

RELEVANT OVERVIEW: CITY INITIATIVES & PROGRAMMING

Many key projects and initiatives have contributed to where the City of Hamilton is today in its current state, as well as helped to shape our desired future state and ensure that Hamilton remains an inclusive city. These programs are integral to the success of our continued equity, diversity and inclusion efforts.

Hamilton’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan

Under the Province’s Safer Ontario Act, 2018 municipalities were required to develop a Community Safety and Well-Being Plan. The aim of Community Safety and Well-Being plan is to ensure all residents in the community feel safe, have a sense of belonging and can meet their needs for education, healthcare, food, housing, income, and social and cultural expression.

The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan (“Plan”) supports safe and healthy communities through a community-based approach to address root causes of complex social issues. Planning 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.

Hamilton’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan offers a framework for partners working together to promote safety and well-being for all residents. Through community consultation, six local priorities where opportunities for action have been identified. These local priorities include violence, mental health and stigma, substance use, housing and homelessness, access to income, and hate incidents.

The Plan has included hate incidents as one of its six priorities for action. The long-term goal in this area is to reduce individual and organizational incidents of Islamophobia, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, transphobia, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination.

The current focus is to:

- Increase public awareness and education on hate
- Address individual and organizational bias of Islamophobia, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, transphobia, homophobia and other forms of discrimination

Through community engagement, it was determined that opportunity exist for Community Safety and Well-Being Plan partners to collaborate, align, and support implementation of future recommendations from the hate prevention & mitigation action plan. There is also opportunity to collaborate with the hate prevention & mitigation strategy to build upon the guiding principles in Hamilton’s Community Safety and Well-Being Plan which include equity, diversity and inclusion, community engagement, data and evaluation, sustainable funding and system collaboration.

The opportunities for action related to hate incidents within the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan include:

- Explore alternative locations and formats to report on hate crimes and incidents of hate.
- Expand public and service provider education on hate crime and incidents of hate reporting.
- Create a community-wide public education campaign on denouncing hate and addressing its root causes.
- Address Call 57 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action by collaborating to provide education to public servants on the history of Aboriginal peoples, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.
- Determine creative ways to build empathy and hold spaces for dialogue on hate considering community engagement art and storytelling projects.
- Encourage organizational equity audits.
- Support of landmarks review through City of Hamilton Urban Indigenous Strategy.
- Collaborate, align and support work of revamped Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre.
- Collaborate between partners to address recommendations in the Just Recovery Hamilton Policy Paper under the themes of Tackling Systemic Racism and Supporting 2SLGBTQ+ Communities.
- Support education on the “everyday” acts of racism that diminish the safety and well-being of Indigenous, Black and other racialized communities.

The actions above are in alignment with the following recommendations from the Sage Solution report are as follows:

- Create, resource and implement an action plan to confront systemic racism, oppression, and other forms of discrimination in Hamilton.
- Initiate convergent strategies to coordinate and accelerate the work that community organizations are doing to combat hate in the city.
- Embrace community-led responses to harm.
- Partner with community organizations, District School Boards, and other relevant collaborators, to co-create and implement an educational curriculum together with young people about racism, hate, equity, diversity, inclusion, and justice and belonging, from the perspective of people living in Hamilton.
- Develop a hate incident community mapping mechanism to better track and collect data for hate incidents happening in the city.
- Build a coordinated community reporting system.

City of Hamilton’s Youth Strategy & Re-engagement Project

The Children’s Services and Neighbourhood Development Division has an integrated Youth team who are finalizing the Youth Strategy which will be presented to the Emergency and Community Services Committee of Council in February 2022. This staff team incorporates the youth voice while connecting and supporting youth 14 to 29 years in the community. One example that has fostered a safe and inclusive environment is the HamOntYouth Steering Committee. This committee has 23 Youth representatives who connect regularly to share ideas and collaborate on various city initiatives. Youth representatives have expressed a sense of belonging in their community through their participation.

This staff team are also partnering with the Hamilton Police Youth Division and the YMCA to deliver the Y.E.S program. (Youth Engagement Series) The Y.E.S. initiative is committed to developing a sustainable program to empower and educate our youth with real world and hands-on involvement as it relates to the elements of Human Trafficking. Participating youth engage and learn various aspects of policing and how to access programs offered at the Hamilton YMCA and throughout the City of Hamilton.

Education & Early Intervention

The Children’s Services & Neighbourhood Development Division plays a key role in ensuring equitable outcomes are achieved for all children and families across the Early Years system in Hamilton. In order to achieve this goal a focus on equity, diversity and inclusion has been embedded in all of the priorities outlined in our Early Years Community Plan and a dedicated Equity & Engagement Advisory Group comprised of diverse community partners and community members is an important component of our Early Years Organizing structure. The purpose of the Equity and Engagement Advisory Group is to ensure that the Early Years Community Plan is responsive to and inclusive of the needs and interests of a diverse early years community by providing ongoing feedback/input, helping to flag issues, and identify opportunities related to equity an engagement.

Since the inception of the Early Years Community Plan the Children’s Services & Neighbourhood Development staff has supported a number of Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) focused Early Years Program initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of understanding and celebrating the unique needs and contributions of diverse populations in Hamilton.

Some of these initiatives include:

- The development of an Equity & Engagement Framework for the Early Years System
- Every Child Matters initiative in partnership with Niwasa Kendaaswin Teg

- An EDI author series in partnership with Telling Tales & our EarlyON Child & Family Centre Service providers
- Professional learning opportunities for early years educators in partnership with Affiliated Services for Children & Youth
- The development of an HR Workforce survey to determine how well staff from the early years system (childcare, EarlyONs, community supports) demographically represent the population of families it serves

Recognizing that education and early intervention are critical elements of hate prevention and mitigation, Children’s Services & Neighbourhood Development remains committed to ongoing work in this area and is currently developing an EDI strategy for the Early Years system.

Investing in placemaking initiatives that encourage diverse community interactions across groups

In 2021, the City of Hamilton launched the Placemaking Grant Pilot Program. Made possible through a \$100 K donation from the Patrick J. McNally Charitable Foundation, the Placemaking Grant Pilot Program funds community-led placemaking projects that will animate public spaces across the City. Applications are accepted from groups of residents and non-profit organizations for temporary placemaking projects. Grants are available at two funding levels: up to \$2,000 per project and from \$5,000 to \$20 K per project.

Placemaking is a hands-on approach for making a meaningful change or impact in a neighborhood, city or region. Placemaking interacts with the unique geography, culture, and heritage of a space and is a way for residents to feel ownership of public space and use it in a way that is specific to community need. The Placemaking Grant Pilot Program supports community-led projects that propose new ways of interacting with public spaces to address issues or realize opportunities. Placemaking projects will help to enliven our public spaces as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Placemaking Grant Program was developed following these principles:

- Welcoming and Accessible: Offer free and inclusive programming that welcomes a wide range of people.
- Participatory and Meaningful: Reflect community values and actively engage citizens.
- Innovative and Authentic: Encourage creative and community partners to embrace the unique conditions, histories and possibilities to produce new place-based experiences.
- Collaborative and Creative: Unite diverse communities through shared immersive, artistic and learning experiences that are inspiring, surprising and memorable.

The Placemaking Grant Pilot Program was created in the hopes of encouraging project proposals from experienced community organizers as well as community members who

haven't been involved with the City's granting or approval systems before. The following program details program were included to help minimize barriers:

- Applications accepted from both groups of residents and non-profit organizations (formal and in-formal groups). Often grants are only open to incorporated non-profits or charities.
- Grant will cover up to 100% of eligible project expenses. Often grants require additional revenue from other funding sources.
- Grant application form created using plain language. The language of grant applications can be intimidating and a barrier to some.
- Many placemaking projects do not fit within existing corporate procedures. As a result, Placemaking Grant Pilot Program staff assist applicants navigate the corporate approval system to determine the permissions and approvals required to implement their project.
- Timelines for funded projects can adapt to accommodate COVID related or unexpected project delays. Often grants have firm project completion deadlines.
- Applications to the grant program are adjudicated. Assessment criteria includes: Project demonstrates a place-based experience (example: Project has the potential for meaningful impact on a place/community), Project encourages collaboration and interaction (examples: Those involved with the project are diverse and represent more than one point of view, Project has the potential to increase community interaction), Project demonstrates a creative or experimental approach to create change (example: Project changes how people can experience the place) and Applicants demonstrates they have the resources to complete the project.

Projects funded through the Placemaking Grant Pilot Program started to be installed in public spaces during the summer of 2021 and will continue over the next 2 years. Once the pilot program period is completed, staff will undertake an evaluation of the program and provide recommendations on next steps.

Information about the grant program including the funding guidelines which outline the eligibility requirements, the application form, and a placemaking toolkit are available on the City's website at [Hamilton.ca/PlacemakingGrant](https://hamilton.ca/PlacemakingGrant). Applications are being accepted until December 10, 2021.

Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HAARC)

Established in 2018, HARRC operated for ten months and was paused in February 2019 to further refine the centre's governance structure and position the centre for success with community input. In December 2019, Council approved directions toward the re-opening of the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC), ensuring that voices of racialized individuals were foundational to the re-opening and HARRC's continued work. This was a significant demonstration of the City's commitment to addressing issues of racism.

Council approval of the recommendations of this report would mark the fulfilment of Council directions regarding HARRC’s re-establishment from December 11, 2019 (HUR18010(c)) and February 24, 2021 (CM0007(b)); including:

- Securing a consultant to recruit and recommend candidates for an independent Board of Directors and to develop terms of reference and a governance structure, for Council approval;
- Establishing a community advisory panel, representative of the community’s racial and cultural diversity, to guide and inform the consultant’s work in Board recruitment and the development of governing documents;
- Dissolving a pre-existing funding agreement between McMaster University, Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion and the City of Hamilton;
- Ensuring the transfer of an outstanding balance of \$53,846 from McMaster University to the City of Hamilton following the dissolution;
- Retrieving all HARRC-related project collaterals, equipment, social media and web accounts from McMaster University and the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion;
- Further retaining a consultant to support the Board in its orientation and onboarding by drafting board policies, by-laws, and briefing documents, providing governance training, establishing board committees, ensuring application for incorporation, and developing a 5-year operational budget, funding and sustainability plan.

HARRC was established to provide resources and support to residents experiencing racism, to collect and report statistically on incidents and trends of racism, and to provide information, education and advocacy to foster community capacity and understanding of anti-racism and anti-discrimination.

In June 2020, staff launched a survey to gather input from the community on the key qualifications and experience of the potential HARRC consultant and Community Advisory Panel. About 70 residents and stakeholders participated in the survey, which informed the project procurement process between July and August 2020. In September 2020, the City retained Hamilton-based EMpower Strategy Group, led by Evelyn Myrie, as the lead consultant for HARRC (CM20007).

In September 2020, EMpower Strategy Group launched its project development by establishing a nine-member Community Advisory Panel. Between October 2020 and January 2021, EMpower Strategy Group and the Community Advisory Panel developed a proposed Terms of Reference for HARRC, launched a Board recruitment campaign.

On February 24, 2021, Council received a report from EMpower Strategy Group detailing the HARRC Board recruitment activities and the establishment of Community Advisory Panel, (Appendix “A” to CM20007(b)).

Based upon recommendations from the HARRC Community Advisory Panel, presented by the consultant, Council appointed the inaugural Board of Directors of

13 members, representing the diversity of Hamilton’s community. Council also approved a Governance Structure and Terms of Reference (Appendix “B” to CM20007(b))

Also on February 24, Council approved the engagement of a consultant to support the Board in its orientation and onboarding by drafting board policies, by-laws, and briefing documents, providing governance training, establishing board committees, ensuring application for incorporation, and developing a 5-year operational budget, funding and sustainability plan.

The City will continue to fund HARRC as per the original commitment of \$100,000/year from the Tax Stabilization Fund Reserve Account 58300 110046 for the remainder of the three-year pilot project (26 months to begin September 7, 2021), as per Council approval December 11, 2019 (HUR 18010(c)).

In August 2021, the HARRC Board announced the successful recruitment of the organization’s first Executive Director, who joined the organization on September 7, 2021.

Staff have been working with HARRC’s Executive Director, Lyndon George and Board to explore alignments with the City’s Council-directed Equity Diversity and Inclusion initiatives and to explore potential federal, provincial, and private funding sources and opportunities, to promote HARRC’s ongoing success and program development.

The actions above are in alignment with the following recommendations from the Sage Solution report are as follows:

- Convene collaborative opportunities for productive dialogue amongst community organizations, businesses, and other local institutions, with the goal of building a welcoming city together.
- Initiate convergent strategies to coordinate and accelerate the work that community organizations are doing to combat hate in the city.
- Deeply listen to the voices of those experiencing hate, acknowledge their experiences and provide ongoing opportunities for community feedback.

Urban Indigenous Strategy

Background on Urban Indigenous Strategy

- April 2015 - Council Motion passed to develop a Strategy
- December 2015 - Truth and Reconciliation Commission Final Report
- Our Future Hamilton community vision includes directions on celebrating Indigenous knowledge and culture
- Many City Divisions have established working relationships and connections with Indigenous peoples
- Indigenous peoples make up approximately 3% of Hamilton’s population but experience disproportionate rates of unemployment, poverty, homelessness

- Indigenous community organizations first began over 40 years ago
- Urban Indigenous Strategy – Council endorsed July 2019
- Implementation Plan – Council endorsed February 2021

Highlights of Urban Indigenous Strategy

- Providing awareness, events, education, and resource material publicly and throughout the corporation to better understand the experiences that Indigenous people face including racism
- Working with Hamilton Police Services on engagement and relationship building policy development
- Cultural appropriation policy development with Sports and Recreation
- Working with various City departments on developing policies and awareness through an Indigenous lens to improve processes, such as the City of Hamilton’s Landmarks and Monument Review

Commitment and Key Objectives of the Urban Indigenous Strategy

A commitment for building mutually respectful relationships with Indigenous peoples.

The City commits to the ‘Guiding Principles’ of commitment, accountability, consultation, reciprocity, inclusion, recognition, commemoration and ally ship, and views as important steps towards building trust and respectful relationships with First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in our City and beyond.

The actions above are in alignment with the following recommendations from the Sage Solution report are as follows:

- Create, resource and implement an action plan to confront systemic racism, oppression, and other forms of discrimination in Hamilton.
 - UIS aims to address systemic racism, oppression & discrimination through training and education
- Convene collaborative opportunities for productive dialogue amongst community organizations, businesses, and other local institutions, with the goal of building a welcoming city together.
 - In the Indigenous Landmarks & Monuments Review currently underway, the City plans to engage in dialogue (Phase II) on adding Indigenous history into the fabric of Hamilton
- Incorporate more diverse representation at decision-making tables.
 - By engaging the Treaty Nations in policy development in municipal activities that affect them and as an element in potential Municipal-Indigenous Relationship Agreements
- Invest in more safe community spaces.
 - In the UIS Land theme action “6 Work with the Indigenous community to establish and maintain a piece of land that the community can use for ceremonial, spiritual and other activities”, a space that is protected, safe from racism

- Invest in placemaking initiatives that encourage diverse community interactions across groups.
 - The Ecological Interpretive Centre that the Joint Stewardship Board of the Red Hill Valley is proposing should become such a space; as well, this can be one outcome in the Landmarks Review