

Advancing Council’s Strategic Priorities

In alignment with the 2016-2025 Strategic Plan, Term of Council Priorities were confirmed in January 2020. They include a focus on climate change, multi-modal transportation, affordable housing and homelessness, equity, diversity and inclusion, integrated growth and development, maintaining trust and confidence in government, fiscal health and financial management and support for a healthy and respectful workplace. These priorities guide the collective work of staff and influence department goals and priority setting.

A. Climate Change

City Council declared a climate change emergency in March 2019, at that time, joining 435 municipalities world-wide. Since then, the total number of municipalities has reached more than 800 cities around the world, as well as, the Government of Canada, all acknowledging the scale of the climate crisis and the need for accelerated action.

The City of Hamilton understands declaring a climate emergency is just the beginning. City Council, through its climate emergency declaration, directed staff to form a multi-departmental Corporate Climate Change Task Force (CCCTF). Through the CCCTF, a centralized approach has been created to recommend actions and initiatives that the City is required to take in order to reach the goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero before 2050.

A key piece of work is the Community Energy and Emissions Plan which is a long-term plan to meet Hamilton’s future energy needs while improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and fostering local sustainable and community-supported energy solutions. A draft of the Community Energy and Emissions Plan is anticipated to be brought to the General Issues Committee in September 2021.

Council has previously approved the following set of goals in order to achieve the overarching target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to net zero before 2050.

- GOAL 1:** To increase the number of new and existing high-performance state-of-the-art buildings that improve energy efficiency and adapt to a changing climate.
- GOAL 2:** To change the modal split and investigate strategies so that more trips are taken by active and sustainable transportation than single use occupancy vehicles.
- GOAL 3:** To accelerate the uptake of modes of transportation that are low and / or zero emissions.
- GOAL 4:** To ensure a climate change lens is applied to all planning initiatives to encourage the use of best climate mitigation and adaptation practices.

- GOAL 5:** To procure goods, services and construction from vendors who conduct their business in a sustainable and ethical manner that considers equity, diversity and inclusion that contributes to the greater good of the community.

- GOAL 6:** To increase our carbon sinks and local food production through the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including local farmland.

- GOAL 7:** To improve Hamilton’s climate resiliency by decreasing our vulnerability to extreme weather, minimizing future damages, take advantage of opportunities, and better recover from future damages.

- GOAL 8:** To ensure all our work promotes equity, diversity, health and inclusion and improves collaboration and consultation with all marginalized groups, including local Indigenous Peoples.

- GOAL 9:** To increase the knowledge and empower City staff and the Hamilton community including business, Non-Government Organizations and individual citizens while advocating to higher levels of government to take action on climate change.

To support the established climate change action goals, Council approved the creation of a Climate Change Reserve through Report FCS19062 and initial funding of \$1.5M in the disposition of the 2020 tax operating budget surplus through Report FCS20069(b). Staff is currently developing a policy that outlines the criteria on use of funds in the reserve and will report back to Council once a framework has been developed. However, to advance the climate change action goals established by the City of Hamilton, consideration of a sustainable funding source for the reserve must be given in future budget years which will put upward pressure on the multi-year budget outlook.

City Council also directed Transit staff to cease the purchase of diesel vehicles during the 2021 budget deliberations in line with the Green Fleet Strategy and Zero Emissions Vehicle Infrastructure Program. Staff will be coming forward with information and recommendations in support of these initiatives in 2021 and how they will impact the City’s multi-year budget in terms of increased capital costs for electric vehicles and supporting infrastructure, as well as, estimates in decreased fuel consumption.

B. Multi-Modal Transportation

In August 2018, Hamilton City Council unanimously approved the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) and the Cycling Master Plan Update (CMP) and, in accordance with those initiatives, the City is committed to providing transportation options that meet legislated standards for both personal travel and good movement in an accessible, convenient, efficient and affordable manner. Along with priority safety measures to support the principles of the Vision Zero Strategy, this term of Council aims to achieve the goal of a 48% non-single occupant vehicle modal split by 2031 with a target of 15% for walk / cycle, 12% for transit and 21% for auto passenger and shared modes.

In support of this goal, years six through 10 of the Ten-Year Local Transit Strategy have been incorporated into the multi-year budget and capital forecast in 2022 through 2026, which includes approximately \$16.2 M in net levy increases over the next five years and additional capital expenditures of \$57.3 M.

To finance the infrastructure required to complete the Local Transit Strategy, the City relies heavily on the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). In order to accommodate the debt charges associated with this financing strategy, Council approved through Report PW19083 / FCS018048(a), additional levy increases of 0.21% in 2020, 0.18% in 2021, 0.09% in 2022 and 0.01% in both years 2023 and 2024.

The Capital Financing Plan incorporates an annual levy increase of 0.5% with the majority of this investment dedicated to roads, bridges, traffic infrastructure, bike lanes and sidewalks. This funding supports the multi-modal goals of the City, as well as, infrastructure improvements required for the Vision Zero Strategy.

The federal and provincial governments announced matching commitments of \$1.7 B each (\$3.4 B total) to advance the Hamilton Light Rail Transit (LRT) project in May 2021. For the purpose of fiscal planning, staff will continue to monitor this project to ensure that any future commitments are properly reflected in financial forecasts.

C. Affordable Housing and Homelessness

On December 13, 2013, Hamilton City Council approved the City’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), which was revised through the endorsement of the five-year review reported to Council in August of 2020 through Report CS11017(d).

The five-year review of the HHAP was a comprehensive overhaul and refocusing of the HHAP necessary due to significant changes in Hamilton’s housing system and its context. The goals of this review were to:

- Determine changes within and influencing the housing sector through an environmental scan;
- Review and report on the progress and status of the 54 strategies and 16 targets;
- Review the elements and structure of the plan: vision, core values, outcome areas;
- Update the strategies and targets;
- Streamline the plan;
- Simplify the language of the plan to be more accessible and relevant to a broader audience;
- Meet the new provincial guidelines to strengthen the plan in the areas of Indigenous housing issues, homelessness, integration of services, environmental sustainability and climate change and a role for the private sector;
- Set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Bound) targets as required by the Province; and,
- Rebrand the look and presentation of the HHAP and related documents.

An in-depth environmental scan was conducted as part of the five-year review. This included analysis of various data sets including Census data and an assessment of future housing needs. The housing needs assessment determined that Hamilton will need an additional 77,800 total housing units to accommodate local population growth and housing needs through 2041. This means, on average, Hamilton will need to add 3,125 units per year.

Hamilton will continue to need a strong mix of ownership and rental housing with a particular need for affordable rental housing targeted to low and moderate-income households. Previous projections forecasted a need of 300 affordable units per year. This has increased to 341 new affordable rental units for low-income households as Hamilton development of affordable rental housing has not kept pace with demand over the past five years.

Significant investments in the multi-year outlook and capital forecast that have been endorsed by Hamilton City Council in the effort to combat homelessness and address ongoing housing affordability include:

Poverty Reduction Investment Plan: includes \$4M annually from 2017-2021 for new affordable rental housing construction, \$2M annually from 2018-2027 for social housing repairs and \$1M annually from 2018-2027 for general indigenous poverty reduction.

- i. **National Housing Strategy:** in-partnership, the City of Hamilton and CityHousing Hamilton (CHH) have submitted a 10-year portfolio-wide application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund - Repair and Renewal Stream, as detailed in Report HSC19048. On March 11, 2021, CHH and the City received confirmation through a letter of intent from the CMHC for \$145.7 M in funding over eight years. This funding will support \$194.3 M in repair and renewal projects impacting 6,290 CHH units as detailed in Report HSC19048(a).
- ii. **Rapid Housing Initiative:** CMHC funding of \$10.8 M to support the development of permanent housing within three categories: acquisition of land and construction of modular housing; acquisition of land and existing buildings for the purpose of conversion; and, acquisition of land and rehabilitation of uninhabitable housing.
- iii. **Roxborough Housing Incentive Pilot Program:** allows developers of affordable rental or ownership housing to receive grants to offset the cost of the City’s development charges and parkland dedication fees for 10 years after the issuance of a building permit. The estimated financial impact of the program is \$2.1 M annually.
- iv. **Rent Ready Program:** one-time investment of \$1 M towards the rapid repair of out-of-service social housing units and increasing the 2021 Housing Stability Benefit budget to support tenants at risk of losing housing due to impacts of COVID-19.

- v. **Adaptation and transformation of services to support the implementation of the COVID-19 response framework:** as articulated in Report HSC20020(c), continuation of COVID-19 emergency response in alignment with the outcomes and strategies within the HHAP.

D. Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The City of Hamilton is committed to creating and nurturing a city that is welcoming and inclusive. In February 2019, Hamilton City Council unanimously passed a motion to develop an equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) framework and strategy in order to establish a lens through which future City of Hamilton policy will be measured in order to address systemic discrimination and acknowledge diversity as one of the City’s greatest strengths.

This work continues internally with the establishment of the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework Steering Committee who are working to finalize and implement the framework into City programs and service delivery models. A sub-committee of Council will also be engaged to ensure that the EDI framework incorporates appropriate components and is reflective of overall strategy. Internally, early successes, which will continue to evolve, include the City of Hamilton employment equity survey, standardized interview guide and the development and integration of EDI competencies into the City’s annual performance accountability process. Externally, an EDI lens has been applied within the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP).

In addition, the completion of six hours training on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion will be offered by a third-party vendor to enhance understanding of EDI concepts and evaluate for roll-out across all supervisors and above staff. The four key components that will be incorporated into the EDI framework for implementation include: having a workforce that is representative of the community we serve; addressing systemic barriers and identify and develop action plans to address using an EDI lens; having a workforce that is skilled in working in an inclusive and respectful manner with each other and the community we serve; and creating inclusive programs and services that meet the needs of our diverse community. It is at this stage that the EDI framework will become embedded in various City policies, programs and services. The EDI framework will be presented to Council in the fall of 2021 for approval.

A core value of the HHAP, as revised in the five-year review through Report CS11017(d), is to have a person-centred approach to housing and homelessness. This means always evaluating the supports and solutions needed to ensure everyone has a home on an individual basis and matching households to the housing and support services that best meet their needs, preferences and self-identification with various groups (Indigenous Peoples, youth, families, newcomers, etc.).

Outcome Area 5 of the HHAP is that “all people experience equity in housing and housing-related services,” which is simplified from the original HHAP. Additionally, in February 2019 Council directed staff to:

- implement an equity-diversity-and-inclusion lens framework to City policy and program development, practices, service delivery, budgeting, business planning and prioritization; and,
- develop and integrate a consistent gender and equity framework, inclusive of evaluative tools, to the City’s Housing and Homelessness Action Plan and service delivery.

The Housing Services Division is committed to continuing to strengthen the active practice of equity, diversity and inclusion principles in its work. This means recognizing and working to address disproportionate structural barriers faced by individuals and groups, ensuring equity is fundamental to all decisions and meaningfully consulting with those impacted by the Division’s work. The work of integrating equity, diversity and inclusion principles into the foundations of the Division’s daily practice will be strengthened and supported by the implementation of the forthcoming corporate-wide and housing-specific equity, diversity and inclusion frameworks. Recently, City Council approved two investments to address equity issues in the City’s homeless-serving system:

- Portable Housing Benefit Program:** additional annual funding of \$950 K in the 2021 Operating Budget for women, trans-feminine, trans-masculine and non-binary adults from Hamilton’s By-Name List as detailed in HSC20061; and
- Menstrual Products Pilot Program:** a one-time investment of \$121 K in a pilot program that seeks to provide more universal access to menstrual products for individuals experiencing low income as detailed in Report HSC20001.

Additionally, the City retained Sage Solutions to consult with residents and equity-seeking groups in support of mitigating and preventing hate in our City. The consulting team engaged with equity-seeking groups with lived experiences of discrimination, residents and other stakeholders to inform the development of the City’s Hate Prevention and Mitigation Initiative policies, procedures and practices. From this engagement, 20 draft recommendations were developed, and the community was provided with an opportunity to review and enhance them through a survey that was launched between November 2020 and January 2021. The hate prevention and mitigation strategy will be finalized in 2021 with initiatives integrated into future multi-year outlooks and capital plans to support positive change, as well as, operationalize the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre Board.

E. Integrated Growth and Development

The City of Hamilton is committed to planning for and implementing infrastructure in a manner that manages growth in a way that minimizes impact and creates opportunities for both residential and business development, while ensuring the City’s overall long-term sustainability. The below sections provide information on strategic investments that have been endorsed in the past, as well as, information on strategies and opportunities for consideration in the multi-year budget outlook and capital financing plan.

a) West Harbour Waterfront Strategic Initiatives

On May 12, 2010, City Council approved COW Report 10-014, referencing the West Harbour Recreation Waterfront Master Plan (WHRWMP), which identified public investments in parks, open-spaces and programming amenities within the West Harbour waterfront area to transform the area into an active and vibrant waterfront.

From 2012 to 2021, Council approved \$118.9 M in capital funding toward the West Harbour Re-Development Plan with \$11.9 M from the tax supported Capital Levy approved, in principle, for 2022. The individual projects and initiatives can be categorized by the following:

- i. Development-Ready Projects
- ii. Asset and Infrastructure rehabilitation
- iii. Parks and Public-Space
- iv. Marina Management Agreement Commitments

Beyond 2021, two other projects are integral to the long-term viability of the plan:

1. Re-Location of the Hamilton Police Service (HPS) Marine Unit, estimated at \$5.15 M (updated estimate) for construction in 2022. The existing HPS Marine Unit building is past the useful lifespan and is being demolished as part of the Piers 5-7 public realm project. In the interim, in 2019 the Police Marine Unit re-located into a temporary facility at Macassa Bay. As a result, a commitment to funding the permanent facility would be required.
2. New Public Parking Garage estimated at \$33.2 M. The functional planning, pre-engineering and design work in 2023 of \$4.9 M and construction costs of \$28.3 M in 2025.

As part of the overall re-development plan, existing free public parking located on Piers 6-8, as well as, the parking for the marina facilities will be eliminated over time as development progresses. West Harbour Staff has identified a long-term need to replace approximately 500-600 parking spaces. Although the WHRWMP identified the future need for a parking structure to address this concern, both the specific site and the funding options for this have not been finalized and, as such, staff would seek possible funding options that mitigate the impact on the City’s capital budget.

To support the capital investment required in the West Harbour Re-Development Plan, Capital Levy increases for debt servicing costs of 0.04% in 2022, 0.07% in 2023 and 0.19% in 2024 are planned.

b) Airport Employment Growth District

The Airport Employment Growth District (AEGD) is a planned development area of 551 net developable hectares of employment land per the Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan is bounded by Garner Road East and Twenty Road West to the north, Upper James Street to the east, Whitechurch Road West to the south and Fiddler’s Green Road to the west all of which has been designed to provide for a major business park development which effectively integrates with and complements the existing John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport.

The AEGD provides the opportunity to create a new employment area which improves live-work opportunities and helps meet provincial employment targets for the City. It supports the Airport as important infrastructure and as an economic driver, supports long-term prosperity, contributes to quality of life and establishes a gateway for economic and goods movements for the City. In particular, the AEGD is intended to offer a range of employment and employment-related land uses in the context of an eco-industrial park, which provides for prestige industrial, light industrial, airport-related business and institutional development, as well as, an environmental footprint that is managed through a range of urban design and eco-friendly sustainable design techniques. All of which allows for the development of land uses consistent with the character of surrounding lands.

c) GRIDS 2 (Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy)

The City is undertaking an update to GRIDS, known as GRIDS 2, which is a long-term growth strategy to allocate forecasted population and employment growth to the year 2051 and encompasses matters that have historically not been part of traditional land use planning studies. The provincial forecasts for Hamilton project a population of 820,000 people and employment of 360,000 jobs by the year 2051. This growth equates to an increase of 236,000 people, 110,000 housing units and 122,000 jobs over the next 30 years.

As such, GRIDS must be updated to plan for the additional jobs and persons to 2051 and assess the implications for the Official Plan, Infrastructure Master Plans and Development Charges By-law. Approval of the final growth option is planned for early 2022.

d) Land Needs Assessment

A Land Needs Assessment (LNA) is a study that identifies how much of the forecasted growth can be accommodated within the City’s existing urban area based on inputted targets and how much growth may need to be accommodated within any potential urban expansion area. The LNA considers the need for “Community” lands (i.e. lands to accommodate population growth and some commercial and institutional employment growth) separate from “Employment” lands (i.e. lands designated to accommodate employment growth including Business Parks and Industrial areas).

In January 2021, staff consulted on the draft LNA, which was presented to Council in December 2020. The final LNA, detailed in Report PED17010(i), reflects some minor changes and clarifications to address the comments received through the consultation.

The “Ambitious Density” growth scenario was recommended and adopted by Council. The “Ambitious Density” scenario results in the lowest land need out of the four scenarios modelled in the LNA and from a climate change policy perspective, represents the preferred option.

In the “Ambitious Density” scenario, the City will be planning to accommodate almost 80% of its housing unit growth within the existing urban area through both intensification and development of existing greenfield lands. This scenario, which is based on a planned intensification target that increases over time, from 50% between 2021 and 2031, to 60% between 2031 and 2041 and to 70% between 2041 and 2051 and a density of 77 persons and jobs per hectare in new growth areas, results in a need of approximately 1,340 gross developable hectare of Community Area lands. For Employment Area lands, the LNA identifies that the City’s supply and demand for Employment Area jobs is in balance and no additional employment lands are required to the year 2051.

F. Trust and Confidence in City Government

The City of Hamilton is committed to promoting an open approach to government. Ensuring public information is readily available and accessible by promoting partnerships and by strengthening and improving its ability to consistently undertake co-ordinated, transparent and inclusive, evidence-based engagement practices, the City is committed to enabling residents, business owners and community stakeholders to become more involved in decision-making processes and find value in partnering and investing in City programs.

The City is doing this by looking at ways to advance and expand the City’s data capabilities to support decision-making, organizational performance management and drive a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. A key component of this is also looking at ways to improve and / or introduce new online services, as well as, advocacy efforts related to the provision of improved broadband access to all corners of the municipality. This advocacy work around connectivity also aims to help address the digital divide and has resulted in additional funding investments in the community via the Universal Broadband Fund, in-flight work to expand connectivity options via the Hamilton Public Library, and expanded connectivity opportunities at CityHousing Hamilton properties.

To enhance accountability and transparency, as well as improve governance, Council adopted the City’s Routine Disclosure and Active Dissemination Policy (RD&AD) in December 2019, in support of a proactive approach to releasing information held by the City and the principles of “Access by Design”. Staff has been working to identify and develop plans detailing records and information to be routinely released directly through each Division. The RD&AD plans of Corporate Services are complete and posted on the City of Hamilton website. The plans for Planning and Economic Development are partially posted with completion anticipated by the end of June. Work on Public Works plans has also begun, and the City Manager’s Office will be developed later in the year.

The City is also committed to protecting the privacy of individuals while balancing an open, transparent and accessible approach to governing. In January 2021, Council adopted the City’s Corporate Privacy Policy implemented to establish accountability, roles and responsibilities and direction to support staff through legislated privacy requirements and the principles of “Privacy by Design”. Council approved an additional staff resource in the 2021 budget process to support the administration of the privacy policy. The new hire is expected to be in place in July with the implementation of privacy training to all staff as the first priority.

Traditionally, the City has undertaken public engagement through place-based public engagement modes. This format is not viewed as being accessible as they exclude opportunities for individuals to get involved that may have non-traditional work schedules, care-giving responsibilities, certain disabilities and related costs such as transportation.

In response to this, the City has been exploring ways to improve its approach to public engagement. In June 2020, the City launched Engage Hamilton a virtual engagement platform. Although not in response to COVID-19, this platform supported on-going public engagement throughout the pandemic and looks at removing barriers to public engagement by expanding reach and inclusivity and allowing participants to respond when and how it is most convenient to them, through multiple formats.

The continued evolution of public engagement practices, including how and when to use traditional place-based public engagement and digital engagement tools, is being supported through the development and Council approval of a new public engagement policy in 2021 with implementation into public engagement initiatives by early 2022.

G. Fiscal Health and Financial Management

The City uses financial management tools to plan, direct, monitor, organize and control spending to ensure that the fiscal health of its finances, including its reserves and debt levels. Ensuring the efficient and effective use of tax dollars and revenues leads to competitive property taxes and user rates. Financial health is balanced with the need to maintain infrastructure assets, grow the non-residential property assessment base and maintain overall competitive residential property taxes.

The effective management of infrastructure involves continuous monitoring of conditions, costs, risks, age and performance to systematically identify and prioritize the City’s investment needs. This ensures that, with its limited financial resources, the City of Hamilton can effectively sustain service delivery to residents and businesses.

The municipal asset management planning regulation (O. Reg. 588/17) was made under the *Infrastructure for Jobs and Prosperity Act, 2015*, and came into force on January 1, 2018. This regulation was put in place to help municipalities better understand what important services need to be supported over the long-term, while identifying infrastructure challenges and opportunities and finding innovative solutions.

O. Reg. 588/17 was amended on March 15, 2021 to extend regulatory timelines for phases 2, 3 and 4 by one year. O. Reg 588/17 helps municipalities better understand what important services need to be supported over the long term, while identifying infrastructure challenges and opportunities and finding innovative solutions.

The phase-in schedule as amended is as follows:

- July 1, 2019: Date for municipalities to have a finalized strategic asset management policy that promotes best practices and links asset management planning with budgeting, operations, maintenance and other municipal planning activities.

- July 1, 2022: Date for municipalities to have an approved asset management plan for core assets (roads, bridges and culverts, water, wastewater and stormwater management systems) that identifies current levels of service and the cost of maintaining those levels of service.

- July 1, 2024: Date for municipalities to have an approved asset management plan for all municipal infrastructure assets that identifies current levels of service and the cost of maintaining those levels of service.

- July 1, 2025: Date for municipalities to have an approved asset management plan for all municipal infrastructure assets that builds upon the requirements set out in 2024. This includes an identification of proposed levels of service, what activities will be required to meet proposed levels of service and a strategy to fund these activities.

H. A Healthy, Respectful and Supportive Workplace

The City’s workplaces are healthy, safe, inclusive and supportive. In 2020, there was a 236% increase in demand for just-in-time supports as staff dealt with the impacts of COVID-19 on their personal lives. The resources accessed focused on a wide variety of health, family, eldercare, personal growth and development and work-life balance topics. The most resourced material was on mental health, an increase of 978% over 2019. Stress management and resilience demand for resources increased by 244%.

In response to this, the City is committed to supporting staff in this prolonged COVID-19 emergency, as well as, continued support through a post-pandemic environment to ensure long-term health and wellbeing. To do this, the development of a comprehensive workplace transition strategy that will incorporate a number of considerations including health and safety (including WSIB implications), expense and equipment requirements (including standardization of equipment), flexible hours of work, mental health and well-being considerations (including resources for employees and their families), privacy issues, performance management and culture in the workplace is underway.

Data collection for the Our People Survey will also commence in 2021 with results rolling out and action planning taking place in 2022. If approved by Council, a new non-union benefit plan will also be rolled out in July 2022.