



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	November 21, 2024
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	2024 Youth Strategy Annual Report (HSC24038) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Rachelle Ihekwoaba 905-978-2680 Daniel Ridsdale 289-659-5994
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Brenda Bax Director (Acting), Children’s and Community Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

On March 30, 2022, Council endorsed the [2022-2027 Youth Strategy Report](#) (CES15056(d)). As described in Report CES150569d), staff are required to “report on progress annually to the Emergency and Community Services Committee and the community.” This report provides the annual progress update for 2024.

## INFORMATION

Built through extensive engagement and collaboration with youth, City staff, parents and agency partners, the City of Hamilton’s Youth Strategy maps out a plan for how the City will engage youth aged 14-29 and address the issues they face in Hamilton. Through this engagement process, five priority themes were identified to ensure youth voices will be integrated into City building:

1. Access to Mental Health and Addiction Support
2. Access to Safe and Affordable Housing
3. Access to Employment and Training Support
4. Enhance Safety and Sense of Inclusion
5. Enhance Youth Engagement and Leadership

In 2023, the Youth Strategy Annual Update (CES15056(e)) presented an overview of the governance model and implementation plan that will be used to fully execute the

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

plans activities. This update seeks to inform key activities, achievements, and impacts realized in 2024.

### ***2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HamOntYouth Summit Presented by RBC***

Hosted at the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board's Education Centre on October 22, 2024, the event engaged over 250 youth from across the city, more than doubling attendance from the inaugural event in 2023. Activities focused on engaging youth with opportunities, celebrating youth achievements, amplifying their voices, and building skills. Students from over 20 public, Catholic, and French-speaking secondary schools were represented in attendance. Due to strengthened relationships with local school board partners, support from sponsors RBC and Alectra, and the youth-led organization, Model City Hall, hundreds of young Hamiltonians were able to inform several community issues. Discussion topics included responding to gun and gang violence, school curriculum planning, city-building, the LRT, and many more. A post-event report will be shared with community and to Council through a Communication Update in early 2025.

### ***HamOntYouth Steering Committee***

The HamOntYouth Steering Committee was launched in 2018 to inform and support Hamilton's Youth Strategy. The Committee is pivotal in integrating youth voices into the City of Hamilton's projects and initiatives. Throughout the past year, the Committee has had membership from 48 unique youth, volunteering over 790 hours to activities and initiatives. Of note, these activities and initiatives included organizing the HamOntYouth Beach Clean Up, HamOntYouth Summit, and supporting activities like the Dundas Cactus Festival Parade and Hamilton's Youth Town Hall.

### ***Hamilton's 1<sup>st</sup> Youth Town Hall***

On April 14, 2024, hosted by Council members at the City of Hamilton's Council Chambers, the town hall event engaged over 50 youth from across the city. Attendees heard from elected officials, engaged in youth-led discussions facilitated by Model City Hall, and debriefed key issues in concert with decision-makers in their community.

### ***Hamilton's Building Safer Communities Grant***

Working in collaboration with Hamilton's Community Safety and Well-Being Plan, the Building Safer Communities Grant Program provides multi-year funding for community-led initiatives that aim to prevent, and address risk factors associated with youth gun and gang violence. Youth Strategy staff have supported the grant initiative to ensure decisions are informed by meaningful engagement with Hamilton's youth. As directed in the Youth Strategy, staff are directed to engage key stakeholders and youth with lived

experience to best understand guns, gangs, and violence among the youth community. This connection to youth-serving partners and initiatives directly ensures that youth are actively involved in creating safer, more inclusive communities.

### ***Hamilton's Child & Youth Network***

In late 2023, Hamilton's Child and Youth Network was established and endorsed by a membership of over 50 senior leadership representatives from over 45 unique community organizations committed to enhancing local outcomes for children, youth, and their families. The Network meets three to six times per year to ensure Hamilton's children and youth feel safe, have a sense of belonging, and can meet their health and well-being needs. This Network will play a critical role in supporting both the Early Years Community Plan and the Youth Strategy. Network members belong to a community of professionals contributing to the broader Community Safety & Well-being (CSWB) Planning Framework, as mandated under the [Province's Safer Ontario Act, 2018](#). The work of Hamilton's Child and Youth Network is nested in the broader system-planning methodology of Hamilton's Community Safety & Well-being Plan.

### ***National Youth Week***

Hamilton celebrated National Youth Week from May 1 - 7, 2024,. The recognition event is an annual celebration of youth and their achievements and involvement in their communities. The theme of Hamilton's 2024 National Youth Week was promoting youth health to improve the overall health of the community. In collaboration with Hamilton's Youth Serving Agencies Network, dozens of free activities were offered throughout the city.

### ***Youth Experiences of Hate/Bias-Related Violence and Discrimination Study***

In a partnership led by McMaster University's Faculty of Health Sciences, staff supported the submission of a \$100,000 grant application to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. Funds were awarded to conduct a youth-led participatory action research study. This one-year youth-led project focuses on understanding how hate and bias-related violence impacts the mental health of diverse and marginalized youth in Hamilton. Led by McMaster University and supported by Empowerment Squared, Hamilton Anti-Racism Resource Centre (HARRC), and the City of Hamilton, this initiative reinforces our commitment to create safer, more inclusive environments for Hamilton's youth.

### ***Youth Team Achievements***

The Youth Team is comprised of the Xperience Annex, Learning Earning and Parenting Program (LEAP), Youth Engagers, and an Ontario Works Youth Case Manager.

- Hamilton's Youth Navigator supported 127 young residents through the Xperience Annex, Learning, Earning, and Parenting Program professionals were able to support 21 graduates through the program,
- Youth Engagers attended 30 public activities and events, growing, and promoting the @HamOntYouth Instagram account to over 4,250 followers,
- the Ontario Works Youth Case Manager provided unique supports to over 260 Hamilton youth.

## **CONCLUSION**

Staff made significant progress in 2024 and a key enabler was establishing workgroups on each of the five identified priorities of the 2022-2027 Youth Strategy. In 2025, staff will report updates on the respective objectives linked to the identified priorities identified. With the successes and programming described above, staff are confident in their ability to achieve improved outcomes for Hamilton's Youth, as described in the 2022-2027 Youth Strategy.