

City Alignment with the Just Recovery Policy Paper

The Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition is a group of not-for-profit organizations that came together in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition released a policy paper providing more than 150 recommendations intended to support the City’s recovery both during and post pandemic, in a fair and equitable manner for all residents.

The Just Recovery policy paper was organized around the following themes:

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

The Just Recovery policy paper aligns with many city initiatives, including the term of Council priorities, the recommendations of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery and the City’s recently approved [Community Safety & Well-being Plan](#) (HSC10932(b) approved by Council June 23, 2021). When initiated, the Just Recovery Policy Paper will also be used as an input into future discussions of the sub-committee to address the impacts of social issues related to the City’s response to the COVID-19 crisis.

Term of Council Priorities (2018 – 2022)

The COVID-19 pandemic and current social justice issues revealed that these term of Council priorities are more important than ever. The Just Recovery policy paper themes, sub-themes and related recommendations most align with term of Council priorities Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, Homelessness and Affordable Housing, Multi-Modal Transportation and Climate Change.

Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery

The [Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery](#) recommendations were received by Council, December 2020. The task force report outlined recommendations to guide Hamilton’s sustainable and equitable recovery during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and represents a compilation of the advice and recommendations of the members of the task force and seven sector working groups. It included three guiding principles; Climate Action, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and Labour.

The Just Recovery policy paper reinforced the importance of the Mayor’s Task Force guiding principles by highlighting both pre and current pandemic statistics related to unemployment and precarious and low wage employment, income disparities across the City, real estate trends, including skyrocketing rent and the impact on those relying

on government supports, pressures on our aging population and issues related to systemic racism.

There are both direct (similar recommendations) and general alignment between the Task Force priority areas for action and the policy paper themes, sub-themes and recommendations, along with many specific economic sector recommendations which align with the overall goals of the Just Recovery policy paper. An update report on the implementation of the recommendations of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery will be brought forward to Council prior to the end of the year.

Community Safety & Well Being Plan

Hamilton’s [Community Safety & Well Being Plan](#), approved by Council June 2021, outlines a framework for working alongside partners to promote safety and well-being for all residents. This framework includes a series of guiding principles that will be applied across all work within the plan as well as six local priorities where opportunities for action have been identified. The local priorities include hate incidents, violence, mental health and stigma, substance use, housing and homelessness and access to income. All content within the plan was informed through consultation with Hamilton residents, service providers and advisory committee members. The plan is only the beginning of collaboration across the community to improve outcomes in Hamilton related to safety and well-being, which aligns with many of the goals of the Just Recovery policy paper.

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan supports safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues and seeks to achieve a proactive, balanced and collaborative approach to community safety and well-being across four key areas: social development, prevention, risk intervention, and incident response.

In alignment with the Just Recovery policy paper themes, subthemes and related recommendations, the Community Safety and Well-Being Plans commits to:

- Collaborating between partners to address recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Tackling Systemic Racism and Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ Communities
- Collaborating to address recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Investing in Women and Disability Justice.
- Reviewing and considering recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Housing as a Human Right.
- Collaborating to address recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Investing in Women and Investing in decent jobs, decent wages and our local economy

Just Recovery Alignment

Over the course of the pandemic, staff, with Council approval have actioned items stemming from work in support of the term of Council priorities, the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery or as part of planned work in support of service delivery, many

of which align with the recommendations of the Just Recovery policy paper. Some examples of what the City can and has acted on are highlighted below.

The Just Recovery Mobility Justice theme has fifteen recommendations that focus around improved transit services, including pursuing higher order transit service and the provision of amenities to support alternate modes of travel. This theme aligns with recommendation #76 of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery which focuses on ensuring appropriate transportation infrastructure is in place to support recovery and long-term mobility across the City. Some actions taken by the City that align with the Just Recovery policy paper recommendations include:

- Council approved (June 24, 2020) COVID-19 Recovery Phase Mobility Plan, which focuses on ensuring that as many trips as possible could be supported using sustainable transportation modes
 - Policy paper recommendation #26 & #29
- Continued investment in and advancement of the City’s transit strategy as approved, by Council, in the 2021 budget
 - Policy paper recommendation #22
- Council approval (November 25, 2020) of the public bike share program through December 2022 and the Council approval (July 7, 2021) of the expansion of Hamilton’s bikeshare program through the addition of 600 used bicycles from Portland.
 - Policy paper recommendation #32
- Council approval (April 28, 2021) of an enhanced sidewalk snow-clearing program beginning in the winter of 2022/2023
 - Policy paper recommendation #27
- Introduction of Ontario’s first carbon-negative bus by HSR (March 2021) and Council motion to not purchase future diesel buses (February 2021)
 - Policy paper recommendation #30
- Council approved the execution of the memorandum of understanding to implement LRT along the B-line in Hamilton (GIC September 8, 2021, subject to Council approval September 15, 2021)
 - Policy paper recommendation #24

Future reports related to the recovery of transit and the continued advancement of the City’s 10-year transit strategy and the HSR’s re-envision initiative will be brought forward for Council approval, which will further support recommendations under the mobility justice theme. Ongoing work in support of term of Council priorities climate change, multi-modal transportation and integrated growth & development, will also continue as it relates to addressing mobility justice.

There are a total of sixteen recommendations in the Just Recovery policy paper that relate to housing, ranging from securing access for vulnerable populations, increasing supply, addressing renovations and ensuring housing as a human right. This theme aligns with four recommendations (#15, 86, 100 & 101) from the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery that both support the creation of and access to affordable housing options. Throughout the pandemic, as part of both its emergency response and as part

of its housing mandate, the City has taken various actions to address the lack of affordable housing in our community and the impact this has on our community, including the need for wrap around supports for vulnerable populations. Some actions taken by the City that align with the Just Recovery policy paper recommendations include:

- Council approval (August 21, 2020) of the [10-year Housing & Homelessness Action Plan](#)
 - Policy Paper theme Housing as a Human Right and sub-theme Accessing Temporary & Permanent Housing
- Council motion in support of Affordable Housing Projects (December 9, 2020)
 - Policy paper recommendation #14, #55 & #58
- Council approval of around the investment of \$30.3M towards housing initiatives as part of the 2021 tax supported capital budget
 - Policy paper recommendation #14, #55 & #58
- Council approval (December 2020 and July 2021) to enter in agreement with the federal government in support of the Rapid Housing Initiative
 - Policy paper recommendation #14, #55 & #58

The Just Recovery High Speed Internet Access for All theme has 6 recommendations that focus around expanding free access to the internet across the city and working with internet service providers to make high speed internet more accessible for all. This theme aligns with recommendation #39 of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery which focuses on supporting investments in broadband internet services to support working and learning from home beyond the pandemic, especially in underserved and rural communities. Although a report won’t be brought forward to Council until 2022 that will speak to opportunities to reduce the digital divide, some work already underway that aligns with these recommendations includes:

- Looking at opportunities to increase indoor and outdoor Wi- Fi access at all Hamilton Public Library (HPL) branches
 - Policy paper recommendation #122 & # 126
- Launched High Speed Internet Survey to map connectivity across the city
 - Policy paper recommendation #123
- Ongoing engagement between the City’s Digital Office and Rogers, Bell, Telus and Cogeco to explore program offerings that can be implemented to alleviate the digital divide across the City and City letters of support to ISP for funding applications to Provincial and Federal Broadband initiatives
 - Policy paper recommendation #125 & #127
- The City’s Digital Office collaboration with CityHousing Hamilton on several projects to expand connectivity options including:
 - support to enroll eligible facilities in low cost internet via major ISP.
 - partnering with city owned HCE Telecom to provide internet connectivity to two locations and exploring proof of concepts for low cost connectivity services.
 - Policy paper recommendation #124

Overall, the Just Recovery policy paper is intended to support those that experienced the negative effects of the pandemic disproportionately, specifically women, 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, and those experiencing systemic racism. The term of Council priority Equity, Diversity and Inclusion has a goal of ensuring that equity-seeking communities will feel safe, supported and have an enhanced sense of belonging through strengthening community capacity, City responsiveness and creating inclusive engagement opportunities. The policy paper and the term of Council priority align strongly in their objective. Most recently, Report CM19006(e), Hate Prevention and Mitigation Update, was received on August 9, 2021 at the General Issues Committee. Ongoing discussions will continue at future committee meetings of Council to work towards approved next steps, at which point staff will prepare an action plan for Council’s review and approval, taking into consideration other related strategies approved by Council and already underway including the City’s Urban Indigenous Strategy (approved by Council July 2019), the work of the new Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre Board (HARRC), the Hamilton Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (approved by Council June 2021), Hamilton’s 10-year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (approved by Council August 2020), the City’s internal Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) workplan, which will come before Council in September 2021 and the newly-developing Hamilton Police Service Hate Crime Review Team. Recommendation #45 of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery also speaks to ensuring sustainable Funding, Capacity & Resources for Equity-Serving Organizations.

Some specific actions taken over the course of the pandemic include:

- Council approval (May 26, 2021) of the Hamilton Home Energy Retrofit Opportunity (HERO) Detailed Design Study (Policy paper recommendation #94 and Task Force recommendation #103), which also supports the climate change term of Council priority;
- Council approval (May 13, 2020) of the outdoor dining districts program enabling restaurants, bars and cafes to expand their operating and service area into the outdoor and public realm space creating new patios and opportunities for placemaking (Policy paper recommendation #33 and Task Force recommendation #67);

Some recommendations have also been referred to staff for future action.

The Food Advisory Committee of Council, and the implementation of the [10-year Hamilton Food Strategy: A Healthy, Sustainable, and Just Food System for All](#), (approved by Council August 2016), has been put on hold as a result of the City’s COVID-19 emergency response and staff capacity. When appropriate, the 6 recommendations of the Just Recovery policy paper under the food insecurity sub-theme and recommendation #38 of the Mayor’s Task Force on Economic Recovery that focuses on food security and resilience will be reviewed for action when staff capacity permits.

The 8 recommendations of the Just Recovery policy paper under the social procurement sub-theme, the 10 recommendations under Community Benefits

Agreement and recommendation #11 of the Mayor's Task Force on Economic Recovery that focuses on social procurement have been referred to staff for consideration. The City of Hamilton supports responsible procurement practices and incorporates social procurement, climate change and green or circular procurement considerations, where possible. Although community benefits and social procurement are different, many of the same responsible procurement principles, such as living wage, and working with education institutions and local employment agencies to create more access to professional, administrative and technical jobs for COVID-19 affected groups, exist under both and the City is committed to working with community partners and the development community to look at how to integrate into city procurement policies and local development practices, where possible. A report will be brought forward to Council for further direction in the future.

Some of the recommendations of the Just Recovery policy paper are the responsibility of other jurisdictions, beyond the City of Hamilton, although the City can play a role in advocating for action, where appropriate. This includes the 3 recommendations related to residential care facilities and the recommendation to grant the special diet allowance to all Hamilton OW and ODSP recipients. Although the City can support agencies responsible for providing supports to 2SLGBTQQIA+ Communities and workforce development opportunities for Black, Indigenous, racialized communities, people with disabilities and 2SLGBTQQIA+ communities, the City must partner with other community organizations and levels of government to implement the recommendations of the Just Recovery Policy Paper. In support of recommendations that are the responsibility of other levels of government, advocacy letters have been sent requesting:

- continued business support from senior levels of government throughout the length of the pandemic;
- mental health and addictions supports;
- childcare supports;
- tax deferral programs; and
- federal trade policies.