



Hamilton

# HAMILTON'S PRIORITIES 2019 AND BEYOND





# Introduction

Hamilton has a population of 540,000+ and boasts both a manufacturing and knowledge-based economy. The Provincial Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) has set population and employment growth targets for Hamilton at 780,000 people by 2041.

Over the last decade, Hamilton has enjoyed an upward trajectory, with sustained growth coming from new investment in the downtown, our industrial waterfront and business parks, and inward migration from other parts of Ontario, Canada, and overseas are fueling our housing construction industry.

While Hamilton is extremely proud of the growth and ongoing success of our community, our city continues to be impacted by the legacy of the dramatic downturn in our steel and manufacturing sector in previous years including an aging infrastructure, and a disproportionate tax burden on residents (88% Residential, 12% Non-Residential).

Now emerging as a national success story of economic growth and urban revitalization, Hamilton needs strong partnerships with senior levels of government to ensure that our infrastructure and services can catch up and keep pace with the needs of a thriving, 21st century community.



Hamilton's potential is without limits. As the ninth largest regional economy in Canada, and the third in Ontario, Hamilton is uniquely positioned as a true multi-modal city offering all modes of transportation, moving goods and our workforce. The city is home to the Port of Hamilton, the busiest and largest marine port in the Canadian Great Lakes, and the John C. Munro International Airport, the fastest growing cargo airport in Canada. Hamilton also provides easy access to regional, national and international rail lines. The QEW and the 400-series highway network provides connectivity to both the Greater Toronto Area and a regional market of nearly 9 million people. These same networks connect Hamilton to the U. S. border and within an hour.

Through collaboration with the Federal Government there are great opportunities to move forward together to tackle Hamilton's priorities:

- Modernizing the Federal–Municipal Relationship
- New Funding Tools
- Predictable Transit Funding
- Housing Affordability
- Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Support

# Modernizing the Federal-Municipal Relationship

Modernizing means finding new and creative ways of working together to tackle and sustainably empower Hamilton to continue to build better lives for all our residents.

The recent \$12.7 million Federal pledge for shoreline rehabilitation is a good example of a robust direct federal transfer that recognizes the benefits of working directly together on the city's infrastructure priorities. It would help to modernize the federal-municipal relationship if there was a permanent, predictable, direct federal investment in areas of core, long-term needs like housing and public transit. In addition, funding support would be more effective if there was more flexibility within funding programs to target local needs.

## New Funding Tools

Our municipal government is the level of government that is closest to and best understands the daily challenges of Hamilton residents. Service delivery and value for taxpayer money is our business. We are responsible fiscal managers maintaining a AA+ credit rating and have consistently kept property tax increases at or below the rate of inflation. We have complete knowledge of local challenges and opportunities in the short, medium and long-terms.

New funding tools must be:

- Long-term and predictable—so we can plan ahead, reduce waste
- Flexible—so local expertise can identify what solutions come first
- Efficient and accountable—less bureaucracy, focus on outcomes

Federal programs like the Gas Tax Fund can serve as an effective model. Every year, it directly empowers communities of all sizes to drive thousands of infrastructure projects—from roads to water, waste, energy and transit systems.

# Predictable Transit Funding

Modernizing public transit in Hamilton and positioning our City to better support long-term growth and development will remain a core local priority requiring significant investments for many years. Thinking differently about the best way that federal resources can leverage provincial and local investments over the long-term is an important conversation to ensure that transit investments are made strategically for the long-term.

Better transit means less congestion, faster commutes, more convenience, higher productivity and lower emissions. Building on the 10-year federal plan, together we are seeking a commitment to explore a predictable, direct, needs-based funding mechanism for modern public transit in Hamilton. It is currently estimated that an additional \$300 million is required to complete the City's 10-Year Local Transit Strategy.

# Housing Affordability

The City of Hamilton is seeking more federal support to alleviate the burden on housing affordability overall in Hamilton, including the consideration of rental supports as well as financial incentives that will assist first-time home buyers achieve home ownership. Needs assessments indicate that the city will need almost 80,000 total housing units over the next two decades to accommodate local population growth and housing needs, or over 3,000 units per year.

## **Social Housing**

Poverty exists in all corners of Hamilton – ranging from 5% to 46% depending on where you live. Individuals living in poverty are at risk of many poor health and social outcomes, including homelessness, social exclusion, mental health, addiction, and lowered life expectancy. Children born into poverty are more likely to live in inadequate housing; receive inadequate nutrition; and experience multiple barriers to education attainment and employment, which perpetuates the poverty cycle.

There are over 6,700 households on the waiting list for social housing in Hamilton and the City's unfunded requirement for the 14,000 units in need of capital repair currently stands at \$700 million.

Almost 50% of our Family Shelter capacity is being used by families seeking asylum in Canada. The increasing costs of asylum seekers accessing shelter and housing subsidies is not sustainable with current funding.

## **Rental Housing and Home Ownership**

Rents in Hamilton have increased by an average of 4.1% since 2012 and 24% over the past 5 years - faster than any other major Ontario municipality, other than Waterloo. Forty three percent (43%) of renters in Hamilton pay more than 30% of their income on rent. Those with the lowest incomes pay up to 69% on rent, putting them at risk of homelessness and with minimal resources to meet other needs.

## **Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Support**

More extreme and less predictable weather events have become the norm. Protecting Canadians from extreme weather damage is a local challenge. Cities are on the front lines as new weather extremes wreak havoc on homes and businesses. We are making the most of limited tools available to respond to more frequent floods, wildfires and more. In March of 2019 Hamilton City Council declared a “Climate Emergency”.

We are investing in climate change adaptation projects to become more resilient in the face of a changing climate and new weather realities.

The City applauds the Federal Government’s recently launched Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, allocating \$150 million towards projects in Ontario and hopes to see sustainable funding in the future. It is important that local and federal representatives work closely together to plan and allocate the funds to both prevention and rehabilitation priority projects.



# THANK YOU FROM THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL

**Back Row:**

Councillor Tom Jackson, Councillor Maureen Wilson, Councillor Terry Whitehead, Councillor Jason Farr, Councillor Arlene VanderBeek, Councillor Brad Clark, Councillor John-Paul Danko, Councillor Chad Collins, Councillor Sam Merulla

**Front Row:**

Councillor Nrinder Nann, Councillor Esther Pauls, Councillor Brenda Johnson, Mayor Fred Eisenberger, Councillor Judi Partridge, Councillor Maria Pearson, Councillor Lloyd Ferguson

A night cityscape with a blue digital network overlay. The background shows a city at night with illuminated buildings and a large, glowing blue sphere in the foreground. A complex network of blue lines and dots is overlaid on the scene, suggesting a digital or data network.

[www.hamilton.ca/federalpriorities](http://www.hamilton.ca/federalpriorities)