

2nd ANNUAL HAMONTYOUTH SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY



2024 POST-EVENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EVENT OVERVIEW

As a progressive city we have a responsibility to create a positive, and supportive community, which offers opportunities for youth to develop in a healthy way.

- 2022-2027 City of Hamilton Youth Strategy Report

The 2nd Annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC (“the Summit”) was held on October 22, 2024, at the Hamilton Wentworth District School Board (HWDSB) Education Centre. The Summit welcomed over 250 high-school-aged students from 20 high schools in Hamilton, Ontario.

The event aimed to engage youth in a day of opportunities, discussion, skill-building, and celebration. The day featured a community service fair with representation from 32 youth-serving agencies, a keynote address from RBC Olympian Brandon McBride, skill-development workshops, and a musical performance from RBCxMusic artist, Fox Revett.

The primary activity of the Summit is to support youth participation in youth-led workshop discussions facilitated by the organization, Model City Hall, a youth-led nonprofit dedicated to encouraging youth involvement in local politics. Model City Hall hosted 6 workshops designed to collect youth-voice. Each workshop is summarized in this report with corresponding recommendations informed by Summit participants. With the support of Model City Hall, the Summit provides the City of Hamilton with an annual, mechanism to solicit, receive, and incorporate youth voice into local decision making.

The Summit is organized by the City of Hamilton and the HamOntYouth Steering Committee. It is an action item identified in the 2022-2027 City of Hamilton's Youth Strategy Report. The HamOntYouth Steering Committee is comprised of more than 50 of youth volunteers between the ages of 14-29.

ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

How were attendees at the Summit engaged?

While primary activity of the Summit is to support youth-voice in local decision-making, it's also a great opportunity to build skills, network, and have fun!

01

Community Service Fair

Attendees engaged with over 30 youth-serving organizations to win prizes, connect with employers, and learn about services.

02

Skill Development Workshops

Participants selected one of six exciting Skill Development Workshops focusing on topics like financial literacy, leadership, disaster response, and more.

03

RBC Activations

Youth enjoyed a keynote with RBC Olympian Brandon McBride, a musical performance with RBCxMusic Artist, Fox Revett, and a 360° photo booth.

04

Model City Hall Workshops

Youth participated in one of six roundtable discussions on important issues and active projects in the community.



MODEL CITY HALL RECOMMENDATIONS

The following section presents possible recommendations for **action** to corresponding stakeholders, as prepared by youth-led organization, **Model City Hall**, and their team of tremendous youth volunteers. For a complete summary of workshop discussions, please review the **Full Report**.



Topic #1 Responding to Youth Gun and Gang Violence in Hamilton

1. Resources seeking to engage youth experiencing gun and gang violence should be openly advertised, available, and accessible through a mix of virtual and physical resources, including posters in frequented community locations which include QR codes and links to online resources.
2. Locations seeking to welcome youth experiencing gun and gang violence should be calm, safe places for youth to share their experiences with approachable, capable professionals, such as social workers, in order to build trust and safety.
3. Professionals engaging youth experiencing gun and gang violence are encouraged to receive proper training and experience in order to be effective.
4. Educators and caregivers need to be properly equipped with the knowledge and skill sets required to provide care for youth experiencing gun and gang violence.
5. Community supports and programs are required to direct youth away from gun and gang violence in locations which are often frequented by youth such as libraries, churches or community centres.

Topic #2 What's Missing from the High School Curriculum?

1. Local leadership must take a strong stance in coordinating across municipal, provincial and federal governments to ensure youth are better prepared to transition from education to the workforce.
2. Workforce programs and promotions must be adapted to resonate with the *current* generation of young people Generation Z if they wish to foster engagement.
3. All high schools should provide more Co-op opportunities, including fairs and workshops, to ensure equal access to hands-on experiences for all students, regardless of academic focus.
4. The conventional wisdom that that youth aged 17 or 18 are in a position to make life-defining decisions was not the perception held at this Summit. Youth need an environment supportive of a non-traditional, 4-year secondary school timeline.
5. The integration of workplace preparation should be a feature of all high school courses, not just is Careers class.

RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT'D



Topic #3 Re-Imagining Public Engagement as a Youth City Builder

1. There must be improved visibility and accessibility of public engagement initiatives designed specifically to engage the voice of youth.
2. Policymakers must construct cohesive, continuous service-delivery frameworks to prioritize maintaining essential initiatives in times of government transition.
3. Politicians need to make efforts to engage with youth directly.
4. The educational curriculum need to be altered with an improved focus on informing youth on the inner workings of current municipal government.
5. The municipal government must improve their utilization of social media, providing regular posts and updates on projects, budget plans, and outcomes, as well as sharing real-time updates on budget allocations in a youth-friendly format to enhance transparency and build trust.

Topic #4 How Will the LRT Impact Hamilton Youth?

1. Improvements to HSRnow and other HSR system infrastructure, including the synchronization of schedule information must be prioritized to increase reliability and ensure user trust in public transit.
2. Diversification of transit routes is required to less-serviced locales in order to support youth who travel long distances to access the HSR.
3. Reengagement of Hamilton youth regarding the development of the daily fare program for high school students is required to ensure more students are able to utilize bus services for a reduced fee.
4. Improved safety and cleanliness measures are needed within the transit system to promote comfort of users and ensure broader accessibility.
5. It is recommended that trash cans, recycling bins, and compost bins be available in every transit vehicle and transit stop to encourage the proper disposal of different types of waste.



RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT'D



Topic #5 What Is Your Perfect Community Centre for Youth?

1. The establishment of free drop-in times at recreation centres for youth-specific activities such as swimming lessons, game rooms, and community-building events is recommended at all facilities.
2. The City must improve staff training for recreational centre employees, focusing on creating positive, welcoming environments and engaging with youth effectively.
3. The City should improve technology access, such as computers, printers, and Wi-Fi, in recreation centres to help youth with schoolwork and personal development.
4. The City should enhance lounge areas with comfortable seating, outlets, and entertainment options like pool tables, ping pong, and live-action chess to make recreation centres more appealing to teens.
5. The City must improve the promotion of recreation centre programs through youth-centered social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, using youth ambassadors from local high schools to spread awareness.
6. The establishment of incentives for participation in youth programs to encourage consistent engagement is recommended at all facilities.
7. The establishment of community leaders and role models, such as athletes or local figures, to participate in youth programs as mentors for young people is recommended at all facilities.
8. The establishment of spaces within recreation centres where youth can practice their religion and culture is recommended at all facilities.
9. The establishment of focus groups and support sessions for youth to discuss mental health, nutrition, and healthy living with trained experts, helping to reduce anxiety and stress is recommended at all facilities.



RECOMMENDATIONS, CONT'D



Topic #6 How Can Hamilton Keep You? Factors for Staying in Our City

1. There needs to be a significant response to housing affordability and infrastructure without the further impact to green spaces within the community. There is urgency to support residential development in a way which prioritizes affordability and supports first time renters and/or homeowners.
2. Increased investment in social programming is recommended to provide mental health resources to the unhoused community and those affected by substance use.
3. Continued investment in the preservation of arts, nature, and local businesses is recommended, including efforts to revitalize the downtown core as a vibrant, safe, and inclusive space for youth and the broader community.
4. Increased investment for climate action initiatives as well as the re-evaluation of harmful public infrastructures that puts species and the local ecosystem at risk is recommended.
5. The establishment of employment pathways for youth to support the healthcare system is recommended.

ENGAGEMENT LIMITATIONS

While the **2nd Annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC** made every effort to enable and empower youth voice, the engagement activities, findings, and recommendations are shared with notable limitations.

Due to the Summit being offered on as a one-day event, limitations to participation is limited to those able to attend the specific day. In this year's event, attendees were primarily high school-aged youth. Expanding outreach to include post-secondary students, young professionals, and youth not in education, employment, or training would provide a broader scope of varied lived-experiences. Individuals from varying lived-experience can enhance the depth and breadth of discussions, ensuring potential recommendations address a broader spectrum of youth needs. Building partnerships with post-secondary institutions and community agencies that support vulnerable youth could broaden the event's impact.

HamOntYouth of the Year

The HamOntYouth of the Year Program was created in 2024 by the HamOntYouth Steering Committee. The award is designed for youth to formally acknowledge their peers.

2024
WINNER
SALSA
SARHAN



Salsa Sarhan joined the HamOntYouth Steering Committee in 2023 after completing a part-time role with the City of Hamilton as a Youth Engager where she was instrumental in the growth of the @HamOntYouth Instagram. Salsa has been a dedicated and active member, contributing to every HamOntYouth initiative, completing the year with the most volunteer hours of any member.

Salsa is a strong advocate for youth engagement, both within the community and among her peers. Salsa has also taken on the role of executive member for the HamOntYouth Summit Planning Team, where her leadership has been integral to the event's success.

CONGRATUALIONS TO THE OTHER HAMONTYOUTH OF THE YEAR NOMINEES



Aria Dalla
Pasqua



Jasmine
Montrichard



Jenna
Azzam



Lillian
Guy



Zoe
Smith

THANK
YOU

For any additional information, please contact Daniel Ridsdale,
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Hamilton

