

City of Hamilton Response – Economic Development Actions (current to April 3, 2025)

High-level actions that are being taken to directly support our economic sectors and local businesses are outlined below. Similar to other actions being taken across the City, Economic Development and Tourism supports will continue to be made available to respond to tariff related activities as long as tariff related actions are a threat to our community and beyond to support recovery as required.

Trade and Tariff Resource Hub

Economic Development launched the Trade and Tariff Resource Hub February 3, 2025 in response to threats of tariff related activities. This hub is a central resource for businesses navigating trade challenges (investinhamilton.ca/tariffs) and serves as a centralized location for the sharing of information including:

- Resources from the federal and provincial government;
- Third-party thought leadership on the impacts of tariffs;
- In-house research on the local labour market and job implications of tariffs; and
- Links to various resources and business ecosystem partners.

Economic Development Newsletter

The existing monthly Economic Development Newsletter ([all 2025 newsletters](#)), which is delivered monthly to a business focused audience of ~1000 recipients, to provide regular updates on tariff related activities.

Invest in Hamilton Week In Review Blog

The Hamilton Week in Review Blog ([all trade and tariff posts](#)) provides a chronological overview of the tariff landscape in addition to providing links to programs and resources. The Week of March 31 blog post included estimates of local job counts in vehicle parts manufacturing.

Economic Development LinkedIn

Provides Ad hoc messaging on tariff related information, as well as promoting Economic Development’s day-to-day work to support not only business retention efforts, but economic growth & vitality on the [City’s Economic Development LinkedIn account](#).

Corporate Calling Blitz

Following the initial 25% tariff announcement on February 1, 2025, increased outreach commenced amid the threat of tariffs. This has resulted in proactive dialogue with local businesses. Staff are for an additional Downtown corporate calling blitz in Q2-Q3. This is outside of the target of 100 corporate calls per year with established Hamilton businesses

Mayor’s Roundtable on Trade and Tariffs

In collaboration with the Economic Development Division, the Mayor has convened two industry roundtables to hear firsthand the impacts that trade and tariff policies are having on local business operations. The first roundtable meeting took place on March

3rd, 2025 and brought together fifteen major employers in the manufacturing and food and beverage manufacturing sectors, ecosystem partners, as well as the Flamborough, Hamilton, and Stoney Creek Chambers of Commerce. A second roundtable meeting was held on March 24th, 2025 and assembled eighteen private sector employers in the agriculture and goods movement sectors. Once again, these businesses were accompanied by ecosystem partners and all three Hamilton Chambers of Commerce. The third roundtable meeting will focus on the development and construction industries and has been set for May 13th, 2025.

These roundtables were critical points of engagement that allowed the pillars of the local economy an opportunity to share major points of advocacy they hope the Mayor and Council will advocate on in discussions with senior levels of government. High-level insights from these events affirmed that:

- The application of tariffs, both globally and on key manufacturing industries such as steel, aluminium, and automotive/vehicle parts manufacturing, will negatively impact jobs and Hamilton’s economic outlook
- Tariff impacts will be felt unevenly across agriculture and goods movement businesses, with some being more impacted than others, with many local food growers reporting they are dependent upon free access to the United States market as domestic markets in Canada are already saturated and unable to accommodate additional supply
- Shipping and logistics companies, as well as companies operating out of the Port of Hamilton, are at risk from multiple trade policies, including tariffs as well as a potential reduction in Great Lakes marine traffic owing to US-proposed docking fees on Chinese-made ships
- A generally held sentiment that tariffs will have a negative impact on Hamilton’s labour force in goods movement and agriculture, with those workers being highly skilled and difficult to replace
- Import and export markets between Canada and the United States that had been balanced to this point, will become unbalanced amid short-term inventory hoarding – as a means of avoiding tariffs – and long-term price adjustments, which will create knock-on effects for Hamilton manufacturers.
- Local employers are looking to diversify trade partners beyond the United States market, with many looking to build stronger trade ties to Europe, Mexico, and the broader Indo-Pacific market; however, they also recognize this is a long-term transformation and that short-term economic hardship amid such a transformation will be inevitable
- Escalation of tariffs and counter tariffs have the potential to make some Hamilton-based businesses non-viable

In consideration of these realities, efforts are being undertaken that focus on relationship building between local companies and senior levels of government and economic development staff are actively supporting local businesses in their use of Canada’s Remission Request Program, a Federal program, introduced on March 14th, 2025, that considers tariff remission on Canadian applied tariffs where a company’s inputs cannot be sourced domestically. Economic Development will provide ongoing

promotion of this program, as well as expanding relationships between Hamilton’s businesses and the Federal Trade Commissioner Service, as a necessary step in supporting local business through the challenge of tariffs and counter tariffs.

Industry Engagement

Direct consultations with steel and manufacturing executives are being undertaken through leveraging strategic partnerships with the Flamborough, Hamilton, and Stoney Creek Chambers of Commerce to create the Tariff Impact Questionnaire. The Questionnaire was identified as a priority project following staff’s attendance at a knowledge sharing session hosted by the Economic Development Association of Canada on January 23, 2025. The final draft of the Questionnaire was approved by all project partners on February 14, 2025. The first tranche of results were released on March 31, 2025, through the Economic Development Newsletter ([March 2025 Invest In Hamilton Newsletter](#)). A second tranche of results, with a focus on manufacturing is expected to be released in April.

The Questionnaire found that:

- A plurality of respondents (27.6%) represented manufacturing enterprises
- Approximately 59.8% of respondents were “extremely concerned” about U.S. tariffs on Canadian goods and retaliatory tariffs
- Approximately 57.0% of respondents anticipated a significant impact on their operations; 27.1% expected a minor impact; 5.6% expected no impact with 10.3% unsure of the potential impact
- 33.5% of respondents anticipated impacts on their goods production; 22.8% of respondents expected impacts on their services production; 29.3% expected impacts on both their goods and services production
- The three most frequently expected impacts to tariffs among respondents were: reduced demand for products/services (64.6% of respondents), increased operating costs (61.8% of respondents), and supply chain disruptions (52.8% of respondents)
- The three most frequently cited actions that would support businesses during prolonged tariffs were: offering tax relief (58.6% of respondents), advocating to government bodies (47.7% of respondents), and negotiating trade agreements (47.1% of respondents). Notably, 40.2% of respondents also identified the provision of financial assistance as a desired support activity.