

[REDACTED]

Dear Council,

I am writing to you as a young woman, informed scientist, and concerned citizen. The Community Energy and Emissions Plan (CEEP) lays down the path we will walk as a city over the next few years, as we increasingly feel the effects of the climate crisis. As the draft stands, I am worried for our city and its residents. While the plan addresses many critical aspects of reducing emissions, some of the goals lack specificity regarding timeframes and also accountability. Other sections of the CEEP are missing opportunities for the city to make an impact on climate and its residents.

Notably, the Growing Green section misses a huge opportunity to get Hamilton back on track with climate change mitigation and adaptation, and even get ahead in the race for federal funding. I whole-heartedly support the recommendations of the Conservation Matters group of Hamilton350 laid out in their submission. I echo the importance of the recommendations, in particular Recommendation 1 – aligning with national land-use targets, as this will open up new funding lines for the city to achieve its climate goals and also improve the lives of many residents.

Land-use is an enormous contributor to emissions but it can also be a great sink, using our land for emissions reductions has climate, biodiversity, economic and social benefits, hence why it is critical to develop the Growing Green section. Recommendation 4 – securing a land purchasing fund for Conservation Authorities, is crucial for reducing the impacts of the climate crisis e.g., flooding, extreme heat, and also leads to mitigation of emissions and potentially uptake of carbon. Not to mention the improved air quality and health and well-being of Hamilton residents. Hamilton has the potential to be at the forefront of a “growing green” revolution, isn’t that what we want for our city? Public surveys suggest that’s what residents want.

Living in central Hamilton I have experienced the searing heat of the semi-regular heatwaves that are now upon us. I see the effects of tree inequity and limited access to greenspace as dogs burn their paws on the pavement and children play on sun scorched grass parkettes. I see vulnerable populations downtown struggling more than myself. This plan needs to work for us all. It could do so much more, and it should.

I urge council to re-draft the CEEP, including the recommendations of the Hamilton350 submission to the Growing Green section. Let’s ReCharge Hamilton in all aspects.

Sincerely,



Sophie Wilkinson Ph.D.