

November 17, 2022



Dear Mayor Horwath and Members of General Issues Committee,

Re: 2023 Municipal Budget Call for Action

Thank you for the opportunity to engage with you, and voice our support to base the 2023 Municipal Budget on progress toward equitable change in Hamilton.

As members of the Just Recovery Coalition, United Way Halton & Hamilton (UWHH) encourages you to consider the existing policy recommendations provided in the Just Recovery Policy Paper 2021, and to remain apprised of the ensuing update of the Just Recovery Policy Paper. The Just Recovery Coalition aligns with our advocacy work and with our efforts in convening stakeholders to ignite action and ensure that everyone can thrive. Our support of thousands of individuals across Hamilton is only possible with community groups coming together, and the inclusion of elected officials like yourselves in the efforts.

As a city full of ambitious leaders, Labour workers and advocates, artists, and educators, we must ensure the support of the full spectrum of our community by creating and maintaining a city that is physically, financially, and socially accessible. The City of Hamilton is already doing this in many ways, and has an important opportunity to do even more. Within the budget deliberation process, we request that you, creatively and thoughtfully, centre equity and marginalized neighbours.

Such actions and commitments include:

- Becoming a certified Living Wage employer for all employees
- Adopting and encouraging Decent Work standards in community
- Increasing the City Enrichment Fund to support financially-strained community services
- Considering accessibility via snow removal services and infrastructure investments
- Supporting short and medium-term housing solutions.

Building a budget anchored in equity represents an important moment for the City. It is the opportunity to increase social good in our community. An equity-based budget will see that community members are better supported in their needs rather than forced towards desperation and distress. This is a key shift that will result in decreased down-stream costs for city-run health systems, less financial pressure on law enforcement efforts, among others. While we know that the COVID-19 pandemic is not over, the ripple or shadow effects are rearing their heads in full force.

The reality is, we are anticipating even more people needing support— especially to cope with difficulties securing basic needs. The social and economic impacts of rising inflation rates and cost of living is transforming our community and individual lives, and people who were already experiencing inequities, including poverty, homelessness and social isolation, are being disproportionately impacted by the crisis. Marginalized people require even more supports during this time. Their needs, along with the challenges of those pushed into crisis for the first time, require our attention now.



Inflation and economic instability, as well as ongoing mental health impacts, are at all-time highs, especially for those already marginalized or previously experiencing these hardships. It is therefore imperative, at every level, to support those most vulnerable in our budgets and community efforts. This act reinforces the standards of living that Hamilton has always advocated for.

As recently elected representatives, your time is now, to support the budgetary changes we all need to see in our community. We look forward to working alongside Council as your commitment to your constituents is demonstrated.

Thank you for this opportunity to delegate and connect, and we will stay in touch over our support of community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brad Park".

Brad Park
President & CEO
United Way Halton & Hamilton

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shawna Mutton".

Shawna Mutton
Vice President, Community Impact
United Way Halton & Hamilton