




INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 6, 2022
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Government Relations Strategy for the City of Hamilton (CM22005) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Morgan Stahl Director, Government Relations & Community Engagement (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2178
SUBMITTED BY:	Morgan Stahl Director, Government Relations & Community Engagement City Manager's Office
SIGNATURE:	

COUNCIL DIRECTION

As a result of the newly established Government Relations & Community Engagement division within the City Manager's Office, this report is intended to provide a strategic plan and framework for the City's future government relations activities.

This strategy will be guided by the term of Council priorities which include Climate Change, Multi-Modal Transportation, Homelessness and Affordable Housing, Equity Diversity and Inclusion, Integrated Growth and Development, Trust and Confidence in City Government, Fiscal Health and Financial Management, and promoting a Healthy, Respectful and Supportive Workplace.

INFORMATION

The goal of a government relations strategy for the City of Hamilton is to establish a strong, open, pro-active and transparent relationship between the City and its provincial, federal, municipal and advocacy partners. In addition to ongoing opportunities and challenges that require intergovernmental cooperation and participation, the pandemic has highlighted the increasing need to ensure that different orders of government have

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OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

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mutual understanding, clear communication and alignment wherever possible on shared challenges.

As all levels of government face fiscal challenges, respect and appreciation for each other's roles and responsibilities are key to ensuring important public services can be sustained in a rapidly changing environment. The intent of the government relations strategy is to ensure the City of Hamilton is uniquely positioned for funding opportunities, collaborative and strategic partnerships with our provincial and federal counterparts.

Hamilton is one of Canada's largest cities. With a population of 569,355 (based on 2021 census data) , Hamilton is home to a traditional manufacturing base, is a nerve centre of healthcare research and training, and a destination for an emerging knowledge-based economy. Hamilton is also a destination for investment in arts and culture, as well as a growing destination for families.

As the ninth-largest regional economy in Canada and the third in Ontario, Hamilton is uniquely positioned as a truly multi-modal city offering all modes of transportation, and good infrastructure for moving goods that support the city's workforce. Hamilton is the only city in Southern Ontario that offers all four modes of transportation – rail, road, air and port.

Over the next ten years, Hamilton's population is projected to grow dramatically. It is imperative that the City of Hamilton can proactively highlight our needs, opportunities and challenges are understood higher levels of government to maximize funding opportunities and promote deeper, pro-active relationships with our provincial and federal partners.

Government Relations Goals & Objectives:

In order to highlight key City of Hamilton priorities to higher levels of government, emphasis will be given to the term of Council priorities, in addition to provincial and federal priorities approved by Council.

This will be accomplished by the following:

- Further cultivating and developing meaningful relationships with political decision makers and strengthening trust with all levels of government
- Actively looking for opportunities to collaborate with provincial and federal government decision makers and the civil service through working groups, roundtables and task forces
- Utilizing forums such as the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, Rural Ontario Municipal Association, Ontario Big City Mayor's, Federation of

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Canadian Municipalities and other relevant associations advocating for similar priorities

- Promoting the City's accomplishments and increasing visibility of the City's leadership at Queen's Park and Parliament Hill
- Actively participating in policy development of interest to the City of Hamilton
- Providing support for local government announcements

Local ridings that are relevant to the strategy:

- Hamilton Centre
- Hamilton East – Stoney Creek
- Hamilton Mountain
- Hamilton West – Ancaster – Dundas
- Flamborough – Glanbrook

The City of Hamilton will work with local, provincial and national institutions and advocacy agencies, which include but not limited to:

- Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO)
- Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM)
- Ontario Big City Mayors Caucus (OBCM)
- GTHA Mayor's & Chairs
- Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA)
- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce
- Stoney Creek Chamber of Commerce
- Flamborough Chamber of Commerce

In addition, the City will continue to work collectively with other Hamilton Anchor Institutions on aligned issues and best practises.

Strategy and tactics include:

- Develop a quarterly Government Relations newsletter that will be provided to members of Council
- Outreach, liaise and work collaboratively with Members of Parliament, Members of Provincial Parliament and party leaders representing Hamilton to ensure that their staff are well briefed on matters of interest to the City of Hamilton.
- Work with the Mayor and Council to engage local MPP's and MPs as champions to work with the City as an advocate within their respective caucus and Cabinet; arm them with the messages they need to effectively advocate for the City with their government colleagues

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- Outreach and liaise with government ministries and key contacts such as Deputy Ministers, Assistant Deputy Ministers and subject matter experts
- Communicate key City of Hamilton priorities that align with provincial and federal priorities (ahead of election period)
- Ensure local candidates in the five Hamilton-based ridings referenced above and major party leaders are informed of the City's priorities in the lead up and during an election writ period
- Collaborate with Hamilton Anchor Institution Leadership and community partners to support collective advocacy, policy positions and funding requests
- Pre-budget consultation and budget submissions, providing feedback to relevant ministries by submitting key priorities for the City of Hamilton
- Implement priorities approved by Council ahead of provincial and federal elections
- Work with government relations staff across municipalities to collaborate, share best practises and mobilize on issues that are aligned

Monitoring:

- Monitor activities at Queen's Park and on Parliament Hill (i.e. legislation, policy changes, changes within the civil service and emerging issues)
- Election outcomes
- Cabinet Shuffle and any ongoing changes to Cabinet
- Speech from the Throne, which generally, occurs at the beginning of each legislative session or when a new government is sworn in
- Budgets

Updates would come in the form of communication to Council or Report to General Issues Committee when required.

Key areas of advocacy include the following:

- Supportive Housing
- Tackling Poverty
- Climate Change
- Transit
- Applying a rural recovery and equity, diversity and inclusion lens to policy and funding decisions

Other areas include:

- Investment in Early Years and Child-care
- Strong economic recovery from COVID-19

- Inclusive city building
- Investments in healthcare to address ambulance off-load delays
- Additional revenue tools for municipalities

Where necessary, staff will ensure relevant subject matter experts are included in conversations on a staff to staff level ensuring policy expertise is provided in the lead up to any advocacy positions or briefing materials being prepared for meetings between elected officials.

On a more regular basis (annually) Government Relations & Community Engagement staff will provide updated recommendations so that Council may debate and approve a list of municipal priorities for discussion with both senior levels of government.

Council may add additional areas of focus to the priority areas as they relate to specific actions to be carried out on an annual basis.

Outlining our government relations strategy and strengthening our relationships with higher levels of government will lead to a brighter, healthier and more equitable future for all Hamiltonians.

Furthermore, Council may choose to seek out subject matter expertise to make certain that we have a prominent presence in both Ottawa and Toronto, ensuring staff are actively monitoring and engaged on developing issues that could impact Hamilton. This would be done through existing Council approved resources and budget allocations for the Government Relations & Community Engagement team.

Where appropriate and where Council approval or direction is required on a particular position or policy, staff will bring this forward to the appropriate sub-committee and/or Standing Committee/General Issues Committee.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED