth

Economic growth and development in general, refers to a prosperous and diverse local and regional economy that benefits all residents. Where businesses collaborate with the city, contributing to success of the economy. Some recommendations provided in this report aim to promote the local businesses through creating many opportunities for exposure on the platform. Projects such as "Festival

Fiesta: What is your favourite summer festival memory?" encourage residents to share different festivals that take place in Hamilton. Transferring the top responses onto a blog post on EH to "Top 10 Summer Festivals in Hamilton" will further spotlight the events. In addition, all community building projects function to direct residents to participate in decision-making projects, some which directly impact policies and initiatives involving economic growth such as the previously completed 2021-2025 Economic Development Action Plan survey.

10.4 Healthy and Safe Communities

In healthy and safe communities, residents lead happy lives in safe neighbourhoods and have access to services and support to be healthy and active. This involves creating an environment that encourages an active lifestyle to support a high quality of life. Community building project ideas such as "Do you want to build a frosty?" encourage residents to get outside and do an activity such as building a snowman. Viewing responses shared by fellow members of the community can inspire Hamiltonians to also do the same. The same applies to the initial fall project idea to share a favourite location to view fall colours, which encourages residents to embark in the outdoors, go hiking and admire nature.

10.5 Clean and Green

A clean and green community fosters pride for the unique natural environment and has properly maintained natural spaces for residents to enjoy. Many projects, which encourage residents to pin the natural areas on the map that they frequently visit, can offer the city insights on natural spaces which are underutilized. From this, the city can analyze reasons as to why the spaces may be utilized, and attempt to beautify and improve the space, to encourage traffic. Along with this, projects that ask to share photos of the natural spaces in Hamilton, will increase pride in the various natural elements such as hiking trails, waterfronts, and waterfalls.

11. Conclusion

In order to maximize the potential of the Engage Hamilton platform, certain actions must be implemented at various levels of public engagement. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, public engagement has been severely impacted because in-person public engagement has been put on hold. Therefore, the city has had to quickly adapt the online platform in response to the evolving situation especially considering that the platform was meant to be used to compliment in-person public engagement sessions. Through implementing the proposed community building projects and marketing strategies, the platform will be able to direct greater traffic onto the site

which will subsequently increase the number of residents participating in public engagement.

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13. Appendices

Appendix A: Other Municipality Engagement Platforms

Figure 1: Layout of the Castle Guardians project on the City of Castlegar's engagement platform.

Figure 2: Layout of community building project on the City of Prince Rupert's engagement platform

Region of Durham   Why Get Involved?   Strategic Plan 2020-2025   Local Municipalities   Search   Sign In   Register

Your Voice. Your Ideas. Your Durham.

Welcome to Your Voice Durham! Our online engagement platform is meant to inspire conversation and encourage community participation anytime, anywhere. There are so many reasons to engage with us—your voice matters. Sign up today and have your say!

IDEAS BANK   PHOTO CHALLENGE   COMMUNITY SURVEY

Tell your story

How do you #PictureDurham? Start your story with a title that describes your photo, and then insert an image to share your favourite pictures of people and places in Durham. Just click on the picture frame icon or enter CTRL+P to upload your images. We might choose your photo to be featured in our new Strategic Plan! You can also share your photos via social media using the hashtag #PictureDurham.

Be sure to tell us the story behind your photo, and don't forget to "Like" photos that you think are the best!

Please note that by sharing images you are giving consent to the Region of Durham to use your photos in any future promotions and materials.

You need to be signed in to share your story.   Sign In   Register

Start your story by providing a title

Remember Summer
by Steve Godin, over 1 year ago

Lakeview Park in Oshawa

Reminder
by Steve Godin, over 1 year ago

Heber Down Conservation Area in Whitby

You need to be signed in to add your comment.   Sign In   Register

Write your comment

Branch Meeting
by Steve Godin, over 1 year ago

Lynde Shores in Whitby

Share your ideas and comments on key priorities between May-September 2019. Subscribe to project updates for dates, times and locations of events.

Phase 3 - Finalization of Strategic Plan 2020-2025
Public feedback will be incorporated into a new five-year Strategic Plan for Regional Council's endorsement.

Key Dates

Pickering Town Hall Meeting (5:30-7pm @ George Ashe Library and Community Centre, 470 Kingston Road, Pickering
September 17 2019

Oshawa Town Hall Meeting (5:30-7pm @ Oshawa Library - McLaughlin Branch, 65 Bagot Street, Oshawa)
August 28 2019

Whitby Town Hall Meeting (5:30-7pm @ Whitby Library - Central Branch, 405 Dundas Street West, Whitby)
August 26 2019

Uxbridge Town Hall Meeting (6:30-8pm @ Uxbridge Town Hall, 51 Toronto Street South, Uxbridge)
July 30 2019

more..

Figure 3: Layout of the Photo Challenge project on City of Durham's online engagement platform

Figure 4: Layout of the Photo Journal Project on City of Colwood's online engagement platform

Appendix B: Stakeholder Mapping
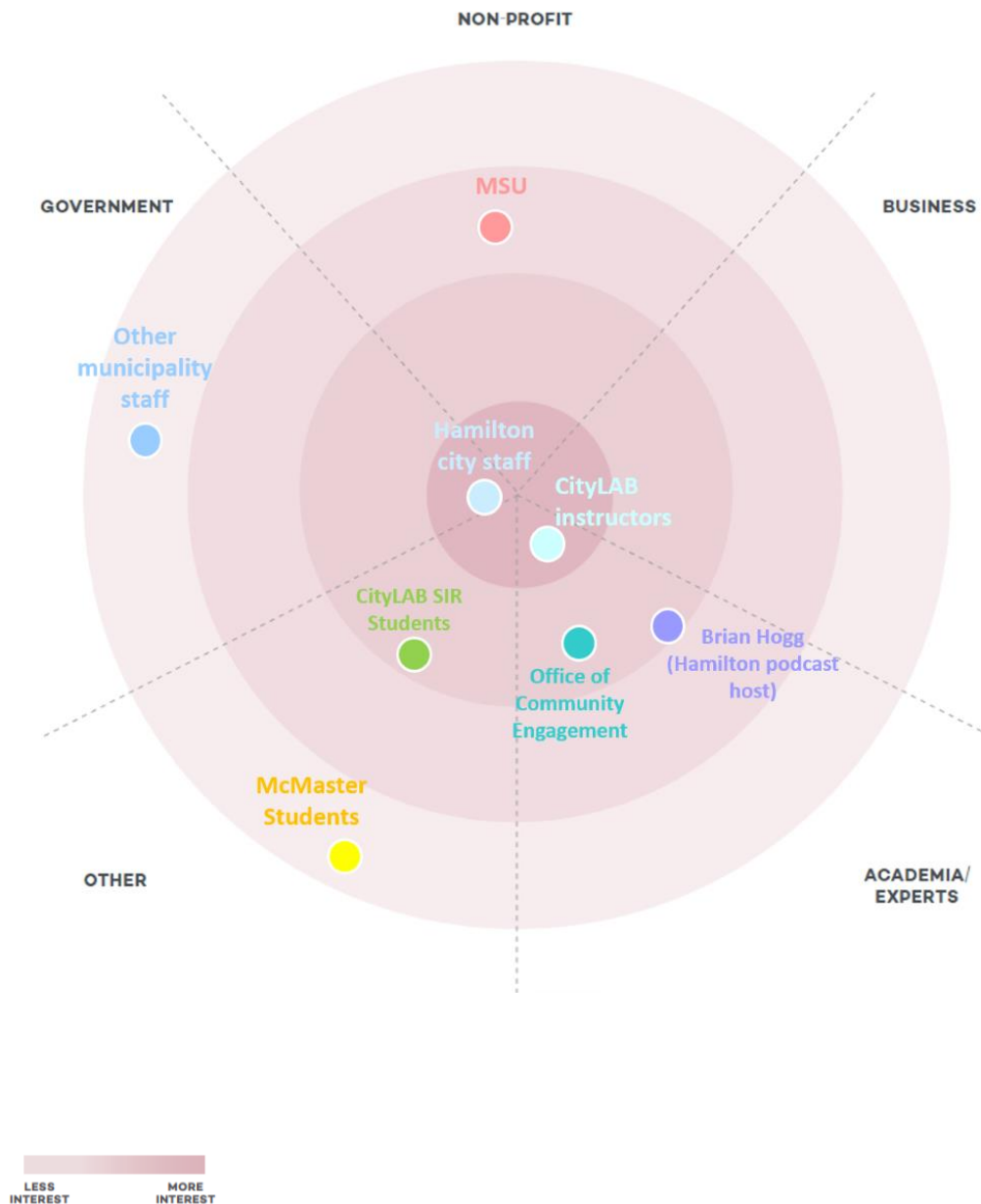
Figure 5: Map displaying potential stakeholders to engage with for the community dialogue

Government:

Hamilton City staff:

- EH Project teams: The projects that are currently on the EH platform is directly impacted by the number of people who are on and EH platform thus they would have a high level of interest in this project
- Cindy Mutch, strategic projects, and communication division of Hamilton: Cindy is the senior project manager for this project and the strategic projects and

communications division is directly involved in this project thus they would be highly invested/interested

- Other municipality city staff: Other municipalities who have already completed relationship-based projects would have helpful input however, they might not be as involved/invested in the projects since they have their own city priorities

Non-profit:
McMaster Student Union

- Giancarlo De Re (MSU president): Using a survey to see if there are any interests from students, either from a specific faculty, or all the university students, to help finalize the ideas. However, they may be more concerned with McMaster students and the projects that occur on the campus than the projects that are to be implemented in Hamilton as a whole.
- 100in1 Days Hamilton: A global movement that is changing how people interact with their cities. They have many interactions with city residents over the years that they have been in Hamilton and would be a good stakeholder to discuss good methods to interact with all the residents in Hamilton.

Academia/Experts:
CityLAB Instructors: Randy Kay, Darina Vasek, Brian Baetz, Dave Heidebrecht

- The reason that the CityLAB instructors are higher on the importance list is because their expertise from different educational backgrounds will provide significant input. They all also live within the Hamilton region so they can provide an insight of the community and their needs. Also, they directly teach us skills which will help us succeed in public engagement and project management.

Office of Community Engagement: Jay Carter, Patrick Byrne

- The importance of having the members of the Office of Community Engagement provide us feedback. They would act as the liaison with the city of Hamilton. They can also promote the discussion through their newsletter.

Brian Hogg – host of DiscoverHamOnt podcast

- Having Brian Hogg in the discussion would be very beneficial as he has a podcast within Hamilton. He would give us his personal opinions of Hamilton and what he would like to see change within the city. The opportunity to contact him would impact the overall project as he could mention the project or potential survey on his podcast to gauge the interest of other community members

Others:
CityLAB students

- The CityLAB students would be considered stakeholders because they are all currently working on their own respective public engagement projects as part

of the program. Due to the circumstances produced by the COVID-19 pandemic, most projects this term have a focus on online engagement. Therefore, CityLAB students are in an on-going process of learning about and developing strategies for online engagement and thus would make for good stakeholders to facilitate dialogue with. Moreover, through participating in the dialogue, CityLAB students will be able to learn more about the process of online engagement themselves which they can then utilize within the context of the challenges of their own projects.

- McMaster Students can be considered as stakeholders due to their affiliation with the institution. By attending McMaster, students have adopted Hamilton as their extended home and therefore may be deemed as valuable community members. Furthermore, McMaster students would have a vested interest in improving Hamilton because the development of the city at any level would benefit the students by providing them with greater opportunities for career progression.

Final Stakeholders for Dialogue Sessions:
- CityLAB students in residence
- MSU president
- McMaster students

Appendix C: Mentimeter Screenshot of Participants Favourite Winter Idea
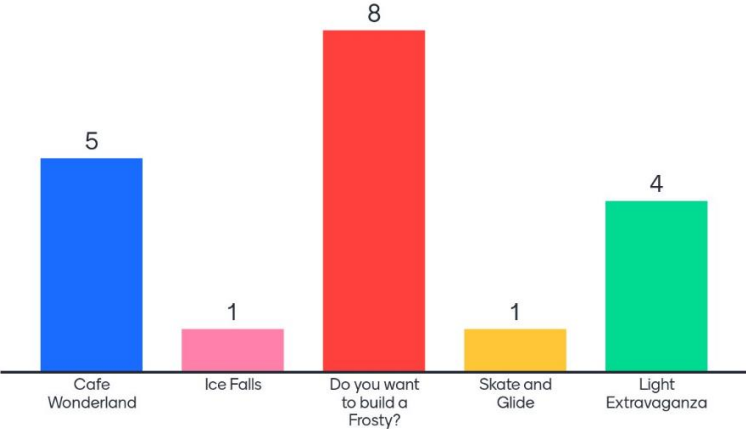
Figure 6: Mentimeter Results for Favourite Seasonal Idea of Stakeholders

Appendix D: Design and Layout of Community-building Projects

Responses

Albion Falls

Tina

Devils Punch Bowl

Jon

Figure 7: Layout of the Winter Community Building Project Idea

Pollen is in the Air

Spring is a time where flowers start to blossom, trees start to bud and animals come out of hibernation. During this season nurseries become popular as people start to replant their gardens and start to enjoy the comfortable weather.

Comment text.

Who's Listening

Cindy Mutch

Senior Project Manager, Community Engagement
City of Hamilton

Phone 905-546-2424 ext 4992
Email engage.hamilton@hamilton.ca

Key Dates

Public Engagement Poll Open
October 26 → November 23 2020

Lifecycle

Poll open for public input
October 26, 2020 – November 23, 2020

Figure 8: Layout of the Spring Community Building Project Idea

Figure 9: Layout of the Fall Community Building Project Idea

Figure 10: Layout of the Summer Community Building Project Idea

Appendix E: List of Additional Seasonal Project Ideas

Winter
- Ice skating
- Shopping at local boutiques or at the mall
- Indoor events in big buildings like Dundurn Castle
- Sledding in Parks
- Outdoor Lights

Spring
- Gardening
- Biking on the waterfront trail
- Escarpment changing colours as trees start to bud/ foliage
- Spring festivals such as the Tulip Festival
- Outdoor workout areas such as hiking and stairs
- Botanical Gardens
- Dundurn Castle Garden
- Bulb blooming at Gage Park
- Shedding winter layers

Summer
- Trails, walking the main streets of Hamilton
- Road trips
- BBQ or patio season
- Backyards get togethers/ parties
- Outdoor/ parking lot movie screenings
- Spending time at the beach (water fronts)
- Farmer's markets

Fall
- Pumpkin patches/ Halloween
- Local cafes
- Sweater Weather
- Fall produce/ Farmers market
- Back to school