

THE CITY OF OTTAWA'S RESPONSE TO THE OLRT PUBLIC INQUIRY

Document 6 - Overview and Approach

In the Final Report of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry, the Commissioner, Ontario Court of Appeal Justice William Hourigan, framed the Commission's primary role as "providing answers about what happened and why, and making recommendations to avoid a repetition of the project's problems."

The Final Report included 103 recommendations, organized across 12 themes:

- Planning Complex Infrastructure
- Preparing Project Estimates and Budgets
- Selecting a Project Delivery Model
- Risk Reduction during Procurement
- Creating an Effective Contract Scheme
- Fostering Successful Working Relationships
- Transparency and Effective Planning and Oversight during Construction
- Accuracy, Transparency, and Public Entity Decision-Making
- Safety Requirements
- Preparing for and Achieving a Successful Handover & Start to Public Service
- Public Service
- Recommendations for the OLRT1

The City's Action Plan

The inquiry recommendations provide the City with an external view of the LRT project, as well as insight into how other major projects are planned, developed and implemented. The City is committed to addressing all of the recommendations that fall within its jurisdiction, with many of them already implemented or in the process of being implemented.

As of April 28, 2023, the City of Ottawa will have completed, or integrated into revised Corporate policies, 36 of 103 recommendations, which will be implemented for future projects.

The inquiry acknowledged that the City has already taken positive steps and has established a good foundation upon which to apply the recommendations. The City is committed to improving the reliability and maintaining the safety of O-Train Line 1, as well as preparing for future expansions while incorporating lessons learned into future major infrastructure projects.

The City has been working with RTG to improve rail service reliability and maintain the safety of the system and will be addressing each inquiry recommendation individually, through an Action Plan.

On November 9, 2022, Council approved the Ottawa Light Rail Transit Public Inquiry and Recommended Next Steps, which recommendations for Council with respect to matters, including records management, and a process that would facilitate consideration of the Commissioner's final report. Through that report, Council directed staff to return with a "Companion Report" that:

- Provided an update on the preliminary recommendations approved by Council on November 9, 2022
- Detailed the lessons learned that Staff had drawn from the experience of Stage 1 Light Rail
- Responded to the recommendations contained in the Public Inquiry's final report

City staff have drafted the Companion Report which satisfies these directions. Attached to the report is a table listing each of the 103 recommendations and indicating the work the City has or will be taking in response.

The City's Transit Services Department has taken the lead to develop the report, but the actions taken to respond to the recommendations will impact the entire City, including:

- Updates to City processes governing delegation of authority and information management led by the Office of the City Clerk
- A review of the City's Employee Code of Conduct by Legal Services
- Updates to City policies governing procurement and project management led by Finance and Corporate Services
- A review of methodology and processes for major infrastructure projects by the Infrastructure and Water Services Department, with a view of continuous improvement and enhancing the quality of services and products

Since the launch of the LRT system, Transit Services has not paused in its efforts to address ongoing issues with the rail system so as to improve service to the public.

In January 2023, City Council provided direction that led to the settlement of issues between the City of Ottawa and RTG. The settlement also reset the relationship to focus on the delivery of safe and reliable transit service to the people of Ottawa. Through this agreement, the City and RTG will move forward with the goal of improved collaboration and partnership. As noted in the Action Plan, this settlement resolves a number of recommendations presented in the OLRT Public Inquiry Report.

Based on previous lessons learned reviews, third-party reviews, external oversight and consultation with international light rail professionals, significant improvements have been made to the Stage 2 LRT model – from design to procurement to construction to contract management.

City staff meet daily with RTG to advance work on outstanding issues and determine the root causes of service disruptions. Both parties are committed to building a long-term relationship on a foundation of candor and transparency.

Moving Forward

Through this report, Transit Services, working as the lead department, will deliver the City's response to the Public Inquiry to Light Rail Sub-Committee on the status of the implementation of the Ottawa Light Rail Transit (OLRT) Public Inquiry report's 103 recommendations. A Technical Briefing is planned to coincide with the publication of the report to explain the work done to date and provide Councillors with an opportunity to ask questions regarding the City's planned approach.

Following the publication of the report, the Action Plan will be posted to Ottawa.ca and OCTranspo.com and updated as needed to reflect the direction of Council and work accomplished until all the recommendations have been addressed. In addition, Transit Services will bring formal updates on the Action Plan to the Light Rail Sub-Committee in September and December of 2023.