



CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Office of Climate Change Initiatives

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	October 16, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy 2024 Annual Update (PED24166) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SUBMITTED BY:	Lynda Lukasik Director, Office of Climate Change Initiatives Planning & Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Appendix "A" to Report PED24166 "Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy Annual Climate Change Update 2024" be received.
- (b) That Appendix "B" to Report PED24166 "Status Update Regarding Climate Actions in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy" be received.
- (c) That the proposal to shift the Annual Update on Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy to June of each year, starting in 2025, be approved.
- (d) That the Office of Climate Change Initiatives, in partnership with Corporate Facilities and Energy Management, be directed to explore an accelerated timeline for realizing the net zero goal of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, building on Council priorities already in place to accelerate corporate greenhouse gas emission reduction timelines, and report back to the General Issues Committee in June 2025.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March of 2019, Hamilton City Council unanimously declared a climate emergency. Coming out of that declaration was a commitment to work with the broader community to create a community roadmap to net zero, now known as Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. Since that time, the evidence continues to mount; we are in a climate emergency that demands aggressive climate mitigation and adaptation actions at the local level.

Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, and the climate mitigation and adaptation plans found within it, was adopted in August 2022 (Report CM22016/ PED22058(a)/ HCS22030(a)) and it is the City's roadmap to drastically cutting carbon emissions and achieving net zero by 2050 or sooner.

As part of the City's Climate Action Strategy, the Office of Climate Change Initiatives was created in November 2022. This report is the second annual report of the Office on the implementation of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. It provides an update regarding on-going Priority Areas of Focus, as well as a status update on the implementation of both corporate and community-led actions found in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. This year's status update provides more detailed data on both the corporate and community side regarding climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

This report is seeking Council approval for the Annual Update to occur earlier each calendar year to enable more timely updates. Direction is also being sought to explore an accelerated timeline for realizing the net zero goal of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, building on Council priorities already in place to accelerate corporate greenhouse gas emission reduction timelines.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 13

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: There are no financial implications associated with the receipt of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy Annual Climate Change Update 2024 attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED24166.

Staffing: There are no staffing implications associated with the adoption of this report.

Legal: Not applicable.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

March 27, 2019 – City Council Report 19-006 approves the Climate Emergency

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Declaration directing staff to investigate actions for Hamilton to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

August 2022 – City Council approves Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy and the mitigation and adaptation plans within it, including approving the creation and staffing of an Office of Climate Change Initiatives (Report CM22016/PED22058(a)/HSC22030(a)).

November 2022 – The Office of Climate Change Initiatives is officially established.

March 2023 – As part of the 2023 Operating Budget, City Council confirms a sustainable source of funding for the city’s Climate Change Reserve via an annual charge to the General Tax Levy.

September 2023 – Council adopts its Term of Council Priorities which include as Outcome 3 “accelerate our response to climate change” and establishes as a Measures of Success the accelerated reduction in the City’s greenhouse gas emissions and the assessment of infrastructure projects against the impact on the City’s climate resilience and readiness.

October 2023 – Staff from the Office of Climate Change Initiatives present the first annual update on progress with implementation of Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy.

April 2024 – The newly constituted citizen Climate Change Advisory Committee holds its inaugural meeting.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The 2024 Annual Update was prepared with the collaboration and input of internal staff from

- the Planning and Economic Development Department (Transportation Planning & Parking, Planning, Growth Management, Building, Economic Development, Municipal Law Enforcement Divisions),
- Corporate Services Department (Financial Planning, Administration and Policy Division),
- Public Works Department (Departmental Initiatives/Corporate Asset Management, Environmental Services, Office of Energy Initiatives, Hamilton Water, Transportation Divisions, Hamilton Street Railway), and

- Healthy and Safe Communities Department (Healthy Environments, Hamilton Fire, Hamilton Paramedic Services, and Housing Services Divisions).

Review and input on priority indicators used to gauge progress with actions set out in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy was provided by the citizen Climate Change Advisory Committee.

Data and other information regarding community progress implementing actions set out in the Strategy was provided by:

- Mohawk College,
- McMaster University,
- Bay Area Climate Change Council,
- Hamilton Community Enterprises,
- Hamilton Conservation Authority,
- Halton Conservation Authority,
- Grand River Conservation Authority, and
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Hamilton is responding to the global climate emergency through a community-wide, comprehensive strategy. This is the second annual report from the Office of Climate Change Initiatives on the implementation of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. It provides an update on the Office's on-going Priority Areas of Focus, as well as a comprehensive status update on the implementation of both corporate and community-led actions found in the Climate Action Strategy.

Overview of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy (HCAS)

Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy consists of two integrated and complimentary plans for climate mitigation and climate adaptation:

ReCharge Hamilton – Our Community Energy & Emissions Plan

The Community Energy and Emissions Plan addresses climate change mitigation through the reduction of greenhouse gases. The actions in this plan focus on five low-carbon transformations that are pivotal in achieving Hamilton's low-carbon future:

1. Innovating our Industry;
2. Transforming our Buildings;
3. Changing How We Move;

4. Revolutionizing Renewables; and,
5. Growing Green.

Hamilton's Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan

The Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan addresses climate change adaptation by building up the City's resiliency to the impacts of a changing climate. Objectives and actions in this plan are organized around four resilient theme areas:

1. Built Environment;
2. People and Health;
3. Natural Environment, Agriculture and Water; and,
4. Energy and Economy.

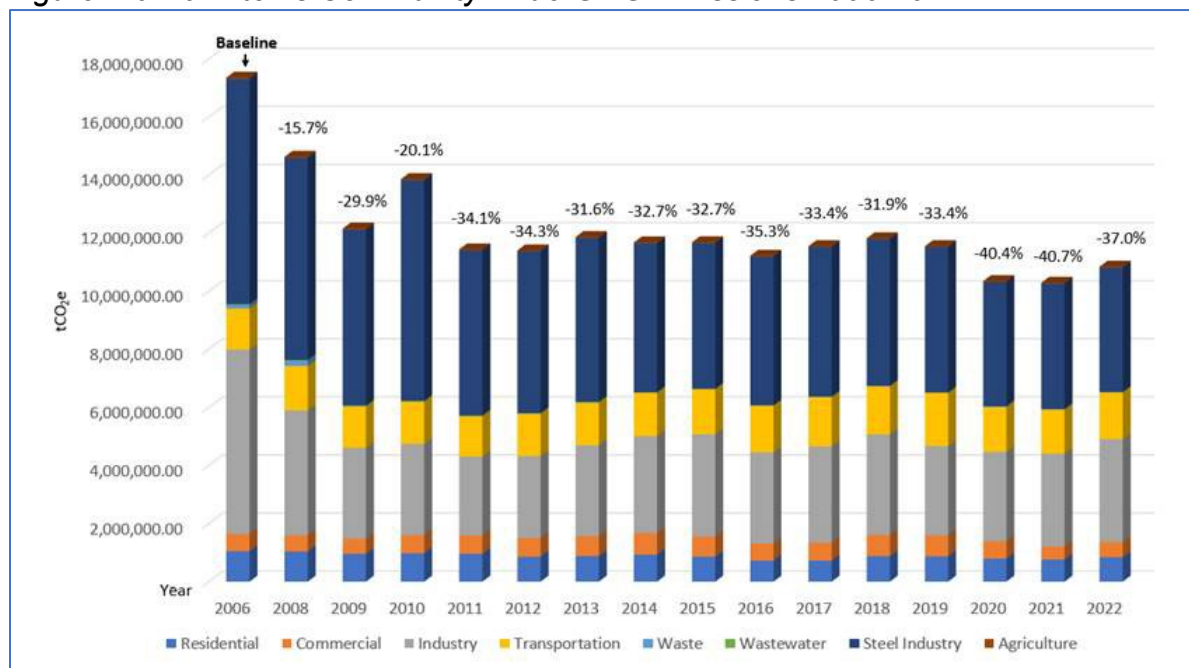
These two integrated plans provide detailed analysis and actions to address the climate emergency by guiding Hamilton on a pathway to net zero carbon by or before 2050, while also increasing Hamilton's resiliency to the emerging impacts of climate change.

Hamilton Community Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The City of Hamilton follows the Global Protocol for Community-Scale Greenhouse Gas Inventories and has been tracking and annually reporting community-wide greenhouse gas emissions since 2008 from major sectors including:

- Industry – comprised of emissions from the Federal Large-Emitters Database, as well as stationary energy sources reported through local energy distribution companies;
- Buildings – comprised of emissions from grid-supplied energy including natural gas and electricity for commercial, institutional and residential buildings;
- Transportation – comprised of emissions from all transportation sources through city-wide fuel consumption sale data;
- Waste – comprised of emissions from Hamilton's municipal landfill;
- Wastewater – comprised of process emissions from the Woodward Avenue wastewater treatment plant; and,
- Agriculture – comprised of emissions based on livestock counts from provincial and federal government databases.

Figure 1.0 Hamilton’s Community-Wide GHG Emissions 2006-2022



Hamilton’s community-wide emissions in 2022 were estimated at 10,928,239 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO_{2e}). This represents an approximate 37.0% decrease based on Hamilton’s 2006 baseline of 17,349,813 tCO_{2e}. Community emissions in 2022 increased by 6.2% however between 2022 and 2021. This was expected in 2022 coming out of the COVID-19 restrictions. Stationary energy, mainly from the commercial sector, increased the most between 2022 and 2021 at approximately 16.8%. However, it should be noted that all building sectors, including industrial and residential, increased between 2022 and 2021 at 13.4% and 10.6% respectively. Likely factors contributing to these increases include increased energy consumption in commercial and industrial buildings post-COVID, and the increased carbon intensity of Ontario’s power grid as more fossil fuel in the form of natural gas is being used to power the system.

Hamilton’s Corporate Greenhouse Gas Inventory

The City of Hamilton’s Office of Energy Initiatives is responsible for reporting annually regarding corporate greenhouse gas emissions. The most recent report is being presented to GIC on October 16, 2024. The 2023 inventoried results show a 4.9% increase in corporate greenhouse gas emissions compared to 2022 and this comes following an increase of 6.5% in 2022 compared to 2021. As reported by the City’s Office of Energy, these increases are due to the following factors:

- Corporate progress reducing emissions by improving energy efficiency in corporate buildings, street and traffic lighting has been cancelled out by a 40%

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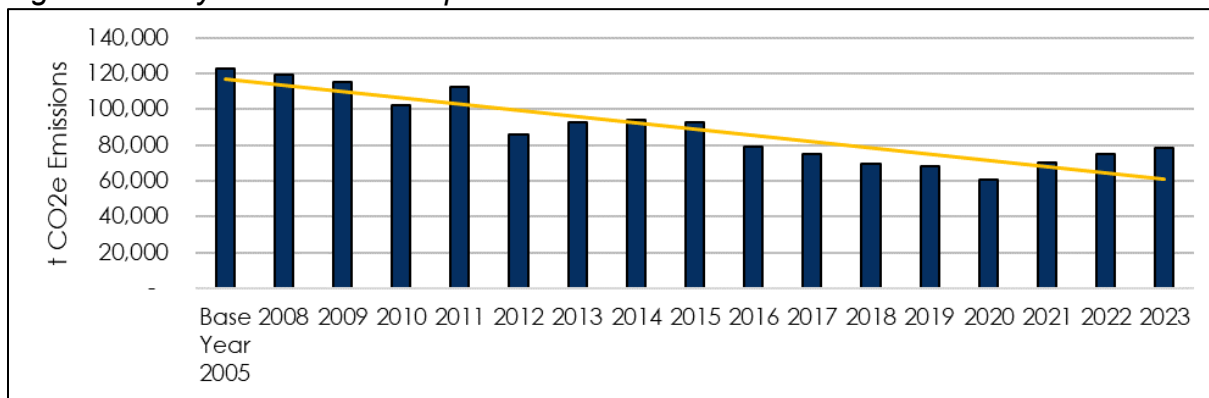
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increase in the provincial electricity emissions factor from 2021 to 2023. This is the direct result of increased reliance on fossil fuel natural gas to power Ontario’s electrical grid, generating power that has a higher carbon intensity, resulting in increased greenhouse gas emissions.

- Transit fleet emissions have increased as service levels increase with new routes and more frequent service on existing routes. The bus fleet has grown by 15% in the last two years and continues to be powered by fossil fuels.
- Hamilton Water’s Woodward biosolids processing facility, which began operations in 2020, has increased processing levels each year, driving higher electricity and natural gas consumption each year.

Figure 2.0 City of Hamilton Corporate Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2005-2023



Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy - Progress Report on Action Implementation

Some highlights related to implementation of a selection of specific actions found in Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy are provided below and a more detailed report can be found as Appendix “A” to Report PED24166.

Appendix “B” to Report PED24166 includes a summary chart with updates for every action in Hamilton’s Climate Action Strategy. This year’s progress report utilizes priority indicators where possible, to provide in-depth reporting on progress with both corporate and community-led efforts.

(i) Recharge Hamilton – Community Energy & Emissions Plan

Low-Carbon Transformation #1: Innovating Our Industry

Mitigation Action 1.0 calls for the creation of a net zero industrial working group in Hamilton, now referred to as the Hamilton Regional Decarbonization Hub. Efforts continue to secure funding to launch the Hub. In the meantime, a priority indicator associated with this Action calls for tracking large industrial greenhouse gas emitters

who must report their emissions to the federal Greenhouse Gas Reporting Program. The Office of Climate Change Initiatives has started this tracking work by collating this publicly available data, confirming that a total of 19 industrial facilities in Hamilton exceed the 10,000 tCO₂e emissions level that triggers the requirement to report to the federal Program. Of these 19 facilities, 9 or 50% of them reported 2022 greenhouse gas emission levels ranging from 8% to 97% lower than 2017 levels. The remaining 50% saw 2022 greenhouse gas emission increases ranging from 0.8% to 47% higher than levels reported in 2017.

Low Carbon Transformation #2: Transforming Our Buildings

Mitigation Action 4.0 directs the City to develop and implement city-wide green development standards to help meet community climate change objectives. Green Building Standards are being created to guide new private development in a manner that considers principles of environmental, social, and economic sustainability. Features proposed in Hamilton's Green Building Standards include energy efficiency, on-site greening, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, bike parking, and bird friendly building design. The draft Green Building Standard was endorsed by the City's Planning Committee on October 1st (Report PED24114), with the exception of building energy performance standards for which additional consultation will be undertaken with the Climate Change Advisory Committee. This will unfold concurrently with the development of a detailed implementation strategy, including incentives, with staff reporting back to Planning Committee in Q1 2025.

Low-Carbon Transformation #3: Changing How We Move

Mitigation Action 7.0 calls for expanding and connecting active transportation networks. In 2023 a total of \$1.39 M was invested in cycling infrastructure resulting in 10.4 kms of new bike lanes.

In January 2024 Council approved the Proposed Accelerated Active Transportation Implementation Plan (2024-2029) for the completion of additional active transportation projects over the next five years including 140 km of new and upgraded cycling, pedestrian, and multi-use trail projects. For 2024 the Public Works Transportation Division plans to complete a total of 23.6 km of active transportation infrastructure (18.3 km stand-alone and 5.3 km part of other infrastructure projects). This represents an approximate 76% increase in kms of bike lanes installed in 2024 versus 2023.

Low-Carbon Transformation #4: Revolutionizing Renewables

Mitigation Action 5.0 and 16.0 both relate to increasing the supply of renewable solar energy by increasing generation from rooftop solar installations on buildings and investigating other strategic locations for solar arrays.

Corporate Facilities and Energy Management has a tender-ready 250 kW solar energy project for the Harry Howell Arena. The Office of Energy Initiatives is also developing a technical and financial business case for incorporating solar power on the roof of the new transit storage facility, which would bring an estimated 2 MW in power generation capacity. Nine additional projects are also under consideration in order to get more rooftop solar energy generation happening at City-owned facilities.

Low-Carbon Transformation #5: Growing Green

Mitigation Action 23 commits the broader community to planting 50,000 trees per year. Data collection was undertaken by the Office of Climate Change Initiatives to measure 2023 tree planting activity undertaken by the City and other external entities that engage in tree planting. This measurement will provide a baseline to compare progress on city-wide tree planting efforts in subsequent years. In 2023, an estimated 46,540 trees were planted or provided to residents to plant within the City of Hamilton, with the following distribution by organization type: Conservation Authorities – 60%, City of Hamilton Forestry – 30%, Other External Organizations (Not-For-Profit & Volunteer Groups, Institutions) 10%. These counts do not include any tree stock purchased and planted by residential, commercial, industrial and most institutional property owners, making it likely that the 50,000-tree goal was met or even exceeded in 2023.

(ii) Hamilton's Climate Change Impact Adaptation Plan

Resilient Theme #1: Built Environment

Action 1.1 calls for development of requirements for incorporation of Low Impact Development features into new development and redevelopment projects. Low Impact Development guidelines were in development in 2023 and were taken to Planning Committee where they received approval on October 1st 2024.

Resilient Theme #2: People and Health

Action 6.2 calls for the exploration of opportunities to expand current cooling & warming centre programming and interventions. The City's Extreme Heat Working Group, established in 2023 by the Healthy Environments Division, is a place where a growing collective of City divisions and community partners come together to discuss how to continue to improve community response to extreme heat. In 2023, Hamilton Public Library, an active member of the Working Group, began opening the Hamilton Room at the Central Public Library on Statutory Holidays during Heat Warnings and Extended Heat Warnings. This service is an enhancement from previous years.

Resilient Theme #3: Natural Environment, Agriculture and Water

Action 7.1 calls for continued efforts to enhance the management and restoration of existing natural areas and seek opportunities to dedicate land and natural areas for conservation. The City's Environmental Services Division has three multi-year projects underway to naturalize areas in Joe Sam's and Courtcliffe Parks, with naturalization efforts also initiated at Flamborough Centre Park in 2024. These projects are removing invasive plants and restoring wetlands, pit and mound swamps, and bringing more native trees and plants to these spaces.

Resilient Theme #4: Energy and Economy

Action 10.1 calls for the City to provide guidance to local businesses on how to maintain business continuity (e.g. supply chain) during extreme weather (i.e. through business continuity planning, green business practices, adaptation measures, etc.), The City's Economic Development Division completed an update of the Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement (ERASE) Tax Assistance Program (TAP) in 2023 to include support for proponents interested in undertaking and certifying climate resilient building measures via recognized programs such as those offered via the Canada Green Building Council. The Division is currently engaged in a comprehensive review of the Hamilton LEEDing the Way Community Improvement Plan which is a private sector grant program designed to serve as an economic catalyst for sustainable building and land development practices.

Gaps, Barriers and Challenges with Strategy Implementation

With each Annual Update on Strategy implementation, attention must be given to gaps, barriers and challenges to effective progress with climate mitigation and adaptation efforts.

A major barrier to more immediate action is the funding gaps that exist for the municipality as more work is done to map out pathways to net zero through corporate action. One example of this is the substantial list of renewable energy projects that are viable and ready to move forward as soon as there is a source of funding to enable this work to happen. More is being done to identify and pursue methods to fund this work, including focused efforts to bring in more funding from higher levels of government and other external funding sources, and continuing to grow the municipality's Corporate Energy Reserve (see CEEP Enabling Action (ii)).

Another challenge is the increasing carbon intensity of our provincial electricity grid. With each passing year, the system's carbon intensity is on the rise with the growing use of methane gas to generate and feed power into the grid. This is reducing the progress made by Ontario communities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Finally, some Strategy actions where have yet to be initiated or have not yet moved from planning to implementation. This includes action to address food waste as a climate challenge, action to engage and support the agricultural community around building climate resilience, and initiating actions to encourage and support business and industry to decarbonize.

Office of Climate Change Initiatives On-Going Priority Areas of Focus

The Office of Climate Change Initiatives set out Priority Focus Areas, presented to the General Issues Committee in April of 2023 (Report PED23064). Priorities were identified in that first year to enable focused action right from the start. Below is a progress update on the on-going implementation of these Priority Focus Areas.

(i) Climate Change Governance & Innovation

In 2024, the following milestones have been achieved with respect to Focus Area #1 – Climate Change Governance & Innovation:

- Monthly meetings of the internal **Climate Change Initiatives Steering Committee** continue, with City Directors from across the corporation guided by a central mandate to facilitate corporate-wide monitoring and centralized reporting on progress with city-led actions in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy
- Establishment of an internal **Extended Leadership Group**, made up of managers and other staff responsible for implementation of city-led Climate Action Strategy efforts is still to be completed. Comprehensive internal data collection efforts undertaken in 2024 have served to identify key staff who need to be recruited to serve on this group, which will be convened in Q4 2024/Q1 2025.
- The selection process for the **Climate Change Advisory Committee**, which helps to guide the implementation of Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, was initiated in Q4 of 2023. Final appointments were made in February 2024, and the Committee held its first meeting on April 30th. The Committee has since held three additional meetings, with a fifth meeting scheduled for November 26.
- With the guidance of the Climate Change Initiatives Steering Committee, the internal process for applying for Climate Change Reserve funding for city-led initiatives was refined, and the 2024 application intake was administered. Projects recommended to receive 2024 Climate Change Reserve funding will be presented to GIC for approval in Q4 2024 along with an update on the progress of projects funded in 2023.

(ii) Community Climate Outreach

In 2024, the following milestones have been achieved with respect to Focus Area #2 – Community Climate Change Outreach:

- In 2023, the City finalized an updated 4-year **agreement and partnership with the Bay Area Climate Change Council**, the multi-stakeholder organization supported by the cities of Hamilton and Burlington to facilitate regional solutions to climate issues. The Office of Climate Change Initiatives continues to benefit from the Council's collaborative support with efforts to develop and implement the City's climate action priorities. The Council hosts an Annual Climate Summit each year, and the 2024 event included a climate 'fireside chat' featuring Mayor Andrea Horwath and Burlington Mayor Marianne Mead Ward.
- Climate Communications and Engagement efforts have included an on-going community awareness campaign regarding Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy, and work to revamp, update, and expand content on the City's webpage for the Strategy. Engagement tactics continue to include social media, in-person presentations, participation in community events, and pop-up sessions in locations like the Hamilton Farmers Market. Efforts in 2024 include planning for a process to co-design a Climate Justice Framework for the City of Hamilton.

(iii) Carbon Budgeting & Accounting Framework

Staff in the Office of Climate Change Initiatives have initiated the development of Hamilton's first Carbon Budget and Accounting Framework. A detailed multi-year workplan has been completed and Phase 1 efforts are underway including the technical calculations for both a community and corporate carbon budget.

There are two main goals for this initiative:

Goal 1 - To develop a corporate carbon budget and accounting framework that systematically integrates climate action policies, including a carbon credit policy, and develops the tools and resources necessary to implement robust GHG emission calculations into existing budget reporting processes and templates; and

Goal 2 – To develop a community carbon budget broken down by sectors, and sub-sectors where possible, with an annual reporting methodology and reporting plan created that provides education and awareness that allows the community to make informed decisions about actions to reduce GHG emissions.

The calculated community and corporate carbon budgets, along with the draft

accounting framework and implementation plan are anticipated to go to Council in Q2 2025.

(iv) Green Buildings

In 2024, the following milestones have been achieved with respect to Focus Area #4 Green Buildings:

Better Homes Hamilton Pilot Program

- The pilot home energy-efficiency retrofit program - Better Homes Hamilton - launched in December 2023 and 150+ homeowners applied to be selected for a loan of up to \$20,000 at the introductory rate of zero-percent interest to be paid back to the City annually through property taxes.
- 50 successful applicants were accepted in 2024 and now participating in the pilot program to install energy-efficient measures in their homes to reduce GHG emissions and increase home comfort. A robust methodology with equitable selection criteria was used to select the successful applicants, resulting in the participation of homes with a diverse mix of building characteristics and a broad geographic distribution, with extra focus on neighbourhoods identified as having high rates of energy poverty.

Corporate Net Zero Emissions/Zero Carbon & Green Building Performance Standard

- Building on the 2022 Pathway to Net Zero for [Existing] Corporate Buildings report, the Office of Climate Change Initiatives is leading the exploration of a parallel study for new corporate buildings.
- In 2024 a consultant was hired to provide technical services via a robust portfolio-level analysis to assist City staff in developing a corporate net zero emissions/zero carbon policy and green building performance standard for all new City facilities and large renovations/additions to existing facilities to support the City's transition to net zero emissions and zero carbon.
- The study will support a City staff report to Council in 2025 on the feasibility of and approach to implementing a corporate net-zero emissions/zero carbon policy by 2026 or sooner.

(v) Urban Greening

Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy sets the ambitious goal of seeing 50,000 trees planted each year across the municipality. The Office of Climate Change Initiatives has created a system to track the tree planting undertaken by key community partners, to enable the tracking of our community's success in realizing the annual 50,000 tree target. Our team will continue to revise this method into the future, by including elements like total tree sale numbers from local garden centres to provide as accurate

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an annual count as possible.

Looking Ahead to 2025 and Beyond

For its first two years, the Office of Climate Change Initiatives has provided its Annual Update in October. Given the urgent need to respond to the climate emergency in a swift manner, there is merit in shifting the reporting cycle in order that the Annual Report for the previous calendar year is presented earlier in the reporting year. For these reasons, staff recommend that the Annual Report be shifted to June of each calendar year, starting in 2025.

Finally, staff are seeking Council support to initiate an assessment of the feasibility of accelerating the corporate and community-wide target of realizing net zero carbon by 2050, and the associated baseline years for Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy. The latest science suggests that immediate and urgent action is needed to make deep emission reductions and limit global warming to 1.5 C or a 'low overshoot scenario'. Leading global organizations such as the World Wildlife Fund, the Carbon Disclosure Project, International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI), World Resources Institute, and C40 Cities have provided guidance to municipalities on the methodologies for calculating science-based climate targets and a 'fair-share' approach to meeting the global net-zero target by 2050. To maintain Hamilton's progress and leadership in climate action, staff recommend that an analysis of our net zero by 2050 target be undertaken to ensure alignment with global best scientific practices, and that the implications of accelerating timelines for implementing mitigation actions in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy be explored. This might require adjusting any City policies and guidelines contributing to greenhouse gas emission reductions, and consideration of financial costs and benefits of accelerated action.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council could choose not to approve an earlier date for Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy Annual Update. This would impact on the timeliness of reporting on actions being taken in response to the climate emergency.

Council could choose not to give direction to staff to explore the implications of accelerating the 2050 timeline for reaching net zero. This could have implications regarding the future costs to address climate impacts, the local impacts from climate change if opportunities to front end key efforts are lost, and negative impacts on the City's efforts to establish itself as a climate leader.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

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Appendix "A" to Report PED24166 – Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy Annual Climate Change Update 2024

Appendix "B" to Report PED24166 – Status Update Regarding Climate Actions in Hamilton's Climate Action Strategy