

February 17, 2023

Dear Mayor & Councillors;

Not one of you ran on a mandate of the outrageous tax hikes you are now proposing. You are currently completely out of touch with your constituents. As such I have written the following recommendations to address this discrepancy in the hopes this council does not create a new source of homelessness among those whose incomes are not rising at the rate of tax increases you are proposing;

Reserves – The City has a systemic approach of overcharging Hamiltonians on their taxes creating billions of dollars on reserve with no plan for these funds.

- **Recommendation** – Immediately stop overcharging taxes and release these reserves.

Bike Lanes – I encourage you to observe Bike Lanes anywhere in the City, they are completely underutilized and, in some cases, not used at all.

- **Recommendation** - Immediately stop the expansion of Bikes lanes in the City and study why these Bike Lanes are underutilized or not used at all.

Hiring New Employees – Over the last year 250 fulltime roles were unfilled at the City and I openly question what has not been done? Why do we need to fill these roles if we can adequately function without these people. Similarly, the additional 50 or so roles the City is proposing to add this year will likely be unfilled. However, these same 300 positions are resulting in tax payers being overtaxed for these empty positions

- **Recommendation** – Remove these 300 vacant positions from the budget.

Climate Change – The City’s recommendation to convert City buildings from gas to electricity is ill conceived with an inability to make a tangible difference in the climate footprint while encumbering the City with an incredible cost structure. The City should be thinking boldly if the goal is to truly address climate, let’s ask how can we eliminate as much carbon as possible. This will occur through employees working from home and not commuting to work. During the “Pandemic” City employees worked from home which dramatically reduced carbon not because buildings were idled but because the employees did not have to commute. As I spoke to employees across the corporation

the biggest barrier encountered was the technology of the corporation which lacked vision and is grossly inadequate for a modern corporation.

- **Recommendation** – The City develop a strategy that replaces Bricks and Mortar buildings with Technology and enables full work from home for employees. The City must also develop a strategy on what to do with these redundant buildings e.g., sell them, or use the lands for affordable housing etc.

Corporate Welfare - 7 of the top 10 largest employer corporations in this City pay no property taxes. The burden falls squarely on residential home owners and renters. The executives of many of these same organizations live outside Hamilton to avoid personally paying Hamilton's outrageous property taxes. These Executives include [REDACTED], [REDACTED]*, and [REDACTED]*. While corporations like McMaster University buy homes and buildings taking them off tax rolls while partnering with Investment Funds to build residences and shelter these Investment Funds from paying property taxes on these buildings.

- **Recommendation** – Immediately launch a study to find ways these organizations can pay their share of property taxes which may include negotiations with the Province on transfers to the City for these corporations many of which are Provincial entities. City should investigate passing a "Work Here Live Here Policy" encouraging all organizations which pay no property taxes within Hamilton to have their executives and staff live here.

Councillors Slush Fund - These funds are abused by Councillors. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This is completely inappropriate with the tax increases [REDACTED] council [REDACTED] proposing.

- **Recommendation** – Immediately look at ending the abuse of these funds along with closely examining why these Councillor Slush Funds even exist.

I am hopeful these recommendations allow this Council to chart a path that avoids creating more financial and economic devastation in the lives of Hamilton residents especially during this time of economic hardship.

Sincerely,

Robert Cooper

**these are forced redactions under the City Of Hamilton's Policy of "Don't Say Their Names". More secrecy and less transparency feeding the recently emerging Culture of Corruption at the City.*