



City of Hamilton Provincial Priorities, 2022 & Beyond

OUR PLAN, OUR PRIORITIES

Building a Brighter Future for Hamilton



As one of Canada's largest cities with a population over 500,000, Hamilton is home to a diverse array of industries, including traditional manufacturing, healthcare research and training, and an emerging knowledge-based economy.

Traditionally known as Steel City, Hamilton has also become a destination for arts and culture, and investment. With the city's millennial population representing one in four residents, new and growing families are increasingly calling Hamilton home, which is expected to lead to continued growth in the years and decades to come.

Hamilton is a city with endless potential. As one of the largest regional economies in Canada and fifth in Ontario, Hamilton is a uniquely positioned city offering all modes of transportation, moving goods and our workforce. The city's transportation assets include mature road, rail, airport and port infrastructure.

Our municipal government is closest to and best understands the daily challenges of Hamilton residents. The City of Hamilton is focused on both service delivery and value for taxpayer dollars; we have a proven track record as responsible fiscal managers. We have complete and intimate knowledge of local challenges and opportunities for the short, medium and long-term and are ready to achieve and aspire to our greatest potential.

Building more resilient, vibrant and inclusive communities post-pandemic will be essential to a strong recovery. The City of Hamilton has identified six key priority areas where collaboration with the Provincial Government is critical to success. These priorities highlight how investing in Hamilton will lead to a much brighter, healthier and more equitable future for our city and our residents.

The following are the City of Hamilton's priorities.



1

Supportive Housing and Ensuring our Most Vulnerable Populations have Access to Health and Human Services

While recent investments through the province's Social Services Relief Fund have assisted greatly in responding to the immediate health, safety, housing and support needs of those experiencing homelessness during COVID-19, Hamilton requires additional ongoing sustainable supports to enhance permanent housing and support solutions to achieve short- and long-term community outcomes related to ending chronic homelessness. To reach this milestone, set out by the provincial government, permanent supportive housing interventions are required.

With appropriate supports and partners, the City of Hamilton is well positioned to meet the goal of ending chronic homelessness.

Currently, Hamilton does not have a permanent Supportive Housing program that can accommodate individuals who have varying and complex health challenges, including mental health and addictions for which the City of Hamilton lacks the mandate, funds and expertise to address on its own.

Physical and mental health challenges can be caused and exacerbated by homelessness and can increase over time. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a surge in demand in Hamilton's homeless serving system, creating a backlog of individuals "waiting" in shelters, hotels and encampments to find appropriate, affordable housing. Shelter stays are now the longest on record as approximately 10 per cent of those accessing services require permanent housing combined with advanced health and mental health supports, which currently amounts to 100 to 140 individuals with an expected 40 to 50 new individuals annually. As frequent users of emergency shelter and emergency health services, they continue to fall between a gap that exists through municipal housing and provincial health care systems. Hamilton's experience has shown that without the appropriate physical, mental health and substance use supports in place, long-term success in the municipal housing system is unachievable.

Investments from the ministries of Health and Long-Term Care and Municipal Affairs and Housing can be aligned to ensure that funding for permanent supportive housing in Hamilton is targeted towards people on Hamilton's By-Name Priority List,

unlocking Hamilton's capacity to meet the provincial goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025. Aligning federal and provincial investments in affordable housing and permanent supportive housing through a single, coordinated strategy will allow Hamilton as well as municipalities facing similar challenges to meet their community's housing and health needs at the same time and end the experience of homelessness for those with the most complex needs.

Currently, a shortage of affordable housing units remains for those in need, making the wait time for affordable housing in Hamilton significant. The average wait time for all households in a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) unit from Hamilton's housing waitlist in 2020 was 2.5 years. For survivors of domestic violence who have Special Priority status, the wait time in 2020 was two years. The wait time was longer for chronological applicant households whose wait time for a home is currently estimated to be between three and five years.

The City of Hamilton is concerned with waitlists and the limited supply of housing. Affordability challenges have resulted in increased demand for all types of housing, including private market rental units, rent-geared-to-income and emergency shelter spaces. As a result of increasing demands and resource challenges over time, Hamilton's social housing capital repair backlog is approximately \$222 million and projected to grow to \$632 million over the next 10 years.

This investment backlog is beyond the financial capacity of the City or social housing providers and as such, providers are dependent on other partners, particularly all levels of government, to participate with in-cost sharing arrangements. While capital investment funding from all levels of government has helped to improve the condition of social housing stock in recent years, more funding will be required to support the following types of initiatives: climate change/greenhouse gas emission reduction, accessibility modifications, unit restoration at turnover, health and safety repairs and maintenance, and preventative maintenance. Capital funding as well as funding for social housing subsidies and housing allowances is critical as are the necessary health supports for those with complex needs.



2

Strong Economic Recovery and Prosperity Post-COVID-19

Municipalities are responsible for more than 60 per cent of the community infrastructure that supports Canada's economy and quality of life. These are the roads, bridges, recreation centres, wastewater facilities and more that residents and businesses rely on every day. According to recent statistics from the City of Hamilton's 2022 Business and Workforce Survey, almost two-thirds of respondents reported that even in the face of the Omicron wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, their business outlook over the next six months was either good or fair. Of the more than 1,500 businesses across the city that participated in the City of Hamilton's 2021 COVID-19 Impact Survey, 60 per cent had experienced revenue decreases of 25 per cent or more, with more than 30 per cent experiencing a 50 per cent or greater decrease in revenue. Many of these businesses also expressed concern about the availability of skilled and experienced labour as they return to normal levels of business activity. This data shows we cannot rest on our past achievements, and as we move forward into 2022, we must do so with a clear focus on economic recovery as a long-term project for the city, its residents and the businesses that operate here. Continued funding of small business support programs such as Digital Main Street, which helps businesses go digital, alongside continued investments in work placements for post-secondary secondary students, will be crucial in enabling strong local business recovery.

Investments in healthcare to address emergency health services modernization and issues such as lengthy ambulance off-load delays, healthy equity, access to care and the need for innovative models that improve care will be vital to a strong economic recovery and prosperity post-COVID-19.

Legislation shifting responsibility to municipalities to determine the need for appropriate provision of land ambulance service, and to provide such service, was enacted prior to the burgeoning challenge of ambulance offload delays. Since placing responsibility for land ambulance delivery on municipalities, the ever-increasing inability of hospitals to accept incoming ambulance patients in a timely manner has become an epidemic and has led to municipalities needing to fund increasing numbers of ambulance units to accommodate the intake challenges being experienced by hospitals. In 2021, this resulted in more than 32,000 hours of ambulance time locally in excess of the provincial – and pre-downloading – standard. This is equivalent to four ambulances 24 hours a day for 365 days being held at hospital. While the municipal cost for this issue is estimated at approximately \$5.6 million, the human cost to the patients awaiting service is immeasurable.

The mental health pressures placed on paramedics who are required to wait, at times longer than four hours, are increasing and costly on a personal level for the individual and financial level for the health care system.

Scarcity of hospital resources combined with the absence of enforcement of the existing standards have increasingly resulted in paramedics staffing hospital hallways rather than being available to respond to health care needs in the community in a timely manner. As municipalities add paramedic staff to compensate for the offload times, they are faced with the reality that this increase in funding is going towards keeping patients in hospital hallways rather than increasing service levels in the community.



3

Investing in Child Care and Early Years

Like many other cities in Ontario, families in Hamilton struggle with accessing child care and managing the high fees required to maintain care. The average family in Hamilton currently pays \$59 per day per child for child care. Currently, there are enough licensed child care spaces for only 27 per cent of the child population in Hamilton, however access for some age groups, such as infant care, is much lower. The Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care agreement, signed by Ontario on March 28, will provide families in Hamilton with access to affordable child care and support increased labour market participation, especially for women and equity-seeking communities.

The City of Hamilton, in its role as service system manager, is ready to partner with the Province of Ontario to implement the new Canada-wide Early Learning and Child Care funding at a local level. Continued funding flexibility will ensure the City is able to respond to the local needs of diverse families.

The child care and early years sector continues to experience recruitment and retention challenges and as such, a high-quality child care and early years system will require a comprehensive human resources workforce strategy, including fair compensation for Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs), to be successful. Currently, RECEs earn an average of \$22 per hour in Hamilton, compared to RECEs that work for school boards and earn an average of \$28 per hour.



4

Climate Change Adaptation and Mitigation

As the level of government with the most direct contact with residents and many of their environmental choices, municipalities are on the front lines of climate change adaptation. Municipalities are limited in scope and authority in setting wide spread policy, requiring the support of all levels of government to establish policy and funding to ensure that climate change adaptation goals are achievable. Hamilton is a willing partner in this adaptation, investing in climate projects to become more resilient in the face of a changing climate and new weather realities.

In March 2019, Hamilton City Council approved the Climate Change Emergency Declaration, in recognition that 'climate change poses a significant threat to our city, region, province, nation, civilization, humanity and the natural world'. The City of Hamilton and Province of Ontario can work together to be leaders in areas such as energy transition and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.

A stronger and flexible, phased-in approach for provincial regulations in areas including building construction, transportation and industrial energy and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are needed to provide a road map for businesses and a mandate for municipalities. Hamilton currently has the highest GHG emissions per capita in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, of which 95 per cent come from transportation and buildings. These emissions are largely regulated through provincial jurisdiction.

A strong and ongoing partnership with the Province of Ontario including funding, updated guidelines and best practices for climate adaptation is a critical component for the City of Hamilton and all municipalities in meeting their adaptation goals and responsibilities.

A report commissioned by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Insurance Bureau of Canada (IBC) estimates that an annual investment at the municipal level between 0.2 per cent to 0.3 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is needed to adapt to climate change. In Hamilton, this represents an investment between \$734 million to \$1.1 billion needed annually to properly adapt to climate change, providing the ability to address the issues that our unique location next to Lake Ontario and the Niagara escarpment create.



5

Our Commitment to Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Building an equitable, diverse and inclusive city is both an obligation and an opportunity. Success is more likely if all levels of government work together to advance this objective, acting both individually and collectively. The City of Hamilton recognizes our progress will rely on meaningful, ongoing support for equity-seeking groups and marginalized communities that have been impacted by incidents of hate and racism. It will also rely on residents and governments working collaboratively to help to amplify the voices of those in our community working for change.

Local government has a tremendous direct impact on policy, services and civic engagement. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has been identified as a key priority for the City of Hamilton through the term of Council priorities.

The City of Hamilton is committed to creating and nurturing a city that is welcoming and inclusive. Our goal is that equity-seeking communities feel safe, supported and have an enhanced sense of belonging through strengthening community capacity and inclusive engagement opportunities. Hamilton faces unique challenges and opportunities and, as such, the framework is designed to meet our city's specific needs.

Prioritizing meaningful engagement and effective participation in Hamilton with those who have lived experience in processes that will inform the development and adaptation of systems-level responses remains critical. This would include addressing issues such as the systemic over-representation of Indigenous persons experiencing homelessness and the need to prioritize consistent approaches, rooted in the spirit and actions of truth and reconciliation.

Over the past several years, there has been an increased level of awareness from municipalities to take a greater role in ensuring communities are safe, respectful and inclusive for all residents. We applaud the provincial government for supporting funding opportunities such as the Anti-Racism Anti-Hate Grant Program. To further this work, additional and continued partnerships with community organizations, district school boards and other relevant collaborators will be key to co-create and implement an educational curriculum about racism, hate, equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice and belonging, that reflects the perspective of people living in Hamilton.

We also invite the government of Ontario to continue working with Hamilton and all municipalities to create meaningful opportunities for productive dialogue amongst community organizations, businesses and other local institutions.



6

Increased Infrastructure Funding

Better transit means less congestion, faster commutes, more convenience and higher productivity. As a designated Foreign Trade Zone, Hamilton is making it easier for import/export businesses to move through our region providing for a reliable route for the movement of people and goods.

Connecting municipal road networks to the provincial transportation system in a seamless manner is critical to growth and continued investment to address existing constraints and pinch points is essential. These pinch points in the provincial transportation system can create unfavorable community impacts such as increased emissions and noise.

Nearly 40 per cent of trucks using the Red Hill Valley Parkway and Lincoln Alexander Parkway pass through Hamilton to access the provincial highway network during the afternoon peak hour. As such, continued investments in Hamilton-area infrastructure will be necessary to meet increasing demand for road use and access to amenities such as Hamilton's port and airport.

For more information and further discussion, please feel free to contact:

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