

# 2nd ANNUAL HAMONTYOUTH SUMMIT

PRESENTED BY



## 2024 POST-EVENT REPORT

# Table of Contents



<b>Event Overview</b>	_____	<b>04</b>
<b>Engagement Opportunities</b>	_____	<b>07</b>
<b>Recommendations</b>	_____	<b>09</b>
<b>Engagement Limitations</b>	_____	<b>12</b>
<b>HamOntYouth of the Year</b>	_____	<b>13</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	_____	<b>14</b>
Youth Volunteers	_____	<b>14</b>
Model City Hall Workshops	_____	<b>15</b>
Responding to youth gun and gang violence in Hamilton	-----	<b>16</b>
What's missing from the high school curriculum?	-----	<b>19</b>
Re-imagining public engagement as a youth city builder	-----	<b>23</b>
How will the LRT impact Hamilton youth?	-----	<b>26</b>
What is your perfect community centre for youth?	-----	<b>29</b>
How can Hamilton keep you? Factors for staying in our city	-----	<b>32</b>
<b>Contact</b>	_____	<b>35</b>

# Messages from our Leaders

## City of Hamilton

The City of Hamilton is delighted to report its findings and successes from the 2nd Annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC. The event was a tremendous success featuring activities focused on engaging youth with opportunities, celebrating their achievements, and amplifying youth voices. Students from 20 public, Catholic, and French-speaking secondary schools were in attendance, expanding their knowledge and understanding of the importance of civic engagement, raising their voice, and collaborative decision-making.

As identified in the 2022-2027 Youth Strategy Report, enhancing youth engagement and leadership opportunities is one of the City's top priorities for young people. The annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC serves as the perfect flagship event to support this objective. Congratulations to all the youth volunteers who made this a reality!



*Jessica Chase*

Jessica Chase  
Director, Children's and Community Services  
City of Hamilton

## Model City Hall

Model City Hall was founded in 2015 with a mission to improve civic engagement amongst youth. This year marks the second time that we have been fortunate to partner with the HamOntYouth Steering Committee to develop programming for the HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC.

The opportunity to work collaboratively alongside youth volunteers, City staff, and other partners is a reminder of how important diverse perspectives are to meaningful engagement. Being able to elicit and learn from youth's ideas, experiences, and opinions has been an incredible privilege, and we remain committed to the continuous uplifting of these voices as catalysts for driving change and informing decision-making whenever and wherever possible.

Our work would not have been possible without the support of volunteers and leaders across the City.

*Lillian Guy*

Lillian Guy  
Co-Director of Operations  
Model City Hall

*Tina Liu*

Tina Liu  
Co-Director of Operations  
Model City Hall



# 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.



# Thank You to our Partners

Thank you to  
our title  
sponsor.



**It's more than just money, it's about community.** RBC supported the planning, delivered skill-building workshops, connected musical guests, and keynote speakers. RBC is an integral piece of the HamOntYouth community.



## ALECTRA

Alectra generously joined the 2nd Annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC as a supporting partner. In addition, Alectra staff graciously hosted a skill-building workshop.



## MODEL CITY HALL

Model City Hall contributed dozens of youth volunteers, hundreds of volunteer hours, and expert facilitation of workshop discussion. Model City Hall is integral to supporting youth voice in Hamilton.



## HAMILTON'S LOCAL SCHOOL BOARDS

A special thanks to the dozens of teaching faculty and staff who supported youth from 20 local high schools to attend the event during their regular school day.



## METROLINX

Thank you to Metrolinx staff for providing attendees the opportunity to engage and share feedback on the future plans of the Hamilton LRT.

# Thank You to our Partners

Our sincerest thanks to the organizations who contributed to the Community Services Fair.

BGC Hamilton Halton	City of Hamilton, Community Safety and Well-Being	City of Hamilton, Community Strategies	City of Hamilton, Fire Department	City of Hamilton, Hamilton Water
City of Hamilton, Human Resources	City of Hamilton, Office of Climate Change	City of Hamilton, Public Engagement	City of Hamilton, Public Health Services	City of Hamilton, Public Works (HSR)
City of Hamilton, Recreation	Compass Community Health	Empowerment Squared	Eva Rothwell Centre	Goodwill Amity
Green Venture	Hamilton Business Centre	Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council	Hamilton Public Library	Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
Living Rock Ministries	McMaster University	Metrolinx	Mohawk College	Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg
NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment and Training	RBC Royal Bank	St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton	Urban Minds	Wesley
YMCA of Hamilton, Burlington, Brantford	YWCA Hamilton			

For the complete list of all the youth volunteers, please see Appendix A.



# 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 WORKSHOPS



While attending the Summit, participants were asked to select one of six Model City Hall Workshops. These workshops were facilitated by youth volunteers with the objective of advancing discussion and collecting critical insights related to active projects in the Hamilton community. The goal of these workshops is to ensure the Summit can function as an annual mechanism for collecting and utilizing youth insights towards active community initiatives.

## Topic #1

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

Explore strategies to address youth gun and gang violence and develop actionable recommendations for safer communities.

## Topic #2

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

Discuss curriculum gaps and brainstorm ways the community can better prepare students for work and life beyond school.

## Topic #3

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

Contribute to the ways the City includes and empowers youth voice in municipal decision-making.

## Topic #4

### How Will the LRT Impact Hamilton Youth?

Delve into the LRT project and its potential effects on Hamilton youth, from mobility to economic opportunities.

## Topic #5

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

Envision and design the ideal community centre for youth in Hamilton, fostering belonging and engagement.

## Topic #6

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

Discuss key factors influencing whether young people stay in Hamilton and how the city can retain its youth talent.

The following section highlights possible recommendations for **action** on each discussion topic. For a complete summary of workshop discussions, please see **Appendix B**.

# 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.



## 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.



2ND ANNUAL HAMONTYOUTH SUMMIT PRESENTED BY RBC  
2024 POST-EVENT REPORT

# 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**

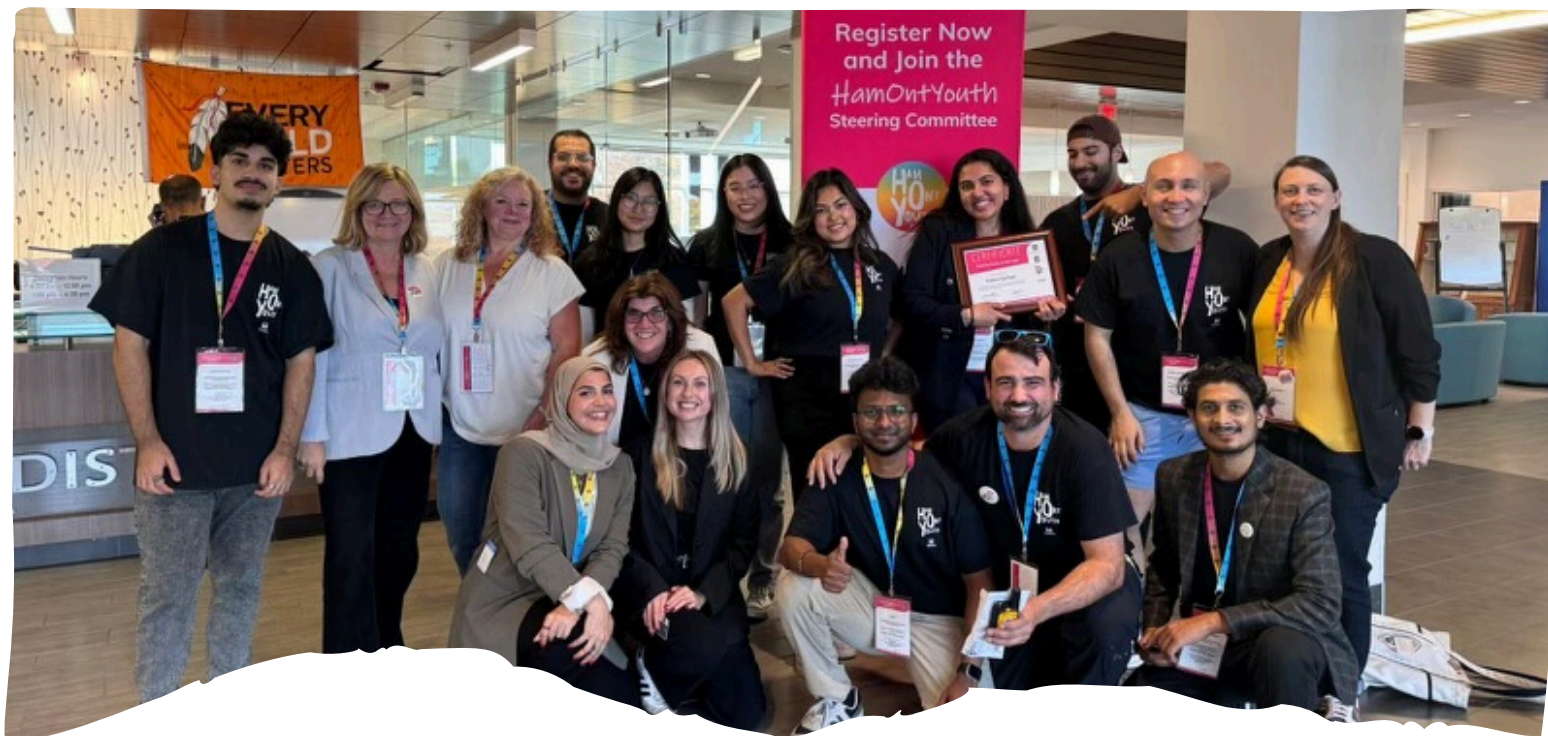


**Zoe  
Smith**



# Appendix A - Youth Volunteers

We thank the following youth volunteers for their contributions at the Summit.



Abigail Samuels  
Ahmed Al-Naqeb  
Al-ameen Odugunwa  
Alhena Virani  
Alice Tulloch  
Amber Siddiqui  
Angelo Marmolejo  
Ashik Ashik  
Deema Abdel Hafeez  
Ealaf Alsaadi  
Emily Wang  
Hannah Twiss

Jamal Harse  
Jasmine Montrichard  
Jenna Azzam  
Joshua Bell  
Kateryna Solodka  
Katie Wang  
Kerry Yang  
Ku Paw Hser  
Lillian Guy  
Logan McLean  
Machaela Trench-Howard  
Maple-Gin Benson

Margarette Dizon  
Maria Montrichard  
Naushin Rashid  
Oyin Aderibigbe  
Pravash Pandey  
Radu Lupascu  
Rajat Kapoor  
Reign Cooper  
Salsa Sarhan  
Sumayyah Satia  
Tina Liu  
Yahya Oshish



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## APPENDIX B Model City Hall Workshop Discussion Summaries

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

Workshop Partner: Community Safety and Well-Being, City of Hamilton

## Ice Breaker Activity #1

(Mentimeter Word Cloud)

In three words or less, describe what a safe community means to you.

- Most common responses:  
**respectful, trust, welcoming, peace, comfortable, understanding, supportive, and positive**

## Ice Breaker Activity #2

(Mentimeter Poll)

Has your life, or that of someone you know, been affected by gun violence?\*

- Yes (12 of 18 responses, 66%)
- No (6 of 18 responses, 33%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Discussion #1

How might prevention and intervention strategies and initiatives aimed at tackling gun and gang activities need to differ and/or be adapted, based on the diverse populations of youth represented in your community?

### Key Response Themes:

- It is important to ensure service-providers are able to provide culturally and socially-relevant support (i.e., peer-to-peer support, individuals with lived experience). Service providers require an understanding of the racial, social, cultural, and economic conditions that contribute to gang violence.
- Respond to instances of possible gang involvement with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention, rather than consequence. Recognize that this behaviour stems complex issues, like isolation, loneliness, bullying, etc.
- There needs to be a more prominent effort to provide resources and alternative pathways for youth who are vulnerable to gun and gang violence. Participants identified that the current model relies on young people seeking out supports, rather than the supports meeting them where they are at. For example, online resources may never reach the intended individual if there is nobody to navigate them to it.

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

Workshop Partner: Community Safety and Well-Being, City of Hamilton

## Discussion #2

Are there youth populations that should be a priority for prevention and intervention strategies? How can programs be catered to serve these populations?

### Key Response Themes:

- Programs and services for youth should universally provide friendly, warm staff and physical locations. The friendly, familial environment may be exactly what the young person requires.
- Programs engaging youth should have simplified enrolment, communications, participation guidelines, etc. Enhancements like food, incentives, etc., are likely to improve attendance.

## Discussion #3

Do you believe there are professionals in your community that play an important role in the prevention of gun and gang violence? How can the community ensure that these individuals are equipped to actively contribute to prevention?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants indicated there are capable professionals; however, there are various factors which may affect an individual's ability to succeed in this role.
  - Participants identified that teachers and school faculty do not always do this successfully, for a variety of compounding reasons (i.e., repetitive behaviour, fatigue, normalization, etc.).
  - Participants also identified that many youth-serving professionals are quite detached from the impacts of gun and gang violence. These professionals may not experience the full social impact this has on youth.

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

Workshop Partner: Community Safety and Well-Being, City of Hamilton

## Active Project Insights

The City of Hamilton will invest nearly \$2.5 million dollars in community initiatives, focused on supporting community based prevention and intervention in tackling gun and gang activities. What types of initiatives would you like to see funded?

### Key Insights:

- Any funded activities should be centred on developing inclusivity and trust with the participants.
- Participants identified that there ought to be attention to program outcomes that do not require funds (i.e., education integration into school programming, utilization of existing community programming, social media messaging, etc.).
- Fund distribution should aim to support those seeking to provide services, rather than build organizational capacity.
- Funds should be used to support positive social pathways for fulfillment (i.e., career development, leadership, etc.).
- Funds should focus supports to low-income communities and up-stream, preventative measures.

## Discussion Summary

One key theme from the discussion was the importance of trust and inclusivity in responding to youth gun and gang violence. Youth see the power of hearing from those with lived experience – and want to hear from teachers, community leaders, and other individuals with their own first-hand experience and understanding of the complex stratification of this issue. When asked how current prevention and intervention strategies should be adapted, many shared the need for more accessible and straightforward support. Finally, youth in attendance shared a desire for prioritizing culturally relevant responses and for creating spaces where youth are empowered and encouraged to be open and honest about their experiences with gun and gang violence.

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

Workshop Partner: Workforce Planning Hamilton

## Ice Breaker Activity #1

(Mentimeter Poll)

Do you have a job?\*

- Yes (22 of 43 responses, 51%)
- No (21 of 43 responses, 49%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #3

(Mentimeter Poll)

Did you know that there is an Instagram account geared towards youth in the workforce in Hamilton?\*

- Yes (13 of 39 responses, 33%)
- No (26 of 39 responses, 66%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #5

(Mentimeter Rank)

Please rank the following in order of most preferred to least preferred, regarding the method/where/how you are searching for and applying to jobs.\*

1. In-person
2. Word of mouth or personal networks
3. Social media or online
4. Job sites (i.e., Glassdoor, Indeed)
5. LinkedIn
6. Government job boards

*\*Listed order represents the result rather than just rank options.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #2

(Mentimeter Poll)

Are you looking for a job right now?\*

- Yes (20 of 33 responses, 61%)
- No (13 of 33 responses, 39%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #4

(Mentimeter Poll)

Are you, or have you been, concerned about getting a job?\*

- Yes (23 of 39 responses, 59%)
- No (16 of 39 responses, 41%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #6

(Mentimeter Poll)

Do you feel prepared to go out and find a job through what you have learned in school?\*

- Yes (13 of 38 responses, 34%)
- No (25 of 38 responses, 66%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*





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

Workshop Partner: Workforce Planning Hamilton

## Discussion #1

How can high schools integrate workplace preparation into all courses, not just their Careers programming?

### Key Response Themes:

- Building career skills as early as elementary school with workshops, hands-on activities, job shadowing, and tactile activities, rather than study and recall tests and assignments.
- Incorporating getting out of the classroom and seeing the workforce as part of Careers classes and programming.
- Making better, clearer, real-life connections to jobs that exist in relation to academic subject areas (i.e., practical jobs related to chemistry, etc.).

## Discussion #2

What does your ideal experiential learning program look like? Is it mandatory? What types of positions, organizations, and industries should be available?

### Key Response Themes:

- Existing co-op programming can be difficult to fit into semester scheduling, particularly for those working to complete the required prerequisites for University programs.
  - Students attending the Catholic school board identified that this is compounded by additional mandatory coursework.
- Respondents identified that co-op experiences occur too late in their education. In many cases, by the time youth access these opportunities, they have already begun to follow a post-secondary path.
- There was additional interest to find opportunities to “try things out,” whereby students would have briefer opportunities to test their skills in various fields (i.e., job shadowing).

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

Workshop Partner: Workforce Planning Hamilton

## Discussion #3

How do you think AI affects your chances of securing employment? What skills do you require to ensure you're able to sell yourself in a world full of technology?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants expressed that AI has been helpful to help them structure resumes and work-related tasks.
- The role of employees/candidates in the world of AI will be separating your skill-sets outside of AI functions and not relying on AI for your performance.
- Participants expressed concerns regarding some jobs becoming less valuable and replaceable.

## Discussion #4

Have you received any guidance or found any resources as to how to prepare for entering the workforce? Consider the high school Civics and Careers course. What do/did you expect to learn from it, and if completed, did it meet these expectations?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants identified that much of the preparation and guidance they received was related to attaining a "full-time job." However, for young people amassing part-time work is a much more realistic option to prepare for.
- While some noted that the Civics and Careers course was beneficial in identifying possible professions, many felt that it relied too heavily on the individual teacher to ensure these connections were made.
- Youth also identified general guidance that had been helpful, like having a back-up plan, pursuing hands-on experience, and following your passions; while other guidance, like "life is unfair", can either negatively impact young people and reduce motivation.

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

Workshop Partner: Workforce Planning Hamilton

## Active Project Insights

Do you feel that the [@hamiltonyouthworkforce](#) Instagram is youth friendly? Do you have any suggestions for improving it?

### Key Insights:

- Participants shared a number of broad recommendations to improve youth engagement:
  - The account is very “corporate,” utilizing graphics, fonts and schemes that do not appeal to youth.
  - Increased use of text and font sizes in content.
  - Less use of graphics and more use of photos.
  - More use and visibility of youth in content and reels.
  - Utilize trends and algorithms more effectively.
  - Provide messaging about what the account is doing.

## Discussion Summary

One key theme from the discussion was that the current high school curriculum is insufficient in preparing youth for both finding and retaining a job. When asked to rank various methods or platforms for finding employment, in-person was the most popular. One youth shared that a local pottery store was a popular location for friends and family to hang out at, therefore, they asked if they were hiring and gave a physical resume. Word of mouth through family and friends was similarly shared as being helpful. Regarding the less preferred methods such as Indeed and Glassdoor, many youth shared that they did not receive follow-ups from the companies they applied to. They view these platforms as a way to gather information on possible jobs in their area, rather than a platform to actually apply and gain employment. Finally, those in attendance shared a desire for more youth-friendly ways to gain information on employment opportunities in Hamilton. 67% did not know about [@hamiltonyouthworkforce](#), the Instagram page geared towards youth in the workforce in Hamilton.

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

Workshop Partner: Public Engagement, City of Hamilton

## Ice Breaker Activity #1

(Mentimeter Word Cloud)

In three words or less, describe what you think public engagement is.

- Most common responses:  
**community, involvement, opportunities, participation, leadership, change, and positivity**

## Ice Breaker Activity #3

(Mentimeter Scale)

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not confident at all and 10 being very confident, how confident do you feel that as a resident of the City of Hamilton, your voice is heard and contributes to decision-making?

- The average response was **5.6/10**.

## Ice Breaker Activity #2

(Mentimeter Scale)

On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being not familiar at all and 10 being very familiar, how familiar are you with the responsibilities of City Councillors?

- The average response was **4.3/10**.

## Ice Breaker Activity #4

(Mentimeter Poll)

Are you familiar with Hamilton's online engagement platform, Engage Hamilton?\*

- Yes (1 of 10 responses, 10%)
- No (9 of 10 responses, 90%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Discussion #1

How do you think City Councillors and the City of Hamilton can best engage youth and ensure youth voice is being integrated into the important, budget decision-making process?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants emphatically shared that liaising with schools to ensure youth voices were incorporated into the budget decision-making was critical.

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

Workshop Partner: Public Engagement, City of Hamilton

## Discussion #2

Do you feel like you have an outlet to voice your concerns about decisions made by the government? What barriers do you think prevent this?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants identified that youth feel like they don't have a platform where their voice will matter. This makes youth feel like their voices are either not needed or not valued.
- Many feel they don't know about their elected officials and how they can connect with them. There was an expressed interest to have more opportunities to speak with elected officials.

## Discussion #3

What factors do you believe contribute to the lack of knowledge or misinformation about how municipal government works? Do you care to learn more about how and why the City works the way it does?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants identified that schools are not addressing the topics discussed at the Summit (i.e., where government funds are directed, how municipal governments work).
- Civics is a half-credit, half-semester course, which provides little insight into what the government is actually doing. There was a recommendation to begin this learning in elementary school.
- Youth identified that there should be more learning opportunities like the Summit available to youth, and they should be promoted widely.
- Government agencies should use social media to educate young people about topics like taxes, where the money goes, and the bigger picture.



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

Workshop Partner: Public Engagement, City of Hamilton

## Active Project Insights

Develop a list of community assets you believe should be prioritized in the 2025 Budget. Narrow this list down to your top 5 priorities.

### Key Insights:

- While the individual responses of participants varied, the overarching priorities identified are listed below in alphabetical order:
  - Education
  - Healthcare
  - Housing and Homelessness
  - Infrastructure
  - Police (Community Safety)
  - Social Services
  - Transportation

## Discussion Summary

One key theme from the discussion was that youth absolutely want to engage in Hamilton's decision-making. However, they are faced with barriers, such as feeling like their voices do not matter, minimal interaction with decision-makers, and a lack of youth-friendly communication from decision-makers on current affairs. For example, one youth's ward has a youth council, but they were unaware of this. In response, an individual in attendance shared, "more youth would take these opportunities if they knew they had them". This highlights that youth want to get involved, but feel a disconnect and are unaware or unsure of how to get involved. Those in attendance shared that activities similar to the budget activity conducted should be implemented in schools and other locations that are frequented by youth – an overarching theme here was meeting youth where they are at. There is also a clear need for additional workshops dedicated to gathering youth input to ensure they, and their peers, are enabled and empowered to actively contribute to idea generation and solutions.

# Topic #4: How Will the LRT Impact Hamilton Youth?

Workshop Partner: Metrolinx

## Ice Breaker Activity #1 (Mentimeter Poll)

What transit systems do you currently use?\*

- **7** participants identified HSR.
- **2** participants identified GO Transit.
- **0** participants identified Bike Share and E-Scooter options.

*\*Only available poll selection options are listed.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #3 (Mentimeter Poll)

Do you know what the Hamilton LRT is?

\*

- Yes (3 of 7 responses, 43%)
- No (4 of 7 responses, 57%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #2 (Mentimeter Rank)

Please rank the following in order of most important to least important in your decision to use public transit.\*

1. Efficiency
2. Convenience
3. Reliability
4. Ease of Use
5. Integration with Other Networks

*\*Listed order represents the result rather than just rank options.*

## Discussion #1

With the cost of living and tuition increasing, how can Metrolinx ensure transit is an attractive option for youth concerned about issues, specifically: accessibility, affordability, and sustainability?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants encouraged several options to attract young people, such as free youth hours, decreased wait times, and fewer route and fare changes.
- There was consensus that Presto Cards and the phase out of daily bus tickets have reduced accessibility and made bus transit too expensive.

# Topic #4: How Will the LRT Impact Hamilton Youth?

Workshop Partner: Metrolinx

## Discussion #2

Share an experience you have had using transit, in Hamilton or otherwise. What about this experience was positive or negative? If not ideal, what improvements could have enhanced this experience?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants described experiences of overcrowded busses, long wait times, distant bus stops, poor integration with wayfinding apps (i.e., Google Maps, Apple Maps), and busses taking the wrong routes.
- There was discussion to cap the number of individuals on busses, increase/improve real-time communications with HSR and passengers, and introduce consistent signage of routes and times at all stops. There was an interest in ensuring passengers could stay up-to-date with arrival times.
- The group also considered improved investments in the bus system, rather than an LRT investment.
  - It was expressed that the development of the LRT is taking too long.

## Discussion #3

What methods do you think the City and Metrolinx should use to ensure community members are informed of and engaged during the LRT's development and, when time, are empowered to use it?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants suggested that advertising LRT development and engagement updates should be shared on or inside HSR busses, due to the likelihood of shared ridership.
- The group also suggested the use of digital media, like social media or the Presto app to engage residents in feedback opportunities.

## Topic #4:

# How Will the LRT Impact Hamilton Youth?

Workshop Partner: Metrolinx

### Active Project Insights

Describe your ideal LRT vehicle! Consider factors like air conditioning, window and door placement, seats, priority seating, etc. The sky's the limit!

#### Key Insights:

- While the individual responses of participants varied, the ideal features of an LRT vehicle included:
  - Accurate integration with wayfinding systems to ensure route information is communicated to riders and updated every 10-15 minutes.
  - Safety buttons for passengers.
  - Dedicated vehicles for specific routes that transport riders between key locations across the City (i.e., McMaster University, Jackson Square, downtown transit terminal, Limeridge Mall).
  - Free Wi-Fi and charging ports.
  - Sanitizing wipes for use on plastic or vinyl seats to ensure cleanliness.

### Discussion Summary

One key theme from the discussion was the importance of accessibility of transit for youth. Those in attendance described how third party apps such as Google Maps or Apple Maps were used more frequently than HSRnow. When asked about potential youth-friendly solutions to improve the LRT, leveraging technology was very popular. Social media campaigns, on platforms such as on X or Instagram were recommended. Youth also identified that delays should be communicated on these apps, especially during rush hours. Youth described a desire and need to utilize public transit to travel to community spaces, job fairs, or other youth opportunities, however, current bus routes are sometimes inaccessible in terms of timing, don't cover necessary areas, and fares can add up quickly. Finally, youth described how initiatives to make riding public transit more affordable are effective and positively received by students.

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

Workshop Partner: Recreation Department, City of Hamilton

## Ice Breaker Activity #1

(Mentimeter Poll)

Have you been to one of the City of Hamilton's Recreation Centres?\*

- Yes (21 of 29 responses, 73%)
- No (8 of 29 responses, 27%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #3

(Mentimeter Poll)

Did you know about the different types of Recreation programming featured in the previous question?\*

- Yes (10 of 28 responses, 36%)
- No (18 of 28 responses, 64%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #2

(Mentimeter Multiple Choice)

What recreation programming have, or would, you participate(d) in?\*

- **18** participants reported Drop-in Swim
- **16** participants reported Drop-in Gym
- **11** participants reported Drop-in Skates
- **8** participants reported Sports Programming
- **8** participants reported Leadership Courses
- **8** participants reported Youth Rooms
- **5** participants reported having Supie or Camp Programming

*\*Only available poll selection options are listed.*

## Discussion #1

The concept of the third space defines a communal space, separate from one's home (first space) or work (second space). What does this space look like?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants all agreed that this space should be free, included spaces to be comfortable, active, and offer opportunities for positive human engagement.
- The group also discussed the role of digital spaces and the importance they can have, where platforms like Discord, Instagram, video games, and virtual gatherings can be a source of human engagement.



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

Workshop Partner: Recreation Department, City of Hamilton

## Discussion #2

Based on having visited a Recreation Centre, or another community space (e.g., school, library, store), what factors made this feel like a welcoming, inclusive and safe space? If you did not feel welcome or safe, what made you feel that way?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants identified that age-specific programming does not cater to those 15-18. Youth expressed that young people of this age do not fit into children or adults offerings.
- There are very few designated areas for youth to 'hang out.' Libraries are too quiet. Many community spaces are not youth-friendly, and youth are made to feel unwelcome due to stereotypes about teenagers.
- Community spaces can improve their sense of belonging by offering inclusive activities to explore art, hobbies, new skills, and areas to practice religion or shared cultures.
  - Enhanced programming may include ESL supports, support groups, etc.

## Discussion #3

What would you want staff in a front-facing, youth-serving role to know about interacting with youth? How can the City ensure its staff are best suited to aid in the creation of a welcoming, inclusive, safe space?

### Key Response Themes:

- Participants indicated that front-facing, youth-serving staff need to be energetic and engaging to really try to convince youth that they belong and are welcome. The positive, welcoming energy of the youth-serving staff will set the energy for how youth can interact and enjoy the space.

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

Workshop Partner: Recreation Department, City of Hamilton

## Active Project Insights

Design your dream community centre or youth hub! Consider what types of facilities or services you would like to have access to here, such as lobby space, gyms, libraries, indoor spaces, outdoor spaces, places to buy food/drink, prayer spaces, etc.

### Key Insights:

- While the individual responses of participants varied, the ideal features of a dream community centre or youth hub are as follows:
  - Improved access to information about the space. No complex webpage to learn about one program.
  - Full-time staff on-site to support with service navigation.
  - Use of warmth, comfort, colours, nature, plants, etc.
  - Welcoming furnishings, such as games tables, comfy couches, etc.
  - Bumping activities (i.e., sport areas, play areas, food areas, gardens, etc.)
  - Free, healthy snacks and water
  - Helpful staff members

## Discussion Summary

In creating the perfect community centre for youth in Hamilton, youth explored current gaps in accessibility, inclusivity, and engagement infrastructure. Many youth expressed that they feel they lack a free and safe third space outside of school or home where they can truly relax and connect with others. Recreation centres should be that space, but youth expressed that while they may have resonated with these spaces as younger children, now as teenagers and young adults, they no longer feel as engaging. Participants highlighted that the staff at these centres should be welcoming, energetic, and trained to engage effectively with teens, creating a positive environment. Additional attractive amenities were raised such as lounge areas with comfortable seating, access to technology for schoolwork, and activities like pool tables or video games.

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

Workshop Partner: Planning and Development, City of Hamilton

## Ice Breaker Activity #1

(Mentimeter Poll)

Are you considering staying in Hamilton following high school?\*

- Yes (12 of 35 responses, 34%)
- No (23 of 35 responses, 66%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Ice Breaker Activity #3

(Mentimeter Word Cloud)

In three words or less, how would you describe Hamilton to a newcomer?

- Most common responses:  
**welcoming, diverse, boring,  
beautiful, small, dirty, busy,  
community**

## Ice Breaker Activity #2

(Mentimeter Poll)

If considering post-secondary education outside of Hamilton, would you consider returning to Hamilton following this?\*

- Yes (7 of 36 responses, 19%)
- No (10 of 36 responses, 28%)
- Maybe or unsure (19 of 36 responses, 53%)

*\*Figures only represent those who elected to respond.*

## Discussion #1

Are you considering staying in Hamilton following high school? If considering moving away from Hamilton, where are you thinking of going and why?

### Key Response Themes:

- Respondents identified that their families, art, parks, and local businesses are contributing factors to remain in Hamilton after high school.
- Alternatively, there was a much more in-depth discussion on the varying reasons for leaving Hamilton, including: homelessness and the housing crisis, violence in the downtown core, pollution, affordability, a lack of opportunities, and a lack of resources for those requiring supports.

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

Workshop Partner: Planning and Development, City of Hamilton

## Discussion #2

What factors, features and other reasons would convince you to remain in Hamilton long-term? As you start out in your career, are there certain supports or elements you hope to see in your City?

### Key Response Themes:

- Several themes arose that, if addressed, may convince youth to stay in Hamilton:
  - Smog removal and pollution reduction
  - Improving the downtown core (i.e., clean up the mess and support opportunities for the homeless population)
  - Improved law enforcement and safety
  - Improved settlement services for newcomers
  - Address the housing crisis and affordability

## Discussion #3

If you were trying to convince a friend who claims ‘there’s nothing to do in Hamilton,’ come visit you in Hamilton, what reasons would you use? How would you get them excited about coming to Hamilton?

### Key Response Themes:

- While the individual responses of participants varied, the following highlights things in Hamilton youth can be excited about:
  - Diversity in both food and culture
  - Affordability, in comparison to other large cities (i.e., Toronto)
  - Great art and music scene (SuperCrawl, events, festivals, etc.)
  - LGBTQIA2S+ inclusion and events
  - Access to nature, hiking, parks, trails, waterfalls, etc.
  - Small businesses and local market sport teams to support

## Topic #6:

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

Workshop Partner: Planning and Development, City of Hamilton

### Active Project Insights

Design your “ideal” Hamilton that you would like to stay in post-grad. Draw or describe what factors keep you here (e.g. nature) and what things you would change to make it a place you would like to stay!

#### Key Insights:

- Participants described some features of their “ideal” Hamilton as follows:
  - Affordable access to nutritious food, appropriate housing, and necessities
  - Plenty of diverse cultures, festivals, and employment opportunities
  - An eco-friendly community with no traffic, reduced pollution, improved walkability, with access to effective public transit, and green energy
  - Access to an exceptional education, community centres, and healthcare systems
  - Community services that provide care to residents in a responsive, supportive manner
  - Retaining the cultural and historical elements in Hamilton, from monuments to the local sports teams

### Discussion Summary

Insights from those in attendance point to the importance of youth engagement in shaping and designing the future of Hamilton. Many youth in the workshop are considering leaving Hamilton after high school graduation for post-secondary education but are hopeful and optimistic about the development of Hamilton and would consider returning after gaining a degree. Many intersecting topics, such as transit, employment, and safety were identified through this discussion. While those topics were not necessarily the topic of this workshop, it reflects desire for youth to be engaged in youth-generated solutions concerning these topics. In short, no city currently fulfills all youth priorities. The recognized concerns are not unique to Hamilton but reflective of broader urban trends.



THANK  
YOU

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Hamilton

