

**CITY OF HAMILTON
M O T I O N**

GIC Committee Date: February 18, 2015

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. GREEN.....

SECONDED BY COUNCILLOR.....

The Right to a Healthy Environment

WHEREAS the MUNICIPALITY understands that people are part of the environment, and that a healthy environment is inextricably linked to the well-being of our community;

AND WHEREAS, The MUNICIPALITY finds and declares that:

1. All people have the right to live in a healthy environment, including:
 - (a) The right to breathe clean air;
 - (b) The right to drink clean water;
 - (c) The right to consume safe food;
 - (d) The right to access nature;
 - (e) The right to know about pollutants and contaminants released into the local environment; and,
 - (f) The right to participate in decision-making that will affect the environment;
2. The MUNICIPALITY has the responsibility, within its jurisdiction, to respect, protect, fulfill and promote these rights;
3. The MUNICIPALITY shall apply the precautionary principle: where threats of serious or irreversible damage to human health or the environment exist, the MUNICIPALITY will endeavour where possible to take cost effective measures to prevent the degradation of the environment and protect the health of its citizens. Lack of full scientific certainty shall not be viewed as sufficient reason for the MUNICIPALITY to postpone such measures;
4. The MUNICIPALITY shall apply full cost accounting: when evaluating reasonably foreseeable costs of proposed actions and alternatives, the MUNICIPALITY will always consider costs to human health and the environment;
5. The MUNICIPALITY shall specify objectives, targets and timelines and actions the MUNICIPALITY will take, within its jurisdiction, to fulfill residents' right to a healthy environment, including priority actions to:

- (a) Endeavour to plan for equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens within the municipality, preventing the development of pollution “hot spots”;
- (b) Ensure infrastructure and development projects protect the environment, including air quality;
- (c) Endeavour to address climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures;
- (d) Responsibly increase density;
- (e) Prioritize walking, cycling and public transit as preferred modes of transportation;
- (f) Ensure adequate infrastructure for the provision of safe and accessible drinking water;
- (g) Promote the availability of safe foods;
- (h) Reduce solid waste and promote recycling and composting;
- (i) Establish and maintain accessible green spaces in all residential neighbourhoods;
- (j) In taking these aforementioned steps, continue to protect and restore the biodiversity and ecosystem services of the many unique and varied natural features that define our MUNICIPALITY, from the Niagara Escarpment and its surrounding greenbelt to Lake Ontario, with Cootes Paradise and the Dundas Valley at its heart;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Mayor, on behalf of City Council, be directed to correspond with the Right Honourable Stephen Harper and the Honourable Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario calling for the development of federal and provincial legislation that recognizes that all people have the right to live in a healthy environment;
- (b) That the City Manager be directed to develop and report back to the General Issues Committee in 2016, in tandem with the City’s community visioning and Strategic Plan, on the objectives, targets, timelines and actions and the plan for making progress towards fulfilling this declaration;
- (c) That staff be directed to consult with residents as part of the Right to a Healthy Environment process; and,
- (d) That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.