

Pilon, Janet

Subject: Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper

From: Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition

Sent: January 14, 2021 10:20 AM

To: Office of the Mayor <mayor@hamilton.ca>; Eisenberger, Fred <Fred.Eisenberger@hamilton.ca>; VanderBeek, Arlene <Arlene.VanderBeek@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Brenda <Brenda.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Collins, Chad <Chad.Collins@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Farr, Jason <Jason.Farr@hamilton.ca>; Ward 8 Office <ward8@hamilton.ca>; Partridge, Judi <Judi.Partridge@hamilton.ca>; Ferguson, Lloyd <Lloyd.Ferguson@hamilton.ca>; Pearson, Maria <Maria.Pearson@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Merulla, Sam <Sam.Merulla@hamilton.ca>; Whitehead, Terry <Terry.Whitehead@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>

Cc: Smith, Janette (City Manager) <Janette.Smith@hamilton.ca>; Johnson, Paul <Paul.Johnson@hamilton.ca>; Thorne, Jason <Jason.Thorne@hamilton.ca>; McKinnon, Dan <Dan.McKinnon@hamilton.ca>; Zegarac, Mike <Mike.Zegarac@hamilton.ca>; Cutler, Christopher <Christopher.Cutler@hamilton.ca>; clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper

Dear Mayor, Councillors

Cc: Office of the City Manager, Department Heads City Staff, Office of the Clerk

As we continue to respond to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic a group not-for-profit organizations have come together to support the current work being done by the City of Hamilton. The group is releasing a Just Recovery Policy document that provides over 100 recommendations to help uplift the city in a more fair and equitable manner for all residents.

The #JustRecoveryHamOnt collation consists of 11 not-for-profits, ACORN Hamilton, Disability Justice Network of Ontario, Environment Hamilton, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion, Hamilton Community Benefits Network, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, Sexual Assault Centre for Hamilton and Area, Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, Spectrum, YWCA Hamilton.

As the case counts of COVID-19 increase in the Hamilton area and the City of Hamilton ponders its 2021 budget, the City can start adopting just recovery principles that respond to the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized -- while at the same time allowing Hamilton to be resilient past 2021 during this and future pandemics.

The recommendations in the #JustRecoveryHamOnt policy paper are a collaborative effort to change Hamilton's trajectory and respond to the inequities exacerbated by the global pandemic. The policy paper is part of a larger campaign to create a broader conversation around how together we might all build a Just Recovery for Hamilton in collaboration with the private sector, other community organizations, residents, other levels of government and the City of Hamilton.

Key #JustRecoveryHamOnt principles:

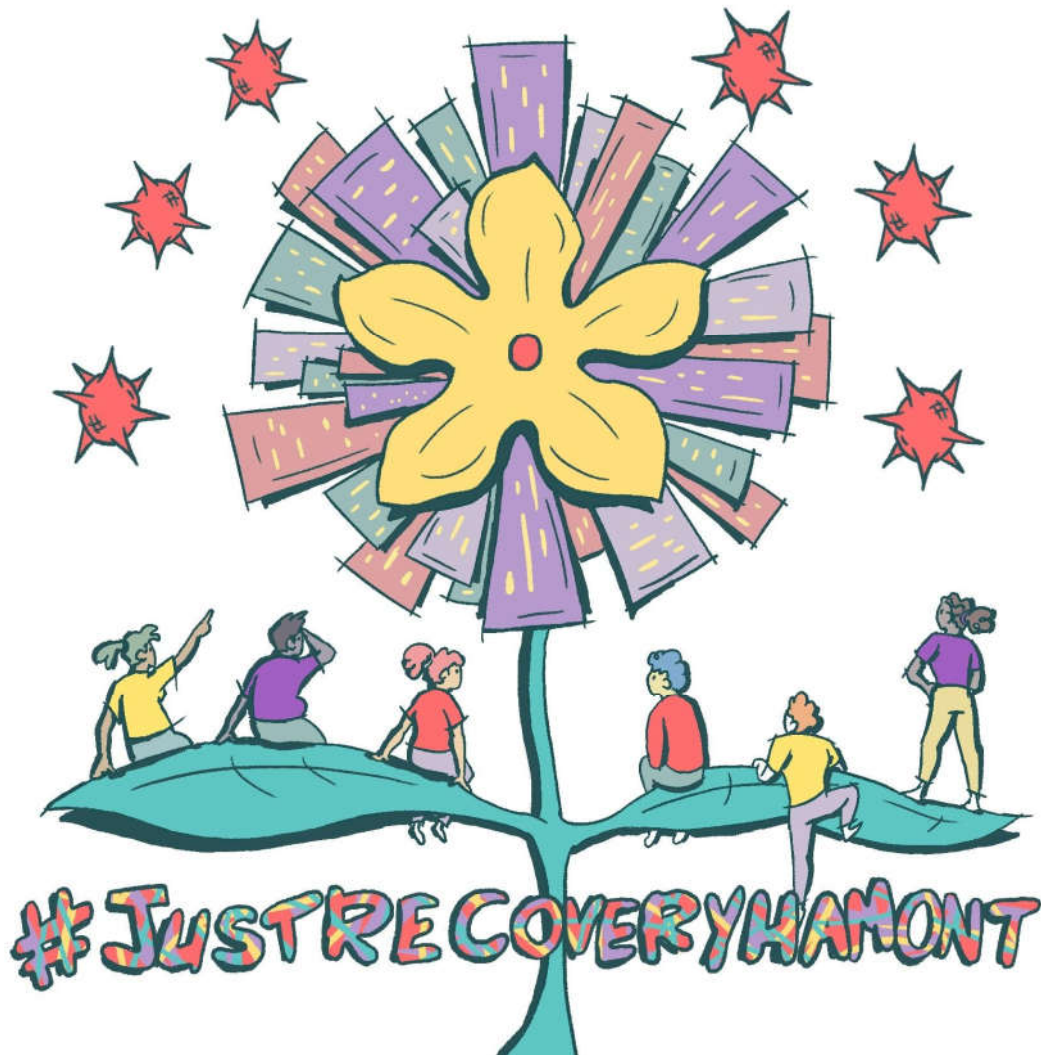
- Investing in Women
- Mobility Justice
- Disability Justice
- Housing as a Human Right
- Tackling Systemic Racism

- Investing in decent jobs, decent wages and our local economy.
- Focus on Inclusive City Building
- Investing in Green Infrastructure
- Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities

We will be holding a [virtual news conference at 8:30 am on January 15th, 2022](#) to release the #JustRecoveryHamOnt policy paper. We wanted to provide your offices with a copy in advance of that release.

Thank you for all the very important work you all are doing in this difficult time.

The Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition



A JUST RECOVERY FOR HAMILTON

Municipal Policy, Investment and Opportunities for a more equitable COVID-19 recovery in 2021



**Hamilton Roundtable
for Poverty Reduction**



Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton



HAMILTON COMMUNITY
BENEFITS NETWORK
building capacity though building communities

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Land Acknowledgement

We are grateful to be residing on the traditional lands of the **Huron-Wendat**, the **Anishnabeg**, the **Chippewa**, the **Haudenosaunee**, and most recently the **Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation**.



The Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt

This land is governed by the **Dish with One Spoon Wampum**. This is a historical pre-contact wampum, a part of the Great Peace of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and was an agreement with the Anishnabeg to protect and be stewards of the land and to share its resources. The Bowl, which was originally represented by the beaver tail, represents the lands of the Great Lakes Basin, including all of its water, plants, animals, and various peoples. Through the Great Peace, all of the Haudenosaunee weapons were buried under the Tree of Peace. The wampum invites us to intentionally put down weapons, harsh words, or uncaring hearts and so come to the bowl with a spoon, and other tools with no sharp edges, to feed ourselves and others. The Dish with One Spoon wampum says we must take care of the land and ensure that there is always food left in the bowl for future generations.



The Two Row Wampum Belt

Another important wampum that covers this territory is the **Two Row Wampum**, which was made between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the Dutch. The Two Rows represent the distinct nations of the Haudenosaunee and the Dutch. Each row runs in parallel to the other, but never crossing paths. The Two Row Wampum signified that the two distinct nations could continue their cultures and traditions alongside each other, without forcing either nation to be assimilated by the other.

Both of these wampums tell us that Indigenous peoples on this land were committed to peace with other nations and to honour each other's identity and self-determination.

We further acknowledge that the land on which Hamilton was settled is covered by the Between the Lakes Purchase, 1792, between the Crown and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. It is important for us to honour this truth and acknowledge the ongoing genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We gather today on stolen land and at the displacement of Indigenous peoples.

Living on this territory makes all people in Hamilton treaty peoples, those who come as settlers, or immigrants of this generation or earlier generations, as well as those brought involuntarily as a result of the TransAtlantic Slave Trade and Imperialism. As we write here today, we live in the contradictions of being treaty peoples in the mists of broken treaties and persistent inaction and idling. We commit to searching for the right words, thoughts, hearts and actions to align ourselves with Indigenous rights and self-determination.

Executive Summary

This report addresses COVID-19 recovery with a focus on communities within the city that have experienced the disproportionate negative impacts of the pandemic and addresses what it will mean to create a Just Recovery for Hamilton. By highlighting identified needs, disparities and gaps in opportunity, the report has identified opportunities for change. The recommendations that follow can allow for a new direction for the city of Hamilton as we deliberate on how city funds should be allocated to benefit members of our community. The recommendations that follow are a result of the experiences of the non-profit organizations participating and as such, we recognize that it is not a comprehensive account of all issues facing our city and its residents. Ongoing consultation with the community will further strengthen our city's recovery, therefore, this should not be considered an exhaustive collection of recommendations, but rather serves as a resource to help the ongoing discussion of elements required for a Just Recovery in Hamilton.

There were considerable financial constraints on City finances long before Covid-19, as community needs have consistently outpaced funding to adequately address the social and health issues facing our residents. These issues are outlined here to help form a basis of understanding and to help explore recovery solutions. In this light, the positive work and policy development that has occurred in Hamilton over the years, by City of Hamilton staff and councillors, has not gone unnoticed.

A few of these noted successes include:

- Hamilton became the first municipality in Canada to license and restrict the growth of predatory payday lenders, protecting borrowers while clamping down on an exploitative industry.
- In 2017, significant local funds were allocated to the repair of Hamilton's social housing stock. When provincial or federal governments have left Hamiltonians behind through cuts to critical programs, City Council has often looked to ways to bolster.
- Hamilton has worked to make public transit more accessible to working people through the Low Income and Seniors Transit Passes
- 300 social housing units were put back into circulation following extensive repairs by the City in 2020
- Increased investment in cycle infrastructure

COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated that our issues of physical health, mental health, poverty, race, gender, disability, workforce conditions, sexual orientation, housing, privilege and status, childcare and social support systems are all connected to the well being and health of our citizens, environment and economy. This includes our relationship to the land as it pertains to Indigenous rights and the environment. Our collective success in recovery requires that our solutions be fully integrated. This paper explores a Just Recovery for Hamilton in nine key themes. They are Investing in Women, Mobility Justice, Disability Justice, Housing as a Human Right, Tackling Systemic Racism, Investing in decent jobs, decent wages and our local economy, Focus on Inclusive City Building, Investing in Green Infrastructure and Supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ Communities

This report outlines recommendations of what a Just Recovery could mean for Hamilton if we could do just that. And while the report is directed to Hamilton City Council, we appreciate that:

There are areas of responsibility that are outside of the scope of the city and which lie with provincial or federal governments.

City funds are not limitless and budgets are increasingly strained, in part, as a result of the pandemic.

Still, we recognize the collective responsibility of the City of Hamilton, local business, community, service providers and residents to work together and continue to advocate for the necessary changes and additional funding from other levels of government to not only recover from COVID-19 but to build a better, healthier and more equitable community.

This report outlines numerous recommendations of what a Just Recovery could mean for Hamilton if we could do just that.

Introduction



Demolition of Firestone Tire plant in Hamilton, Ontario – Source Construct Connect

City in Crisis

Hamilton is a city with a deep working-class industrial history. The decline of the manufacturing sector over two decades have combined with external economic challenges to create a community where some residents thrive while many others live in abject poverty, experience social exclusion and are fearful for their safety.

It is a tale of two cities: the staggering difference between the federal riding of Hamilton Centre, third poorest in the country, with a median income of \$43,717; and Flamborough-Glanbrook, at 34th richest with a median income of \$99,355, shown in 2016 Census data, brings this picture of income inequality into focus. The steady loss of good-paying blue-collar jobs has only amplified the contrast in between areas of the city. Life expectancy mirrors the income inequality in the city, with an appalling difference of six years in life expectancy between the aforementioned ridings.

Hamilton has seen a massive influx of capital investment and over \$1 billion a year in new development permits, concentrated mostly in the downtown core. Cranes tower over the city for the first time in more than 30 years. Construction and development are booming. Yet income inequality, child poverty rates, higher mortality rates in some downtown neighbourhoods, displacement, and renovictions are escalating. It is in these same lower city neighbourhoods where vulnerable residents are exposed to some of the highest air pollution levels in the province, and where people struggle most with extreme weather caused by the climate crisis.

Those with lived experience on Ontario Works (OW), the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), the retired poor on Old Age Security (OAS) and the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS), and those living on the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) Disability Benefit have long known the struggle of living on inadequate income and substandard supports in Hamilton. Their situation continues to worsen.

Wages across the city continue to not keep pace with increases in costs, especially rent. Although Hamilton's pre-COVID-19 unemployment rates are lower than the country as a whole, those statistics belay an unfortunate reality, a growing number of those jobs are precarious, non-union, low wage, and temporary leaving more and more residents of the City of Hamilton behind. A full 31% of jobs in Hamilton were precarious, higher than the GHTA average. A study released by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives published July 18, 2019, called *Unaccommodating: Housing Rental Wage in Canada*, shows to afford a one-bedroom apartment in Hamilton making minimum wage (\$14/h) one would have to work 54h a week, or 65 hours for a two-bedroom. You need \$18.99/h for that same one-bedroom to work only 40 hours a week, and \$22.78/h for the two-bedroom. Rents continue to skyrocket: the average rent in the downtown core and the Mountain has risen 40 % in 8 years. Tenants of all kinds face increasing displacement and renoviction pressure from landlords to capitalize on the new higher market rates, pushing them into an already unaffordable market. 45% of tenants in the city are already living in unaffordable housing.

Hamilton, like Canada as a whole, faces the additional pressure of an aging population's requirements for services. Those with disabilities suffer more deeply the effects of inequality. In 2017, Statistics Canada reported that persons with disabilities make up 27.7% of the total population of the Hamilton CMA. This is much higher than the national average.

Current data has not yet been processed as to how that disability density is disturbed, however in 2006, Hamilton had the largest density of people with disabilities per capita in Ontario.

Hamilton's long struggle with systemic racism and undercurrents of hate found itself further challenged as far-right extremists found fertile ground to gather. Hamilton Pride 2018 and 2019 both faced violent attacks. Hamilton made national news as the so-called "Yellow-Vest" anti-immigration extremists clashed with counter protesters in front of City Hall. Statistics Canada reported in 2019, "Hamilton has the highest rate of police-reported hate crimes in Canada — almost three times more than Toronto."

For decades, activists living with the effects of these deep systemic issues have rallied, protested, and raised the flag to anyone who would listen.



"The Bubble Pops"

Surge of Unemployment

Amid this already challenging social and economic picture came the first wave of the Global COVID-19 pandemic. A state of emergency was declared by Premier Doug Ford on March 17, 2020. That same day Mayor Fred Eisenberger exercised the authority granted by the province declaring "... an emergency in the City of Hamilton under section 4 of the Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act, R.S.O. 1990 (EMCPA) concurrent with this order."

The first wave brought a series of lockdown measures to arrest the spread of the pandemic. Non-essential businesses, daycares, schools, government offices were shuttered. Huge changes to our way of life began, in an instant, as the city struggled to keep cases and deaths low. The pandemic increased food costs, exacerbating the long-standing issue of food security for many Hamiltonians including families, precariously housed or employed single persons, and individuals requiring special diets. Foodbanks, even before the pandemic, are rarely able to provide more than three days of food. Foodbanks struggled to create the logistics to deliver to high risk individuals, seniors and those with disabilities.

Travel quickly became very difficult for disabled people, as the City of Hamilton instituted a protocol requiring people in wheelchairs to have a support person to take public transportation. Many people with disabilities and seniors found themselves isolated during the pandemic from family, friends and the support services they depended on.

Essential service workers who did not face unemployment found additional challenges as the city's public transit system undertook drastic restrictions of levels of service. Workers were often faced with the tough choice of choosing a taxi or rideshare they could not afford, leaving hours earlier, or risking the questionable choice of public transit for individuals who have health conditions that make them an at-risk group for COVID-19.

Between February and June of 2020, almost 60,000 residents in the Hamilton CMA (which includes Burlington and Grimsby) lost employment. The Hamilton regional unemployment rate used by the Employment Insurance was 13.1 % as

of December 4th. The SPRC reports “The unemployment rate is higher than it has been in at least the last 20 years”. The SPRC further reports, “The pandemic has exacerbated existing inequalities, with the largest impacts on younger workers, women, and part-time workers. Racialization status is not included in labour force data, but other data sources indicate racialized workers are also facing the harshest effects of the employment impacts of COVID-19. People with disabilities across Canada struggle with accessing employment, either because of discrimination or because the workforce, in general, is ableist and not built for everyone. More than that, we have constructed society to be a place where one’s value comes from their ability to produce. The Second Wave of the pandemic has led to a new series of shutdowns and restrictions and even further economic impacts, coupled with lessening income support from the federal Government. Reporting on the Second Wave is only just now underway but early data points to an even bleaker outlook for the health, employment and social picture in the City.

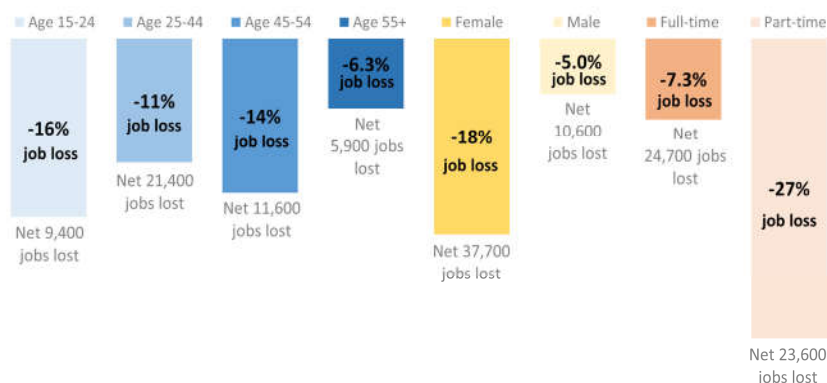
Disparate Impacts



Hamilton Urban Core Community Health Centre – Source Globe and Mail

In the Hamilton CMA between February and July 2020, workers aged 15-24, women, and part-time workers have been hardest hit by job loss (see Chart 2). Workers aged 15-24 saw a 16% decrease in employment, while part-time workers experienced a 27% decrease and women experienced a 17.6% decrease in work in the February-July period. Compared to other demographic/employment categories, these decreases are significant and demonstrate the precarious employment of these groups. The local data on employment impacts presented in this report reflects provincial and national trends. In communities across Canada, COVID-19 has disproportionately affected certain groups and has magnified inequalities in the labour market. As the Canadian Labour Congress states in a recent report, “low-wage service workers—particularly women, young workers, workers of colour, and vulnerable workers in precarious forms of employment—disproportionately suffered layoffs and loss of hours of work.” The Ontario Nonprofit Network has also released findings that economic losses have fallen heavily on women, particularly women experiencing other intersecting inequalities, such as racialization, poverty, newcomer status, and more and called for building gender equality into recovery strategies.

Metropolitan Area (CMA), February-July 2020 (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey)
chart 2, Percent change in employment and total jobs lost by age group, gender, and full/part-time status, Hamilton Census



Research is also pointing to amplified impacts of COVID-19 for those who have struggled with chronic exposure to air pollution. This means that lower city residents in some of Hamilton’s most vulnerable neighbourhoods face a greater risk of amplified impacts from COVID-19 because of the air they must breathe.

David Lepofsky, the chair of Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Alliance, has expressed huge concern about a vacuum that exists in Ontario’s triage policy for COVID-19. Those with disabilities faced barriers to care and medical discrimination before the pandemic. With hospitals becoming overwhelmed there is great concern by activists and those with disabilities about who decides what sort of access will be given to scarce, life-saving treatments when hospitals become overwhelmed. Lepofsky points out “the danger of the vacuum is that if triage does take place, individual doctors will apply their individual discretion and that could force or lead a doctor to [discriminate based on their own systemic biases]”.

As of the publishing of this paper Hamilton’s current case count was around 7,300 with the disease tragically taking the lives of 196 residents. We are just now learning that even those who recover, may face long term health impacts. Between March 1, 2020 and August 14, 2020, the city of Hamilton reports that just under 1,000 residents had COVID-19. Public Health gathered social determinants of health (SDOH) data from 630 people that contracted the virus. They reported to council the following Findings:

“Our data suggests that racialized populations, health care workers and people living with low-income are disproportionately affected by COVID-19 in Hamilton. We also found that males and seniors are more likely to be hospitalized and die from COVID-19.

These findings are not unique to Hamilton. Toronto Public Health also found that people in the lowest income group have the highest rate of COVID-19 and that there is a higher case and hospitalization rate for racialized communities. Similar trends have been shown in Waterloo Region³ and in the City of Ottawa.

The COVID-19 pandemic is magnifying the impact of the SDOH and the inequities that have long existed in communities. For example, we know that people living with low incomes have difficulty affording basic resources (e.g. food, paying bills). During a pandemic, difficult choices between needed supplies (e.g. hand sanitizer, masks) and basic resources is exacerbated.”

The same report also noted cases of COVID-19 are much more likely to live in low-income households compared to Hamilton’s Population. The report highlighted the pandemic reality that visible minority COVID-19 cases were three times more likely to live in low-income households compared to white cases.

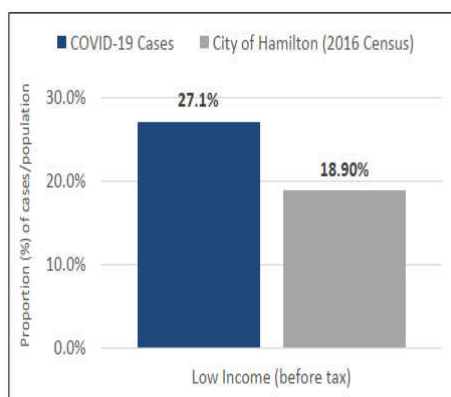


Figure 4. Proportion (%) of COVID-19 cases living in low income households, City of Hamilton, Mar 1 – Aug 31, 2020.

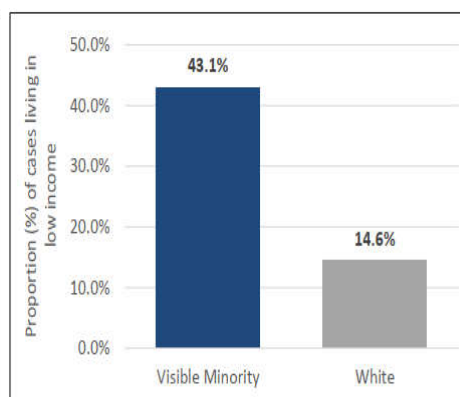


Figure 5. Proportion (%) of white and visible minority COVID-19 cases living in low income households, City of Hamilton, Mar 1 – Aug 31, 2020.

The internet, smartphones and computers -- tools that many of us are using to offset the loneliness and other effects of this pandemic -- are unavailable to many lowest income neighbours. Only around 80% of people in Hamilton have access to the internet, and those in the lowest income brackets are among the majority of individuals without internet access. Among those without internet or a computer, vital access through libraries and other institutions has been severely limited, and at times cut off completely. At a time when connections to friends, family, community and social services are most needed, community members struggling with fixed low incomes do not have access to the internet, smartphones and computers.

Renewed lockdown measures in the second wave are leaving many throughout the city feeling isolated. Those facing isolation, especially in long-term care homes, retirement homes, and residential care facilities struggle most under the COVID-19 pandemic burden.

The COVID-19 pandemic has placed increased pressure on residents already squeezed, neglected and ignored by both the federal and provincial governments. Those on fixed income of social assistance, OAS and GIS saw little support from the provincial and federal governments. Their income has been stretched to breaking by the demands of the pandemic.

The Landlord Tenant Board (LTB) has received over 400 applications for evictions for non-payment of rent in Hamilton alone. Across the province more than 7000 have been issued. As federal support programs such as Canada Emergency Relief Benefit (CERB) and Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB) wind down, the employment picture continues to look bleak and future evictions can be expected. Growing number of tent encampments are springing up across the city. Hamilton's often hidden housing crisis is now visible in many parks, wooded areas and lots across the city. Intersectional understandings of COVID-19 impacts demonstrate that different social factors work together to "compound inequalities



Ferguson Street Encampment Site

COVID-19 impacts demonstrate that different social factors work together to "compound inequalities and mediate experiences of marginalization," explains the YWCA Toronto report "An Intersectional Approach to COVID She-covetry." As the City of Hamilton looks towards a post COVID world, we must not return to the status quo. It is no longer enough to talk about accessibility, we need to discuss social, racial and disability justice—the ways in which all institutions leave people behind on the basis of disability, race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and the myriad of challenges amplified by the pandemic. We don't need a "New Normal;" we need to make substantive changes that will improve the lives of Hamilton residents, especially those bearing the highest costs of the pandemic.

The #JustRecoveryHamOnt coalition are suggesting nine themes with over a hundred recommendations to chart a path forward. These themes are:

- Investing in Women
- Mobility Justice
- Housing as a Human Right
- Tackling Systemic Racism
- Investing
- Investing in decent jobs, decent wages, & our local economy
- Focusing on Inclusive City Building
- Investing in Green Infrastructure
- Supporting 2SLGBTQQIA+ Communities

Investing in Women



The Bridge

The global COVID-19 pandemic has had clear impacts on our collective physical and mental health and the division of gendered labour within the home and within our society; child and family responsibilities; our safety at home; and many other aspects of our daily lives. At the onset of the pandemic, economists and policy analysts warned that Canadian women would pay a heavier price than men during the pandemic-induced recession and that, without swift action, decades of advances in women's labour-force participation would recede. As women adjusted to an ever-changing world, all levels of government have failed to adequately prevent a decrease in women's engagement with the labour force, failed to sustain benefits and protections for frontline workers, failed to ensure safe and affordable childcare options, and failed to strengthen the capacity for the sectors that address violence against women and shelter women experiencing homelessness and/or fleeing from violence.

The impact of COVID-19 has been massively gendered. Women, specifically women of colour, make up the majority of frontline essential workers in occupations known as the 5Cs: caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical functions. These women are putting their bodies at risk to maintain the health and safety of our communities working in roles including personal support workers, grocery store workers, nurses, midwives, and long-term care workers. Women constitute 90% of Canadian nurses, 75% of respiratory therapists, and 90% of personal support workers in long-term care and nursing homes (Statistics Canada, 2020). Women were also overrepresented in the figures of who were furloughed or laid off during the earliest months of the pandemic; women represented 70% of all job losses in Canada and, unlike men, were unable to access employment as readily following the first wave of the pandemic.

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, demands to support survivors of sexual assault continue. Crisis line calls have increased. Many survivors of violence are impacted by a lack of adequate income supports, safe and fair workplaces, and access to affordable basic services like child care, transportation, digital access and eldercare. In one year, Ontario sexual assault centres took over 48,000 Crisis Line calls, supported over 16,000 individual survivors of sexual violence, and provided 3000 prevention education workshops to youth and others in the community.

Since 2014, sexual assault centres across Ontario have seen a significant influx of new referrals, crisis line calls and intake for counselling services. Awareness of sexual violence is increasing —a significant and positive achievement. Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, more survivors of gender-based violence were reaching out for support than ever before. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many community-based sexual assault centres in Ontario have been helping support-seekers with little or no income to access basic practical supports, such as providing grocery store and food

vouchers.

While shelters for women and children experiencing violence provide a critical – and often life-saving – service in our communities, many were at their limit in resources and shelter space well before the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is important to recognize that for a recovery plan to truly succeed, it must prioritize equity -- which includes focusing on the detrimental impacts COVID-19 has had on communities oppressed by their gender and/or sexuality. The recovery plan must acknowledge the disproportionate impacts COVID-19 has had on Black, Indigenous, People of colour, and must intentionally position these communities at the center of its planning and relief delivery plans. The recovery plan must find ways to support all types of households, and ensure that no member of the household is left behind including single mothers, women who had to leave the workforce, persons on social assistance or disability based social assistance, and women working in the 5C professions (caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical functions).

In order to realize a Just Recovery for women, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 1. Ensure intersectional gender analysis (GBA+) is conducted, by women and non-binary people, on all forthcoming pandemic policies not only for understanding differential impacts, but also for designing policies.**
- 2. Establish a Gender Advisory Council that provides guidance to the municipal government on pandemic policies.**

Continual Response

- 3. Implement the Calls to Action in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Calls for Justice in the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Report.**
- 4. Ensure that Indigenous peoples and especially women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, have equitable access to jobs, training, and education opportunities, and that they gain long-term sustainable benefits from economic development projects.**
- 5. Provide adequate, stable, equitable, and ongoing funding for Indigenous-centered and community-based health and wellness services that are accessible and culturally appropriate, and meet the health and wellness needs of Indigenous communities, especially women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people.**
- 6. Tracking the success and status of Hamilton women, including employment, leadership makeup, workforce participation, other vital statistics, childcare spaces, and childcare needs.**

Labour Force

Urgent COVID Response

- 7. Invest in programs that focus on retraining and professional development across sectors for women who have experienced job loss through EI. For people who are not eligible for EI, create other pathways to financially support re-skilling and re-training, with greater incentives for workers in care-economy based sectors such as childcare and elder care.**

Child Care

Urgent COVID Response

- 8. Expand the supply of available, affordable municipal daycare spots.**
- 9. Keep the Child Care Affordability Plan and increase the \$10 subsidy to reduce the cost of child care for families.**

Addressing Violence

Urgent COVID Response

10. Increase funding to, and work collaboratively with service providers to address the capacity issues in, shelters for women and non-binary persons experiencing homelessness and shelters for persons fleeing violence.
11. Increase financial investment for community organizations tackling violence against women.
12. Increase financial investment for local sexual assault centres.
13. Increase shelter spaces for single women and women with children.

Continual Response

14. Increase municipal investment in affordable housing specifically for women.
15. Provide annual funding to the Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG).
16. Provide annual funding to the Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC).
17. Provide annual funding to the Sisters in Spirit Committee of Hamilton (SIS).
18. Provide annual funding to the Sex Workers' Action Program Hamilton (SWAP).
19. Schedule biannual meetings with the WAWG, HAHTC, SIS, SWAP to receive information about the current realities for agencies serving women & survivors of gender-based violence.

Access to Menstrual Products

Urgent COVID Response

20. Funding for menstrual products for community organizations to provide to community members.
21. Make free menstrual products available at all city-owned washrooms.



YWCA Hamilton, located on MacNab Street South, has supported women, girls and families in the community since 1889.



A New Seed

The City of Hamilton must ramp up planning efforts and investments to realize mobility justice for all Hamiltonians. Some residents are privileged to have their own transportation, and the means to afford delivery or pickup services. The pandemic has widened the gap, exposing the differences between residents with full mobility and those who do not have that advantage. The pandemic underscores the urgent need for increased investment in active transportation infrastructure and public transit services. Too often, those who depend on our public transportation services are excluded from conversation about those services. Those must be included in the planning and design considerations of future transportation infrastructure and public transit services; this would ensure the utmost adherence to the Access to Ontarians with Disabilities Act.

The needs of those with mobility challenges must also be considered in all city decision-making around outdoor spaces including city sidewalks, walkways, paths and bus shelters. For example, the use of sidewalks and pedestrian spaces to accommodate restaurant expansion due to COVID-19 public health restrictions, had the unintended result of creating mobility barriers for persons with disabilities. Ultimately, mobility justice could also mean shifting our public transit services to a no-fare system. Commitments to these key elements will support mobility justice, while at the same time, making low or no carbon transportation options more attractive to the degree that significant modal shifts away from private automobile use are facilitated. Transportation is one of the largest sources of community-generated greenhouse gas emissions in our city.

In order to realize a Just Recovery for all, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

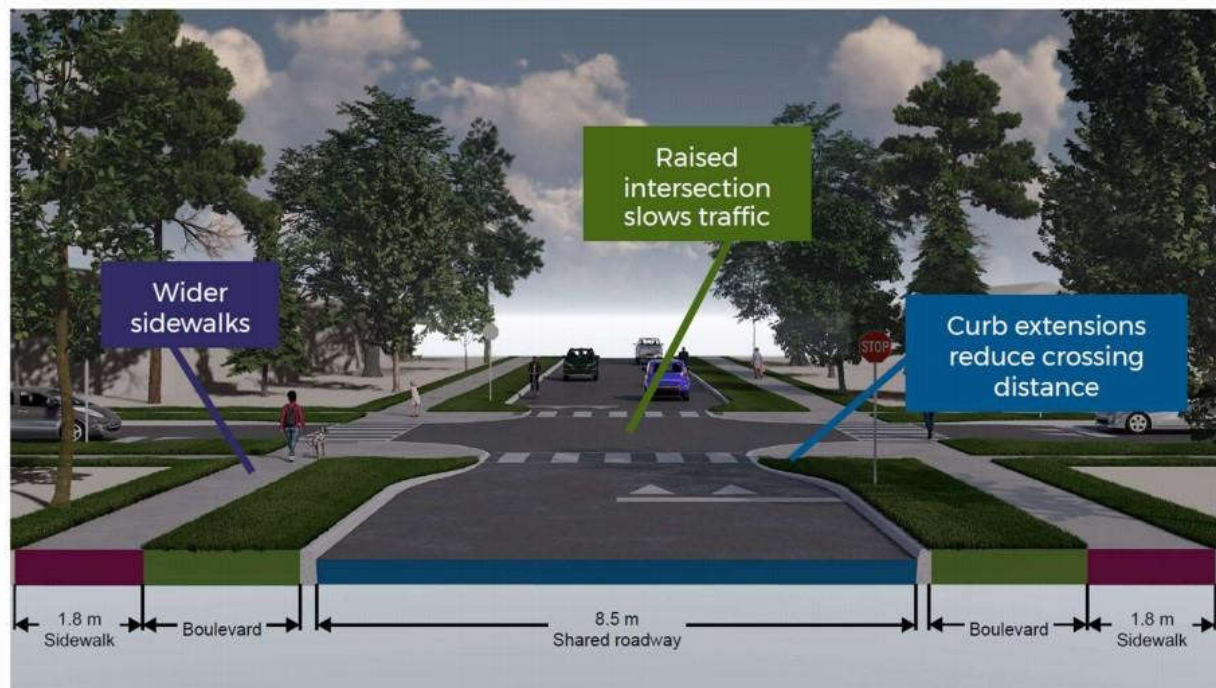
- 22. Commit to full funding of the 10-year transit strategy - including fast-tracking implementation of express bus service on the L, S & T lines of the BLAST Network - to provide frequent, reliable public transit across the city.**
- 23. Commit to the immediate establishment of bus lanes on Express Transit Routes (the B and A-Line), to offer more frequent and reliable service.**
- 24. Pursue higher order transit service along key corridors, starting with the shovel-ready east-west King Street LRT corridor from Eastgate Square to McMaster University.**
- 25. Commit to freezing public transit fares during the COVID-19 recovery.**

26. Consider creation of temporary cycle and pedestrian paths on existing roads with movable construction barriers.
27. Implement a universal sidewalk snow removal program in 2021 to ensure equal sidewalk access for all during winter months.

Continual Response

28. Consider alternative modes of payment for public transit for marginalized communities and service users of community organizations, in ways that do not differentiate them from other public transit users.
29. Implement and expand the cycling network set out in the Cycling Master Plan – including separated cycle track systems – to make cycling a viable and safe option for Hamiltonians.
30. Commit to making the investments required to fast track the electrification of our transit fleet including DARTS service vehicles.
31. Consider working with local school boards to implement a universe transit pass system for all students, similar to the programs used by McMaster and Mohawk college.
32. Commit to providing municipal funding for Hamilton's Bike Share system - an integral part of our public transportation network.
33. Increase public investment in enhanced streetscapes (complete, friendly streets) to encourage pedestrian mobility and support Hamiltonians across the entire spectrum of mobility abilities.
34. Work with other levels of government to create a fare free public transit system in Hamilton.

DESIGN CONCEPT (20 m ROW)



Design Concept (20M Right-of-Way) Source City of Hamilton

Disability Justice



Making Way

People with disabilities in Hamilton struggle with accessing employment, either because of discrimination or because the workforce, in general, is ableist and not built for everyone. More than that, we have constructed society to be a place where one's value comes from their ability to produce. This has doomed many disabled people, who cannot work, to lives of poverty, and isolation in long-term care homes and residential care facilities. It is no longer enough to talk about accessibility as compliance. Policy discussions need to be centered around disability justice—the ways in which all institutions leave people behind on the basis of disability; ramps alone do not equal equality.

Emergency response people with disabilities

People with disabilities, reliant on social assistance, face high rates of food insecurity. In addition, when the City of Hamilton shut down due to the pandemic, many immunocompromised people who already struggle with accessing food were unable to leave their homes to purchase groceries, access services and food bank services without significant risk to their health. Those concerns remain especially important as HSR service has removed social distancing restrictions on HSR buses and new more transmissible variants of the COVID-19 virus begin to be detected in Ontario. As cases continue to soar and the Ontario government considers more stringent COVID-19 emergency protocols, the City must engage with the disabled community to ensure adequate accommodation for access to essential services, food and quality of life requirements.

In order to realize a justice recovery for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 35. Develop a framework and policy around disability justice and accessibility to inform pandemic decision-making, ensuring disabled people are not an afterthought.**
- 36. Write to the Ontario Government in support of the Ontario Human Rights Commission request for a clarification on the critical care triage policy.**
- 37. Develop an emergency HSR plan in collaboration with the Amalgamated Transit Union and people with disabilities.**

Accessing temporary and permanent housing

People with disabilities have difficulty securing housing options that are both accessible and affordable. Many units that are affordable are not suitable for people with physical disabilities, causing distressing and dangerous living situations. Without a basic livable income for disabled people who cannot work, many cannot afford rent on social assistance wages, leaving them the most likely to experience evictions. This leaves many disabled people in situations that are unsafe, either indoors or outdoors. Not all of the shelter spaces are accessible for people in wheelchairs -- for example, some shelters, like Mary's Place require clients to climb stairs to access their upstairs rooms.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed problems in the city's shelter systems. The current system is not working for many people who are sleeping rough, and more work is required to either get them directly into permanent housing with appropriate supports or accommodate them in a shelter/motel that is low-barrier and high-support enough to meet their needs. Without this the cycle of high turnover from shelters to parks may continue. The system, especially with additional COVID-19 pressures, struggles to accommodate an unhoused person with visible or invisible disabilities (such as substance abuse, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, etc.). When an unhoused resident moves from a park to a shelter, and they break property as a result of a disability related episode, or they interact poorly with other unhoused residents, or do not follow up with services due to disabilities, they can be barred from support in shelters.

Lastly, substance abuse is a complex issue, and many disabled people self-medicate to cope with disability related symptoms. Our current pandemic related responses tends to not account for disabilities in these ways, and proper responses that are catered toward specific disabilities are needed. The collaborative system being run by the City of Hamilton, the shelters, and the hotels lack the resources to invest in understanding where the disruptions are coming from. Without addressing this, disabled people will continue to end up in parks and tents.

In order to realize a justice recovery for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 38. Secure accessible temporary housing options specifically for people with disabilities immediately. These options should include harm reduction services and be rooted in a disability justice framework.**
- 39. Advocate with the province for rent relief support specific for people on social assistance.**

Continual Response

- 40. Assess how many accessible, temporary indoor housing options are available to unhoused people in Hamilton who cannot use stairs and/or have other physical disabilities.**
- 41. Create and maintain a list of accessible housing units existing in Hamilton, making it easier for disabled people to move in when needed.**
- 42. Incentivize the creation of more accessible housing units to coincide with the number of disabled people in our communities.**

Addressing Violence against People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are two times more likely than anyone else to experience violence or hate crime on the basis of disability, according to reports from the Disabled Women's Network of Canada. Women with disabilities are more likely to experience physical, sexual, emotional, and financial abuse. According to Statistics Canada, 83 percent of women with disabilities are likely to be sexually assaulted at least once in their lifetime. Many people with various disabilities are also incarcerated, due to the intersections of policing and poverty.

In order to care for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

43. Work with community groups to track violence being experienced by disabled people in Hamilton.
44. Ensure that services for women with disabilities experiencing violence are accessible, and make accessible shelter spaces searchable online. p
45. Track how many disabled people are immunocompromised in Barton Jail to understand the scope and have that influence their vaccine roll out plans. This can be done through a letter from the Board of Public Health and the Chief Medical Officer.

General access in Hamilton



Self Serve Presto Card Reload Machine – Source Metrolinx

The City of Hamilton must be cautious in this digitization of services fast-tracked by the pandemic to ensure that disabled people are not left behind. This means understanding the limitations of phasing out bus tickets, and understanding that not everyone is able to access the internet when releasing information about public health and safety. The province has set a deadline for accessibility by 2025. With three years to go, the City of Hamilton must invest in local accessibility to make this a reality. For this to become a reality, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

46. Provide American Sign Language (ASL) services and captioning locally by as many services as possible under the provision of the City of Hamilton. This includes all announcements made by the City of Hamilton that are to be communicated to the public.
47. Provide the ability to load and buy PRESTO cards at every transit terminal, recreation and community centre, sports facilities and every other publicly accessible, city-owned facility processing payments from the public.
48. Provide Closed Captioning on all City of Hamilton video streams and recording
49. Work with disability organizations to confirm Web accessibility of all city Websites
50. Create an accessibility checklist that is given to future landlords explaining the history of people with disabilities in Hamilton, and how to best serve renters with disabilities locally.

Housing as a Human Right

The Ontario Human Rights Commission reports “Adequate housing is essential to one’s sense of dignity, safety, inclusion and ability to contribute to the fabric of our neighbourhoods and societies.... Without appropriate housing, it is often not possible to get and keep employment, to recover from mental illness or other disabilities, to integrate into the community, to escape physical or emotional violence or to keep custody of children.” It is essential to the preservation of the dignity and health of residents of Hamilton. The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the already untenable housing crisis in the city. Every effort must be made to increase the stock of real affordable housing in the city and to utilize creative municipal bylaws and bold policy to protect tenants from being displaced from affordable housing.



Covered

Tenant Vulnerability

Vulnerable Hamilton tenants now face both a housing crisis and a public health pandemic. Low- and moderate-income families have been most impacted by the COVID-19 crisis. Since March, the pressures on Hamilton’s market of affordable housing has increased dramatically. . While there was a temporary suspension of eviction enforcement from late March to early August, once the Landlord and Tenant Board resumed hearings, housing advocates raised the alarm on the eviction crisis created. This contrasts the United Nations declaration that “... shelter, a space to sleep in your own bed, with your own roof, a place where your person and possessions are safe is a human right.” The Hamilton experience of predatory developers and landlords, as they continue to force long term tenants from their homes, increases the already critical housing crisis. Property owners can exacerbate illegal practices to worsen neglect of properties and buildings using COVID-19 to justify failing to do repairs and maintenance.

In order to realize dignified housing for all, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 51. Prioritize healthy homes during COVID-19 and beyond, including resuming building inspections, enforcement of all property standards, and the implementation of all COVID-19 health and safety measures as recommended by Public Health.**
- 52. Urge the province to suspend eviction enforcement until the province has entered the post-pandemic recovery period and immediately bring in rent relief.**
- 53. Implement a municipal 'rent bank' where any tenant in financial need can receive non-repayable grants, so tenants can get the funds they need without falling further into debt.**
- 54. Use all of the city's regulatory powers to protect tenants from predatory renovation practices and save Hamilton's affordable housing stock.**

Continual Response

- 55. Make a deeper municipal capital budget investment in housing first placements to end homelessness.**
- 56. Pass Inclusionary Zoning bylaws on Transit Oriented Development corridors (TODs) to facilitate additional affordable housing.**
- 57. Change regulations on parking requirements to afford developers of not-for-profit homes more flexibility and cost savings.**
- 58. Continue to advocate for construction of public affordable housing from other levels of government (provincial and federal), with marked increases in targeted funding to Indigenous, 2SLGBTQIA+ and housing for women.**
- 59. Look to examples from other municipalities and pass a landlord licensing by-law with strong enforcement penalties.**
- 60. Take a proactive approach when it comes to informing tenants of their rights and provide resources for tenant groups to respond to Above Guideline Increases and threats of displacement.**
- 61. Commit to ensuring all persons eligible to vote have access to a voter registration card and are enumerated on municipal voting roles.**

Protecting Vulnerable Hamiltonians from Extreme Heat

The climate is changing. Hamilton has experienced record-setting high temperatures and increasing heat advisories. People living in poverty or experiencing social exclusion are hit hardest and suffer most from extreme temperatures. Seniors, persons with disabilities, and particularly those without adequate housing or living rough on the streets will be most at risk. Tenants living in multi-residential apartment buildings and in rooming houses in Hamilton are at particular risk of the effects of extreme heat.

Many high-rise apartment buildings are heat traps: concrete multi-story complexes heat up during the day and often take hours to cool down – offering little relief for those without air conditioning. Because of age and disrepair, rooming houses and residential care homes, often considered the most modest form of rental accommodation, are also particularly vulnerable. While a landlord is responsible for providing heat to a residential dwelling at a minimum of 21 C between Sept. 15 and June 1 of each year, there's no obligation to keep temperatures below a certain threshold in summer.

To address this major issue the city of Hamilton should:

Urgent COVID Response

- 62. Coordinate with landlords, tenants and community organizations to develop a vital services bylaw for cooling of rental units during summer months and advocate with the provincial government for changes to provincial legislation to require landlords to install adequate cooling systems in residential units.**

Long-Term Care Homes

There are a number of long-term care homes in Hamilton that have had COVID-19 outbreaks, which is where many seniors are sent to live when they experience the intersection of disability through aging. Many people in long term care homes would live at home with families if medical supports that are required were affordable.

In order to protect residents at Long Term Care Homes, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 63. Meet with all long-term care homes in Hamilton to receive an update on the impacts of COVID-19 on people with disabilities in these homes.**

- 64. Advocate to the province for more oversight of Long-Term Care homes given outbreaks across the country.**
- 65. Develop a COVID-19 vaccine plan that prioritizes access for people with disabilities in long-term care Homes.**

Continual Response

- 66. The City of Hamilton should invest in the development of multigenerational, accessible home options for seniors.**

Residential Care Facilities



Emerald Lodge - Image Source Google Maps

Residential care facilities (RCFs) are home to more than 900 of Hamilton's most vulnerable adults. Unlike long-term care facilities or retirement homes, which typically house seniors and are under provincial jurisdiction, RCFs are overseen by the City. RCFs provide shelter and meals for younger adults in what is supposed to be a safe environment. They represent a critical form, and often the only housing available in Hamilton for people with mental health challenges, physical and developmental disabilities.

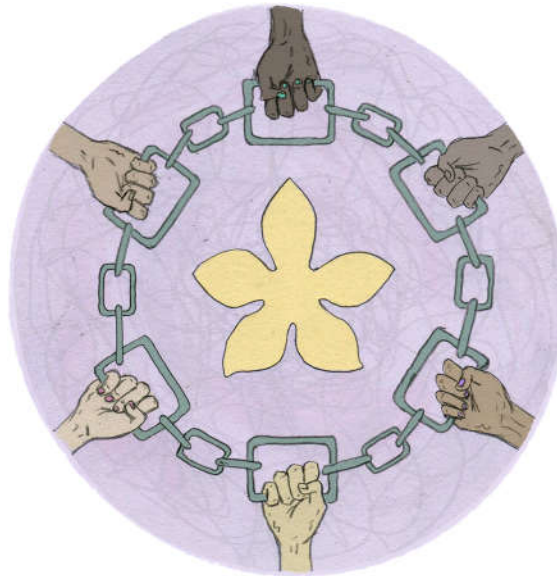
The people who live in these homes are tenants under Ontario law. Unfortunately, standards at the homes vary considerably as they are privately run, for-profit entities. The deplorable situation at Emerald Lodge in 2020 in which tenants were mistreated, and in some cases abused, and then evacuated, must never be repeated. The City of Hamilton must commit appropriate funding in Budget 2021/22 to a proactive policy to protect RCF tenants, keep them safe and healthy in their homes.

Urgent COVID Response

- 67. Ensure RCF tenants, who live in vulnerable congregate living settings are a high-priority for distribution of COVID-19 vaccines - through mobile outreach at their homes.**
- 68. Work with the Residential Care Facility Tenants Coalition on an RCF tenant engagement project to reduce social isolation and enhance community participation and active living for RCF tenants.**

Continual Response

- 69. Permanently fund the RCF Liaison pilot project and adequately staff the office to ensure proactive outreach to RCF tenants, community advocates and families. can commence**



The Chain

Given the majority of Hamilton's population are settlers to Turtle Island, particularly the traditional lands of the **Huron-Wendat**, the **Anishnabeg**, the **Chippewa**, the **Haudenosaunee**, and most recently the **Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation**, it is important to understand how the creation of this country's policies and laws are informed by racist views, attitudes, and actions. Hamilton is not immune to racial injustice. In fact there was a period where members of the KKK openly marched on James Street. Historical racist views, attitudes, and actions have seeped into all aspects of society including but not limited to Policing, Health-Care, Education, Justice System, and all levels of Government.

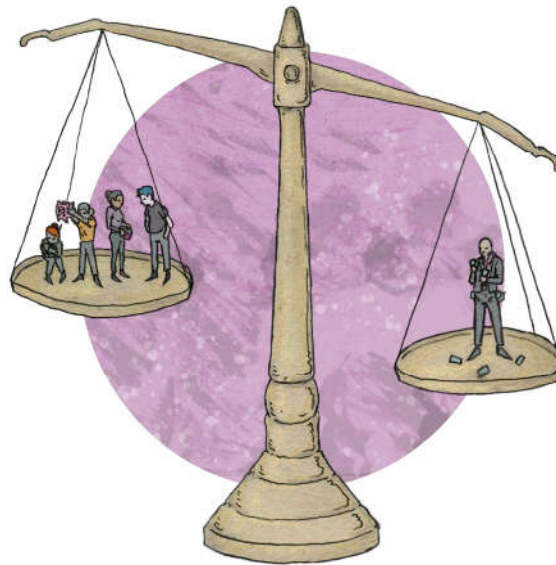
According to Stats Canada, prior to the pandemic, in 2019 Hamilton had the highest number of hate crimes per capita in Canada. Members of the Black community, various religious communities (particularly Jewish and Muslim communities), and members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community were and continue to be on the receiving end of hate in Hamilton. The global pandemic has exacerbated the many barriers and inequities Black, Indigenous and People of Color communities face in Hamilton. This was evident in the Hamilton Public Health COVID-19 report that suggested that racialized populations, health care workers, and people living with low-income are disproportionately affected by COVID-19.

In order to eliminate systemic racial barriers, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

70. Commit a portion of the city's operational and capital budget to the Urban Indigenous Strategy.
71. Provide funding to the Sisters In Spirit Committee of Hamilton and commit to the 231 Calls for Justice from the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Inquiry Final Report.
72. Develop a framework with local police services, community partners, education institutions, and residents to dismantle barriers for Indigenous women and girls to feel safe and equality within the city.
73. Commit to funding for specific under-resourced racialized communities to meet their own social, educational, health, cultural, and civic needs and development.
74. The City of Hamilton should restructure the membership of the Board of Public Health to include members of the public from the following equity seeking groups; women, people with (in)visible disabilities, Indigenous peoples, low-income communities, Black and Racialized communities.
75. The City of Hamilton needs to commit to an Anti-Oppression/Anti-Racism Fund that supports anti-racism work done by community organizations.

Investing in decent jobs, decent wages, & our local economy



The Weight of Change

Social Procurement

COVID-19's economic effects have been devastating, especially for small businesses in the service sector, restaurants, small retail stores and other businesses. As one of the largest employers, with almost 9000 employed, an annual budget of almost \$1 billion, and \$16 billion worth of hard infrastructure assets, the City of Hamilton is in a strong position to take a lead on a Just Recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Social procurement is the achievement of strategic social, economic and workforce development goals using an organization's process of purchasing goods and services. Through its procurement and purchasing structure, the city is in a position to effect broad social, economic and workforce development changes.

In order to attain a Just Recovery in social procurement, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 76. Inspect every contractor and supplier of the city to guarantee their COVID-19 compliance.**
- 77. Reinforce masking and social distancing requirements within city staff and subcontractors.**
- 78. Pass a motion to the Police Service Board to make mask compliance of provincial guidelines part of the operational process.**

Continual Response

- 79. Implement a social procurement policy based on the experiences of other Ontario and Canadian municipalities. Locally, Toronto has had social procurement policy in place since 2014.**
- 80. Promote Workforce Development opportunities for Black, Indigenous, racialized communities, people with disabilities and 2SLGTBQQIA+ communities.**
- 81. Promote Supply Chain Diversity in its vendor partners.**
- 82. Implement a buy local policy where possible in procurement.**
- 83. Apply a climate lens to all potential RPQ and RPFs.**

Community Benefits Agreements

Community Benefit Agreements (CBAs) can be used by the city of Hamilton to create commitments between developers, the city and coalitions of community organizations. These agreements allow for innovative and creative ways to address a broad range of community needs with safeguards to ensure that affected residents share in the benefits of major developments. CBAs have been used successfully across North America to make real change in the environmental and economic lives of residents. COVID-19 presents an opportunity for CBAs to be used to redress many of the challenges facing the city in a post pandemic recovery.

In order for residents of Hamilton to benefit from major developments, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 84. Pass the terms of reference for the Community Benefits Protocol Advisory Committee - HSC19066 removing it from the Outstanding Business List Item, letting the committee meet with city staff to discuss how CBAs might be used in COVID-19 recovery**
- 85. Insist on living wages clauses being negotiated on large scale projects.**
- 86. Institute mandatory sick benefits on any RFP/RFQ during and post COVID-19.**

Continual Response

- 87. Implement a Community Benefits Framework based on the experiences of other cities in North America to provide employment training and placement in union trades positions in large scale infrastructure projects.**
- 88. Wherever possible, integrate green building and green infrastructure requirements into CBAs to create green jobs and contribute to long term resilience of the urban built form.**
- 89. Use CBAs to help residents secure more affordable and purpose-built rental units from developers.**
- 90. Partner with education institutions and local employment agencies to afford more access to professional, administrative and technical jobs for COVID-19 affected groups.**
- 91. Partner with developers to include public art a component of all developments. Even small investments in art can transform communities and provide employment.**
- 92. Use Community Benefits to increase resident engagement and participation in the growth and changing city reconnecting us all to our city in a post COVID-19 Just Recovery.**
- 93. Continue to encourage through CBAs local developers to buy local, and exercise social procurement to give and extra support for women and marginalized lead businesses through improved economic development opportunities.**

Deep Energy Retrofits & Green Jobs

Buildings are a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions in Hamilton. There is an urgent need to ensure new builds are carbon neutral and to invest dollars to ensure existing homes, public buildings, and IC&I sector buildings undergo deep energy retrofits to ensure that these structures are made climate-resilient for the future. Both of these transitions open the door to huge local opportunities for green economic growth and green jobs creation. Deep energy retrofits also make all forms of housing more affordable and more comfortable in both extreme heat and extreme cold, helping Hamilton's most vulnerable community members to cope with a changing climate.

In order to center climate justice into a Just Recovery, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 94. Proceed with plans to create a Home Energy Retrofit Opportunity or 'HERO' program immediately, offering low-interest loans to homeowners to enable greenhouse gas emission reductions via energy retrofits of existing housing stock.**

- 95. Quickly complete the Community Energy Plan and ensure that the municipal financial commitments are made to realize full implementation of the plan.**

Continual Response

- 96. Lead the way with efforts to undertake deep energy retrofits of existing non-residential building stock in the city by retrofitting its own building stock and mandating and/or supporting others to do the same.**
- 97. Lead efforts to ensure all new building stock - including any new city buildings - is carbon neutral.**
- 98. Support relevant trades and trainers of the trades to provide training for local tradespeople in order to ensure that the skilled workforce exists to make deep energy retrofits in both the residential, public, and IC&I sector.**

Paid Sick Days

The official recommendation from Medical Officers of Health is “If you are sick, stay home.” Many workers in Hamilton are stuck having no choice but to go to work sick, risking their health and that of co-workers. Ontario’s current employment laws do not protect workers when they fall ill. Many workers cannot afford even a single day without pay, while others face punishment and termination for not working when ill. The City of Hamilton cannot mandate paid sick days; it can, however, lead by example, and work with other anchor institutions to set a bar for employment that will sustain those in a post COVID-19 world.

In order to keep residents safe and financially secure, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 99. Provide paid sick days to all employees, provide a leadership role to encourage through Hamilton Anchor Institute Leadership (HAIL) other large employers to provide paid sick days.**

Continual Response

- 100. Include requirements for paid sick days in all RFP/RPQ procurement and from subcontractors.**

Living Wage Policy

Covid-19 demonstrated -without a doubt- how critical front-line workers are for our health and the economy. Unfortunately, in Hamilton, too many workers struggle with low wages, precarious hours and no benefits.

Living Wage are calculated on what it costs for workers to meet monthly costs and participate in the community.

In its 2020 budget, city council took the important step of bringing many additional municipal workers up to the local living wage rate of \$16.45/hr. This commitment to living wage sends an important signal to municipalities across the province as well as to local employers and organizations that Hamilton cares about its employees and their wellbeing.

The City of Hamilton should continue this important work by:

Urgent COVID Response

- 101. Signing the Ontario Living Wage Network declaration certifying that the City of Hamilton is a Living Wage organization and develop a plan to lift remaining City of Hamilton employees to the Hamilton Living Wage rate.**
- 102. Develop a municipal procurement policy that incorporates living wages and incentivizes contractors doing business with the City to pay their employees a living wage.**
- 103. Through Hamilton Anchor Institute Leadership (HAIL), work with other large employers in Hamilton to encourage living wages are paid at all of Hamilton's large institutions.**
- 104.**

Continual Response

- 105. Through the Economic Development Department, implement a new Living Wage policy that actively encourages new employers relocating to Hamilton to pay their employees at least Hamilton's living wage rate.**

Investing in the Arts

The arts are one of the sectors hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. Shutdowns and restrictions of gatherings have taken a heavy toll on the performing arts, while lower disposable income has caused spending on the arts to wane. The closure of music and theatre venues and the cancellation of many events and festivals has further contributed to the precariousness of those working in the arts.

The city should lead a fulsome discussion around support for the arts with those in the community to ensure that this important aspect of COVID-19 is addressed. The organizations involved have limited knowledge in the arts fields, but felt this important aspect of COVID-19 recovery must be discussed. Commissioning public art could become a core focus of our efforts in Hamilton in building a Just Recovery, as it has the ability to spur not only artistic production and community engagement but also skilled trades and fabrication employment. The points below are recommendations for a starting point for the city to discuss this very important aspect of a Just Recovery. In order to support the art and creative sector, the City of Hamilton should:

Urgent COVID Response

- 106. Begin extensive engagement with members of the Arts community and Arts organizations to prioritize their needs and requirements.**
- 107. Re-establish a Cultural Plan Roundtable with clear objectives and resources.**
- 108. Work with artists and arts organizations to steam-line, and make the SEAT process barrier-free. Create a fund to ensure all local events have free access to GAMEDAY insurance.**
- 109. Encourage the use of visual arts and performance arts in community spaces and public parks.**
- 110. Reinvest in expanding opportunities for concerts, performing arts, music and festivals.**
- 111. Choose to increase spending on the arts with projects prioritizing, people of colour, women, Indigenous communities, and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities.**
- 112. Provide Resources to the Hamilton Music Strategy and the Hamilton Music Advisory Team.**

Continual Response

- 113. The creation of a separate Cultural Enrichment Fund to establish a dedicated funding stream for BIPOC, 2SLGBTQIA+, and other equity-seeking artists and cultural producers.**
- 114. The city should fully fund the Cultural Enrichment Fund so it grows each year to meet industry growth and cost of living increases in Hamilton.**
- 115. Create a designated fund either CEF, the Hamilton Future Fund or a combination of Ward Funding to support capital investments in cultural spaces from a wide range of cultural producing partners.**

Focusing on Inclusive City Building



Community Tools

Addressing Food Insecurity

No conversation on inclusive city building can begin without acknowledging the massive issues of food insecurity that many residents of the city of Hamilton faced before the pandemic. This insecurity has only been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Food Prices are increasing dramatically. The challenges mentioned throughout this paper, have caused the effects of food insecurity to be felt across the city. Food Banks struggling before the crisis struggled to keep up with growing demands. Community agencies, volunteers, caremongering groups and local residents have all stepped in to do what they can to address this crisis. As a worldwide issue it is acknowledged there is no easy fix. However additional support must be provided to offset this massive challenge, we ask the City of Hamilton to:

Urgent COVID Response

- 116. Make available, working with local community garden groups, the Hamilton Victory Gardens, organizations and residents as much city public land as possible for urban farming.**
- 117. Make budgetary funds available for the construction of additional community garden spaces**
- 118. Waive all insurance, water, and associated fees for all Community Gardens.**
- 119. Continue to increase emergency funding to Hamilton Foodshare, and other organizations providing frontline food assistance.**
- 120. Expand programs, working with community organizations, and food banks to deliver directly to disabled people and seniors for free.**
- 121. As the Pandemic is a Public Health crisis, grant the Special Diet Allowance to all Hamilton OW and ODSP recipients.**

High Speed Internet Access for All

COVID-19 demonstrated a significant internet communications gap exists in Hamilton. The requirements for reliable and steady access to the internet has proven to be a must for many working remotely, connecting with friends, family and accessing critical services during the pandemic. Too many in the city of Hamilton do not have access to this required connection. The Regional and Rural Broadband (R2B2) Project will reveal exactly how many do not have high-speed internet available. Those living in rural areas where service restrictions prevent decent connection, those who face economic challenges to affording access, those sleeping rough, all cannot access this critical service.

Currently, broadband providers in other cities -including Toronto- have offered low-cost access to internet for social housing residents (\$10 per month). The federal government created the Connecting Families Initiative for eligible households with incomes under \$30,000 to access low-cost internet and yet, many still do not have access.

Solving this issue cannot be done by the City of Hamilton alone. The City has also made great accommodations in extending Wi-Fi access on buses, around libraries and city property. The free internet services in Gage Park are a model for equitable access in the city.

To help Hamilton residents access this critical service we recommend the City of Hamilton:

Urgent COVID Response

- 122.** Expand free Wi-Fi services in public parks and spaces across the city.
- 123.** Advertise with visible signage areas where residents might connect to City Wi-Fi services
- 124.** We recommend the City of Hamilton co-ordinate a targeted outreach to eligible households in Hamilton to sign up for the Connecting Families Initiative.
- 125.** We recommend the City of Hamilton work with community organizations and negotiate with local broadband providers to provide \$10 per month basic internet for all low-income households in Hamilton so we can all keep connected during these difficult times.

Continual Response

- 126.** Develop a City-Wide strategy for free Wi-Fi in the most dense areas of the city.
- 127.** Develop and implement a costing plan for high-speed rural access, in cooperation with the private sector and other levels of government.

Accessible Outdoor Spaces

Changing lockdown conditions through the first and second wave of the pandemic have closed most traditional gathering and congregating spaces throughout the city. Recreation centres, gyms, athletic arenas, religious institutions, and other gathering spots have all faced challenges and closures. The city's parks and trails have become an invaluable place for exercise, escape and play for many in the city. These public assets have provided invaluable spaces for residents of multi-dwelling structures who may not have access to a backyard or outdoor space. We hope the city will continue its support and expansion of our public outdoor spaces and we ask the City of Hamilton to consider:

Urgent COVID Response

- 128.** Advanced and ongoing snow removal from all public parks, paths, trails and walkways, including the sidewalks around them. Making keeping these spaces clear and accessible top priority.
- 129.** Find areas of the city which could be temporarily transformed into public spaces, including city-owned parking lots, side streets, alleyways.
- 130.** Make Hamilton Conservation Authority spaces free to Hamilton residents.
- 131.** Expand transit service to outdoor spaces.
- 132.** When it's safe to do so, encourage small park performances, educational programming, music concerts etc.
- 133.** Continue excellent work on outdoor restaurants and patios for business support, but with more awareness of the effect these business accommodations might have on the mobility needs of residents.
- 134.** Consider laxing permits and business requirements for outdoor sales, bazaars, markets especially for small craft makers, artists, etc.

Green Development/ Building Standard:

Green Development Standards (GDSs) set out municipal requirements and incentives designed to ensure that community development/redevelopment happens in a climate and environmentally friendly manner. Municipal GDSs typically include both mandatory and incentivized standards. They can cover a wide range of elements including: amenities and infrastructure to support active transportation and public transportation; building energy efficiency requirements; public and private property landscaping/greening requirements such as street tree plantings, landscaping with native pollinator plants; incentivizing green roof installations; and creating bioswales to manage stormwater. Many Ontario municipalities have developed or are developing GDSs, but Hamilton has yet to do so.

The elements of a GDS bring important benefits, to realise those benefits, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 135. Create a Green Development Standard that sets out both mandatory and incentivized green development requirements.**

Continual Response

- 136. Continue to add both mandatory and incentivized requirements to a Hamilton Green Development Standard over time.**

Publicly Accessible (Gender-neutral) Washrooms

In the late 19th and early 20th century large cities across the world undertook large scale construction of publicly accessible washrooms. One such washroom, the Gore Park Downtown Washrooms was voted in 1981, ...” Canada’s best public washrooms” by Today Magazine. A few years later they were shuttered, as were many across the city. This removed from generations of residents the ability to “go without paying.” The limited supply of publicly accessible washrooms do not provide 24-hour access. Even those who can afford to pay to use toilet facilities encounter challenges of accessibility, lack of changing stations, and gendered washrooms.

To build a city where any and everyone has access to gender-neutral washrooms, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

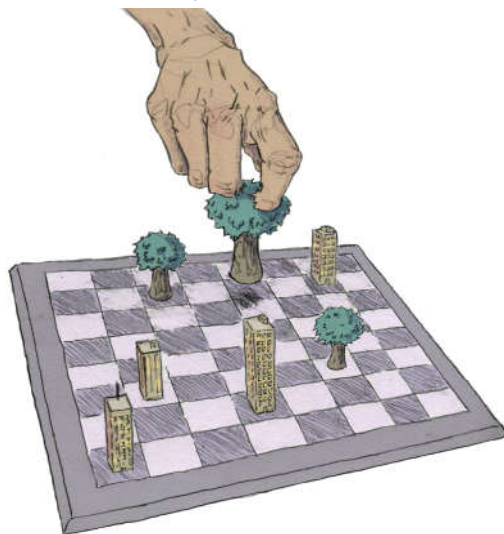
- 137. Advertise all city-owned restrooms across the city, including posting signage and providing maps.**

Continual Response

- 138. The City of Hamilton should construct and maintain and staff accessible public washrooms.**
- 139. The City of Hamilton should encourage private developers of large-scale projects to create accessible, gender-neutral publicly available free washrooms.**



Entrance to Gore Park Washrooms – Source Hamilton Spectator



A Greener Gambit

Greening the City

Trees and plants contribute significantly to fighting the climate crisis by absorbing CO₂ and emitting oxygen. Trees also combat the urban heat island effect, providing cooling relief from extreme summer heat – including physical shading from exposure to UV rays. Trees and plants help to filter the air, reducing levels of fine, respirable particulate in a neighbourhood, as well as ‘slowing the flow’ of stormwater, helping to mitigate flooding impacts from extreme storm events. Finally, trees provide important habitat for native species of mammals and insects, and they provide healing benefits to humans too. All of this points to the essential need for green infrastructure in the city - whether it be in urban parks and natural areas or along our commercial and residential streets.

To incorporate climate justice into a Just Recovery, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

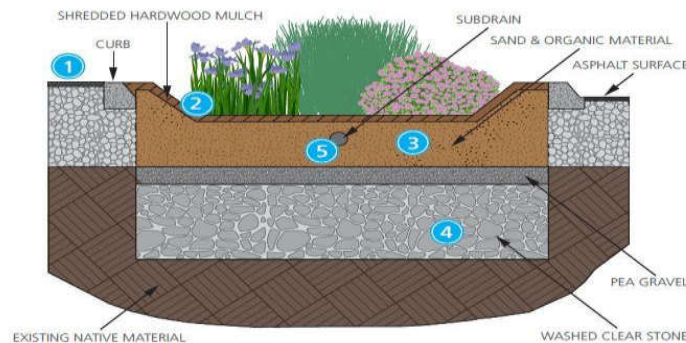
- 140. Complete and begin implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy. This strategy must include an ambitious commitment to increasing Hamilton’s ‘Urban Forest Canopy Cover’ with a goal of 45% canopy cover equitably distributed across the municipality’s urban area, and the development and subsequent implementation of a Private Tree By-Law to ensure Hamilton’s urban forest is protected into the future.**
- 141. Commit to ensuring that all Hamiltonians have ready access to quality greenspace, regardless of where they live in the city.**
- 142. Continue to help with the community effort to create and implement a Biodiversity Strategy. The development and implementation of such a strategy can help to reinforce the objectives proposed above regarding the urban forest and access to quality park space.**



Image Courtesy of the City of Hamilton’s Street Tree Planting Program

Fair Fees for Stormwater & Green Infrastructure

A 'stormwater fee' is an essential tool for generating the necessary revenue to develop climate resilient stormwater infrastructure – including green infrastructure like native trees, green roofs, and planted with native vegetation. The fees must be fair in the sense that the greatest contributors to the problem should pay the most. A stormwater fee program should include incentives so that property owners – whether IC&I or private residential – are encouraged to take positive actions for stormwater management on their properties and be rewarded for these actions with a reduction in their stormwater fee. Better stormwater management will help to mitigate flooding and other problem impacts that stormwater flows cause - including reducing the impacts of combined sewer overflows that can contribute to contamination of local water bodies. Right now, the city does not have a dedicated fee for stormwater management despite the fact that stormwater flows are a major issue that is inflicting growing and serious impacts on the city's built and natural environment.



To incorporate climates justice into a Just Recovery, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID response

- 143. Develop and implement a stormwater fee program that includes incentives for stormwater mitigation by private property owners.**

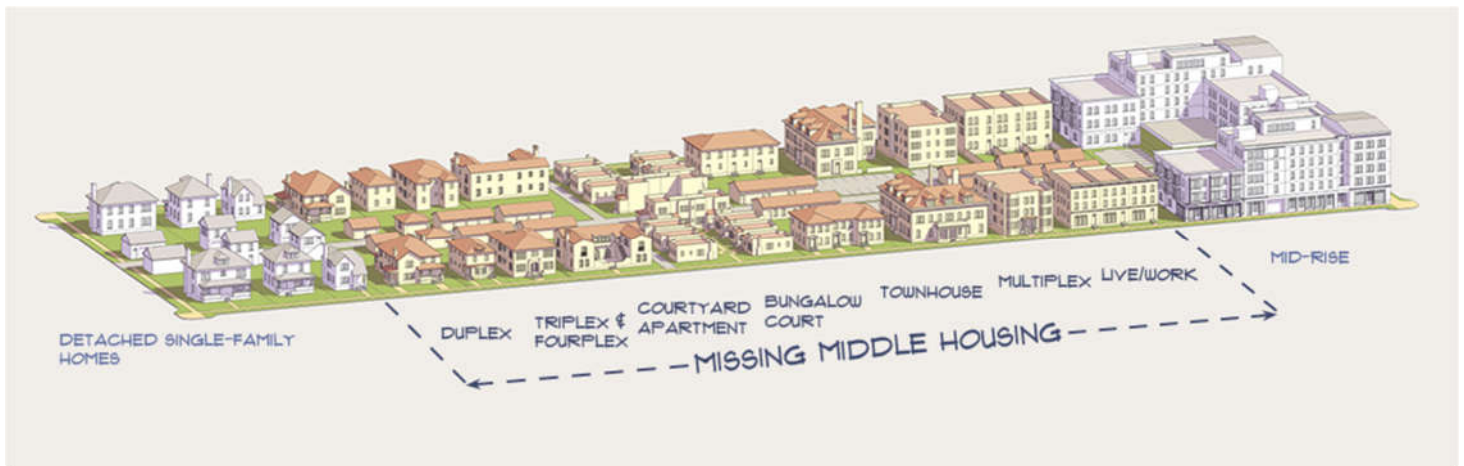
Growing a Climate Resilient, Inclusive Urban Hamilton

Urban Hamilton is growing and this growth needs to be accommodated in a manner that is sustainable, climate-resilient and, above all, inclusive. Municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe must abide by policy requirements set out in the provincial plan “A Place to Grow – Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.” That plan sets out provincial population and jobs growth projections specific to Hamilton to the year 2051 and the city must plan to accommodate that growth. The result, given such a long provincial planning horizon, is increased pressure on the municipality to expand urban Hamilton into rural areas. Urban sprawl comes with huge social and climate costs: it gobbles up prime agricultural land and rural natural areas, impacting food security and making the city less resilient to extreme weather events by removing natural areas that help to moderate these impacts; it creates more car dependent neighbourhoods in a city that has not yet provided solid transit services to existing neighbourhoods within the urban boundary; and outward expansion simply does not pay for itself – it is subsidized by other Hamilton taxpayers. Finally, urban sprawl does not result, as the current provincial government likes to suggest, in an increase in affordable housing options. Rather, committing to make more efficient use of land within the urban boundary to accommodate future growth opens the door to opportunities to build more complete neighbourhoods, including increasing the availability of social/geared to income/affordable rental options for Hamiltonians.

To grow a climate resilient and inclusive Hamilton, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

144. Commit to a firm urban boundary in order to build a sustainable, climate resilient, inclusive urban Hamilton.
145. Prioritize greyfield development opportunities within the urban boundary and along major arterial roads—with top priority placed on greyfield properties located along proposed higher order transit lines (e.g. Eastgate Square and surrounding area).
146. Commit to piloting programs to incentivize homeowners who establish Secondary Dwelling Units to offer these units at below market rents as a way to increase the availability of below market rental units across the municipality.
147. Continue to retrofit existing and build new social housing that meets low/no carbon standards – including passive house – to ensure that public housing is climate resilient and offers comfortable accommodation to tenants in extreme heat and cold.
148. Promote gentle density/missing middle development in neighbourhoods across urban Hamilton. This development might take the form of laneway housing or other ‘second dwelling units’ on residential properties across the city. It might also involve infill development that includes 3,4,5 storey apartments with commercial/retail at street level along major arterial roads like Upper James. Establishing missing middle housing helps to make better and more frequent transit service through these neighbourhoods viable. It also supports the business case for more neighbourhood amenities like grocery stores and banks.
149. Commit to ensuring that social housing/ geared to income/ affordable housing is provided along higher order transit lines – within walking distance of higher order transit stations.



Missing Middle Housing types, image via Opticos Design

Supporting 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities



A Roof for Everyone

Members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community face a myriad of challenges, highlighted in a recent report by McMaster University, The AIDS Network and Hamilton community researchers who identify as Two-Spirit and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer entitled “Mapping the Void.” The report concluded that members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community do not have adequate access to health services, housing, peer-to-peer support, social services, and social spaces. In the absence of these services, members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities are forced to leave the city in order to meet their needs. The absence of these services creates a City where not all members of society are able to live with dignity.

The second challenge for members of the 2SLGBTQQIA + community is targeted hate, discrimination, racism and social exclusion. Hamilton has a history of discriminating against members of the 2SLGBTQQIA+ community former Mayor Bob Morrow refused to proclaim Hamilton’s first Gay Pride Day in 1991. More recently alt-right protesters, anti-2SLGBTQQIA protesters, Yellow-vesters and religious extremists disrupted Pride celebrations and attacked residents of Hamilton attending Pride. An independent review by Scott Bergman of the events that transpired noted that “the Hamilton Police Service’s inadequate preparation for Pride 2019 resulted in a failure to protect the public and Pride attendees during the event.” The review went on to list 38 recommendations for the Hamilton Police Service Board and Hamilton Police Services.

COVID-19 is seeing xenophobia, the predominance of hate crimes and hate related groups organizing on the rise. The need for a safe gathering space for 2SLGBTQIA+ community members -- similar to Toronto's Rexdale community hub, or the Church Street 519 community centre -- cannot be understated. For members of the 2SLGBTQQIA + community to realize a safe, caring, and just community, the City of Hamilton must:

Urgent COVID Response

- 150. Prioritize the procurement or creation of an accessible Community Hub for diverse communities in the city near major transit routes.**
- 151. Provide funding for or increase access to mental health services that specifically reach 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth, seniors and adults with disabilities.**
- 152. Provide hotel rooms for unsheltered women and victims of domestic violence, sexual abuse and sex trafficking, 2SLGBTQQIA+ youth and others who are not able to access safe spaces when shelters are full.**
- 153. Fund and increase financial support for 2SLGBTQIA+ specific community programs and organizations reducing isolation and providing peer support and connection.**

Conclusion

The pre-COVID-19 Hamilton was a society in which residents thrived while many others lived in abject poverty, experienced social exclusion and were fearful for their safety. That was the “Normal”. The recommendations in this policy paper are a starting point for a broader conversation about a Just Recovery in Hamilton as we look forward to a post COVID-19 future.

Although shaped by the perspectives of the organizations involved in the Just Recovery Hamilton coalition, it is limited in scope and perspective to the not-for-profit organizations involved. We know many voices, thoughts and needs have not been fully expressed in this document. We hope it will serve as a starting point for the public, city staff and council to consider ways in which the city can be transformed for the better by the pandemic experience. We will continue those conversations, hoping to engage with as many other organizations and residents across the city as possible. A Just Recovery for Hamilton cannot be solved by a few organizations alone. It will require dauntless continued collaboration, conversation and connection.

Many of the specific recommendations are possible with simple policy changes. Some require deeper financial investment. Others will require participation from higher levels of government. Others still need broader partnerships and involvement from the private sector. We recognize the constraints on municipal funding, especially with the requirements for ongoing emergency response to the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic will continue to challenge the city for the foreseeable future.

Discussions about COVID-19 recovery will extend well past the 2021 budget. In order to move the city forward, bold ideas and solutions will be required. . The city must be courageous in its consideration of expanding the investment it makes into its residents of this city, particularly its most vulnerable.

Monetary considerations alone cannot dictate how the city responds to these extraordinary times. Throughout its history, Hamilton has tackled other major crises, from the previous pandemic in 1918/19, to the Great Depression and the struggle against fascism during the Second World War. From each of those major incidents the city, through the resilience of its residents, to bold leadership from its governments, and investment in city building, the city became better, stronger, and more resilient. The challenge in responding to this crisis will be making sure that the growth and investment is equitable, sustainable, and includes voices not often considered as stakeholders.

Hamilton should not return to the status quo; the city does not need a “New Normal”. In order to truly recover from the pandemic, it needs to build on its strengths, firmly acknowledge deeply rooted systemic issues, and look to be audacious in its exploration of a Just Recovery, both in the coming months and well into the future. We cannot meet the deep inequality and hidden challenges the current pandemic has exposed with fear and austerity.

We can, and must, build back better!

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