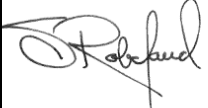




COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members City Council
DATE:	August 25, 2025
SUBJECT:	Updated Ministry of Finance Population Projections for the City of Hamilton to the Year 2051 & Proposed Provincial Projection Methodology Guideline (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
SUBMITTED BY:	Steve Robichaud Director of Planning, Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

The purpose of this communication update is two-fold:

- To inform Council of recently updated Ministry of Finance population projections for the City of Hamilton to the year 2051; and,
- To inform Council that the Province has released and is seeking input through the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO 025-0844) on proposed updates to the Projection Methodology Guideline to support the Provincial Planning Statement.

Ministry of Finance Population Projections

As stated on the Ministry of Finance webpage, the Ministry of Finance produces an updated set of population projections every year to reflect the most up-to-date trends and historical data. The 2025 update uses as a base the 2023 population estimates from Statistics Canada (released in January 2025 based on the 2021 Census) and includes changes in the projections to reflect the most recent trends in fertility, mortality, and migration.

The 2051 population for the City of Hamilton is now forecast to be 853,130.

As illustrated in Appendix “A” to this Communication Update, Ministry of Finance population projections for Hamilton are higher than the 2020 Growth Plan forecast

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(2051 population of 820,000), but significantly lower than 2024 Ministry of Finance projections (2051 population of 903,270).

The Ministry of Finance website references planned decrease in Federal immigration targets in its updated projections as the primary driver of lower population growth.

The projections do not incorporate explicit economic or planning assumptions. They are developed using a standard demographic methodology in which assumptions for population growth reflect recent trends in all streams of migration and the continuing evolution of long-term fertility and mortality patterns.

Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 was approved by an Order in Council on August 20, 2024, and took effect on October 20, 2024. replacing both the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan).

A significant change in the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 is that municipalities must begin basing population and employment growth projections on Ministry of Finance projections (Policy 2.1.1), but this policy document also states:

- Municipalities “may modify projections, as appropriate”; and,
- Municipalities may continue to use the previous forecast issued by the Province until its next Official Plan review.

The growth policies of the City’s Urban Hamilton Official Plan are based on the Growth Plan’s population forecast of 820,000 people and employment forecast of 360,000 jobs by the year 2051. As shown in Appendix “A” and Table 1, the updated Ministry of Finance population projections for Hamilton are approximately 4 percent higher than the Urban Hamilton Official Plan forecast with the Ministry of Finance projecting 33,130 more people in Hamilton by 2051.

Table 1: Comparison of Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Ministry of Finance Population and Household Projections

Time Horizon	Urban Hamilton Official Plan		Ministry of Finance (2025)		Difference	
	Population Forecast	Household Forecast	Population Projection	Household Estimate ¹	Population	Households
2031	652,000	258,100	679,654	269,047	27,654	10,947

¹ City of Hamilton staff calculation based on household size (ie persons per unit) forecast used in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan.

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2041	733,000	295,200	764,170	307,753	31,170	12,553
2051	820,000	332,800	853,130	346,246	33,130	13,446

The *Planning Act* requires municipalities to undertake five-year reviews of its Official Plan to ensure conformity with Provincial plans and policies. In 2022, the province approved the City's last update to the Urban Hamilton Official Plan following the completion of the City's Growth-Related Integrated Development Strategy (known as GRIDS2).

Proposed Updates to the Projection Methodology Guideline to support the implementation of the Provincial Planning Statement, 2024

On August 12, 2025, the Province posted proposed updates to its Projection Methodology Guideline on the Environmental Registry of Ontario webpage (ERO 025-0844). The commenting deadline is October 11, 2025.

The purpose of the proposed guideline is to assist municipalities with developing population and employment forecasts and identifying land needs requirements to plan their communities and implement provincial policies. If finalized, it would replace the 1995 Projection Methodology Guideline.

The proposed guideline is organized into four main sections:

1. Establishing Municipal Population Projections
2. Developing Housing Needs Forecasts
3. Developing Employment Forecasts
4. Land Needs Assessment

City staff are currently reviewing the proposed guideline and will submit staff level comments to the Environmental Registry of Ontario webpage prior to the October 11, 2025 deadline. As per the Planning Division's practice, staff will submit a report to Planning Committee seeking endorsement of the staff-level comments at which time Council may choose to amend or supplement these comments.

Next Steps – Official Plan Review

The first step in undertaking a comprehensive review and update of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan under the Provincial Planning Statement is to establish updated population, household and employment forecasts. In Q4 2025, the Planning Division will submit a report to Planning Committee outlining the Official Plan review process and submit recommendations respecting the scope and timing of preparing these updated forecasts for the Official Plans .

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Once these updated forecasts have been established and endorsed by Council, they would form the basis of the City's next comprehensive Urban Hamilton Official Plan review similar to how the previous Growth Plan population, household and employment forecasts formed the basis for GRIDS2. As discussed in [Report PED24203](#) received by Planning Committee on November 3, 2024, the City may accelerate the review of the Employment Area policies of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan.

Please contact Anita Fabac, Acting Director of Planning and Chief Planner with any questions at Anita.Fabac@hamilton.ca or by phone at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1258 or Steve Burke, Manager of Sustainable Communities at Steve.Burke@hamilton.ca or by phone at (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2533.

SCHEDULES AND APPENDICES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" – 2025 Ministry of Finance Population Projections

Comparison of Ministry of Finance 2024 & 2025 Hamilton Population Projections with Urban Hamilton Official Plan Population Forecast

