



City of Hamilton
AUDIT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
AGENDA

Meeting #: 24-021
Date: November 21, 2024
Time: 9:30 a.m.
Location: Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall
71 Main Street West

Tamara Bates, Legislative Coordinator (905) 546-2424 ext. 4102

1. **CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES**
2. **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**
(Added Items, if applicable, will be noted with *)
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**
 - 4.1 November 7, 2024
5. **COMMUNICATIONS**
6. **DELEGATION REQUESTS**
7. **DELEGATIONS**
8. **STAFF PRESENTATIONS**
 - 8.1 Volunteer Advisory Committee Review (CM23025(a)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List)
 - 8.2 Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD24006) (City Wide)
9. **CONSENT ITEMS**

Members of the public can contact the Clerk's Office to acquire the documents considered at this meeting, in an alternative format.

- 9.1 Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #78878) (AUD24007) (City Wide)

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 10.1 Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks Audit (PW24071) (City Wide)
- 10.2 2025 City Enrichment Fund Advance Payments (CM24007) (City Wide)
- 10.3 2025 Temporary Borrowing and Interim Tax Levy By-laws (FCS24049) (City Wide)
- 10.4 Governance Review Sub-Committee Report 24-002 (October 31, 2024)
- 10.5 Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011)
- 10.6 2024 Amended Development Charges By-laws (FCS24051) (City Wide) (to be distributed)

11. MOTIONS

12. NOTICES OF MOTION

13. GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS

- 13.1 Amendments to Outstanding Business List
 - 13.1.a Items Considered Complete and to be Removed
 - 13.1.a.a Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks Audit
 - Added November 16, 2023
 - Addressed as Item 10.1 on today's agenda
 - 13.1.a.b Review of the City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committees
 - Added September 7, 2023
 - Addressed as Item 8.1 on today's agenda
 - 13.1.a.c Amendment to Code of Conduct Policy (HUR23009)
 - Added Jun 1, 2023
 - Subsection (a) addressed as Item 10.5 on today's agenda

14. PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL

Members of the public can contact the Clerk's Office to acquire the documents considered at this meeting, in an alternative format.

15. ADJOURNMENT



AUDIT, FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE
MINUTES 24-020
9:30 a.m.
November 7, 2024
Council Chambers
Hamilton City Hall

Present: Councillors T. Hwang (Chair), M. Spadafora (Vice-Chair), J. Beattie (virtually), B. Clark, C. Kroetsch, M. Tadeson, A. Wilson, and M. Wilson

Also Present: Councillor T. McMeekin

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS WERE REFERRED TO COUNCIL FOR CONSIDERATION:

1. Consent Items (Items 9.1-9.4)

(A. Wilson/Kroetsch)

That the following Consent Items, be received:

- (a) 2020, 2021 and 2022 Audited Financial Statements for City of Hamilton Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) (FCS24026) (City Wide) (Item 9.1);
- (b) Ward Specific Funding Initiatives Update as of December 31, 2023 (FCS24046) (City Wide) (Item 9.2);
- (c) Grightmire Arena Lessons Learned Audit (AUD22004) – Management Responses Status Report (PW23007(c)/FCS23011(c)) (City Wide) (Item 9.3); and
- (e) Water Meter Program Audit and Water Billing Service Transition Project (PW24070/FCS24059) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) (Item 9.4).

Result: Motion, CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson

YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

**2. Consolidated Utility Billing and Collections Policy (FCS24025) (City Wide)
(Item 10.1)**

(Beattie/Clark)

- (a) That the draft Utility Billing and Collections Policy By-law, attached as Appendix "A" to Report FCS24025, be approved;
- (b) That the General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, be delegated authority to approve bill adjustments and payment arrangements up to \$200,000 in accordance with the Utility Billing and Collections Policy By-law attached as Appendix "A" to Report FCS24025;
- (c) That staff be authorized and directed to prepare all necessary amending by-laws for Council approval to update references to utility billing and collections policies reflecting the enactment of the Utility Billing and Collections Policy By-law in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor for Council approval; and
- (d) That staff be authorized and directed to prepare the necessary by-law in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor to amend the Utility Billing and Collections Policy By Law to reflect the cessation of Alectra Utilities Corporation as the City's utility billing agent once the City assumes utility billing and collection responsibilities.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

3. Consultation on Province-wide Enabling of the Use of Pay on Demand Surety Bonds to Secure Land-Use Planning Obligations under Section 70.3.1 of the *Planning Act* (FCS24058) (City Wide) (Item 10.2)

(Clark/A. Wilson)

- (a) That Council adopts the submissions and recommendations as provided in Appendix "A" to Report FCS24058 regarding ERO 019-9198: Enabling the Use of Pay-on-Demand Surety Bonds to Secure Land-Use Planning Obligations under Section 70.3.1 of the *Planning Act*;
- (b) That the General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services, be authorized and directed to confirm the submissions made to the Province regarding

ERO 019 9198: Enabling the Use of Pay-on-Demand Surety Bonds to Secure Land-Use Planning Obligations under Section 70.3.1 of the *Planning Act*, attached as Appendix "A" to Report FCS22085; and

- (c) That the General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services and the City Solicitor be authorized to make submissions pertaining to ERO 019-9198: Enabling the Use of Pay-on-Demand Surety Bonds to Secure Land-Use Planning Obligations under Section 70.3.1 of the *Planning Act* and any associated future opportunities for consultation, consistent with the comments and concerns raised in Report FCS24058.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised there were no changes to the agenda.

(Clark/Kroetsch)

That the agenda for the November 7, 2024 Audit, Finance and Administration Committee meeting, be approved, as presented.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES – CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Item 4)

(i) Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting (Item 4.1)

(Spadafora/Clark)

That the Minutes of the October 17, 2024 meeting, be approved, as presented.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(d) COMMUNICATIONS (Item 5)

(i) City of Hamilton 'AAA' Credit Rating (City Wide (referred from Council, October 23, 2024) (Item 5.1)

(Clark/Tadeson)

That the Communication Update, respecting City of Hamilton 'AAA' Credit Rating, referred from Council, October 23, 2024, be received.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(e) GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS (Item 13)

(i) Amendments to the Outstanding Business List (Item 13.1)

(Spadafora/Kroetsch)

That the following amendments to the Outstanding Business List, be approved:

(1) Outdated Items to be Removed

- (a) 2018 Provincial Offences Administration Annual Report (FCS19011) (City Wide)

Added June 12, 2019

- (2) Items Considered Completed and To Be Removed

- (a) Water Meter Program Audit and Water Billing Service Transition Project

Added January 19, 2023

Addressed as Item 9.4 on today's agenda

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

- YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
- YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
- YES - CHAIR - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
- YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
- YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
- YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
- YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
- YES - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

(f) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

(Tadeson/Beattie)

That, there being no further business, the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee, be adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

Result: Motion CARRIED by a vote of 8 to 0, as follows:

- YES - Ward 1 Councillor Maureen Wilson
- YES - Ward 2 Councillor Cameron Kroetsch
- YES - Ward 4 Councillor Tammy Hwang
- YES - Ward 9 Councillor Brad Clark
- YES - Ward 10 Councillor Jeff Beattie
- YES - Ward 11 Councillor Mark Tadeson
- YES - Ward 13 Councillor Alex Wilson
- YES - CHAIR - Ward 14 Councillor Mike Spadafora

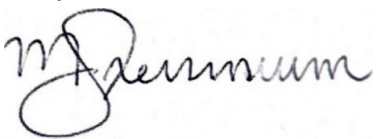
Respectfully submitted,

Councillor Tammy Hwang, Chair
Audit, Finance and Administration
Committee

Tamara Bates
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk



CITY OF HAMILTON
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
Communications & Engagement
and
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Office of the City Clerk

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Volunteer Advisory Committee Review (CM23025(a)) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Rebecca Banky (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6732
SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase Acting Director Communications & Engagement City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Matthew Trennum City Clerk Office of the City Clerk Corporate Services
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That, based on municipal best practices, a new civic engagement model be applied that uses community liaison groups of volunteers, with each Division reporting back within one year, and that the:

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

**SUBJECT: Volunteer Advisory Committee Review
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- (i) Tourism and Culture Division staff report back to the General Issues Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Arts Advisory Committee to recommend activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community, monitor and assist with the implementation of the Arts Awards Program and Public Art Program, and inform Council of issues and achievements in the Hamilton arts community and acts as a point of contact for members of the arts community regarding issues affecting the arts community; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Arts Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (ii) Climate Change Initiatives Division staff report back to the General Issues Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Climate Change Advisory Committee to provide advice to Council and City staff on the prioritization, implementation, and monitoring of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, through an equitable, inclusive, and climate justice lens, that responds to the perspectives and needs of all, while transitioning to a prosperous, healthy and vibrant net-zero greenhouse gas community that is a national leader in climate adaptation; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Climate Change Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (iii) Active Transportation and Mobility Division staff report back to the Public Works Committee on the further development of the Division's Mobility Lab, a community liaison group, to also replace the Hamilton Cycling Committee, expanding their mandate to encourage residents to cycle and monitor the implementation of the Hamilton Cycling Master Plan; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Hamilton Cycling Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (iv) Indigenous Relations Division staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee to honour and engage Indigenous residents in the pursuit of the City's vision by providing advice and recommendations that enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous people; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (v) Heritage Resource Management Division staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Hamilton Veterans Committee to oversee the planning and delivery of military remembrance and

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commemoration activities on behalf of the City; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Hamilton Veterans Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;

- (vi) Children's & Community Services Division staff report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee to provide input with respect to the issues of women, non-binary individuals and gender diverse people; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (vii) Housing Secretariat staff, in partnership with Housing Services Divisions staff report back to the General Issues Committee on the further development of a community liaison group to also replace the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, expanding their mandate to work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Housing and Homelessness Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (viii) Environmental Services Division staff report back to the Public Works Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee to beautify our community, promote environmental stewardship, and prevent litter, illegal dumping and graffiti; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (ix) Children's & Community Services staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the LGBTQ Advisory Committee to eliminate barriers experienced by LGBTQ communities by giving voice to the perspectives of LGBTQ individuals and evaluating the City on its related efforts; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the LGBTQ Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group;
- (x) Lodges Division staff report back to the Emergency and Community Services Committee on the creation of a community liaison group to replace the Seniors Advisory Committee to organize the Senior of the

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Year Awards and to be a credible communication vehicle regarding the quality of life for all older persons in the City; and that the 2024 approved budget currently assigned to the Seniors Advisory Committee be transferred to this Division to support this working group; and

- (xi) Reserve budgets remaining from Advisory Committees transitioning to working groups be transferred to the Tax Stabilization reserve.
- (b) That the following Advisory Committees be disbanded, and their members thanked by Council for their service to the community:
 - (i) Committee Against Racism;
 - (ii) Food Advisory Committee;
 - (iii) Immigrants and Refugees Advisory Committee; and,
 - (iv) Mundialization Advisory Committee.
- (c) That staff be directed to review the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities for alignment with the City's new civic engagement model and community liaison groups;
- (d) That staff in the Office of the City Clerk, in consultation with the City Manager's Office, develop and host a robust and mandatory training program for staff supporting community liaison groups, inclusive of:
 - (i) Civic engagement best practices in alignment with the City's Public Engagement Policy and Framework;
 - (ii) Legislative policies and procedural requirements for meetings; and,
 - (iii) Decorum and behavioural expectations including an explanation of the role of the City's Integrity Commissioner.
- (e) That staff in the City Manager's Office be directed to work with the Integrity Commissioner and Clerks Office to develop and host a training program for members of community liaison groups on expectations, liabilities, and project plans.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.
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The recommendations outlined in Report CM23025(a) are based on municipal best practices, comprehensive engagement efforts, and analysis of the current structure's inherent challenges. Structural changes are required to address the needs of more effective engagement.

Council-directed the Volunteer Advisory Committee Review (VACR) in September 2023. At this time the City of Hamilton had fourteen volunteer-led Advisory Committees. Engagement with City staff supporting Advisory Committees, former and current City of Hamilton Advisory Committee members, and members of Hamilton City Council showed significant need for change, some of which was outside the boundaries of the current structure as shown in Appendix "A" to Report CM23035(a).

Advisory Committee members represent some of the City's most passionate and engaged residents. While trends from the jurisdictional scan, included here as Appendix "B" to Report CM23035(a), show a movement away from this specific form of engagement, and the recommendations outlined here would significantly reshape several of the committees, it remains important to allow effective civic engagement opportunities to advance the 2022-2026 Term of Council Priority of responsiveness and transparency, especially as it relates to getting more people involved in decision making and problem solving.

Advisory Committees that have duplicative mandates of community tables the City already consults, discussed in Appendix "C" to Report CM23035(a), were considered in the context of their unique workplans and recent contributions. Advisory Committees with clear project workplans and strong alignment with a department within the City as detailed in Appendix "D" to Report CM23035(a), were considered for community liaison groups, removing some of the procedural challenges of hosting in-camera meetings, and providing a better opportunity for civic engagement. The newly recommended structure is intended to be supplemented by training, a significant deficiency identified through the VACR engagement process.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Disbanded committees will no longer have associated budget requirements. Committees transitioning to working groups will have their budgets transferred to appropriate departments to continue project plans in this new form.

Staffing: In cases where an Advisory Committee has been replaced by a community liaison group, departmental Staff Liaisons will continue to support these new groups.

**SUBJECT: Volunteer Advisory Committee Review
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Legal: None

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

An Advisory Committee review was last conducted and presented to the Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee in June of 2015 (CM15007). The review made several recommendations, including establishing Advisory Committees for the 2014-2018 Term of Council. This report informed the current shape and policies of the City's Advisory Committees.

At the July 13, 2023, meeting of the Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee, the Committee considered a motion to review Voluntary Advisory Committees. Consideration of this motion was deferred pending a Staff Report on the expected duration of the pause of these committees. Report CM23025 was brought to the Audit, Finance, and Administration Committee on September 7, 2023. The motion passed and included a pause on existing Volunteer Advisory Committees, with the exception for the Climate Change Advisory Committee, for which recruitment was already underway, but included it in the review process.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The pause and review motion specifically did not include the Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD), a legislatively required sub-committee of council previously referred to as an Advisory Committee.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff in the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division partnered with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to conduct arms-length engagement with three groups: City staff supporting Advisory Committees; former and current City of Hamilton Advisory Committee members; and members of Hamilton City Council. Engagement methodology took the form of surveys, key informant interviews, and focus groups described in Appendix "A" to Report CM23035(a).

Engagement from support staff, committee members, and councillors was high in all groups, reflecting the dedication and desire to ensure Volunteer Advisory Committees can operate in a way that effects meaningful change in the City. SPRC-led engagement efforts also identified significant areas of need for change, many of which fell outside the capacity of the Advisory Committee structure.

Staff leading the review conducted internal cross-departmental engagement to identify community tables and networks the City regularly consults with, included as Appendix

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“C” to Report CM23035(a). To complete the picture of who we may be missing from existing consultation, SPRC conducted a scan of community tables leading work efforts similar to Volunteer Advisory Committees, Appendix “E” to Report CM23025(a).

A jurisdictional scan of other municipalities was conducted by staff, offering alternative models for civic engagement in alignment with current best practices, outlined in Appendix “B” to Report CM23035(a). Of note, the City of Ottawa has recently moved entirely away from non-legislated Advisory Committees and toward a departmentally led model like community liaison groups.

Staff engaged in the review met with staff supporting the Climate Change Advisory Committee to discuss their role in the upcoming model and attended the inaugural meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee.

Preliminary recommendations were shared with staff liaisons supporting Volunteer Advisory Committees to provide relevant context and discuss the implications of these changes. In a few instances, support staff identified unique situations specific to their committees that informed staff recommendations.

Staff supporting the Food Advisory Committee specifically identified Covid-related staff redeployment as a challenge for their committee’s activity and success.

Staff leading the review spoke with Active Transportation and Mobility staff about their existing Mobility Lab and about whether it aligns with the new model of community liaison groups. Aligned with this new model, the recommendations outlined here suggest this group should be expanded to take on work previously assigned to the Hamilton Cycling Committee.

The Housing Secretariat’s Community Partnership Action Table serves a similar role to what a developed Housing and Homelessness community liaison group might serve. Staff leading the review work met with members of both the Housing Secretariat and the Housing divisions to discuss this and received general agreement for the adaptation of a group, be it this one or another related working group.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

A scan of ten similarly sized municipalities revealed that Hamilton has more Advisory Committees than comparable municipalities as outlined in Appendix “B” to Report CM23035(a). This indicates a trend moving away from this form of civic engagement. Alternatively, municipalities are moving forward with a variety of civic engagement methods like experts’ panels, task forces, and departmentally led working groups.

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For our purposes in Hamilton, the model we are recommending is the community liaison group. A Community Liaison Group (CLG) reports directly to staff to advise on the community perspective, which staff includes in the process of making recommendations directly to Council. Such groups can meet in person, regularly, or even virtually, corresponding over email to share recommendations, like a public information session. The groups are chaired by and called to order by departmental staff and do not follow the procedural by-law.

Engagement and consultation findings showed a significant need for change, with major areas of improvement identified across themes of meaningful engagement, transparency, clarity, and culture. The feedback gathered by the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC), summarized in Appendix “A” to Report CM23035(a), indicated the interdependence of most of these issues, with greater clarity on policies and procedures contributing to effective engagement, more transparency contributing to overall process clarity, and culture being largely dependent on how the Advisory Committee functions.

A SWOT analysis of the Volunteer Advisory Committees is attached as Appendix “F” to Report CM23025(a). While there are strengths to the Advisory Committee model, there are considerable disadvantages and leaving the structure unchanged could result in negative public engagement outcomes, especially in the context of the City’s Public Engagement Framework. Restructuring to community liaison groups presents an opportunity to address these weaknesses and further the goals of public engagement.

Recommendations around training focuses on these identified needs, both supporting Advisory Committee members with fulfilling their mandates and training support staff to better aid advisory bodies. Training recommendations also suggest that new community liaison groups receive specialized training owing to the expectation, responsibility, and liability of their roles.

Analysis was done of comparable tables the City consults with, shown in Appendix “C” to Report CM23035(a) and meetings, budgets, and citizen committee reports made to a committee’s standing committee as indicated in Appendix “G” to Report CM23035(a). In cases where the recommendation is to disband a given Advisory Committee, these recommendations stem from related work being done by other community tables and a lack of product from the Advisory Committee in terms of integrated workplans, produced citizen committee reports, and in some cases even meetings with quorum. The expectation is that increased support and training opportunities would lead to better quorum and member participation, so a lack of quorum alone was not considered sufficient reason to disband an Advisory Committee when their work was not also duplicative of other community tables the City consults with, included as Appendix “C” to Report CM23025(a), or other community tables in the scan conducted by SPRC, included as Appendix “G” to Report CM23025(a).

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For the remaining Advisory Committees, a recommendation is made around a shift toward staff-directed, community liaison groups to reduce some of the procedural requirements around open meetings that have been challenging for volunteer members. Council-directed working groups would still, by the legislative requirements, be expected to hold open meetings. To ensure ongoing transparency and accountability for the new community liaison groups, it is also recommended that departmental staff report back on an annual basis to the relevant committee on the feedback and results of the groups. Staff would also be more easily able to integrate community liaison groups into workplans and project plans. Where there was evidence of a strong project plan and close alignment with a department, the recommendation was made to shift the Advisory Committee to this form of civic engagement.

Appendix “D” to Report CM23025(a) shows each Volunteer Advisory Committee’s mandates and objectives and a suggested departmental alignment.

Next steps for successful implementation of community liaison groups will include departments reporting back on tailored solutions around recruitment and structure. Community liaison groups allow for more fluid recruitment, supported by Human Resources, and are not restricted to four-year terms. This recruitment should and could include former members of VACs but could also broaden to a wider group who might not have felt comfortable with the formality of the VAC structure. Staff will work closely with existing VAC members, Clerks, Councillors and Human Resources to ensure a smooth transition to the new community liaison group structure.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not applicable.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report CM23025(a):	SPRC Engagement Findings
Appendix “B” to Report CM23025(a):	Jurisdictional Scan Summary
Appendix “C” to Report CM23025(a):	External Community Tables and Networks the City Consults
Appendix “D” to Report CM23025(a):	VAC Mandates, Objectives, and Alignment
Appendix “E” to Report CM23025(a):	Community Tables Scan
Appendix “F” to Report CM23025(a):	SWOT Analysis
Appendix “G” to Report CM23025(a):	Current VAC Structure Overview

City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee Review: Engagement Report

April 2024

Report prepared by:



SPRC

Social Planning and
Research Council of
Hamilton

City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee Review: Engagement Report

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land on which we work this work is situated upon the traditional territories of the Erie, Neutral, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee, and Mississaugas. This land is covered by the Dish With One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, which was an agreement between the Haudenosaunee and Anishinaabek to share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. We further acknowledge that this land is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. We hope to honour the spirit of the Dish With One Spoon agreement by working to build a nation-to-nation relationship with Indigenous communities in Hamilton.

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Executive summary & Recommendations

Under the direction of the Hamilton City Council, the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division is conducting a review of Volunteer Advisory Committees to provide recommendations around engagement to fulfill the priorities of the 2022-2026 Term of Council. As part of this review, the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to collect feedback from key community partners including VAC members, staff liaisons, and council members.

Overall, there was a high level of engagement across all participant groups, with 56 of 112 VAC members completing the VAC member survey, 10 of 10 staff liaisons completing the staff liaison survey, 29 VAC members participating in the focus groups, and 10 of 16 council members participating in an interview.

Across all engagements, there was recognition of the immense opportunity VACs provide in leveraging both the enthusiasm and expertise of community members in Hamilton. The diversity of experiences and opinions on VACs was highlighted as a critical asset that allows the City to tap into and engage with a critical knowledge base, as well as provide the opportunity to foster more equitable solutions that meet community needs.

Council members, staff liaisons, and VAC members also spoke to a desire for an improved process that enables meaningful participation of volunteers through improved structure and supports for VACs. Challenges consistently raised among all three participant groups spoke to the unfulfilled potential and underutilization of VACs. Lack of clarity with respect to scope and mandate, as well as misalignment in the understanding of the role VACs, were commonly identified as unmet needs by the participant groups. The need for a clearly articulated, accessible, and transparent process for communicating with council was also commonly raised, both in relation to how VAC recommendations are brought forward, but also in how council receives, reviews, and responds to VAC recommendations. The need for more consistent and comprehensive training for both VAC members and staff liaisons, as well as the need for improved transparency in the VAC member selection and decision-making process, were also frequently raised as areas for improvement.

The recommendations brought forward in this report are based on and suggest remedy for the challenges and opportunities raised throughout the report.

Recommendations:

1. As the City looks to potentially amend the VAC model considering the outcomes of this review, it is imperative that the City continue to involve and consult VAC members with respect to potential changes moving forward. VAC members have tremendous knowledge on what has

been working well and what has not with respect to VAC function. Their involvement will only strengthen remedies to the challenges identified in this report, as well as provide an opportunity to rebuild trust lost with VAC members.

2. Given the sentiments of disregard and confusion communicated by VAC members with respect to how the VAC Review was initiated, we encourage the City to proactively inform and engage VAC members in the next steps of the review.
3. Overall, there is a need for greater clarity and consistent understanding of the role of VACs, their expected outcomes, and how each participant group (i.e. VAC members, staff liaisons and council members) participate in and contribute to the work of VACs. As this was a need identified by all three groups, it is recommended that the scope, mandate, role and intended outcomes of VACs be clearly defined in VAC governing document.
4. In addition to clear objectives, there is a need to develop ongoing feedback mechanisms and an evaluation plan for VACs. Evaluation of VACs needs to capture both the effectiveness of the VACs in fulfilling their mandates as well as volunteer experiences on the committees, necessitating feedback from council, staff liaisons and VAC members on their effectiveness. Additionally, implementing a process for ongoing feedback would create opportunities to address challenges with VACs as they arise.
5. It should be recognized that all challenges brought forward in this report and the associated recommendations for remedy have direct implications on the effectiveness and impact VACs can have. As a result, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to how all recommendations could be implemented.
6. The City should look to implement processes and engagement opportunities that support improved collaboration and a more intersectional approach to VAC work, including vehicles that enable VAC engagement with the broader community as well as means for VACs to collaborate with each other on intersecting issues.
7. Implement VAC Terms of Reference (TOR) reviews at regularly scheduled intervals to ensure governing documents continue to meet the needs of VAC members and council.
8. Given that the importance of community expertise was highlighted as a key asset by all three participant groups, it is recommended that VACs be provided the latitude necessary to raise concerns identified at the community level. Additionally, there was an identified need for better alignment between council and City priorities and the work of VACs; therefore, it is recommended that the City review existing VACs for alignment with strategic priorities and refocus VAC work as needed.

9. There is also need for consideration of the diverse mandates and functions of current VACs, therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to VAC governance and supports would likely not support the success of current VACs.
10. As the rigidity of the current VAC structure was raised as a barrier to VAC's ability to fulfill their role by all three participant groups, it is recommended that the City consider less structured formats/processes for VACs. While it was recognized that some structure is required for meaningful participation, procedures around quorum and how discussions are held were generally viewed as inhibiting the important advisory and engagement function of VACs.
11. To fully utilize the expertise on VACs, proactive and ongoing engagement with VACs should be embedded into existing consultation processes that inform council priorities and departmental work as they relate to VAC scope and mandate (e.g. in the development and implementation of City action plans). This consultation should be done as part of departmental work on strategic initiatives and before staff reports are put to council for consideration.
12. VAC governance documents should clearly articulate the role of council members on VACs, including the expected level of participation from council members (e.g. frequency of meeting attendance, availability for consultation to VAC outside of meetings) to support consistent understanding across all VAC participants.
13. Governance documents should also provide clear direction on the role of staff liaisons in facilitating and supporting VAC work. VACs also require ongoing support from staff content experts as well as procedural experts. Delineation of these roles, and consistent access to both competencies, would better support VACs as well as the staff supporting their work.
14. Ensure a clear and transparent process, with expected timelines, is provided to VAC members with respect to communicating and making recommendations to council. The process should identify how recommendations are put forward, how and by whom recommendations are received, and deliberated. It should also clearly outline how council will respond to the recommendations, and if/how they have been actioned, focusing on ensuring a clear feedback loop to VACs.
15. There is a need for improved, consistent, and accessible training for VAC members. More comprehensive training on council structure and process, VAC scope and responsibilities, meeting procedure and VAC decision making, report-writing, and role-specific training for VAC chairs were identified needs.
16. Steps should also be taken to develop and implement consistent training for staff liaisons that clearly outlines the role of staff liaisons, as well as VAC purpose, function, and structure.

Consistent onboarding and handoff planning should also be developed to better support transitions between staff liaisons. A centralized location for all VAC documents/work accessible to staff liaisons and all VAC members would also support these transitions.

17. Involve community stakeholders in the VAC member selection and decision-making process.
18. Working with citizen representatives supporting VAC selection work, develop selection criteria for VAC members, inclusive of how equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are accounted for in decision-making. Communicate selection criteria to applicants/public during the call for applications. Where a VAC applicant is unsuccessful, communicate the outcome to the applicant and provide a brief explanation of the decision to further support transparency of the process.
19. Established term limits for VAC membership. Clearly communicate term limits in VAC Terms of Reference.
20. Greater attention needs to be given to the timely transition between VAC members in the event a VAC member resigns. Maintaining a list of applicants who met the application criteria but were not selected for the role would assist with this transition.
21. Provide robust, consistent training to all VAC members, including those brought on mid-term.

1.0 Introduction

Under the direction of Hamilton City Council, the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division was assigned to lead a review of Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs), in July 2023. As part of the review, the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division partnered with the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to collect and analyze feedback from Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) members, VAC staff liaisons, and council, through a series of surveys, focus groups, and interviews. The objective of the broader review is to provide recommendations around engagement methods inclusive of the Volunteer Advisory Committees to fulfill the priorities of Council aligned with the Term of Council priorities 2022 – 2026.

This report highlights key feedback received throughout engagement efforts with current advisory committee members, council members, and VAC staff liaisons to map the challenges and identify the unmet needs resulting from the current advisory committee structure.

The second key element of this review includes a scan of community advisory tables that the City actively consults with for advice and feedback, including community-based task forces, grassroots organizations doing aligned work, steering committees, and working groups. This includes preparing a list of the external community-based tables and organizations that support work similar to that of advisory committees.

1.1 About Volunteer Advisory Committees

According to the City, VACs in Hamilton are established by Council and consist of volunteer members from the local community. The City of Hamilton has 14 VACs. All VACs operate under a Terms of Reference (TOR) document that outlines the scope of their work. In the City of Hamilton, VACs typically provide recommendations to Council through reports on their area of expertise to an assigned Standing Committee. Currently, members of VACs are selected by the Interview Sub-Committee of the appropriate Standing Committee and are appointed by Council¹. VACs, with the exception of the Climate Change Advisory Committee, Veterans Affairs Committee, and Seniors Advisory Committee, were mandated to pause, beginning October 1, 2023, in light of this review.

¹City of Hamilton (2022). Committee Listings. Accessed <https://www.hamilton.ca/city-council/council-committee/council-committee-meetings/committee-listing#sub-committees>

2.0 Scope

The scope of the SPRC's engagements was limited to current VAC members, current staff liaisons, and current council members. The scope included a broad analysis of VACs, therefore data and analysis on the challenges and unmet needs of individual VACs is not part of the review.

The following volunteer advisory committees and key informants were included within the scope of this work:

- a. Committee Against Racism
- b. Women and Gender Equity Committee
- c. Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees
- d. Indigenous Advisory Committee
- e. Mundialization Committee
- f. Food Advisory Committee
- g. Hamilton Veterans Advisory
- h. Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee
- i. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee
- j. Seniors Advisory Committee
- k. Arts Advisory Committee
- l. Hamilton Cycling Committee
- m. Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee
- n. Staff Liaisons (10)
- o. Members of Council (16)

The Climate Change Advisory Committee (CCAC) and CCAC Staff Liaison were not included in the scope of SPRC's engagements with VACs.

3.0 Methodology

Figure 1. VAC review engagement timeline



The information presented in this review was obtained through surveys, key informant interviews, and focus groups with current VAC members, staff liaisons, and Hamilton City Council members.

Over the course of the project, the SPRC met bi-weekly with the Project Manager in the City of Hamilton’s Government Relations and Community Engagement Division. These meetings were used as an opportunity to establish and review the workplan, and review and approve distribution materials.

Given their intimate knowledge of VACs, SPRC consulted with VAC chairs and vice chairs in December of 2023 to help develop appropriate research questions that would inform the breadth of information captured throughout the data collection process. The SPRC received feedback from 11 chairs/vice-chairs. Key research questions were established focusing on four central themes:

- 1) What is working well with respect to how VACs currently operate?
- 2) What are the unmet needs resulting from the current structure?
- 3) Ideally, what would the role and structure of VACs look like in the future?
- 4) What (if any) changes would be needed to fulfill this role?

The City provided a list of VAC members, chairs, vice-chairs, and staff liaisons from which the SPRC was able to engage for the purpose of this review. Recruitment and data collection began in January 2024. Data collection for focus groups and interviews occurred in both virtual and in-person settings.

The SPRC hosted a validation session in March 2024 open to all VAC members to present preliminary findings and engage in further discussions to ensure that themes and ideas were holistic and representative of the information captured in the VAC member survey and VAC member focus groups. The one-hour validation session occurred on a weekday evening to encourage equitable member participation. Eight VAC members participated in the session, representing six VACs. The main themes uncovered during data analysis were presented to VAC members and polling was utilized throughout the presentation to capture members' sentiments. Overall, polling indicated that those in attendance felt the themes presented aligned with the data.

3.1 Surveys

The SPRC consulted with VAC co-chairs to broadly identify key research areas that would inform the survey questions administered to both VAC members and staff liaisons. The surveys consisted of five main categories:

- 1) Application, selection, and appointment of VAC members
- 2) VAC mandate and role
- 3) Member training and materials
- 4) Effectiveness in fulfilling mandate
- 5) Opportunities.

The survey included closed-ended questions that asked participants to rate their agreement with a statement provided as well as open-ended questions. All surveys were administered virtually.

a. VAC member survey

The SPRC contacted all current committee members via email providing a link to the anonymous survey. Participants were given approximately two weeks to complete the survey. Surveys were administered to 112 committee members with an overall response rate of 56 out of 112 (50%).

b. Staff liaison survey

The SPRC contacted all staff liaisons via email with a link to an amended version of the VAC member survey. Amendments were made in consultation with the Project Manager to ensure applicability to the staff liaison role. Staff Liaisons were initially provided just over a week to

complete the survey. A short extension was provided at the end of the survey period. Surveys were administered to ten staff liaisons and all staff liaisons completed the survey (overall response rate of 100%).

3.2 Council member interviews

The SPRC contacted council members via email to participate in key informant interviews. Additionally, follow-up emails were sent to council members to provide multiple opportunities to engage with the review. Each interview was scheduled for approximately 20 minutes. The interviews were attended by both an interviewer and a notetaker from the research team alongside the key informant. Interviews were not recorded and were conducted either virtually or in person based on the Council member's preference.

All interviews featured four questions that addressed central themes regarding VACs:

- 1) What is going well with respect to VACs?
- 2) What are the unmet needs?
- 3) What could the role of VACs look like in the future?
- 4) What changes are necessary to fulfill this role?

Council members were also asked to provide any additional commentary or feedback on VACs outside of the four main themes and had the opportunity to provide additional feedback via email following the interview. Each interview concluded with a read-back of notes to ensure that information was captured in full and with accuracy. The data collected through interviews is representative of engagement, with 10 out of 16 council members, representing a 63% response rate.

3.3 VAC member focus groups

The SPRC contacted all current VAC members via email to participate in focus groups to expand upon feedback received through survey implementation. Four focus groups were offered (one in-person and three virtual via Zoom) to accommodate the needs of interested participants. Each focus group was attended by six to ten participants, as well as one moderator and one to two notetakers. Overall, 29 VAC members from 11 VACs participated in a focus group. VAC members who expressed interest in participating in a focus group but were unavailable on the scheduled dates were offered a brief key-informant interview utilizing the focus group questions.

Focus groups lasted approximately one hour and occurred during weekday evenings to provide an equitable time frame for participation. The in-person focus group occurred at City Hall and participants were provided with bus fare as required. All focus group participants were provided with a \$25.00 gift card as an honourarium for participating. This amount was selected to avoid

undue influence on whether VAC members chose to participate in a focus group, and in consideration of the living wage in Hamilton.

Focus group questions consisted of an identical set of research questions used during key informant interviews with Council, with additional prompts informed by VAC member survey feedback. Each focus group began with a discussion of the review, group norms, and accessibility considerations, followed by the main discussion, and concluded with a review of the next steps. Participants were also provided with the option to offer additional feedback via email for up to three days following the focus group.

An individual interview was conducted with one VAC member who was unable to attend a focus group. Feedback gathered from this interview was anonymized and integrated into the data received from focus groups.

4.0 Limitations

As with all research, this report is subject to several limitations:

a. General limitations

Due to the scope of this review, this research captures a broad understanding of what is currently working well and the unmet needs of Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs) and does not examine specific VACs. We acknowledge that VACs have diverse purposes and support needs, and a detailed analysis of the role and function of each committee falls outside the scope of this research.

Additionally, meta-data on VAC membership was not collected in the survey, such as the gender or age of participants, length of time they had been VAC members, and committee membership. This was done to ensure VAC members felt that they were able to share freely and candidly about their experiences. As a result, the data may be skewed due to possible over-representation of responses from participants who are members of particular committees. Although not all VACs may have been represented equally in the review, the review captured a diversity of experiences across VACs and within individual VACs. The themes drawn out from the review process were consistent overall. In the future, individual consultation with each VAC would illuminate the unique needs based on their role and mandate.

Given participation in the engagements was optional for VAC members, staff liaisons and council members, this review is subject to *non-response bias*. For example, the VAC members who did not participate may have more negative experiences and may have been less likely to answer the

survey or attend a focus group if they felt the process was flawed and would not be a good use of their time.

Additionally, given the scope only included current VAC members, current staff liaisons, and current council members, the feedback contained in this report is subject to *survivorship bias*. This type of bias reflects a possible positive skew in the data, as VAC members who may have previously resigned their VAC membership due to frustrations with one or more aspects of the VAC process were not included in this review, and only those whose level of satisfaction with the VAC process was greater (evidenced by their continued participation) were invited to participate. Excluding the perspectives of those who have previously been engaged with VACs represents a significant gap in understanding the experiences of those who may have disengaged for a variety of reasons. These perspectives would be helpful to frame a more inclusive understanding of the unmet needs of VACs and the barriers they present for citizen participation.

b. Survey limitations

The research team, in consultation with the City Project Manager, decided not to include a neutral response option to the survey questions to account for neutral response bias. However, this may have encouraged respondents to select an answer that did not completely align with their beliefs. This highlights possible *acquiescence bias* (the tendency for survey participants to agree with the presented research statement, even if it does not truly reflect their opinion²) within the quantitative survey data. There is also a possibility that *social desirability bias* (providing a response the participant feels is the more socially desirable when asked a sensitive question³) may influence the quantitative data obtained from the surveys, as some respondents expressed agreement with the statements in the survey yet made recommendations for change when answering the corresponding open-ended question.

c. Focus group and interview limitations

The research team made an intentional decision not to record focus groups and interviews to solicit frank and candid feedback from participants and ensure anonymity. In place of recording, there was a designated note taker in addition to the facilitator for each focus group as well as each key informant interview. Not recording and transcribing the focus groups and interviews limited our ability to include direct quotes from these feedback sessions.

²Toor, M. (2020). What is acquiescence bias and how can you stop it? Accessed <https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/avoiding-the-yes-bias/>

³Qualtrics. (2024). What is response bias and how can you avoid it? Accessed <https://www.qualtrics.com/experience-management/research/response-bias/#:~:text=Social%20desirability%20bias%20often%20occurs,and%20underreport%20'bad%20behavior>

d. Limitations of the analysis

As the qualitative component of this research relies on a thematic analysis (a process of identifying key themes and coding collected qualitative data based on the themes that arose to identify trends), there is a possibility that data interpretation may have been influenced by *researcher bias*. To help mitigate this risk, the research team incorporated both a deductive and inductive approach to data analysis. Initially, qualitative data was reviewed and coded using the main research questions and survey themes. In this preliminary analysis, several additional themes emerged and were subsequently incorporated. The data was then re-coded to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the feedback and major themes. Additionally, a validation session was held with VAC member participants to evaluate the accuracy of data collected and subsequent findings from surveys and focus groups.

5.0 Key Findings

The key findings are broken down by the three groups engagements were conducted with: VAC members, staff liaisons, and council members. We received a greater volume of feedback from VAC members based on a larger number of possible participants (112) in comparison to the staff liaisons (10) and council members (16). Additionally, several staff liaisons and council members expressed less familiarity with VACs because they were new to their roles, and therefore, were unable to provide the same level of feedback. The feedback from VAC members was coded and analyzed based on the frequency of a theme, whereas data from the staff liaison survey and council interviews was primarily analyzed based on the number of participants that raised a theme due to the smaller number of participants.

Although the data and analysis presented below are broken down into thematic sections for each group, it is imperative to acknowledge that in reviewing and analyzing the data, the research team identified patterns suggesting a strong likelihood that the many benefits and challenges raised intersect and influence each other. For example, when issues of quorum were raised, VAC members noted that issues with quorum were likely a direct result of volunteers not feeling valued. Not feeling valued, in turn, could be a result of not being adequately trained and, therefore, not having a clear understanding of the scope, mandate, and process related to VACs. As a result, VAC members may have become frustrated by the process and their inability to have a broader impact, which may have contributed to their decision to stop attending meetings.

5.1 VAC members

Key findings from engagements with VAC members are separated into sections based on subject areas in the survey. Quantitative data from the VAC surveys is presented first and contextualized within the open-ended qualitative survey responses and focus group results. Focus groups were

not transcribed to encourage open dialogue, therefore, all quotes included in the following sections were captured in the open-ended survey responses. The quotes used are a direct transcription from the survey responses.

In the survey, VAC members were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement with statements about specific subject areas related to overall VAC function. These subject areas were identified by VAC Chairs as requiring notable improvement. In the open-ended survey questions and in the VAC member focus groups, several other aspects related to VACs were consistently identified as areas for significant improvement. These are also highlighted in the sections below.

It is important to consider and analyze the closed survey questions in the context of the open-ended responses. Although there were relatively high levels of agreement generally expressed by VAC members who participated in the survey, when looking at the sentiments expressed in the open-ended response box that pertained to the same survey section, over 60% of responses identified a need for change, even among those who expressed agreement to the survey statements. This highlights that although there may have been a general agreement, there were still significant areas for improvement noted amongst participants.

Overall, sentiment analysis was done by comment, with each comment being tagged as positive, neutral, or identifying a need for change. Each comment was then coded based on the themes, as well as specific benefits and challenges identified in the comment. Some comments contained multiple themes or identified both benefits and challenges, and these were coded accordingly.

Table 1. VAC member survey and focus group code areas

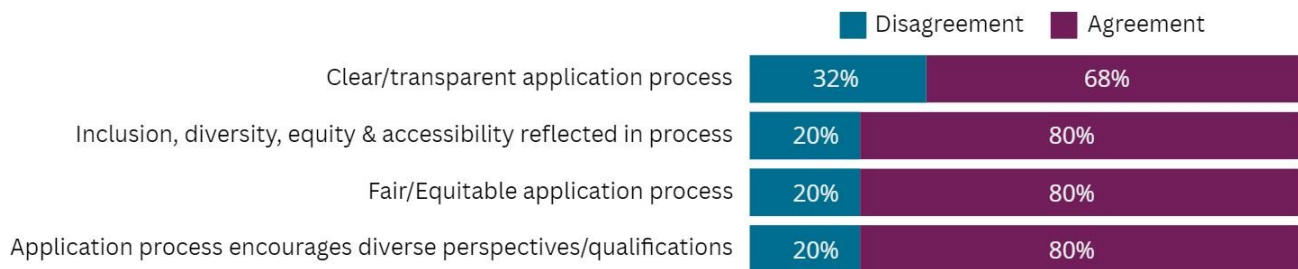
Theme code	Survey Responses (by code application)*	Focus Groups (by code application)*
Application, Selection & Appointment	Total: 34 Challenges: 29 Benefits: 4	Total: 12 Challenges: 11
Mandate & Role	Total: 43 Challenges: 28 Benefits: 15	Total: 37 Challenges: 29 Benefits: 8
Training & Materials	Total: 25 Challenges: 20 Benefits: 5	Total: 12 Challenges: 12
City Staff	Total: 43 Challenges: 33 Benefits: 10	Total: 52 Challenges: 24 Benefits: 28
VAC Membership	Total: 57 Challenges: 41 Benefits: 16	Total: 36 Challenges: 24 Benefits: 11
VAC Process/Structure	Total: 55 Challenges: 53 Benefits: 2	Total: 50 Challenges: 44 Benefits: 4
Councillor Involvement	Total: 20 Challenges: 20	Total: 27 Challenges: 17 Benefits: 9
Effectiveness in Fulfilling Mandate	Total: 143 Challenges: 99 Benefits: 44	Total: 75 Challenges: 58 Benefits: 17

*Code application refers to the number of times a theme was identified in the responses. In some responses, more than one theme, or specific aspects of a theme, was identified as a challenge or benefit. For example, with respect to VAC process/structure, one response could highlight the benefits of the processes in place generally, while also noting challenges that this creates when quorum is not able to be met. These were coded separately as benefits and challenges.

5.1.1 Application, selection, and appointment process

As seen in the Figure 2., when asked to express agreement or disagreement with statements related to the application, selection, and appointment process, approximately one in three survey respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, “The application, selection, and appointment process is clear and transparent.” When looking at the other three statements, one in five respondents expressed disagreement.

Figure 2. VAC member survey: Application, selection, and appointment process



The survey asked participants about their experience with the application, selection, and appointment process. In the additional feedback we received in this section of the survey, there were a total of 35 comments. When looking at the broad sentiment of these comments, 12% were positive comments about the application process, 11% were generally neutral, and 77% of comments reflected a need for change. Further thematic analysis using the coding method detailed above was also carried out as explored below.

Sentiment analysis of responses in application, selection, and appointment process:



VAC survey responses:

In analyzing the open-ended survey responses related to the VAC Application, Selection, and Appointment process, approximately 80% of responses identifying a need for change spoke to challenges with the **selection/decision-making process**. Comments related to the selection/decision-making process were made second most frequently when looking at the total

number of survey responses identifying a need for change. Only comments with respect to VAC impact were made more frequently.

Most of these responses identified issues related to **transparency** in the decision-making process (this represents nearly 40% of the comments that identified a need for change with respect to the selection/decision-making process) or a lack of **representation and diversity** (over 20% of responses that identified a need for change related to the selection/decision-making process).

“The process for how the applications are reviewed, screened and shortlisted was not at all clear to me - from what information I saw it seemed fairly random or arbitrary, especially in terms of which incumbent committee members were selected for a second term.”

“The process is flawed and is not inclusive of marginalized identities. It also keeps members on for too many terms and should have an end date. The selection committee needs to be aware of how unconscious bias is playing a role in selecting and appointing members. They need to have an equity lens when selecting candidates.”

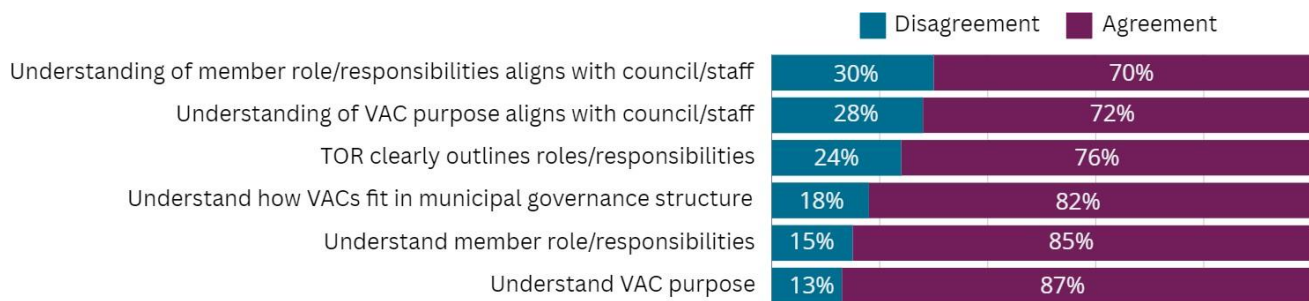
VAC focus groups:

While not mentioned as frequently, VAC members raised transparency and representation/diversity as areas in need of improvement. However, more frequently, focus group participants identified issues related to **timelines for onboarding new members** after a VAC member has stepped down as an area for improvement. This represents approximately 35% of comments that identified a need for change with respect to the selection /decision-making process and the impact this has on VAC work.

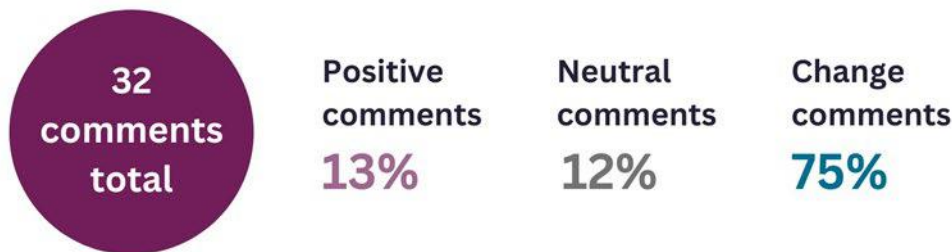
5.1.2 Mandate and role

When asked to express agreement or disagreement with statements related to the mandate and role of VACs (Figure 3), 30% of survey respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, “My understanding of the role and responsibilities of VAC members aligns with that our council and staff liaisons,” followed by 28% of respondents indicating disagreement with the statement “My understanding of the purpose and mandate of VACs aligns with that of council and staff liaisons. Interestingly, when looking at where most of the agreement was expressed pertaining to mandate and role, VAC members expressed agreement with “I understand the purpose of VACs” and “I understand the roles and responsibilities of VAC members.” This is further explored in the qualitative analysis below.

Figure 3. VAC member survey: mandate and role



Sentiment analysis of responses in the mandate and role section of the survey:



Overall, approximately 75% of the VAC member comments made in the role and mandate section of the survey identified a need for change.

VAC survey responses:

When analyzing the open-ended survey responses specific to the scope and mandate broadly, all comments identified a need for change, with 50% identifying a need for improved **clarity**. Both **alignment with community need** and **engagement with the broader community** were frequently raised in comments in relation to the mandate and role of VACs, with comments indicating almost equally these areas as benefits and working well, and areas for improvement.

“It was not very clear what we were expected to do and how it would be relayed to the city or impact it would have on our communities”

“The committee that I was a part was greatly impactful. We often challenged city council to be better and accountable to their community. We also offered the community another option to be heard and access city council which is a very important role!”

“I am sure if Volunteer Advisory Committees are given more leeway, and bring in suggestions from other stakeholders and boundary partners, they could impact more change and influence for the benefit of the public.”

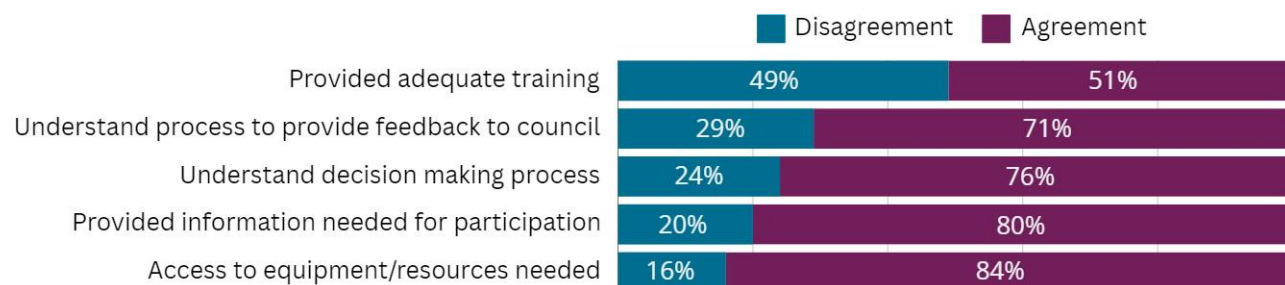
VAC focus groups:

In the focus groups, the lack of **clarity** on the VACs scope and mandate was also raised by participants as a challenge. Additionally, the need for **broader community engagement** was also raised as a challenge, along with the need for **improved collaboration among VACs**. Participants highlighted the intersectional nature of the scope of many VACs and noted challenges that the currently siloed model of VACs presents, for example, seniors intersecting with immigrants and refugees and LGBTQ).

5.1.3 Training and materials

When asked to express agreement or disagreement with statements related to VAC training and materials made available to members (Figure 4), 49% of respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, “I was provided adequate training to fulfill the responsibilities of a VAC member.” Additionally, 29% of respondents expressed disagreement with the statement “I understand the VAC member structure and process to provide feedback to council,” and one in four respondents expressed disagreement with the statement “I understand the decision-making process and how my voice can be heard within a VAC.” These sentiments are explored further in the qualitative sections below, as many comments in the survey and focus groups centered around challenges with respect to training.

Figure 4. VAC member survey: training and materials



Sentiment analysis of responses in the training and materials section of the survey:

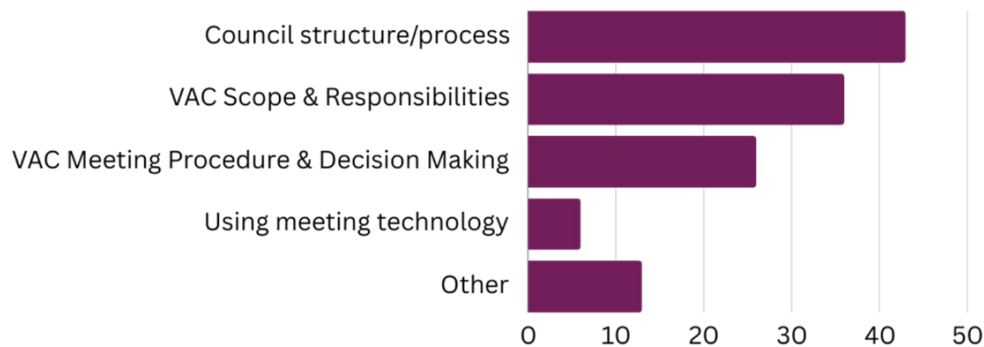


Overall, approximately 72% of the broad sentiments in the comments in this section identified a need for change.

VAC survey responses:

In addition to the questions above, survey respondents were also asked to identify areas where further training would be beneficial. The chart below is a breakdown of responses (Figure 5):

Figure 5. VAC members survey: Where additional training would be beneficial:



Responses to “Other” included: communication procedures, role specific training for VAC Chairs, Vice-Chairs, and Secretaries, writing committee reports/motions, budget process, and community engagement.

Approximately 80% of open-ended survey responses related to VAC Training and Materials identified a need to improve VAC member training, and approximately one-third of the responses spoke to the need for better training related to process/procedure (both with respect to internal VAC processes and interfacing with Council).

“I have served on a committee for 8 years and am still not 100% clear about the process of communications and decisions between Committee and Council. I feel

there was regular confusion about this and it really hindered our meetings and effectiveness. I think training and support for meeting process and decision making could be significantly improved and would make the whole experience much more enjoyable, meaningful and productive for everyone involved."

"It will be of great help for volunteers to be trained, advised of the expected outcome of their meetings/discussions, and how this will fit into the bigger picture and future planning of the Council, and how this will benefit the citizens in Hamilton. I suggest the training to be done on first meeting."

There were several accounts of VAC members receiving no training in the survey responses.

VAC focus groups:

Focus group participants were not specifically asked about VAC training, and concerns with training were not raised as frequently in focus groups as they were in the survey. However, when training was raised, comments largely echoed those made in the survey, identifying a need for improved training related to interfacing with council as well as better training consistency. This also included accounts of no or minimal training when VAC members were onboarded, notably when brought on part way through the term. Training related to interpersonal skills, self-confidence and self-improvement, and motivational speaking were also suggested.

5.1.4 Additional thematic areas

In reviewing the feedback from both the open-ended survey responses and focus groups, several themes emerged that were not previously captured by the broader areas of inquiry in the survey or focus groups. These themes are explored in the below sections.

City staff

VAC survey responses:

In the open-ended survey responses, working with **staff** was raised frequently. Three-quarters of the comments identified this as an area that needs improvement. **Staff involvement** in VACs and **clerks** were identified as the most significant areas for improvement, with around 40% of the challenges raised indicating sentiments of **staff influence/gatekeeping**.

"... we were told that we couldn't say certain things and we were told to change how we said things. In the meetings, the clerks would dissuade us from making certain motions or create certain committee reports. [...] The staff liaison weren't as bad, but they still tried to

dissuade us by preventing us from raising systemic issues because there was no "process" for it."

Concerns around staff knowledge of VAC processes and lack of specific content expertise relating to the mandate of the VACs were both raised as challenges that likely impacted staff involvement with VACs. When clerks were raised in comments, the comments identified working with clerks as an area of improvement.

"While I might understand how the process works, it is not effective. The city liaison person makes a big difference in what is allowed to be put forth and how the mandate of the committee is interpreted."

VAC focus groups:

The analysis of the focus group responses pertaining to staff highlights an almost equal split between comments identifying benefits and those identifying areas for improvement. Similar to the survey responses, sentiments of **staff influence/gatekeeping** were identified as challenges, and more commonly, the impact of **staff turnover** was identified as a challenge (30% of challenges identified). Many participants noted disruption of work plans and inconsistencies in the level of staff training and knowledge about VAC processes as challenges resulting from frequent turnover in the staff liaison position. Additionally, where benefits of staff involvement were identified, the **content expertise** of staff was noted most frequently.

VAC membership

VAC survey responses:

Comments related to VAC Membership (both positive and those indicating a need for change), including those concerning quorum, committee make-up, and VAC member skills, were raised second most often in the open-ended survey responses (coded nearly 60 times). Over 70% of these comments identified a need for change, and of these comments, lack of **quorum** was raised as the most frequent issue (approximately 30% of challenges with respect to VAC Membership).

"We had huge quorum issues and it's not fair to the people devoting their time, we couldn't get anything done and missed many opportunities because of participation"

However, as noted previously, VAC members raised the importance of considering issues related to quorum in the larger context of VAC effectiveness/impact, remarking during the Validation Session that member participation rates were likely reflective of feeling devalued since their

contributions were not resulting in meaningful impact. This is explored further in the "VAC Effectiveness" section of this report.

Community expertise came up most frequently in comments related to VAC Membership and was raised almost equally as a current benefit and as an area that required improvement.

Positive comments with respect to community expertise highlighted VAC members' function/potential to provide a diversity of insights and knowledge that may be outside of the expertise of staff and Council. Most comments identifying a need for improvement highlighted the need to better utilize the community expertise within VACs or the need for a diversity of skills/viewpoints within the VAC member selection/decision-making process.

"It lets community members share their expertise to help their community in a non-intimidating way (ex. the budget process while open for community comments, can be daunting to be involved in). In many cases the volunteers have more expertise than staff and Council, so it provides reliable advice from experts who want the best for the City."

"The committee members have valid opinions about issues and we are not taking advantage of this. There is a lot of talent in these groups. If they are given proper support and training, the advisory committees can be the best source of true community opinion."

VAC focus groups:

Quorum was raised most frequently in comments related to VAC Membership during the focus groups, and all but one of these comments identified quorum as a current challenge, representing approximately 50% of comments identifying a need for change related to VAC Membership in focus group feedback.

Comments related to **community expertise** were raised almost as frequently as quorum in the focus groups, though they were raised more frequently as a current benefit of VACs (nearly 65% of focus group comments related to community expertise) as opposed to an area that needs improvement (approximately 35% of comments) when compared to the survey responses. Comments echoed those made in the open-ended survey responses, underscoring the role/potential for VACs to bring forward community perspectives.

VAC process and structure

VAC survey responses:

VAC processes and structure were frequently brought up in open-ended survey group responses, with 95% of comments identifying a challenge or area for improvement. The structure/process for **communication with council** was identified as the most common challenge by survey respondents. Around 30% of comments pertaining to challenges resulting from the current VAC process/structure spoke to the **rigidity/bureaucracy** of the VAC structure, with respondents noting the barriers this created to being able to provide meaningful participation and impact.

"I would like to think that Volunteer Advisory Committees are places where change, impact, and influence can happen but in my time serving on a Committee, I haven't ever felt this. It often feels that the formalities and structures preclude meaningful impact."

Lastly, the lack of **proactive consultation** or simply being **outside of the consultation process** was raised in approximately 20% of the comments by survey respondents. VAC members raised concerns around not being consulted on issues that directly pertained to the mandate/scope of the VACs they are a part of.

"Also relevant items/projects that city staff are requesting advise for, should be noted BEFORE the work is done, and not afterwards"

"To have a committee with citizen volunteers to be able to check off a box by saying we have a committee and then not bringing issues to it, makes it a waste of time for both citizen reps and staff."

VAC focus groups:

The comments from VAC members in focus groups around the VAC process/structure echoed the open-ended responses in the survey, centering around the same three themes. **Communication with council** was again raised as the most common issue and will be explored in the following section around council involvement.

In the focus groups, **rigidity/bureaucracy** was frequently raised (representing approximately 25% of challenges identified in relation to VAC process and structure) in the context of VACs not being able to meet, even informally, if quorum was not met. Participants identified that the bureaucracy is challenging to navigate and, as a result, can limit the voices that are heard. They identified the process itself as intimidating and associated this with contributing to issues around not achieving quorum.

Focus group participants also spoke to a lack of **proactive consultation** or being **outside of the consultation process** (representing around 20% of challenges raised around VAC process and structure). VAC members who participated in the focus groups spoke to a desire to be more formally integrated into the City's engagement process, and to be able to provide advice and input prior to council decisions.

Council involvement

While not directly addressed in either the survey or focus group questions, comments related to councillor involvement in VAC, including both attendance and participation in VAC meetings, were raised frequently in both VAC member engagements.

VAC survey responses:

All responses in the open-ended survey questions related to council involvement in VACs identified a need for improvement. Most frequently, these comments raised concerns about the lack of **councillor attendance** at VAC meetings.

"I was profoundly disappointed that the Council rep on my advisory committee never attended, not once. Spoke volumes about respect for the Committee."

"We are supposed to have two Council members assigned to our committee. One of them never shows up and the other is an occasional show. How our progress gets transmitted to Council is not known to me"

VAC focus groups:

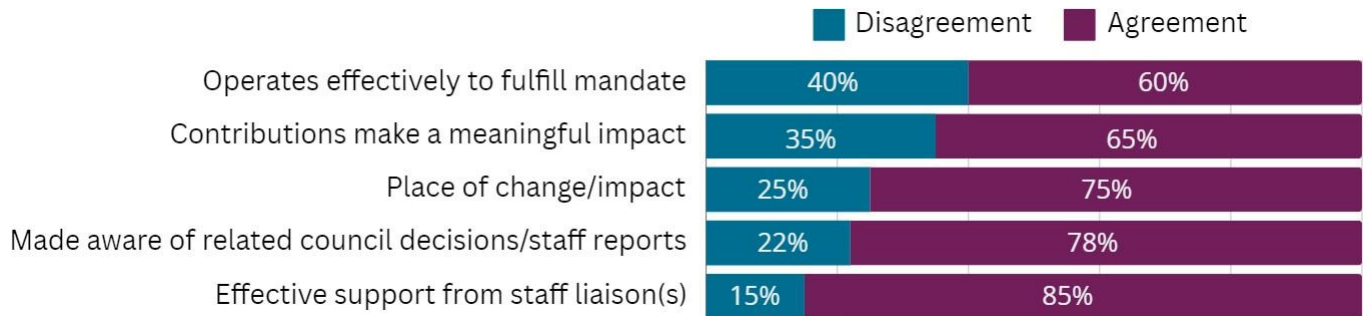
Comments made during the focus groups more often reflected a positive sentiment towards councillor involvement; however, 60% of survey responses identified a need for improvement with respect to councillor participation. Comments related to lack of **councillor attendance** made up most of the feedback received (representing approximately 75% of comments indicating a need for change within the VAC process and structure).

5.1.4 Effectiveness in fulfilling mandate

The second largest area of disagreement noted in the survey was in regard to the statement, "The VAC(s) I am a member of operates effectively to fulfill its mandate," with 40% of respondents indicating disagreement (Figure 6). Furthermore, 35% of survey respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, "My contributions through the VAC(s) make a meaningful

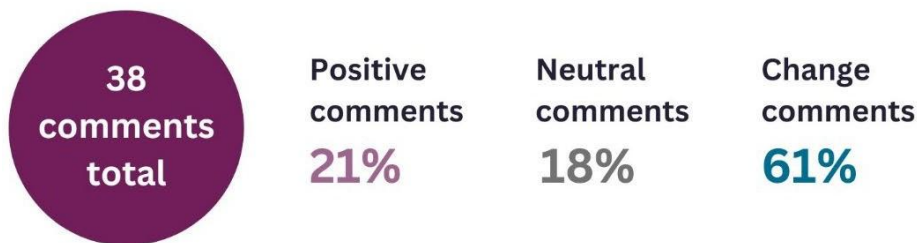
impact in the City of Hamilton,” and 25% (one in four respondents) expressed disagreement with the statement, “VACs are a place where change, impact, and/or influence can happen”.

Figure 6. VAC member survey: Effectiveness in fulfilling mandate



Interestingly, only 15% of survey respondents expressed disagreement with the statement, “The staff liaison(s) effectively supports the work of the VAC(s).” As noted in the section on City Staff, this was not fully echoed in the open-ended survey responses and focus groups and became a significant theme relating to areas for improvement in the broader analysis.

Sentiment analysis of responses in the effectiveness in fulfilling mandate section of the survey:



Overall, approximately 61% of the comments made in this section identified a need for change.

In a preliminary analysis of the survey responses and feedback received through focus groups, it became evident that the challenges discussed in the previous sections of the report intersect with and impact the effectiveness of VACs and their ability to fulfill their mandates. For example, lack of transparency in communicating with council left VACs unclear if and how their recommendations had been received and deliberated by council. Therefore, while effectiveness of fulfilling the mandate was a section of the survey, a broader thematic approach was taken to analyzing feedback with respect to VAC effectiveness to better reflect the interplay between this and other themes. For this reason, some themes already considered in this analysis will be highlighted again.

The major themes related to VAC effectiveness identified in VAC member feedback in the open-ended survey question and focus groups were:

1. Impact (including sentiment of fulfilling mandate/role; having wider community impact; value/regard for VAC work)
2. Transparency
3. Clarity
4. Timelines (general timeliness of VAC processes, e.g. selection process, communications with council, training etc.)
5. VAC Culture

Overall, VAC Effectiveness was by far the most common theme raised in VAC member feedback in the open-ended survey questions and was also the most common theme raised in focus group comments, though by a smaller margin.

1. Impact

VAC survey responses:

Out of all open-ended survey responses identifying a need for change, impact was the theme most commonly raised and made up approximately 40% of comments identifying current challenges related to VAC Effectiveness. Impact was also the most common theme raised in comments that spoke to aspects of VACs that are currently working well, and approximately 40% of comments raised with respect to impact conveyed a current benefit.

In the survey, comments identifying challenges related to impact intersected most with **communicating with council** (approximately 25% of negative comments related to impact) and **rigid/bureaucratic process** (also about 25% of impact comments identifying a need for improvement).

"The lasting impression gained from [my years on VAC] is that the city doesn't listen to these committees or care about enacting policies it creates. This is truly demoralizing and causes citizens to feel actively ignored. The city needs to do better and let citizens take an active role vs. placating them with seats in an ignored room."

VAC focus groups:

Impact was also the overall most common theme that arose in feedback from the focus groups, though by a smaller margin. Comments related to impact made up approximately 35% of total comments related to VAC effectiveness, though positive comments with respect to impact were

made far more infrequently in comparison to the open-ended survey responses (just over 15% of comments related to impact).

When analyzing the focus group feedback, comments suggesting improvements with respect to **impact** most often intersected with **communicating with council**. These comments made up approximately 30% of all comments identifying a need for change related to impact. These comments echoed the sentiments that VACs are disregarded or devalued by council, and encouraged council and the City to more proactively seek out VAC advice on matters related to their mandates.

2. Transparency

VAC survey responses:

Transparency and VAC Culture were raised second most frequently in open-ended survey comments related to VAC Effectiveness. Almost all comments raised in the open-ended survey questions related to transparency identified a need for change. Transparency also made up approximately 20% of comments identifying a need for change related to VAC Effectiveness. Comments identifying current challenges related to transparency most frequently raised the **selection/decision-making process** for VAC membership (just over 40%) and **communicating with council** (approximately 30%).

“Our recommendations have to travel up through a bureaucratic structure and then it seems they get lost. Very few recommendations if any result in Council or City action”

“In terms of the everyday issues our community faces, that would potentially need to be communicated to our council, there seems to be a disconnect in communicating these things. Somehow this information often gets lost and/or is misinterpreted at times.”

VAC focus groups:

Comments related to transparency made up a smaller portion of total comments related to VAC Effectiveness (approximately 15% of total comments related to VAC Effectiveness, and 20% of challenges raised with respect to VAC Effectiveness). All comments concerning transparency in the focus groups conveyed a need for improvement, and most again related to **communicating with council** (approximately 45) and the **selection/decision-making process** (nearly 30%).

3. Clarity

VAC survey results:

Feedback related to clarity in the open-ended survey questions made up approximately 20% of comments identifying a need for change related to VAC Effectiveness and almost approximately 90% related to clarity identified a need for improvement.

In the survey responses, the need for improved clarity was most commonly raised in relation to **scope and mandate** (approximately 30% of comments) and **communication with council** (approximately 25% of comments). The need for improved clarity with respect to the VAC role as part of training/onboarding was also referenced several comments.

"I never got a proper explanation of the expectations of the role, as it aligns to Staff Liaison and Council, hence I was actually confused for the most part. I felt that we did not make any marked difference or served any purpose, besides fulfilling a need for Council."

VAC focus groups:

Feedback with respect to clarity in the focus groups made up approximately 25% of comments reflecting need for improvement related to VAC Effectiveness, and almost all comments related to clarity identified a current challenge.

Similar to the survey responses, comments that identified a need for change related to clarity most often intersected with **scope and mandate** (approximately 25% of comments), as well as **VAC structure/process** (approximately 20% of comments).

4. Timelines

VAC survey responses:

Feedback related to the timelines of VAC processes was least common in comments related to VAC Effectiveness (approximately 6% of all comments related to VAC Effectiveness, and 10% of those that identified a need for improvement), and all comments raised with respect to timelines identified this as a current challenge. Several of these comments were raised about VAC/Council processes more broadly as well as in relation to the VAC member and **selection/decision-making process**.

"The speed and flexibility of the process is lacking. At times, we needed to recruit members part way through the cycle to fill any expertise gaps or replacing members"

and it can take a very long to find new members. This is especially challenging when working within the 4 year committee term."

"You submit a report and they just vote to receive it and everything is so SLOW. People need to be prepared for how SLOW politics are and how long it takes for ideas to come to fruition."

VAC focus groups:

Comments related to timelines were more frequently raised in the focus groups, making up approximately 20% of comments that identified a need for change related to VAC Effectiveness. Most of these comments related to the timeliness of bringing on new VAC members when someone had stepped down, though timeliness related to the feedback loop with council when recommendations have been put forward was also raised.

5. VAC culture

VAC survey responses:

In the open-ended survey responses, VAC Culture was raised in approximately 15% of comments about VAC Effectiveness and was raised fairly equally as both something currently working well with respect to VACs (approximately 55% of comments) as well as an area that needs improvement (approximately 45% of comments).

Many of these comments highlighted camaraderie among VAC members and members' dedication to VAC work.

"I enjoyed my participation in the committee and meet wonderful Hamilton members. We were able to advance some change for our community."

"[VAC] is a hard working committee, well attended at committee meetings and working groups. We have kept [type of] issue in the forefront"

"Some members use the experience on the committee as a line in their CV and some try to bring their own personal agendas in front of the city council not understanding that committees advise, not decide on issues."

VAC focus groups:

Comments related to VAC Culture made up a larger portion of comments raised about VAC Effectiveness (over 15%) and were also raised more frequently as an aspect of VACs that is

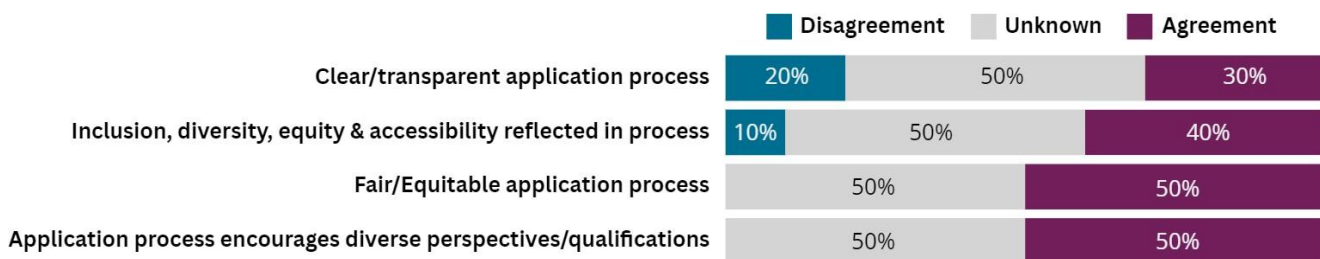
currently working well (approximately 75%), again highlighting member’s commitment to VAC’s and their goals.

5.2 Staff liaisons

5.2.1 Staff liaison survey

a. Application, selection, and appointment process

Figure 7. Staff liaison survey: application, selection, and appointment process



When looking at staff liaison responses to statements around the application, selection, and appointment process, 50% of staff answered unknown to the statements, with the majority indicating in the comment box that they were not with the committee during the VAC member selection process. Otherwise, staff liaisons generally expressed agreement with statements in this section, apart from the statement “The Application, selection, and appointment process is clear and transparent,” where 20% expressed disagreement. This was also the statement with the highest level of disagreement among VAC members who completed the survey.

b. Mandate and role

Figure 8. Staff liaison survey: mandate and role



When looking at staff liaison responses to the mandate and role of VACs, the statement “I understand how VACs fit within the municipal governance structure” has the highest

disagreement, with 40% of respondents indicating disagreement. The statements “The Terms of Reference for the VAC I am a staff liaison for clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of the members, staff liaisons and council,” as well as “My understanding of the scope and responsibilities of the VAC aligns with that of council and VAC members,” both had 30% of staff liaisons indicate disagreement.

c. Member training and materials

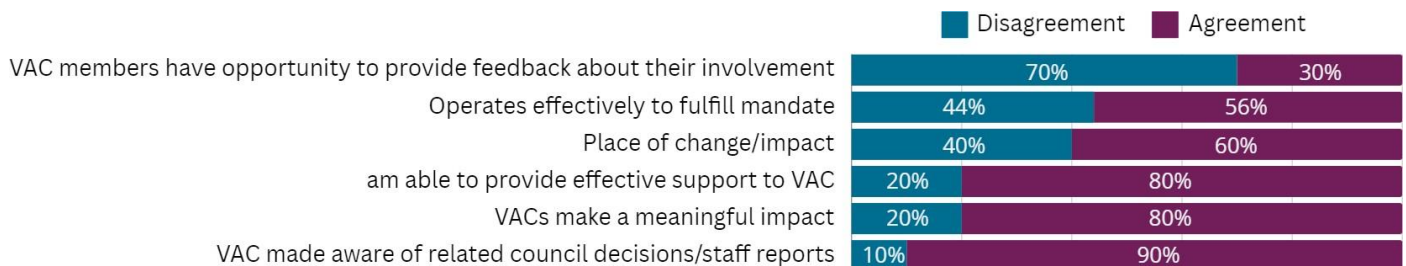
Figure 9. Staff liaison survey: Member training and materials



The statement “I was provided adequate training to fulfill the responsibilities of a Staff Liaison” had the largest indication of disagreement, with 80% of staff liaisons indicating disagreement. Regarding whether VAC members received adequate training, 50% of staff liaisons expressed disagreement. 40% of staff liaisons expressed disagreement with the statement, “I understand the VAC structure and the process by which VAC members can provide feedback to council.” Staff liaisons all expressed VAC members are provided with materials that they need to participate in VAC meetings in a timely manner, and that, as staff liaisons, they have access to the equipment and resources needed to fulfill their role.

d. Effectiveness in fulfilling mandate

Figure 10. Staff liaison survey: effectiveness in fulfilling mandate



70% of staff liaisons expressed disagreement with the statement, “VAC members have adequate opportunity to provide feedback about their involvement in a VAC.” Over half of the staff liaisons (55%) expressed disagreement with the statement “The VAC I am a staff liaison for operated

effectively to fulfill its mandate.” Half of the staff liaisons expressed disagreement with the statement, “VACs are a place where change impact, and/or influence can happen;” however, 70% of staff liaisons expressed agreement with the statement, “VACs make a meaningful impact in the City of Hamilton.”

Staff liaison open-ended survey responses:

Table 2. Staff Liaisons: Theme areas of open-ended responses

Theme	# Staff Liaisons who discussed theme (out of 10)	Frequency of theme in responses*
Scope and mandate	5	Total: 9 Challenges: 8 Benefits: 1
Staff Liaison training	5	Total: 5 Challenges: 5
Rigidity/bureaucracy	4	Total: 5 Challenges: 5
Impact	4	Total: 8 Challenges: 5 Benefits: 3
Member training	4	Total: 5 Challenges: 5
Involvement of staff	3	Total: 3 Challenges: 3
VAC Culture	2	Total: 8 Challenges: 8
Engagement with broader community	2	Total: 5 Challenges: 4 Benefits: 1
Councillor attendance	2	Total: 3 Challenges: 3

*themes may have come up multiple times in one staff liaison survey

When looking at the open-ended survey responses from staff liaisons, challenges pertaining to the **scope/mandate** of VACs were brought up most frequently, and by the greatest number of staff liaisons (five staff). The lack of **clarity** around the scope/mandate for VAC was the challenge raised most frequently, specifically with respect to the role of VACs. It was raised that VACs ought

to play more of an advisory role rather than program delivery or budget administration. Comments also raised confusion among both staff and VAC members about the advocacy capacity of VACs. One staff liaison also noted that developing priorities and work plan was a challenge for the VAC they worked with.

"There were challenges with staying in scope and knowing what they could [do] with a small budget. For example, it was difficult for them to know what was their role vs. staff's role vs. council's role."

Staff liaison training was also raised by five staff as a challenge, with two staff indicating that they did not receive any onboarding or training before starting in their role. Staff indicated a need for specific training for the staff liaison role.

"When I started in this role there was no cross-over and no formal staff liaison training provided at the corporate level, which I expected given the weight of the role."

"I think a well developed training for volunteers and staff liaisons that included information on the structure, function, roles, examples of activities etc. could be helpful and might address these changes."

The **rigidity/bureaucracy** of the VACs and associated processes, **impact**, and **member training**, were all raised as challenges in the comments made by four staff liaisons. In reference to rigidity/bureaucracy, staff spoke to the formality of VACs inhibiting committee work, along with lengthy timelines of moving things forward presenting challenges for VACs. Staff liaisons also noted training for VAC members as an area for improvement, indicating that training for VAC members should include orientation and training specific to: role, structure, function, and report writing. It was also suggested that newly formed committees have a senior clerk at an early meeting, or a pre-made video, outlining the reporting process, code of conduct etc. to make processes clearer. One comment also noted that the introduction of the citizen committee report in the middle of the term was confusing and that staff liaisons and VAC members were not adequately trained on this. In regard to impact, three staff liaisons noted that the current structure of VACs is not working effectively to allow VACs to fulfill their purpose, underscoring the importance of soliciting advice from citizen experts while speaking to the inefficiencies and ineffectiveness of the current structure for doing this.

Impact:

"I feel like the advisory committee model is ineffective in what I think their purpose is; to provide guidance to council. Our Committee doesn't do that. People on our committee actually interact more with council outside of the committee [...] because it is easier."

"I think it is a challenge for people to understand how council and committees function and the various ways in which they fit within this structure. A challenge of this structure for the committee I worked with is the timelines associated with moving things forward. It can be a slow process which can be frustrating for people."

"We also need to shift the culture of the committee to make them less formal / bureaucratic so that we can inspire and encourage genuine contributions. This may mean having less formal & less public meetings & staff can remit formal minutes as needed."

Three staff liaisons identified challenges around **involvement of staff** liaisons in VACs in the open-ended responses. Staff noted challenges with being required to run meetings when they had content expertise, but no knowledge of the processes pertaining to VACs, not having a clear understanding of their role in directing the committee, and the over-emphasis on administrative work.

Additionally, although only raised by two staff liaisons, challenges pertaining to **VAC culture** are important to highlight as concerns of bullying towards VAC members and staff liaisons, as well as concerns of broader toxicity within the VAC were raised.

"I had my intentions, work ethic, and performance attacked regularly. I had comments from Committee members that they felt bullied and that they would never come back to the committee because of the toxicity. As staff, I can take it, but committee members shouldn't have to."

Engagement with broader community and lack of **councillor attendance** at meetings were also raised by two staff liaisons as challenges. A staff liaison noted that VAC membership is not necessarily reflective of the community and highlighted the need for feedback mechanisms to increase broader community engagement and input at the grassroots level. Comments with respect to councillor attendance underscored the importance of having a councillor attached to each VAC as well as the importance of their attendance at meetings.

5.3 City Council members

5.3.1 City Council interviews

Given that Council Interviews were a comparatively smaller data set, the data was analyzed by the number of Council Members that raised a particular theme (Table 4).

Table 3. Council member interview theme areas

Theme	# Council Members who discussed theme (out of 10)	Frequency of theme in responses*
Communication with council	9	Total: 19 Challenges: 14 Benefits: 5
Scope and mandate	8	Total: 32 Challenges: 26 Benefits: 5
Impact	7	Total: 30 Challenges: 19 Benefits: 11
VAC member selection process	7	Total: 7 Challenges: 7
VAC structure/process	7	Total: 11 Challenges: 11
Clarity	6	Total: 14 Challenges: 13 Benefits: 1
Alignment with Council priorities	4	Total: 7 Challenges: 6 Benefits: 1
Timelines and effort required to meet them	4	Total: 6 Challenges: 6
Value of community expertise in VAC	4	Total: 14 Challenges: 5 Benefits: 9
Alignment with community need	4	Total: 5 Challenges: 4 Benefits: 1
Transparency	4	Total: 4 Challenges: 4

*themes may have come up more than once in each council member interview

Council members conveyed the general sentiment that VACs play an important role in providing community feedback. Council members also raised a number of areas of suggested improvements to the VAC function and process. Many of the themes raised coincided with the

feedback provided by VAC members and staff liaisons, although there was some divergence both thematically and in terms of the recommendations put forward. These are explored below.

In terms of the themes most frequently raised as areas of improvement, **communication with council** was raised most frequently by Council members. Comments by Council members generally suggested improvement to the process related to VAC recommendations (both how they are put forward as well as how they are received/actioned by Council). A need for a clear, transparent process of receiving, deliberating on, and communicating back to VACs was an identified need. Also, proactively engaging VACs to inform departmental reports and policy initiatives from the outset rather than reviewing reports that have already been put forward to council was raised. One comment raised that the City has enacted several new action plans that could align with existing VACs, though it is unclear if they have been consulted as part of the process. Alternatively, it was also suggested that VACs should be able to request a meeting with the committee they report to with respect to work they have taken on. Some comments raised issues related to the clarity of the work being undertaken by VACs, for example, improved clarity on how VACs fit into City policy-making as well as the relationship between council, staff liaisons, and VACs. Other comments suggested a need for uniformity in VAC reporting, and some suggested that the reports be provided to the whole of Council for review instead of going to committees.

Issues related to **scope and mandate** were raised in eight of ten Council interviews. Similar to feedback received in the VAC Member engagements and the Staff Liaison survey, lack of **clarity** of scope and mandate was raised most frequently and by the majority of Council Members that raised challenges related to scope and mandate. Comments by Council members identified the need to provide greater clarity to VACs on the expected outcomes of their work. Related to this, several council comments spoke to the need for clear terms of reference that are reviewed at regular intervals to ensure their currency. Though not raised as frequently in the VAC engagements, consideration of the **relevance** of VAC's scope and mandate in the current climate was raised by a majority of Council members that spoke to scope and mandate.

Impact (sentiment of VAC fulfilling mandate/role, having wider community impact, being valued/regarded) was raised by seven of ten Council members. Some comments made expressed that VAC members feel devalued or are underutilized (most frequently raised) and others spoke to the lack of proactive consultation with VACs on issues related to their mandate. Council members noted that VACs ought to be providing policy recommendations related to council's strategic priorities and should carry the same weight as consultant feedback. A desire to bring back the passion and commitment of community members who have otherwise joined advocacy groups into the formal VAC process was identified. To support this work, Council members identified a need for robust and consistent staff support, as well as a need for VACs to access financial resources and additional expertise as needed. There was divergence on the role of Clerks in VACs. Further training for VAC Chairs to effectively facilitate meetings to allow for meaningful

participation among all VAC members was also raised, along with improved training for staff on meaningful engagement with VACs.

Seven of ten Council Members also spoke to VAC member **selection/decision-making process** as an area that needs improvement. Most commonly, council members identified a need for increased **community involvement** in the selection and decision-making process. Creating a process for greater **transparency** in decision-making, for example, by using of a skills matrix, was seen as one way to improve the selection/ decision-making process. Adding transparency with respect to how inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility are factored into member selection was also suggested. Some Council members commented on the importance of establishing clear membership requirements in the selection process to avoid VACs being used to push personal agendas.

The **VAC Structure/Process** was also referenced by seven of ten Council Members. These comments largely identified that the over-structuring of VACs impedes their function and spoke to the need for some flexibility, less formality, and a balance between structure and overall purpose to allow VACs to carry out their work as intended. One council member suggested that VACs should be restructured as working groups rather than a local board to allow for greater flexibility. It was identified that committees that serve different purposes may require different structures and supports.

There was notable divergence among council members with respect to restructuring. One suggestion made was to only have VACs with specific mandates related to council priorities, while another spoke to the importance that all VACs can have if provided the opportunity and adequate support. It was noted that council may need to consider the creation of additional VACs to support their work. There was also a suggestion that VACs representing equity-deserving communities could be amalgamated as a potential means of supporting a more intersectional approach.

Several comments focussed on the need for a diversity of voices and expertise in each VAC to provide comprehensive advice to Council on Council priorities. One comment pointed to how the Climate Change Advisory Committee has been structured in that it is linked to a strategic priority of council, has membership that complements and enhances the capacity of the City and reflects diverse backgrounds that intersect with climate change, and suggested all VACs should be structured this way.

The need for greater clarity was also a notable theme, raised by six of ten Council Members. Like the feedback received through the engagements with VAC Members and Staff Liaisons, comments with respect to clarity were most often raised with respect to VAC **scope and mandate**. The need for greater clarity was also brought up more generally with respect to VAC processes and how information is shared between Council and VACs.

Misalignment with Council Priorities was brought forward as an area of improvement by four Council Members. Comments spoke to the desire for clear delineation between the mandate of VACs and current council priorities. It was also suggested that VAC terms align with those of council.

The **timelines** with respect to VAC processes were also raised as a current challenge by four Council Members, both with respect to the need for timely recommendations from VACs, the considerable time it takes to put recommendations forward given the current VAC structure, and the timelines for feedback. Time constraints related to recruitment was also identified as a concern.

The value of the **community expertise** brought forward by VACs was brought forward by five Council Members as an aspect of VACs that is currently working well. Most highlighted the value of citizen input and the importance of leveraging community knowledge and expertise. Community expertise was also raised as an area that needs improvement by four Council Members, and reflected sentiments that **community expertise in VACs could be better utilized**.

Alignment with community needs was raised by four Council Members, with respect to the importance of balancing/incorporating feedback from the broader community in addition to or as part of the VAC through VAC engagement with the wider community. One comment suggested that VACs ought to be able to use the Engage Hamilton platform or host town halls to seek advice from residents on initiatives and recommendations being considered by the VAC.

Transparency was also raised by four Council Members, with respect to VAC's relationship to Council, noting a lack of transparency with respect to Council expectations of VACs and receiving/actioning VAC reports.

5.4 Additional considerations

Although the themes below were not raised with the same level of frequency as the previous sections in the VAC member, staff liaison and council member engagements, issues around accessibility, the VAC review, and measuring success were raised among VAC members, staff liaisons, and councillors.

5.4.1 Accessibility

Several challenges regarding accessibility were raised. Most frequently, the suggestion to offer **hybrid** VAC meetings was raised, both in terms of making VACs more accessible for a broader audience, as well as a means to address issues with quorum.

Storage of relevant documents for VAC members (past meeting minutes, presentations, working documents) in an accessible manner was raised second most frequently. VAC members voiced challenges with the lack of infrastructure available to VACs to store documents currently, with VAC members having to store items on personal computers and drives. For those who do not have access to personal storage, this presents a significant barrier to meaningful participation in VACs; members also voiced concern that the lack of availability of documents in an accessible format affects the continuity of work, especially when there is turnover among VAC members.

Stipends and Meeting supports for VAC members was raised third most frequently. Staff and VAC members noted that offering stipends would enable more diverse representation and experience on committees. The availability of childcare and more disability-related supports were also raised as areas for improvement, as well as parking and having food available at VAC meetings. Council member feedback included that VAC members take time away from their families to participate and should at least get a meal as a token of the City's thanks for their time and efforts.

5.4.2 VAC review

Although not necessarily part of the scope of this review, VAC members raised several questions and concerns around the current VAC review. These comments highlight the lack of **clarity** and **transparency** VAC members have felt around the review process and timelines.

VAC members expressed concerns about the lack of clarity regarding the purpose of the review process. In the absence of clear and transparent communication, members were left to speculate about the intended outcome of the review, with some noting they were told their committees might not exist after the review.

As VACs played a role in facilitating feedback from the broader community related to their mandates to council, VAC members also noted concerns around this "missing link" that exists with regards to council consultation and engagement with community expertise while the review is being undertaken.

5.4.3 Measuring success

Measuring success was raised in three of the focus groups and by a few council members. VAC members highlighted that having ongoing feedback methods (e.g. and annual survey on VAC functioning) would be beneficial to address challenges as they arise, and gauge what VAC members feel is working well, and provide opportunities to suggest areas for improvement. Others suggested that where possible, VACs have work plans or strategic plans that include indicators of success.

Overall, measuring the success of VACs is an area that needs significant consideration, specifically around how success is defined, and who defines the success of VACs.

“On measuring success, One suggestion would be that if the City establishes a new approach to Advisory Committees, there should definitely be an evaluation plan to go with it e.g. annual survey to measure 'how's it going?' for both the committee members and the staff liaison, and a measure of Councillor participation too”

“valuable if each committee had a stat plan and committee workplan – when there is turn over there is an agreed up plan that the committee could continue working towards (Clean Air Hamilton provided as an example), renewed every year or term of council/committee, provided measurement and indicators to know if work has been successful”

6.0 Discussion and recommendations

The high level of participation from VAC members, staff liaisons and council members speaks to dedication and desire to ensure VACs can operate in a way that affects meaningful change in the City of Hamilton. Council members, staff liaisons, and VAC members spoke to a desire for an improved process that enables meaningful participation of volunteers, recognizing that VAC members have a wealth of knowledge and expertise based on their lived and professional experiences that can be utilized for the greater good of Hamilton.

Important for consideration in both the discussion and recommendations, is the intersecting nature of the challenges and benefits brought forward in participant feedback. As previously noted, areas requiring improvement cannot be looked at in isolation and must be situated in the broader context of VAC function, particularly in considering recommendations for change moving forward. Moreover, steps taken to remedy areas that were identified as needing improvement should strive to understand and work to address the root causes of issues to avoid the reoccurrence of challenges. For example, while improved training may address some issues related to lack of clarity with respect to VAC process and structure and would likely have other positive implications for VAC participation, comments in the engagements with VAC members, staff liaisons, and council demonstrated misalignment in the understanding of the purpose and role of VACs. This incongruence would likely not be addressed by training alone and requires intentional work to establish a common understanding of the purpose and intended outcomes of VACs.

6.1 Summary of aspects currently working well and opportunities

Across our engagements with all participants, there was recognition of the immense opportunity VACs provide in leveraging both the enthusiasm and expertise of community members in Hamilton. The diversity of experiences and opinions on VACs was highlighted as a critical asset that allows the City to tap into and engage with a knowledge-base they may otherwise not have access to, as well as provide the opportunity to foster more equitable solutions that meet community needs. This is demonstrated in the below staff liaison quotes:

"...having a group of diverse folks that can bring an array of ideas to the table is really amazing. There's so many things that other people can think of."

"A focussed, involved advisory committee can bring relevant issues to Council's attention and suggest ways to deal with these issues. The citizen view of Hamilton, as a place to live and work, raise a family and age successfully, is not necessarily the same as that of an employee who may live elsewhere. These committees have the opportunity to suggest events and ways to generate more equitable involvement in the city by marginalized groups."

All participant groups also highlighted the importance of VACs as a vehicle for community involvement and engagement. In particular, VAC members noted the importance of the connections built through VACs and the role VACs can play in fostering a sense of community, breaking down barriers to civic engagement, and providing opportunities to contribute to the creation of a thriving Hamilton.

There was also a strong desire by VAC members, staff liaison, and council to establish appropriate structure and supports that would enable meaningful integration of VACs into City processes as a means of identifying issues from the community as well as providing advice on strategic initiatives being undertaken by council and the City.

6.2 Summary of areas for improvement

Similar to the above-noted opportunities, several challenges were also consistently raised among the three participant groups. Challenges pertaining to impact were most commonly raised among the engagements. These comments spoke to the unfulfilled potential and underutilization of VACs and the community expertise held within them. Lack of clarity with respect to the scope and mandate of VACs was also frequently raised among all three participant groups. Notably, there was both a lack of clarity around scope and misalignment between the three participant groups with respect to the role of VACs in Hamilton. The current structure and processes of VACs were also consistently raised as an area for improvement among VAC members, staff liaisons and

council. All three participant groups identified over-structuring VACs as an impediment to their function and ability to take on meaningful work. The need for a clearly articulated, accessible and transparent process for communicating with council was also identified, both in relation to how VAC recommendations are brought forward, but also in how council receives, reviews, and responds to VAC recommendations. While not raised as frequently as council, the need for more consistent and comprehensive training for both VAC members and staff liaisons was commonly raised by the two groups. The need for improved transparency with respect to the VAC member selection and decision-making process, including clear selection criteria, was also raised frequently by both VAC members and council.

6.3 Recommendations

Overall:

1. As the City looks to potentially amend the VAC model considering the outcomes of this review, it is imperative that the City continue to involve and consult VAC members with respect to potential changes moving forward. VAC members have tremendous knowledge on what has been working well and what has not with respect to VAC function. Their involvement will only strengthen remedies to the challenges identified in this report, as well as provide an opportunity to rebuild trust lost with VAC members.
2. Given the sentiments of disregard and confusion communicated by VAC members with respect to how the VAC Review was initiated, we encourage the City to proactively inform and engage VAC members in the next steps of the review.
3. Overall, there is a need for greater clarity and consistent understanding of the role of VACs, their expected outcomes, and how each participant group (i.e. VAC members, staff liaisons and council members) participate in and contribute to the work of VACs. As this was a need identified by all three groups, it is recommended that the scope, mandate, role and intended outcomes of VACs be clearly defined in VAC governing document.
4. In addition to clear objectives, there is a need to develop ongoing feedback mechanisms and an evaluation plan for VACs. Evaluation of VACs needs to capture both the effectiveness of the VACs in fulfilling their mandates as well as volunteer experiences on the committees, necessitating feedback from council, staff liaisons and VAC members on their effectiveness. Additionally, implementing a process for ongoing feedback would create opportunities to address challenges with VACs as they arise.

Impact:

5. It should be recognized that all challenges brought forward in this report and the associated recommendations for remedy have direct implications on the effectiveness and impact VACs can have. As a result, it is recommended that careful consideration is given to how all recommendations could be implemented.
6. The City should look to implement processes and engagement opportunities that support improved collaboration and a more intersectional approach to VAC work, including vehicles that enable VAC engagement with the broader community as well as means for VACs to collaborate with each other on intersecting issues.

Scope/Mandate:

7. Implement VAC Terms of Reference (TOR) reviews at regularly scheduled intervals to ensure governing documents continue to meet the needs of VAC members and council.
8. Given that the importance of community expertise was highlighted as a key asset by all three participant groups, it is recommended that VACs be provided the latitude necessary to raise concerns identified at the community level. Additionally, there was an identified need for better alignment between council and City priorities and the work of VACs; therefore, it is recommended that the City review existing VACs for alignment with strategic priorities and refocus VAC work as needed.
9. There is also need for consideration of the diverse mandates and functions of current VACs, therefore, a one-size-fits-all approach to VAC governance and supports would likely not support the success of current VACs.

VAC Structure/Processes:

10. As the rigidity of the current VAC structure was raised as a barrier to VAC's ability to fulfill their role by all three participant groups, it is recommended that the City consider less structured formats/processes for VACs. While it was recognized that some structure is required for meaningful participation, procedures around quorum and how discussions are held were generally viewed as inhibiting the important advisory and engagement function of VACs.
11. To fully utilize the expertise on VACs, proactive and ongoing engagement with VACs should be embedded into existing consultation processes that inform council priorities and departmental work as they relate to VAC scope and mandate (e.g. in the development and implementation of City action plans). This consultation should be done as part of

departmental work on strategic initiatives and before staff reports are put to council for consideration.

12. VAC governance documents should clearly articulate the role of council members on VACs, including the expected level of participation from council members (e.g. frequency of meeting attendance, availability for consultation to VAC outside of meetings) to support consistent understanding across all VAC participants.
13. Governance documents should also provide clear direction on the role of staff liaisons in facilitating and supporting VAC work. VACs also require ongoing support from staff content experts as well as procedural experts. Delineation of these roles, and consistent access to both competencies, would better support VACs as well as the staff supporting their work.

Council Communication:

14. Ensure a clear and transparent process, with expected timelines, is provided to VAC members with respect to communicating and making recommendations to council. The process should identify how recommendations are put forward, how and by whom recommendations are received, and deliberated. It should also clearly outline how council will respond to the recommendations, and if/how they have been actioned, focusing on ensuring a clear feedback loop to VACs.

Training:

15. There is a need for improved, consistent, and accessible training for VAC members. More comprehensive training on council structure and process, VAC scope and responsibilities, meeting procedure and VAC decision making, report-writing, and role-specific training for VAC chairs were identified needs.
16. Steps should also be taken to develop and implement consistent training for staff liaisons that clearly outlines the role of staff liaisons, as well as VAC purpose, function, and structure. Consistent onboarding and handoff planning should also be developed to better support transitions between staff liaisons. A centralized location for all VAC documents/work accessible to staff liaisons and all VAC members would also support these transitions.

Selection/Decision Making:

17. Involve community stakeholders in the VAC member selection and decision-making process.
18. Working with citizen representatives supporting VAC selection work, develop selection criteria for VAC members, inclusive of how equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility are accounted

for in decision-making. Communicate selection criteria to applicants/public during the call for applications. Where a VAC applicant is unsuccessful, communicate the outcome to the applicant and provide a brief explanation of the decision to further support transparency of the process.

19. Established term limits for VAC membership. Clearly communicate term limits in VAC Terms of Reference.
20. Greater attention needs to be given to the timely transition between VAC members in the event a VAC member resigns. Maintaining a list of applicants who met the application criteria but were not selected for the role would assist with this transition.
21. Provide robust, consistent training to all VAC members, including those brought on mid-term.

Appendix

Appendix A – VAC member survey



Under the direction of the Hamilton City Council, the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division is currently leading a review of Volunteer Advisory Committees to provide recommendations around engagement to fulfill the priorities of the 2022-2026 Term of Council.

As part of this review, the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division has engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to collect feedback from key community partners. The SPRC is an independent, non-profit organization that conducts program evaluations and community-based research.

This survey collects information about members' experiences on Volunteer Advisory Committees as aligned with the scope of the Volunteer Advisory Committee Review. The survey has 27 questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. It will ask you to reflect on your experience in four areas:

- (1) The application, selection, and appointment process
- (2) The mandate and roles of your Volunteer Advisory Committee
- (3) Member training and materials, and
- (4) How effective the Volunteer Advisory Committee is at achieving its mandate

The survey does not ask for any identifying information and the answers provided will be anonymous. Questions can be skipped if you don't have the information or are uncomfortable providing an answer. Information shared through the survey will be reported to the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division.

Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is important and will help inform City staff recommendations to Council. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact SPRC Social Planners, Jen Matthews (jmatthews@sprchamilton.ca) or Alana Westervelt (awestervelt@sprchamilton.ca). To learn more about SPRC, visit sprchamilton.ca.

By clicking next to enter this survey, I indicate that I have read the information provided and agree to participate in the survey.

Application, Selection & Appointment Process

Based on your personal experience with the City of Hamilton's Volunteer Advisory Committees, please respond to the following statements:

1. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees is fair and equitable.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees is clear and transparent.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees reflects the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees encourages a diversity of perspectives and qualifications among committee membership.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committee application, selection and appointment process.

Mandate & Role

Based on your personal experience with the City of Hamilton's Volunteer Advisory Committees, please respond to the following statements:

6. I understand the purpose of Volunteer Advisory Committees.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

7. My understanding of the purpose and mandate of Volunteer Advisory Committees aligns with that of council and staff liaisons.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. I understand the role and responsibilities of Volunteer Advisory Committee members.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. My understanding of the role and responsibilities of Volunteer Advisory Committee members aligns with that of council and staff liaisons.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. The terms of reference for the Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) that I am a member of clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of members, staff liaisons, and council.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. I understand how Volunteer Advisory Committees fit within the municipal governance structure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committees mandate and role.

Member Training & Materials

Based on your personal experience with the City of Hamilton's Volunteer Advisory Committees, please respond to the following statements:

13. I was provided adequate training to fulfill the responsibilities of a Volunteer Advisory Committee member.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

14. Further training in these areas would benefit me as a Volunteer Advisory Committee member (please select all that apply):

Council structure/procedure

Volunteer Advisory Committee scope and responsibilities

Volunteer Advisory Committee meeting procedure and decision making

Using meeting technology

Other (please specify)

No further training

15. I am provided the information needed to fully participate in Volunteer Advisory Committee meetings in a timely and efficient manner.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

16. I understand the Volunteer Advisory Committee structure and the process to provide feedback to council.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

17. I have access to the equipment and resources needed to fulfill my role on a Volunteer Advisory Committee.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. I understand the decision-making process and how my voice can be heard within a Volunteer Advisory Committee.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committee member training and meeting materials.

Effectiveness in Fulfilling Mandate

Based on your personal experience with the City of Hamilton's Volunteer Advisory Committees, please respond to the following statements:

20. The Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) I am a member of operates effectively to fulfill its mandate.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

21. The staff liaison(s) effectively supports the work of the Volunteer Advisory Committee(s).

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. I am made aware of council decisions and staff reports that relate to the mandate of the Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) I am a member of.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. My contributions through the Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) make a meaningful impact on the City of Hamilton.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

24. Volunteer Advisory Committees are a place where change, impact, and/or influence can happen.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

25. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the effectiveness of Volunteer Advisory Committees in fulfilling their mandates.

Opportunities

26. Based on your experience as a Volunteer Advisory Committee member, what do you see as the biggest opportunity for Volunteer Advisory Committees in the City of Hamilton?

27. Please use the space below to share anything else about your experience as a Volunteer Advisory Committee member that has not already been included.

Appendix B: Staff liaison survey



Volunteer Advisory Committee Review - Staff Liaison Survey

Under the direction of the Hamilton City Council, the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division is currently leading a review of Volunteer Advisory Committees to provide recommendations around engagement to fulfill the priorities of the 2022-2026 Term of Council.

As part of this review, the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division has engaged the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) to collect feedback from key community partners. The SPRC is an independent, non-profit organization that conducts program evaluations and community-based research.

This survey collects information about Staff Liaisons' experiences on Volunteer Advisory Committees as aligned with the scope of the Volunteer Advisory Committee Review. The survey has 31 questions and takes approximately 10 minutes to complete. It will ask you to reflect on your experience in four areas:

- (1) The application, selection, and appointment process
- (2) The mandate and roles of your Volunteer Advisory Committee
- (3) Member training and materials, and
- (4) How effective the Volunteer Advisory Committee is at achieving its mandate

Questions can be skipped if you don't have the information or are uncomfortable providing an answer. Information shared through the survey will be anonymized and reported to the City's Government Relations and Community Engagement Division.

Thank you for your participation. Your feedback is important and will help inform City staff recommendations to Council. If you have any questions or concerns about this survey, please contact SPRC Social Planner, Jen Matthews (jmatthews@sprchamilton.ca). To learn more about SPRC, visit sprchamilton.ca.

By clicking next to enter this survey, I indicate that I have read the information provided and agree to participate in the survey.

1. What Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) are you currently the Staff Liaison for?

Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees

Arts Advisory Committee

Committee Against Racism

Food Advisory Committee

Hamilton Cycling Committee

Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee

Hamilton Veterans Advisory Committee

Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee

Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee

Keeping Hamilton Green and Clean Committee

LGTBQ Advisory Committee

Mundialization Committee

Seniors Advisory Committee

Application, Selection & Appointment Process

Based on your personal experience as a City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) Staff Liaison, please respond to the following statements:

2. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees is fair and equitable.

Strongly Agree Agree Unknown Disagree Strongly Disagree

3. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees is clear and transparent.

Strongly Agree Agree Unknown Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees reflects the values of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility.

Strongly Agree Agree Unknown Disagree Strongly Disagree

5. The application, selection, and appointment process for Volunteer Advisory Committees encourages a diversity of perspectives and qualifications among committee membership.

Strongly Agree Agree Unknown Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committee application, selection and appointment process.

Mandate & Role

Based on your personal experience as a City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) Staff Liaison, please respond to the following statements:

7. I understand the purpose of Volunteer Advisory Committees.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

8. My understanding of the purpose and mandate of Volunteer Advisory Committees aligns with that of council and Volunteer Advisory Committee members.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

9. I understand the role and responsibilities of the Staff Liaison role.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. My understanding of the scope and responsibilities of the Staff Liaison role aligns with that of council and Volunteer Advisory Committee members.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

11. The terms of reference for the Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) that I am a Staff Liaison for clearly outline the roles and responsibilities of members, staff liaisons, and council.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

12. I understand how Volunteer Advisory Committees fit within the municipal governance structure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

13. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committees mandate and role.

Member Training & Materials

Based on your personal experience as a City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) Staff Liaison, please respond to the following statements:

14. I was provided adequate training to fulfill the responsibilities of a Staff Liaison.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

15. Volunteer Advisory Committee members receive adequate training to fulfill their role.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

16. In what areas do you feel Volunteer Advisory Committee members require additional training (please select all that apply):

Council structure/procedure

Volunteer Advisory Committee scope and responsibilities

Volunteer Advisory Committee meeting procedure and decision making

Using meeting technology

Other (please specify)

No further training

17. Volunteer Advisory Committee members are provided the information needed to fully participate in VAC meetings in a timely and efficient manner.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

18. I understand the Volunteer Advisory Committee structure and the processes by which Volunteer Advisory Committee Members can provide feedback to council.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

19. I have access to the equipment and resources needed to fulfill my role as a Staff Liaison.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

20. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the Volunteer Advisory Committee member training and meeting materials.

Effectiveness in Fulfilling Mandate

Based on your personal experience as a City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) Staff Liaison, please respond to the following statements:

21. The Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) I am a Staff Liaison for operates effectively to fulfill its mandate.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

22. As a Staff Liaison, I am able to effectively support the work of Volunteer Advisory Committees to fulfill their mandate.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

23. Volunteer Advisory Committee members are informed of the council decisions and staff reports related to the mandate of their committee

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

24. Volunteer Advisory Committee(s) make a meaningful impact on the City of Hamilton.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

25. Volunteer Advisory Committees are a place where change, impact, and/or influence can happen.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

26. Volunteer Advisory Committee members have adequate opportunities to provide feedback about their involvement in a Volunteer Advisory Committee.

Strongly agree Agree Disagree Strongly disagree

27. Please share any other feedback or examples you have about the effectiveness of Volunteer Advisory Committees in fulfilling their mandates.

Opportunities

28. Based on your experience as a Staff Liaison, what do you see as the biggest opportunity for Volunteer Advisory Committees in the City of Hamilton?

29. Based on your experience as a Staff Liaison, what do you see as the biggest challenge(s) for Volunteer Advisory Committees in the City of Hamilton?

30. Are there changes needed to overcome these challenges? If so, in your opinion, what changes need to be made?

31. Please use the space below to share anything else about Volunteer Advisory Committees that has not already been included.

Appendix C: VAC focus group questions

1. From your perspective, what has been working well with respect to Volunteer Advisory Committees?

Prompt: Members who filled out the survey shared a number of things that they feel have been working well – are there any key highlights from your experience that you would like to share?

2. From your perspective, what are the unmet needs resulting from how Volunteer Advisory Committees are currently or were operating before being put on hold?

Prompt: In the survey, volunteer advisory committee members noted some significant challenges that their committees faced, does anyone here tonight have any general challenges or specific examples that they would like to highlight?

3. In an ideal world, what role would Volunteer Advisory Committees play in the City of Hamilton?

4. What, if any, changes would be necessary for Volunteer Advisory Committees to better fulfill this role?

Prompt: Would changes need to be made to VAC's current structure or processes? What would be the relationship between VACs and council? What role would Staff Liaisons play? What supports would VAC members need to carry out this role?

Appendix D: Council member interview questions

1. From your perspective, what has been working well with respect to Volunteer Advisory Committees?
2. From your perspective, what are the unmet needs resulting from the current Volunteer Advisory Committee structure and process?
3. In an ideal world, what role would Volunteer Advisory Committees play in the City of Hamilton?
4. What, if any, changes would be necessary for Volunteer Advisory Committees to better fulfill this role?

Prompt: Are there any structural changes to volunteer advisory committees needed to better fulfill this role?

Appendix E: Thematic analysis codes

- 1) Benefits
- 2) Challenges
- 3) Scope/mandate
 - Collaboration with other VACs
 - Alignment with current council priorities
 - Alignment with community need
 - Engaging broader community
- 4) Councillor Involvement
 - Councillor meeting attendance
 - Council participation at meeting
- 5) Logistics
- 6) Measuring success
- 7) Application process
 - Advertising
 - Selection/decision-making process
- 8) Staff
 - Process expertise
 - Content expertise
 - Clerk
 - Staff Involvement
 - Turnover
- 9) Training
 - Staff liaison training
 - Other training
 - Co-chair specific training
- 10) VAC effectiveness
 - VAC member training
 - Timelines
 - Impact
 - Clarity
 - Transparency
 - VAC culture
- 11) VAC membership
 - Quorum
 - Community expertise
 - Alternate agenda
 - Representation/diversity
- 12) VAC process/structure
 - Continuity of work
 - Consultation process/proactive consultation
 - Accessibility
 - Communication with council
 - Structured process (rigidity/bureaucracy)
- 13) VAC review process

Appendix F: Community scan of advisory tables consulted by the City (Added June 2024)

As outlined in the Introduction to the broader VAC Review Engagement Report, SPRC was asked to work with the City to generate and analyze a list of the community tables actively consulted by the City as a component of the VAC Review. Appendix F and G fulfill this component of the review.

a. Methodology

SPRC's research team developed a list of survey questions to be circulated among City staff in various departments to identify the tables, groups, and organizations the City consults with in addition to VACs. The questions were reviewed by the City Project Manager and subsequently sent to City staff in a survey distributed by the Government Relations and Community Engagement Office. The survey featured three questions:

- 1) What City department/division do you work in?
- 2) Do you seek input from any external community groups, collaboratives, or organizations to inform your work?
- 3) If so, what community groups, collaboratives, or organizations do you regularly consult with for input? Please list all.

The City Project Manager compiled and alphabetized the responses from City staff and sent the list of responses to SPRC for analysis. SPRC's research team reviewed the provided list, identifying and organizing the entries into the following categories (see Appendix G):

- 1) Current VAC/Sub-committee
- 2) City-led/coordinated advisory tables, groups, and other City advisory bodies
- 3) Community-based/led tables, collaboratives, and other initiatives consulted by the City
- 4) Single entities (e.g. non-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, community groups, and corporations) consulted by the City
- 5) City Strategies and Plans

The re-organized list was subsequently sent to the City to review for accuracy.

The research team conducted a broad-based analysis of the entries, providing general considerations around the role of VACs and consultations with other community groups. This analysis is provided below.

b. Limitations

The timelines for this component of the VAC Review were significantly affected by the cybersecurity incident that has impacted the City's IT systems since February 2024, as well as shifts in departmental capacity within the Government Relations and Community Engagement Division at the City. As a result, the scope and outcomes for this component of the project were amended to accommodate a much larger data-collection timeframe than initially anticipated.

c. Analysis

The list generated through the survey sent to City staff identifies over 200 different tables, community groups, and organizations that staff consult. Of these, roughly

- 8% are VACs or Council sub-committees
- 18% are City-led/coordinated advisory tables, groups, and other City advisory bodies
- 11% are Community-based/led tables, collaboratives, and other initiatives consulted by the City
- 45% are Single entities (e.g. non-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, community groups, and corporations) consulted by the City
- 3% are City Strategies or Plans
- 15% were unable to be categorized

It is important to note that other community tables and collaboratives exist in the city that were not captured in the list generated by City staff. These groups may provide further opportunities for engagement.

Frequent opportunities for engagement are important to ensure City work plans and strategies are informed by community level expertise. As demonstrated in the list generated by City staff, the City currently undertakes many forms of engagement and consultation with various community bodies. While information related to the extent to which these bodies are consulted was not collected, the input provided from these consultations undoubtedly provides the City with important insights related to City plans, policies, and priorities.

Below are important general considerations when exploring the role of VACs and other consultations undertaken by City staff. This analysis is based on SPRC's experience and knowledge due to the limitations described above. Future analysis could further expand on the roles, opportunities, and mechanisms by which community groups, listed or otherwise, can provide input to the City.

- **The makeup of VACs and community tables often differ:** Community members/individual constituents make up a large part of VAC membership, whereas many community tables are made up of organizational representatives. Each offers different perspectives, including on the implementation of City plans and council priorities.
- **VACs often have a different relationship with council compared to community tables:** VACs provide a direct link to council, whereas it is frequent practice for tables/organizations to rely on City staff to bring forward information raised in their engagements, creating an intermediary relationship with council.
- **There are transparent parameters for how the City engages VACs:** There are transparent processes for how VACs should be engaged and consulted by the City. These parameters are available to the public through VAC Terms of Reference, public VAC meetings, agendas, and minutes. Although incredibly important, the City's process for engaging and consulting with community bodies may not have the same degree of transparency for the general public, specifically pertaining to who gets consulted, when, and how frequently, as well as the role and impact of these consultations.
- **VACs provide space for ground-up ideas from community:** Based on their guiding documents, VACs offer space for generative and iterative ideas to be identified and brought forward by participants, in addition to providing engagement on City plans and other strategic areas identified by the City. Other community engagement methods used by the City, for example, Engage Hamilton, offer community members the opportunity to provide feedback on specified projects and initiatives.
- VACs have resources that support their operations including secure funding and support staff. Many community tables have ad-hoc funding that is often less dependable and may change with shifting funder priorities.

Conclusion

In summary, VACs and community tables provide different, but equally important, engagement opportunities on City priorities, strategies, and workplans given their differences in composition, accountability mechanisms, and transparency in how they are engaged by the City. It is suggested that attention is paid to these nuances in enhancing and implementing City engagement strategies.

Appendix G: List of tables and organizations consulted by the City (Added June 2024)

Please note that italicized entries are the organizations/tables presumed to be referenced and have been categorized on this basis.

Volunteer Advisory Committees and Council Sub-Committees

1. Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD)
2. Agricultural and Rural Affairs committee
3. Clean and Green Committee (*Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee*)
4. Climate Change Advisory Committee
5. Committee for Immigrants and Refugees (*Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees*)
6. Cross-Melville Heritage Conservation District Advisory Committee (*Cross-Melville District Heritage Committee*)
7. Development Charges Stakeholder Sub-Committee
8. Development Industry Liaison Group (DILG)
9. Glanbrook Landfill Coordinating Committee
10. Hamilton Cycling Advisory Committee (*Hamilton Cycling Committee*)
11. Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee
12. Hamilton Veterans Committee
13. Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee (*Women and Gender Equity Committee*)
14. Heritage Permit Review Subcommittee
15. Indigenous Advisory Committee
16. LRT Sub-committee
17. LGBTQ Advisory Committee
18. Open for Business Sub-committee
19. Seniors Advisory Group committee (*Seniors Advisory Committee*)

City-led/coordinated advisory tables, groups, and other City advisory bodies

20. Early on Equity and Engagement Advisory Group
21. Adopt A Park Working Groups
22. Age Friendly Hamilton Collaborative Committee
23. Age-Friendly Governance Committee
24. Bayfront Industrial Area Strategy Steering Committee
25. City Housing Hamilton
26. CityLAB (CoH)
27. CityLab Steering Committee
28. Clr. Beattie's student council
29. Club 60 Senior's Club Board
30. Community Partnership Action Table (CPAT)
31. Daily School Routes (*Active and Sustainable School Travel*)
32. Early Years CMSM Advisory
33. Early Years HR Workforce Committee

34. EarlyON Operational Committee
35. EarlyOn, Veteran's Committee
36. Extreme Heat Working Group
37. Fair Wage Ad-Hoc Committee
38. Hamilton Bee City
39. Hamilton Breastfeeding Coalition
40. Hamilton Drug Prevention (*Hamilton Drug Prevention Steering Committee*)
41. Hamilton Early Years Research Network (*Hamilton Early Years Research & Evaluation Network*)
42. Hamilton Food Literacy Network
43. Hamilton Future Fund Board of Governors
44. Hamilton Healthy and Safe Communities Joint Boards of Education Leadership Committee
45. Hamilton Music Advisory Team
46. Hamilton Opiate Action Table
47. Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Program
48. Hamilton Trillium Awards Committee
49. Hamilton Ukrainian Crisis Response (*Hamilton Ukrainian Crisis Response Working Group Team and Working Groups*)
50. Hamilton's Child and Youth Network
51. HamOnt Youth Steering Committee
52. Housing Focused Outreach
53. HPHS/School board collaboration meetings
54. Infant and Early Years Mental Health Committee
55. Internal Youth Steering Committee
56. Mobility Lab
57. Perinatal Mental Health Workgroup
58. Salam Hamilton Planning Group
59. Smoking Cessation Community of Practice
60. Woodward Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade & Expansion Project Community Liaison Committee
61. Youth Serving Advisory Network (YSAN)
62. Youth Steering Committee (City of Hamilton)
63. Youth Strategy Working Group

Community-based/led tables, collaboratives, and other initiatives consulted by the City

64. Basic Income Hamilton
65. Bay Area Climate Change Council
66. Canadian Wildlife Health Cooperative
67. Circle of Beads (COB)
68. Coalition of Hamilton Indigenous Leadership
69. Community Data Program Data Working Group
70. Community Transitions Network (CTN)
71. Dust and Particulate Matter Working Group
72. Embolden Advisory Group (McMaster)

73. FASD Network
74. GHHN Partnership Council
75. Hamilton Coalition for Refugee Claimants
76. Hamilton Committee for the Collaborative Management of Youth Suicide
77. Hamilton Community Benefits Network
78. Hamilton Community Cat Network
79. Hamilton Employment Resource Network
80. Hamilton For All
81. Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)
82. Hamilton is Home Coalition (HiHC)
83. Hamilton Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Lab
84. McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) Community Stakeholder Committee
85. No Hate in the Hammer
86. SCORE! Advisory Team
87. Seniors at Risk Community Collaborative (SaRCC)
88. Street Youth Planning Collaborative
89. Tastebuds Student Nutrition Program Steering Committee
90. Women's Shelter System (*Women's Housing Planning Collaborative*)

Single entities (e.g. non-profit organizations, neighbourhood associations, community groups, and corporations) consulted by the City

91. Aboriginal Health Centre
92. Afro Canadian Caribbean Association
93. Ainslie Wood Community Association (AWCA)
94. Air, Army, Navy Cadets
95. Ancaster Achievement Senior's Club (*Ancaster Achievement Senior's Centre*)
96. Ancaster Horticulture Society
97. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario, Hamilton Branch
98. Architectural Conservancy of Ontario
99. Argyll and Sutherland Highland Light Infantry
100. Bay Area Research Logistics
101. Bay Area Restoration Council
102. Beasley Neighborhood Association
103. Blk Owned
104. Bruce Trail Conservancy
105. Business Improvement Area Groups (BIAs)
106. Canadian Council for the Blind
107. Canadian National Institute for the Blind
108. Centre for Civic Inclusion YWCA
109. Chamber of Commerce
110. Citizens at City Hall (CATCH)
111. Clean Air Hamilton
112. Columbia International College
113. Compass Community Health

114. Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System Alliance
115. Cycle Hamilton
116. Dundas Community Services - Seniors Supports
117. Dundas Senior's Club Board
118. Dundas Turtle Watch
119. Durand Neighborhood Assoc.
120. Empowerment Squared
121. Environment Hamilton
122. Everyone Rides Initiative
123. Flamborough Chamber of Commerce
124. Flamborough Senior's Board
125. Friends of Auchmar
126. Golden Horseshoe Live Steamers
127. Good Shepherd
128. Greater Hamilton Health Network
129. Green Communities Canada
130. Green Venture
131. Hamilton Arts Council
132. Hamilton Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now (ACORN)
133. Hamilton Bike Share
134. Hamilton Burlington SPCA
135. Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion
136. Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
137. Hamilton Council on Aging (HCOA)
138. Hamilton Gardening Network (*Hamilton Community Garden Network*)
139. Hamilton Health Sciences
140. Hamilton Ladies of Film and Television
141. Hamilton Naturalist Club
142. Hamilton Oshawa Port Authority
143. Hamilton Poverty Roundtable (*Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction*)
144. Hamilton Regional Indian Centre
145. Hamilton Seniors Centres
146. Hamilton Urban Core
147. Hamilton Wentworth Heritage Association
148. Hamilton-Burlington Society of Architects (HBSA)
149. Historical Societies
150. Hospital to Homes
151. HWCDSB Operators/Operations Committee
152. Industry Education Council
153. Indwell
154. Innovation Factory
155. Jewish Community Centre
156. Kirkendall Neighbourhood (*Kirkendall Neighbourhood Association*)
157. Lights, Camera, Hamilton

158. McMaster Innovation Park
159. McMaster University
160. Mission Services
161. Mohawk College
162. Mohawk College Challenge 2025 Employment Action Group
163. Municipal Finance Officers Association (MFOA)
164. Neighbour 2 Neighbour
165. Neighbourhood Associations
166. New Hope Community Bikes
167. North End Neighbours
168. Older Adults Centre's Association of Ontario (OACAO)
169. Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB)
170. Realtors Association of Hamilton-Burlington (RAHB)
171. Redeemer University
172. Regional Heritage Organizations
173. Rosedale Senior's Club Board
174. Royal Botanical Gardens
175. Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) Working Groups
176. Royal Canadian Legion Branches
177. Royal Hamilton Light Infantry
178. Sackville Senior's Board
179. Salvation Army
180. School Boards
181. School Parent Councils
182. Social Navigation
183. Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC)
184. Sports Teams
185. St. Joseph's Healthcare
186. Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce
187. Sustainability Leadership/Sustainable Hamilton Burlington
188. Synapse Life Science Consortium
189. The Children's Garden Project
190. The Hamilton Hub
191. Twenty Place Resident Committee
192. Warden Senior's Club Board
193. West End Home Builders Association (WEHBA)
194. West Harbour Waterfront Recreational Boating Clubs
195. Winona Senior's Club Board
196. Workforce Planning Hamilton
197. YMCA

City Strategies or Plans

198. Biodiversity Action Plan
199. Digital Access Strategy

- 200. Hamilton Remedial Action Plan (*Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan*)
- 201. Hamilton's Age and Dementia Friendly Plan (*Hamilton's Plan for an Age-Friendly Community*)
- 202. Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy
- 203. Hamilton's Youth Strategy

Unknown Categorization

- 204. Accessible Taxi Committee
- 205. Bennetto/St. Lawrence Community Collaborative
- 206. Coordinated Service Planning Leadership Table
- 207. Cootes to Escarpment Management Committee and Stewardship Subcommittee
- 208. Discovery Centre Project Working Group
- 209. Downtown West Harbour Committee (*West Harbour Development Sub committee*)
- 210. Dundurn Gardeners
- 211. Fieldcote Expansion Committee
- 212. Golden Horseshoe Aquatic Municipal Group
- 213. Griffin House Black Heritage Committee
- 214. Halton and Hamilton Conservation Working Groups
- 215. Hamilton Disability Employment Network (HDEN)
- 216. Hamilton Inclusive Professionals Network (*City of Hamilton Inclusive Professionals*)
- 217. International Day of Older Persons
- 218. Invasive Species quasi formal
- 219. Lifesaving Society Area Chair Committee
- 220. Local Housing Providers Community of Practice
- 221. McMaster University, Age-Friendly University Collaborative
- 222. Open Data Champions
- 223. Professional Learning Committees
- 224. Public Health Services and Joint Boards of Education Steering Committee
- 225. Quality Operations Committee
- 226. School Safety Zone Working Group (regional)
- 227. Skills Development Flagship
- 228. Special Needs Resourcing Committee
- 229. Summer Student Recruitment Committee
- 230. Traditional Ecological Knowledge Committee
- 231. Volunteer Park Beautification Groups
- 232. Waterfront Industrial Heritage Committee
- 233. Wellness Connect Mohawk College Table
- 234. West End Women's Network
- 235. Woodward Ave Community Liaison Committee
- 236. Young Parent Collaborative Table
- 237. YWCA Older Women and Homelessness



VOLUNTEER ADVISORY COMMITTEE REVIEW JURISDICTIONAL SCAN SUMMARY

Executive Summary

In September 2023, Hamilton City Council approved a motion for a review of the Voluntary Advisory Committees (VAC), including a best practice scan of municipal VAC's and related alternatives. Analysis of advisory bodies was done across other jurisdictions in Ontario (London, Kingston, Toronto, Ottawa, Brampton, and Windsor) as well as in Canada (St. John's, Edmonton, Victoria). Some common themes emerged.

The jurisdictional scan demonstrated that cities who recently conducted reviews are moving away from the formal structure of Advisory Committees that Hamilton currently utilizes and toward working groups in one form or another. Support staff were a key factor in the success of any advisory body, as was embedding principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion in recruitment and approach. Training for volunteers, including both initial orientation and ongoing resources, was highlighted as essential for ensuring the success of these advisory bodies.

The scan also supported a reduction in the overall number of Advisory Committees. This shift would be better in line with both the municipal best practice and be a more structurally permissive model for civic engagement.

Analysis

Types of Advisory Bodies

In some jurisdictions, Advisory Committees have been replaced by the efforts of Working Groups. By comparison, these working groups put less of a burden of procedural understanding on volunteers, increasing the likely effectiveness of recruitment and retention. Compared to Advisory Committees, working groups are typically established around a specific project or goal and at the conclusion of which they adjourn (although in some cases these Working Groups were also tied to terms of council).

In their 2012 review and then again in their 2023 review, the City of Ottawa has shifted focus to department-led working groups. These were formed to help inform staff recommendations to council, rather than being formed by council. These departmental working groups are more easily able to fit into staff workplans early enough to contribute effectively as tools for public engagement. In a 2023 report Ottawa also identified that working groups, unlike advisory committees, would not be considered local boards, opening members up to fewer procedural requirements for participation.

In the City of Toronto, a distinction is drawn between Council Advisory Bodies (CABs) and Program Advisory Bodies (PABs). CABs are tied to terms of Council, have specific terms of reference, and report to council like the current Hamilton Advisory Committees. PABs are staff-created, helping to inform recommendations but ultimately not reporting formally to council, with terms of reference that include what staff they report to. At the discretion of staff, Toronto PABs may hold closed meetings and may recruit selectively from targeted groups without an open application process.

Expert Panels, populated by subject matter experts, and Task Forces, defined by narrow mandates, each also provided a useful tool for civic engagement in some municipalities. In Kingston and Ottawa, panels convened with equity-deserving groups and people with lived experience were offered honorariums to offset the burden of participation. Narrower mandates helped inform recruitment, and the City of Windsor found that these panels, with their focus on subject matter expertise, often better aligned with the needs of council and staff consultation.

While staff led working groups did not need the same support from clerks as publicly held/streamed meetings, staff capable of training and supporting volunteers on project plans were identified as critical to the success and attendance of volunteer bodies. While working groups do not have the same quorum requirements, are not required to meet publicly, and offer more flexibility to members, in some ways they required more staff support with more focused project deadlines to produce more tangible outcomes.

In understanding the criteria and form an advisory body may take, the City of Windsor offered that their council asks:

1. is the subject matter still relevant?
2. what form of advisory body will this group take?

Table 1 offers a comparison of the types of advisory bodies most used by municipalities across the jurisdictional scan, along with their roles and guiding principles.

Table 1	Role	Principles
Advisory Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides citizen and Organizational expertise on matters relevant to the Committee’s mandate. • Involved in the development of solutions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports to a committee of council. • Has a Terms of Reference. • Duration tied to term of council. • Minutes and Citizen Committee Reports disclosed to reporting committee.
Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide citizen or organizational expertise or oversight in the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assists in the development or delivery of an approved plan or strategy. • Term tied to project or goal.

	development or delivery of a program or project.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May report to staff or council.
Task Force	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide citizen or organizational expertise on a specific set of defined topics/issues • Involved in the receipt of information and providing feedback on the specific topics/issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a defined timeline and goal. • May develop Terms of Reference. • May recommend items for implementation.
Experts Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides expert opinion on topics or issues within a defined mandate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May or may not have a defined timeline. • Report to Standing Committee

At the City of Hamilton there are recent examples of alternative bodies being formed, either as staff directed groups or as council directed groups. This includes a Mayor’s Taskforce on Economic Recovery, and a Mayor’s Task Force on Transparency, Access, and Accountability. The task forces are council-directed bodies, that meet publicly with the support of clerks and other municipal staff and behave similarly to existing Advisory Committees. Task forces typically have a shorter intended term, however because of the structure are prone to the same structural limitations of existing Advisory Committees at the City of Hamilton.

Comparatively, the Youth Steering Committee, formed in response to the ending of the Youth Advisory Committee, is departmentally led and considerably more agile based on staff feedback. Following a more flexible working group model, the staff-directed relationship of this group makes it possible to meet more flexibly, recruit in an ongoing manner, and host a much larger and more engaged body of passionate volunteers.

Recruitment and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)

Common themes regarding recruitment included the use of dynamic social media marketing and an easy-to-fill-out application form. Ottawa emphasized that working group recruitment could look to local community groups, advocates, and subject matter experts in a more relationship-focused approach to recruitment. In Windsor, the city worked closely with a local Instagram influencer and saw significant success producing short recruitment videos, a model they plan to return to for future recruitment.

The City of Toronto identified three key strategies for recruitment: being clear about the work, providing some form of honorarium where appropriate, and accessing diverse, multiethnic promotional resources. The City of Victoria emphasized the need for an Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) approach during recruitment to find suitable subject matter experts with lived experience. Staff at the City of Victoria also stressed

the potential failing of advisory bodies assembled for generic EDI needs, noting a lack of intersectionality as a potential challenge.

The current model of recruitment for Advisory Committees could be significantly improved with structural changes. Limits around who is involved in the recruitment process mean it is often not those with subject matter expertise actively interviewing prospective members of an advisory group. This process could be improved by transitioning to a staff-directed, working group model.

Training and Member Orientation

Most consulted municipalities had in place an overview of the terms of reference and handbooks for advisory bodies, be they those reporting to council or those reporting to staff. In municipalities where clerks conducted an official training session for members, it was offered both in person and as a virtual recording. In the City of St. John’s, clerks staff make themselves available to answer questions on procedure and motion crafting, providing an ongoing member resource.

In Ottawa, training for Advisory Committee members was identified by their 2023 review as deficient, especially in the context of the statutory ruling that Advisory Committees are “local boards,” subjecting them to certain mandatory policy requirements. These requirements include behaving according to a code of conduct, stipulations around actions taken during an election, holding open-to-the-public meetings, and others under the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The challenges of organizing and supporting these local boards supported the need for change recommendations in Ottawa, moving entirely away from non-legislated Advisory Committees.

In Hamilton, we do not have legislated volunteer-led Advisory Committees. The Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD) is required by the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)* but is a sub-committee of Council and not within the scope of the Volunteer Advisory Committee review. This means that a similar shift to what was done in Ottawa would transform all Advisory Committees into departmentally led working groups, if adopted here.

Reduction in Number of Advisory Committees

Across the jurisdictional scan there was a tendency toward a reduction in the number of Advisory Committees. Most did not have as many as the City of Hamilton to begin with, but even among those with close to the same number there’s a tendency toward a reduction.

Table 2 shows some municipalities from within the scan that recently conducted reviews, and the trend among them toward a reduction in the number of overall

committees. Also indicated here are the estimated staffing requirements of their existing process, for comparison across the jurisdictions.

TABLE 2: Municipalities with Recent Reviews				
Municipality	Current Number of Committees	Staffing Support	Date of Recent Reviews	Number of Committees Before Review
Hamilton	14	Clerks assigned to each AC and a staff liaison	2015	14
Kingston	7	Two clerks per committee, with 3 committee clerks handling all 7 ACs	2023	8
London	7	Clerk supports meeting operations and staff support attending meetings when required	2024	13
Ottawa	4	Clerk appoints a Committee Coordinator for each AC. Each AC also supported by departmental staff	2023, 2012	5 (2023), 15 (2012)
Windsor	9	1-2 Staff per committee to provide resources	2023	18
St John's	11	There is a lead staff assigned to each committee, from the program/topic area, and a legislative assistant from the City Clerk's office	2015	11

Conclusion

Hamilton has more advisory committees than similarly sized municipalities, in part because of a trend toward alternative models of civic engagement, and in part because of a general shift away from this form of civic engagement. Staff-led volunteer teams are often more effective groups for moving forward workplans and projects, based on the feedback through the jurisdictional scan. Training, both of staff supporting these bodies and of volunteers themselves especially those in the role of chair, was identified as a key element of the success of these groups. For volunteers to be effective in their roles, they need to be resourced and supported effectively.

The jurisdictional scan and the Hamilton-specific context support a restructuring of Advisory Committees. While this structure could look a few different ways, it is both important to consider the leadership structure (council-directed or staff-led) and the form (working group, task force, experts panel).



External Community Tables and Networks the City Consults

Staff sent out the VACR Community Partners Survey to assist in identifying all other advisory tables consulted with by the City of Hamilton, including community-based task forces, steering committees, and working groups.

While there are many tables and community networks listed here, we understand this list is not exhaustive, as the City’s consultation changes and this may not reflect every City staff member’s engagement.

We received 136 responses across six departments, broken down below:

- City Housing Hamilton – 2 responses
- City Manager’s Office – 6 responses
- Corporate Services – 6 responses
- Health and Safe Communities – 37 responses
- Planning and Economic Development – 44 responses
- Public Works – 41 responses

Grouped broadly by theme, the City engages with:

Accessibility and Inclusion

- Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities (ACPD)*
- Age Friendly Hamilton Collaborative Committee
- Age-Friendly Governance Committee
- City of Hamilton Inclusive Professionals
- Hamilton Coalition for Refugee Claimants
- Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC)
- Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy
- Indigenous Advisory Committee*
- LGBTQ Advisory Committee*
- Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Advisory Committee*

Community and Youth Development

- Bennetto/St. Lawrence Community Collaborative
- Community Partnership Action Table (CPAT)
- Community Transitions Network (CTN)
- Hamilton is Home Coalition (HiHC)
- Hamilton’s Child and Youth Network
- Internal Youth Steering Committee
- Young Parent Collaborative Table
- Youth Serving Advisory Network (YSAN)

*Advisory Group or Sub-committee

- Youth Steering Committee (City of Hamilton)

Economic and Employment Initiatives

- Basic Income Hamilton
- Development Charges Stakeholder Sub-Committee*
- Development Industry Liaison Group (DILG)*
- Hamilton Community Benefits Network
- Hamilton Employment Resource Network
- Hamilton Future Fund Board of Governors
- Open for Business Sub-committee*

Environmental and Sustainability Initiatives

- Bay Area Climate Change Council
- Biodiversity Action Plan
- Clean and Green Committee*
- Climate Change Advisory Committee*
- Dust and Particulate Matter Working Group*
- Hamilton Bee City
- Mobility Lab

Health and Wellbeing

- Fair Wage Ad-Hoc Committee
- Hamilton Breastfeeding Coalition
- Hamilton Drug Prevention Steering Committee
- Hamilton Early Years Research & Evaluation Network
- Hamilton Prenatal Nutrition Program
- Infant and Early Years Mental Health Committee
- Perinatal Mental Health Workgroup
- Seniors at Risk Community Collaborative (SaRCC)

Heritage and Culture

- Bayfront Industrial Area Strategy Steering Committee
- Hamilton Community Cat Network
- Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee*
- Hamilton Music Advisory Team
- Heritage Permit Review Subcommittee*
- McMaster Institute for Research on Aging (MIRA) Community Stakeholder Committee

Planning and Development

- CityLAB (CoH)

*Advisory Group or Sub-committee

- CityLab Steering Committee
- Discovery Centre Project Working Group
- Hamilton Transit Oriented Affordable Housing Lab
- Salam Hamilton Planning Group
- Woodward Avenue Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade & Expansion Project Community Liaison Committee

Social Services and Support

- Coalition Hamilton Indigenous Leadership
- Hamilton Food Literacy Network
- Hamilton Healthy and Safe Communities Joint Boards of Education Leadership Committee
- Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
- Street Youth Planning Collaborative
- Tastebuds Student Nutrition Program Steering Committee
- Glanbrook Landfill Coordinating Committee

Advisory and Special Interest Groups

- Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees*
- Early on Equity and Engagement Advisory Group
- Early Years CMSM Advisory
- Early Years HR Workforce Committee
- Hamilton Trillium Awards Committee
- SCORE! Advisory Team
- Embolden Advisory Group (McMaster)

Special Initiatives

- Club 60 Senior's Club Board
- Hamilton Cycling Advisory Committee*
- Hamilton Opiate Action Table
- Extreme Heat Working Group

*Advisory Group or Sub-committee

Table 1 - Volunteer Advisory Committees: Mandates, Objectives, and Alignment

Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
Makes recommendations to City Council and staff about policies, procedures and guidelines that address the needs of immigrants and refugees within the City of Hamilton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and comment on pertinent reports, proposed legislation and studies that affect immigrants and refugees. Be consulted by City of Hamilton staff and Council on the review, development and implementation of City policies, procedures, programs and services that affect, directly or indirectly, immigrants and refugees. Facilitate, organize and promote open lines of communication with the school boards, police services, City of Hamilton, (e.g. Public Health Services, Healthy and Safe Communities, etc.) and other relevant organizations to provide advice and recommendations about the service needs of newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. Make presentations, host workshops and/or open houses to educate service providers, police, Ontario Works, school boards, settlement agencies, employment agencies, professional regulating bodies and other relevant services and programs about immigrant and refugee issues. Develop relationships with the Access to Fair Trades Office and training institutions to gain a better understanding of their processes and find some common ground that will assist newcomers and immigrants in their pursuit of timely certification and upgrading. Complement and collaborate with the work of the City of Hamilton’s Volunteer Advisory Committees. 	Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving	Community Engagement & Participation Culture & Diversity	Planning and Economic Development – Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council

Arts Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>To recommend activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community.</p> <p>To monitor and assist with the implementation of the Arts Awards Program and Public Art Program.</p> <p>To inform Council of issues and achievements in the Hamilton arts community and acts as a point of contact for members of the arts community regarding issues affecting the arts community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts Advisory Commission (AAC) held a public art forum in 2017 to gather information about the growth and needs of the arts community in Hamilton. The Big Picture Report was created with seven recommendations which would guide the work of AAC. • The 2018-2022 Term of AAC began working on The Big Picture recommendations, when the Covid-19 pandemic paused this initiative. The AAC pivoted by working with Hamilton Arts Council (HAC) to create a survey asking Hamilton artists to share how the pandemic affected their lives. Post-survey, AAC and HAC did a call for submissions, where art works were selected, awarded honorariums and are featured on the AAC City webpage. • The Big Picture Celebrating Resilience in the Arts Symposium being held November 18th 2022 will gather the arts community in Hamilton again to revisit The Big Picture 2017 recommendations, to garner feedback around the current needs of the community post pandemic and serve to guide the work of the next term of AAC 2022-2026. • The AAC continues its work monitoring and assisting with the implementation of the Public Art Program and the City of Hamilton Arts Awards Program. 	N/A	Culture and Diversity	Planning and Economic Development – Tourism and Culture

Climate Change Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>To provide advice to Council and City Staff on the prioritization, implementation and monitoring of Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy, through an equitable and inclusive manner and a climate justice lens, that responds to the perspectives and needs of all, while transitioning to a prosperous, healthy and vibrant net-zero greenhouse gas community that is a national leader in climate adaptation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide recommendations on prioritization and implementation of actions in Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy; • Advise on developing a ‘City and Community Climate Change Report Card’ that tracks meaningful targets, indicators and timelines for monitoring that is transparent and easily accessible; • Identify, support and enhance existing climate positive actions across the community, within the municipal government, and at other levels of government to accelerate meaningful climate action, in a manner that supports existing efforts of other organizations and avoids duplication of efforts; • Work together to better understand the diverse perspectives across Hamilton’s community to better provide advice and recommendations to Council and to City staff to ensure no one is left behind; • Support and advise on protecting biodiversity through the integration of western science combined with Traditional Ecological Knowledge and other sources of lived experiences with Mother Earth; and • Provide advice to City staff and Council on other matters related to climate change and actions to address climate change, as may be identified from time-to-time by Council or City staff. 	<p>Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development – Accelerate our Response to Climate Change</p> <p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Clean and Green</p>	<p>Planning and Economic Development – Climate Change Initiatives</p>

Committee Against Racism				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The Committee Against Racism is a Volunteer Advisory Committee of the City of Hamilton, appointed by Council. Members comprise residents of the city of Hamilton, representing diverse backgrounds and cultures. The mandate of the Committee Against Racism is to advise, advocate and consult on relevant issues in the community of Hamilton relating to racism and its consequences, including anti-racism strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make recommendations and give advice to the City of Hamilton’s staff and Council on issues relating to racism, equity, diversity and inclusion as well as issues relating to antiracism. • Encourage every person, regardless of their race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, religion, creed or any other grounds based on the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC), to participate in programs and services for the improvement of community relations and the fulfilment of Human Rights. • Work actively with institutions and all other relevant organizations, including educational institutions, Police Services, Emergency Services, public, private, voluntary sector and all levels of government to advise, consult, advocate and to promote proactive measures pertaining to racism and its impacts. • Consult with individuals and/or groups with respect to complaints regarding racism and to make referrals within the community for complainants. • Initiate and facilitate discussions between individuals and/or groups to address issues and concerns of racism and/or while promoting respect and understanding in the community. 	<p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Participation</p> <p>Culture & Diversity</p>	<p>Healthy and Safe Communities – Children and Community Services</p>

Food Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>Identify and inform, where appropriate, innovative community food security policies and programs that align with the vision and goals of the Hamilton Food Strategy, Hamilton Food Charter, and other City strategies</p> <p>Identify and advise on emerging issues affecting Hamilton's food system</p> <p>Facilitate connections and share information and resources between members, the Public Health Committee, City staff, and as appropriate, further disseminate these lessons and resources among community organizations, businesses, citizens, and other groups that have an impact on community food security</p> <p>Support research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts, and identify gaps and opportunities that may inform community food security policies and program modifications</p> <p>Facilitate the cross-promotion of community food security within existing programs, events, policies, services, and other actions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and inform, where appropriate, innovative community food security policies and programs that align with the vision and goals of the Hamilton Food Strategy, Hamilton Food Charter, and other City strategies. • Identify and advise on emerging issues affecting Hamilton's food system. • Facilitate connections and share information and resources between members, the Public Health Committee, City staff, and as appropriate, further disseminate these lessons and resources among community organizations, businesses, citizens, and other groups that have an impact on community food security. • Support research, monitoring, and evaluation efforts, and identify gaps and opportunities that may inform community food security policies and program modifications. • Facilitate the cross-promotion of community food security within existing programs, events, policies, services, and other actions. 	N/A	Healthy & Safe Communities	Healthy and Safe Communities – Public Health, Environmental Health

Hamilton Cycling Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The Hamilton Cycling Committee (HCC) advises City Council on:</p> <p>a. all matters related to cycling and micro-mobility</p> <p>b. monitors the implementation of the Hamilton Cycling Master Plan</p> <p>c. encourages and participates in planning for bicycling and micro-mobility facilities</p> <p>d. encourages citizens to cycle instead of drive</p> <p>e. educates the public about the benefits and necessities of cycling</p> <p>f. integrates the work of area municipal bicycle and active transportation committees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and support progress in implementing the Cycling Master Plan • Ensure community input on specific details associated with implementing the Cycling Master Plan • Ensure that cycling needs are emphasized in all transportation related decisions • Encourage legislation and policy changes that are supportive of cycling and sustainable mobility • Promote cycling and micro-mobility for transportation and recreation through relevant events • Educate the public on the benefits, necessities, and safety aspects of cycling • Assist in establishing secure, adequate bicycle and scooter parking facilities • Represent the cycling community at City of Hamilton sponsored functions/events • Encourage the formation of, and liaise with other municipal cycling and active transportation committees • Foster a mutual respect between cyclists and other road users 	<p>Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods – Make sure people can safely and efficiently move around by foot, bike, transit, or car</p>	<p>Built Environment & Infrastructure</p>	<p>Planning and Economic Development – Active Transportation and Mobility</p>

Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The Indigenous Advisory Committee assists the City of Hamilton to honour and engage its Indigenous citizens in the pursuit of the City’s vision by providing advice and/or recommendations, through the appropriate Standing Committee of Council, that enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous people and/or resolve municipal issues.</p> <p>The Committee envisions a future where Hamilton is an inclusive and culturally-aware community, where issues of importance to its Indigenous peoples are addressed proactively, effectively and respectfully on the municipal agenda.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to assist the City in achieving and demonstrating progress or positive change in support of the equitable economic, social, health and overall wellbeing of Indigenous citizens; to provide a forum and mechanism for coordinated dialogue and consultation between and among Indigenous leaders and other stakeholders, acting as a catalyst for the development of positive relationships and open, transparent dialogue between and among the City and these stakeholders; and, to offer input, advice and recommendations, through the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee, informed by stakeholder consultation, to support the City in determining effective municipal strategies and/or policies on issues of importance to Indigenous peoples. 	<p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Participation</p> <p>Culture & Diversity</p>	<p>Healthy and Safe Communities – Indigenous Relations</p>

Hamilton Veterans Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>Reporting to Council, through the Emergency and Community Services Committee, the Hamilton Veterans Committee oversees the planning and delivery of military remembrance and commemoration activities on behalf of the City of Hamilton. When directed by Council, the Committee will provide input on projects and issues that are of concern to Hamilton Veterans.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Act as a liaison for the veterans of the City of Hamilton on all matters that fall within Council’s jurisdiction. Coordinate Decoration Day, Remembrance Day Parades, community engagement pieces and Memorial Services in multiple wards. Maximize the engagement of youth in the act of Remembrance through projects and events. <p>How will they be achieved:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinate the remembrances for significant anniversaries such as Decoration Day, Remembrance Day, Garrison Parade and including but not limited to parades and memorial services. Administer all other matters directly relating to or of concern to Hamilton Veterans that fall within Council’s jurisdiction. Provide written letters of support for Veterans causes when requested and deemed appropriate. Veteran’s Committee advises on the use and care of cenotaphs in partnership with Heritage Resource Management. Present opportunities for the engagement of youths in acts of Remembrance in the City of Hamilton through events and community projects <p>Who will benefit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All citizens of the City of Hamilton as well as local veterans and active forces. Upward of 2,000 people attend the Remembrance Day services and parades coordinated by the Veterans Committee. All residents of Hamilton will have the opportunity to show respect for Veterans service to our country. The Youth of Hamilton will be given the opportunity to be engaged with Acts of Remembrance outside of the classroom setting through hands-on and digital platforms. 	<p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Participation</p> <p>Culture & Diversity</p>	<p>Planning and Economic Development – Tourism & Culture Division</p>

Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee is a Council mandated advisory committee of the City of Hamilton. Serving and acting as an advisory committee of Council it provides input with respect to the issues of women, non-binary individuals and gender diverse people.</p> <p>The Committee is empowered by City Council and is responsible to City Council for its services; it reports to City Council on issues and concerns pertaining to women, non-binary individuals, and gender diverse people through the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To define, investigate, study and make recommendations on issues of concern affecting women, non-binary people, and gender diverse individuals in the City of Hamilton and other matters of social or municipal concern including matters referred to this Committee by City Council, staff, and City of Hamilton committees. • To inform citizens of the City of Hamilton on issues affecting women, non-binary people, and gender diverse individuals. • To actively encourage women, non-binary people, and gender diverse individuals to participate in all aspects of society and support them in their life choices. • To advise residents of the City of Hamilton of decisions made by City Council which may impact women, non-binary people, and gender diverse individuals including matters of social concern and those referred to City Council by this Committee. • To review the progress and measure of success of the Committee and its activities on a regular basis. 	<p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Participation</p> <p>Culture & Diversity</p>	<p>Healthy and Safe Communities – Children and Community Services</p>

Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>To communicate and work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes.</p> <p>To support the City of Hamilton’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan by providing information, advice, and recommendations regarding the Action Plan’s successful and meaningful implementation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with the coordination and implementation of Council approved recommendations, including the City of Hamilton’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. • Ensure that recommendations regarding issues relating to people who are experiencing homelessness or who may be at risk of becoming homeless are brought forward to Council in a timely manner. • Devise and recommend to Council innovative and preventative measures to assist in addressing homelessness within the community; • Identify emerging trends, potential gaps and best practices in emergency housing needs. • Provide Council and staff with information, advice, and recommendations about residential landlord and tenant issues and policies that would improve the overall well-being of tenants in Hamilton and support landlords in the provision of safe, quality, and affordable rental units. • Identify housing-related supports available in the community and facilitate relationship-building between community partners, citizens and government to ensure that people have the individualized supports needed to help them obtain and retain housing. • Regularly update Council about homelessness and affordable housing issues through the discussion and analysis that takes place at HHAC. • Respond to requests and direction from staff and Council. • Collaborate and cooperate with other City of Hamilton committees and community groups doing work around issues that impact homelessness and affordable housing to stay apprised of relevant initiatives and contribute information and advice as needed. 	<p>Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods – Increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing and reduce chronic homelessness</p> <p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Healthy & Safe Communities</p>	<p>Healthy and Safe Communities – Housing Services</p>

Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>To provide input and advice to staff and Council on engaging citizens to take greater responsibility for improving our community environments. Primary focus is on effecting behaviours and attitudes conducive to a clean, healthy and safe community through leadership and action.</p> <p>To provide input and guidance to City staff, Council and other stakeholders on community involvement, private sector involvement and identification of resources to sustain Clean City programs and initiatives that aim to beautify our community, promote environmental stewardship and prevent litter, illegal dumping and graffiti.</p>	<p>Litter</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development and marketing of a coordinated cigarette litter prevention program. • Lead the promotion and collaboration with community partners for the ongoing operation of Team Up to Clean Up. • Administer Keep America Beautiful Community Appearance Index survey in 2022. • Support and promote City and community litter remediation and prevention initiatives. <p>Illegal Dumping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the development of educational and communication tools to prevent illegal dumping. <p>Graffiti</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support stakeholder engagement strategies and victim assistance initiatives with prevention and remediation tools. <p>Beautification</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognize volunteer contributions to beautification initiatives and projects that support the Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy. • Support neighbourhood beautification and greening initiatives as needed. <p>Environmental Stewardship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and promote the engagement of citizen volunteers in programs and initiatives that encourage ecological integrity and minimize human impact on natural habitats and ecosystems on public and private properties. 	<p>Safe & Thriving Neighbourhoods – Provide vibrant parks, recreation, and public spaces</p>	<p>Clean & Green</p>	<p>Public Works – Environmental Services Clean and Green Hamilton Strategy</p>

LGBTQ Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 TOCP	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The LGBTQ Advisory Committee for the City of Hamilton exists to eliminate barriers experienced by LGBTQ communities by giving voice to the perspectives of LGBTQ individuals and evaluating the City on its related efforts. The Committee does this by making recommendations to Council and staff in order that the City of Hamilton will excel in providing services to and interfacing with members of the LGBTQ communities.</p> <p>The Committee is empowered by City Council and is responsible to City Council for its services; it reports to City Council on issues and concerns pertaining to the LGBTQ communities through the Emergency and Community Services Committee.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide opportunities for members of Hamilton’s diverse LGBTQ communities to share stories, impart information, raise concerns and recommend changes as they relate to the way the City develops by-laws, policies, programs and services that impact LGBTQ communities, through the appropriate Standing Committee of Council. • To provide advice and recommendations to City council and staff with respect to the implementation of by-laws, policies, programs and services that impact LGBTQ communities. • To educate and increase the awareness and understanding of City Council and staff on issues that impact LGBTQ communities. • To facilitate access to accurate information about LGBTQ communities, including an up-to-date list of LGBTQ positive spaces, programs, resources and organizations. • To acknowledge and respect the diversity of Hamilton’s LGBTQ communities, including those voices not represented at the Committee table, with respect to gender identity, sexual orientation, age, ability, ethno-cultural background and socio-economic status. • To review the progress and measure of success of the Committee and its activities on a regular basis. 	<p>Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving</p>	<p>Community Engagement & Participation</p> <p>Culture & Diversity</p>	<p>Healthy and Safe Communities – Children's and Community Services</p>

Mundialization Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 TOCP	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
<p>The purpose of the Hamilton Mundialization Committee shall be:</p> <p>a) to promote Hamilton as "A World (Mundialized) City" dedicated to global awareness, international cooperation, and world law</p> <p>b) to further the work of the United Nations through publicity and education and to have the United Nations flag always flown with the Canadian flag the City Hall</p> <p>c) to undertake twinning programs in international cooperation with like-minded municipalities in this and other countries to foster an understanding of the increasing interdependence of the municipalities, peoples, and countries of the world</p> <p>d) to involve Hamilton residents of different cultures, especially those from the countries of our sister communities, to share in our multicultural programs</p> <p>e) to include representatives from City Council in the Committee for implementing the above programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitating and supporting peace initiatives and the twinning relationships between Hamilton and its ten twin-cities around the world. • Assisting Council in implementing its Mundialization resolution • Complementing and affirming the objectives of the City's "Strengthening Hamilton Community Initiative" • Supporting any and all relationships with the City of Hamilton's Twin Cities <p>In alignment with the Committee's mandate, key deliverables include leading the following efforts, activities, and initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing Kaga/Hamilton events commemorating the 50+ year relationship between Kaga and Hamilton (Dundas) • Anniversary twinning events or other twinning events as identified • Racalmuto Regional events • World Citizenship Award • Photo Contest • Hiroshima-Nagasaki Vigil • The Committee provides an ongoing review of Mundialization relationships and processes thereof. The benefit of participation is the enhancement of relationships between the residents of our twin communities, both locally and internationally, and the residents of the city of Hamilton. 	N/A	Culture & Diversity	Planning and Economic Development – Business Development and Sector Development

Seniors Advisory Committee				
Committee Mandate	Committee Objectives	2022-2026 Term of Council Priority	Community / Strategic Plan Priority	Department / Divisional Areas of Alignment
To be a credible communication vehicle regarding the quality of life for all older persons in the City of Hamilton. It will provide a forum for consumers and deliverers of seniors' services and facilities to identify issues, explore possible remedies, and work to implement them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To assist Council in decision making as it pertains to senior's issues in Hamilton. • To respond and advocate concerns affecting policies, services and facilities for seniors delivered by and funded by all levels of government. • To promote and disseminate all decisions relating to access, the provision of services programs and facilities for seniors in the City of Hamilton. • To liaise with other organized groups when there are matters of mutual concerns. • To promote and advocate, wherever appropriate, the concept of healthy aging by encouraging improved and responsive programs and services in a timely fashion. 	Responsiveness & Transparency – Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving	Community Engagement & Participation Culture & Diversity	Healthy and Safe Communities – Lodges



Scan of community organizations with mandates and/or services aligned with City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committees

July 2024

Prepared for: City of Hamilton

Prepared by: Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton

In November 2023, the Social Planning and Research Council (SPRC) was engaged by the City of Hamilton’s Government Relations and Community Engagement Division to collect feedback from key community partners including VAC members, staff liaisons, and council members as part of the Volunteer Advisory Committee (VAC) review undertaken by the City. SPRC’s report “*City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee Review: Engagement Report*” outlines the feedback and recommendations based on these engagements.

In addition, at the request of City’s Government Relations and Community Engagement Division, SPRC developed the below list of organizations, community tables, and local collaboratives that have a mandate that, at least in part, are similarly aligned with the mandates of VACs. This includes organizations that provide significant programming and/or services in related areas.

Similarly aligned organizations and community tables have been provided for all VACs. The City’s Sub-Committees (e.g. Accessibility Committee for Persons with Disabilities and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Sub-committee) have not been included as they are not Volunteer Advisory Committees.

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that this is not an exhaustive list. It is not intended to capture all not-for-profit entities that operate in areas related to the VACs, but rather provides a broad picture of organizations working in each area. The fluid nature of community-based work makes it difficult to capture all not-for-profit entities and community tables working in similar areas to VACs.

The selection of organizations and collaboratives was based on reviews of publicly available lists of organizations in different subject areas, the Hamilton Red Book, the City's Enrichment Fund recipient lists, a previous survey of city staff¹, and existing knowledge and networks of SPRC staff. The criteria for inclusion were limited to non-profit organizations and associated community tables. In some instances where government/quasi-government entities are key players in a specific area, these have also been included. In generating this list, SPRC looked at organizations similarly aligned with aspects of the VAC mandates. Where not included on the City's VAC listing webpage, the mandates of the VACs included below were provided by City staff.

As highlighted in Appendix F of SPRC's "*City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee Review: Engagement Report*", VACs provide unique engagement opportunities for City staff and Council, and while there may be some consistencies between VACs and engagements with other community tables and organizations, there are also distinctions between engagement opportunities. These include:

- VAC membership is often made up of a larger portion of individual community members/constituents, whereas community tables are often made up of organizational representatives. Consultation with community tables or directly with organizations may provide a different perspective, representing institutional or agency feedback.
- As council representatives make up part of VAC membership, VACs have a direct link to council, which is not necessarily the case with community tables, collaboratives and organizations as consultation with these groups is often conducted by City staff.
- There are delineated processes for how VACs should be engaged and consulted by the City, that support transparency of VACs. These parameters are available to the public through VAC Terms of Reference, public VAC meetings, agendas, and minutes. The City's process for engaging and consulting with community bodies may not have the same degree of transparency for the public, although these consultations and relationships between the City and outside organizations also bring valuable feedback. City consultations with community organizations and tables are not typically open or recorded for the public and therefore may not have a clear framework on who gets consulted, when, and how frequently.

¹ See Appendix G of SPRC's "*City of Hamilton Volunteer Advisory Committee Review: Engagement Report*"

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Arts Advisory Commission</p> <p>Mandate: <i>“To recommend activities for the stabilization and strengthening of the arts community; to inform Council of issues and achievements in the Hamilton arts community; to liaise with and act as a point of contact for members of the arts community regarding issues affecting the arts community; to monitor and assist with the implementation of the Public Art Program; to monitor and assist with the implementation of the Arts Awards Program.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamilton Arts and Culture Collective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Art Gallery of Hamilton - Centre [3] for Artistic and Social Practice - CoBALT Connects - Dundas Arts & Crafts Association - Dundas Little Theatre - Dundas Valley School of Art - Hamilton Arts Council - Hamilton Artists Inc. - Hamilton Festival Theatre Company (Fringe Festival) - Hamilton Music Collective - Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra - Hamilton Theatre Inc. - Immigrant Culture and Art Association - Players Guild Theatre - Re-Create Outreach Art Studio - Supercrawl Productions - Theatre Ancaster - Theatre Aquarius - Women’s Art Association of Hamilton - Workers Arts and Heritage Centre - Various choir and music performance organizations - Various craft-specific guilds

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Climate Change Advisory Committee*</p> <p>Purpose: <i>“To provide advice to Council and City Staff on the prioritization, implementation and monitoring of Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy, through an equitable and inclusive manner and a climate justice lens, that responds to the perspectives and needs of all, while transitioning to a prosperous, healthy and vibrant net-zero greenhouse gas community that is a national leader in climate adaptation.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clean Air Hamilton - Friendly Streets - Hamilton Community Climate Action Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bay Area Restoration Council - Environment Hamilton - Green Venture - Hamilton 350 - Hamilton Conservation Authority - Hamilton Conservation Foundation - Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association - Hamilton Naturalist Club - Royal Botanical Gardens

*While not included in as part of the VAC Review engagements conducted by SPRC, the Climate Change Advisory Committee was included in this list at the direction of City staff. Please also note that a SPRC staff is a member of the Climate Change Advisory Committee.

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Committee Against Racism</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The Committee is empowered by and responsible to City Council for its activities; it reports to City Council, on issues and concerns pertaining to racism and provides advice to address the impacts of racism, through the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circle of Beads - Hamilton For All - No Hate in the Hammer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamilton Anti Racism Resource Centre - Hamilton Community Legal Clinic - Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion - Various faith and cultural organizations

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Food Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>“As a volunteer advisory committee to the Board of Health, the Food Advisory Committee will support and advise on the implementation of Hamilton’s Food Strategy, and the development of inclusive and comprehensive food related policies and programs at the individual, household, and community/population level based on internationally recognized principles of healthy public policy and best practices/available evidence.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction - Hamilton Emergency Food Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compass Community Health Centre - De dwa da dehs nye -Aboriginal Health Centre - Eva Rothwell Centre - Food4Kids - Good Shepherd - Hamilton Community Food Centre - Hamilton Community Garden Network - Hamilton Dream Centre - Hamilton Foodshare - Hamilton Regional Indian Centre - Hamilton Sustainable Victory Gardens - Hamilton Tastebuds Student Nutrition Program - Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre - Living Rock Ministries - McQuesten Urban Farm - Mission’s Services - Native Women’s Centre - Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg - Neighbour to Neighbour - Salvation Army - St. Matthew’s House - Welcome Inn Community Centre - Various foodbanks at places of worship

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Hamilton Cycling Committee</p> <p>Purpose: <i>“The Hamilton Cycling Committee (HCC) advises City Council on:</i> <i>a. all matters related to cycling and micro-mobility</i> <i>b. monitors the implementation of the Hamilton Cycling Master Plan</i> <i>c. encourages and participates in planning for bicycling and micro-mobility facilities</i> <i>d. encourages citizens to cycle instead of drive</i> <i>e. educates the public about the benefits and necessities of cycling</i> <i>f. integrates the work of area municipal bicycle and active transportation committees”</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bike for Mike - Cycle Hamilton - Daily School Route - Environment Hamilton - Hamilton Bike Share/Everyone Rides Initiative - Hamilton Burlington Mountain Biking Association - Hamilton Glow Riders - New Hope Community Bikes - Steel Town Athletic Club (Cycle)

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Hamilton Veterans Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>“Reporting to Council, through the Emergency and Community Services Committee, the Hamilton Veterans Committee oversees the planning and delivery of military remembrance and commemoration activities on behalf of the City of Hamilton. When directed by Council, the Committee will provide input on projects and issues that are of concern to Hamilton Veterans.”</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cadets - Legions - Veteran Affairs, Hamilton District Office - Veterans Service League

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The mandate of the HHAC is to: - communicate and work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes; and - support the City of Hamilton's 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan by providing information, advice, and recommendations to the Emergency & Community Services Committee regarding its successful and meaningful implementation."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Coalition of Hamilton's Indigenous Leadership - Men's Emergency Services Committee - Women's Housing Planning Collaborative - Street Youth Planning Collaborative - Hamilton is Home - Emergency Shelter Coordination Table 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ACORN Hamilton - City Housing Hamilton - Golden Horseshoe Co-operative Housing Federation - Good Shepherd - Greater Hamilton Health Network - Habitat for Humanity - Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters - Hamilton Community Benefits Network - Hamilton Community Legal Clinic - Hamilton Housing Help Centre - Hamilton Regional Indian Centre - Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre - The Hub - Indwell - Interval House of Hamilton - Keeping Six/HAMSMaRT - Kiwanis Non-Profit Homes - Living Rock Ministries - Mission's Services - Native Women's Centre - Nisa Homes - Residential Care Facilities - Sacajawea Non-profit Housing - Shelter Health Network - Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton - St Matthew's House - The Salvation Army - Womankind Addiction Services - Wesley - West End Home Builders Association - YMCA - YWCA

		- Various non-profit and co-operative housing providers
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VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Immigrant and Refugee Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>“To make recommendations to City Council and staff regarding policies, procedures and guidelines, which address the needs and concerns of people who are immigrants or refugees.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC) - Hamilton Coalition for Refugee Claimants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Afro Canadian Caribbean Association - Centre de Sante Communautaire Hamilton/Niagara - College Boreal Hamilton - Compass Community Health - Empowerment Squared - Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre - Immigrant Culture and Art Association - Immigrant Working Centre - Micah House - Open Homes Hamilton - Rafiki Hamilton - Refuge: Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health - Welcome Inn Community Centre - Wesley - YMCA - YWCA - Various cultural groups and events

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Indigenous Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>“The Indigenous Advisory Committee assists the City of Hamilton to honour and engage its Indigenous citizens in the pursuit of the City’s vision by providing advice and/or recommendations, through the appropriate Standing Committee of Council, that enhance the wellbeing of Indigenous people and/or resolve municipal issues.</i> <i>The Committee envisions a future where Hamilton is an inclusive and culturally-aware community, where issues of importance to its Indigenous peoples are addressed proactively, effectively and respectfully on the municipal agenda.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Circle of Beads - Coalition of Hamilton’s Indigenous Leadership (CHIL) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - De dwa da dehs nye -Aboriginal Health Centre - Hamilton Regional Indian Centre - Native Women’s Centre - Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg - NPAAMB Indigenous Youth Employment & Training - Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing - Woodland Cultural Centre

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The KHCG Committee will support and provide advice to City staff, elected officials and other stakeholders to implement the Clean & Green Hamilton Strategy and Our Future Hamilton community vision. Reporting through the Public Works Committee, the KHCG Committee will provide input to staff and Council on issues relating to environmental sustainability and stewardship and advice on approaches to engaging citizens to take greater responsibility to protect and revitalize natural and built environments. The KHCG Committee's primary focus is on effecting behaviours and attitudes conducive to a clean, healthy and safe community through leadership and action. The Committee will provide input and guidance to City staff, Council and other stakeholders on community and private sector involvement and identification of resources to sustain Clean and Green programs and initiatives that aim to beautify our community, promote environmental stewardship and prevent litter, illegal dumping and graffiti."</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Bay Area Restoration Council - Environment Hamilton - Green Venture - Hamilton Conservation Authority - Hamilton Naturalists Club - Trees for Hamilton

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The Committee is empowered by City Council and is responsible to City Council for its services; it reports to City Council on issues and concerns pertaining to the LGBTQ communities through the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hamilton Trans Health Coalition - Queer and Trans Youth Collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Compass Community Health - Good Shepherd - Greater Hamilton Health Network - Hamilton Community Legal Clinic – Queer Justice Project - Positive Health Network - Pride Hamilton - Shelter Health Network - Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton & Area) - Youth Wellness Centre - YWCA/Spectrum

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Mundialization Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The Committee is empowered by City Council and is responsible to City Council for its activities; it reports to City Council, on facilitating and supporting peace initiatives, supporting, facilitating twinned city relationships, through the Audit, Finance & Administration Committee."</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Rotary Club of Hamilton - Various cultural organizations, societies and clubs

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Seniors Advisory Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The Senior Advisory Committee is empowered by City Council and is responsible to City Council for its activities; it reports to City Council, on issues and concerns pertaining to seniors in Hamilton, through the Emergency & Community Services Committee."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Age Friendly Hamilton - Seniors at Risk in Hamilton Collaborative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Able Living - The Alzheimer Society of Brant, Haldimand Norfolk, Hamilton Halton - Afro Canadian Caribbean Association Hamilton - Ancaster Community Services - Banyan Community Services - Centre de Sante Communautaire de Hamilton/Niagara - Compass Community Health - DARTS - Dundas Community Services - Flamborough Connects - Glanbrook Community Services - Good Shepherd - Hamilton Council on Aging - Hamilton Health Sciences - Hamilton Public Library - Hamilton Recreation Centres - Hamilton Regional Indian Centre - Meals on Wheels (various organizations) - Non-profit long term care homes - Public Health Seniors Dental Bus and Clinic - Seniors Centres - St. Joseph's Healthcare - St. Matthew's House - Victorian Order of Nurses - Wesley

VAC name and mandate	Tables/collaboratives	Service Providers/ Organizations
<p>Women and Gender Equity Committee</p> <p>Mandate: <i>"The Women and Gender Equity Committee for the City of Hamilton acts as an Advisory Committee on matters pertaining to gender inequities faced by women, trans, and non-binary individuals. It achieves this mandate by providing Council input on matters of municipal concern and evaluating the City on its related efforts."</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Women Abuse Working Group (WAG) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Centre de Sante Communautaire de Hamilton/Niagara - Good Shepherd - Hamilton's Women's Clinic - Interval House - Mission's Services - Native Women's Centre - Nisa Homes - Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area) - Sex Workers Action Plan - Womankind Addiction Service - YMCA - YWCA - Zonta Club



Volunteer Advisory Committee – SWOT Analysis

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The analysis highlights that while Volunteer Advisory Committees have strengths such as diverse representation and public accessibility, they also face significant weaknesses related to slow processes and rigidity. To enhance their effectiveness, there is a clear need to streamline procedures, potentially adopting more agile and flexible models similar to those seen in other municipalities. This could involve restructuring committees to be more dynamic or adopting working group models that facilitate quicker decision-making and adaptability.

There is a substantial opportunity to improve volunteer engagement and satisfaction by implementing comprehensive support systems. This includes providing better training, recognition, and honorariums, as well as ensuring a transparent and accessible recruitment process. Enhancing these aspects can help attract and retain motivated volunteers, thereby strengthening the committees' overall impact and effectiveness.

The committees have the opportunity to align more closely with current Public Engagement best practices and the City's new Public Engagement Policy. By addressing barriers and increasing representation, the committees can improve their relevance and effectiveness in community engagement. This alignment can also help bridge gaps in public involvement and ensure that the committees are better integrated with broader municipal goals.

Several threats, such as the slow realization of outcomes and issues with transparency, need to be addressed to maintain and build trust in the committees. Ensuring clear communication with decision-makers and the public about processes and delays is crucial for maintaining credibility. Additionally, overcoming resistance to change and addressing the attachment to existing models are important for achieving the committee's potential and aligning with council priorities.

The analysis underscores the importance of flexibility and innovation in the functioning of Volunteer Advisory Committees. Embracing new engagement methods and adapting to evolving community needs can enhance their effectiveness. This includes exploring new models of engagement and being open to structural changes that can improve responsiveness and impact.

In summary, while Volunteer Advisory Committees have several strengths, addressing their weaknesses and threats through structural changes, enhanced volunteer support, and alignment with best practices presents significant opportunities for improvement.

Embracing these opportunities will be crucial for maximizing their effectiveness and achieving their goals.

SWOT ANALYSIS: KEY THEMES

Overview: Strengths

Volunteer Advisory Committees offer a robust framework for community engagement and decision-making. They serve as a vital communication channel at the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2)’s Involve/Consult level, bringing together diverse voices to support and guide decision-makers. The committees are notable for their broad representation, with 14 distinct groups actively working to include a wide range of perspectives through targeted recruitment efforts. This diversity is complemented by the passion and commitment of community members, who are deeply invested in the work of the committees.

Transparency and accessibility are key strengths, as the committees are open to the public, allowing for in-person attendance, online viewing, and public access to meeting minutes. This openness fosters a sense of accountability and community involvement. Additionally, committees benefit from dedicated staff support and a budget, which helps in managing resources effectively and supporting their initiatives.

The structured nature of the committees, backed by clerks and a well-defined framework, ensures organized operations. Furthermore, the committees play a crucial role in advancing principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA), addressing key community concerns, and aligning with the City’s strategic priorities. By providing a direct link to City Councillors and engaging in civic activities, the committees demonstrate the City’s investment in community engagement and provide valuable platforms for addressing high-conflict topics and building meaningful relationships.

Overview: Weaknesses

Volunteer Advisory Committees face several challenges that impact their effectiveness and efficiency. One significant issue is the slow and burdensome process involved in advancing workplans and priorities, which can hinder timely progress and limit the committees’ ability to respond to emerging needs. The complex budgetary and council-approval structure further complicates the spending of allocated funds, often leading to financial and operational constraints.

Additionally, the committees struggle with alignment to current Public Engagement best practices. Their infrequent evaluations—only every four years, with the last review in 2015—can result in outdated practices that do not fully address current community needs. Long fixed terms for members and limited recruitment opportunities outside of these cycles can also restrict flexibility and responsiveness. There is a notable lack of a

formal volunteer engagement process, including policies for recognition and honorariums, which can affect volunteer motivation and satisfaction.

The committees also face challenges related to perception and process. Decision-makers may not fully appreciate the value of the committees, leading to potential issues with trust and support. The rigidity of the existing structural system makes it difficult to implement necessary changes, and transparency issues—exemplified by the lack of communication about delays during the current review pause—can undermine accountability and confidence in the system. These factors collectively contribute to a sense of stagnation and inefficacy within the committees.

Overview: Opportunities

Volunteer Advisory Committees have several promising opportunities for enhancement and greater impact. One key opportunity lies in evolving their engagement strategies to be more meaningful and flexible. By creating innovative, creative spaces for community interaction, the committees can better reflect the diverse voices they aim to serve, fostering more impactful and relevant discussions. Embracing trends from other municipalities, which are moving towards streamlined or working group models, presents a chance to explore structural changes that could improve effectiveness and responsiveness.

Enhancing the volunteer program itself offers substantial opportunities. Implementing comprehensive training, recognition systems, and honorariums can greatly improve volunteer engagement and satisfaction. A clear and open recruitment process, along with agile and reduced-barrier participation, would make the program more inclusive and responsive. Integrating principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) and expanding access to various levels of IAP2 engagement can further enhance the committees' effectiveness and alignment with best practices.

Moreover, strengthening the City's new Public Engagement Policy by aligning committee operations with its principles can increase consistency and inclusiveness in community engagement efforts. This alignment could help bridge gaps, increase representation, and reach new demographics, thus broadening the committees' impact and relevance. By accessing new audiences and referencing municipal best practices, the committees can improve their approach and better serve the community's evolving needs.

Overview: Threats

Volunteer Advisory Committees encounter several threats that can undermine their effectiveness and credibility. A primary concern is that these committees might inadvertently undermine the Public Engagement Policy, Framework, and guidelines, potentially failing to advance meaningful engagement. The slow pace at which

committees realize outcomes can erode trust in both the committees themselves and the broader City government, as delays and inefficiencies become more apparent.

Liability expectations associated with committee work can negatively impact members' reputations and careers, deterring potential volunteers and causing stress for current members. Additionally, the lack of confidence in the current system may result in diminished trust in the advice and recommendations provided by the committees. Issues with transparency and accountability have arisen, particularly during periods of review or change, which can exacerbate concerns about the system's effectiveness.

Resistance to change poses another significant threat which can hinder progress and adaptation. This resistance threatens to prevent the achievement of Term of Council priority #3, which focuses on increasing public involvement in decision-making and problem-solving.

SWOT ANALYSIS DATA

Identified Strengths

- **Structured Communication:** Advisory Committees serve as a regular communication channel at the IAP2 Involve/Consult level, providing a panel of diverse voices to assist decision-makers.
- **Diverse Representation:** With 14 committees, there is a strong emphasis on recruiting members from diverse backgrounds, ensuring a broad range of perspectives.
- **Passionate Volunteers:** Members are highly motivated and committed to their roles, contributing to a vibrant and engaged committee.
- **Public Accessibility:** Meetings are open to the public, allowing for in-person attendance, online viewing, delegation delivery, and public access to process and minutes, fostering transparency.
- **Support and Resources:** Committees benefit from dedicated staff support, allocated budgets, and resources, which aid in their functioning and initiatives.
- **Awareness and Connection:** There is some awareness and opportunity for consultation with the Advisory Committees, along with connections to Term of Council Priorities and the Strategic Plan.
- **Conflict Engagement:** Committees provide a platform for engaging with high-conflict topics, offering a structured method to address sensitive issues.
- **Relationship Building:** Opportunities exist for building and strengthening relationships within the community and with stakeholders.
- **Policy Alignment:** There is potential alignment with the Public Engagement Policy, enhancing the committee's relevance and impact.
- **Community Feedback:** Committees facilitate shared feedback on community concerns, such as police board selection questions, ensuring that diverse viewpoints are considered.

- **Expertise and Skills:** Members bring a wealth of expertise, skills, and knowledge, representing broader sections of the population and enhancing the committee's effectiveness.
- **Well-Defined Structure:** A clear organizational structure, supported by clerks, ensures efficient operation and clarity in roles and responsibilities.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** Equity-deserving committees address key community issues, advancing principles of Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) and supporting council priorities.
- **Direct Council Connection:** There is a direct link to City Councillors, which can facilitate better communication and influence.
- **Civic Engagement:** Committees play a role in civic engagement, including leading community events and demonstrating the City's investment in various communities.
- **Broad Coverage:** The existence of a large number of committees allows for extensive community involvement and representation.

Identified Weaknesses

- **Slow and Burdensome Process:** The process for advancing workplans and priorities can be slow and cumbersome, hindering timely progress.
- **Budgetary Challenges:** Navigating the budget and council-approval structure can be difficult, often leading to challenges in spending allocated funds effectively.
- **Misalignment with Best Practices:** Advisory Committees may not fully align with current Public Engagement best practices, potentially limiting their effectiveness.
- **Relevance Concerns:** Committees are evaluated only every four years, with the last evaluation occurring in 2015, which may result in outdated practices that do not address current needs.
- **Long Fixed Terms:** Members are appointed for long fixed terms (4 years), which can limit flexibility and responsiveness to changing community needs.
- **Limited Recruitment Opportunities:** Recruitment opportunities are restricted to a four-year cycle, making it difficult to introduce new members outside of this period.
- **Perceived Lack of Value:** Decision-makers may not fully appreciate the value or impact of the committees, affecting their support and engagement.
- **Timeliness Issues:** The committees often struggle to meet timelines for public engagement projects due to procedural constraints.
- **Limited Tools and Methods:** While the Public Engagement policy supports diverse methods and tools, these are not available to Advisory Committees, limiting their engagement capabilities.

- **No Volunteer Engagement Process:** There is no formal policy for volunteer engagement, including the absence of honorarium payments or recognition processes.
- **Intimidation Factors:** The presence of recordings, live streaming, and adherence to ombudsman and integrity commissioner restrictions can create a sense of intimidation for members.
- **Inflexible Structure:** The structural system of the committees can be rigid and difficult to change, sometimes making it impossible to adapt or address issues.
- **Limited Recognition and Compensation:** Volunteers receive minimal recognition and cannot receive honorariums, which may impact motivation and appreciation.
- **Complex Learning Curve:** There is an extensive learning process involved in understanding municipal processes and working with government structures, which can be a barrier for new members.

Identified Opportunities

- **Enhanced Community Engagement:** There is a chance to create more meaningful and flexible ways to engage communities, fostering creative and brave spaces that reflect the diverse voices of those being reached.
- **Adapting Municipal Trends:** Other municipalities are evolving their approaches by reducing the number of committees or shifting towards working group models. This trend presents an opportunity to explore similar innovations.
- **Structural Evolution:** There is an opportunity to move away from the traditional Advisory Committee model towards a more dynamic and adaptable structure.
- **Volunteer Program Enhancements:**
 - **Training:** Implement comprehensive training programs for volunteers.
 - **Recognition:** Develop systems to recognize and celebrate volunteer contributions.
 - **Honorariums:** Introduce honorariums to acknowledge the time and effort of volunteers.
 - **Clear Recruitment:** Establish a transparent and efficient recruitment process.
 - **Agility:** Facilitate quick and open participation with reduced barriers.
 - **IDEA Principles:** Integrate Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) principles into the volunteer program.
 - **IAP2 Engagement Levels:** Increase access to various levels of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum.
 - **Privacy and Anonymity:** Ensure that the program supports privacy and anonymity where needed.
- **Career Advancement and Networking:** Advisory Committees offer opportunities for members to build valuable relationships and advance their careers.

- **Best Practice Integration:** Reference and incorporate municipal best practices to enhance committee operations and effectiveness.
- **Strengthening Public Engagement:** By aligning more closely with the City's new Public Engagement Policy, there is an opportunity to strengthen engagement efforts with greater consistency and inclusiveness.
- **Increased Representation:** Reducing barriers and increasing representation can help ensure that diverse voices are heard and involved.
- **Access to New Demographics:** Engage with new people, audiences, and demographics to broaden the committee's impact and relevance.

Identified Threats

- **Undermining Public Engagement Standards:** Advisory Committees may undermine the Public Engagement Policy, Framework, and guidelines, potentially failing to advance meaningful and effective engagement.
- **Reputational and Career Risks:** The liability expectations associated with committee work can negatively affect reputations and careers, deterring potential volunteers and impacting current members.
- **Slow Outcome Realization:** The slow pace of committees in delivering outcomes can erode trust in the City and local government, affecting public perception and confidence.
- **Lack of Confidence:** The current system's inefficiencies or perceived shortcomings can contribute to a lack of trust in the advice and recommendations provided by the committees.
- **Transparency and Accountability Issues:** During the pause for review, a lack of communication with decision-makers about delays can lead to issues with transparency and accountability, undermining stakeholder confidence.
- **Attachment to Existing Models:** Staff or members may have strong attachments to existing Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs), making it difficult to implement changes or reforms.
- **Resistance to Change:** Current committee members may be invested in maintaining the status quo, creating resistance to necessary changes, and making it challenging to adapt to new approaches.
- **Impact on Council Priorities:** Maintaining the status quo threatens to hinder progress toward Term of Council priority #3, which aims to increase public involvement in decision-making and problem-solving.

Current Volunteer Advisory Committee Structure Overview

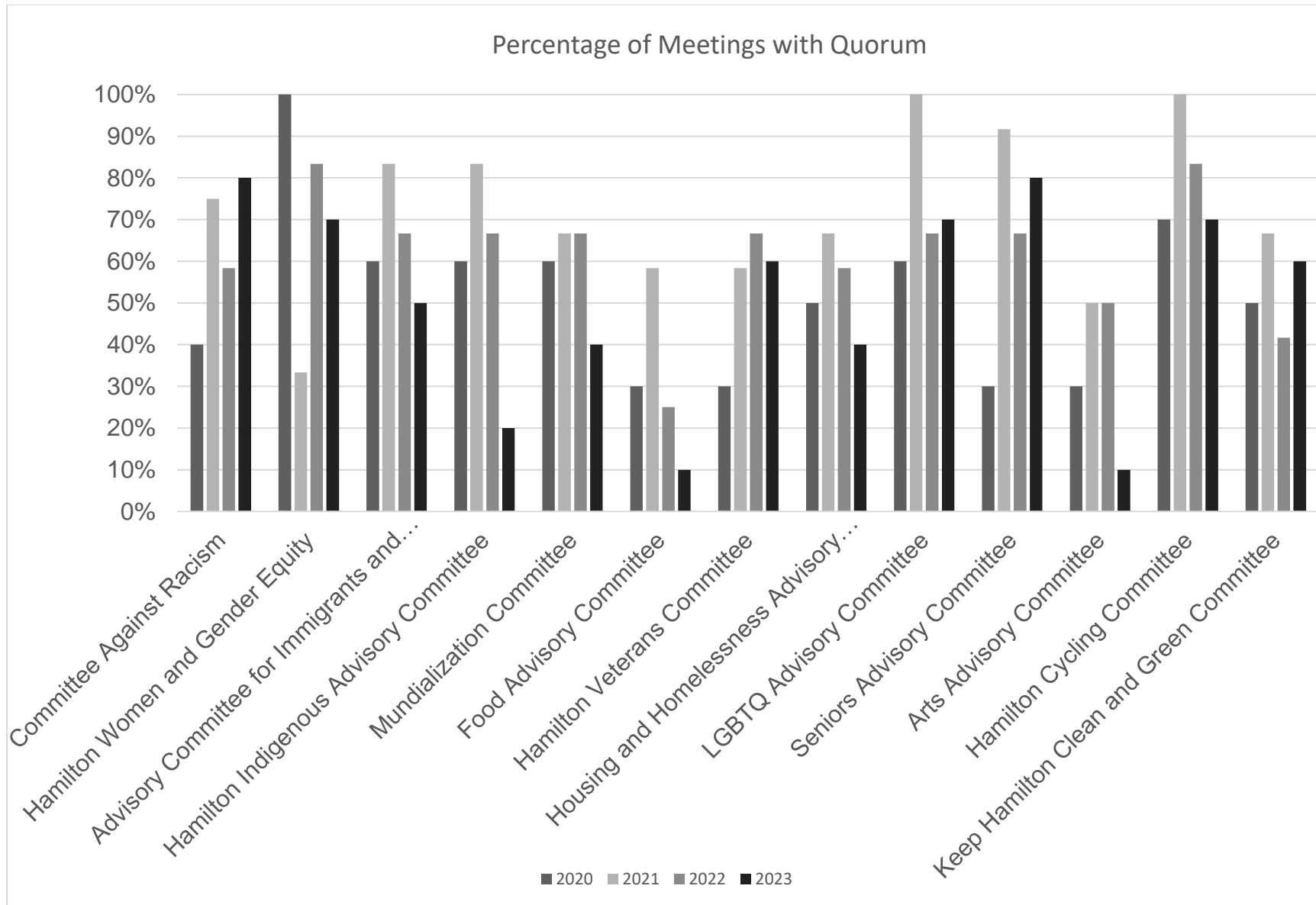
An advisory committee is established by City Council for the purpose of providing advice on matters that are related to the specific mandate of the committee, comprised of a group of appointed citizens. An advisory committee is accountable to City Council for its actions through the appropriate Standing Committee to which they report.

An advisory committee member is recruited based on their understanding of and expertise around the advisory committee's mandate and willingness to volunteer their time.

Advisory committees play an important role in providing resident input on proposed policy and City initiatives and are often used as another way to connect directly with the broader community. Advisory committees and task forces have a clearly defined terms of reference document which provides the committee's mandate and outlines parameters for committee activity.

Advisory committees/task forces review or provide advice to City Council and staff on mandated matters; assist in public consultation processes and committee work; and liaise with other advisory committees/task forces. Two of the Advisory Committees organize and participate in community events. The Hamilton Veteran's Committee has organized the annual Remembrance Day Events in the City of Hamilton. The Seniors Advisory Committee assists in the organization of the Senior of the Year Awards. Being a member of an advisory committee/task force offers residents a unique chance to volunteer their highly valued skills, diversity, and knowledge to strengthen our shared sense of community.

The work of the Advisory Committee is facilitated by staff from various departments. Often these staff persons are facilitating the work of the advisory committee along with many other responsibilities. The work of the advisory committee is not always well served by the committee meeting process. When an advisory committee requires approval for any action, other than basic actions around the operations of the advisory, from their respective Standing Committee, the advisory committee is required to prepare a Citizen Committee Report (CCR) with recommendations. Recommendations: are proposals/requests from an advisory committee to their respective Standing Committee to approve, amend, cancel, consider, implement, direct staff respecting a matter, issue, project, service or program. Committee members may not have much experience drafting reports or recommendations and staff liaisons may not always have the capacity to provide needed assistance, which can lead to delays in action. Additionally, the advisory committee are limited as to contacts that they can make with various organizations, due to the advisory committee meeting structure. Staff-lead groups would better facilitate the connection between interested citizens and the City of Hamilton.



Advisory Committee	Citizen Advisory Committee Reports (CCRs) Submitted to Council			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees	0	1	0	0
Arts Advisory Committee	0	0	0	0
Committee Against Racism	0	1	0	1
Food Advisory Committee	0	0	0	0
Hamilton Cycling Committee	0	4	1	4
Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee	1	0	1	1
Hamilton Veterans Committee	0	0	0	0
Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee	0	2	2	4
Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee	0	0	0	0
Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee	2	0	2	1
LGBTQ Advisory Committee	4	10	2	2
Mundialization Committee	0	0	0	0
Seniors Advisory Committee	0	5	2	0

Advisory Committee	Allocated Budget (Percentage Spent*)			
	2020	2021	2022	2023
Advisory Committee for Immigrants and Refugees	\$3,500 (5.1%)	\$3,500 (0.0%)	\$3,500 (0.0%)	\$3,500 (42.9%)
Arts Advisory Committee	\$9,000 (62.6%)	\$9,000 (52.2%)	\$9,000 (214.4%)	\$9,000 (0.3%)
Committee Against Racism	\$8,900 (79.8%)	\$8,900 (11.1%)	\$8,900 (0.6%)	\$8,900 (25.8%)
Food Advisory Committee	\$2,500 (100.0%)	\$2,500 (40.0%)	\$1,500 (0.0%)	\$1,500 (0.0%)
Hamilton Cycling Committee	\$13,000 (28.3%)	\$10,000 (90.8%)	\$10,000 (76.7%)	\$14,000 (36.8%)
Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee	\$3,552 (3.7%)	\$3,552 (24.5%)	\$3,552 (52.4%)	\$3,552 (22.5%)
Hamilton Veterans Committee	\$43,000 (127.9%)	\$43,000 (100.0%)	\$43,000 (143.1%)	\$55,000 (98.7%)
Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee	\$3,500 (48.1%)	\$3,500 (202.9%)	\$3,500 (191.2%)	\$3,500 (85.7%)
Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee	\$1,000 (88.4%)	\$1,000 (0.0%)	\$1,000 (0.0%)	\$1,000 (0.0%)
Keep Hamilton Clean and Green Committee	\$18,250 (80.8%)	\$18,250 (50.5%)	\$18,250 (92.0%)	\$18,250 (152.7%)
LGBTQ Advisory Committee	\$3,960 (60.9%)	\$3,960 (85.8%)	\$4,039 (51.6%)	\$4,050 (14.8%)
Mundialization Committee	\$5,890 (14.0%)	\$5,890 (10.2%)	\$5,890 (34.6%)	\$5,890 (33.0%)
Seniors Advisory Committee	\$2,500 (62.9%)	\$2,500 (33.8%)	\$2,500 (43.2%)	\$3,000 (98.5%)

*In cases where the percentage spent exceeds 100% this represents funds spent from the Advisory Committee's reserves



Volunteer Advisory Committee Review

Audit, Finance, & Administration Committee

November 21, 2024

Meaningful civic engagement is...

- A community-driven process to shape community
- Active participation in inclusive decision-making processes
- Open, collaborative dialogue, and engagement
- Focused on outcomes, capacity building, and civic education



Empowering individuals to work in partnership with the City to shape their communities.

What are Volunteer Advisory Committees (VACs)?

- Comprised of passionate and civically-engaged residents (volunteers)
- They provide advice and recommendations on issues and policies
- Diverse in expertise on a range of local priorities
- Council-directed, supported by clerks and departmental staff
- Local Boards, subject to unique liability and expectations
- City of Hamilton currently has 14 VACs

Current Organization of VACs

Audit, Finance & Administration:

- Committee Against Racism
- Women and Gender Equity
- Immigrant and Refugees
- Hamilton Indigenous Advisory
- Mundialization

General Issues:

- Arts Advisory
- Climate Change

Emergency & Community Services:

- Hamilton Veterans
- Housing and Homelessness
- LGBTQ Advisory
- Seniors Advisory

Public Works:

- Hamilton Cycling
- Keep Hamilton Clean and Green

Public Health: Food Advisory

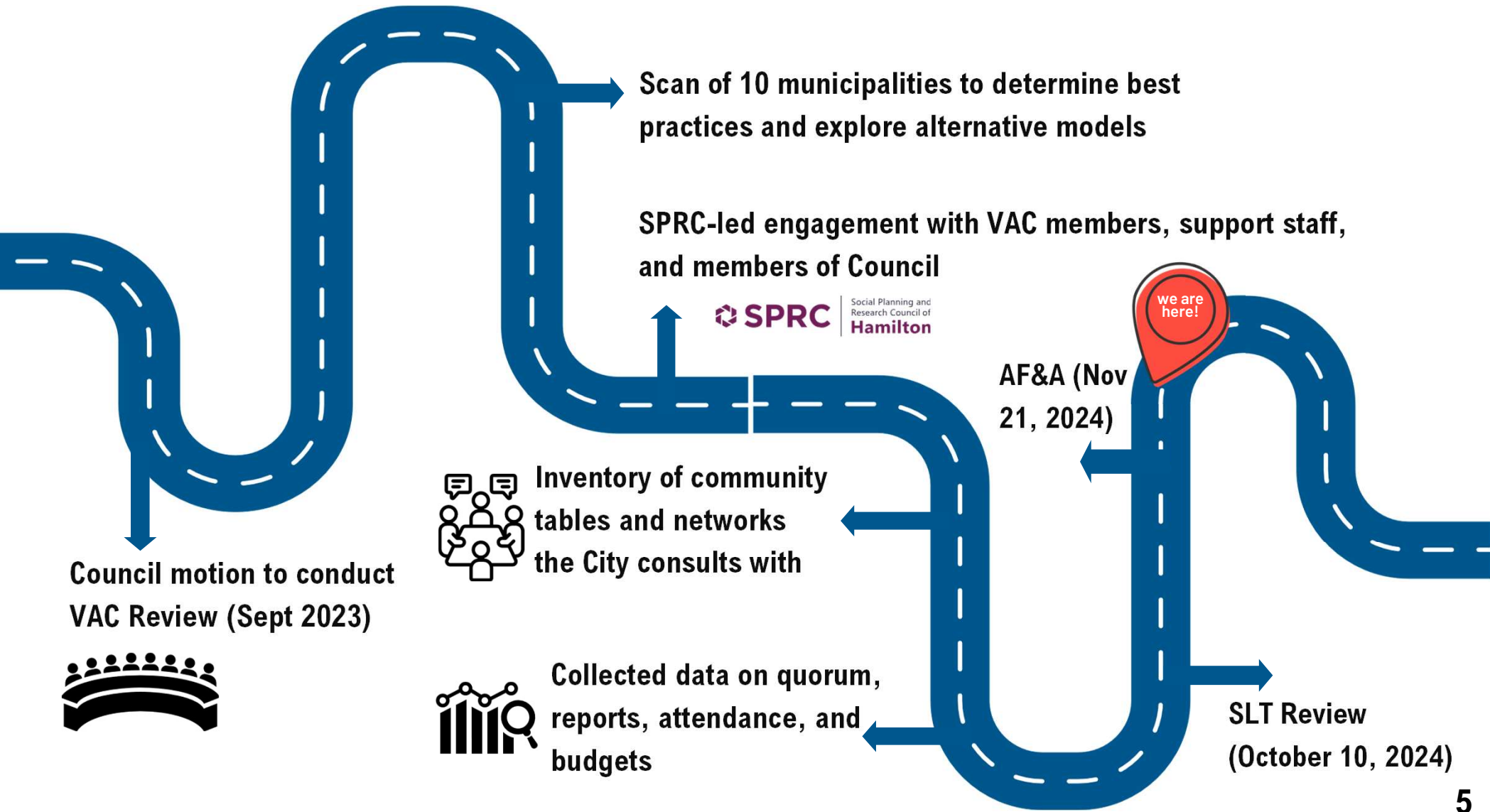
Purpose of VAC Review

- Last review conducted in 2015
- Motion to review VACs passed by Council in September 2023
- Supported by Term of Council Priorities
- Aligned with Public Engagement Policy



Priority 3: Responsiveness & Transparency

Outcome 2: Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving



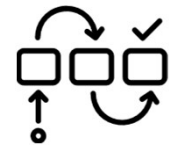
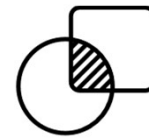
What We Heard



Feedback showed significant need for change along key theme areas of:

- 1 Meaningful Engagement
- 2 Transparency
- 3 Clarity

- 4 Culture
- 5 Structural Changes



What We Learned

- Trends show other municipalities reducing number of VACs
 1. Disbanding advisory committees
 2. Reformatted advisory committees
 3. Alignment with civic/public engagement best practices
- Training, orientation, and staff support is key to success
- Local Boards which VACs were recently determined to be, subject to higher liability

What We Recommend

- Eliminate VACs duplicating efforts of other community tables:
 - Committee Against Racism (Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre, Circle of Beads, Hamilton Anti-Hate Coalition)
 - Food Advisory Committee (Roundtable for Poverty Reduction)
 - Immigrants and Refugees Advisory Committee (Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council)
 - Mundialization Advisory Committee (Planning and Economic Development Department / Government Relations Division)

What We Recommend

- Transition remaining VACs to Community Liaison Groups
 1. Aligned with municipal best practices
 2. Reduce barriers to meaningful engagement
 3. Better integrated with staff work plans
 4. Aligned with Public Engagement Policy and guidelines
- Increased training support for staff, VAC Chairs, and members
 1. Inclusive of liability and decorum expectations
 2. Public engagement principles and levels of engagement

What We Recommend


- VAC's transitioning to Community Liaison Groups:
 - Arts Advisory Committee (Tourism and Culture)
 - Climate Change Advisory Committee (Climate Change Initiatives)
 - Hamilton Cycling Committee (Active Transportation & Mobility)
 - Hamilton Indigenous Advisory Committee (Indigenous Relations)
 - Hamilton Veterans Committee (Heritage Resource Management)
 - Hamilton Women and Gender Equity Committee (Community Strategies)
 - Keep Hamilton Clean & Green Committee (Environmental Services)
 - LGBTQ Advisory Committee (Community Strategies)
 - Senior Advisory Committee (Lodges Division)
 - Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee (Housing/Housing Secretariat)

Thank you





**CITY OF HAMILTON
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL**

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD24006) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Brigitte Minard CPA, CA, CIA, CGAP, CFE (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3107 Cindy Purnomo Stuive IAP (905) 546-2424 Ext. 8627
SUBMITTED BY:	Charles Brown CPA, CA Auditor General Office of the Auditor General
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Appendices “A”, “B”, and “C” to Report AUD24006 be received.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- **127 Fraud and Waste Reports received between July 2023 and June 2024.**
- **The overall substantiation rate was 33%.**
- **\$2,348,000 in loss or waste was substantiated since the issuance of the last Fraud and Waste Report.**
- **\$11,500 in recoveries or restitution received since the issuance of the last Fraud and Waste Report.**

SUBJECT: Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD24006) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 4**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report is the Annual Report of Fraud and Waste activity and includes the reporting period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. A total of 127 reports were received and assessed by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) during this reporting period.

Thirteen investigations were launched by the OAG, and there was an overall substantiation rate of 33%.

A detailed report containing the types of reports received, investigations opened, and report examples can be found in Appendix "A" to Report AUD24006.

Alternatives for Consideration –Not Applicable**PREVIOUS REPORTS SUBMITTED:**

Report AUD23011 Fraud and Waste Annual Report

Report AUD23003 Fraud and Waste Annual Report

Report AUD21011 Fraud and Waste Annual Report

Report AUD20007 Fraud and Waste Annual Report

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: None.

Staffing: None.

Legal: None.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

By-law 19-181 (Whistleblower By-law), Section 19 – Responsibility of the Auditor General requires reporting to Council semi-annually, in the aggregate, on the number, nature and outcome of disclosures of serious wrongdoing made under this By-law.

On June 27, 2018, Council directed the Auditor General to implement a Fraud and Waste Hotline with intake performed by an independent third party as part of a three-year pilot project. The City's Fraud and Waste Hotline launched in July 2019 and was made permanent in March 2023.

SUBJECT: Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD24006) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 4

The fourth Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD23011) was presented to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on November 16, 2023. Report AUD23011 fulfilled the semi-annual reporting requirement for January to June 2023, as it contained the information required by the Whistleblower By-law.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Whistleblower By-law No. 19-181

To Appoint the City Auditor as an Auditor General under Section 223.19 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* By-law No. 19-180

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Human Resources and Legal and Risk Management Services were consulted as required during the assessment and investigation of Fraud and Waste Hotline reports.

Management was informed of reports relating to their area of responsibility.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

This report is the Annual Report of Fraud and Waste activity and includes the reporting period of July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024. The 2023 year-end reporting requirement for whistleblower disclosures was postponed due to the cyber security incident in February 2024, however there were zero whistleblower reports between July and December 2023. This report fulfils the 2024 mid-year reporting requirement for whistleblower disclosures.

Since the Fraud and Waste Hotline launch, there has been an increased level of awareness by employees and management to report fraud, waste and whistleblower matters to the Office of the Auditor General. The Office of the Auditor General would like to acknowledge the reports submitted by employees and management, along with the assistance provided to complete assessments and investigations. Reporting these matters so they can be assessed and investigated increases the City of Hamilton's transparency and accountability.

A detailed report containing the types of reports received, investigations opened, and report examples can be found in Appendix "A" to Report AUD24006. This report does not represent an overall picture of fraud, waste, or other wrongdoing at the City of Hamilton as there may be items that were not reported to the Office of the Auditor General or items that remain undetected.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Fraud and Waste Annual Report (AUD24006) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 4

An infographic summarizing the activity can be found in Appendix “B” to Report AUD24006.

A summary of the recommendations the OAG made to City of Hamilton Management as a result of Fraud and Waste reports in the current reporting period can be found in Appendix “C” to Report AUD24006.

The Office of the Auditor General would like to thank members of the public that submitted reports and for providing additional information as requested by the Office of the Auditor General.

Future Reporting

The City of Hamilton’s Whistleblower By-law (19-181) has a semi-annual reporting requirement. Information about the number, nature, and volume of whistleblower disclosures for the first six months of 2024 are included in this report. The 2024 year-end reporting requirement will be met with the next Semi-Annual Fraud and Waste Report, which is expected to be presented in March or April 2025.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Not applicable.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report AUD24006 – Fraud and Waste Annual Report 2023-2024

Appendix “B” to Report AUD24006 – Fraud and Waste Annual Report Infographic

Appendix “C” to Report AUD24006 – Fraud and Waste Recommendations to Management

FRAUD AND WASTE ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



November 21, 2024

Charles Brown, CPA, CA
Auditor General
Office of the Auditor General
City of Hamilton



Hamilton
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

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Summary and Commentary

This year's Fraud and Waste Annual Report reflects the fifth year of activity of the hotline since it was launched in July 2019. It provides a summary of the complaints received, the investigations launched, and the results and actions that took place related to allegations of fraud and government waste.

During the first year, July 2019 to June 2020, the volume of reports received by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) exceeded initial expectations, with 85 reports being received. For the second year, July 2020 to June 2021, the volume of activity continued to exceed expectations with 80 reports received. For the third year, the volume increased significantly with 107 reports received, and in the fourth year, 159 reports were received.

In this fifth year, volume remained high, with 127 reports being received, a decrease from the previous year, but still the second highest volume ever. During the first three months of the sixth year of implementation there were 44 complaints reported. Clearly, the hotline continues to be well used.

With 127 complaints received in the most recent reporting year we have noted that 46% come from self-identified employees and 54% from the public. While most of the complaints we receive are dealt with through referral and report back, a significant number (13), involved investigation by our Office. Overall the substantiation rate of complaints received was 33%. We also continued to follow the approach of the previous year by making it a practice to initiate spontaneous system or process audits in response to issues that could have systemic repercussions. In that regard we performed audits of Corporate Real Estate – Leases and Licensing Audit (AUD24005), and we are in the final stages of report writing for an audit of DARTS Payments Administration Audit that is expected to be reported to the Audit, Finance, and Administration Committee in the coming months. Three Payment Process Reviews have been completed in response to some of the larger fraudulent incidents and a report is to be issued in early 2024. And finally, an audit of Freedom of Information processes is also in the audit fieldwork stage, as some hotline reports were received regarding this topic.

The purpose of the hotline and ensuing investigation of complaints is to ensure honesty, integrity and accountability in the operations of the City. One of the significant benefits is that it affords an opportunity to identify systemic problems, themes or emerging issues that can be considered by City management in their operations and Council in their governance.

An item to note is that for losses substantiated, there were more losses due to fraud rather than waste for the second time since the launch for the Fraud and Waste Hotline. This is due, primarily, to a new, and significant issue that came to prominence during this reporting period - cyberfraud, specifically, business email compromise fraud. This occurs when a fraudster infiltrates and impersonates a vendor for the purpose of diverting payments made by the City to their illicit bank accounts. There was one such matter in the previous reporting period with losses

of about \$52,000 where the Police have laid charges since our last Annual Report, and there have since been two new cases of fraud that the City and its Agencies have fallen victim to and where large losses have been substantiated. These two incidents combined for losses of over \$826,000. The total of these three incidents is about \$878,000. These types of investigation are time-consuming and involve complex legal procedures where time is of the essence. One of the instances involved a fraud of \$552,000. As part of the investigation response, OAG enlisted the assistance of the City's Legal Services Division in tracing the funds and through court orders \$417,000 of the \$552,000 was successfully frozen.

In addition to the above examples of cyberfraud, there were multiple other attempts of payroll phishing schemes and attempts to breach the City's payment systems. This is all in addition to the ongoing recovery efforts by the City of Hamilton after being hit by a major ransomware attack in February of 2024. In 2021, the Office of the Auditor General completed an extensive Cyber Security Audit (AUD21004) and made 29 recommendations to management. Our Office was planning a follow-up to ascertain the progress made on those recommendations when the cyber incident took place. In light of the incident, our plan is to initiate a series of reviews to check in on management's progress in implementing the OAG's recommendations, as well as any recommendations provided by the cybersecurity consultants who have been assisting the City in its recovery efforts, and as necessary make additional recommendations as the circumstances of the incident become more clear.

Employee Benefits Fraud continues to be an ongoing issue, although the number of reports has declined. There was a total of three reports made involving current or former City employees, and their dependents. Due to findings of prior investigations, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) considers this to be a continuing area of high-risk for the organization, and the OAG has serious concerns about the organization's current profile of fraud risk pertaining to benefits claims.

One issue that OAG is bringing forward for the fourth year in a row is the apparent difficulty that management experiences in properly dealing with conflict of interest (COI) situations that arise with employees of the City. Since the hotline was implemented, the OAG has investigated no fewer than 25 instances (more if reports where conflict of interest is one of several topics being looked into are considered) where either the disclosure process or the related mitigation of the conflict of interest has been an issue. Conflicts of interests continue to be one of the most persistent, serious, and time-consuming types of complaints received and investigated by the OAG. The OAG does note that a new version of the Code of Conduct for Employees was approved by Council in 2023, and the reporting process for COI's was revamped, but these issues persist. Accordingly, we recommend that senior leadership continue its review of its current process to rationalize and improve the effectiveness with which conflicts of interest are both disclosed and mitigated, and most importantly to increase awareness amongst employees of the importance of proper disclosure of potential conflicts. In this year's report our Office makes specific mention of enhancing guidance surrounding potential conflicts of interest of vendors.

In addition to the recurring theme of conflict of interest policies and processes, we again cite recurring issues with the veracity of the City's contract management processes. In a previous audit of the Grigmire Arena project (AUD22004) we noted needed improvements, and some of those same issues in the lack of vigorous contract oversight have been evident in some of the cases, both in contracted services, and in transfer payments made to third parties.

About the Fraud and Waste Hotline

The Fraud and Waste Hotline provides City of Hamilton employees, contractors, vendors, and members of the public a convenient, confidential, and anonymous way to report suspicion or proof of wrongdoing. Wrongdoing is defined as any activity that could be illegal, dishonest, wasteful, or violates a City of Hamilton policy.



Fraud encompasses any array of irregularities and illegal acts characterized by intentional deception.



Waste involves taxpayers not receiving reasonable value for money in connection with any government funded activities, due to mismanagement or an inappropriate or careless act or omission by those with control over or access to government resources.



Whistleblower By-law No. 19-181 is intended to help uncover serious wrongdoing at the City, by bringing it to the attention of management and the Auditor General or their designate, and to ensure it is addressed appropriately, including by means of an investigation where required. The City of Hamilton has had a Whistleblower By-law in force since 2010 (previously By-law No. 09-227).

The Fraud and Waste Hotline enables the City of Hamilton to operate with a high level of honesty and integrity. The Fraud and Waste Hotline is managed by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG), an independent and objective office accountable to Council.

The Office of the Auditor General reviews and assesses every Hotline report to ensure it was made in good faith and if necessary, launch an investigation. The Office of the Auditor General conducts an objective and impartial assessment of each report, regardless of the alleged wrongdoer's position, title, length of service, or relationship with the City.

Alignment to the 2016-2025 Strategic Plan

The Fraud and Waste Report supports the following City strategic objectives:

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

Alignment to 2023-2026 Council Priorities

The Fraud and Waste Report supports the following Council priorities:

Responsiveness & Transparency

Government plays an important role in people's lives through the provision of vital services, programs and support systems. To fulfill those responsibilities, City Hall must continue to develop its approach to public engagement, respond effectively and efficiently to public need and feedback, and communicate its approach in an accessible and transparent manner.

Outcome 3: Build a high performing public service

Introduction

This is the Fraud and Waste Annual Report on fraud, waste and whistleblower matters at the City of Hamilton and includes information about the activities of the Fraud and Waste Hotline.

It highlights the reports that have been communicated to the Office of the Auditor General from July 2023 to June 2024. It does not represent an overall picture of fraud, waste, or other wrongdoing across the City of Hamilton.

Fraud and Waste Hotline Program

Hotline made permanent in March 2023

The Fraud and Waste Hotline was established to help protect City of Hamilton assets and reduce losses. Since its launch in July 2019, the cumulative total of actual and potential losses investigated is approximately \$3,635,000, with about \$47,400 recovered via repayments/restitution/asset recovery. Effective March 2023, City Council made the Fraud and Waste Hotline a permanent program. Additionally, the Fraud and Waste Hotline provides the following benefits that cannot be quantified:

- Deterring fraud, waste, and wrongdoing,
- Strengthening internal controls and mitigation of risks,
- Improving policies and standard operating procedures,
- Building a culture of accountability,
- Better value in service delivery through increasing operational efficiencies,

Hotline report data can also be used to identify trends, manage risks, make results-oriented recommendations to management, and inform future audits for the Office of the Auditor General work plan, along with spontaneous audits for high-risk areas.

No dedicated Fraud and Waste team

The Office of the Auditor General operates the Fraud and Waste program in addition to their other audit assignments. The Office of the Auditor General are a team of professionals who collectively possess the expertise to assess a broad range of reports and conduct investigative work into allegations ranging from simple to complex. When required, the Office of the Auditor General engages outside experts to assist on complex investigations or specialty work due to the small size of the team. Investigation costs are recovered from the home department, per the Fraud Policy and Protocol.

Independent oversight

The Office of the Auditor General also provides independent oversight of management-led investigations by reviewing the adequacy of work performed and evaluating mitigation plans to protect City of Hamilton assets, reduce the risk of future losses, and prevent and deter future fraud, waste, or wrongdoing.

Anonymity of the Fraud and Waste Hotline

Fraud and Waste Hotline intake is independently operated by a third party, Whistleblower Security Inc. (a Case IQ company). Whistleblower Security Inc. provides IntegrityCounts, a Certified Ethics Reporting System, which is a confidential way to report important information and ethical misconduct. Providing any personal information, such as your name, is optional. For any person willing to identify themselves, their information will remain confidential and will not be disclosed unless the Auditor General is compelled to do so by law.

The Office of the Auditor General may have questions or require additional information about a reported incident and will communicate using the Fraud and Waste Hotline anonymous messaging system.






All participants in a fraud and waste investigation are required to keep the investigation details and results confidential.

Role of the Auditor General

The City of Hamilton has appointed the Auditor General as an Auditor General under the Municipal Act (via By-law No. 19-180, and previously No. 12-073) since 2012. This position has the responsibility to assist City Council in holding itself and its administrators accountable for stewardship over public funds and value for money in City operations. This responsibility is fulfilled by completing audits, operating the Fraud and Waste Hotline and conducting investigations as required.

Report Sources

Reports in good faith are made in one of the following ways:

-  **Online** at hamilton.ca/fraud
-  **Email** to cityofhamilton@integritycounts.ca
-  **Phone** 1-888-390-0393
-  **Mail** to PO Box 91880, West Vancouver, BC, V7V 4S4
-  **Fax** to 1-844-785-069

Overview

44 Reports
 Directly Received by the
 Office of the Auditor
 General (Proxy)

27 Proxy Reports Sent by
 City Staff, Management,
 HR, Finance, Council
 Members

46% of Reporters
 Self-Identified as an
 Employee

54% of Reporters were
 non-Employees

Investigations Launched
 13
 (12 Current Year Reports,
 1 Carryforward Report from
 Prior Reporting Year)

\$2.35M Loss or
 Waste/Mismanagement
 Substantiated

(\$3.64M since
 Hotline launch)

Number of Reports

127

Number of Reports Since Hotline Launch

558

Number of Reports by Source

54



Online

37



Email

36



Phone/
 In Person

0



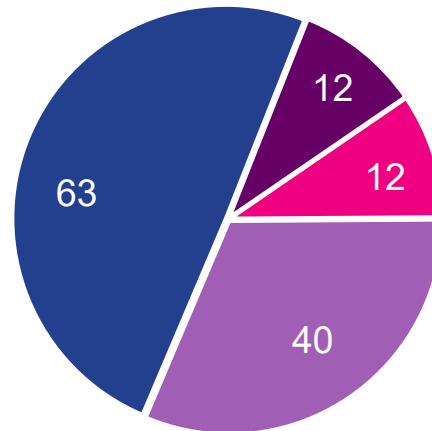
Mail

0



Fax

Report Types July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024



- Referral – Response Required – 63
- Referral – No Response Required – 12
- Investigations Launched (Current Year) - 12
- No Response Required/ Out of Jurisdiction/ Not Enough Information – 40

Investigation Type

2



Fraud

6



Waste

1



Combined Fraud and
 Waste/Mismanagement

4

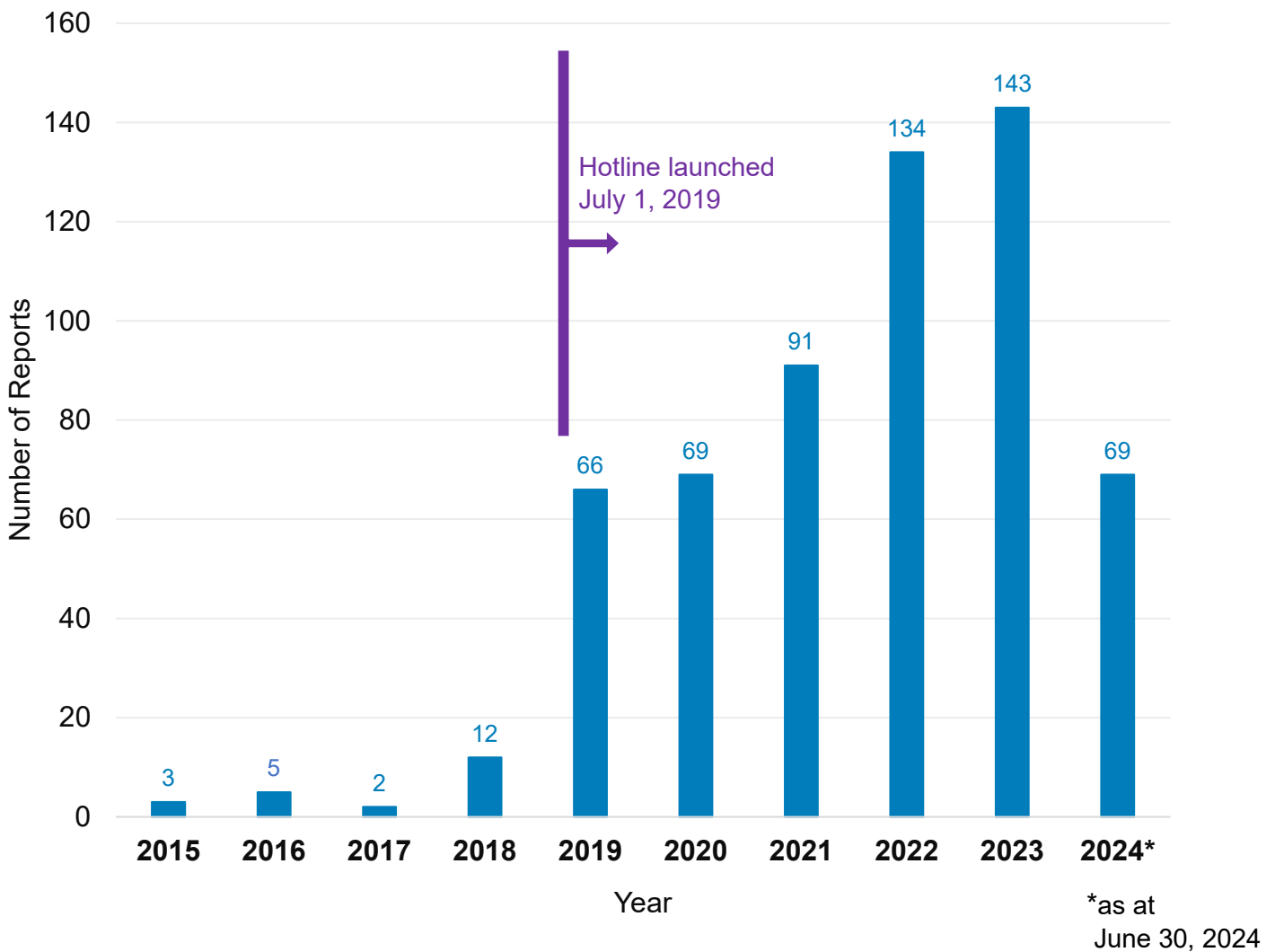


Whistleblower

Historical Volume

This chart depicts the number of fraud, waste, and whistleblower reports from 2015 to June 2024. Between 2018 to 2023, the Office of the Auditor General saw a large increase in reports since the Fraud and Waste Hotline was announced in late 2018 and launched in July 2019. This trend continued into the first half of 2024.

City of Hamilton Fraud, Waste, and Whistleblower Report Volume January 1, 2015 to June 30, 2024



Work Volume

A total of 127 reports were assessed by the Office of the Auditor General in the twelve-month period between July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.

There are no staff dedicated solely to the Fraud and Waste Hotline. Existing Office of the Auditor General staff complete assessments and investigations, with some limited usage of external specialty expertise for investigations that require additional support.

In total, about 3,940 hours were spent on Fraud and Waste Hotline administration, assessment, investigations and reporting during this 12-month period. This is approximately equivalent to 2.2 frontline Office of the Auditor General FTEs annually (excluding management's time spent on hotline matters). Another way of looking at this, is that the effort is similar to having completed four to five audits of modest scope and complexity. When the Office of the Auditor General is fully staffed, there are a total of five frontline OAG employees. There have been significant vacancy and recruiting challenges experienced during this reporting period. It is estimated that management spends between 30-50% of their time on Fraud and Waste matters, depending on the active number of files at any given point in time. Compared to the prior year, a slightly increased amount of time was spent on Fraud and Waste Hotline matters (prior reporting period was 2.0 FTEs), however this nevertheless had a serious impact as the Office of the Auditor General had at least one of five frontline FTE positions vacant during this reporting period. The amount of time spent on Hotline matters has been significant in each 12-month reporting period since Hotline's launch.

Reports

From July 2023 to June 2024, a total of 127 reports were received and assessed.

Of the 127 reports received, 83 (65%) reports were received via the third-party hotline operation. Another 44 (35%) reports were received directly by the Office of the Auditor General and were entered as a proxy into the case management system that is provided as part of the IntegrityCounts service contract. Of the 44 proxy reports received directly by the OAG, 27 were made by City staff and management, and 17 items were received directly from residents.

For reports received regarding Ontario Works (OW) and Housing Services social services matters, these were referred to OW and Housing Services for assessment and investigation. The investigations were handled by OW/Housing Services, not the Office of the Auditor General. The substantiation status is reported to the OAG for the tracking of aggregate statistics. The OAG reserves the right to investigate any matter which is not found to be satisfactorily investigated. In this reporting period, there was an uptick in the volume of

hotlines cases received by the OAG team relating to OW that were substantiated and actioned by the OW team.

Employee Reports

Fifty-nine (59) of these 127 reports were reported by City of Hamilton employees (46% vs 48% in the prior year). Thirty (30) of the 59 employee reports were made anonymously (51% vs 44% prior year). The remaining 29 reports were employees that identified themselves. Many of these 29 reports where the employee identified themselves were employees working in HR, Finance, and Management where they had an awareness of the Fraud Policy and Protocol and of their responsibility to report matters to the Office of the Auditor General as part of their job duties.

The Office of the Auditor General continues to encourage employees and management to submit reports and thanks all those that submitted reports for this reporting period, and for their cooperation during report assessments and investigations.

Reports from the Public

All reports received from the public were assessed and investigated as appropriate. The Office of the Auditor General continues to encourage members of the public to submit reports and thanks all those that submitted reports for this reporting period and for providing additional information as requested.

Anonymous Reports

When a report is made anonymously, it automatically does not qualify as a whistleblower disclosure per the Whistleblower By-law, although it may meet the definition of serious wrongdoing. The vast majority of the reports the Office of the Auditor General received do not qualify as a whistleblower matter due to the fact that they come from residents or employees that wish to remain anonymous. In fact, a sizeable proportion of employee reports (30 of 59) do not qualify as a whistleblower disclosure because of anonymity. Overall, 65 of the 127 (51%) reports received for the current 12-month reporting period were anonymous.

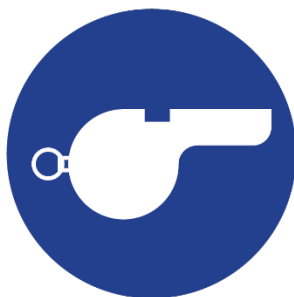
It should be noted that anonymous reports are able to be effectively assessed and investigated if the Reporter provides a sufficient level of information. The OAG is able to communicate with an anonymous reporter in the case management system, as long as the Reporter chooses to enable this feature and periodically returns to the online system for exchange of messages. City of Hamilton employees continue to prefer making anonymous reports to the Hotline. While anonymity is not necessarily a constraint to the Office of the Auditor General investigations, the ability to dialogue with a Reporter through the IntegrityCounts online messaging system has proven effective in assisting with investigations.

Whistleblower Disclosure

By-law 19-181 (Whistleblower By-law), Section 19 - Responsibility of the Auditor General requires reporting to Council semi-annually, in the aggregate, on the number, nature and outcome of disclosures of serious wrongdoing made under this By-law.

There was no activity for the first half of the reporting period, July to December 2023. A semi-annual report was not prepared due to impacts from the cyber security incident.

There were four qualifying Whistleblower disclosures in the second half of the reporting period from January 2024 to June 2024.



Reports Involving Whistleblower

0

4

July to December 2023

January to June 2024

For the first item, the report category is Multiple Categories Applicable (Conflict of Interest and Employee Misconduct). The outcome is pending as the investigation is ongoing.

For the second item, the report category is Multiple Categories Applicable (Conflict of Interest and Employee Time Theft and/or Misconduct). The outcome is substantiated, and the employee resigned prior to the conclusion of the investigation.

For the third item, the report category is Multiple Categories Applicable (Conflict of Interest and Employee Time Theft and/or Misconduct). The outcome is pending as the investigation is ongoing.

For the fourth item, the report category is Multiple Categories Applicable (Conflict of Interest and Waste/Mismanagement). The outcome is pending as the investigation is ongoing.

Report Categories

A wide variety of reports were received by the Office of the Auditor General for the 12-months covered in this reporting period. The most common report categories were the following:

Top Report Categories July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Social Services – Fraud/Wrongdoing	21
Service Complaint/Concern	20
Multiple Categories Applicable	18
Conflict of Interest	9
Phishing/Identity Theft	9
Time Theft and/or Misconduct	5
Improper Financial Reporting/Budgeting	5
Employee Benefits Fraud	3
Fraud	3
Contractor/Vendor Wrongdoing	2
Theft/Misappropriation	2
Waste/Mismanagement	2
Other Various Categories	8
Out of Jurisdiction	20
Total Reports	127

Having the top report category be “Social Services – Fraud/Wrongdoing” is indicative there are concerns that eligible individuals are in receipt of the available support and services. The second most common report category is service complaint/concern, the OAG ensures appropriate referrals are made back to City departments, or the resident is provided with contact details for the Ontario Ombudsman.

Prior Year Reports

Thirty-five open reports were reported at the time the 2022-2023 Fraud and Waste Annual Report was issued. The assessments and investigations were completed by the Office of the Auditor General with the following outcomes: 3 were substantiated, 3 were partially substantiated, 6 were unsubstantiated, 9 had a status "Not Applicable", and 14 are in progress or have an outcome pending.

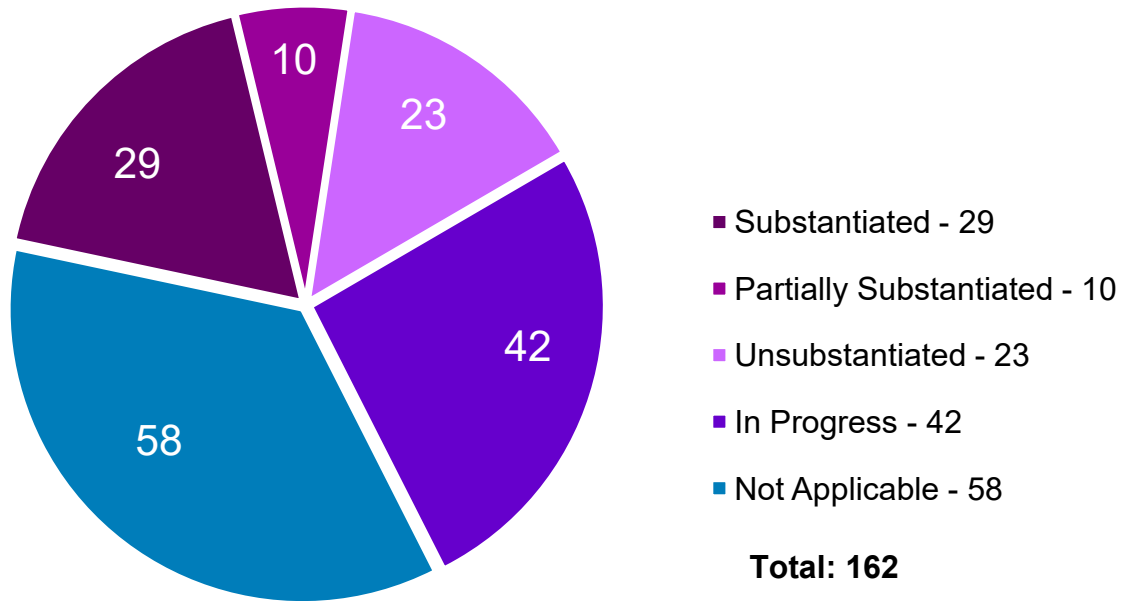
The most common reason for the 14 reports being in progress or having an outcome pending are that an audit is in progress, with results expected to be reported in 2025, employees being on leave so the outcome remains as pending, or the OAG is waiting on management to provide information. Outcomes are included in the section above for reports that were closed during the current reporting period. The City of Hamilton's ransomware attack in February 2024 also delayed the investigation and closure of many reports as files were inaccessible for several months and some still remain inaccessible and/or unrecoverable.

Substantiation

One way of summarizing outcomes is to report on the volume of reports that were substantiated, that is the number of reports where the allegation(s) were found to have merit and were able to be proven by reviewing evidence or with findings from interviews.

Of the reports received from July 2023 to June 2024 (plus any carryforward reports from prior years) the following is a summary of substantiated status. A substantiation result is not applicable (N/A) if a report was out of jurisdiction, the assessment result was that no action was to be taken, or if the report was to be referred elsewhere with no response required.

Volume of Reports Substantiated



**Substantiation
Rate
33%**

Typically, a result is “pending” if the report is still in process of being assessed and/or investigated. Overall the current substantiation rate including carryforward reports from the previous reporting period (both substantiated and partially substantiated) is 33%.

The City of Hamilton’s substantiation rate for the prior reporting period was 31%. For comparative purposes, in the City of Toronto Auditor General’s 2023 Annual Report on the Fraud and Waste Hotline, 21% of complaints from 2023 that were investigated were substantiated in whole or in part. In the City of Ottawa’s 2022 Report on the Fraud and Waste Hotline, 46% of reports closed in 2023 were substantiated. The substantiation rate will vary annually, depending on the mix of reports received by the OAG and the number of reports in progress at the end of reporting period, which have their substantiation rate counted in the reporting period that the work is completed and the report is closed.

Loss or Waste/ Mismanagement Substantiated

\$3.64M

**Loss or Waste/
Mismanagement
Substantiated
Since Hotline
Launch**

It is difficult to measure or substantiate a precise cost of fraud and waste. Incidents sometimes remain undetected for long periods of time. It is also challenging at times to determine the entire time period that a fraud or waste was occurring, which makes it hard to quantify losses.

As at October 31, 2024, the amount of confirmed loss or waste substantiated by the Office of the Auditor General since the last Annual Report was issued was \$2,348,000. Of this amount, \$863,000 was fraud and \$1,485,000 was waste. Since the launch of the Hotline cumulatively \$3,635,000 of loss or waste has been substantiated. Of this amount \$1,083,600 was fraud, \$2,494,400 was waste, and for \$57,000 a category could not be determined.



Disciplinary Action

The Office of the Auditor General is not responsible for disciplinary actions (including terminations). Investigation results are shared with Management and Human Resources. The Office of the Auditor General is informed of terminations and disciplinary actions, and this information is tracked and compiled for reporting purposes. The number of disciplinary and other actions will vary from year to year. This number is not controlled by the OAG and is reported for information purposes only.

As at the date of report publication, the following disciplinary actions related to investigations had been confirmed by the Office of the Auditor General:

- 5 Terminations,
- 10 Other Actions Taken (includes 2 employee resignations, 3 discipline issued, 1 retirement, 1 non-disciplinary letter, 2 verbal warnings, and 1 repayment letter).

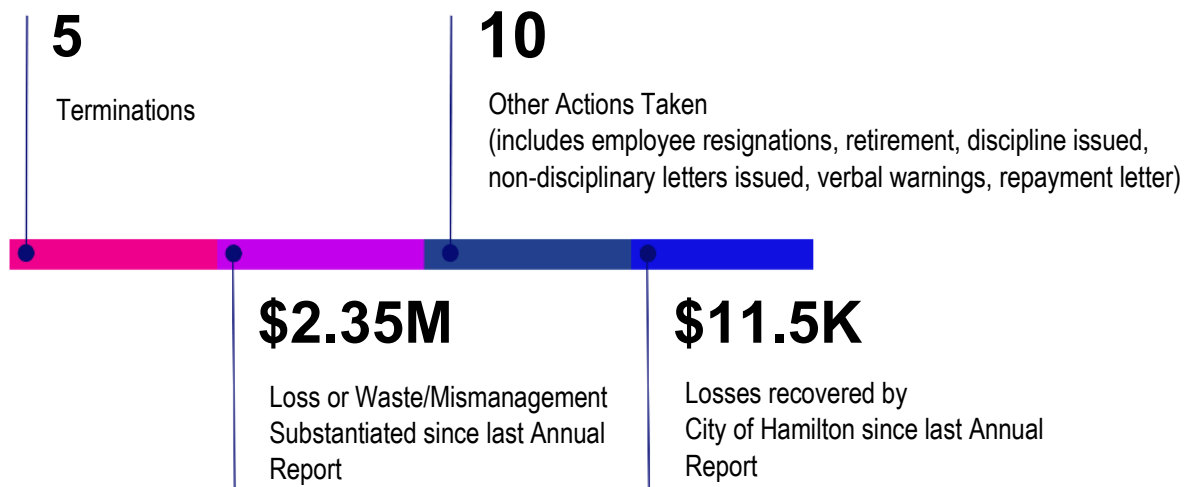
Recoveries and Impact

As at October 31, 2024, the City of Hamilton recovered about \$11,500 of losses since the last Annual Report was issued. Cumulative recoveries since the hotline's launch are \$47,400.

The impact of fraud and waste to an organization goes well beyond financial impact. There are also non-financial impacts such as impact to reputation, impact to other staff working in an affected area. The level of effort to investigate allegations of fraud and waste are quite high.

Sometimes there is a time lag for the completion of an investigation and calculating the losses. As there are 44 open reports at report issuance, there may be additional losses and recoveries that will be reported in the next Fraud and Waste Annual Report.

Report Outcomes



Report Examples

Introduction

To provide more information about the type of reports that the Office of the Auditor General receives and assesses, several report examples are provided in pages 20 - 29 of this annual report.

The reports included here provide examples of:

- fraud,
- waste/mismanagement; and,
- combined fraud and waste/mismanagement reports.

Auditor General Reporting Serious Matters to Council

All items qualifying as a "Serious Matter" per the "Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council Policy" for the reporting period have been previously reported to Council. There were four items that qualified under this Policy in the 2023-2024 Fraud and Waste Report time period and they were all presented to Council.

1. AUD23014 Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #56207 Employee Benefits Fraud).
2. AUD24002 Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #71958 Business Email Compromise Fraud #2).
3. AUD24003 Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #73367 Business Email Compromise Fraud #3).
4. AUD24004 Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #74254 Vehicle Theft).

Report Examples

Manager Working Another Job (“Moonlighting”) When Scheduled to Work at City of Hamilton

It was alleged that a City of Hamilton manager was working at another job and there were concerns about how the manager could complete their City of Hamilton duties along with the duties of this additional position.

The OAG investigated and confirmed via publicly available sources that the employee did hold an appointment with another government organization and found a high volume of work activity at this additional government organization for select periods of time.

Some of the work activity at the other government organization, when compared to the manager’s City of Hamilton schedule, provided evidence that the manager was working for the other government organization during City business hours.

The OAG made two requests to interview the manager for this investigation. The employee ultimately never responded to the OAG’s requests and instead submitted their resignation from the City.

Based on available evidence that the former manager was working another job when scheduled to work at the City of Hamilton, the OAG concluded that the allegations were ultimately substantiated.

Hotline Tip Led to Real Estate Audit Findings - \$1.2M of Revenue Unlikely to be Fully Collected

Following the submission of two separate reports to the Fraud and Waste Hotline regarding the administration of leases and licensing in the Corporate Real Estate Office, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) performed an audit of Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licences (AUD24005).

The audit focused on standard lease-out arrangements where the City is the landlord. The OAG concluded that there is significant room for improvement in governance and administration of leases and licences.

Administration

- Inefficient and error-prone,
- Opportunities being missed,
- Responsibilities are dispersed between multiple parties and multiple tools,
- Procedures, roles, and criteria are not adequate.

Governance

- Delegations of authority not addressed.

Systems and Data

- Current system is vulnerable to changes being made to information without any trace of the source or timing of the change,
- Information is not complete or current,
- Information is inconsistent across systems,
- None of the lease and licence systems integrate with corporate financial systems,
- Lack of proactive reporting procedures / practices / tools.

Below Market Rental Rates

- Transparency and accountability are lacking in processes,
- Lack of rent increases.

Collections

- Inadequate process to ensure full collection and restoration of arrears in a timely manner,
- Accumulated arrears, rental losses, and revenues that are unlikely to be fully collected estimated to be about \$1.2 million.

The Office of the Auditor General's Report AUD24005 made 35 recommendations to address the key audit findings, with a focus on data collection and financial reporting, maximizing and collecting revenues, and related process improvements in the administration of leases and licences. Management agreed with all 35 recommendations and provided responses for each recommendation.

Employee Breach of Trust Allegations - Update

In the 2022-23 Fraud and Waste Report we reported that the OAG received information about a (now former) City employee who was a Plans Examiner that had been charged with two counts of breach of trust. The charges followed a Police investigation.

Per our review of court documents, two charges were laid against a City employee. Both charges were: "being an official with the City of Hamilton, a Plans Examiner did commit Fraud in connection with the duties of his office by entering false information on City of Hamilton documentation and depriving the City of Hamilton fees owed to it contrary to Section 122 of the Criminal Code".

These charges were stayed in Fall of 2024. The former employee was terminated earlier in 2024 due to their conviction on a drug-related charge as part of the Project Skyfall investigation.

A full investigation by the OAG has begun, as ultimately the OAG is looking to understand the full extent of what happened, how it happened, and what lessons, if any, can be learned. OAG work is resuming now that the criminal trial has concluded.

Employee Time Theft

Human Resources notified the OAG of allegations that a City employee was committing time theft and that they were found handling personal matters during work time. The OAG requested that HR investigate the matter.

The HR investigation found that work records did not match what was observed by management. Ultimately 12 instances of time theft by falsifying work service records as substantiated. HR informed the OAG that employee was issued discipline.

False Benefit Claims

HR informed the OAG that they investigated three employees for false benefit claims and informed the OAG of the result as follows:

- An employee was found to have filed false claim submissions (93 in all) totalling over \$14,300. Based on available information, it is the OAG's understanding that over 70% of this amount was received back from the employee. The employee resigned before the investigation could be concluded by HR.
- An employee was found to have filed false claim submissions. The total of the false claims was about \$990. HR informed the OAG that the employee was terminated and that the full amount was recovered from the former employee.
- An employee was found to have filed false claim submissions totalling about \$6,600. HR informed the OAG that the employee was terminated. It is unknown to the OAG if any funds have been recovered.

As a result of these issues OAG included an audit of Employee Benefits Administration on its 2023-2026 Term of Council Audit Workplan, it is planned to be an audit of the processes used to administer benefits claims and protect against fraud.

City Targeted by Imposter Vendor Scam - Again

OAG received notification from City Finance staff of a situation whereby someone posed as an existing vendor to the City – a vendor that was owed substantial monies. The imposter vendor contacted the City to change the banking details of the legitimate vendor. As a result of a misstep in applying the City's existing procedures for such requests, the banking information was changed, and over \$274,000 was paid into a new bank account as directed by

the imposter. The legitimate vendor subsequently contacted the City wondering where their payments were, which led to further enquiries that revealed the diverted funds.

The OAG engaged a forensic investigative firm to assist in looking into the matter, and to report the exact circumstances of the diverting of funds. The OAG also reported the incident to the police and will be making recommendations for process improvement in its final report to management. This particular incident occurred prior to the City's ransomware attack in late February 2024.

This is similar to a situation that the OAG reported in last year's Fraud and Waste Annual Report and Report AUD24001.

The OAG is currently finalizing the investigative report for this matter.

City Agency Targeted by Imposter Vendor Scam

OAG received notification from a City Agency's Finance staff of a situation whereby someone posed as an existing vendor to the City Agency – a vendor that was owed substantial monies. The imposter vendor contacted the City Agency to change the banking details of the legitimate vendor. The banking information was changed, and over \$552,000 was paid into a new bank account as directed by the imposter. The legitimate vendor subsequently contacted the City wondering where their payment was, which led to further enquiries that revealed the diverted payment.

This particular incident occurred after the City's ransomware attack in late February 2024, and this matter was made even worse because the invoice to be paid was for about \$137,000, but due to human error and manual workaround processes in place due to ransomware attack, the amount paid to the imposter vendor was the incorrect, higher amount of \$552,000, and a different, legitimate vendor was underpaid by about \$415,000.

Further complicating things, the legitimate vendor had emailed the City Agency over a week prior to the fraud warning the Agency that they had experienced a security breach and were notifying the Agency that their banking information has not changed and to urgently contact them if there are any suspicious requests for fund transfers to difference banks. Notwithstanding the warning, the funds were electronically transferred to the imposter vendor's bank account.

The OAG engaged a forensic investigative firm to assist in looking into the matter, and to report the exact circumstances of the diverting of funds. The OAG also reported the incident to the police and will be making recommendations for process improvement in its final report to management. As part of its investigation response OAG enlisted the assistance of the City's Legal Services in tracing the funds and through a court order \$417,000 of the \$552,000 was successfully frozen.

The OAG is currently finalizing the investigative report to management for this matter.

Non-Compliance with Contract Costs City \$22K

A vendor reported to the OAG with allegations that they were treated unfairly in the assignment of work with respect to a contract relating roadway maintenance, essentially that the City was not adhering to the terms of the contract.

The vendor claimed that for two weeks their equipment sat idle while another vendor was being assigned work. The vendor's understanding through the Tender award process was that there was a defined work assignment process for all of the multiple, successful bidders. It was the vendor's opinion that the City was not adhering to the contract terms.

A preliminary assessment by the OAG substantiated the allegation of unfairness in how the contract was administered, shown by discovering that the work was assigned using an inaccurate assignment list. The OAG referred the issue to management for resolution and recommended that they work with Legal Services and the contractor to determine the appropriate actions. The result was almost \$22,000 was paid to the vendor that reported the matter to the OAG.

Protective Plumbing Program – Several Duplicate Payments Made

The OAG is preparing the final report for a Transfer Payments and Grants Value for Money Audit (to be released in the near future). During audit testing in the Protective Plumbing Program (3P), the OAG identified 10 duplicate payments made to various grant recipients in 2022.

Our investigation into the matter found the duplicate payments were made due to human error in the manual payment process and also due to a lack of review. In addition, the financial system was found be lacking the needed built-in controls to identify and reject transactions that have all the same attributes except for one. The total amount of the duplicated payments is over \$18,400.

The OAG issued an urgent memo to management requesting immediate action be taken to recover the duplicate payments and to further review transactions processed in this manual process. Management reported back to the OAG that no further duplicate payments were found. Collection efforts were being led by Finance and Legal Services.

Alleged Waste in City Trail Capital Works

The OAG received a complaint about a City Trail Capital Project, on behalf of a group of residents. The complaint was that the contractor did not finish, nor cleanup from, their work, leaving residents without a path for walking, running, and other healthy activities.

The report alleged that two months following the scheduled completion of work, the trail was still closed, and the worksite was left untidy, and that the contractor was not fulfilling their contractual requirements of being onsite.

The OAG found that the project would take about four months to complete; by the time the OAG received the complaint, it was six months from when the contractor started the work. Further investigation substantiated other aspects of the complaint; indeed, the project was delayed, and the contractor was not attending the site daily. Trees and stones had not been removed from the site.

Procurement documents and project documentation revealed certain aspects, such as change orders, documented quantity and monetary changes, but did not document schedule changes. The substantial completion date was more than three months past the date specified in the contract without a formal written amendment to extend or change the contract terms.

The OAG found there were several opportunities to improve processes. The OAG made four recommendations to management that focused on improvements to contract management processes and practices. Management replied with an action plan to implement all four recommendations.

DARTS Billing Issues

In November 2023, the Accessible Transit Service (ATS) section that manages the City's agreement with DARTS, noticed that DARTS was incorrectly including group booking trips as special events, which are subsidized trips, and were therefore overpaid. ATS believed that this may have been occurring as far back as the beginning of the contract in 2012.

A preliminary assessment by the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) prompted an audit of overpayments made to DARTS for support persons, orientation interviews, and special events.

OAG concluded that payments made to DARTS from 2018-2023 for this type of ride were more than \$115,000 higher than they should have been and that the estimated 12-year total of overpayments ranged between \$232,000 and \$310,000.

The full Audit Report will be released by the OAG in December 2024, and it includes seven recommendations to management.

Stolen City Van

Corporate Security reported to the OAG that a van was stolen from a City Facility, with suspected employee involvement. The matter was reported to the Police by Corporate Security. The OAG also notified HR. The OAG requested that Corporate Security and HR investigate, however there is no new information to report on this file. Estimated value of the stolen van is over \$13,000.

Insufficient/No Business Case to Justify the Addition of 7 FTEs to City Budget

The OAG received a report alleging seven temporary staff positions were converted to permanent positions without proper a proper business case and analysis. The seven positions at issue are currently funded by a different level of government. The Reporter alleged the information provided to Council requesting their approval was misleading as there is allegedly insufficient funding to support the positions.

The OAG's investigation concluded that there was no business case prepared that analyzed the long-term impact converting the temporary positions to permanent in the request for Council approval. The OAG also found that the existing corporate policy does not provide guidelines or expectations for the level of sophistication and analysis required to support changes in staff complement.

However, we did conclude that the seven positions are currently fully funded and will continue to be fully funded provided that the Province continues the funding at the current level and continues with at least the same percentage allocation for program administration costs.

The OAG finds the allegation to be partially substantiated due to the policy gap and lack of a robust business case.

Other Report Examples

Although the Office of the Auditor General may find some reports not to be substantiated, there are reports that show significant control weaknesses. Some unsubstantiated examples are also provided for insight into the varying outcomes that can occur when cases are assessed and investigated.

Alleged Vendor (Consultant) Conflict of Interest

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The OAG received a report from a citizen concerned about the potential conflict of interest of a consulting firm. The firm was working on an important project for the City, while at the same time representing a developer that was taking a position on a different matter that was adversarial to that of the City. Ultimately, OAG concluded that the 2 matters were unrelated, with each having little bearing on the other.

However, our research did lead us to the conclusion that the City has very little substantive guidance on what constitutes conflict of interest on the part of a vendor, including the situations and criteria for identifying those that would require disclosure and/or involve unacceptably high risk.

In discussions with Procurement Division we learned that they are working on a Vendor Code of Conduct. Accordingly, we made a recommendation that they consider more detailed definition and guidance on vendor conflict of interest as part of that exercise.

Handoff of Package

We received an anonymous report alleging possible fraud and embezzlement. In the parking lot of a local retailer, the Reporter saw a City-branded vehicle and a person wearing an orange safety shirt transferring a white box to a person who pulled up in a truck and placed it in the back of the truck. The allegation was that City property was being released to a private citizen without permission.

The OAG referred the allegation to management for investigation. Management was able to verify that the Reporter saw one employee providing another employee with supplies needed for the next day's work. The employee in the City vehicle picked up a box of supplies and met with the employee on route to their project to save staff time for the other City. The report was found to be unsubstantiated.

Unproductive Road Work Allegations

The OAG received a report alleging that some road repair work performed by the City staff was unproductive and more staff and machinery resources were being used than was necessary and was a waste.

We reviewed the matter and concluded that the allegation was unsubstantiated, however we made recommendations for improvement to management. We found that the repair methodology used was based on the concept of economies of scale, which enabled a higher volume of work to be completed each day.

Various Intrusion Attempts to City Payment Systems

In today's digital economy, online payment systems have become essential for City services. However, cybercriminals target online payment portals hoping to test stolen credit card numbers, make unauthorized purchases, or gain access to payment systems for larger-scale fraud operations.

These fraudulent activities typically involve criminals using automated tools to attempt multiple transactions in rapid succession, often using stolen or generated credit card numbers. Their goal is to identify valid card numbers that can then be used for larger unauthorized purchases or sold on illegal marketplaces.

In the past year, more than 1,240 attempts to make suspicious payments through the City's payment pages were reported to OAG. The attempts were usually part of multiple transactions in rapid succession, for low dollar amounts.

The City's protective measures helped safeguard public resources and maintain trust and confidence in our digital services by successfully blocking 99.5% of the attempts. Collaboration and support from Information Technology and Finance contributed to the Customer Service Division's successful blocking of these attempts.

**Multiple
Payroll
Phishing
Attempts**

"Payroll Phishing" is a form of fraud where criminals attempt to redirect employee paychecks by manipulating payroll and human resources systems. These attacks target an organization's Human Resources department, attempting to exploit their access to employee payment information and payroll systems.

In a typical payroll phishing attempt, fraudsters impersonate employees through fake or compromised email accounts, requesting changes to direct deposit information. These attacks use carefully crafted emails to appear legitimate. The criminals' goal is to redirect salary payments to fraudulent bank accounts before their deception can be detected.

The OAG was informed of three payroll phishing attempts in the current reporting period; all three attempts sent directly to the email address of the Executive Director of Human Resources (HR), claiming to be an employee and requesting a change in direct deposit banking information.

HR reported the emails to the OAG and successfully verified that each attempt was a 'phish' through direct confirmation with the three City employees.

**Unsubstantiated
Allegation of
Recruitment
Irregularity**

The OAG received an anonymous report alleging that a senior level position was awarded without due process. Working with Human Resources to obtain more information about this particular recruitment competition and following a review of the City's "Request to Post and Fill a Vacancy Policy", the OAG was able to conclude that there was no policy violation and therefore considered the allegation unsubstantiated.

**Allegation of
International
Travel While
Receiving
Ontario Works**

Concerns were reported to the Office of the Auditor General about an individual in receipt of Ontario Works income support and who was also allegedly travelling internationally. The OAG referred this report to the Ontario Works Division who provided the OAG with the Ontario Works Policy 9.2 Absence from Ontario, which outlines the directives for travelling out of Ontario for a period of time.

"A person who is absent from Ontario for a period greater than seven days is not eligible for assistance unless the absence is approved by the Administrator as necessary for reasons of health or exceptional circumstances."

Ultimately the allegations were found to be unsubstantiated.

Allegation of Social Housing Subletting

The OAG received concerns about potential subletting of a social housing unit. The matter was referred to Housing Services who reported back to the Office of the Auditor General the concerns were unsubstantiated.

Allegation of Wrongful Eviction at a Social Housing Property

Allegations that a tenant was wrongfully evicted from a social housing property was reported to the Office of the Auditor General. The OAG referred the matter to Housing Services who informed the OAG the tenant was over \$20,000 in rental arrears and that the proper process for terminating a tenancy was applied. The report was found to be unsubstantiated.

Conclusion

The Fraud and Waste Hotline was launched in July 2019 as a pilot program and was made permanent by Council in March 2023. Overall, the first five years of the Fraud and Waste Hotline operation have seen a high volume reports assessed and investigations launched as appropriate. Over 550 reports have been assessed and investigated.

Without a Fraud and Waste Hotline in place, it is likely that many of these reports would not have been received by the Office of the Auditor General and wrongdoing involving City resources may have continued and the scale of fraud and waste would have remained undisclosed and not publicly reported. Generally speaking, it indicates Hamiltonians and employees alike share the commitment in protecting the City of Hamilton's revenue, property, information and other assets and resources from fraud, waste and other wrongdoing.



Charles Brown CPA, CA
Auditor General

Brigitte Minard CPA, CA, CIA, CGAP, CFE
Deputy Auditor General

Lyn Guo CMA (US), CIA
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Rajni Deshpande CPA (NH), CIA, CFSA
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SPEAK UP – Reporting Fraud and Waste

Online: Hamilton.ca/fraud

Phone: 1-888-390-0393

Mail: PO Box 91880, West Vancouver, BC V7V 4S4

Email: cityofhamilton@integritycounts.ca

Fax: 1-844-785-0699

Copies of our audit reports are available at: hamilton.ca/audit

Alternate report formats available upon request.

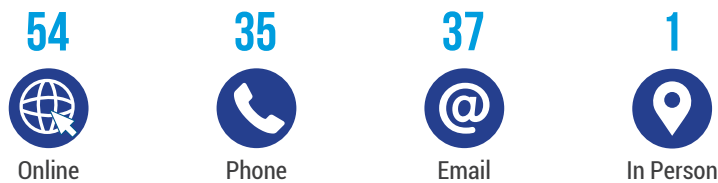
FRAUD AND WASTE ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Total Reports

Current Reporting Year	127
Prior Year Carryforward	35
Reports Since Hotline Launch	558

Number of Reports by Source



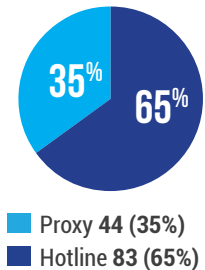
Investigations Launched by Office of the Auditor General	13
Current Reporting Year Reports	12
Carryforward Reports from Prior Reporting Year	1



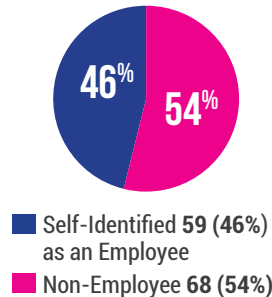
Top Report Categories

Social Services – Fraud/Wrongdoing	21
Service Complaint/Concern	20
Multiple Categories Applicable	18
Conflict of Interest	9
Phishing/Identity Theft	9
Time Theft and/or Misconduct	5
Improper Financial Reporting/Budgeting	5
Employee Benefits Fraud	3
Fraud	3
Contractor/Vendor Wrongdoing	2
Theft/Misappropriation	2
Waste/Mismanagement	2
Other Various Categories	8
Out of Jurisdiction	20
Total Reports	127

Reports Directly Received by the Office of the Auditor General (Proxy)



Employee Reports



Report Types

Referral – Response Required	63
Referral – No Action Required	12
No Response Required / Not Enough Information / Out of Jurisdiction	40
Investigations Launched (Current Reports)	12

Investigation Type (launched in current reporting year)



Loss or Waste Substantiated	\$2,348,000
Recovery/Restitution	\$11,500
Loss or Waste Substantiated since Hotline Launch	\$3,635,000
Recovery/Restitution since Hotline Launch	\$47,400

Office of the Auditor General Recommendations to Management Fraud and Waste Hotline Period: July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

Theme	Recommendations	Summary
Real Estate – Leases and Licensing	35	Addresses the key audit findings, with a focus on data collection and financial reporting, maximizing and collecting revenues, and related process improvements in the administration of leases and licences.
Code of Conduct - Conflict of Interest	5	Progress towards establishing a tone-at-the top that clearly communicates that conflicts of interests are not acceptable and in conjunction with the new controls, will help establish a culture of accountability.
Code of Conduct - Conflict of Interest	2	Potential policy development for engaging employees as consultants. Develop enhanced conflict of interest guidance for employees accepting outside employment (“moonlighting”).
Financial Reporting/Budgeting (i.e. Inventory Management)	1	Inventory management and proper reporting of assets.
Administration of Employee Benefits	18	Strengthen policies, procedures, and oversight for the administration and detection of employee benefits fraud.
Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks	5	Opportunities for continuous improvement.
Conflict of Interest, Code of Conduct, Financial Reporting/Budgeting	15	Enhance property security and establish clear roles and responsibilities with segregation of duties at a City agency.
Safety	4	Maintain compliance with legislation and specifications requirements.

Theme	Recommendations	Summary
Cash Handling	4	Strengthen cash handling at a City agency.
Contract Management	1	Policy administration of hired contractors.
Continuous Improvement	2	Improve frequency of site assessments and communication to residents.
Contract Management	4	Improve oversight of projects and contracts.
Code of Conduct – Conflict of Interest	2	Disclosure of Code of Conduct Conflict of Interest. Improve guidance and clarify definition of Conflict of Interest for Vendors as part of the Vendor Code of Conduct.
Financial Reporting/Budget (i.e. Billing Administration)	6	Update contract and improve data collected for invoicing. Develop guidance and standards for business cases related to increasing staff complement.

Theme	Total Number of Recommendations
Administration of Benefits	18
Cash Handling	4
Code of Conduct - Conflict of Interest	24
Continuous Improvement	2
Contract Management	5
Financial Reporting/Budgeting (e.g. Inventory Management, Billing Administration)	6
Real Estate - Leases and Licensing	36
Safety	4
Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks	5
Total Recommendations	104



Hamilton
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

FRAUD AND WASTE ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

**Charles Brown, Auditor General
Brigitte Minard, Deputy Auditor General**

What is a Fraud and Waste Hotline?

The general public, City staff, and those doing business with the City can report **suspected fraud, waste or wrongdoing involving City resources**.

Confidential and anonymous service

Independently operated by a third party

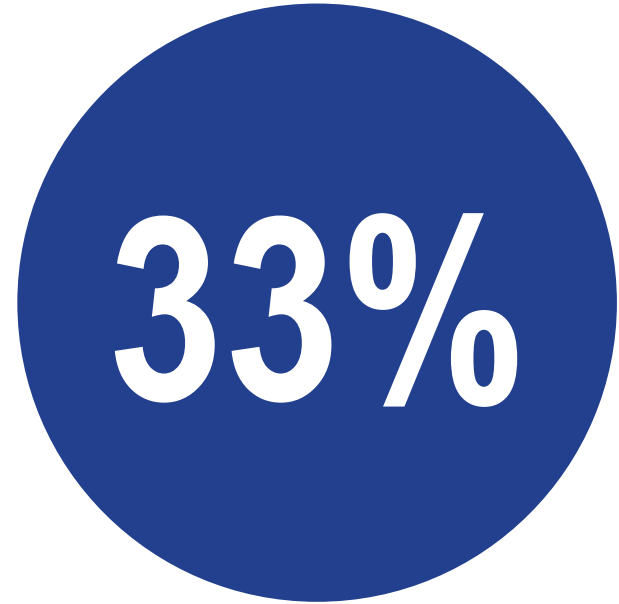
Accessible by phone or online

Available 24 hours a day 7 days a week



Reports

Received between
July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024

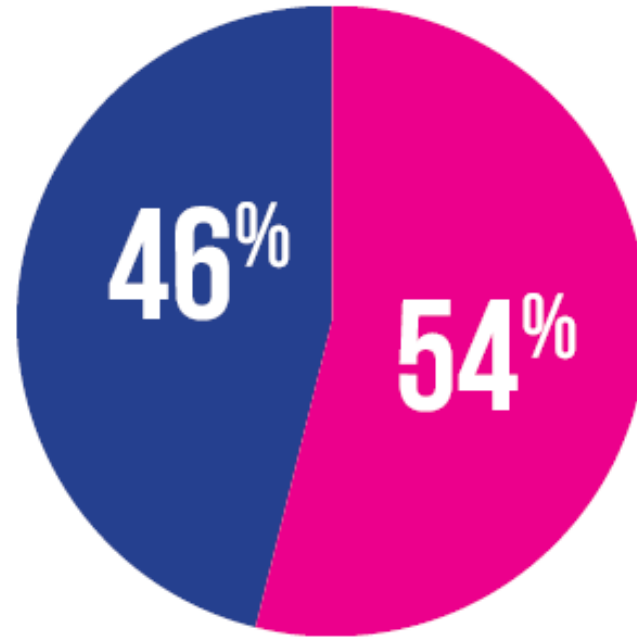


Substantiation Rate

Top Report Categories

Social Services – Fraud/Wrongdoing	21
Service Complaint/Concern	20
Multiple Categories Applicable	18
Conflict of Interest	9
Phishing/Identity Theft	9
Time Theft and/or Misconduct	5
Improper Financial Reporting/Budgeting	5
Employee Benefits Fraud	3
Fraud	3
Contractor/Vendor Wrongdoing	2
Theft/Misappropriation	2
Waste/Mismanagement	2
Other Various Categories	8
Out of Jurisdiction	20
Total Reports	127

Employee Reports

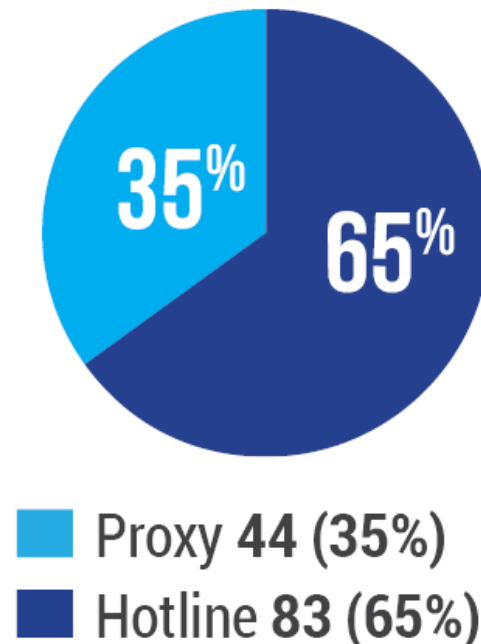


■ Self-Identified **59 (46%)**
as an Employee

■ Non-Employee **68 (54%)**

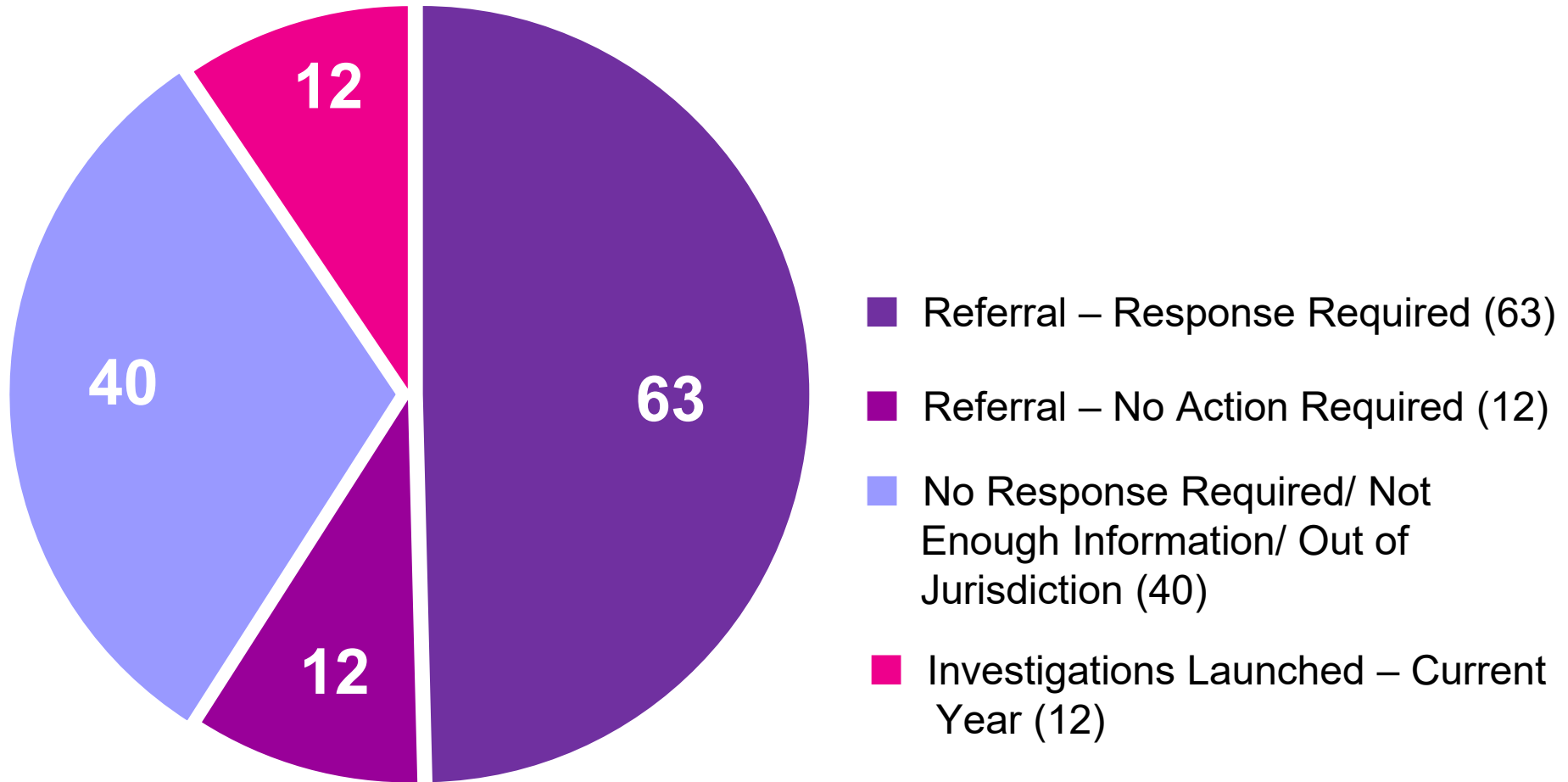
Statistics - Direct vs. Proxy Reports

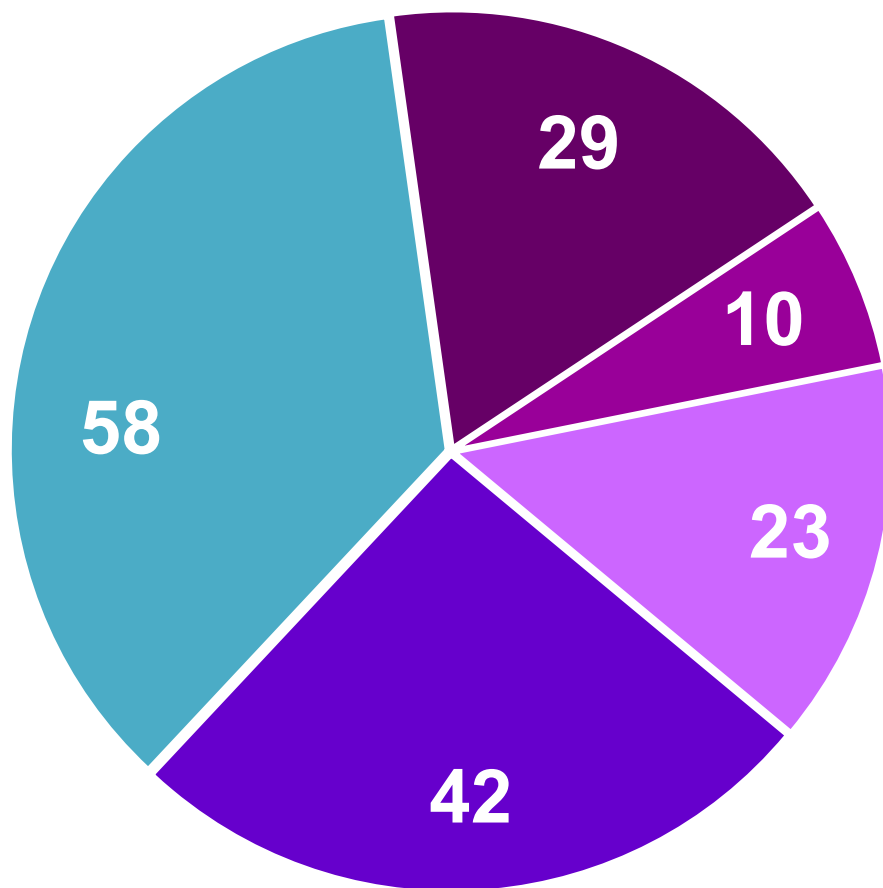
Of these 127 reports, 44 were made directly to the OAG, remainder were made using the Hotline service provider.



Proxy Reports from
Management,
Finance, Human
Resources –
27 of 44

What We Did With The Reports





- Substantiated - 29
- Partially Substantiated - 10
- Unsubstantiated - 23
- In Progress - 42
- Not Applicable - 58

Total: 162

5

Terminations

10

Other Actions Taken (includes employee resignations, retirement, discipline issued, non-disciplinary letters issued, verbal warnings, repayment letter)

\$2.35M

Loss or
Waste/Mismanagement
Substantiated since last
Annual Report

\$11.5K

Losses recovered by
City of Hamilton since
last Annual Report

Manager Working Another Job When Scheduled to Work at City of Hamilton

- Alleged that a City employee was working at another job and there were concerns about how the leader could complete their City of Hamilton duties and the duties of this additional position. Two requests were made by the OAG to interview the leader for the investigation. Based on the overwhelming amount of publicly available evidence the OAG concluded that the allegations were ultimately substantiated.

Hotline Tip Led to Real Estate Audit Findings - \$1.2M of Revenue Unlikely to be Fully Collected

- Following the submission of two separate reports to the Fraud and Waste Hotline regarding the administration of leases and licensing in the Corporate Real Estate Office, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) performed an audit of Corporate Real Estate: Leases and Licences (AUD24005). The audit found numerous issues, but particularly accumulated arrears, rental losses, and revenues that are unlikely to be fully collected estimated to be about \$1.2 million. The audit report made 35 recommendations to address the key audit findings, with a focus on data collection and financial reporting, maximizing and collecting revenues, and related process improvements in the administration of leases and licences.

Employee Time Theft

- Human Resources notified the OAG of allegations that a City employee was committing time theft and that they were found handling personal matters during work time. The OAG requested that HR investigate. The HR investigation found that work records did not match what was observed by management. Twelve instances of time theft by falsifying work service records as substantiated. Per HR, the employee was issued discipline.

False Benefit Claims

- Three reports were received from HR regarding false claims by 3 employees and their dependents. False claims totalled \$14,300, \$990 and \$6,600. The reports were substantiated and there were a variety of outcomes – one resignation before the conclusion of an investigation, and two terminations. Recoveries were made for at least two of the three reports.

City Targeted by Imposter Vendor Scam - Again

- Someone posing as an existing vendor contacted the City to change the vendor's banking details for electronic deposit. As a result of a misstep in following City procedures over \$274,000 that was owed to the legitimate vendor was transferred to the imposter's bank account. The scam became apparent when the legitimate vendor made enquiries wondering why they hadn't been paid.

City Agency Targeted by Imposter Vendor Scam

- Someone posing as an existing vendor contacted the City to change the vendor's banking details for electronic deposit. This incident occurred after the City's ransomware attack in late February 2024. Over \$552,000 was transferred to the imposter's bank account. This matter was made even worse because the invoice to be paid was for about \$137,000, but due to human error the amount paid to the imposter vendor was the incorrect, at the higher amount of \$552,000. As part of its investigation response OAG enlisted the assistance of the Legal Services in tracing the funds and through a court order \$417,000 was successfully frozen. The investigation revealed that over a week prior to the fraud, the legitimate vendor had emailed the City Agency with notification that they had experienced a security breach and were warning them not to accept changes to their banking information.

**Non-Compliance
 with Contract Costs
 City \$22K**

- A vendor reported to the OAG with allegations that they were treated unfairly in the assignment of work, essentially that the City was not adhering to the terms of the contract. The OAG substantiated the allegation of unfairness in how the contract was administered, the work was assigned using an inaccurate assignment list. The result was almost \$22,000 was paid to the vendor that reported the matter to the OAG.

**Protective Plumbing
 Program – Several
 Duplicate Payments
 Made**

- The OAG is preparing the final report for a Transfer Payments and Grants Value for Money Audit (to be released in the near future). During audit testing in the Protective Plumbing Program (3P), the OAG identified 10 duplicate payments made to various grant recipients in 2022. The duplicate payments were made due to human error in the manual payment process and also due to a lack of review. Management reported back to the OAG that no further duplicate payments were found. Collection efforts were being led by Finance and Legal Services.

Alleged Waste in City Trail Capital Works

- The OAG received a report that a City Trail Capital Project and that the contractor did not finish, nor cleanup from, their work, leaving residents without a path for walking, running, and other healthy activities. Procurement documents and project documentation did not document schedule changes. The substantial completion date was more than three months past the date specified in the contract without a formal written amendment to extend or change the contract terms. The OAG made four recommendations to management that focused on improvements to contract management processes and practices.

DARTS Billing Issues

- ATS, the HSR section that manages the City’s agreement with DARTS, noticed that DARTS was incorrectly including group booking trips as special events, which are subsidized trips, resulting in overpayment to DARTS by the City. OAG found that overpayments went back to 2012 and are estimated to range between \$232K and \$310K. Full audit report to be released in December 2024.

Stolen City Van

- Corporate Security reported to the OAG that a van was stolen from a City Facility, with suspected employee involvement. The matter was reported to the Police by Corporate Security. The OAG also notified HR. The OAG requested that Corporate Security and HR investigate, however there is no new information to report on this file. Estimated value of the stolen van is over \$13,000.

Insufficient/No Business Case to Justify the Addition of 7 FTEs to City Budget

- The OAG received a report alleging seven temporary staff positions were converted to permanent positions without proper a proper business case and analysis. The seven positions at issue are currently funded by a different level of government.
- The OAG found that no business case, that analyzed the long-term impact converting the temporary positions to permanent in the request for Council approval, was prepared. We concluded that the seven positions are currently fully funded and will continue to be fully funded. The OAG finds the allegation to be partially substantiated due to the policy gap and lack of a robust business case.

Closing Remarks: Auditor General Reflections

Current Year Themes and Risks

- Significant losses due vendor imposter frauds.
- Conflicts of interest continue to be a systemic issue.
- Overall high volume of reports, 2nd highest year ever.
- Poor contract administration and oversight continues to be a frequent issue.
- Need for continued vigilance with respect to cyberfraud and employee benefits fraud.

confidential
anonymous

SPEAK UP

Report any wrongdoing



Hamilton
OFFICE OF THE
AUDITOR GENERAL

Use the Fraud and Waste Hotline

www.hamilton.ca/Fraud

Call Toll Free 24/7

1-888-390-0393



Online

hamilton.ca/fraud



Email

cityofhamilton@integritycounts.ca



Phone

1-888-390-0393



Mail

PO Box 91880, West Vancouver, BC V7V 4S4




Fax

1-844-785-0699



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #78878) (AUD24007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Brigitte Minard CPA, CA, CIA, CGAP, CFE (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3107
SUBMITTED BY:	Charles Brown, CPA, CA Auditor General Office of the Auditor General
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

On June 24, 2020, Council directed the Auditor General to implement a policy on Reporting of Serious Matters to Council. The policy outlines specific situations that require the Auditor General to make a report to Audit, Finance and Administration Committee in order to proactively inform Council about serious matters uncovered through complaints, reports, and investigations launched under the Fraud, Waste and Whistleblower process, or in the course of audits or other engagements.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On June 24, 2020, Council directed the Auditor General to implement a policy on Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council. Under this policy, timely disclosure to Council is called for in situations that:

- Pose a security threat (e.g. cybersecurity exposure) to the organization's information systems/hardware/software applications or involves major privacy breach
- Threaten public safety

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**SUBJECT: Auditor General Reporting of Serious Matters to Council (Case #78878)
(AUD24007) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 2**

- Involve potential fraud over \$100,000
- Could have a significant adverse impact on the City's vulnerable populations
- Result in investigation by Office of the Auditor General and referral to the Police
- In the judgement of the Auditor General are deemed to be of a significant risk to the Corporation.

This report of a serious matter is the fifteenth (15th) serious matter reported that implements this policy. The criterion being applied is: the matter was referred to the Hamilton Police Service.

INFORMATION REPORT SUMMARY

In October 2024 the Office of the Auditor General (OAG) received a Fraud and Waste Hotline report from the Customer Service and POA Division (Customer Service). The report was made to notify the OAG of suspected counterfeit funds that were received by Customer Service and flagged for further review with Corporate Security, who then reported the matter to the Hamilton Police Service.

Per the Council-approved Fraud Policy and Protocol, of which the Office of the City Auditor has responsibility for, an item such as these suspected counterfeit funds falls within the scope of the Protocol.

As the payment was for a parking ticket, the ticket payment was cancelled, and the registered owner of the vehicle has been advised. As there was some change provided, the incident has resulted in a cash shortage of \$20.00.

Risk Management Services was notified of the incident by Customer Service. Corporate Security preserved the closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage for the incident.



The OAG has requested that Customer Service handle this matter by cooperating with the Hamilton Police Service and to report back any relevant updates to the OAG.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

None.



INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks Audit (PW24071) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Dave Alberton (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1090
SUBMITTED BY:	Shane McCauley Director, Water & Wastewater Operations Public Works
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Jackie Kennedy Director, Engineering Services Public Works
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

The Audit, Finance and Administration Committee, at its meeting on November 16, 2023, received report AUD23010 Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks. Recommendation “C” of that report provided the following direction:

- (c) That the General Manager of Public Works be directed to implement the Management Responses (attached as Appendix “B” to Report AUD23010) and report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee by May 2024 on the nature and status of actions taken in response to the audit report.

INFORMATION

This Information Report provides an update on the progress made by Hamilton Water and Engineering Services in response to the audit recommendations.

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**SUBJECT: Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks
Audit (PW24071) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 2**

The audit contained five recommendations. Three recommendations have been completed; the remaining two are in progress and are expected to be completed by Q4 2025. Appendix “A” to Report PW24071 provides an update on each recommendation.

Hamilton Water and Engineering Services will provide an update to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee on the two remaining recommendations in Q4 of 2025.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report PW24071 – Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks - Audit Recommendations Update November 2024

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Stormwater Asset Management – Investigation of Recent Sewage Leaks

Audit Recommendations

Update November 2024

Recommendation 1

The approach prescribed in the Stantec report – which was in many respects already underway within Hamilton Water – be continued, namely:

- *The Existing Sewer Lateral Cross-Connection Program.*
- *Existing passive monitoring and complaints-driven processes to identify and investigate suspected cross-connections and spills;*
- *Continue and expand the Risk-Based Proactive Pilot Program in the high-risk central Hamilton combined sewer system and use this as a launching pad for a permanent System-wide Unauthorized Discharges Removal and Inspection Program (SUDRIP); and*
- *Review and revise these programs over time to ensure they remain a good value from a risk-reward program as infrastructure is renewed, cross-connections are repaired, and high-risk areas are cleared.*

Management Response

Agree - Hamilton Water will continue to action the programs highlighted in recommendation one. Hamilton Water took a recommendation report to Public Works Committee on September 8, 2023, recommending the implementation of the System-wide Unauthorized Discharges Removal and Inspection Program (SUDRIP). The recommendations were approved by Council on September 13, 2023 (PW22088(b)).

Status: Complete

The Enhanced Sewer Inspection Program, formerly referred to as the System-wide Unauthorized Discharges Removal and Inspection Program, builds upon the successful Proactive Sewer Inspection Pilot program initiated in January 2023. The revised inspection methodology, endorsed by the City's Office of the Auditor General and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, employs historical drawings and background information review to accurately verify existing field conditions within the City's sewer maintenance chambers where potential cross-connections may occur. The program includes physically inspecting approximately 3,000 maintenance chambers within the combined sewer network.

The cyber security incident that the City experienced in February of this year has affected Hamilton Water's ability to access to digital records, limiting inspections under this program to physical inspections in 2024, with an accompanying review of data within the City's Geographical Information System.

To support the Enhanced Sewer Inspection Program, Hamilton Water has hired two Wastewater Collection Operators and one Operations Technologist. Hamilton Water is working to hire a Superintendent to support this program as well.

As of September 1, 2024, 90 modified inspections have been completed under this program, with no cross-connected sewers identified.

Hamilton Water has also introduced the In-Pipe Dry Weather Sampling Program. This program is designed to survey, sample, and trace storm sewer outfalls within the City's

combined sewer system area, primarily identifying unauthorized in-pipe discharges and improving stormwater quality. The survey includes identifying the location and characteristics of all outfalls, sampling those with dry weather flow, and determining if there is any evidence of contamination. If contamination is detected, investigations are initiated with the goal of identifying and eliminating the source. A preliminary approach for identifying unmapped city-owned outfalls and updating maps has also been created.

To support the In-Pipe Dry Weather Sampling Program, Hamilton Water has hired one Supervisor, two Field Technologists, one Environmental Quality and Compliance Technologist, and one Laboratory Technician.

As of September 1, 2024, 102 outfalls have been identified. Initial chemical constituents to be analyzed under the program and their limits have been selected. Sampling and/or inspections commenced in June 2024. Of the 102 Identified outfalls 60 have been sampled and/or inspected, with 42 remaining.

Recommendation 2

Use and refine Hamilton Water's risk-scaled communication and response (for as-yet-undiscovered leaks/cross-connections). As it is likely that residual risk exists that new leaks/spills may be uncovered; therefore, transparency and response planning remain important.

Management Response

Agree - Council approved the Hamilton Water Sewage Spills Communications Guideline on February 22, 2023 (PW22088(a)). As a result, Hamilton Water created the procedure "PW-WW-P-012-018 - Sewage Spills Communication Plan" under Hamilton Water's wastewater quality management system. Procedures are reviewed at a minimum every 3 years. Since this is a new procedure that is critical to ensuring effective and transparent communication with Council, the community, and the City's partners this procedure is scheduled for a review in Q1 2024.

Status – Complete

The Council-approved procedure "PW-WW-P-012-018 - Sewage Spills Communication Plan" is currently being reviewed, with recommended changes scheduled to go to council on November 4, 2024

Recommendation 3

Continue with protocols for the validation and integration of asset management information across the IPS, WIMS, and SPIDER systems during design, construction, and maintenance activities. Long-term establishment of a unified asset management database should remain a priority to facilitate inter-divisional collaboration and communication which were a hallmark of the excellent response to the three identified spills.

Management Response

Agree - The existing protocols that have been refined over time will continue to be followed for the verification and integration into the different systems noted in recommendation three. Currently there is a Public Works project to implement an Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) system that will consolidate the various asset management systems used across

Public Works. This system is expected to be operational for Hamilton Water by quarter one 2026.

Status – Ongoing – Estimated Completion Q2 2025

The cyberattack on the City has significantly impacted several software programs, including SPIDER and IPS, which were identified in the audit findings and have yet to be reinstated. Initially, the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) system was slated for phased implementation across various divisions of Public Works, with full operational capability for Hamilton Water targeted for Q1 2026. As a result of the cyberattack, however, this timeline has been accelerated. A minimum viable product of the EAM system is now expected to be available to Hamilton Water staff by Q1 2025. This expedited rollout aims to consolidate multiple asset management systems and enhance the integration and validation of asset management information across divisions.

Recommendation 4

Consider the incorporation of risk-based inclusion of Hamilton Water and Hamilton ES expertise across divisions on design and construction projects at key milestones (e.g., pre-tender design reviews, pre-construction field surveys, CCTV inspections) to increase the frequency of personnel with optimal and timely expertise being part of projects, particularly those wastewater projects with higher risks of cross-connections, spills, or other community impacts.

Management Response

Agree - The current Engineering Services Division capital delivery process incorporates cross divisional scope collection and design reviews at key milestones. These activities will continue to evolve as part of an overall effort and commitment to continuous improvement and quality management.

Action Items:

Develop and establish a process for Infor Public Sector (IPS) data collection standard so that all stakeholders undertaking CCTV sewer inspection capture and record the data in IPS.

- 1. Establish and formalize a process for data collection for CCTV sewer inspection and escalation.*
- 2. Training – Ensure staff are being trained and updated on sewer inspection standards and methodologies.*

Status – Ongoing – Estimated Completion Q4 2025

As a result of the cyberattack, City staff no longer have access to the Infor Public Sector (IPS) system. The City has decided not to restore IPS but rather expedite the implementation of the Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) software across Public Works. The initial version of EAM is expected to be available to Hamilton Water staff in Q1 2025

Data Integration: All CCTV sewer inspections will follow Pipeline Assessment Certification Program (PACP) standards to ensure consistent and reliable data collection. Once EAM is fully operational, CCTV inspection data may be uploaded, allowing automated triggers for

further actions based on system information.

Training: Staff responsible for sewer inspections and data entry will be trained on inspection methods and uploading data to EAM. This will ensure that staff are skilled in conducting inspections to standard and using EAM for better data management, analysis, and continuous improvement

Recommendation 5

Continue to evaluate opportunities for improvement on a cost-benefit basis including costs to the natural environment and community, for policies associated with infrastructure investment and operation as they relate to stormwater management.

Management Response


Agree - The City will continue to look for and evaluate opportunities for improvement in the areas noted in recommendation five as they relate to stormwater management. This will be done in accordance with Hamilton Water's Wastewater Quality Management System, the City's Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Master Plan and industry best practices.

Status – Complete

The City is committed to implementing the audit recommendation to evaluate and act on opportunities for improvement in stormwater management, including assessing cost-benefit impacts on the natural environment and community. Improvements will be implemented wherever possible and will continue. Implementation of any improvements will align with Hamilton Water's Wastewater Quality Management System, the City's Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Master Plan, and industry best practices.



CITY OF HAMILTON
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
Communication and Engagement Division

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2025 City Enrichment Fund Advance Payments (CM24007) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Monique Garwood (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3991 Andrea Carvalho (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6797
SUBMITTED BY:	Jessica Chase Acting Director, Communication and Engagement Division City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That, effective January 1, 2025, advance payments from the City Enrichment Fund be provided to the organizations as specified in Appendix "A" of Report CM24007; and
- (b) That any outstanding arrears owed to the City of Hamilton by these organizations, as detailed in Appendix "A" of Report CM24007, be deducted from the approved City Enrichment Fund grants, including any advance payments, until the debt is fully satisfied, prior to issuing the remaining approved funds to that organization.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City Enrichment Fund (CEF) is the overall name for the City of Hamilton's (City) municipal investment in a wide range of program areas that support the City's Strategic Plan and 25-year Community Vision priorities. The CEF invests in Hamilton-based charities, not-for-profit and grassroots organizations across seven distinct sectors:

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**SUBJECT: 2025 CEF Advance Payments
(CM24007) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 3**

- Agriculture;
- Arts;
- Communities, Culture & Heritage;
- Community Services;
- Digital;
- Environment; and,
- Sport & Active Lifestyle.

Council, at its September 2014 meeting, approved the launch of the CEF Report FCS14024(b). Organizations that were previously funded through Boards and Agencies were transitioned over to the new program under a similar model. To avoid undue hardship to their operations, it was felt that the advances should continue ahead of the approval of the 2025 budget.

For the organizations listed in Appendix “A,” attached to Report CM24007, the City follows a policy which ensures that grant payments are withheld until any outstanding arrears owed to the City are fully paid and cleared.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Based on Council approval of the 2025 total CEF envelope and overall funding levels, the remaining payments to the organizations listed in Appendix “A” attached to Report CM24007 would be adjusted to ensure that total payment amounts do not exceed the 2025 Council approved budget and funding level, which is expected by May 2025.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City has been supporting various Boards and Agencies with operational funding through the CEF since 2015. Since these organizations depend on the City to fund their operational expenditures, past practice has been to provide regular on-going payments pending the approval of the City Budget for each year. The proposed payment schedule closely follows that of 2024.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

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**SUBJECT: 2025 CEF Advance Payments
(CM24007) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 3**

To maintain consistency with prior years, staff requests Council approval to continue monthly funding for organizations receiving City Enrichment Fund support, as listed in

Appendix "A" attached to Report CM24007, from January to May 2025, pending the approval of the 2025 budget. Funding will be based on the previous year's budget and adjusted, if necessary, when the current year's budget receives Council Approval.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED


Appendix "A" to CM24007 – 2025 City Enrichment Fund Requiring Advance Payments
in 2025

City Enrichment Fund
Requiring Advance Payments in 2025

Organization	Advance Payment Schedule for 2025	# of Payments (advance)	2024 Approved Annual Budget	2025 Advance Payment Amount (Monthly)	2025 Advance Payment Amount (5 Payments)
Art Gallery of Hamilton	1st of each month	5	\$1,000,000.00	\$83,333.33	\$416,666.67
Theatre Aquarius	1st of each month	5	\$270,375.00	\$22,531.25	\$112,656.25
Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra	1st of each month	5	\$216,300.00	\$18,025.00	\$90,125.00
Brott Music Festival	1st of each month	5	\$154,500.00	\$12,875.00	\$64,375.00
Total			\$1,641,175.00	\$136,764.58	\$683,822.92



CITY OF HAMILTON
CORPORATE SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Division

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	2025 Temporary Borrowing and Interim Tax Levy By-laws (FCS24049) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Kayla Petrovsky Fleming (905) 546-2424 Ext. 1310
SUBMITTED BY:	Kirk Weaver Acting Director, Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Corporate Services Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (a) That Appendix "A" attached to Report FCS24049, "By-law to Authorize the Temporary Borrowing of Monies to Meet Current Expenditures Pending Receipt of Current Revenues for 2025", be enacted; and
- (b) That Appendix "B" attached to Report FCS24049, "By-law to Authorize an Interim Tax Levy for 2025", be enacted.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Temporary Borrowing By-law ensures that the City can borrow funds to offset any cash flow challenges related to the timing of incurring expenses versus the collection of billed property taxes.

The Interim Tax Levy By-law ensures that the City has access to a continuing cash flow to fund operations until a final 2025 tax budget and tax levy has been approved.

Alternatives for Consideration – Not Applicable

**SUBJECT: 2025 Temporary Borrowing and Interim Tax Levy By-laws (FCS24049)
(City Wide) – Page 2 of 3**

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The City would have to pay negotiated interest payments should it have to borrow funds under the Temporary Borrowing By-law. In order to bill and collect the planned February and April 2025 property tax instalments, an Interim Tax Levy By-law must be passed.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: The Temporary Borrowing By-law is required under Section 407 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* if the Municipality needs to borrow funds to address short-term cash flow issues. An interim Tax Levy By-law may be passed under Section 317 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Appendix “A” to Report FCS24049 is a Temporary Borrowing By-law allowing the City to ensure that it has access to adequate cash flow to meet operating commitments. The allowable percentages to borrow, as set out in Section 407 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, are 50% of estimated revenues prior to September 30 and 25% afterwards. It is important to note that actual borrowings under this provision have historically been very limited in both magnitude and duration. The most recent case of the City taking advantage of this provision was in late 1998 and 1999, under the Current Value Assessment conversion, when the Province was adjusting the rules and regulations for taxation of commercial and industrial properties which held up final tax bills to August and September, respectively.

Appendix “B” to Report FCS24049 is an Interim Tax Levy By-law. In the course of its operations, before a final budget has been approved, the City incurs expenses on a regular basis. These expenses, including such items as employee wages, material expenditures and School Board tax payments, would require significant temporary borrowing without the ability to levy taxes in advance of the final tax bills being issued. Section 317 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* permits the levy of up to 50% of the prior year’s taxes (annualized for adjustments such as supplementary taxes or tax appeals). The Interim Tax Levy By-law provides the formal mechanism whereby Council can affect this pre-levy. The due dates of the instalments for the 2025 Interim Levy are proposed to be February 28, 2025 and April 30, 2025.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Report FCS24049 complies with provisions within Sections 317 and 407 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

**SUBJECT: 2025 Temporary Borrowing and Interim Tax Levy By-laws (FCS24049)
(City Wide) – Page 3 of 3**

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The Legal Services and Risk Management Division was consulted to confirm adherence to the *Municipal Act, 2001*. The Taxation Section of the Financial Services and Taxation Division has also been consulted as they are responsible for the tax billing and collection.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION(S)

By-laws are required under the *Municipal Act, 2001*. Both the Interim Tax Levy and the Temporary Borrowing By-laws ensure the City has adequate funding to run day-to-day operations.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

N/A

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix “A” to Report FCS24049 – 2025 Temporary Borrowing By-law

Appendix “B” to Report FCS24049 – 2025 Interim Tax Levy By-law

KP/dt

Appendix “A” to Report FCS24049
Page 1 of 2

Authority: Item X, Audit, Finance and
Administration Committee
Report 24-xxx (FCS24049)
CM: November xx, 2024, City Wide
Dated:

Bill No. XXX

CITY OF HAMILTON
BY-LAW NO. 24-XXX**To Authorize the Temporary Borrowing of Monies to Meet Current
Expenditures Pending Receipt of Current Revenues for 2025**

WHEREAS the Council for the City of Hamilton deems it necessary to pass and enact a by-law to authorize the temporary borrowing of monies by the City to meet current budget expenditures for the year 2025 pending receipt of current revenues; and,

WHEREAS section 407(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, provides as follows:

"At any time during a fiscal year, a municipality may authorize temporary borrowing, until the taxes are collected and other revenues are received, of the amounts that the municipality considers necessary to meet the expenses of the municipality for the year and of the amounts, whether or not they are expenses for the year, that the municipality requires in the year"; and,

WHEREAS Section 407(2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, imposes certain limitations on the amounts that may be borrowed at any one time.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Hamilton hereby enacts as follows:

1. (a) The City of Hamilton is hereby authorized to borrow from a Bank or person by way of Promissory Notes or Bankers Acceptances from time to time a sum or sums of monies not exceeding at any one time the amounts specified in subsection 407(2) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* to pay off temporary bank overdrafts for the current expenditures of the City for the year 2025, including amounts for sinking funds, principal and interest falling due within such fiscal year and the sums required by law to provide for the purposes of the City.

Appendix "A" to Report FCS24049
Page 2 of 2

- (b) The amount of monies that may be borrowed at any one time for the purposes of subsection 407(1) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, together with the total of any similar borrowings that have not been repaid, shall not, except with the approval of the Ontario Land Tribunal, exceed the prescribed percentages of the total of the estimated revenues of the City as set forth in the estimates adopted for the year, which percentages are set out in section 407 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* as it may be amended from time to time.
2. (a) Until estimates of revenue of the City for the 2025 year are adopted, borrowing shall be limited to the estimated revenues of the City as set forth in estimates adopted for the next preceding year.
- (b) The total estimated revenues of the City, including the amounts levied for Education purposes, adopted for the year 2025 are Two Billion Dollars (\$2,000,000,000).
3. All sums borrowed pursuant to the authority of this By-law, together with any and all similar borrowings in the current year and in previous years that have not been repaid shall, together with interest thereon, be a charge upon the whole of the revenues of the City for the current year and for all preceding years, as and when such revenues are collected or received.
4. The Treasurer shall, and is hereby authorized and directed to, apply in payment of all sums borrowed pursuant to this By-law, together with interest thereon, all of the monies thereafter collected or received for the current and preceding years, either on account or realized in respect of taxes levied for the current year and preceding years or from any other sources which may lawfully be applied for such purpose.
5. That the Mayor and failing such person, the Deputy Mayor of the City Council and failing such person, the City Manager, together with the Treasurer or any one of the Temporary Acting Treasurers be authorized and directed to sign and execute the aforesaid Promissory Notes and Bankers Acceptances, hypothecations, agreements and such other documents, writings and papers which shall give effect to the foregoing.
6. This By-law shall come into force and effect on the 1st day of January 2025 and shall remain in force and effect until December 31, 2025.

PASSED this _____ day of November, 2024

Mayor Andrea Horwath

Matthew Trennum, City Clerk

**Appendix “B” to Report FCS24049
Page 1 of 3**

Authority: Item X, Audit, Finance and
Administration Committee
Report 24-xxx (FCS24049)
CM: November xx, 2024, City Wide
Dated:

Bill No. XXX

**CITY OF HAMILTON
BY-LAW NO. 24-XXX**

To Authorize an Interim Tax Levy for 2025

WHEREAS the Council for the City of Hamilton deems it necessary to pass a by-law to levy on the whole of the assessment for each property class in the local municipality rateable for a local municipality purpose, a sum not to exceed that which would be produced by applying the prescribed percentage (or 50 percent if no percentage is otherwise prescribed) of the total amounts billed to each property for all purposes in the previous year on the properties that, in the current year, are in the property class as provided for in Section 317 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*; and,

WHEREAS Section 317 of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, also authorizes a Municipal Council, by by-law, to adjust the interim taxes on a property if the Council is of the opinion that the Interim Levy on a property is too high or too low in relation to its estimate of the total taxes which will be levied on the property in 2025.

NOW THEREFORE the Council of the City of Hamilton enacts as follows:

1. The interim tax levies shall be levied and collected upon the whole of the rateable property categories in columns 1 and 2, shown below:

Appendix “B” to Report FCS24049
Page 2 of 3

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>
Class	Class Code
Residential	RT
Farmlands Awaiting Development	C1/R1/M1
Multi-Residential	MT
New Multi-Residential	NT
Commercial	CT
Commercial Excess Land / Small-scale on farm	CU/C7/C0
Commercial Office Building / Excess Land	DT/DU
Commercial Parking Lot / Vacant Land	GT/CX
Commercial Shopping Centre / Excess Land	ST/SU
Industrial	IT
Industrial Aggregate Extraction / Excess / Vacant land /Small-scale on farm	IT1/IU/IX/I7/I0
Industrial Large/Excess Land	LT/LU
Landfills	HT
Pipeline	PT
Farmland	FT
Managed Forest	TT
Rail Right of Way	WT CN
Rail Right of Way	WT CP
Utility Right of Way	UT
Shortline Railway Right-of-Way	BT

2. The interim tax levy shall become due and payable in two instalments as allowed under Section 342(1)(a) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as follows:

Fifty percent of the interim levy, rounded, shall become due and payable on the 28th day of February 2025 or 21 days after an interim tax bill is mailed out, whichever is later, and the balance of the interim levy shall become due and payable on the 30th day of April, 2025, and non-payment of the amounts due on the dates stated, in accordance with this section, shall constitute default.

3. That when payment of any instalment or any part of any instalment of taxes levied by this by-law is in default, penalties and where applicable interest, shall be imposed respectively in accordance with City of Hamilton policies.

Appendix “B” to Report FCS24049
Page 3 of 3

4. Section 342(1) (b) of the *Municipal Act, 2001* allows for alternative instalment due dates to spread the payment of taxes more evenly over the year. Therefore, notwithstanding the payable dates provided for in section 2, the interim tax levy for those on a 12-month pre-authorized automatic withdrawal payment plan shall be paid in 6 equal instalments due and payable on or after the first or fifteenth day of each month January to June, inclusive. For those on the 10-month pre-authorized automatic withdrawal payment plan, the interim levy shall be paid in 5 equal instalments due and payable on or after the first day of each month February to June, inclusive. The pre-authorized payment plans shall be penalty and interest free for as long as the taxpayer is in good standing with the terms of the plan agreements.
5. The interim tax levy rates shall also apply to any property added to the assessment roll after this by-law is enacted.
6. This by-law shall come into force and effect on the 1st day of January 2025.

PASSED this ____ day of November, 2024

Mayor Andrea Horwath

Matthew Trennum, City Clerk



Hamilton

**GOVERNANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE
REPORT 24-002**

Thursday, October 31, 2024

9:30 a.m.

**Council Chambers (Hybrid)
Hamilton City Hall**

Present: Councillors T. Hwang (Chair), B. Clark (virtually) J.P. Danko, C. Kroetsch, N. Nann (virtually) and M. Wilson (virtually)

THE GOVERNANCE REVIEW SUB-COMMITTEE SUBMITS REPORT 24-002 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Governance Workplan (City Wide) (CC24001) (Item 10.1)

That Report CC24001, respecting Governance Workplan, be received.

2. 2025 Council and Committee Schedule of Meetings (FCS24062) (Added Item 10.2)

- (a) That the 2025 Committee and Council Schedule of Meetings, as presented in Appendix A to Governance Review Sub-Committee Report 24-002, BE APPROVED; and
- (b) That the necessary amendment to the Procedural By-law, By-law 21-021, respecting the Committee and Council Schedule of Meetings, BE PREPARED and PRESENTED for Council consideration.

FOR INFORMATION:

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 2)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda:

10. DISCUSSION ITEMS

- 10.2 2025 Council and Committee Schedule of Meetings (FCS24062) –
Report has been published

The October 31, 2024 Agenda of the Governance Review Sub-Committee was approved, as amended.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) APPROVAL OF MINUTES (Item 4)

(i) September 13, 2024 (Item 4.1)

The Minutes of the September 13, 2024 meeting of the Governance Review Sub-Committee were approved, as presented.

(d) GENERAL INFORMATION / OTHER BUSINESS (Item 13)

(i) Amendments to the Outstanding Business List (Item 13.1)

The following amendment to the Outstanding Business List, was approved:

(1) Items Considered Completed and to be Removed (Item 13.1(a))

(a) Governance Workplan (Item 13.1(a)(a))

Added September 13, 2024
Addressed as Item 10.1 on today's agenda

(e) ADJOURNMENT (Item 15)

There being no further business, the Governance Review Sub-Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:16 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Councillor T. Hwang, Chair
Governance Review Sub-Committee

Tamara Bates
Legislative Coordinator
Office of the City Clerk

Appendix A to Governance Review Sub-Committee Report 24-002 - REVISED
January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 NEW YEAR'S DAY	2 3 No Meetings		4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	14 PC – 9:30 a.m.	15 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	16 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	17	18
19	20	21	22 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = **Public Health Committee**

All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor

February 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	4 PC – 9:30 a.m.	5 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	6 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	7	8
9	10	11	12 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	13	14	15
16	17 FAMILY DAY	18	19	20	21	22
23	24 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	25 PC – 9:30 a.m.	26 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	27 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	28	

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

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PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

March 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	6	7	8
9	10 11 12 13 14 MARCH BREAK				15	
16	17 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	18 PC – 9:30 a.m.	19 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	20 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	21	22
23	24	25	26 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	27	28	29
30	31					

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PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee

All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor

April 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	8 PC – 9:30 a.m.	9 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	10 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	11	12
13	14	15	16 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	17	18 GOOD FRIDAY	19
20	21 EASTER MONDAY	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	29 PC – 9:30 a.m.	30 GIC – 9:30 a.m.			

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

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PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

May 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	2	3
4	5	6	7 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 VICTORIA DAY	20 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	21 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	22 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	23 PC – 9:30 a.m.	24
25	26	27	28 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	29	30	31

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

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ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = ~~Public Health Committee~~**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

June 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	10 PC – 9:30 a.m.	11 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	12 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	13	14
15	16	17	18 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

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PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

July 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 CANADA DAY	2	3	4	5
6	7 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	8 PC – 9:30 a.m.	9 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	10 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	11	12
13	14	15	16 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	29 PC – 9:30 a.m.	30 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	31 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.		

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 CIVIC HOLIDAY	5	6 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17 AMO 2025	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee

All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 LABOUR DAY	2	3	4	5	6
7	8 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	9 PC – 9:30 a.m.	10 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	11 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	12	13
14	15	16	17 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	30 PC – 9:30 a.m.				

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

October 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	2 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	3	4
5	6	7	8 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	9	10	11
12	13 THANKSGIVING	14	15	16	17	18
19	20 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	21 PC – 9:30 a.m.	22 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	23 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	24	25
26	27	28	29 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	30	31	

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

November 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	11 REMEMBRANCE DAY	12 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	13 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	14 PC – 9:30 a.m.	15
16	17	18	19 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee

ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

PHC = Public Health Committee**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 PHC – 9:30 a.m. PWC – 1:30 p.m.	2 PC – 9:30 a.m.	3 GIC – 9:30 a.m.	4 AFAC – 9:30 a.m. ECSC – 1:30 p.m.	5	6
7	8	9	10 COUNCIL 9:30 a.m.	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25 CHRISTMAS DAY	26 BOXING DAY	27
28	29 SHUT DOWN	30 SHUT DOWN	31 NEW YEARS EVE			

GIC = General Issues Committee of the Whole

AFAC = Audit, Finance & Administration Committee

PWC = Public Works Committee


ECSC = Emergency & Community Services Committee

PC = Planning Committee

~~PHC = Public Health Committee~~**All meetings will be in the Council Chambers, Hamilton City Hall, 2nd Floor**



CITY OF HAMILTON
CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE
Human Resources

TO:	Chair and Members Audit, Finance and Administration Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 21, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Nenzi Cocca, (905) 546-2424, ext. 3924 Katherin Platt, (905)546-2424, ext. 3212
SUBMITTED BY:	Lora Fontana, Executive Director Human Resources
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

That the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee approve the proposed changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality within the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy, as outlined in Appendix "A" attached to Report HUR24011. The recommended amendments to Schedule B include the following:

- (a) That the terms 'gifts' and 'hospitality' within the policy be defined as separate items, with different and distinct criteria for each.
- (b) That the different nominal amounts referenced in the Schedule be eliminated, in favour of one consistent amount (\$50).
- (c) That the amendments to the Schedule that clarifies the criteria for when employees can accept hospitality be accepted.
- (d) That any gifts over \$50 received by employees will be returned, or given to charity, or shared with other employees.
- (e) That gifts of alcohol can not be accepted.
- (f) That hospitality offered to employees that exceed \$50 in value will require approval by the General Manager.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 6

- (g) That employees be required to track the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and should the amount exceed \$200 annually, submit a disclosure form by end of calendar year.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to a motion passed at the June 7, 2023, Audit, Finance and Administration Committee and later revised on November 22, 2023, Human Resources has developed recommendations regarding amendments to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality within the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy. Schedule B defines fees, gifts and hospitality as follows:

Fees: An amount of money that is paid for work conducted for an outside organization or individual, for example, a speaking engagement.

Gifts: A benefit of any kind, not only pecuniary in nature, including but not limited to gifts, gift certificates, gift cards, discounts, favours, tickets, passes (zero-value or otherwise), or assistance and/or opportunities given to an employee(s), a member of their family, or a significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.

Hospitality: Any hospitality event or activity, including but not limited to, meals, tickets to sporting events, theatre tickets, tickets to other forms of entertainment, passes (zero-value or otherwise) golf game fees, etc. given to an employee, their family member, or significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.

As part of its review HR examined other municipal codes of conduct in relation to the acceptance of fees, gifts, and hospitality by employees. A summary of this review is included in Appendix "C" to Report HUR24011. As well, Human Resources sought input from the Policy Review Group which consists of Director level participants who provide advice and consultation on HR policy development, and from the Senior Leadership team. Below is a summary of the proposed changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality within the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy. A more detailed explanation of the proposed changes is contained in Appendix "A" to Report HUR24011. For ease of readability, a clean copy of Schedule B with the recommended changes is contained in Appendix "B" to Report HUR24011.

Summary of Changes:

- (a) Separate 'gifts' and 'hospitality' within the policy with different and distinct criteria for each,
- (b) Eliminate different nominal amounts in favour of one consistent amount (\$50),
- (c) Clarify criteria for when employees can accept hospitality,

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011) (City Wide) - Page 3 of 6

- (d) Return gifts over \$50, or give them to charity or share with all other employees,
- (e) Employees can not accept gifts of alcohol,
- (f) Hospitality offered to employees that exceeds \$50 requires General Manager approval,
- (g) Require employees to track the acceptance of gifts and hospitality, and should the amount exceed \$200 annually, submit a disclosure form by year end,
- (h) Minor edits to provide clarity and consistency.

Alternatives for Consideration – See page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Not Applicable

Staffing:

Policy amendments, reporting forms, employee communications, and education resources can be managed with the current staff complement within Human Resources and Communications.

- (a) Human Resources can update the policy and develop reporting forms to track employee acceptance of fees, gifts, and hospitality.
- (b) Communications and Human Resources are developing a regular Code of Conduct newsletter that can be used to inform staff about changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality, along with regular updates and information on how to interpret and apply the Code of Conduct.
- (c) Human Resources has developed a mandatory Code of Conduct Learning module that was launched in 2023 in My Learning Connection. This module will need to be updated to reflect the changes to this policy.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On June 7, 2023, the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee passed the following motions:

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.
 OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.
 OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011) (City Wide) - Page 4 of 6

Limiting or Prohibiting the Acceptance of Gifts in the Code of Conduct for Employees and the Council Code of Conduct (Item 9.4)

- (a) That Human Resources staff be directed to conduct a review of the Codes of Conduct for employees at other municipalities and report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee with recommendations respecting limiting or prohibiting the accepting of gifts for employees.
- (b) That the City Clerk be directed to coordinate a review of the Council Codes of Conduct at other municipalities and report back to Audit, Finance and Administration Committee with recommendations respecting limiting or prohibiting the accepting of gifts for elected officials.

On November 22, 2023, Council amended the motion to add a part (c):

- (c) That staff be directed to perform a gap analysis of City policies that apply to staff, as employees of the corporation, and not to elected officials, who are not employees of the corporation, and report back to the Audit, Finance and Administration Committee with recommendations on how those policies could be applied to elected officials.

Human Resources and City Clerks Office have worked collaboratively to complete the review. Presented in Report HUR24011 are the recommended amendments to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality, based on a review of Codes of Conduct in other municipalities, and from consultation with leadership within the City.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Should the proposed changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality be approved by Council, the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy will be updated and the changes will be shared with all City of Hamilton employees.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

- Human Resources Leadership Team
- Communications
- Office of the City Auditor
- Senior Leadership Team
- Policy Review Group (members include Directors and senior staff from the Clerk's Office, Healthy and Safe Communities, Legal Services, Labour Relations, Planning and Economic Development and Public Works)

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SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011) (City Wide) - Page 5 of 6

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

This work supports the strategic initiative of Trust and Confidence in City Government. The research and analysis conducted will help to ensure that the City of Hamilton's practices in relation to gifts and hospitality are consistent with other Ontario municipal and regional governments. As well, amendments to the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy will help to clarify the terms and conditions in relation to fees, gifts, and hospitality so that employees can better understand the City's expectations and their responsibilities.

Below is a summary of the treatment of gifts and hospitality for employees by other municipalities/regions. A more detailed explanation is provided in Appendix "C" to this Report HUR24011.

Summary:

- (a) Five municipalities do not permit acceptance of gifts or hospitality (i.e., Greater Sudbury, London, Markham, Oakville, Ottawa).
- (b) Several municipalities and regions do not permit the acceptance of gifts or hospitality, with exceptions, e.g., holiday party where other organizations are invited, infrequent business lunches, if gift is a nominal amount, if it is in the best interest of the City (business-related), moderate hospitality as an accepted courtesy of a business relationship (i.e., Brampton, Cambridge, Durham, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Niagara Region, Peel, Richmond Hill, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Windsor).
- (c) Several comparator municipality's policies use terms like modest, reasonable, nominal, etc. without defining an amount (i.e., Cambridge, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Niagara Region, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vaughan).
- (d) A few comparator municipality's policies do provide amounts that are quantified (i.e., Cambridge \$25, Halton \$50, Mississauga \$50, Guelph \$100).
- (e) 'Infrequent acceptance of gifts' is mentioned as a criteria by several municipalities/regions (i.e., Brampton, Cambridge, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Peel, Thunder Bay, Vaughan) however no specific definition of "infrequent" is provided.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

The committee may choose to approve the proposed changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts, and Hospitality within the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy in whole, or in part.

SUBJECT: Proposed Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality of the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy (HUR24011) (City Wide) - Page 6 of 6

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report HUR24011 – Proposed Changes to the Code of Conduct for Employees Policy, Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality

Appendix "B" to Report HUR24011 - A Clean Version of the Recommended Changes to Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality

Appendix "C" to Report HUR24011 - Municipal/Regional Comparison re Acceptance of Fees, Gifts and Hospitality by Employees

Proposed Changes to the Code of Conduct for Employees, Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
Purpose	The City requires employees to perform their professional duties and responsibilities with fairness, impartiality, and transparency. The purpose of this Schedule is to outline the City's expectations for employees who are offered fees and both pecuniary and non-pecuniary gifts, and/or hospitality from outside individuals or organizations in relation to their position with the City.	No Changes.	
Definitions			
Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form	The form employees complete to identify a benefit (fee, gift, or hospitality) they received from an outside individual or organization in the course of their professional duties and responsibilities. A form must be completed for fees, gifts and hospitality valued over \$25 to ensure transparency and accountability. Instructions for completion of the Disclosure Form are included with the form.	The form employees complete to identify a benefit (fee, gift, or hospitality) they received from an outside organization or individual in the course of their professional duties and responsibilities. Instructions for completion of the Disclosure Form (link) are included with the form.	Keep text that defines what the form is. Delete text that says how it is to be used and move to terms and conditions.
Fee	An amount of money that is paid for work conducted.	An amount of money that is paid for work conducted for an outside organization or individual, for example, a speaking engagement.	Text added for additional clarity.
Gift	A benefit of any kind, not only pecuniary in nature, including but not limited to gifts, gift	A benefit of any kind, not only pecuniary in nature, including but not limited to gifts, gift certificates, gift	'Significant social relationship' added to be consistent with the

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Hospitality	<p>certificates, gift cards, discounts, favours, tickets, passes (zero-value or otherwise), or assistance and/or opportunities given to an employee(s) or a member of their family from an outside organization or individual.</p> <p>Any hospitality event or activity, including but not limited to meals, tickets to sporting events, theatre tickets, tickets to other forms of entertainment, passes (zero-value or otherwise) golf game fees, etc. given to an employee, their family member, or significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.</p>	<p>cards, discounts, favours, tickets, passes (zero-value or otherwise), or assistance and/or opportunities given to an employee(s), a member of their family, or a significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.</p> <p>No changes</p>	<p>current definition of Hospitality and with other Code of Conduct schedules.</p>
Pecuniary Interest	<p>Relates to matters involving a real or potential financial gain or loss to the employee, their family members, their significant social relationships, or to the businesses and/or organizations to which they belong.</p>	<p>No changes</p>	
Non-Pecuniary Interest	<p>Relates to matters involving a real or potential gain or loss that is not monetary in nature to the employee, their family members, their significant social relationships, or to the businesses and/or organizations to which they belong. This may include, but is not limited to, a social benefit, political advantage, professional advancement, preferential treatment, access to benefits not available to the public, etc.</p>	<p>No changes</p>	

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
<p>Terms and Conditions</p> <p>Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Gifts and Hospitality</p>	<p>1. Employees may not solicit or accept any pecuniary or non-pecuniary gifts or hospitality that could influence, or be perceived to influence, the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities from outside individuals or organizations that:</p> <p>(a) are applying for, or are in receipt of, services from the City, (b) do business with, or want to do business with, the City, unless the benefit is available to all members of the public or are available on a discounted basis to all City employees, e.g., discounted cell phone package, automobile insurance.</p>	<p>No changes.</p>	
<p>Exceptions</p> <p>Gifts or Hospitality Valued at \$25 or Under</p>	<p>2. An employee may accept a nominal gift or hospitality with a value of \$25, or under (for example, lunch, dinner, coffee, a business portfolio, a plant, promotional materials, pen, mug, etc. from a conference, trade show, etc.) provided that:</p> <p>(a) it is in in the context of a business meeting or interaction, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and</p>	<p>2. Gifts of a nominal value that do not exceed \$50 in value may be accepted in the following circumstances, as long as there is no real or perceived conflict of interest:</p> <p>a. Promotional items, such as a mug, pens, business portfolios, magnets, etc. from a conference, trade show, etc.</p>	<p>The proposed changes separate gifts and hospitality into two distinct sections with different criteria. Many municipalities do this and have similar criteria to what is proposed here.</p> <p>The proposed new value is \$50, instead of under \$25, \$25-\$100, over \$100. This is more straight</p>

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
	<p>(b) it is an infrequent occurrence; and (c) it legitimately serves a business purpose; and (d) it is part of the employee’s professional duties and job responsibilities; and (e) the gift or hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City.</p> <p>3. Employees are not required to disclose receipt of such gifts or hospitality provided they meet the criteria above, unless the total value exceeds \$200 in a calendar year. If the value exceeds \$200, employees must inform their Manager/Director, complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form and submit it to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>b. Items presented to persons participating in public functions as guest speakers, panelists, etc. such as flowers, plaques, picture frames, pens, chocolates, travel mugs, water bottles, gift card, etc.</p> <p>c. Token exchanges as part of protocol, for example, from a visiting international delegation, a cultural group, a charitable organization, etc.</p> <p>d. Gifts of courtesy or thanks which are shared within the Department or donated to charity, such as seasonal gift baskets, flowers, gift cards, etc.</p> <p>3. Any gifts that exceed \$50 should be returned to the sender with an acknowledgement and with reference to the Code of Conduct. Any gifts that cannot be reasonably returned should be donated to charity, auctioned off to employees with the proceeds going to charity, or shared with all employees within the Department.</p> <p>4. Gifts of alcohol (e.g., bottles of wine or liquor) cannot be accepted regardless of their value.</p> <p>5. Gifts received by an employee on behalf of the City where the gift is intended to become the property of the City and/or the gift commemorates or records a significant event, place, or individual (such as a commemorative</p>	<p>forward and hopefully easier for employees to follow.</p> <p>Some municipalities identify a dollar value while others indicate “a nominal value” only. We thought it best to set some parameters and propose \$50.</p> <p>New requirement to return gifts exceeding \$50, to give to charity, or to share amongst all employees in Department – avoid perception of influence over one employee. Consistent with what some other municipalities are doing.</p> <p>New stipulation to explicitly preclude gifts of alcohol.</p> <p>This text is in the current policy, it is just moved up in the policy to be under the Gifts section.</p>

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		plaque) are excluded from this Schedule.	Reference to completing a disclosure form is deleted here but moved to a new section below “Tracking and Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality”.
<p>Gifts or Hospitality Valued at Over \$25 and under \$100</p>	<p>4. An employee may accept a gift or hospitality valued at over \$25 and under \$100 provided that: (a) it is in in the context of a business meeting or interaction, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and (b) it is an infrequent occurrence; and (c) it legitimately serves a business purpose; and (d) it is part of the employee’s professional duties and job responsibilities; and (e) the gift or hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City.</p> <p>5. To ensure transparency, following the receipt of gifts and hospitality valued at over \$25 and under \$100, employees must report the occurrence to their Manager/Director and complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form and submit it to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	Deleted	Explanation as above.
<p>Gifts or Hospitality Valued at \$100 or More</p>	<p>6. In almost all cases, employees are not permitted to accept a gift or hospitality valued at \$100 or more.</p>	Deleted	Explanation as above.

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
	<p>7. In exceptional circumstances it may be acceptable for an employee to accept a gift or hospitality that is valued at \$100 or more, provided that it is:</p> <p>(a) it is in in the context of a business meeting or interaction, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and</p> <p>(b) it is an exceptional occurrence; and</p> <p>(c) it legitimately serves a business purpose; and</p> <p>(d) it is part of the employee's professional duties and job responsibilities; and</p> <p>(e) the gift or hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City.</p> <p>8. The employee must seek approval from the General Manager to keep the gift or hospitality and complete the Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form. The Form must be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>		
<p>Participation in Hospitality Events as Part of Employee Professional Duties and Job Responsibilities</p>	<p>9. Some management and professional staff are required, as a part of their business responsibilities for the City, to participate in hospitality events that may be more frequent or that may involve a higher monetary value than the guideline above.</p>	<p>6. Some employees are required to participate in hospitality activities as part of their job duties and responsibilities for the City.</p>	<p>Text reworded to simplify.</p>

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
<p>Hospitality</p>	<p>10. This is permitted provided that: (a) it is in in the context of a business meeting or interaction whereby the doner is present, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and (b) it legitimately serves a business purpose; and (c) it is part of the employee’s professional duties and job responsibilities; and (d) the gift or hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City.</p>	<p>7. This is permitted for these employees provided that: (a) The value of the hospitality does not exceed \$50; and (b) There is no real or perceived conflict of interest, and (c) It is in in the context of a business meeting or interaction whereby the doner is present, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and (d) It is an infrequent occurrence; and (e) It legitimately serves a business purpose; and (f) It is part of the employee’s professional duties and job responsibilities; and (g) The hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City.</p> <p>8. In limited circumstances, employees may participate in hospitality activities that exceed \$50, as long as the conditions in 7 (b)-(g) are met, and employees have approval from their General Manager <u>prior to the activity</u>.</p>	<p>Proposed text includes adding the \$50 dollar value limit for hospitality (a), as well as a condition that receipt of the hospitality does not lead to a conflict of interest (b).</p> <p>Also, the addition of (d) regarding an infrequent occurrence – to prevent a pattern that could be perceived as a conflict.</p> <p>The other conditions remain the same.</p> <p>Addition of circumstances where hospitality over \$50 may be permitted. Conditions in 10. (now 7.) must still be met and prior approval by the General Manager is required.</p>

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
	<p>11. Employees are not required to disclose receipt of such gifts or hospitality provided they meet the criteria above, unless the total value exceeds \$200 in a calendar year. If the value exceeds \$200, employees must inform their Manager/Director, complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form and submit it to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p> <p>12. Accepting free admission from the seminar or conference organizers for the balance of a seminar or conference where the activity is taking place is not a violation of this Policy. However, the employee must report this to their Manager/Director and complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>Moved to below</p> <p>9. Accepting free admission for the balance of a seminar, conference, etc. is permitted when the employee is fulfilling a work responsibility, for example, as a presenter, keynote speaker, etc. However, the employee must receive approval from their General Manager prior to the event and complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>Clarification that the seminar, conference, etc. is part of the employee's work responsibilities.</p> <p>Employees must receive approval from their General Manager, not just inform their Manager/Director.</p>
<p>Gifts Given to the City</p>	<p>Gifts received by an employee on behalf of the City where the gift is intended by the giver to become the property of the City and/or the gift commemorates or records a significant event, place, or individual (such as, without being limited to, a commemorative plaque) are excluded from this Schedule.</p>	<p>Moved up to 5. above.</p>	

Section	Current Text of Schedule B	Proposed Changes	Considerations
Tracking and Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality	<p>Employees are not required to disclose receipt of such gifts or hospitality provided they meet the criteria above, unless the total value exceeds \$200 in a calendar year. If the value exceeds \$200, employees must inform their Manager/Director, complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form and submit it to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>10. Employees are required to track receipt of any gifts or hospitality outlined above using the Personal Gifts and Hospitality Form (we will create this form).</p> <p>11. When the total value of gifts and/or hospitality exceeds \$200 in a calendar year, employees must complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form (link) and submit it to their General Manager and to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca). All forms must be submitted upon completion or, at the latest, by December 31 each calendar year.</p> <p>12. Human Resources will provide an annual report of employee-received gifts and hospitality that exceed a total of \$200 to the respective General Managers and to the Executive Director of Human Resources.</p>	<p>New requirement for employees to track their receipt of gifts and hospitality.</p> <p>\$200 value is in the current policy. Employees would be required to submit the form to their General Manager (not just inform their manager). The date for submission of the form is new.</p> <p>Proposing a new reporting requirement for Human Resources.</p>
Fees	<p>14. Employees will not accept a fee for activities, information, services, etc. that relate directly to their professional duties and job responsibilities or that relate indirectly by virtue of their employment with the City. This includes, but is not limited to, fees for:</p> <p>(a) Public speaking engagements, such as a public radio/television broadcast, web site broadcast or conference to which he or she was</p>	<p>No changes</p> <p>No changes.</p>	

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	<p>invited as a direct result of his or her position as an employee,</p> <p>(b) Publications where the employee writes or publishes articles or books in any print or online publications, including journals and newsletters, if such article or book directly relates to the employee's position as a City employee or uses insider information about the City.</p> <p>(c) Witness fees for taking part in a court, tribunal, or other adjudicative process to which he or she was requested to attend as a direct result of his or her position as an employee.</p> <p>15. Accepting fees to cover expenses not reimbursed by the City for an activity, such as a speaking engagement, publication, witness statement, during normal working hours or at any time where the employee is representing the City, is permitted, e.g., parking, accommodation, meals. The employee must report these fees to their Manager/Director and complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca) prior to the activity.</p> <p>16. Seminar or conference admissions where the employee is a presenter, keynote speaking, etc. are permitted. The admission must still be reported on the Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form and submitted to Human Resources (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>No changes</p> <p>Maintained but moved up to #9 above in the policy.</p>	

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	<p>17. Employees may charge or accept a fee for activities such as speaking engagements, publications, etc. during their time off work (e.g., vacation time) providing such employees are not representing or purporting to represent the City. Employees must notify their Manager/Director regarding participation in these events and ensure no conflict exists as outlined in Schedule D – Outside Employment and Activities.</p> <p>18. Requests for exceptions related to Fees for public engagements, publications and witness fees will be dealt with on a case-by-case and must be approved by a General Manager in consultation with Human Resources. Completion of a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form is required and is to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>	<p>No changes</p> <p>No changes.</p>	

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Schedule B: Fees, Gifts and Hospitality

PURPOSE	The City requires employees to perform their professional duties and responsibilities with fairness, impartiality, and transparency. The purpose of this Schedule is to outline the City’s expectations for employees who are offered fees and both pecuniary and non-pecuniary gifts, and/or hospitality from outside individuals or organizations in relation to their position with the City.
DEFINITIONS	
<u>Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form</u>	The form employees complete to identify a benefit (fee, gift, or hospitality) they received from an outside individual or organization in the course of their professional duties and responsibilities. Instructions for completion of the Disclosure Form are included with the form.
Fees	An amount of money that is paid for work conducted for an outside organization or individual, for example, a speaking engagement.
Gifts	A benefit of any kind, not only pecuniary in nature, including but not limited to gifts, gift certificates, gift cards, discounts, favours, tickets, passes (zero-value or otherwise), or assistance and/or opportunities given to an employee(s), a member of their family, or a significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.
Hospitality	Any hospitality event or activity, including but not limited to meals, tickets to sporting events, theatre tickets, tickets to other forms of entertainment, passes (zero-value or otherwise) golf game fees, etc. given to an employee, their family member, or significant social relationship from an outside organization or individual.
Pecuniary Interest	Relates to matters involving a real or potential financial gain or loss to the employee, their family members, their significant social relationships, or to the businesses and/or organizations to which they belong.
Non-Pecuniary Interest	Relates to matters involving a real or potential gain or loss that is not monetary in nature to the employee, their family members, their significant social relationships, or to the businesses and/or organizations to which they belong. This may include, but is not

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	limited to, a social benefit, political advantage, professional advancement, preferential treatment, access to benefits not available to the public, etc.
TERMS & CONDITIONS Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Gifts and Hospitality	<p>1. Employees may not solicit or accept any pecuniary or non-pecuniary gifts or hospitality that could influence, or be perceived to influence, the performance of their professional duties and responsibilities from outside individuals or organizations that:</p> <p>(a) are applying for, or are in receipt of, services from the City,</p> <p>(b) do business with, or want to do business with, the City, unless the benefit is available to all members of the public or are available on a discounted basis to all City employees, e.g., discounted cell phone package, automobile insurance.</p>
<u>Exceptions</u> Gifts	<p>2. Gifts of a nominal value that do not exceed \$50 in value may be accepted in the following circumstances, as long as there is no real or perceived conflict of interest:</p> <p>(a) Promotional items, such as a mug, pens, business portfolios, magnets, etc. from a conference, trade show, etc.</p> <p>(b) Items presented to persons participating in public functions as guest speakers, panelists, etc. such as flowers, plaques, picture frames, pens, chocolates, travel mugs, water bottles, gift card, etc.</p> <p>(c) Token exchanges as part of protocol, for example, from a visiting international delegation, a cultural group, a charitable organization, etc.</p> <p>(d) Gifts of courtesy or thanks which are shared within the Department or donated to charity, such as seasonal gift baskets, flowers, gift cards, etc.</p> <p>3. Any gifts that exceed \$50 should be returned to the sender with an acknowledgement and with reference to the Code of Conduct. Any gifts that cannot be reasonably returned should be donated to charity, auctioned off to employees with the proceeds going to charity, or shared with all employees within the Department.</p>

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	<p>4. Gifts of alcohol (e.g., bottles of wine or liquor) cannot be accepted regardless of their value.</p> <p>5. Gifts received by an employee on behalf of the City where the gift is intended to become the property of the City and/or the gift commemorates or records a significant event, place, or individual (such as a commemorative plaque) are excluded from this Schedule.</p>
Hospitality	<p>6. Some employees are required to participate in hospitality activities as part of their job duties and responsibilities for the City.</p> <p>7. This is permitted for these employees provided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The value of the hospitality does not exceed \$50; and (b) There is no real or perceived conflict of interest, and (c) It is in the context of a business meeting or interaction whereby the donor is present, or in the context of a recognized charitable event; and (d) It is an infrequent occurrence; and (e) It legitimately serves a business purpose; and (f) It is part of the employee's professional duties and job responsibilities; and (g) The hospitality is not an attempt to seek special favours or advantages from the employee or the City. <p>8. In limited circumstances, employees may participate in hospitality activities that exceed \$50, as long as the conditions in 7 (b)-(g) are met, and employees have approval from their General Manager prior to the activity.</p> <p>9. Accepting free admission for the balance of a seminar, conference, etc. is permitted when the employee is fulfilling a work responsibility, for example, as a presenter, keynote speaker, etc. However, the employee must receive approval from their General Manager prior to the event and complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>

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Tracking and Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality	<p>10. Employees are required to track receipt of any gifts or hospitality outlined above using the Personal Gifts and Hospitality Form.</p> <p>11. When the total value of gifts and/or hospitality exceeds \$200 in a calendar year, employees must complete a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form (link) and submit it to their General Manager and to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca). All forms must be submitted upon completion or, at the latest, by December 31 each calendar year.</p> <p>12. Human Resources will provide an annual report of employee-received gifts and hospitality that exceed a total of \$200 to the respective General Managers and to the Executive Director of Human Resources.</p>
Fees	<p>13. Employees will not accept a fee for activities, information, services, etc. that relate directly to their professional duties and job responsibilities or that relate indirectly by virtue of their employment with the City. This includes, but is not limited to, fees for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Public speaking engagements, such as a public radio/television broadcast, web site broadcast or conference to which he or she was invited as a direct result of his or her position as an employee, (b) Publications where the employee writes or publishes articles or books in any print or online publications, including journals and newsletters, if such article or book directly relates to the employee’s position as a City employee or uses insider information about the City. (c) Witness fees for taking part in a court, tribunal, or other adjudicative process to which he or she was requested to attend as a direct result of his or her position as an employee. <p>14. Accepting fees to cover expenses not reimbursed by the City for an activity, such as a speaking engagement, publication, witness statement, during normal working hours or at any time where the employee is representing the City, is permitted, e.g., parking, accommodation, meals. The employee must report these fees to their Manager/Director and complete a</p>

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	<p>Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca) prior to the activity.</p> <p>15. Employees may charge or accept a fee for activities such as speaking engagements, publications, etc. during their time off work (e.g., vacation time) providing such employees are not representing or purporting to represent the City. Employees must notify their Manager/Director regarding participation in these events and ensure no conflict exists as outlined in Schedule D – Outside Employment and Activities.</p> <p>16. Requests for exceptions related to Fees for public engagements, publications and witness fees will be dealt with on a case-by-case and must be approved by a General Manager in consultation with Human Resources. Completion of a Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form is required and is to be submitted to Human Resources via the Code of Conduct email (codeofconduct@hamilton.ca).</p>
RELATED DOCUMENTS	Disclosure of Gifts and Hospitality Form
COMPLIANCE	<p>Employees are expected to be aware of and act in compliance with the Code of Conduct Policy and all related Schedules.</p> <p>Real or perceived breaches of this Schedule should be reported to the Manager/Director and Human Resources without delay, along with the completion of the Code of Conduct Disclosure Form.</p> <p>Where there is serious wrongdoing as defined in the Whistleblower By-law that By-law applies.</p> <p>Failure to comply with this Policy and related Schedules may result in appropriate disciplinary measures, up to and including termination of employment.</p>
HISTORY	Schedule B was amended to update/add new definitions and to re-organize/clarify Terms and Conditions related to Exceptions on 2023-06-07.

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CONTACT	Questions or code of conduct correspondence can be sent to codeofconduct@hamilton.ca
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Municipal/Regional Comparison re Acceptance of Fees, Gifts and Hospitality by Employees

Quick Summary:

- 5 municipalities do not permit acceptance of gifts or hospitality, period (Greater Sudbury, London, Markham, Oakville, Ottawa).
- Several do not permit the acceptance of gifts or hospitality with exceptions, e.g., holiday party where other organizations are invited, infrequent business lunches, if gift is under \$25, if in the best interest of the City (business-related), moderate hospitality as an accepted courtesy of a business relationship. (Brampton, Cambridge, Durham, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Niagara Region, Peel, Richmond Hill, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Windsor).
- Several policies use terms like modest, reasonable, nominal, etc. without defining (Cambridge, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Niagara Region, Thunder Bay, Toronto, Vaughan).
- Nominal amounts that are quantified (Cambridge \$25, Halton \$50, Mississauga \$50, Guelph \$100).
- Frequency mentioned as a criteria by several (Brampton, Cambridge, Guelph, Halton, Mississauga, Peel, Thunder Bay, Vaughan).

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
Brampton (comparator)	No. No mention of nominal amounts. Limited exceptions noted. Frequency noted, e.g., infrequent business lunches.	<p>Code of Conduct: 1. (f) Gifts and Benefits: Gifts should not be solicited by employees. Employees should not allow themselves to reach a position whereby they might be or might be deemed by others to have been influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting hospitality.</p> <p>Employee Code of Conduct – Handbook & Guide: We will not accept or provide any gift, benefit or special favour in exchange for special consideration or influence, or where it may be perceived to be in exchange for special treatment.</p> <p><u>Reality Check:</u> In the course or any day to day business, we may be faced with situations that requires us to decide if it is acceptable to receive gifts or benefits from 3rd parties. When in doubt, ask yourself the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will the result in a personal benefit to me or to a member of the public? • Could a co-worker, outside party or media perceive this as unethical? • Was the gift/benefit intended to influence my decision? <p>If you answered yes, you may be facing a conflict of interest. Any policy requires the use of personal judgement and interpretation. Seek clarification from your supervisor. The best measure for success is, “if in doubt, don’t”.</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p><u>Exceptions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance at events approved by, or at the invitation of, the Mayor or Council Member, e.g., sponsored charity events. • Golf and other sports entertainment on weekends, on personal time, when paid for by the employee. • Field trips to see City-related projects elsewhere – if hospitality is anticipated, e.g., a meal, the supervisor will evaluate and approve. • Supplier sponsored conferences/seminars/hospitality suites (at conferences) within the GTA where other similar organizations are invited. Hospitality suites permitted if it is a general invitation to the conference attendees. • Infrequent business lunches, except during the blackout periods define in the Purchasing Policy. • Large events with attendance by other organizations, e.g., Christmas parties. • Incidental promotional items, e.g., pens, pencils, mugs. • Fruit baskets/Christmas baskets if made as a common benefit or raffled with proceeds to the United Way.
<p>Cambridge</p>	<p>No, unless of a nominal value of \$25 or less. Return gifts over that amount.</p> <p>An employee may, at the expense of the City, purchase a meal for business/professional associates to reciprocate.</p>	<p>Code of Conduct</p> <p><u>Gifts and Benefits</u></p> <p>Business gifts should be discouraged, unless of a nominal value of \$25 or less. Employees should not solicit or accept any gift, present, favor or any form of entertainment where its acceptance would place the employee under obligation or compromise. Any gifts, payments, tickets or other items exceeding this nominal value should be returned to the sender with an acknowledgement and with reference to this Code of Conduct.</p> <p>Employees should seek guidance from their Director, Deputy City Manager or the City Manager as appropriate if they have concerns or need to clarify if a hospitality event offered is an acceptable business courtesy. Alternatively, the hospitality item may be turned over to the employee’s Deputy City Manager to be made available to all department staff with an acknowledgement to the sender.</p> <p>An employee may, at the expense of the City, purchase a meal for professional or business associates where a City of Cambridge business connection/established business relationship and/or potential relationship exists. The frequency and nature of this hospitality must be deemed appropriate by the Director, Deputy City Manager or the City Manager as an acceptable business courtesy in that staff can reciprocate a similar benefit to the provider. If</p>

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		the amount is excessive, staff should advise the provider that they are not comfortable with costs associated with the meal and that they would not be able to reciprocate.
Durham	<p>No. All gifts auctioned off for charity. No dining out – employee has to pay their own way and it will not be reimbursed.</p> <p>Participation in events must be approved by Dept Head and employee must use vacation time to attend.</p>	<p>Code of Ethics: Gifts and Entertainment 3.06 Employees shall not solicit or accept any gifts, entertainment, payment, fee, service, discount, present or any other favour as a result of their status as an employee of the Region or on behalf of the Region (token gifts following a presentation are exempt). The acceptance of these gifts could place, or appear to place, the employee and/or the Region in a compromising situation. All gifts received from consultants, vendors, suppliers and customers/clients shall be auctioned and proceeds will be donated to the Corporate United Way program.</p> <p>Employees shall decline paid invitations for entertainment including dining out (e.g. as offered by existing or potential external consultants, vendors, suppliers, customers/clients). Participation in such events shall be allowed only if the employee covers all costs of their participation. These costs are not eligible for reimbursement.</p> <p>It is recognized that employees may be invited to participate in events. Participation in such events will require Department Head approval. Employees attending any event will complete the Participation in Events Disclosure/Approval Form prior to the event. Employees shall utilize vacation time to attend the approved event. Type of events may include invitation to a sporting event, charity tournaments and/or entertainment shows.</p>
Greater Sudbury	No. Respectfully decline.	<p>Code of Conduct: When acting with integrity, we must: ... respectfully decline gifts, hospitality or entertainment from people who do, or who want to do, business with the City. If you are in doubt or have a question/need guidance, ask your Supervisor or the next level of management for assistance.</p>
Guelph	No. With limited exceptions. Nominal amount of \$100.	<p>Code of Conduct 2. Receipt of Gifts and Hospitality To preserve the image and integrity of the City, gifts and benefits are not to be accepted by an individual or business. <u>Exceptions</u></p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>The City recognizes that moderate hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship. Accordingly, incidental gifts, hospitality or other benefits associated with an individual’s official duties and responsibilities may be accepted provided that such hospitality or other benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) are appropriate, a common expression of courtesy or within the normal standards of hospitality and of nominal value (\$100 or less); b) do not put the recipients in a position where they may be or be seen by others to have been influenced in making a business decision as a result of accepting such benefits; c) the frequency and scale of benefits accepted should not be greater than the employee’s manager would allow to be claimed on an expense account if it were charged to the City; and d) would not compromise the integrity of the City. <p>The City recognizes that from time to time, gifts will be donated for special City sponsored events, charitable events or municipal functions. This practice may be reasonable, provided that the gifts are publicly acknowledged and approved by the General Manager, Deputy CAO and/or CAO, or their designate in advance of the receipt of the donated gift.</p> <p>Where an employee is uncertain whether a gift is reasonable to accept, they are to seek guidance from their manager.</p> <p><u>Hospitality</u> The occasional hospitality for entertainment for business contacts may occur. Such practice may be acceptable provided it can be shown that the interests of the City will be advanced. Such activities must be moderate and reasonable, both in cost and nature, with City participants being fully aware of the business aims involved and provided that at all times the image and integrity of the City are protected.</p> <p>In all cases department General Manager, Deputy CAO or CAO, or their designate must be notified in advance of participating in such business hospitality and/or business. Employees should ask themselves:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Would I be uncomfortable disclosing this gift/benefit/hospitality to my manager? 2. Is the gift/benefit/hospitality being offered to me in exchange for a favour or benefit? <p>Where an employee is uncertain if the hospitality offered is acceptable, they are to seek guidance from their manager.</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
Halton (comparator)	No. Nominal amount \$50, infrequent, no tickets	<p>Code of Conduct: Employees must refuse gifts, hospitality or other benefits that could influence or be perceived to influence their judgement and performance of official duties from persons, groups or organizations having dealings or potential dealings with the Region.</p> <p>Employees must not solicit gifts, hospitality or other benefits that could influence or be perceived to influence their judgement and performance of official duties from persons, groups or organizations having dealings or potential dealings with the Region.</p> <p>Employees may accept common expressions of courtesy that do not cause suspicion about the objectivity and impartiality of the employee, would not compromise the integrity of the Region and;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) are of a nominal value not to exceed fifty dollars (\$50); 2) occur on infrequent and exceptional basis; and 3) are not ticket(s) to an entertainment event including sporting events, concerts, or other similar activities. <p>All gifts, hospitality or other benefits must be reported immediately to the employee's Department Head. The propriety of gifts, hospitality or other benefits that do not meet the above criteria should be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the Department Head. The Department Head may determine that the gift is appropriate in all of the circumstances. In the event that the gift is inappropriate, the Department Head may require that a gift be given to charity or take other action as may be appropriate under the circumstances.</p>
London (comparator)	No.	<p>Code of Ethics: <u>4.1.5 Compensation or Business Gifts and Benefits</u> - The compensation an employee is paid is intended to remunerate them for service to the City. An employee will not solicit, accept, arrange to accept, give, or request to be given a reward, gift, present, favour, advantage, benefit, or any form of entertainment or other compensation which a reasonable person would perceive as influencing the past, current and/or future performance of the employee's duties or business relationships with the City. City employees who receive a gift in the performance of their duties will immediately advise their Manager.</p>
Markham (comparator)	No.	Code of Ethics and Conduct Policy

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>Employees shall not solicit, accept or condone the solicitation or acceptance of any gift, favour or form of entertainment and/or hospitality from any person or corporation having dealings with the City whereby the acceptance of such could reasonably be construed as being given in anticipation or recognition of special consideration by the City.</p>
<p>Mississauga (comparator)</p>	<p>No. Limited exceptions. Nominal amount of \$50.</p>	<p>Conflict of Interest: <u>Acceptance of Gifts, Hospitality, Benefits or Favours</u> - Employees must avoid being influenced and they must avoid the appearance of being influenced. An employee must not accept any gifts, hospitality, benefits or favours from any person or organization whose business or financial interests may be impacted in any fashion by the employee in the course of the exercise of the employee's Corporate duties, or where acceptance could be construed as being given in anticipation of future special considerations or recognition of past consideration by the City.</p> <p>The City will tolerate the acceptance of gifts, hospitality, benefits or favours only when they can be viewed to be within the boundaries of generally accepted business practices. With respect to acceptable practice during an acquisition process, refer to the Purchasing By-law, Section 6 - Conflicts of Interest.</p> <p>An employee who is in doubt about whether they should accept a gift, benefit or favour should politely decline or pay for their own entertainment.</p> <p>Acceptable business practices are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Occasional business meals • Gifts of a nominal value (\$50 or less) • Nominal gift or fee for speaking engagement • Social or charity event of nominal value where there is value in attending, etc. <p>Business Meals: From time to time, it may be necessary to conduct a business meeting over a meal. Employees may accept occasional business meals from a person doing business with the City or seeking to do business with the City.</p> <p>Social/Charity Events and Functions:</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>In general, invitations or tickets from those currently doing business with the City (e.g., vendors; developers; contractors), those who may wish to do business with the City in the future, or any corporation or organizations currently in negotiations or discussions with the City or currently part of any regulatory process, investigation or penalty should be declined.</p> <p>Invitations or tickets to social/charity events and functions may be accepted if they meet one or more of the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The employee is one of many employees with similar municipal roles to attend the event (i.e., the invitation is being extended to the broader public sector or a specific professional audience) b) There is value in attending (i.e., the event/function will offer the opportunity to gather information relevant to the attendee’s specific role/responsibility) c) The purpose of the event/function is information sharing or customer/partner appreciation where there may be an expectation that invited staff will attend as a representative of the City d) Staff in attendance are there to represent or promote the City. For example, staff in a leadership role or in divisions such as the Economic Development Office, Tourism Mississauga, and the Planning & Building Department, may accept invitations or tickets from stakeholders and/or strategic partners, (e.g.) local business associations, local non-profit or charitable organizations, other public sector agencies or local community groups and in some cases corporations, where attendance by relevant City staff is deemed to be part of their role and/or business responsibilities in advancing the interests of the City of Mississauga e) The source of the invitation or tickets does not pose a real or perceived conflict of interest, and/or f) The employee will receive no personal gain or benefit in attending in their role as a representative of the City <p>Any tickets in categories (a) to (f) above that are of more than a nominal value may require increased scrutiny by the employee to ensure that no real or perceived conflict of interest exists. If in doubt, employees should either decline the invitation or purchase a ticket if attendance is deemed suitable. Legitimate business expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the City’s policies dealing with expense reimbursement.</p> <p>Gifts of a Nominal Value</p> <p>Individual employees may accept an occasional gift that is offered as a common expression of courtesy or is within the normal standards of hospitality, provided the gift has a nominal value of \$50 or less. Gifts of cash may never be accepted.</p> <p>Gifts that exceed a nominal value or numerous, cumulative gifts of nominal value from the same source, must be refused or returned to the sender. Gift baskets, boxes of chocolates and the like may be accepted on behalf of all</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>employees within a work group, even if the gift exceeds a nominal value, provided that appropriate action is taken to ensure that no individual employee can be seen to have a real or perceived conflict of interest. For example, the gift may be opened and shared with all members of the work group or used in support of a charitable cause. Gift items such as art may also be forwarded to the applicable department for inclusion as a corporate donation, in accordance with the City's donation policies.</p> <p>Where an employee has accepted an invitation to an event/function, the employee may keep any gifts/prizes won that are of a nominal value.</p>
Niagara (comparator)	No. Limited exceptions. Nominal amount.	<p>Code of Conduct Employees shall not seek or accept any gifts, entertainment, payments for services, valuable privileges, etc., or other favours from any external person or business organization except as provided below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) acceptance of promotional items at a nominal dollar value; ii) attendance at social events where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the event is attended by a broad range of the sponsoring organization's customers or professional association members and does not specifically cater to the Region; b. there is no actual, potential or apparent conflict of interest, and; c. permission to attend has been granted by the department Commissioner. iii) charitable donations or fundraising for the benefit of the community; and; iv) sponsored community/professional events e.g., educational days. <p>Gifts that do not meet the criteria in (i) above (i.e., entertainment tickets / vouchers) that are given directly to Niagara Region employees for personal use should be returned to sender or redirected with the sender's approval to a charity or non-profit community association of their choice. Employees should communicate the sensitivity of public perception to these individuals. Suppliers should be informed of this policy.</p>
Oakville	No.	<p>Code of Conduct: <u>Gifts and gratuities</u> We will not accept or provide any gift, benefit or favour in exchange for special consideration or influence, or where it may be perceived to be in exchange for special treatment. What does this mean? Employees must not give or receive gifts if in doing so there is a perception that their decisions are being influenced or their integrity appears to be compromised.</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>Why is this important? Although most gifts come with no strings attached, there is always the chance that something is expected or perceived to be expected in return. Things to do</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decline cash tips or in kind gifts • Decline gifts that could be viewed as an exchange for a favour • Decline gifts from potential vendors or interested parties during or in anticipation of the purchasing or tendering process • No honorarium or fee for speaking engagements • If unsure, decline the gift or ask your supervisor.
Ottawa (comparator)	No.	<p>Code of Conduct Employees are not allowed to accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment from people who do, or want to do, business with the City. <u>Integrity</u> - As public servants, we have to do our jobs with the City of Ottawa's best interests in mind, not our own. We have to do our jobs without bias, without favour and without allowing outside interests to conflict with work decisions. We do not accept gifts, hospitality or entertainment from people who do, or want to do, business with the City. <u>Questions to ask:</u> Am I putting my own interests before the City's? Would I make the same decision if my managers, the public or the media were watching me? Will I owe someone a favour if I do this? Would I be offered this if I weren't an employee of the City?</p>
Peel Region (comparator)	No. Limited exceptions. Prior approval required.	<p>Code of Conduct <u>5. Gifts and Entertainment – Employees' Responsibility</u> Employees shall not seek or accept any gifts, entertainment, payments, fees, services, valuable privileges, or other favours from any person or business organization that has dealings with the Region, except as provided for herein, such as employees may entertainment usually associated with accepted business practices if it is infrequent, legitimately serves a definite business purpose, and is appropriate to the business responsibilities of the individuals involved.</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>Staff may participate in a client/supplier sponsored event (e.g., dinner, golf tournament, conference) when there is a valid business purpose and it is approved by the Department Head. When these events are paid for by the supplies staff must seek Department Head approval prior to accepting such invitations. Employee attendance may be sponsored by the Region at the discretion of the Department Head, or the employee may elect to attend at their own cost on their own time.</p>
<p>Richmond Hill (comparator)</p>	<p>No. Limited exceptions. Prior approval required.</p>	<p>Code of Conduct Policy Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality</p> <p>Employees must make workplace decisions based on an impartial and objective assessment of each situation, free from influence of gifts, favours, hospitality and entertainment. Employees must avoid the reality and appearance of impropriety with organizations and people with whom they deal.</p> <p>In order to preserve the image and integrity of the City, business gifts are prohibited except as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The normal exchange of gifts between friends; b. Gifts received in connection with municipal twinning (Lakeland etc.); c. Gifts received for services to professional organizations or non-profit groups; d. Token gifts of exchange as part of protocol; e. Normal presentation of gifts to persons participating in public functions. <p>Gifts received by a Department (or section, division or other separate sector of a Department, as the case may be – the “work unit”) may be accepted provided the nature of the gift is in keeping with this policy. Any such gifts should be shared amongst staff in that work unit where possible. For example, flowers received should be displayed in the main lobby of the department, items in a fruit basket should be made available to all staff in that work unit.</p> <p>Gifts that are received that are not in keeping with this policy should be returned to the sender wherever possible citing this policy. Alternatively, at the discretion of the Commissioner or City Manager, gifts received may be contributed to a raffle where proceeds are donated to a registered charity or City sanctioned event. A letter outlining the actions taken by the City shall be sent to the sender of the gift by the Commissioner or designate.</p> <p>The City recognizes that moderate hospitality is an accepted courtesy of a business relationship but any hospitality accepted should fall within the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recipients do not allow themselves to reach a position whereby they might be or be deemed by others to have been influenced in making a business decision as a consequence of accepting such hospitality.

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		<p>b. The expenses involved are not greater than the employee's Commissioner would allow to be claimed on an expense account if it were charged to the City (as defined in the City's Business Expenses and Hospitality Policy); and</p> <p>c. It serves a legitimate business purpose related to the responsibilities of the individual.</p> <p>Employees may attend cultural, social, charitable, political, recreational, golf or sporting events if, in the opinion of their Commissioner, it would be beneficial to the City and if it directly relates to the functions of the position of the staff member attending the event. Specific rules regarding the disclosure, permission and documentation required to participate in golf events are included in Schedule B.</p> <p>Consideration may be given to reimbursing an employee for the expense of such an event if it is determined by the appropriate Commissioner that attendance would be of benefit to the City.</p> <p>If an employee is invited to such an event in the company of the person extending the invitation, the employee should consult with his/her Commissioner, to determine if attendance would be of benefit to the City.</p> <p>If an employee is invited to such an event where the person extending the invitation is not attending, the invitation is to be refused citing this policy.</p> <p>Employee shall not accept travel costs or accommodation, or payment related to travel or accommodation, from any person or business organization unless their Commissioner decides acceptance is in the best interest of the City.</p> <p>In recognition of the value of interaction with business associates, the City occasionally participate in invitational, charity or special events. Participation in such events shall be approved by the appropriate Commission prior to the event taking place.</p>
Thunder Bay	No. Modest, nominal, infrequent	<p>Code of Conduct Policy</p> <p>Employees will not solicit nor accept any gift or favour which compromises his or her real or perceived ability to make decisions or carry out his or her official duties in an impartial "unbiased" manner. Moderate tokens of appreciation and modest hospitality may be accepted as a normal courtesy of a business relationship. The frequency and scale of hospitality should not exceed what would be permitted to be claimed as an expense in the normal course of one's duties.</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Procedure</p>

Municipality/ Region	Can Employees Accept Gifts/Hospitality?	Related Text
		An employee shall not accept any gift, money, discount, favour or other assistance from any business that has a contract with the City, unless the gratuity is one which is of nominal value (such as a coffee mug or meal) or available to the general public at no cost.
Toronto	No. Nominal value.	<p>Toronto Municipal Code – Chapter 192 Public Service 192-13. Gifts. A. City or Agency employee will not accept, arrange to accept, give or request to be given a reward, gift, advantage or benefit of any kind from any person or entity that influences or could be perceived to influence the performance of the employee's duties. B. City or Agency employee, who receives a gift in the performance of his or her duties, will immediately notify his or her manager/supervisor or Ethics Executive. C. City or Agency employee may accept a gift of nominal value given as an expression of courtesy or hospitality if doing so does not influence, or would not be perceived to influence, the performance of the employee's duties. D. The head of a City or Agency department or division may pre-determine that no gift may be accepted under any circumstance.</p>
Vaughan (comparator)	No. Nominal value.	<p>Code of Conduct 8. Gifts 8.1 Employees shall not accept gifts (including items, articles, services, offers or vouchers) except of nominal value. 8.2 Employees recognize that even items of nominal value, if frequently accepted, may be perceived to be an attempt to create an obligation. 8.3. Employees will donate gifts to charity or raffle gifts and send proceeds to charity where money is raised. 8.4. Employees can share gifts of nominal value amongst the department, if perishable. 8.5. Employees will not accept loans offered in the course of their employment at the City.</p>
Windsor	No. Limited exceptions.	<p>Employee and Volunteer Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy No Employee or Volunteer shall accept any gift, favour or services or other financial benefit in the course of the performance of their employment duties other than:</p>

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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal hospitality among persons doing business where normal hospitality is restricted to food and beverages; • Seasonal gift baskets or flowers which cannot be reasonably returned and which are shared equitably within the receiving department or donated to charity; • Token exchanges as part of a protocol; • Normal presentations made to persons participating in public functions; • Acceptance of an invitation to any social or recreational event flowing from a business relationship related to the Employee's or Volunteer's employment with the City of Windsor where the Employee or Volunteer pays for all entry fees and participates on their own time. <p>All monetary conflicts of interest including the above noted exceptions shall be disclosed on a Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form and in the case of invitations to events, they shall be disclosed in advance of attendance.</p>