



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

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| TO: | Mayor and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee |
| COMMITTEE DATE: | November 7, 2024 |
| SUBJECT/REPORT NO: | Community Risk Assessment (HSC24033) |
| WARD(S) AFFECTED: | City Wide |
| PREPARED BY: | Debbie Spence (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3395 |
| SUBMITTED BY: | David Cunliffe Chief, Hamilton Fire Department Healthy and Safe Communities Department |
| SIGNATURE: | |

COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not applicable

INFORMATION

The Hamilton Fire Department has completed its 2023 Community Risk Assessment Report. The Ontario Fire Marshal requires all Ontario municipal fire departments to review their existing Community Risk Assessments annually and generate updated versions every five (5) years. The Hamilton Fire Department completed its first Community Risk Assessment in 2019, which formed part of its 10-Year Service Delivery Plan (Reference: Report HSC19026). Community Risk Assessments are unique to each community and are a critical and foundational tool, used to comprehensively assess and document current and future fire risk based on a range of features and profiles. Identified risks and trends are then used to inform decisions about the three (3) lines of defence, which include programs and activities for public fire safety education; fire safety standards and enforcement; and emergency response (delivery of Fire Protection and Rescue Services). Fire departments use this information to determine which risks they need to address and how best to manage and reduce them.

The information (profiles) reviewed and contained in the Report (Appendix A: Community Risk Assessment Report) include Hamilton’s geographic features, building stock, critical infrastructure, demographics (includes corresponding data by Ward), hazards, public safety response, community services, economy, and past fire loss and fire event history. Qualitative and quantitative data – in combination with matrix and assessment tools provided by the Ontario Fire Marshal and reviewed by the Hamilton

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Fire Department leadership team – are used to determine overall fire risk and specifically identify which features or profiles have high, moderate, or low risk levels.

While the Community Risk Assessment is considered a standalone document, it will be utilized to identify potential gaps, opportunities for improvement, and/or efficiencies in the current Fire Service Delivery model. Through the utilization of its updated data, trends, and community risk analysis it will also inform, support, and influence future Fire Department strategies, programs, business cases and plans, including the planned mid-point review of the perpetual 10-Year Service Delivery Plan expected to be brought to Committee and Council in 2025 as a follow up report with potential recommendations and actions.

REPORT SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

The data collected and reviewed spans from 2016 to 2023. Data sources include Hamilton Fire Department data (i.e., Past Loss section includes 2020, 2021, and 2022), Statistics Canada data, and the City of Hamilton's Geographic Information Services section via a range of sources such as various divisions within the City of Hamilton's Planning & Economic Development Department (i.e., Building Stock data).

Key findings include year over year increases in number of fires, dollar value loss, deaths, and injuries. Significant and concerning trends in the City include increased residential fires and their associated deaths and injuries, the troubling and ongoing trends of residences that do not have working smoke alarms, increased persons living unsheltered, encampments, and issues surrounding housing stock availability (i.e., the increased need to protect and preserve existing residential building stock). Other hazards noted include risk levels related to wildland fires.

This current report highlights several changes when compared with the 2019 Community Risk Assessment. These include an increase in the number of fires and emergency incidents, changes and increases in building stock and the City's population and demographics, and a shift in the top behavioural causes of fires.

High-risk levels were identified in the information/profiles associated with building stock, past fire loss and non-fire emergency calls, hazards, and economy. Risk levels are determined by reviews that a) identify features and characteristics that may impact fire and life safety risk; b) prioritize risks based on probability and consequences; and c) assign a risk level (low, medium, and high) for features or elements within each profile using the Ontario Fire Marshal's risk index.

With the Community Risk Assessment being reviewed annually, yearly data associated with past fire loss and non-fire emergency calls will be updated and communicated in future (i.e., 2023 and beyond) annual reports from the Hamilton Fire Department.

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APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix A: Community Risk Assessment Report