

# OUR FUTURE HAMILTON

“Communities in  
Conversation”

## COMMUNITY SUGGESTED ACTIONS







*from* **VISION** *to* **REALITY**

Our Future Hamilton is the city's new 25-year community vision. Between April 2015 and April 2016, we asked residents and community partners a simple question: "What is your vision for the future of Hamilton?" Using a variety of public engagement approaches, we gathered the ideas, hopes, and dreams of nearly 55,000 people to create a shared community vision.

Six community priorities emerged for Hamilton's new community vision:

1. Community Engagement and Participation
2. Economic Prosperity and Growth
3. Healthy and Safe Communities
4. Clean and Green
5. Built Environment and Infrastructure
6. Culture and Diversity

Our Future Hamilton reflects the values and aspirations of the thousands of the residents who participated in the community visioning process. It is based on our community's understanding of the unique challenges and opportunities that lie ahead and provides us with 81 key directions and 57 signs of success.

The community has forged an inspiring vision for the future of Hamilton and identified the following 226 actions to guide us in creating a city we can all be proud of. Together, we can achieve Our Future Hamilton – an ambitious 21st century city that is driven by the voices of our community.









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# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Our Future Hamilton is a collaborative place where...

People work together and make a positive impact on the community. Citizens are consulted and involved in making the decisions that impact them. A passion and sense of pride for the city exists among residents, driving volunteerism and community-based initiatives.





## Community Participation & Engagement

1. Promote Hamilton on school campuses to introduce students to city initiatives, community organizations, and neighbourhood associations.
2. Develop campus-based initiatives to raise awareness about student community engagement opportunities.
3. Create a database of community engagement opportunities.
4. Advance community volunteer opportunities for students at all levels, from elementary schools to post-secondary institutions.
5. Identify collaborative opportunities for local school boards and community organizations to support volunteerism within the school curriculum.
6. Create new engagement channels for youth and residents through online/mobile platforms.
7. Engage post-secondary students, staff, and faculty to support community building efforts.
8. Increase awareness on how students can get involved in supporting local priority initiatives such as refugee resettlement, community building, and neighbourhood development.
9. Strengthen youth engagement and decision-making through the establishment of youth committees.
10. Expand the Neighbourhood Action Strategy to include more neighbourhoods across the city.
11. Develop a Seniors Strategy that holistically addresses the needs of Hamilton's seniors.
12. Increase funding to community groups and local organizations.
13. Encourage organizations to provide honorariums to volunteers.
14. Consider adjusting municipal ward boundaries.
15. Examine the possibility of having term limits for elected municipal officials.
16. Explore holding annual participatory budgeting exercises in all wards.

## Openness & Access to Information

1. Make agendas and minutes of municipal meetings public in a timely and easily accessible manner.
2. Communicate effectively about city events and community activities through a common newsletter or other media outlet.
3. Create a community engagement "front desk" where residents can go to share ideas and receive information on community services and opportunities.
4. Support private journalists in streaming public meetings at City Hall and in other public places.
5. Develop a city-wide structure for facilitating fair, open, transparent and balanced negotiations between government and stakeholders.





6. Identify innovative ways to forge connections between residents and community leaders.
7. Improve access to services by making it easier for people to find appropriate services for their needs.
8. Improve online information and engagement tools.
9. Provide information in electronic and hard-copy formats to ensure greater accessibility for all residents.
10. Provide technical and communication support to residents and stakeholders when the project issues under consideration are overly complex.
11. Use a variety of public engagement tools and strategies to involve residents and stakeholders in defining problems, identifying alternatives, and proposing solutions.
12. Use evidence-based research to inform lobbying or campaigns on current issues in Hamilton.

### Community Pride

1. Celebrate and profile community successes and achievements through various web, social media, and news outlets.
2. Design a new brand for Hamilton that highlights its exceptional attractions (i.e., arts and culture, history and heritage, industry and commerce, recreational lands and natural assets).
3. Create an app that is targeted towards encouraging residents to explore the community.
4. Encourage and facilitate ongoing relationship building among various neighbourhoods and community hubs.
5. Enhance collective ownership by creating a “City Champion” initiative to improve knowledge about various areas and aspects of the city.
6. Coordinate events to engage residents in outdoor activities and sports competitions within different neighbourhoods and municipal wards.
7. Promote Hamilton through storytelling workshops, sidewalk stories, and a Walk of Fame.
8. Promote local hidden “gems” such as Green Venture’s EcoHouse and the Neighbour to Neighbour Centre.
9. Initiate community events in neighbourhoods around food sharing opportunities like community potlucks.









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## ECONOMIC PROSPERITY AND GROWTH

Our Future Hamilton is an ambitious place where...

People successfully provide for themselves and their families and have opportunities to grow and develop. Post-secondary institutions and businesses collaborate with the City, contributing to the success of our economy. Residents can work in the city in one of the increasing number of quality, well-paying local jobs. A prosperous and diverse local and regional economy benefits all residents.



## Strong Local Economy

1. Foster economic collaboration across various sectors in Hamilton.
2. Advocate for a strong and thriving business community.
3. Explore alternatives to local property tax such as land value tax or hotel tax.
4. Continue to support small businesses, both established and start-ups.
5. Coordinate bus tours for investors, entertainment industry leaders, and local residents who are interested in learning more about Hamilton.
6. Foster a supportive business environment for manufacturing and industrial enterprises.
7. Create television shows featuring Hamilton success stories.
8. Identify ways to develop and attract small local businesses to downtown Hamilton.
9. Increase support programs that offer residential tax relief for low-income residents, seniors, people with disabilities, new homeowners, and newcomers to Canada.
10. Provide competitive tax incentives to attract new industries that support a knowledge-based economy.
11. Simplify the permit application system for people looking to do business in Hamilton.
12. Support and develop incentives for businesses to sell and purchase local products.
13. Collaborate with Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) to support small businesses with building renovation grants, advertising, and marketing support.

## Farming & Agriculture

1. Encourage residents to grow their own food by providing training and skill building opportunities.
2. Explore alternative land zoning possibilities to support small family farms such as severances and land equalization capital.
3. Strengthen local food systems by increasing connections between food producers and communities.
4. Encourage institutions to adopt local food procurement policies.
5. Provide support for small local farms through farmers markets, events, and education.





## Employment Opportunities

1. Build stronger relationships and partnerships with companies investing in Hamilton.
2. Advance opportunities for co-op or summer jobs for youth and students.
3. Provide support and incentives to businesses that have child-minding programs for their employees.
4. Encourage local businesses and organizations to apply for Canada Summer Jobs program funding.
5. Advocate for the creation of a living wage policy.
6. Increase collaboration between schools and businesses by coordinating student and business leader networking events around the city.
7. Subsidize child care for low-income families.

## Education & Skills Development

1. Strengthen linkages between elementary and secondary education to incorporate Indigenous knowledge throughout both curriculums.
2. Enhance student learning by supporting longitudinal student engagement in community-based projects.
3. Foster greater engagement between students and community leaders to strengthen connections to Hamilton.
4. Assist young people with learning disabilities through cognitive therapy/neuro plasticity procedures and support programs.
5. Identify projects and initiatives where college and university students can help mentor secondary school students.
6. Increase basic life skills training in elementary and secondary school curriculums, including financial literacy and the use of information technology.
7. Integrate post-secondary students into the broader community to demonstrate that Hamilton is a great place to build a career and life after graduation.
8. Advance experiential learning opportunities for students through internships, co-ops, and summer placements.
9. Invest in paid internship opportunities for foreign trained professionals so they can succeed in Hamilton.
10. Identify opportunities for increasing post-secondary accessibility by lowering tuition fees through grants, scholarships, and subsidies.
11. Explore opportunities for implementing smaller class sizes in schools of all levels.
12. Strengthen partnerships with local school boards to support youth in receiving a solid foundation for success.









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## HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES

Our Future Hamilton is a caring place where...

People lead happy lives in safe neighbourhoods and friendly community. We all have access to the services and supports we need to be healthy and active. Our city is safe and inviting, and people continue to work together to take care of and support each other.





## Healthy Lifestyles

1. Provide competitive user fees for City of Hamilton recreation facilities and programs.
2. Create signs that display step counts or minutes to walk to and from a community landmark.
3. Develop a plan for people of all income levels to have access to healthier food choices.
4. Coordinate city-wide active lifestyle events such as salsa at the waterfront or Yogafest.
5. Increase access to grocery stores in all communities.
6. Install water fountains/water bottle filling stations in public buildings, parks, and along trails.
7. Maintain a consistently healthy environment for residents through onsite pollution monitoring in local factories and industries.
8. Offer free city-wide nutrition classes for newcomers of all ages at grocery stores, farmers markets, and community centres.
9. Provide affordable parking and increase public transit to parks and recreational areas such as the Royal Botanical Gardens (RBG) and Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) lands.
10. Provide and promote resources for smokers who want to quit.
11. Provide child safety programs at all elementary schools such as “walking buses” and crossing guards.
12. Provide unique recreational activities and programming in our parks such as zip lines, climbing structures, and tree houses.
13. Provide free nutritious meals for students attending schools in priority neighbourhoods.
14. Provide inclusive recreation opportunities to all community members.
15. Accommodate people with disabilities at all recreation centres.
16. Use City-owned advertising space to promote healthy habits and lifestyles.



## Healthcare Services

1. Address the needs of seniors by setting up call centres or pairing them with a student volunteer to help navigate services.
2. Create an online mental health resource or counselling tool for people who are not able to physically visit a counsellor.
3. Increase pre- and post-natal class attendance through incentives such as offering free baby supplies to attendees.
4. Integrate mental health and addictions services.
5. Ensure mental health resources are widely available to youth in schools, community centres, and libraries.
6. Connect people experiencing marginalization with additional supports instead of focusing on specific health outcomes.
7. Provide senior services in multiple languages that reflect the diversity of Hamilton.

## Safe Caring Communities

1. Connect communities with the Hamilton Police Service and invite police officers to attend neighbourhood association/community hub meetings.
2. Create and fund programs that provide support services to sex trade workers and street involved youth.
3. Create safer and more inclusive neighbourhoods by increasing police presence (similar to ACTION team).
4. Develop outreach programs to monitor the elderly.
5. Explore the possibility of implementing a guaranteed income policy.

## Housing

1. Repair and maintain housing units owned by the City of Hamilton.
2. Develop new policies and bylaws to support the development of safe and affordable housing.
3. Ensure accountability and compliance for landlords of low-income housing are met through financial incentives.
4. Explore current standards and best practices regarding mental health housing in Hamilton.
5. Implement a neighbourhood watch program in Hamilton to engage neighbourhoods and residents in being their own advocates for safety.
6. Invest in private-public partnerships to provide better and more efficient social housing.
7. Review current City Housing residents to ensure they qualify for subsidized housing and assist with transitioning to market rate housing when necessary.









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## CLEAN AND GREEN

Our Future Hamilton is an environmentally sustainable place where...

A flourishing natural environment enriches the quality of life for community members. Organizations take a leadership role and operate in a sustainable manner. Everyone has a deep understanding and respect for the natural environment and its important contribution to our lives.





## Natural Features

1. Create a bylaw that requires a new tree to be planted for each one that is cut down or dying.
2. Create bylaws that protect our environmental features in Hamilton such as parks, trails, and waterfalls.
3. Maintain Hamilton's natural creeks and inlets to environmentally-acceptable standards.
4. Set targets for the urban canopy and create an urban forest plan.
5. Maintain the escarpment forest and plant more escarpment trees where viable.

## Leadership & Awareness

1. Partner with schools across the city to host community clean-ups to help keep public places clean and safe.
2. Launch a program to support city building involving students from local post-secondary institutions similar to CityStudio in Vancouver.
3. Promote and educate about the importance of the gardening community in Hamilton.
4. Promote volunteer opportunities that support a healthy environment and smart urban growth.
5. Reduce CO2 emissions by promoting sustainable transportation alternatives such as biking, walking, and transit.

## Environmental Impact

1. Consider limiting new developments on existing greenspace until brownfields in urban areas are completely remediated and repurposed.
2. Create bylaws and incentives that require all new buildings meet LEED standards.
3. Create a strategy for "cradle-to-grave" waste management.
4. Create a sustainability incubator for the development of science and technology around environmental remediation, pollution control, and community impacts.
5. Encourage all new buildings to have a green or white roof.
6. Encourage the use of renewable resources such as solar power to residents and businesses.
7. Ensure that recycling and composting systems exist in all facilities.
8. Include space for plants and trees in newly developed areas to offset the warming effects of concrete.
9. Set high targets for recycling rates that are consistent with municipal best practices.



CLEAN AND GREEN

10. Install and service waste disposal bins in all public parks and buildings.
11. Invest in high quality road cycling and off-road cycling resources, including bicycle paths.
12. Invest in implementing solar panels on buildings throughout the city.
13. Invest in solar panels that are more visually appealing.
14. Learn, adapt, and implement recycling best practices that have been successful in other cities and communities.
15. Advocate the importance of recycling to increase city-wide recycling rates.
16. Protect existing greenspace from major development, especially in urban neighbourhoods.
17. Provide financial incentives to support home energy efficiency improvements.
18. Provide large covered blue bins to reduce litter.
19. Require parking lots to retain storm water on-site or implement a storm water fee.









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## BUILT ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Our Future Hamilton is a people friendly place where...

The quality of life, well-being and enjoyment of its residents influence design and planning. It is easy to get around our city and Hamilton's transportation systems are well-connected regionally. Hamilton is connected to its rich history through architecture. Public spaces are well-maintained and vibrant, with greenspace and attractions for residents and visitors. Neighbourhoods have a variety of homes and amenities.





## Transportation Network

1. Build an escarpment gondola.
2. Build more bike lanes to create a connected cycling network with protected/separated bike lanes.
3. Build more parking garages in high density areas.
4. Build pedestrian only paths that are separate and protected from vehicle traffic and bicycles.
5. Build sidewalks in suburban areas.
6. Consider how closed streets during LRT construction can be used for fun neighbourhood activities and community gatherings.
7. Continue to expand the LRT to service all areas of the city and expand public transit to areas not serviced by LRT.
8. Create an effective detour plan when major highways are closed or jammed due to accidents and/or construction.
9. Design new streets that meet walkability and safety requirements for pedestrians.
10. Design transportation systems that can meet capacity for new subdivisions and reduce traffic congestion.
11. Develop a complete streets strategy to ensure that complete streets are a priority whenever construction work is done.
12. Develop an effective and efficient strategy to fix pot holes and other road damage.
13. Educate the public about the benefits of an active transportation network.
14. Improve wayfinding and interpretive signage throughout the city, with a focus on economic, cultural, and recreational destinations.
15. Maintain a budget for plowing snow on sidewalks.
16. Install more push button activated cross walks throughout Hamilton.
17. Remove area rating for transit.
18. Require all new streets to be built according to complete streets guidelines.
19. Research and implement safer speed limits in residential areas.
20. Work with the community to resolve issues around one-way versus two-way streets.
21. Work with transportation services such as Metrolinx, Coach Canada, and Greyhound to implement all day transportation services to other cities such as Toronto, Kitchener, and Niagara Falls.

## Modern Infrastructure

1. Enhance our urban emergency preparedness plan at the household level.
2. Encourage more third party objective opinions on infrastructure projects.
3. Provide incentives for all new buildings to meet modern infrastructure standards.



## Building & Development

1. Create grant programs and awards for developers who re-use historic structures instead of demolishing them.
2. Develop a public education campaign on the benefits of innovative design and infrastructure.
3. Expand financial incentive programs for home and building improvements.
4. Design new parking lot structures that are efficient in the downtown core.
5. Develop new plans for re-purposing industries near the waterfront.
6. Develop zoning regulations that will create mixed used communities.
7. Consider penalizations for absentee and negligent property owners.
8. Explore opportunities to create and/or expand downtown campuses to provide more space for student community engagement.
9. Include a percentage of affordable housing units in all new or planned residential areas.
10. Include expert knowledge more formally at decision-making tables.
11. Infill downtown surface parking lots with revenue generating buildings.
12. Preserve historic assets while making room for new approaches and ideas.
13. Promote conservation of historical architecture and integration of built heritage resources within the downtown core.
14. Purchase CN railyard lands and repurpose the land.
15. Replace lead pipes in existing homes at little or no cost to homeowners.
16. Re-purpose abandoned buildings to be used for housing and community-shared space.

## Public Spaces

1. Add more bike racks in public spaces throughout the city.
2. Consider alternatives to current storm water and sewer designs that impact pedestrians and people with disabilities.
3. Ensure pavements of public spaces, school yards, and local parks have water-permeable surfaces.
4. Develop educational programs on littering.
5. Create multi-purpose downtown squares in the centre of each community.
6. Enforce stricter fines for littering, including cigarette butt littering.
7. Implement an alleyway management project to improve usability and cleanliness of alleyways.
8. Increase promotion of the City of Hamilton's Street Tree Planting program.
9. Increase the number of street beautification programs.
10. Design new public spaces for multi-use purposes such as dog parks, sitting areas, play areas, and sports fields in one park.
11. Use Indigenous plants, which cost less and do not need annual planting, for beautification projects.









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## CULTURE AND DIVERSITY

Our Future Hamilton is a vibrant place where...

People of all ages, backgrounds and abilities are accepted and celebrated. There is always something to do in Hamilton, with a year-round calendar of events and a thriving local arts scene. All of our downtown areas are bustling centres of economic and community activity. People of all backgrounds, ages and abilities call Hamilton home and have access to the support and opportunities they need to succeed.





## Celebrate Culture

1. Build year-round indoor farmers markets in areas beyond downtown Hamilton.
2. Celebrate and encourage art as a form of public engagement.
3. Celebrate local talent through Hamilton-made film festivals, street art, and community art installations.
4. Communicate effectively about events and opportunities through a common newsletter or other media sources.
5. Construct a new child and family-friendly museum or educational programming facility.
6. Construct a new iconic Hamilton landmark.
7. Convert old industrial buildings and heritage buildings into arts facilities and community-owned spaces.
8. Provide a collaborative space to build connections between people who have similar experiences but may be from different cultures or backgrounds.
9. Create a wayfinding project that provides historic information about various areas of Hamilton.
10. Develop and promote a website that notifies residents of events happening in the City.
11. Establish a cultural events app for smartphones.
12. Host a multi-day event downtown to celebrate multicultural diversity that includes food, music, and games.
13. Host an annual Christmas/winter market with food, activities, and attractions for all ages.
14. Host an annual event that educates non-Indigenous people about Indigenous history, customs, beliefs, and values.
15. Host more live music events and concerts.
16. Invest in an Arts & Cultural Centre to promote local artists across the city.
17. Expand investment in public art projects and initiatives.
18. Increase promotion of professional artists and their work.
19. Host unique events as a multicultural music festival or giant water slide block party.



## Inclusion and Equity

1. Bring people together through community hikes, cycling events, and food festivals.
2. Create a welcoming city brand, building on initiatives like “Hamilton Welcomes Newcomers.”
3. Create a secondary education program that informs youth on local issues and helps them get involved in the community.
4. Create a project that creates neighbourhood signage in different languages reflecting the diversity of Hamilton’s newcomer communities.
5. Develop programs to ensure that socially isolated, vulnerable, and frail seniors have a voice in the community.
6. Ensure members of the Indigenous community are actively involved in public engagement initiatives and invite Indigenous leaders to lead community discussions.
7. Provide free or affordable transitional programs for newcomers looking to settle in Hamilton.
8. Support inclusion of the LGBTQ community through more events like the Pride Parade.
9. Strengthen interest in local arts through youth programming initiatives.
10. Translate City of Hamilton information materials into multiple languages.

## Community Support Services

1. Build an accessible seniors centre in every ward.
2. Create a safe gathering space and environment for the LGBTQ community.
3. Expand programming for people living with disabilities at recreation and community centres.
4. Enhance opportunities for international language support, potentially through partnerships with the Hamilton Public Library and local school boards.
5. Provide public space conversations about culture and diversity.
6. Support connections between newcomers, refugees, and immigrant communities, possibly in partnership with the Hamilton Public Library as a safe space for conversation.
7. Build partnerships with local sports clubs to invite newcomers to attend sporting events as a way to settle and integrate in Hamilton.
8. Support at-risk-youth that are experiencing various societal, mental, addictions and unemployment issues.





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Follow us on Twitter:

@cityofhamilton #futurehamont

Email: [ourfuturehamilton@hamilton.ca](mailto:ourfuturehamilton@hamilton.ca)

Telephone: 905-546-2424 ext. 4992



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