



ACTION 13 - COMMUNITY CLIMATE ACTION

Submission Regarding Hamilton's Corporate-Wide Climate Change Update 2021

December 7, 2021

In the over two years since the City of Hamilton declared a Climate Emergency it is clear that **we are not making the progress required**. The COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented challenges to all aspects of our lives and this has in turn delayed work on forming a climate action plan. Unfortunately, our ever-shortening window to meet our climate targets will be filled with similarly unprecedented years.

As residents we deserve to live in a City who's climate work is resilient to the challenging times we are only going to continue to face. With the hope of building a shared response that allows residents to feel assured our City is taking the actions needed at scale and with the urgency required to meet this crisis we have two recommendations for Council.

- 1. It is clear that more resources are required for the outcomes our communities deserve.**

When the City first declared a climate emergency the window for sweeping reductions in greenhouse gas emissions was just over a decade. Now over two years later residents of this city still do not have access to a climate action plan. We have also heard that through the pandemic staff were reassigned to other roles to support our City's COVID-19 response. With so much of an already small window spent planning and not acting, the size and speed of the decisions needed in the years remaining only grows.

Further, the MCR-GRIDS-II process has demonstrated that our City is not equipped to handle large scale resident feedback without substantial delays to project timelines. Residents of the City deserve a city that lives up to it's promise to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully. To do this it is clear more staff resources are required to rapidly accelerate progress on this plan and better engage residents in it's creation, review, and completion.



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2. Community engagement is essential to any Climate Action Plan's success.

Over the past year, we as neighbours in Ward 13 have been gathering around climate action within our community. Since then we have been hard at work organizing with our community. We have met with City Staff in Hamilton and from other cities in North America to learn how their communities are responding to this crisis and we have begun building the community climate infrastructure from pollinator gardens, to food forests, to the stormwater infrastructure we know our community needs. What we have learned is that in our City and other Cities, a shared commitment by neighbours to build better communities is essential to any successful climate work.

We have worked with neighbours across our City in campaigning to protect local wetlands and have advocated to meet our City's housing needs within existing communities. In these campaigns we as citizens have pushed to put new options on the table that had co-benefits for both residents and the lands we live on. Most notably, Hamilton's decision not to expand our urban boundary is now being lauded as climate leadership by the media across Canada - this option wouldn't have even been on the table without resident engagement.

Resident engagement goes beyond just plan development. From home energy retrofits, to green stormwater infrastructure, to decisions as to how we get around our city, resident buy-in will be essential to the success of any plan. We know being engaged early and engaged substantively will be key indicators to how wide-spread resident involvement with the climate action plan will be.

Action 13 and other similar groups across our City are a testament to how an engaged community can act with agility to take climate action within their neighbourhood. The Save Our Streams Coalition and the Stop Sprawl Coalition have shown that when residents across our city come together we come together with a shared vision for a vibrant city integrated with thriving natural systems.

We hope these reports act as a wake up call to the need to resource and accelerate this vital work and for resident engagement to be embedded throughout our City's Climate response from here onwards.