

January 12, 2024

Hamilton, Ontario.

City of Hamilton,  
71 Main Street St. W.,  
Hamilton, Ontario.  
L8P 4Y5

Attention: City Clerk

Dear Sirs:

Re: Comment & Opinion on 2024 Tax Operating & Capital Budget

This letter constitutes my opinion in regard to the above-mentioned topic to be reviewed and taken into consideration as a property tax owner & payee, whereby, a significant amount of the income & expenses incurred by the City of Hamilton are supported from my residential property.

The current city council needs to and **must** exercise extreme fiscal restraint in considering this budget. **They need to differentiate between 'essential & must have' and 'would like'**. It has become very obvious from watching city council meetings that some councillors (we know who you are) seem to think there is a bottomless pit of money to cover everything they would like at property owner's expense. They should be running the city as they should be running their own personal finances in a prudent manner by identifying the 'essential items & fixed expenses' and only considering purchasing 'would like' items if they have any extra money left over. We cannot make-up in a few years for a large financial

shortfall in infrastructure & capital projects that have been neglected or put-off and continue to accumulate for many years while simultaneously continue to fund a multitude of often frivolous 'pet projects/causes' that they personally feel strong about. If they care so strongly about a specific cause perhaps they should be working instead for a private agency or organization that addresses that cause instead of expecting homeowners to fund it directly from their property taxes and at the expense of other more important & urgent city requirements. I often wonder if these councillors personally contribute financially to their 'pet projects/causes'. I know I financially contribute with my limited income to a few causes including women's shelters & addiction recovery services, but do they.

The \$750,000. cost to expand the number of E-Bikes is another 'would like' being covered by reserves and are only available to a small proportion of city residents.

winterizing washrooms in public parks (no one feels safe going to any park these days (in the daytime & definitely at night), whereby, they will just be destroyed & repaired or replaced at great expense again & again (constantly throwing bad money after good), the parks are virtually empty of families all the time no matter what month it is throughout the year because they do not feel safe because of the homeless who have taken up residence in them or someone has vandalized the equipment and no one would even dare to use the washrooms so we basically are spending hundreds of thousands of dollars to winterize them for the homeless who just destroy them (replacing with metal fixtures would make no difference as it would just be ripped out to sell as scrap metal) or use them for illicit purposes),

City run fireworks or laser displays (at least the city councils of the cities of Montreal & Vancouver have had the foresight & fiscal prudence to eliminate this unnecessary expense due to budget constraints).

We should not be financing various & multiple street festivals due to the significant cost of hundreds of thousands of dollars to cover policing, traffic control, maintenance & clean up at this time. There are nice for some, but, not essential and must have.

I feel only a nominal amount should be provided to services that are supposed to be shared with the Province due to the Province being remiss or providing limited

funding even though the various items e.g. Publicly Funded Health Care, L.T.C., Housing & Children's Services etc. are very important issues. We have over the last couple of years spent double on housing than what the Federal & Provincial governments have provided to us. **As quoted by Mayor Andrea Horwath in a recent council meeting & printed in the Hamilton Spectator on December 21, 2023 We certainly are not in a financial space, as we all know, to be able to pick up the slack as other orders of government withdraw**". The City of Hamilton should be going after the Provincial government (and Federal government) by pressuring them through their local representatives to live up to their responsibility and provide their share of appropriate funding required and not leaving the Hamilton property owners paying the shortfall directly for which the Province should be doing. The Provincial government will not change their stance as they realize that the City of Hamilton continues to fund these items for which they should be doing as they will just feel it's money that they do not have to spend as we are doing it for them.

Public safety on the escarpment stairs has come up recently with council deferring this item to budget deliberations an estimated cost of \$400,000 for possible cameras which experts have already said would probably not provide an identifiable image of the culprit. I feel Improved lighting and significant brush cut-back from the stairs would be helpful. The city is considering a one-year 'pilot project' on perhaps one stairwell which any potential culprit would instead just use one of the other four remaining staircases so I cannot see how effective that would be. Why spend a considerable amount of money on a partial 'pilot project' to see if it works or not and, if not, just remove it and waste the financial expenditure. The city has a habit of trying different 'pilot projects' at a significant amount of money which I equate to throwing spaghetti on the wall to see what sticks. Some measures may or may not possibly deter these individuals. Other than having armed security stationed at the top & bottom of each staircase 24 hours a day which would be unrealistic and financially impossible there is no way that the stairwells can be totally safe. Individuals, in particular females, using these staircases should be accept some responsibility under these isolated conditions and carry personal alarm system which, hopefully, in most cases would scare the culprit away.

I also feel that the city should stop frequently spending such a significant higher cost on outside consultants to study and provide feedback on a multitude of issues. The city should have enough qualified and competent staff to cover most issues unless it is an extremely specialized matter.

Stop using reserves for 'frills' or 'pet projects' i.e. e-bikes or eventually we will have little to no reserve in case of an emergency etc.

The estimated \$26 million price to convert Main St. to two-way is a complete waste of money and once, if ever, the LRT (another wasteful project that is just essentially replacing the B-Line and the revised cost to the city to operate I'm sure will be astoundingly higher (just look at the revised cost to operate either the Finch West or Eglinton Crosstown in Toronto which are still under construction)) Main St. will just turn into a parking lot with only one lane for traffic east and west, the LRT taking up another line and bike lanes (another waste of money) taking up another lane. I've been around long enough to barely remember when & why it was converted to one way to create an easy flow of traffic and reduce the bottleneck of traffic. So essentially no one will be going anyway any time soon. People will just avoid it and create heavy traffic along Cumberland Ave/Lawrence Ave. and Cannon St. which many are already doing so they will also become congested. Adjusting the traffic light signals would slow traffic down and the main areas that need to be addressed are the intersections of Dundurn St./Main St. & Dundurn St./King as those are the problematic intersections.

No city sidewalk clearing. The city already does a terrible job on major street corners and at bus stops which they are required to do which are either not done at all, half done or still difficult to traverse by foot and impossible by scooter, walker or stroller so clearing of sidewalks would not be any better and not meet the city's snow clearing requirements for city sidewalks and would only be done if a certain amount of snow has fallen. Do you really think they would clear the entrances to driveways initially or come back repeatedly when snowplows plow the driveway entrance in again?

Homeowners, especially those on fixed incomes & seniors with the continuous rise in the cost of living, utilities, food and transportation are finding it

increasingly difficult to maintain and remain in their homes with the added cost of the significant & continuously increasing property taxes. If you think you have a problem now with the number of homeless you could possibly end up with even more from the aforementioned. For your information according to the 2021 Census 18.3% of the residents of Hamilton are 65 and over and I'm pretty sure it would be significantly higher now. That is almost and probably now is closer to 20% or 1 in 5 so think about that.

Of the property tax taken in by the City of Hamilton approximately 86% is generated from residential homeowners and only 14% is generated from commercial and industrial owners. This proportion is severely flawed & atrocious on so many levels & needs to be addressed as very few people can now or will be able to afford to own a home in this city due to a disproportionate amount of city taxes that are carried on the backs of homeowners. This equation is so extreme from other municipalities throughout the province and needs to be addressed and efforts made to fix it.

I would prefer that my tax dollars are spent on essential and must have items such as infrastructure, capital projects, policing services (although certain councillors (again we know who you are) pretty much would prefer at minimum a reduction of policing services due to a seemingly personal & biased grudge against them) (we need policing services more ever now with more crime & expanding development), emergency services & waste water & storm water management.

**Again, I reiterate unbiased & very extreme and hard decisions must be made.**

I am requesting that you take my opinions and comments into consideration as a life long resident of this and a property tax paying homeowner.

Any questions or concerns you may have regarding this matter you can contact me at the above address or by telephone at .

Sincerely,

Sylvia C. Perrone