

Community Safety and Well-Being: Gender Based Safety Audit Action Plan

This Gender-Based Safety Action Plan outlines how the City is responding to the recommendations from the Gender-Based Safety Audit (GBSA). It identifies actions that have been completed, are currently underway, or planned for the future. It also highlights new ideas and opportunities to further strengthen gender-based safety across 13 City Divisions.

The Action Plan is organized around four key themes from the audit:

- Training and education;
- Public safety and security infrastructure;
- Accessibility in transit, sidewalks, and roadways; and,
- Addressing root causes of safety concerns.

This plan demonstrates progress to date and provides a roadmap for continued action to improve gender-based safety city-wide.

GBSA Recommendation: Increase Access to Training and Education

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Children’s and Community Services	• 180 Early Years System professionals participating in professional learning opportunities focused on equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging topics. • 80 Early Years System providers have committed to implementing the Early Years System’s Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Policy. • Delivered Overcoming Bias and Fostering Inclusion training to about 130 Early Years System leaders, with plans to expand. • Promoted Hamilton for All with 80+ early years providers and partners. • Mandatory anti-oppression and trauma informed care training provided to all Building Safer Communities Grant recipients. • In collaboration with Women’s Abuse Working Group, gender-based violence training is planned for City Council.	
Corporate Facilities and Energy Management	• Staff participating in Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) training. • Self-Defense Training video and other Safety and Security eLearning modules (Situational Awareness, Lockdown, Hold and Secure, Shelter in Place) available to all City of Hamilton staff.	• Ensure staff participate in Gender Identity Training.
Economic Development	• Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council offers Anti-racism/Anti-Oppression training to all members annually.	• Hamilton for All; build upon existing resources.

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Housing Services	• Flamborough Resource Centre (Interval House) provides rural women and gender-diverse individuals with Gender-Based Violence-related info and resources. • Business Improvement Area Toolkit includes Violence Against Women support info. • Housing First Street Outreach service model adjusted for greater visibility in core areas. • Staff support clients at risk of losing housing. • Eviction prevention by ACORN and Housing Help Centre offers rights, information, and housing support. • Tenant materials translated into 5 languages. • Community outreach strategy targets agencies supporting vulnerable groups (e.g., Violence Against Women sector). • Third Party contracts require staff training in de-escalation and trauma-informed care. • Community legal clinic advises and supports tenants during Landlord Tenant Board hearings.	• Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Framework is planned for 2025/2026. Framework will standardize how IDEA lens is applied across divisional decision making and operations.
Human Resources	• Implementation of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) Training. 2 modules have been released to date. Modules 3 and 4 will be released in 2025 and 2026. Module 2 focuses on Cultural Awareness in the Workplace, Module 3 on Bias Awareness, and Module 4 on Anti-Racism, Anti-Oppression. • Gender Identity and Gender Expression training; Verbal Intervention training; ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training; safeTALK training; The Working Mind training. • LifeSpeak - Numerous videos, blogs, expert information available. • Employee and Family Assistance Program - resources for all employees and dependents. • Employee Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy • Critical Incident Peer Support	• Expanding Critical Incident Peer Support teams to include Hamilton Street Railway and Ontario Works.
Long Term Care	• Mandatory annual training including but not limited to lifts, responsive behaviours, code white policy, all code policies, RZONE education and other corporate topics. • Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) training related to staff – specifically leaders completing the Corporate IDEA modules and new staff completing corporate training during orientation. • Resources focused on awareness and best practices (infection control, resident safety, etc.).	• Facilitate Equity Diversity and Inclusion workshops for professionals, Hamilton Council on Aging Board, and Age-Friendly Committee using the Age-Friendly EDI Framework in partnership with Hamilton Council on Aging. • Ensure all Long-Term Care staff complete Gentle Persuasive

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	• Infection, Prevention and Control (IPAC) lead and nurse manager provide educational support. • Long Term Care internal committees oversee resident care, services, and safety (falls, skin, Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC), lifts). • Support resident Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) initiatives through recreation programs, cultural meal preparation throughout the year, Person Centred Care plans and comprehensive assessments capture cultural interests and requests etc., • Education provided/ posted regarding Resident’s Bill of Rights – Three Resident Rights are reviewed at monthly Resident’s Council meetings. All Resident’s Rights are reviewed at admission and at the annual care conference. English and French version of Resident’s Bill of Rights is posted and accessible to residents within the Lodges. • Full time Social Worker available to support all residents, educate them etc., • Modifying and enhancing two washroom areas to be gender neutral and enhance Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA).	Approach (GPA) training.
Communications & Community Engagement	• Public Engagement Community of Practice includes 260+ cross-departmental staff who meet quarterly to share meaningful PE practices and implement Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility (IDEA) in planning. • Staff maintain a Public Engagement SharePoint site with resources for ongoing support.	
Recreation	• Design new and expanded Community Recreation Centres with bright, clean features and nature access in capital planning.	• Sport Services staff collaborate with Provincial and National Sport Organizations to offer Safe Sport refreshers and workshops on Cultural Awareness, Sensitivity, and Gender Equity. • Promote enhanced training for staff working with gender-diverse populations, developed by Corporate Services.
Transit	• New Operator Training (22-days) • Annual Operator Refresher Training	
Tourism and Culture	• Create a public art piece commemorating Sophia Burthen Pooley that also speaks to the Black lived experience in Hamilton.	

GBSA Recommendation: Increase and Enhance Safety and Security Protocols in Public Spaces

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Corporate Facilities and Energy Management	• Provide cell phone charging ports at City staff hotel desks. • Promote public space use by community groups through City facility and City Hall Forecourt bookings. • Alexander Park Fieldhouse Renovation: improve exterior and natural lighting, add gender-neutral washrooms, and install a public art mural (construction anticipated to start in Q3, 2025). • Macassa Lodge: plant 75 new trees and add exterior lighting near Macassa Park as part of the B Wing Renovation (construction in progress). • Hamilton Amateur Athletic Association (funded to design) & Churchill Fieldhouse Renovations (funded to construction): enhance exterior lighting, increase natural light, and add gender-neutral washrooms. • Since July 2024, uniformed security patrols cover five escarpment staircases nightly from 5 pm to 1 am, seven days a week. • RAVE -this system alerts City employees of any active emergency scenarios which may impact the workplace.	• Develop design specifications to provide public single-stall gender-neutral washrooms and add gender-neutral signage in recreation centre changerooms and washrooms. • Support maintenance and repairs of Barton Tiffany Shelter. • Install closed circuit television (CCTV) pilot at one escarpment staircase. • Promote awareness of RAVE system to onboard more city staff
Economic Development		• Develop City and partner-led priority actions via the 10-Year Downtown Revitalization Strategy to enhance safety, infrastructure, and overall downtown conditions. • Explore expanding Economic Development financial incentives (e.g., façade and building grants) to include Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) improvements on private properties.
Environmental Services	• Recommendations from Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) review of escarpment stairs - pruning of vegetation. • Wayfinding enhancements with braille/multilingual signage. • Natural surveillance features and improved line-of-sight through vegetation management. • CPTED principles and park design- trailhead locations visible, lighting where appropriate. • Seating, shade and paths for caregivers and seniors. • Expand the urban tree canopy.	• Install emergency call stations and gender-inclusive signage at priority trailheads and park locations identified through engagement. • Conduct site audits using Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) lens with a focus on inclusive infrastructure.

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	• Environmental scan to determine levels of lighting other municipalities offer - baseline standards. • Charging stations – solar charging offered in some parks.	
Long Term Care	• Age friendly work, which includes engagement events in public spaces. i.e., Seniors Kick-Off event, Seniors Awards, Seniors at Risk Committee, Age-Friendly Collaborative, etc. • Offer gender-based programs with residents in our homes.	
Recreation	• Develop a tool to assess facilities for signage and program space best practices, applying it to current facilities during programming decisions. • Include women/girls’ demographics in Recreation’s new Equity Assessment to identify engagement gaps and actions. • Offer gender-based programs for women and girls, including drop-in gym/swim hours, swim lessons, registered sports, and fitness programs with seniors’ boards. • Boost participation and engagement by raising program awareness and encouraging feedback. • Increase information sharing on gender-based programs, free opportunities, and fee assistance. • Review existing recreation facilities to add single-stall gender-neutral washrooms/changerooms during capital projects.	• Implement best practice features in program spaces for women/girls/gender-diverse groups (e.g., blind coverage). • Expand drop-in hours and registered programs where demand exists, varying locations, options, and times. • Include public art initiatives in capital planning for new and expanded Community Recreation Centres. • Create a webpage with information on women/girls/gender-diverse programs, locations, and access, plus a quick Uniform Resource Locator (URL) for engagement. • Provide fee waivers and resources to Fit Active Beautiful (FAB) for offering women/girls programs in target communities.
Tourism and Culture	• Install suspended overhead lighting on King William for 3 years. • Revitalize Pipeline Trail between Copps Parkette and Andrew Warburton Park, adding public art seating. • Renew Public Art Master Plan with extensive engagement of often-overlooked groups. • Develop a community-led placemaking grant program for Downtown Hamilton, launching Q1 2025. • Collaborate with the Hamilton Arts Council to create an artist-in-residence program for public art on vacant storefronts. • Added artwork and decorative lighting to Ferguson Station to enhance the Main-King pedestrian walkway.	• Artist in Residence project.

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Transit	• Customers can report safety issues/emergencies to Operators, who contact Dispatch. • All buses have radio access and an operator-activated emergency call button. • Buses from 2015 onward include Universal Serial Bus (USB) charging ports. • The 2023 “Speak Up Speak Out” campaign encourages customers to report serious safety concerns directly to Hamilton Police.	• Hamilton Steet Railway Next (HSR growth plan) to consider Universal Serial Bus (USB) charging stations and payphones at hubs. • HSR Wayfinding Strategy 2026-2032.

GBSA Recommendation: Increase accessibility on Public Transit and Local Sidewalk/Roadways

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Transit	• Encourage customers to raise safety concerns with Operators who can contact dispatch; increase awareness. • HSR Courtesy Stop program allows after-dark non-stop location requests. • Improve public safety communication, including Speak Up Speak Out messaging. • Ensure communication and wayfinding follow Corporate Accessibility Guidelines with Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) input. • Raise awareness of accessible seating; HSR buses (2015+) have six Personality Mobility Device spots and flip-up lower deck seats. • Promote R-Zone awareness and customer etiquette to encourage safety, courtesy, and respect.	• Improve bus stop lighting via Solar Lighting Pilot; if successful, launch pilot in 2026 and assess scalability and costs. • Subject to Council approval, Transit's next growth plan (HSR Next, 2026-2032) will invest in service levels across the City and restructure the network to improve access to destinations across Hamilton.
Transportation	• The comprehensive 2009 Outdoor Lighting Study and Street Lighting Design Guideline concludes that alleyway lighting should be discouraged due to safety concerns and the risk of a false sense of security. • Infrastructure is inspected and repaired to meet the requirements of the Ontario Minimum Maintenance Standards, and Levels of Service approved by Council. • Sidewalks are inspected and repaired to meet the requirements of the Ontario Minimum Maintenance Standards. • Implemented updated intersection pavement marking standards focused on safety, with 166 ladder and 2 decorative crosswalks added in 2024; markings meet or exceed Ontario Provincial Standards and are maintained on a 1–5-year cycle. • Graffiti removal - In the downtown, 27 hot spots identified and being proactively attended to be contractor. • Bridge and Underpass Maintenance/ Cleaning - to address 14 hotspots. • Installed notable decorative crosswalks including 2023 Pride-themed rainbows supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ at Ferguson/King William and Waterdown High, plus a	• Exploring overhead flashing beacons at crossovers to enhance visibility, with Equity Diversity and Inclusion-focused installation in high-risk or transit-dependent areas. • Opportunity to Launch a program to assess crosswalk lighting and implement necessary upgrades. • Opportunity to install a decorative crosswalk in proximity to the Hamilton YWCA with a Gender Based Safety Audit (GBSA) theme. • Opportunity to conduct a GBSA-based Transportation Research/Study to better understand related issues and embed Gender–Based Safety Audit

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	2024 WWI commemorative “Lest We Forget” crosswalk at Stoney Creek Cenotaph; these enhance safety by improving visibility and driver awareness. • Downtown After Hours Enhanced Cleaning - Increased frequency of sweeping to 2 x per week, litter/debris cleanup 1 x - in Business Improvement Areas, vegetation control: on roadway main assets. • Added additional funding to road resurfacing budget in 2025. • Enhanced Sidewalk Snow Clearing / Transit Stop – Service. • In 2024, 19 new pedestrian crossovers and 3 new traffic signals were installed, while 8 existing traffic signals were reconstructed and upgraded. • In 2024, 10 new sidewalk installations were completed to fill existing network gaps. • The City’s Annual collision reports include gender-based data to identify safety disparities and support a more inclusive, barrier-free environment. • Hamilton’s Vision Zero program aims to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries through education, enforcement, engineering, evaluation, and engagement; while applying an Equity Diversity and Inclusion lens to ensure gender-equitable, inclusive road safety - a revised action plan is planned for Council approval in Q4 2025. • Hamilton’s Complete Livable Better Streets Design Manual (endorsed in 2022) guides safer, more inclusive street design by prioritizing all users—pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers—through speed management, crossings, and streetscaping.	principles into division programs. • Update sidewalk in-fill prioritization to incorporate Gender-Based Safety Audit principles, focusing on high-benefit locations for at-risk residents. • Opportunity to enhance the selection of locations for pedestrian-controlled crosswalks by enhancing Equity Diversity and Inclusion principals/framework into the decision-making process. See item below regarding Gender-Based Safety Audit Transportation Research/Study. • Opportunity to create a stand-alone program to widen existing sidewalks that are narrower than the updates sidewalk standards.

GBSA Recommendation: Addressing Safety’s Root Cases in Laws, Policies, Procedures, Funding, and Structures

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
Children’s and Community Services	• EarlyON centres recorded 202,221 visits from parents, caregivers, and children in food security programs. • 120 Early Years System professionals attended inclusion policy workshops to review and update their organization’s inclusion policy. • Partnered with Women’s Education and Rural Support to provide family violence resources to all 8 EarlyON Operators. • Gender-diverse programming promoted city-wide at 34 EarlyON Child and Family sites. • Childcare access under the Canada-Wide Early Learning and Childcare plan aims to reach 32% by end of 2026. • 21,875 affordable, safe, licensed childcare spaces for children aged 0–12. • Provide annual funding to Hamilton Food Share to address food insecurity. • One-time funding to Women’s Abuse Working Group to support enhanced system coordination and resourcing. • One-time funding to Interval House for WEARS program addressing rural supports for Gender Based Violence. • Lead Community Safety and Well-Being Plan and co-chair System Advisory Leadership Table meeting, with Gender Based Violence partners participating regularly.	
Economic Development	• Growing membership of Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) to support HIPC Community Plan 2025-2028.	• Public spaces and assets incorporate a newcomer lens.
Communications & Community Engagement	• City Enrichment Fund grants that support organizations addressing and support gender-based safety	• Launching a new funding stream, Organizational Capacity, that will support internal capacity building projects to strengthen the delivery of services and operational resiliency. • Opportunity to improve data gathering to measure client services and funding impact.
Housing	• Developing a People with Lived Expertise Framework (Q4 2025) to improve consultation with women and gender-diverse people experiencing homelessness. • Coordinated Access Process prioritizes women, gender-diverse people, and couples for housing supports; reaches 500 individuals yearly.	• Request for more permanent shelter spaces and supports for women and gender-diverse individuals to meet demand; to

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	• Prevention/diversion programs tailored for women/gender-diverse people, including safety and violence considerations. • Access policies allow flexibility to prioritize based on risk, including gender-based violence (Gender Based Violence). • Temporary emergency shelter added in 2024 for women and gender-diverse individuals (45 spaces); continued funding needed for 2026, or spaces will close. • Gender-specific transitional living programs (62 beds) offer housing and healthcare supports. • Reproductive Care Beds (3) for pregnant/recently postpartum individuals needing stabilization, part of YWCA program. • Permanent supportive housing at Dorothy Day Place (73 units) with safety features. • Gender-specific emergency shelters (66 spaces). • Family emergency shelters (80 spaces) and overflow hotel spaces (208 spaces). • Drop-in programs for women/gender-diverse people, enhanced in winter. • Asylum transitional shelter (10 spaces) supports homeless women seeking asylum. • Overflow Violence Against Women shelters (16 beds). • Tiffany Barton Temporary Shelter opened Q1 2025, low-barrier and housing-focused, with up to 80 co-ed spaces. • Client transportation funds support moves to safer environments. • Rent supplements for gender-specific housing for Gender Based Violence survivors (50 units). • Policy allowing Gender Based Violence survivors to stay in units after abuser leaves. • Housing waitlist prioritizes survivors of abuse; 267 active households; applicants may live outside the city per local policy. • Four new housing programs (Q3 2025–Q2 2026) with 36 units for women/gender-diverse people and 7 for those fleeing Gender Based Violence. • Safe at Home pilot offers five housing allowances for Gender Based Violence survivors. • Residential care subsidies for women-only sites (25 spaces). • Housing and Homeless Action Plan shaped by intersectional gender safety lens as well as 2SLGBTQIA+ lens. Ongoing strategic planning with relevant committees. • Social Housing Review Panel supports appeals, including for Gender Based Violence survivors. • Exceptional circumstances policy allows reconsideration of housing eligibility due to past abuse/Gender Based Violence. • Dedicated housing allowances for women/gender-diverse people at higher Gender Based Violence risk.	go to Council by Fall 2025.

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	• Homelessness Information System includes safety features for Gender Based Violence clients and is improving confidentiality and data access. • Data from participating programs informs service development; gaps exist for some shelters/outreach. • Housing Focused Street Outreach operates daily, providing intake, safety planning, and referrals for vulnerable clients, including those experiencing domestic violence and trafficking. • Community research table in development to identify gaps, including gender-specific needs. • Housing Emergency Fund offers eviction prevention with an equity lens review after one year.	
Human Resources	• Annual review of Health, Safety and Wellness Policy and Violence in the Workplace Prevention Policy. • Workplace Violence Risk Assessment tool. • Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy. • Updating HSW documents (policies/procedures/forms) to ensure inclusive language and terminology. • RZone policy and program. • Howi Resources available include topics such as psychological health and safety and Workplace Violence Prevention. • Implementation of Maintaining Workplaces that Promote Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Guide for the City of Hamilton (2023-2026).	
Long Term Care	• Complete equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) assessment of Long-Term Care (LTC) Division with action plans to address gaps. • Long-Term Care work plans include Equity Diversity Inclusion, accessibility, and emergency response. • Developed Age-Friendly Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework to improve engagement with diverse older adults; community consultation planned for 2026 to inform Hamilton’s third Age-Friendly Plan. • Long Term Care homes support spousal/family reunification. • Wentworth Lodge provides Meals on Wheels to Dundas, averaging 17.5 meals/day (4,436 meals in 2024). • Macassa Lodge runs Adult Day Program serving approx. 30 community residents per day Monday through Friday. • Partnerships with Hamilton Elder Abuse Prevention Network and Seniors at Risk Community Collaborative. • Active involvement in internal/external committees: Greater Hamilton Health	

Division	Activities Underway	Opportunities
	Network Long Term Care Advisory, Partnership Council, Barriers to Discharge Ontario Health West LTC Advisory, and research projects Prevention of Error-Based Transfers (PoET), (PREVENT).	
Communications & Community Engagement	• Public Engagement Policy. • Strategic advice on public engagement and audience identification/planning. • Public Engagement Lending Library with 60+ items (e.g., technology, tents, age-friendly activities, child-minding) to reduce participation barriers for staff and community.	• Honorarium Policy (Corporate-wide); Municipal scan and policy development for Honorarium Policy to support meaningful Public Engagement. • Opportunity to enhance tools in lending library.
Recreation	• Annually review and update policies for women, girls, and gender-diverse programs to align with best practices. • Conduct yearly safety audits and consult sport groups for feedback to improve facility and program safety and gender equity. • Launched project providing menstrual products in all City facilities and emergency food clients via partnership with Hamilton Food Share.	• Increase prime-time facility hours for women's and girls' sports by revising allocation policies for better access. • Launch Women and Girls in Sport campaign with mentoring, scholarships, and promotion across Hamilton. • Develop capacity for policy enforcement and incident reporting on harassment, discrimination, and abuse within the sport sector for governing bodies and City staff.

While the Gender-Based Safety Action Plan outlines how the City is responding to the recommendations from the Gender-Based Safety Audit (GBSA), it is important to highlight the invaluable work of community partners participating in this meaningful work. Below is a sample of some of the activities underway, meant to highlight the collaborative response of community. This is not an exhaustive list.

External Partner	Activities Underway
Hamilton Public Library	• Staff Training: Implementing Verbal Intervention training, "Call It Out" anti-discrimination training, Ontario Human Rights Commission training, and Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion training to better equip staff in handling gender-based issues. • Policy Revisions: Removing gendered language from all library policies. • Data Practices: Updating the member database to stop collecting gender data and adding separate fields for preferred name and name on ID. • Inclusive Programming: Expanding LGBTQ+ inclusive programming such as drag and rainbow story times, Pride events,

	Queer Friendship Club, and Queer Parents Meet-up.
Hamilton Police Service	• Collaboration on Safety Audits: Working with City Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) auditors to conduct safety audits, especially for victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) and hate crimes. • Victim Support: Providing safety items and support for accessing housing and resources for IPV victims. • Training Initiatives: Delivering training to sworn members and recruits on diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), Intimate Partner Violence, hate crimes, de-escalation, human rights, racism, multiculturalism, and Indigenous rights. • Crime Analysis: Partnering with crime analysts to monitor crime trends and identify unsafe areas, particularly around public transit, and bus stops, and addressing concerns through targeted audits and increased patrols.
YWCA Hamilton	• Community Engagement • Building relationships with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to discuss shared goals related to GBSA recommendations. • Working with community members and other organizations to implement GBSA recommendations within our scope of work. Safety Enhancement Initiatives • Addressing safety issues around MacNab by creating a more welcoming space for women, children, and community members. Collaborating with police to improve safety in the MacNab area.
BGC Hamilton Halton	Physical Space Improvements • Created a designated, relaxing space. • Installed window covering in the all-gender bathroom. • Ensured all existing exterior lighting is functional. • Planning to add additional lighting in the parking lot. • Planning to add more stalls in the universal change room for privacy and safety. Program and Activity Enhancements • Introduced gendered swim times for girls and gender-diverse youth (younger ages). • Increased girl-specific programming, especially in the craft room. • Initiated gender-safety-focused program planning in Early Learning and Childcare Safety Procedures and Supervision • Added supervised line-ups outside before drop-in times to maintain a safe environment. • Planning to add extra staff to monitor the parking lot and outdoor park areas. Community Feedback and Advocacy • Providing feedback to HSR regarding safety concerns on the Barton 2 bus route.