Proposal for the establishment of a working group to focus on disability justice in our climate emergency.

What does Disability Justice look like in the face of our climate crisis?

Here's what we know:
- Citizens and organizations successfully advocated to the city to declare a climate emergency. The City of Hamilton has recognized that we are in a climate emergency that will have massive financial, health, and environmental impacts, and in many ways already is.
- We are already experiencing more extreme weather events, flooding, and negative health impacts as a result of the climate crisis, these promise only to worsen.
- We must act radically and quickly to mitigate the worst of this crisis but even in the friendliest predictions adaption to our new more volatile climate will be necessary
- Disabled people and people with disabilities will in many ways be uniquely impacted, more severely impacted, and frequently among some of the first people significantly impacted because of sensitivities and health conditions, isolation, marginalization, and ableism.
- Disabled people and people with disabilities will not only be disproportionately impacted by the climate crisis but the climate crisis will cause or contribute to acquiring disability and/or health conditions (one example being poor air quality causing respiratory issues and/or cancers)
- Disabled people and people with disabilities already have knowledge that is valuable to adapting to the climate crisis (staying cool in the heat – especially with few resources, emergency preparedness, adapting to poor air quality, etc.).

What does a solution look like?
- Beyond necessary and unfortunately lacking mitigation efforts successful adaption to the climate crisis that includes a focus on disability justice would
  - Recognize celebrate, compensate, encourage and share the contributions and knowledge disabled people and people with disabilities already possess.
  - Centre those most marginalized and explore how adaption initiatives can not only be preparatory but act to reduce inequality in their creation and implementation.
  - Solidarity with other marginalized groups in their struggles for justice especially indigenous land and water protectors who have been doing much of this work for generations at great personal and collective cost.
  - Hold those responsible for creating this crisis accountable (financially, technologically, politically, and legally) in providing/funding solutions.
  - Prioritize collective action over individual action (i.e. plastic straws which are a lifesaving accessibility technology have come under fire recently in efforts to reduce single use plastics, instead of creating additional barriers for people how could we as a City better address the issue of single use plastics holistically)

What I am proposing:
- The ACPD creates a new working group that specifically focuses on disability justice in the context of a changing climate and our climate crisis. The goal would be to explore concerns like:
  o Extreme weather events and impacts to mobility in the city;
  o Emergency procedures (evacuation, extreme weather events, emergency communications etc.);
  o Temperature Equity - heat islands/street trees/access to cooled spaces/ and health concerns relating to extreme hot and cold;
  o Pollution/toxins and acquired disability and health concerns;
  and ideally push the city into proactive and important action.

Further Reading:
- Declaration of Climate Emergency:
  https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/climate-change-1.5061326 and
  https://www.raisethehammer.org/article/3633/hamilton_declares_climate_emergency
- Heat Kills: http://projects.thestar.com/climate-change-canada/quebec/
- Toxins and acquired conditions: https://www.thespec.com/news-story/9398464-mcgill-university-study-finds-hamilton-has-higher-than-average-rates-of-leukemia/ and https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2669065/
- Inequity kills: https://www.thespec.com/news-story/6140009-researchers-link-poverty-and-shorter-life-expectancy/
- Climate crisis unique impact on disability: https://blog.ucsusa.org/guest-commentary/climate-adaptation-adaptive-climate-justice-and-people-with-disabilities