



United Way
Halton & Hamilton

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SOCIAL PLANNING
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of HAMILTON



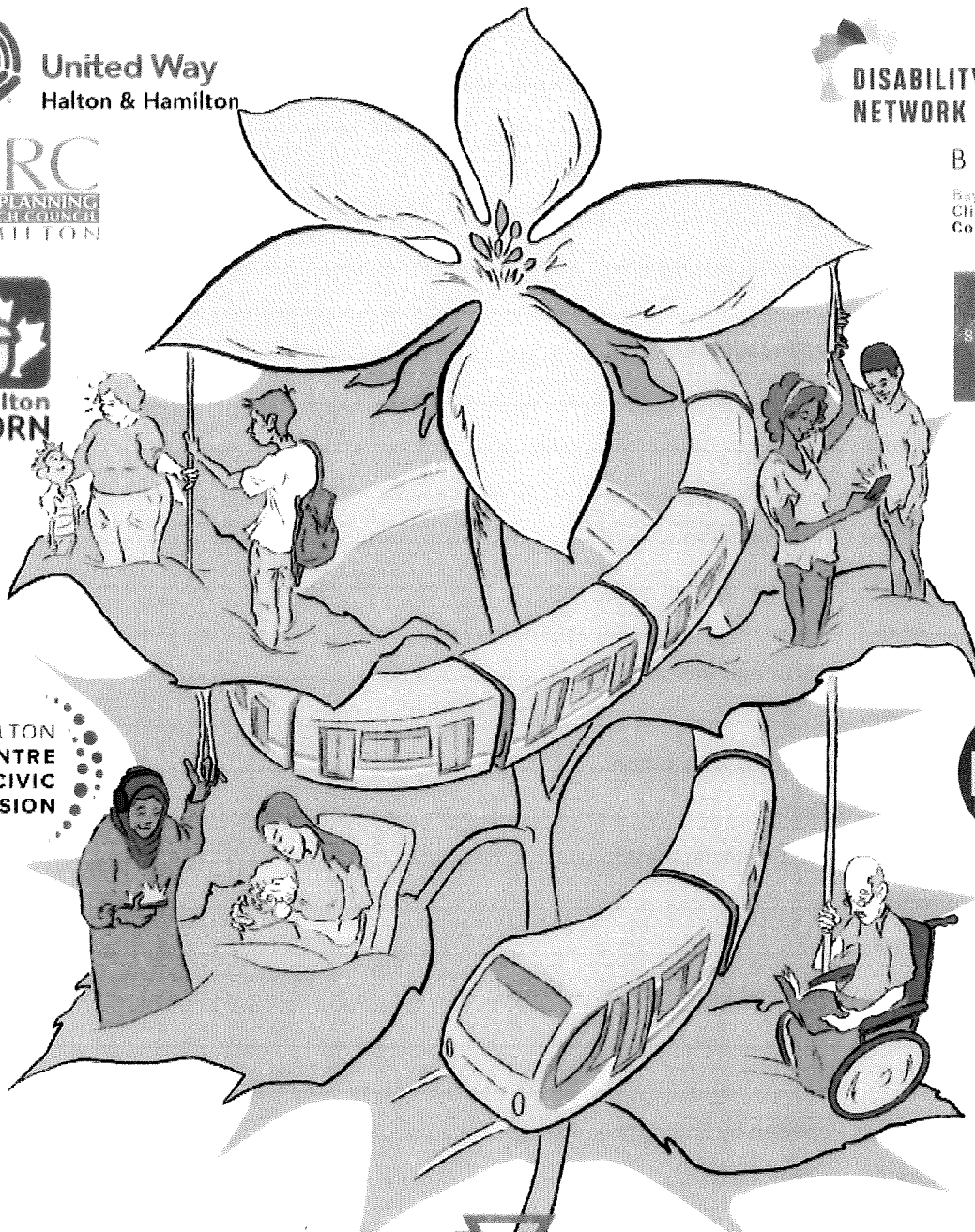
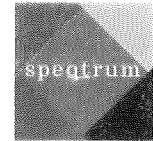
Hamilton
ACORN



DISABILITY JUSTICE
NETWORK of ONTARIO

B A C C C

Bay Area
Climate Change
Council



HAMILTON
CENTRE
FOR CIVIC
INCLUSION



Hamilton Community Legal Clinic
Clinique juridique communautaire de Hamilton



YWCA
HAMILTON

SACHA
SEXUAL ASSAULT
CENTRE



HAMILTON COMMUNITY
BENEFITS NETWORK
building capacity through building communities

Hamilton Roundtable
for Poverty Reduction



Environment
Hamilton

A JUST RECOVERY FOR HAMILTON

Bold Ideas in a Time of Change - Municipal Policy, Investment and
Opportunities for a more equitable 2023

Contents

Land Acknowledgement:	3
Recognition and Thanks	3
Executive Summary:.....	4
Bold Ideas in a Time of Change:.....	5
Hamilton is a City in Crisis:.....	5
Inequality in Hamilton:.....	6
Unemployment and Poverty in Hamilton:.....	6
Healthcare and Seniors' Care:.....	7
The Ongoing Pandemic:.....	8
Investing in Women:.....	9
A Gendered Lens for the City of Hamilton:.....	9
Gender-Based Violence:.....	10
Childcare:	11
Supporting Women through Strategic Investment:	11
Housing as a Human Right:	12
The Shortage of Affordable Housing in Hamilton:.....	13
Rapidly Increasing Housing Costs:.....	14
Affordable Housing Waitlist and Homelessness:	15
Housing for Newcomers:	16
The Risk of Extreme Heat:.....	16
Affordable Housing for Women and Gender-Diverse People:	17
Mobility Justice:	18
CARE FARE Transit:.....	18
Expanding Transit Across Hamilton by Ending Area Rating:.....	19
Making Transit More Accessible:	19
Disability Justice.....	20
Healthcare Barriers on a Local Level:.....	20
Food Insecurity as it impacts people with disabilities explicitly:	21
Accessing temporary and permanent housing:	21
Addressing Violence against People with Disabilities.....	22
Tackling Systemic Racism:.....	23
Tackling the Rise of Hate and Racism:	23
Creating a Culture of Anti-Racism at City Hall:	24
Reforming the Hamilton Board of Health:.....	25

Building Reconciliation with those whose traditional lands we now occupy:..... 25

Investing in decent jobs, decent wages, and our local economy: 26

 Community Benefits: 26

 Investing in the Arts: 27

Focus on Inclusive City Building: 28

 Working to alleviate the Overdose Crisis:..... 28

Supporting Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ Communities: 29

 Creating a safer Community: 29

 Addressing LGBTQQIA+ Core Needs 30

Investing in Green Infrastructure:..... 31

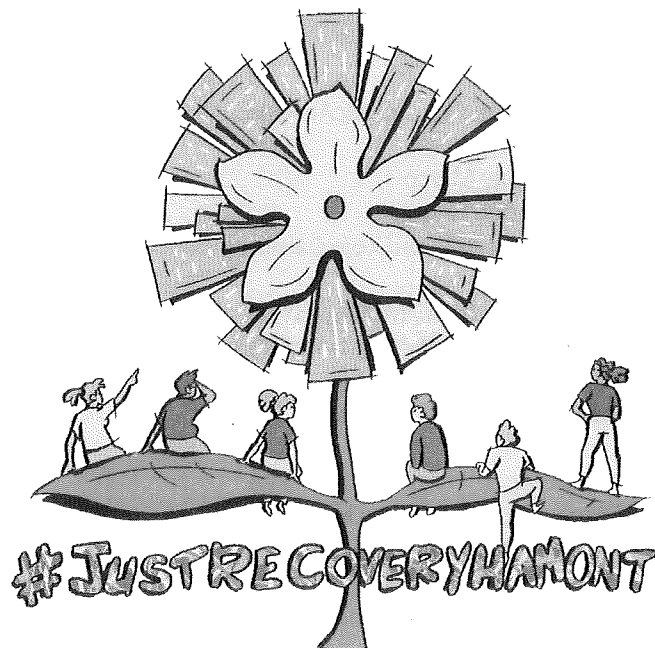
 The Impacts of Climate Change on Hamilton Residents:..... 31

 Staffing up to Fight Climate Change: 31

 Ecosystem Services: 32

Conclusion:..... 33

References 34



Land Acknowledgement:

For generations, we have been witness to the impacts of ongoing settler colonialism across Turtle Island with the attacks on Wet'suwet'en land defenders, a permanent injunction at 1492 LandBack Lane, thousands of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and Two-Spirit people and over 2000 unmarked graves being uncovered at residential schools and forced assimilation encampments across the country. Indigenous peoples have been protecting their land against land theft, displacement and dispossession, colonial resource extraction and genocide.

The Just Recovery Coalition occupies the traditional lands of the Huron-Wendat, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and is now home to many diverse Indigenous communities. This land is governed by the [Dish with One Spoon Wampum](#) and the [Two Row Wampum](#) and furthermore [Between the Lakes Purchase Treaty, 1792](#). We acknowledge that we are treaty people and live in the contradiction of being treaty peoples in the midst of broken treaties.

As we commit to a Just Recovery in what some of us now call Hamilton, we also commit to the principles of the caretakers of this land: to bring peace, to come with a caring heart for all that is alive, to act in respect and kindness to one another, and to not take more than what we need so our future generations can enjoy the abundance of this land. A Just Recovery cannot happen without having bold actions, commitments and accountability from the City of Hamilton and its residents and institutions to uphold Indigenous rights, Indigenous self-determination and Indigenous sovereignty.

Recognition and Thanks

The Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition would like to express gratitude to all of the contributors who participated in creating the 2023 Policy Paper. In the creation of this paper, we drew from many sources, including the work of local journalists, published academics and community groups across the country. However, this work would not have been possible without the perspectives of those listed below. This policy document is shaped by their commitment to change, tireless work, willingness to share their knowledge and diverse perspectives. A special thanks must go to Sunny Singh, who graciously produced the beautiful illustrations used in both Just Recovery Policy Paper.

ACORN Hamilton – Members and Staff and Maria Antelo
Art Gallery of Hamilton - Sara Dickinson
Bay Area Climate Change Council - Zoe Green and Lauren McAusland
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Executive Summary:

In November of 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic's negative impacts continued to impact our city, a group of non-profit organizations gathered to collectively wonder how they might create a Just Recovery for Hamilton. They hoped to use their collective voice to make recommendations on how the City of Hamilton could chart a new direction in allocating city funds and implementing policies that might benefit members of our community. From that deliberation, the Coalition made local history when they released a policy document focusing on recommendations for improving life for Hamilton residents during the COVID-19 pandemic. The paper, [A Just Recovery For Hamilton: Municipal Policy, Investment and Opportunities for a more equitable Covid-19 recovery in 2021](#), was released in advance of the deliberations for the 2021 Budget.

That document and collaboration made a clear case that our collective success rests in intersectional and interconnected solutions. The policy paper focused on key overlapping priorities and made 153 policy recommendations to be actioned by local leaders. It was intended to be a conversation and policy primer to help explore more equitable recovery options and push back against the austerity narrative. It was not designed to be an exhaustive list of all the challenges facing the City of Hamilton. The Coalition's experiences and interactions with the communities they support and engage with provided the framing for the document. The goal of the paper was to highlight the way the pandemic was experienced disproportionately. The report outlined the city's historical challenges and argued that the COVID-19 pandemic had exposed and exacerbated systemic issues. The Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition laid out core values and suggested some changes the city could make to build a more sustainable, more just and inclusive city.

Our Coalition would like to thank the municipal staff and city council members for their adaptive response to the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and for working to implement some of the recommendations from the Just Recovery Policy Document. The City of Hamilton has been engaged and responsive to many of our residents' evolving needs. We continue to acknowledge that some of the recommendations are outside the scope of the city, that city funds are not limitless, and that budgets continue to be strained by factors outside our local control.

However, the challenges facing our community remain great – and there is still much work to be done... With renewed urgency, the Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition is submitting a new policy paper for consideration. This paper will explore some of the ongoing challenges we face as a city and explore how the compounding crisis exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic continues to generate a need for urgent action on behalf of our most vulnerable and marginalized residents. It will also provide a roadmap for our newly elected leaders to empower them to lead with compassion and care.

The following recommendations provide an equitable direction for the City of Hamilton as the 2023 capital and operational budgets are deliberated. The principles of equity, diversity, inclusion and recovery inform them.

This paper is the work of the Just Recovery Coalition, and as with the previous work, is not a comprehensive account of all the issues facing our city. We are only a few organizational voices, and our ongoing just recovery can only be strengthened by ongoing consultation and engagement by the City of Hamilton. We submit this resource to forward a discussion of elements required for a Just Recovery in Hamilton.

The previous paper's policy recommendations are listed in Appendix A.

Bold Ideas in a Time of Change:

In 2022, Hamilton residents elected a new city council consisting of nine new councillors and a new mayor. The 2022 election was widely regarded as a 'change election' with the residents of Hamilton electing leaders they hope will bring transparency, new perspectives and bold ideas to tackle the city's challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many long-hidden problems and revealed deep rifts in how we care for and support our city's most marginalized residents. Many candidates for council and the mayor's office campaigned on platforms that advocated for change. We hope the nine themes of the Just Recovery Hamilton Coalition Policy Paper can guide newly elected leaders to turn promises into actions. Those themes are:

- **Investing in Women**
- **Housing as a Human Right**
- **Mobility Justice**
- **Disability Justice**
- **Tackling Systemic Racism**
- **Investing in decent jobs, decent wages and our local economy**
- **Focus on Inclusive City Building**
- **Supporting Two-Spirit, LGBTQIA+ Communities**
- **Investing in Green Infrastructure.**

The new Hamilton City Council has an opportunity to develop a new set of priorities for the next four years. The upcoming 2023 municipal budget will be one of the most important in Hamilton's history. Hamilton City Council will choose how we rebuild after the COVID-19 pandemic. They can prefer to continue on a path of austerity, which could further impact Hamilton's most vulnerable residents or choose a more Just Recovery by investing in people and communities. A Just Recovery requires a commitment to expanding our investments in the most vulnerable communities in Hamilton. Hopefully, this new city Council will explore and implement the solutions offered in this paper. The Covid-19 crisis has shown we can work collectively to address the challenges of our times. This council has a historic opportunity to chart a new course, building a better city than the one that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic. We are excited to collaborate with the City of Hamilton to make progress on our policy recommendations from the 2021 Policy Paper and this 2023 update. We hope the new leadership in Hamilton will lead with their hearts and work in good faith with residents, organizations and groups toward a better city for all. Let's collectively work to ensure Hamilton is the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

Hamilton is a City in Crisis:

Marginalized communities continue to bare the disproportionate impacts of compounding crises facing our city. The pandemic's impact is disproportionately felt by racialized communities, our trans and gender-diverse neighbours, low-income residents, women, seniors and people with disabilities. The minimum wage has barely moved, and wage increases are not keeping pace with inflation. Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), pensions, Canada Pension Plan Disability (CPP-D), Old Age Security and other government income supports continue to keep residents trapped well below the poverty line. The cost of living has increased dramatically over the past year. Food prices are rising faster than most other essential goods. Rents across Hamilton continue to skyrocket, with the average cost for a one-bedroom rental in Hamilton over \$1,700 a month. Lockdowns created conditions for increased gender-based violence since the start of the pandemic. Overdose deaths increased throughout the pandemic as social isolation took a toll on many residents' mental health. The Climate Crisis continues to be a significant concern, with extreme weather events increasing yearly. Hamilton's long struggle with systemic racism and undercurrents of hate continues as far-right extremists proliferate, finding fertile ground to gather and increase organization online. For decades, activists living with the effects of these deep systemic issues have rallied, protested and raised the flag to

anyone who would listen. Before the pandemic, Hamilton's artists were struggling. During the lockdowns, artists faced mass unemployment. The crisis of precarious and low-paying work has persisted throughout the pandemic. Finally, there is a growing crisis of despair in Hamilton, with more and more residents convinced that their government is incapable of alleviating the city's problems. In this section, we will review the crises facing our city to outline the current state of inequality in Hamilton and the more recent impacts of the pandemic on our healthcare system.

Inequality in Hamilton:

Significant wealth and health disparities across the city intensified during the pandemic. The Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton (SPRC) found that “neighbourhoods with high proportions of racialized residents have high rates of COVID-19 infections”. For example, people who identify as Arab, Middle Eastern, West Asian, Black, and East or Southeast Asian have experienced a higher rate of COVID-19 cases compared to non-racialized community members.

According to the SPRC, the disproportionate impact on people who are racialized, low-income, seniors, or living with a disability is due to three factors: 1. differential exposure – for instance, the inability to work from home, job security, access to paid sick leave, living conditions (number of people in the household, number of household units in residence), reliance on services such as public transit and childcare; 2. differential susceptibility – referring to biological factors such as age, exposure to disease, underlying health issues; and 3. differential treatment – access to and experiences with the health care system. There is also continued inequality between the different geographic areas of Hamilton. For example, Hamilton Centre is the 3rd poorest federal riding in the country, with a median income of \$43,717, whereas Flamborough Glanbrook is the 34th richest, with a median income of \$99,355. Hamilton Centre has a life expectancy of 6 years lower than Flamborough Glanbrook.

The 2019 “Code Red: Ten Years Later” study found that inequality between neighbourhoods in Hamilton has increased over the past decade. Comparing the two downtown neighbourhoods of Census Tract (CT) 17 (south of Aberdeen Avenue) and CT37 (between Queen Street and James Street) – which are less than a kilometre apart – we see massive wealth and health inequality. In CT17, the average life expectancy is 81 years, and in CT37, it is 66.4 years. Our neighbours living rough in Hamilton, concentrated mainly in the lower city, have an even worse life expectancy of 43 years. Those suffering from Homelessness have a life expectancy of half that of those living in more affluent neighbourhoods.

The median household income in the Aberdeen Avenue area is \$118,000, while between Queen and James Street, it is \$20,500. In CT17, 4.5% of residents live in poverty. In CT37, the poverty rate is 46%, with over half of the seniors in the neighbourhood living in poverty. Wealth inequality is also explored in the original Just Recovery policy paper. However, skyrocketing rents and housing costs continue to be significant drivers of inequity in our city. The pressure of added inflation, seeing the cost of household goods increase, has put additional pressure on all residents, particularly those on fixed incomes. Government incomes continue to lag behind.

Unemployment and Poverty in Hamilton:

Hamilton's picture of overall poverty and unemployment is mixed. There has been a decline in general poverty in Hamilton over the past five years. The percentage of low-income Hamilton residents declined from 15% in 2015 to 11% in 2020. Much of this is due to a significant decline in child poverty in Hamilton and the country. Between 2015 and 2020, child poverty in Hamilton declined from 21% to 13%. The drop in poverty can be attributed to the Canada Child Benefit introduced in 2016 and the temporary pandemic support of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB) and Canada Recovery Benefit (CRB).

While the CERB/CRB was not perfect and excluded many who needed aid during the pandemic, its impact on the economic recovery was extremely positive. The CERB/CRB programs increased the disposable income of the poorest

20% of Hamilton residents, allowing them to buy essentials for their families. CERB/CRB was likely a critical factor in the rapid drop in national unemployment from a peak of 13.7% in May 2020 to 5.1% in November 2022. Low-income Hamilton residents could buy more goods and services, creating more demand. The increased need led to employers hiring more workers. CERB/CRB reduced poverty and helped thousands of Hamilton residents get back to work.

Unfortunately, women workers have still not gained back all the jobs they lost during the pandemic. In March 2020, 63% of all pandemic job losses were women. Workers aged 15-24, women and part-time workers were the hardest hit by job loss between February and July 2020. Once the initial lockdowns ended in May 2020, men's jobs returned more than twice as quickly as women's jobs.

Poverty among seniors and those with disabilities in Hamilton has increased over the past several years. From 2016 to 2021, Hamilton's senior's poverty rate rose from 11% to 12%. Old Age Security increased only slightly during the pandemic. Private employers have also reduced the economic security of seniors by reducing pension benefits over the past several decades. Social services providers in Hamilton have reported increased instances of seniors being evicted from their homes, often for the first time.

For people in Hamilton on provincial social assistance, the picture has grown dire since the publication of our last paper. Evictions and the affordable housing crisis see more residents losing their homes. A single person on ODSP in Hamilton has an annual income of \$9,600 below the poverty line or Low-income cut-offs (LICOs). A single person on Ontario Works lives on \$11,590 below that same measure. Since our last paper's publication, the Ontario Government has provided only a small increase to ODSP core allowance rates of 5%. The basic monthly benefit for a single person on ODSP went from \$1,169 to \$1,228, an increase of about \$58 per month. There was no increase to Ontario Works; it remains fixed at a maximum of \$733 for a single person. Residents across all low-income brackets are struggling to put food on their tables. Rates for Ontario Works have been frozen since 2018 and fall hundreds of dollars short of what an individual needs to cover, even the most modest rental accommodation or food. 75% of all people visiting food banks in Hamilton rely on social assistance.

Healthcare and Seniors' Care:

During the pandemic's first wave, a staggering 81% of all deaths related to COVID-19 in Canada were patients or workers at Long Term Care Homes (LTCs). That is over double the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) average. One of the worst COVID-19 outbreaks in the country occurred at the Grace Villa LTC Home in Hamilton. From November 2020 to January 2021, 44 of the 156 Grace Villa residents passed away from COVID-19. As reported by the Hamilton Spectator, when the Rossllyn Retirement Residence in Hamilton was evacuated due to an outbreak, one resident was left in the home without care for 18 hours. The Canadian Armed Forces Report on Long-Term Care released in May 2020 found that LTC Homes across the province were significantly understaffed, lacked PPE and left seniors in poor conditions without care for hours. Healthcare workers and advocates have been raising flags about the chronic underfunding and understaffing of seniors' care for decades but have been ignored.

Healthcare workers have dealt with hallway medicine and low wages in the hospital setting for years. The pandemic has pushed our hospitals into a further state of crisis. With the continued pandemic, a flu season and the emergence of Respiratory Syncytial Viruses (RSVs) this winter, our city's emergency departments are overflowing. According to a Government of Ontario report, Hamilton has one of the longest average emergency department wait times in the province. This winter's high influx of sick children has resulted in the McMaster Children's Hospital converting its lobby into a children's walk-in clinic. In 2021, the number of what paramedics call 'code zeroes,' which is when there are only one or no ambulances available to respond to emergencies, tripled from 2020 to 2021. Despite the incredible efforts of Hamilton's healthcare workers, there are not enough funding, staff and hospital beds to accommodate the influx of patients.

The Ongoing Pandemic:

The pandemic continues to endanger the lives of many Hamilton residents. More Canadians died of COVID-19 in 2022 than in 2020 or 2021. As of January 2023, over 71,000 COVID-19 cases in Hamilton and 650 Hamilton residents have lost their lives to the virus. Many people have had to continue to self-isolate in some form. Though widespread vaccine usage has undoubtedly saved many lives, the impacts of the pandemic continue to be felt disproportionately. Vaccine access, especially in marginalized communities, is an ongoing concern.

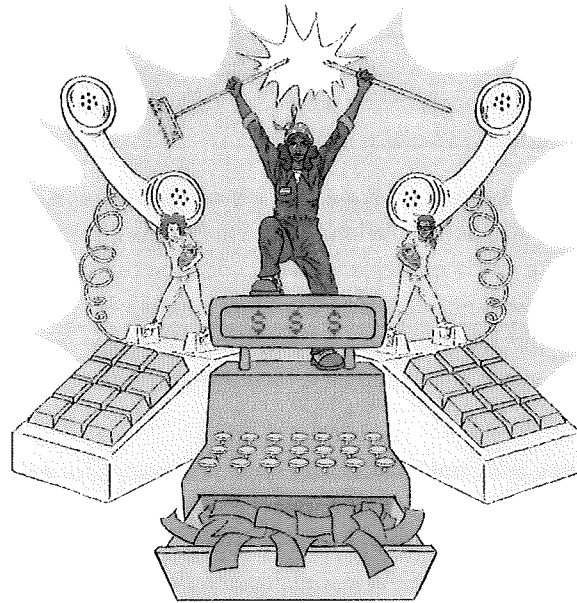
The removal of public health protocols such as public masking, vaccine certificates and capacity limits in indoor spaces in 2022 increased the risk of contracting the virus. Seniors in long-term care homes, students and education workers in classrooms and essential workers across the city now face additional infection risk without the added protection of masking requirements measures. Frontline workers, disproportionately people of colour, continue by nature of their work to be at greater risk of infection. People living with disabilities, those with pre-existing or otherwise complicating health conditions, immunocompromised people and seniors still face threats of disease and limits on their ability to interact in the broader community.

Long COVID is emerging as a new challenge and could have long-term implications for exposed Hamilton residents. They have displayed symptoms such as shortness of breath, fatigue, headaches, palpitations and varying mental health and cognition impairments. What the long-term implications are is still a subject of ongoing study. However, every new infection of COVID-19 risks another case of Long Covid. All leadership should consider this emerging secondary public health crisis in the City of Hamilton as the pandemic is far from over.

City of Hamilton Ambulance – Source CBC Hamilton



Investing in Women:



"Breaking the Broom"

A Gendered Lens for the City of Hamilton:

The City of Hamilton must use a gendered lens for all city decisions. Policy decisions can often impact women and gender-diverse people differently, as they are more likely to live in poverty, experience homelessness and have increased expenses due to caring for dependents. Establishing a Task Force situated within the Office of the Mayor would ensure a gender lens is applied to all of the city's decisions. The task force must reflect the diversity of lived experiences and positionalities of all women in the City of Hamilton. Racialized women, Trans women, low-income women and others must be included.

The City of Hamilton must use a gendered lens for all decisions by:

- 1. Ensure intersectional gender analysis (GBA+) is conducted, by women and non-binary people, on all forthcoming pandemic policies not only for understanding differential impacts but also for designing policies.**
- 2. Establish a Task Force out of the Office of the Mayor on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; the Task Force could ensure the implementation of a gender budgeting process.**
- 3. Plan a Gender Inclusive Economic Development Plan, one focused on supporting financial independence for women and non-binary people.**

Gender-Based Violence:

Gender-based violence has increased during the pandemic, with domestic violence charges in Hamilton rising from 1,186 in 2016 to 1,657 in 2019. Many sexual assaults are not reported to the police; therefore, these numbers only capture a fraction of the crisis. Housing costs magnified the challenges of breaking from an abusive partner, which advocates have called a "shadow pandemic." The compounding crisis of housing and COVID-19 has increased control and manipulation by abusive partners and intensified both the rate and severity of intimate partner violence. Across Canada, police-reported sexual assault reached the highest level since 1996 in 2021, increasing by 18% from 2020 to 2021.

Most sexual assault centres in the province – including the Sexual Assault Centre (Hamilton and Area), SACHA – have not seen funding increases that matched the inflation rate since the 1990s. During the pandemic, SACHA did not receive any extra funds from the provincial or municipal governments. As a result, SACHA has a 5-7 month waitlist for survivors of sexualized violence wishing to receive counselling services; this is an unacceptable timeframe for someone in crisis to access support. The pandemic created what advocates call a "perfect storm," as partners need to self-isolate together while dealing with new stresses such as job loss, increased financial pressure, children being at home during the day and social isolation.

Sexual assault centres are vital because they help survivors who are working through trauma, often years after the assaults take place. Given the high rates of gender-based violence during the pandemic, the counselling services at these centres are stretched thin. Sexual assault centres are distinct services from shelters filling a different but critical role.

SACHA operates a 24-hour telephone support line and online chat/text for survivors and allies. They get frequent calls from educators, nurses and other helping professionals to refer clients in need of support. SACHA noted that many survivors utilized the online chat to become comfortable speaking about their experiences. Public education on healthy relationships, consent, bystander awareness, how to respond to disclosures and education for high school students is a vital service sexual assault centres provide to the community. We know public education is a form of abuse prevention. Unfortunately, SACHA only has one public educator for all of Hamilton. More resources would allow them to do more prevention work. Sexual assault centres also do important outreach to diverse communities in the city. Indigenous women, women of colour and Trans and nonbinary individuals are disproportionately affected by sexual assault.

In order for the City of Hamilton to begin to address gender-based violence and sexualized violence, it must:

- 4. Increase financial investment in local sexual assault centres. More funding will allow the centres to meet demands for Public Education and Prevention sessions and hire more Sexual Violence Counsellors to shorten existing waitlists for survivors.**
 - a. Fund the 'Take Back the Night event so that SACHA can maximize Abuse Prevention funds on direct support for survivors of sexualized violence and public education initiatives.**
 - b. Fund the Program Support Worker position at SACHA so the Crisis Support Chat and Text lines can be managed and readily available to survivors.**

Childcare:

Over the next several years, the City of Hamilton will implement the Canada-wide Early Learning and Childcare Agreement in Hamilton. They will be responsible for using municipal, provincial and federal funding to create more high-quality childcare spaces in Hamilton. The City of Hamilton is responsible for ensuring safe, reliable, affordable and high-quality childcare is available in every neighbourhood in our city.

There is a shortage of childcare spaces in Hamilton. Only 27% of children in Hamilton have access to a licensed daycare space, compared to 44% Canada-wide. 70% of children 12 and under in Hamilton live in “childcare deserts.” Childcare deserts are areas with three or more children aged 12 and under for every single childcare space available. Childcare deserts are not confined to one geographic area – neighbourhoods in Glanbrook to the East End to the Mountain contain childcare deserts. For instance, on the East Mountain, the Sherwood neighbourhood childcare facilities only have the capacity for 3% of children in that area. The lack of childcare has resulted in guardians needing to wait on childcare waitlists or travel to different parts of the city for services. Many parents who take maternity leave cannot find childcare when they are expected to return to work. Full-time employment for women in Canada has dropped from 70% before the pandemic to 62% in June 2022; the lack of childcare spaces and affordable childcare spaces is a constant barrier to employment for women.

Research on childcare in Canada has repeatedly shown that children with access to childcare are more likely to graduate from high school, are less frequently incarcerated, and have lower unemployment rates as adults. Every child in Hamilton deserves access to safe and reliable childcare.

To ensure that it is safe, reliable, affordable, and high-quality childcare in every neighbourhood in Hamilton, the City of Hamilton must:

- 5. Create a Strategic Plan for creating more childcare spaces in Canada in preparation for the continued rollout of the National Early Learning and Childcare Agreement.**
- 6. Expand the supply of available, affordable municipal daycare spots. Ensure that the newly created childcare spots are public and non-profit wherever possible.**
- 7. Keep the Child Care Affordability Plan and increase the \$10 subsidy to reduce the cost of childcare for families.**

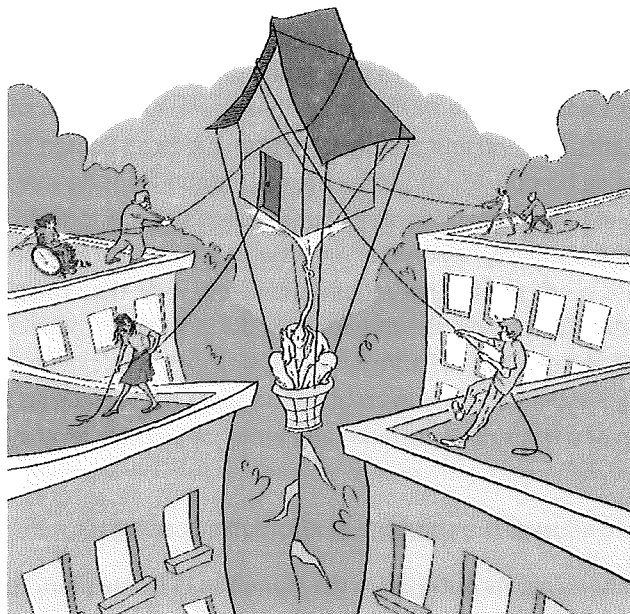
Supporting Women through Strategic Investment:

Many grassroots groups, organizations and collaborators do incredible work with limited resources to advance the needs of women and gender-diverse residents. These groups can provide invaluable support, engagement and consultation on various issues facing women across the city. A stable source of funding for their meetings, program delivery and capacity building would let these primarily volunteer-based organization expand their reach.

To realize a Just Recovery for women, the City of Hamilton must also:

- 8. Develop a dedicated fund to provide annual funding to groups like the Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG), Hamilton Anti-Human Trafficking Coalition (HAHTC), the Sisters in Spirit Committee of Hamilton (SIS), Sex Workers’ Action Program Hamilton (SWAP).**
- 9. Schedule biannual meetings with the WAWG, HAHTC, SIS, SWAP to receive information about the current realities for agencies serving women & survivors of gender-based violence.**

Housing as a Human Right:



“The Elephant in the Balloon”

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the fundamental need for housing as a requirement for safe living. As discussed in the previous *Just Recovery* policy paper, public health directives are aren't always possible for houseless residents to follow. Social inequities and lack of affordable, secure and accessible homes intersect, magnifying many of the challenges of inequality in our City. Homelessness has been rising in the Hamilton area as the affordable housing crisis has deepened since our last report. The pandemic has exacerbated an already dire situation fueling an economic crisis which sees large investors accelerate the purchase of real estate for profit, driving up housing and rental prices and further threatening affordability for those most in need. Home prices and rents in Hamilton have rapidly risen as people relocating from Toronto have flooded the area. Hamilton is now the 3rd most expensive City in North America. From 2016 to 2021, the average rent in Hamilton went up 41%, while incomes only increased 22%. Over the same period, the annual income needed to afford a one-bedroom rental unit in Hamilton nearly doubled from \$25,600 to \$48,000. Generally, rents in Hamilton are growing faster than the provincial average. Evictions have also increased significantly more than in the rest of Ontario. The Canadian human rights commission has written a damning case study on encampments and housing in Hamilton. The picture is grim. That report, *Case Study: Hamilton*, should be required reading for all our local leaders and decision-makers. The right to housing has been acknowledged in international agreements,

Housing is a human right – it is more than an aspiration. It is an obligation. The human right to housing is an obligation defined in the international treaties Canada has signed and ratified. With the National Housing Strategy Act, the human right to housing is now enshrined in Canadian law. The courts increasingly recognize housing as fundamental to Section 7 rights in the charter of rights and freedoms. Recent decisions in BC and Ontario suggest residents' rights to life, liberty and security include decent accommodation. In Ontario, the responsibility for delivering social housing rests with the cities. The City of Hamilton bears a duty of care to our most vulnerable to see them housed in accordance with our laws and international obligations

The Shortage of Affordable Housing in Hamilton:

It is understood that the shortage of affordable housing is not only a city of Hamilton challenge. During the 1990s, federal and provincial governments across Canada cut funding for social housing. Between 1990 and 2011, the number of social housing units declined by 5% while Canada's population grew. Social housing went from accounting for 10% of all housing in Canada in 1992 to 1% by 2007. In 1972, Canada built over 30,000 new social housing units. In 2010, we only built 1,000 social housing units. Federal and provincial funds have been limited to address the lack of investment in social housing. Hamilton is bringing on only 65 units of deeply affordable housing a year. Hamilton is Home does have 1000s of units in the planning and implementation stage but requires support to build. There is often a gap between federal funding and programs and the costs needed for an initial mortgage, survey, design and land acquisition. Not-for-profit housing providers also face much more strict requirements for credit than the private sector. The City of Hamilton is a significant landholder with excellent credit, reserve funds and a large social housing provider in City Housing Hamilton. Many tools to address the shortage of affordable housing exist and can be utilized to scale up social housing delivery. The City is undertaking a significant step in creating the Sustainable Housing Delivery Model and Investment Roadmap. The pending creation of a Housing Secretariat and hiring of Director level staff are welcome steps in taking on the affordable housing crisis

The City of Hamilton can begin to address the shortage of affordable housing by:

- 10. Building non-profit housing: As outlined in the Hamilton is Home plan, the City must provide the 10% funding needed for 3,000 new non-profit-built homes over the next three years. These homes will go directly to the affordable housing waitlist.**
- 11. Streamline the development, design and permitting process for not-for-profit construction and provide priority approval within the Economic Development and Planning office.**
- 12. Build on the existing council motion to develop a strategic land acquisition plan to ensure affordable and non-profit housing and other social services are built along the LRT corridor. While establishing this plan, city staff must consult community stakeholders such as non-profits, operators of emergency shelters, operators of childcare spaces and community groups.**
- 13. Create intergenerational housing options for indigenous people in Hamilton. Indigenous residents and organizations must inform this work. These units would have communal areas where elders can share knowledge with youth and private family units.**
- 14. Review all current "affordable market" rental buildings in the City of Hamilton and consider ways to acquire those buildings for City Housing Hamilton and Hamilton is Home not-for-profit partners to stem the loss of deeply affordable Market Housing.**
- 15. Become a developer of purpose-built rental units through City Housing Hamilton to provide a range of rental units at 50-80% of the Average Market Rate, plugging the gap left by a lack of market rental construction.**
- 16. Push the Ontario government for more permissive inclusionary zoning powers and pass Inclusionary Zoning by-laws on Transit Oriented Development corridors (TODs) to facilitate additional affordable housing**
- 17. Develop a specific levy yearly investment amount to build social housing in partnership with City Housing Hamilton and the Hamilton is Home not-for-profit coalition.**

Rapidly Increasing Housing Costs:

Mortgages and rents have been increasingly unaffordable for Hamilton residents over the past few years. According to the City of Hamilton's Housing Sustainability and Investment Roadmap, over \$500 million of investment will be needed by 2032 for the City's current stock of social housing to continue to house Hamilton residents. Younger Hamiltonians, specifically, are the fastest-growing group of renters in the City. Despite this, only 8% of renters aged 15-24 in Hamilton receive housing subsidies. As a result of the lack of subsidized housing, young single-parent renters are struggling to pay their rent, with 68% of them in core housing needs. The precarious situation of renters in Hamilton has allowed landlords to get away with illegal tactics such as requiring multiple months payment of rent prior to entry. Other illegal tactics include deposits for application, forcing credit checks, and disqualifying those on social assistance from the rental application process.

With the 2018 overhaul of Ontario's rent control policies, demoviction and renoviction have become a real fear for renters in Hamilton. The Hamilton experience of predatory developers and landlords, as they continue to force long-term tenants from their homes, increases the already acute housing crisis. Property owners can exacerbate illegal practices to worsen neglect of properties and buildings using COVID-19 to justify failing to do repairs and maintenance.

In order to protect tenants, the City of Hamilton must:

18. Expand the Tenant Defense Fund to cover N12s, N13s and tenant maintenance applications (T6).
19. Expand annual funding of the Tenant Defense Fund (increase funding available for tenants and investment in a tenant outreach component of the program).
20. Continue to advocate for the repealing of the provincial government's Bill 23. Once the Bill is repealed, look to examples from other municipalities and pass a landlord licensing by-law with substantial enforcement penalties. A city-wide landlord licensing program to ensure healthy housing conditions and restrict renoviction.
21. Create a comprehensive landlord licensing policy, like Toronto's RentSafe program, to proactively inspect buildings with more than five rental units.
22. Continue to work with community partners to develop an anti-renoviction policy based on the policy in New Westminster, BC.
23. Create a city-wide rental replacement and tenant assistance policy to protect tenants from demoviction and prevent loss of affordable housing.
24. Work with the Hamilton Community Legal Clinic to consider alternative delivery models for the Tenant Defense Fund such as directly funding staff paralegals.



ACORN Members Protesting Displacement – The Hamilton Spectator

Affordable Housing Waitlist and Homelessness:

There are over 5,700 households on the City's affordable housing waitlist as of 2021. Only 9% of the applicants on the waitlist have thus far been housed. As of 2019, 45% of Hamilton renters live in unaffordable housing. More than one in five renters in Hamilton spends half of their income on rent. The number of houseless residents in Hamilton has increased dramatically, with over 1,600 individuals currently experiencing houselessness, compared to 1,300 in 2021. It is also essential to consider that the current shelter system lacks harm reduction practices and is not always accessible for families, disabled residents and those who use substances. Shelters can also be unsafe spaces for Two-Spirit and LGBTQIA+ people. The City must address these systemic issues by expanding the availability of safe, accessible, long-term housing options for houseless residents. Once considered a temporary measure, shelter beds are not viable alternatives to housing-first solutions like transitional and supportive housing. Every \$10 invested in supportive housing has an average savings of \$21.72 across the healthcare, social services and justice systems. A unit of supportive social housing costs only \$613/month; by contrast, a hospital bed is \$13,000/month, a correctional bed \$4300 a month and a shelter bed \$2100/month. Encampment eviction requires the significant presence of the City of Hamilton and Hamilton Police Services staff and serves as a costly and dehumanizing response to houselessness. Encampments are real-time evidence that the City of Hamilton is failing to fulfill its responsibilities of ensuring that housing is a human right.

The City of Hamilton can address houselessness by:

- 25. Saving Housing Subsidies: The City of Hamilton must cover the \$22.5 million shortfall the provincial government is leaving in housing subsidies to keep Hamilton residents in their homes and off the streets. The City must also advocate for the continuation of every housing subsidy program funded by the province that will end in March 2023. If the subsidies are not continued after March 2023, hundreds of Hamilton residents will be unable to pay their rent.**
- 26. Increase the income cap on rent subsidies and issue more rent subsidies to low-income renters in Hamilton. The current cap of an annual income of \$22,000 leaves many low-income Hamilton residents struggling to pay rent without any assistance.**
- 27. End all encampment evictions.**
- 28. Pass an encampments by-law that upholds housing as a human right in line with the recommendations of the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate:**
 - a. Stop the use of policing and law enforcement as a response to encampments.**
 - b. Provide funding and services and advocate for other levels of government – to support municipalities facing the disproportionate impact of addressing the existence of encampments and to invest in short- and long-term housing options and support for encampment residents.**
 - c. Ensure the meaningful participation of encampment residents in decisions that affect them.**
 - d. Recognize the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples and include them in the development of policy approaches to encampments.**
 - e. Address the conditions within encampments and provide access to essential services such as clean water, sanitation facilities, electricity, and heat when a permanent housing solution is impossible.**
- 29. Assist organizations and residents looking to provide creative solutions to the shortfall in the shelter and transitional housing system, including programs like Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS). This can be done by contributing to funding the projects.**
- 30. Increase the number of cooling centres in the summer and warming centres in the winter for houseless Hamilton residents and ensure they become permanently funded. The Hub is the only overnight warming centre funded for the 2022-2023 winter months, and these centres must be open 24 hours per day.**

Housing for Newcomers:

There is a shortage of suitable housing for newcomers in Hamilton, particularly for multi-generational families, as most social housing units are 1-2 bedrooms. Many are forced to stay in hotels while they wait for affordable housing and face challenges such as high rent, selective landlords, and often race-based discrimination from landlords. Many newcomers come to Hamilton only to find that they cannot afford a home in this City. Many have moved to other cities with more affordable housing options.

The City of Hamilton must support newcomers by:

- 31. Condemn discrimination by landlords against racialized newcomers, and develop translated resources to inform newcomers of their rental rights.**
- 32. Do everything within the scope of Municipal responsibility to preserve market 3+ bedroom units, which often serve as the first home of newcomer families in Hamilton.**

The Risk of Extreme Heat:

Climate change has increased the risk of illness and death from extreme heat. This danger is most exemplified by the heat dome that impacted British Columbia (BC) in the summer of 2021, the deadliest weather event in Canada to date. The BC Coroners Service confirmed that there were 619 heat-related deaths from that event, which took place from June 25 to July 1. A report by the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation found that Hamilton could have three times as many days of 30 degrees Celsius plus weather as it has had in the past 30 years. In September 2022, Hamilton ACORN released a "Beat the Heat" report which outlines how many Hamilton tenants are impacted by extreme heat. As the impacts of climate change intensify, heat waves are expected to increase. Excessive heat can lead to many health problems, such as heat exhaustion, heat cramps, heat stroke and death. It can also exacerbate pre-existing chronic conditions such as respiratory diseases and traumatic brain injury. Those most at risk from heat stroke-related health issues are people living with disabilities, seniors, those with lower incomes, and Indigenous, Black, and other racialized communities who disproportionately have reduced access to air conditioning. Hamilton's Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan has also identified extreme heat as a priority climate change impact.

The City of Hamilton must address the risks of extreme heat by:

- 33. Developing and implementing a maximum heat by-law for rental housing. Similar to Hamilton's minimum heat by-law, there must be a financial penalty for landlords who fail to comply with the maximum heat by-law.**
- 34. Track heat-related deaths and illness in Hamilton.**
- 35. Establish cooling centres throughout the City, especially along major transit corridors.**
- 36. Increase the number of publicly available water fountains and water-bottle refilling stations, especially in the lower city and dense concrete spaces.**



ACORN Members Protest for Maximum Heat By-Law – Hamilton Spectator

Affordable Housing for Women and Gender-Diverse People:

The City of Hamilton has recognized that most of the houseless population comprises women and gender diverse individuals – 53% of the unhoused population. This demographic is disproportionately affected by housing insecurity and experiences of "invisible homelessness," such as couch surfing or relying on survival sex work. Furthermore, they are often responsible for caring for families and are disproportionately impacted by landlords converting large homes into multiple rental units. To address this issue, the City of Hamilton must provide targeted services and support, such as increased transitional housing units, designated social housing units and rental subsidies, that align with the proportion of women and gender diverse individuals experiencing homelessness.

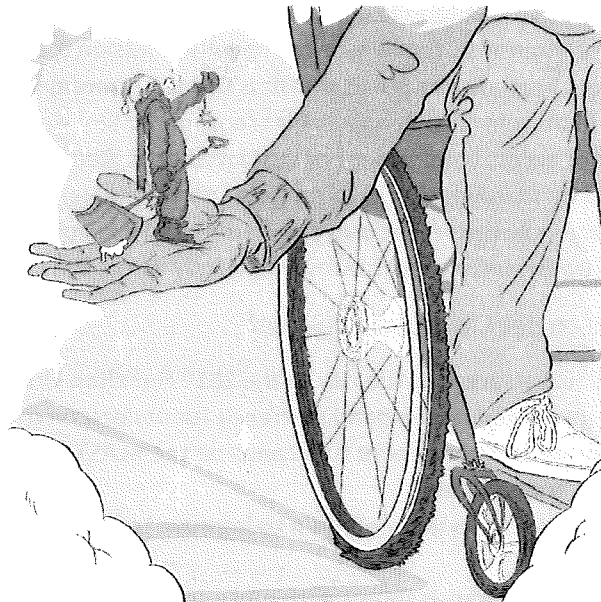
To better provide affordable housing for women and gender-diverse people, the City of Hamilton must:

- 37. Increase funding for affordable housing for women and gender diverse people.**
- 38. Invest in purpose-built transitional housing for women and gender diverse residents.**



Putman Family YWCA - YWCA Hamilton

Mobility Justice:



"A Little Help Goes a Long Way"

CARE FARE Transit:

Hamilton has implemented several programs to build a more equitable transit delivery system. The Golden Age transit pass, the pilot of free ridership for kids aged 6-12, and the Affordable Transit Pass Program offering half-price passes to those on OW and ODSP. CARE FARE seeks to build on these initiatives by removing all transit fare fees for students aged 17 and under, seniors, ODSP and OW recipients and anyone living with a disability. Implementing "CARE FARE" Transit would help dramatically increase movement options for our most vulnerable residents. It can provide a practical application to increase transit ridership and build a more equitable service delivery model for the Hamilton Street Railway. It can also offer a testing ground for showcasing fare-free service delivery models to other levels of government. Parents with kids outside school bus pickup zones are often forced to spend hundreds of dollars per year on transit fares or car ownership to get their kids to and from school. CARE FARE transit would cut costs for parents while building brand loyalty to the HSR among younger riders. As previously mentioned, Hamilton residents living with disabilities and seniors are more likely than others to live with low incomes and need reduced transportation costs. Commitments to these critical elements will support mobility justice while simultaneously making low or no-carbon transportation options more attractive to the degree that significant modal shifts away from private automobile use are facilitated. Transportation is one of our city's most important sources of community-generated greenhouse gas emissions.

To expand the use of public transit in Hamilton, the City of Hamilton must:

- 39. Implement CARE FARE Transit. CARE FARE transit eliminates all transit fare fees for students aged 17 and under, seniors, OW and ODSP recipients and people living with disabilities.**

Expanding Transit Across Hamilton by Ending Area Rating:

The transit area rating system is a unique to Hamilton taxation method for funding the HSR that was supposed to be temporary. It has created a multi-tiered transit system where communities outside the old city of Hamilton have reduced or no access to transit services. High-quality public transit is needed for residents of all communities to ensure mobility justice and prompt a model shift from cars. People in Binbrook, upper Stoney Creek, Ancaster and Waterdown are forced into car ownership to find or access employment or visit loved ones. Reliable transit across the city is needed to get workers and employers to our city's business parks. Area rating is inequitable, and the poorest city residents subsidize most of the richest. If you live in Ancaster, you pay one-third the HSR tax of people who live in east Hamilton. As a result, HSR is underfunded, and transit service levels vary significantly across the city's urban areas.

To expand public transit across Hamilton, the City of Hamilton must:

- 40. End Area Rating. Bring all urban areas of the city to the 2019 Hamilton Urban Transit rate. Create a plan to invest the new revenue generated into expanding transit for underserved communities across Hamilton.**
- 41. Expand the use of temporary and permanent BUS Lanes on the BLAST network and other major transit corridors to improve peak transit times.**
- 42. Create a BUS-only lane for transit up the mountain to improve travel times between the mountain and the lower city.**
- 43. Improve the frequency of public transit routes with more consistently timed frequent service levels.**

Making Transit More Accessible:

It is crucial to note that women, the disabled, the elderly and gender-diverse people are more likely than others to rely on public transit. Accessible transit can be the primary method of moving across the city for many residents. Residents with strollers, walkers, wheelchairs and other mobility devices face additional challenges when moving on our public transit system. Some of the city's bus shelters are in ditches, and bus stops can be placed in areas with no sidewalks. Inadequate or untimely snow removal can impede movement from home to HSR stops. Many bus stops do not have overhead lights, coverings or seats, presenting safety, comfort and accessibility concerns. Cabs in the city of Hamilton can now charge an additional \$10.00 fee for accessible vans. Even those eligible for DARTS service can often find scheduling the service challenging. DARTS drivers and users face additional safety risks posed by unsafe streets.

To make public transit more accessible for women and gender-diverse people, the City of Hamilton must:

- 44. Improve accessibility of transit stops by adding coverings, overhead lights and seating and move bus stops out of ditches.**
- 45. Determine which intersections have poor safety records and implement protection upgrades, especially in hospital, school and care facility areas.**
- 46. Perform neighbourhood-level sidewalk assessment and triage repair based on the mobility needs of our most vulnerable residents.**
- 47. Review arrival schedules for public transit for better alignment with GO services.**
- 48. Commit to making the investments required to fast-track the electrification of our transit fleet, including DARTS service vehicles.**
- 49. Perform neighbourhood-level sidewalk assessment and triage repair based on the mobility needs of our most vulnerable residents.**
- 50. Incentivizing the driving of accessible cabs in Hamilton by increasing the annual top of given to accessible cab drivers**
- 51. Increase the number of DARTS drivers and vehicles.**

Disability Justice



“Making Way”

The last few years of the pandemic have been tough on disabled people living in Hamilton. As last year’s report mentioned, they have not been prioritized in emergency responses or as we push to “return to normal.” We have constructed society to be a place where one’s value comes from their ability to produce. The systemic ableism of our society has doomed many disabled people, who cannot work, to lives of abject poverty and isolation in long-term care homes and residential care facilities. Our community can no longer consider accessibility as compliance with the narrow scope of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA). Policy discussions need to be centred around disability justice – the ways in which all institutions leave people behind on the basis of disability; ramps alone do not equal equality.

Healthcare Barriers on a Local Level:

Healthcare is under attack in Hamilton and across Ontario, as shown in the government spending \$859 million less than expected in this fiscal year on healthcare. Disabled people rely on a functioning healthcare system, and a failing system puts more pressure on the Hamilton municipality to take leadership in ensuring disabled people are protected. On a local level, our hospitals are still oversaturated, and healthcare workers are underpaid. The system is falling apart, and disabled people struggle to access care while some healthcare workers are experiencing homelessness.

There are steps the City of Hamilton can take to address some of these concerns:

- 52. Have the office of Public Health investigate the number of disabled people who are racialized or Indigenous who get turned away from emergency rooms for “drug-seeking behaviour.”**
- 53. Lobby against the privatization of our healthcare services, which will inevitably kill many disabled people.**
- 54. Reinstigate the indoor mask mandate on a municipal level to protect disabled people, the elderly and immunocompromised residents.**
- 55. Push for the repeal of the Ontario Triage Protocol. Disabled people deserve the same level of care as everyone else, but our hospitals still use this policy locally.**
- 56. Provide support for healthcare workers experiencing homelessness in Hamilton.**
- 57. Provide support for seniors attempting to stay out of Long Term Care, such as one-time subsidies for seniors looking to stay at home and age.**

- 58. Publicize lists of recent health and safety violations of any public and privately-owned Long Term Care homes in Hamilton. Provide this information to local hospitals that will refer clients to these institutions.
- 59. Implement free municipal parking around all public hospitals. Encourage Hospitals to end this practice. This will eliminate financial strain on patients and healthcare workers who are facing financial hardship.
- 60. Review wages, salaries and benefits in all municipal public health and increase them to meet the growing challenges of inflation.
- 61. Create and maintain a local list of how many disabled people in Hamilton use Medical Assistance in Dying due to poverty or out of fear of moving into Long Term Care.

Food Insecurity as it impacts people with disabilities explicitly:

Disabled people continue to face high rates of food insecurity. This is especially true today, where grocery prices are at an all-time high.

In order to realize a just recovery for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

- 62. Support grassroots groups that are keeping disabled community members fed (i.e., the Gore Park grocery giveaways that have been happening weekly for over a year).
- 63. Lobby for Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program to be doubled in rates.
- 64. Advocate for elimination of any punitive measures implemented at food banks (i.e., rules that state you must show identification for use or can only access services once a month).
- 65. Provide incentives for food banks to offer delivery services to limit the spread of COVID-19.
- 66. Work with all school boards to implement and support breakfast programs in schools where there are none.
- 67. Advocate for the release of prisoners held in Barton for any charges related to the theft of food. Advocate for an end to the criminalization of anyone who steals necessities.

Accessing temporary and permanent housing:

People with disabilities continue to have difficulty securing housing options that are both accessible and affordable. Many affordable units are unsuitable for people with physical disabilities, causing distressing and dangerous living situations. Without a basic livable income for disabled people who cannot work, many cannot afford rent on social assistance wages, leaving them the most likely to experience evictions. This leaves many disabled people in unsafe situations, either indoors or outdoors. Not all of the shelter spaces are accessible for people in wheelchairs.

In order to realize a just recovery for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

- 68. Create, maintain, and publicize a list of accessible housing units existing in Hamilton, making it easier for disabled people to find places to live.
- 69. Create and implement a municipal visitability policy similar to the United Kingdom. The UK visitability is a standard where all new developments must have a bathroom on the main floor of all new builds, and a percentage of accessible units in apartment buildings, so that disabled people can visit.
- 70. Incentivize the creation of more accessible housing units to coincide with the number of disabled people in our communities.
- 71. Assess and publicize how many accessible, temporary indoor housing options are available to unhoused people in Hamilton who cannot use stairs and/or have other physical disabilities.
- 72. Secure, accessible temporary housing options specifically for people with disabilities immediately. These options should include harm reduction services and be rooted in a disability justice framework.
- 73. Meet with the Accessible Housing Network of Ontario to learn more about changes they would like made to the Ontario Building Code.

Addressing Violence against People with Disabilities

People with disabilities are still two times more likely than anyone else to experience violence or hate crime based on disability, according to reports from the Disabled Women's Network of Canada. Women with disabilities are more likely to experience physical, sexual, emotional and financial abuse.

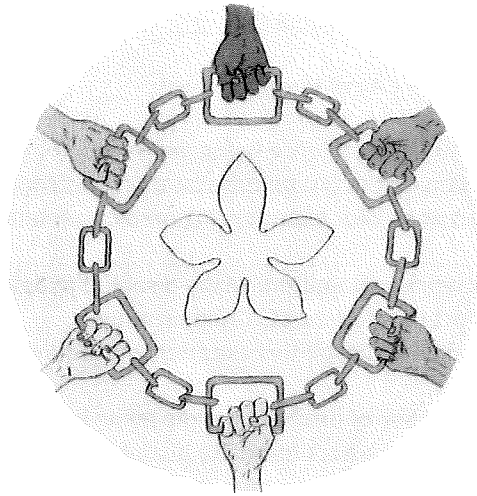
In order to care for people with disabilities, the City of Hamilton must:

74. Work with community groups to track violence being experienced by disabled people in Hamilton.
75. Advocate for the Health Care Consent act to be reinstated. It was repealed during the pandemic, and its repeal specifically puts women at risk for experiencing medical violence where consent is no longer required.
76. End the criminalization of sex work in Hamilton. Many disabled people are sex workers who experience violence that they cannot report due to fear of criminalization.
77. Ensure that services for women with disabilities experiencing violence are accessible, and make accessible shelter spaces searchable online.
78. Release updated data on the number of disabled people living in Hamilton.
79. Build emergency preparedness that centers disability justice and inclusion for all natural disasters, extreme weather, and pandemics.
80. Work with SACHA to create supports specifically for disabled survivors.
81. Implementing a disability justice and inclusion training for all senior staff and elected officials at the City of Hamilton.



#JustRecoveryHamOnt

Tackling Systemic Racism:



“The Chain”

There is an ongoing problem of hate in Hamilton. High-profile incidents downtown exemplify that ongoing issue, including a bomb threat towards the Ibrahim Jame mosque, white supremacist hate messages and swastikas graffitied outside Hamilton’s Farmers’ Market. These shocking examples and others are unacceptable indications of the growing current of hate facing the City. In the previous Just Recovery Policy Paper, we noted that in 2019, Hamilton was declared the ‘hate capital of Canada’ with the highest rate of hate-related incidents in the country. Hamilton also had the highest rate of hate incidents in 2018, 2016 and 2014. Black and Jewish Hamilton residents were the most targeted by hate crimes in 2019. New data from a survey by the Community Safety and Well-Being Plan’s Advisory Committee showed an alarming 35% of Indigenous residents reported being a victim of verbal attack. In 2021, more hate crimes were committed in Hamilton than in all of 2017, 2018 and 2019 combined. Hate incidents in Hamilton increased by 35% from 2020 to 2021. There were more reported hate-related incidents in Hamilton in 2021 than in any year since 2012.

Emboldened by the rise of the far right in Canada and abroad, incidents of Transphobia, homophobia, racism, misogyny, xenophobia directed at immigrants, islamophobia, anti-Black racism, anti-Indigenous racism, ableism and medical disinformation are on the rise. The City of Hamilton must have zero tolerance for hate and be an active participant in the struggle against hate in Hamilton. Over the past several years, there have been numerous highly publicized instances of hate in our City. While this is not an exhaustive list of all hate incidents in Hamilton, some examples of recent hate incidents are included in Appendix B.

Tackling the Rise of Hate and Racism:

The City of Hamilton should provide annual operational funding to organizations already working to tackle racism and hate. These funds will allow them to do public workshops and education programs while expanding their capacity to work towards eliminating hate in the community. Funding will also support training for organizations, institutions and workplaces to identify and eliminate structural racism in their institutions and practices. Additional support and resources would expand the ability of organizations such as the Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HAARC) to provide local programming and community support. In order for the centre to meet the needs of the community and provide high level of community engagement, it will require sustainable operation funding. The centre’s city funding expires in November 2023, and without additional funding, the city risks losing critical support services dedicated to

confronting racism, hate and discrimination. This includes key programming related to workshops, data collection and community engagement and important resources necessary to meet the challenges of rising hate. No Hate in the Hammer's "Hamilton Community Response to Hate" is one such resource created by an organization that could be more widely delivered with improved funding and capacity.

The City of Hamilton can empower groups already working to tackle hate in Hamilton by:

- 82. Fully fund all Community Safety and Well-Being Plan aspects with committed dollars instead of an application-based system. The plan contains tangible actions to impact the hate incidents, violence, mental health and stigma, the overdose crisis, housing and homelessness and access to income. By robustly funding the plan, the City of Hamilton can improve the lives of vulnerable Hamilton residents.**
- 83. Create ongoing operational funding for groups already doing anti-racism/anti-oppression work in Hamilton.**
- 84. Work with groups who have already produced anti-racism resources such as the No Hate in the Hammer "Hamilton's Community Response to Hate" and assist them in expanding the distribution of these items through the City of Hamilton channels (including Councillor newsletters, Unions, social media, website and other forums).**

Creating a Culture of Anti-Racism at City Hall:

The City of Hamilton also needs what the Hamilton Centre for Civic Inclusion (HCCI) calls a "culture change" to tackle hate in the community better. The City needs to be an active participant instead of a bystander in dealing with structural and systemic racism. HARRC notes that the solution to systemic racism cannot be to hire a single EDI expert as the approach is unsustainable and centralizes responsibility. Instead, the City of Hamilton should take action to address systemic racism through an internal call to action. All city staff should actively participate in identifying and addressing racism and discrimination, including providing anti-racism/anti-oppression training and incorporating anti-racism/anti-oppression measures into job descriptions.

In order to become an active participant in efforts to combat hate in Hamilton, the City of Hamilton must:

- 85. Work with anti-racism organizations in Hamilton to explore how the City's staff from all city departments can work to identify and address instances of racism.**
- 86. Ban hate symbols, including the confederate flag in Hamilton (public and private property).**



Stop Hate Sign on Steps – Source CBC Hamilton

Reforming the Hamilton Board of Health:

Unfortunately, COVID-19 will not be our last pandemic. After the SARS pandemic, one of the key lessons learned was that the pandemic had disproportionate impacts on historically marginalized communities. Throughout the pandemic, the City of Hamilton did not adequately address the needs of marginalized residents, which can be attributed to a lack of representation on the Board of Health – primarily composed of white cis male city councillors.

An excellent example of an area a more inclusive Board of Health would have responded more quickly and equitably to was vaccine access. Those with experience and expertise in BIPOC, low-income, Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ communities would have identified the barriers preventing access to these life-saving measures. Non-profit and volunteer organizations worked with limited resources to fill the gap reactively. The City's rollout would have benefited from the experience and expertise of these communities through oversight on the Board of Health. This is just one of many examples during the pandemic in which diverse voices on the Board of Health could have better-shaped outcomes.

To build a more inclusive public health response, the City of Hamilton must:

- 87. Restructure the membership of the Board of Public Health to experts and members of the public from the following equity-seeking groups; women, people living with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, low-income communities, Black and Racialized communities.**
- 88. Use an EDI lens for membership in all future emergency response committees.**
- 89. Adopt equitable approaches to how citizen/resident appointees are made to Advisory Committees and other Boards and agencies.**

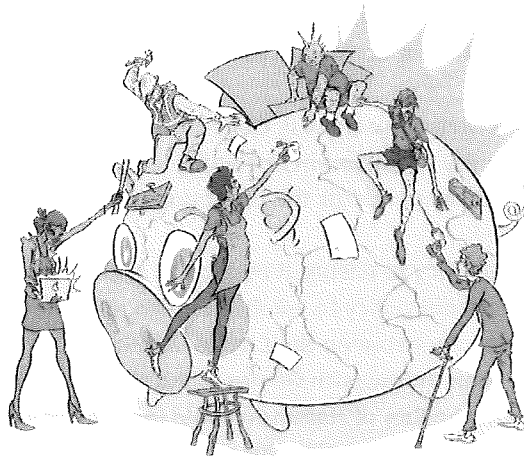
Building Reconciliation with those whose traditional lands we now occupy:

The City of Hamilton has begun the work of Reconciliation with its Urban Indigenous Strategy. We of the Just Recovery Coalition are not the voice for indigenous residents of these lands. Our members are each taking our own journey of reconciliation with the traditional stewards of this land. We wish to impart to the City of Hamilton that only the voice of Indigenous people can shape their relationships with the City of Hamilton. As such, we encourage staff, councillors and the Mayor to seek out those Indigenous voices, especially grassroots groups (eg the Hamilton Water Walkers, Kahnekanorn, and others) to learn from them what resources, words and actions those groups may require.

A step towards building Reconciliation could be:

- 90. Commit a portion of the City's operational and capital budget to its own Urban Indigenous Strategy.**
- 91. Creating an Urban Indigenous Office with Director level staff that might interface with indigenous peoples to build on Reconciliation and your own Urban Indigenous Strategy.**
- 92. Hire indigenous people to do work on indigenous matters.**
- 93. Provide ongoing operational funding to registered non-profits and non-registered grassroots groups (such as Hamilton Water Walkers and Kahnekanoron) if required.**
- 94. Recognize that the traditional City of Hamilton processes and practices may not align with the needs Indigenous community in our area.**
- 95. Assist registered non-profits and non-registered indigenous groups in finding accessible space for their activities.**

Investing in decent jobs, decent wages, and our local economy:



“Repair”

As documented in the previous policy paper, women, specifically women of colour, make up the majority of essential frontline workers in the 5Cs: caring, cashiering, catering, cleaning and clerical functions. Those sectors of the economy continue to lag behind male-dominated professions in job recovery. As the SPRC reports, although some improvement has been made, the pandemic's economic effects are ongoing, and the latest labour force data shows that the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (which includes Burlington and Grimsby) has approximately 8,800 fewer persons employed than before the pandemic. Statistics show that the pandemic disproportionately impacted younger women workers by the summer of 2020. This local data is not available by racialization status. Still, it is expected that they are similarly experiencing higher rates of job loss and lower rates of job recovery, as reported in national and provincial data. During the pandemic, the significant drop in employment hit service-sector jobs the hardest, a sector with a high rate of female, racialized and young workers. Workplaces such as retail, restaurants, childcare centres and hotels were particularly vulnerable to the shutdown; many closed completely for some time. *Women Out of Work: report by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce in partnership with YWCA Hamilton* shines a light on the economic effects of COVID-19 on women. It should be reviewed in great depth to gain a fuller picture of the Hamilton employment picture and its impacts.

Community Benefits:

Since the first Just Recovery Policy Paper, the City of Hamilton has made incremental gains in moving towards implementing social procurement and Community Benefits agreements. These include the creation of a community benefits advisory committee to begin reviewing how Community Benefits Agreements might help shape social outcomes in the City of Hamilton's spending. A formal agreement with Metrolinx and the province of Ontario in establishing the importance of Community Benefits and affordable housing as part of the Hamilton LRT construction. Much work remains as the City of Hamilton lags behind other jurisdictions in supporting employment outcomes through its operational and capital spending. The City missed an opportunity with the significant capital expenditure of \$300 million on bus storage and maintenance to learn from other jurisdictions and implement the federal government's recommended Community Employment Benefits.

To further advance the work of using Community Benefits, the city of Hamilton should:

- 96. Create a full-time (FTE) staff position dedicated to Community Benefits to work with the Community Benefits Advisory Committee and Hamilton Community Benefits Network (HCBN) to study CBA and social procurement policies from other jurisdictions.**
- 97. Begin piloting the implementation of Community Employment Benefits based on federally recommended guidelines.**
- 98. Work with HCBN to pressure Metrolinx and the Government of Ontario to sign a Community Benefits Agreement based on community engagement, including land for affordable housing.**
- 99. Insist the Hamilton Street Railway performs the operations and maintenance responsibilities for the Hamilton Light Rail Project.**
- 100. Review the City's Fair Wage Policy to ensure it meets the salary needs of employees in 2023.**
- 101. Insist on an open and transparent policy to establish a signed Community Benefits Agreement, outlining costs, benefits and commitments, between the City of Hamilton, Community groups and stakeholders for any large games events (eg. Commonwealth Games 2030) the City of Hamilton undertakes or supports.**
- 102. A simple Community Benefit the City of Hamilton could implement would be Signing the Ontario Living Wage Network declaration certifying that the City of Hamilton is a Living Wage organization and develop a plan to lift remaining City of Hamilton employees to the Hamilton Living Wage rate. This would increase the wages of all city workers to at least \$19.05 per hour.**

Investing in the Arts:

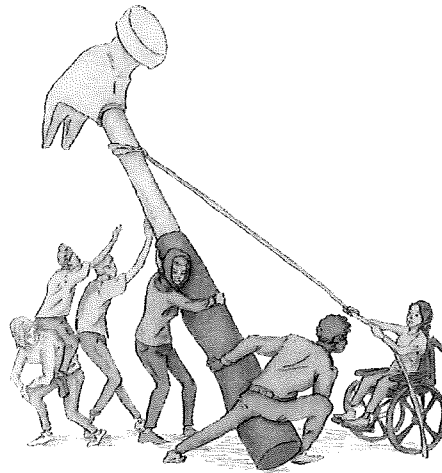
The Arts sector in Hamilton is grappling with profound employment challenges and recession. In 2020, jobs in the arts in Hamilton decreased 48%. Artists who kept their jobs worked 36% fewer hours than they had prior to the pandemic. The number of outdoor events in the city declined from 447 in 2019 to only 43 in 2020. Visits to galleries and museums fell by 82% in 2020. Film permits issued by the City of Hamilton dropped by 34%. The pandemic also magnified the income disparity within the arts sector. Across Canada, Indigenous artists earned 32% less than non-Indigenous artists. Racialized artists earned 28% less than non-racialized artists. Women artists earned 18% less than male artists. The overall average income for artists was only \$24,300. Artists repeatedly note difficulties establishing live/workspaces in our city. Artists of all kinds will need support from the City of Hamilton to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are ongoing issues for Hamilton artists that need to be addressed. Significant zoning and financial barriers exist to artists setting up live/workspaces. There is also a lack of highly visible online space promoted by the City of Hamilton, where Hamilton residents can search and connect with art and artists.

To support the art and creative sector, the City of Hamilton should:

- 103. Explore how to eliminate any zoning barriers to artists setting up live/workspaces.**
- 104. Wherever possible, eliminate costs for artists to put on programming for youth at Hamilton's recreation centres, parks and public spaces.**
- 105. Work to create a publicly available online space for artists in Hamilton to promote themselves and their work.**
- 106. Invest in a yearly increase in the Community Enrichment Fund**

Focus on Inclusive City Building:



"Community Tools"

Working to alleviate the Overdose Crisis:

Hamilton is facing an overdose crisis. Opioid-related deaths "have increased exponentially" from 26 opioid-related deaths in 2005 compared to 166 in 2021. Hamilton paramedics responded to 814 incidents related to suspected opioid overdoses in 2022, according to city data, compared to 430 such incidents in 2017. The opioid crisis will continue to impact many areas and intersect with other challenges exposed throughout the Just Recovery policy document. One essential tool in preventing drug-related deaths is access to safe drug supply in Hamilton and consumption spaces. Consumption at these sites is regulated and provides sterile injection supplies, lowering the risk of spreading infectious diseases such as HIV. Safe consumption sites provide education on opioid tolerance and the dangers of overdosing, housing support, employment support, addictions, and mental health counselling. According to Canada's Minister for Mental Health and Addictions, 41,000 overdoses have been reversed by safe consumption sites in Canada. As of December 2022, there have been no recorded overdose deaths in Canada at safe consumption sites.

The City of Hamilton should expand safe supply options and safe use sites with a comprehensive approach to community consultation and engagement. The community's involvement, including the participation of local city councillors, is vital in determining the location and implementation of these sites and reducing the associated stigma. Furthermore, it is essential to provide comprehensive wrap-around services, including housing, food security, mental health support and trauma support for individuals confronting addiction. It is crucial to consider substance use's complexity and approach the issue with a harm reduction perspective.

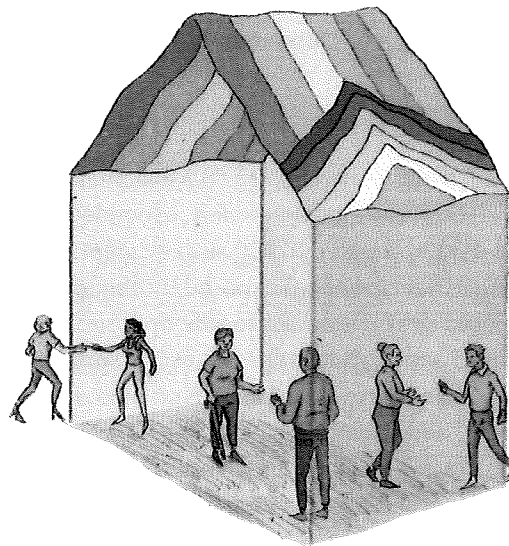
Harm reduction for those currently facing addiction is important, but equally important is preventing the root causes of addiction from occurring. There must be a massive investment in preventing the root causes of addiction. The Community Safety and Well-Being Plan mentions many of these preventative measures. The plan is multidisciplinary so that different departments can support each other in prevention work. It outlines factors such as violence at home, food insecurity, lack of housing, and low income, as considerable determinants of substance use. The challenge with a preventative approach is that it will not impact those already dealing with substance use. If we invest in preventive services for our youth, we will not see the full impact of that investment until they are adults. Policymakers need to understand that we will go through what HUCCHC describes as a "growing pain" where we will invest in harm reduction and prevention, but the overdoses may not immediately decline. Providing those with substance abuse issues with safe

supply and connecting them with housing will help prevent deaths and break intergeneration addiction cycles. Substance use over the long term will decline as the supported generation gets older, but in the meantime, people will still struggle with addiction. The overdose crisis is a complicated issue that will ultimately take years to alleviate.

The City of Hamilton can begin to alleviate the overdose crisis by:

- 107. Fully support and fund the Hamilton Drug Strategy.**
- 108. Explore increasing the number of safe consumption sites in Hamilton. When choosing the location of safe consumption sites, the City of Hamilton must conduct meaningful and continuous community consultation.**
- 109. Ensure any safe consumption sites created are tied to housing options for those who use the site.**
- 110. Fund services such as childcare, food security, housing and others prevent the traumatic experiences that lead to substance use.**

Supporting Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ Communities:



"A Roof for Everyone"

There have been many high-profile instances of transphobia and homophobia in Hamilton over the past several years, and anti-Trans protestors from across Ontario have found Hamilton to be the go-to place to express their harmful views. The City of Hamilton must consistently denounce hate before incidents occur so that Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ residents know the City of Hamilton supports them.

Creating a safer Community:

On the outstanding Business List for the City of Hamilton, one of the vital recommendations in our previous policy paper was creating a Community Hub for Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ Hamilton residents. The makeup of this space and the services and supports established there must be conceived with extensive consultation of those communities and identifying residents. This should be done with the guidance of Hamilton's advisory committees. Creating a feasibility study guided by the Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ residents would provide an invaluable resource for the concrete realization of such a HUB. Building that hub would show the Community that the City of Hamilton values their lives, safety, and mental well-being.

The City of Hamilton can create a safe space for the Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ community by:

- 111. By immediately Funding a complete Feasibility Study for the creation of this Community Hub**
- 112. Work with Metrolinx to identify possible Metrolinx-owned land for such a space**
- 113. Prioritize the procurement or creation of an accessible Two-Spirit LGBTQQIA+ Community Hub for diverse communities in the City near major transit routes.**
- 114. Consider the viability of additional accessible social housing above any Community Hub created to address core housing needs of LGBTQQIA+ communities.**

Addressing LGBTQQIA+ Core Needs

The City of Hamilton must provide shelter services specifically for Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ youth. As previously mentioned, shelter spaces are often unsafe for Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ people. The shelter space would have the obvious benefit of providing shelter, but it would also send a clear message to Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ youth that they matter in Hamilton. They need to know that they have a home in Hamilton and that their City will have their back in a time of need.

Community programs that support the Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ community in Hamilton also need to be funded to continue providing services such as drop-in sessions, peer-to-peer mentoring, and other events that help to continue to build the Community's well-being and safety

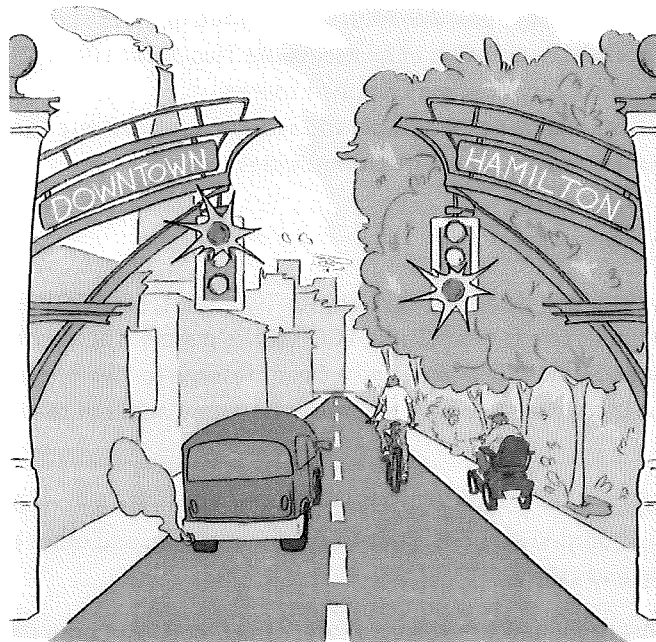
For members of the 2SLGBTQQIA + Community to realize a safe, caring, and just Community, the City of Hamilton must:

- 115. Create a Two-Spirit, LGBTQQIA+ specific shelter in Hamilton as soon as possible.**
- 116. Fund and increase financial support for Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ specific community programs and organizations, reducing isolation and providing peer support and connection. These programs are often the only places Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ youth feel safe enough to go for necessities like food. These community programs take on a wide range of needs because they are some of the few safe spaces for Hamilton residents in the Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community.**
- 117. Repeatedly and consistently condemn all forms of hate against the Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ community in Hamilton before incidents occur so that Hamilton residents know they have your support.**
- 118. Provide funding for and increase access to mental health services that specifically reach Two-Spirit and LGBTQQIA+ youth, seniors, and adults with disabilities.**



Pride Flag – Source Hamilton Spectator

Investing in Green Infrastructure:



“Invest in Green”

The Impacts of Climate Change on Hamilton Residents:

Hamilton continues to face a climate crisis. If global GHG emissions continue to rise, we will face increased flooding, storms, wildfires and droughts, creating greater food insecurity. There will also be an increase in refugees fleeing natural disasters worldwide. Hamilton will be called on as a welcoming city to provide some of their homes. There will be a massive loss of biodiversity, with one in five species in Canada currently at some risk of extinction. The City of Hamilton contains many beautiful natural and wildlife areas. It would be devastating to lose the incredible biodiversity of this city to climate change. The impending climate catastrophe leaves many young people in our city worried that they would not have a livable planet and a livable city in the future.

Staffing up to Fight Climate Change:

Hamilton has taken some significant first steps in tackling the climate crisis by creating the Climate Change Initiatives Office and hiring a director. This office will tackle important climate change initiatives and must be provided with staff resources. Initiatives such as retrofitting homes and city-owned buildings with energy-efficient insulation, providing loans for homeowners to replace their furnaces with electric heat pumps, electrifying public transit, building Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stations, planting trees, planting community gardens, implementing flood and erosion protection for parks trails and other outdoor spaces and revamping our city's stormwater maintenance. Along with fighting the climate crisis, these programs will aim to create good living wage jobs in Hamilton.

The City of Hamilton can implement plans to reduce Greenhouse Gas emissions by:

- 119. Staff up to fight climate change: The city's Climate Change Office must hire two additional full-time staff so the city can work on initiatives to fight climate change. The City of Hamilton's staff has recommended that two full-time equivalent staff be hired to implement the city's Climate Action Strategy.**

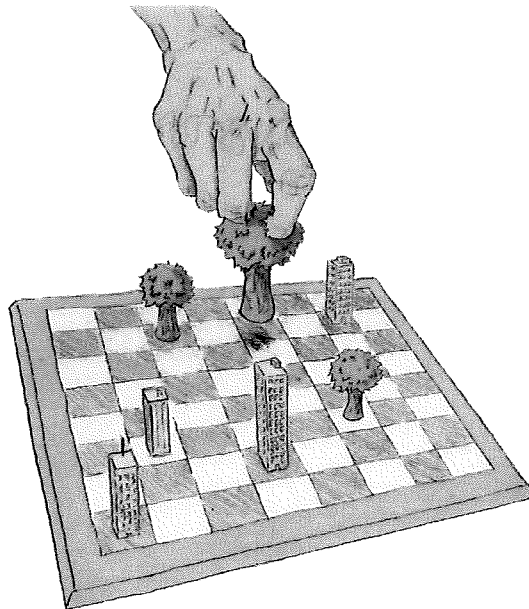
120. Fund the “ReCharge Hamilton: Our Community Energy and Emissions Plan” and “Hamilton’s Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan” so that the municipal financial commitments are made to implement the plans fully.
121. Lobby the federal government to provide funds for creating a Decarbonization Hub in Hamilton.
122. Establish a Community Climate Change Advisory Committee.

Ecosystem Services:

Climate Change will put extra strain on our current infrastructure like roads, water mains and wastewater pipes, adding to the maintenance debt. Work must be done to make them resilient to climate change, as proactive improvements will prove much less expensive in the long term than reactive repair and replacement. The city must also begin to recognize the value ecosystem services provide, including trees, greenspaces, farmland wetlands and floodplains across local watersheds, as part of the overall asset management and valuation.

In order to make Hamilton more resilient to the impacts of climate change, the City of Hamilton must:

123. Invest in protecting Hamilton’s “ecosystem services such as wetlands, floodplains, and natural areas.
124. Complete and begin implementation of the Urban Forest Strategy. This strategy must include an ambitious commitment to increasing Hamilton’s ‘Urban Forest Canopy Cover’ with a goal of 45% canopy cover equitably distributed across the municipality’s urban area.
125. Preserve and protect Urban Trees by developing a tree protection bylaw.
126. Implement a “fair” stormwater fee that charges companies based on how much of the stormwater system they use.

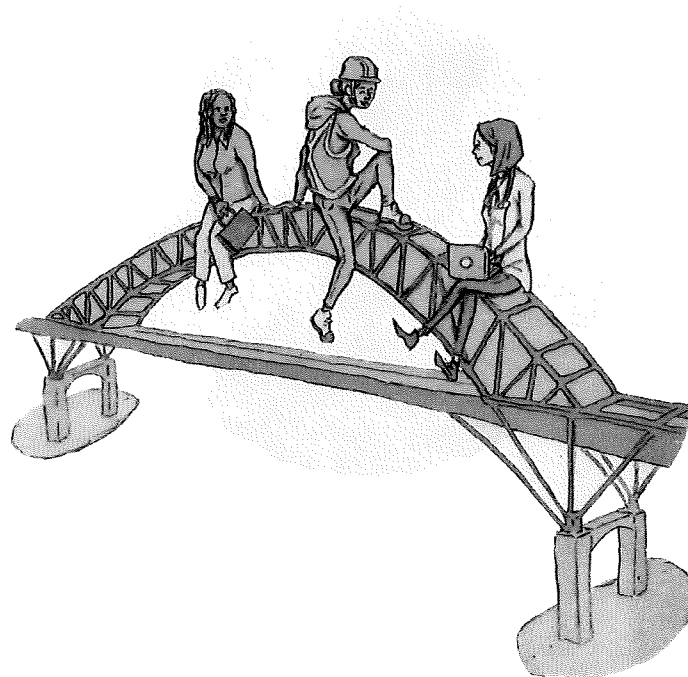


“A Greener Gambit”

Conclusion:

The compounding crises of our time are not insurmountable. We can overcome them through collective action, compassion and caring. In the first Just Recovery Paper, we outlined a vision of how we might respond to these crises and do more to build a just and more equitable society. The City of Hamilton has shown great willingness to adapt to our trying times with new ideas and models. Though a corporation as large as the City of Hamilton cannot change overnight, reasonable steps have been undertaken since the last policy paper. The City of Hamilton must continue to push forward with making investments into the problems worsened by COVID-19 and support our marginalized communities.

The historic election of our first woman Mayor and the first Hamilton councillor to openly identify as non-binary telegraph that change is possible. New faces and ideas now sit in leadership positions in our city. Although the complex and interconnected crisis of our times can seem overwhelming, this paper's authors share a renewed spirit of hope with residents. Perhaps we are moving into a time when the city response to our extraordinary times can be met with a paradigm shaped beyond monetary considerations. With an embracing of the spirit of hope tempered by firmly acknowledging deeply rooted systemic issues, we can audaciously explore Just Recovery, both in the coming months and well into the future. We cannot meet the profound inequality and hidden challenges the current pandemic has exposed with fear and austerity. We can, and with new and inspired leadership, must push for a Just Recovery for All.



"Women's Work"

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