

From: Lyn Folkes <[REDACTED]>

Sent: Monday, February 2, 2026 11:11 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca; Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Maureen <Maureen.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Kroetsch, Cameron <Cameron.Kroetsch@hamilton.ca>; Nann, Nrinder <Nrinder.Nann@hamilton.ca>; Hwang, Tammy <Tammy.Hwang@hamilton.ca>; Francis, Matt <Matt.Francis@hamilton.ca>; Jackson, Tom <Tom.Jackson@hamilton.ca>; Pauls, Esther <Esther.Pauls@hamilton.ca>; Cooper, Rob <Rob.Cooper@hamilton.ca>; Clark, Brad <Brad.Clark@hamilton.ca>; Beattie, Jeff <Jeff.Beattie@hamilton.ca>; Tadeson, Mark <Mark.Tadeson@hamilton.ca>; Cassar, Craig <Craig.Cassar@hamilton.ca>; Wilson, Alex <Alex.Wilson@hamilton.ca>; Spadafora, Mike <Mike.Spadafora@hamilton.ca>; McMeekin, Ted <Ted.McMeekin@hamilton.ca>

Subject: For the Budget meeting on Feb 6th 2026

Dear Mayor and Council members,

I live in Ward 8 and my family and I disagree with what I've heard from our councillor, Rob Cooper, during the budget meeting on Jan 30th. I thank those who corrected my councillor's inaccurate statements concerning bike lanes and the ICCO. I urge Councillors Cooper, Pauls, Spadafora and Jackson to please educate themselves about what Hamilton is doing to climate-ready our city, and what the benefits of climate actions are in our community. Educating residents may also help more people to embrace climate solutions.

I say this from heart-felt concern for my family and all residents of Earth today, it is in no way meant as an insult and is simply a plea for help in our community's increasingly difficult times. Life is becoming unaffordable for many and that will only worsen faster if we ignore or downplay climate change in any way.

For example, to complain about a small but significant action like bicycle lane expansions today, shows that some councillors still don't understand the seriousness of the global climate emergency even though the proof is positive world wide. Premier Ford has just lost court battles to remove bicycle lanes in Toronto for good reason by the judge - to protect public safety and address the climate emergency. We can't afford to waste time at council meetings, so please understand that bike lanes are definitely helpful. We need them to help with traffic congestion. Any university urban planning student knows that widening roads does nothing to help solve traffic congestion but a good bicycle lane system does help.

Our council as a whole should be applauding proven actions like bicycle lanes. They help lower GHG emissions, don't impede traffic, make people healthier, and make Hamilton a healthier place to live for all residents. These actions are the kind that will save us money in the long term -- unlike urban sprawl and road widening. The latter are too costly, increase traffic congestion by attracting more cars, increase

GHG emissions which accelerate climate change, pollute our air and water, limit water infiltration which harms our ground-water supply, damage our natural heritage, harm species at risk and other wildlife, and waste a huge amount of our taxes that could be spent on things that could truly benefit taxpayers in Hamilton.

So please continue to improve climate actions in our budget. Continue bicycle lane expansions; continue plans to expand mass public transport that runs on clean energy like the LRT; protect our wetlands and forests from development; increase tree cover especially in the most barren wards (like my ward 8); and implement the Biodiversity Action Plan as quickly as possible.

I noticed a lot of grass mowing discussion during the budget meeting and I agree with staff that this is a good action to reduce emissions in our city. Ticks are just part of life in Southern Ontario now. I worked for the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas walking in all types of natural habitats in our area from 2020 to 2025. Over those 5 years, I received only one tick bite and received treatment for it. We just have to get used to checking for ticks and get prompt treatment when necessary. Having said that, there may be larger opportunities to reduce mowing in our conservation areas, especially around the wetlands and other natural areas. This would provide a natural buffer to keep those wetlands and forests healthier. Docks could be installed for access to ponds by fishermen who may complain about reduced mowing.

Also, I would be thrilled to see any kind of naturalization project in my neighbourhood park, which I live right next to. There are large areas of our park's very weedy lawn that are seldom used and could be converted to native vegetation. During rain events, mowed lawns act more like concrete than native plant habitats, so a naturalized area would help to retain more flood waters as well as recharge our water table underground - both important benefits for residents. I believe the city has the ability to grow plants to use for this type of project, including trees and shrubs, because a friend used to work in the Gage Park greenhouses doing that.

Please remember that climate change is real and its impacts are already harming, and killing people around the globe including here in Canada. Hamilton will likely experience increasingly severe weather events more often in the years to come, largely because countries like the USA and Canada have not taken serious enough climate action to date. Scientifically, climate change worsens with increased speed over time too, making it more imperative to consider it seriously in all our decision-making.

Weather events have intensified here in recent years and caused more danger to residents and their property, particularly from flooding. Do we really want to let our climate get completely out of control? It will, if we don't take climate change seriously.

The rest of the world is depending on us to do our part as well but Canada in particular, is still holding back the great progress being made around the world. To learn about more ways to help, I suggest looking for education about municipal climate actions from other communities who have had success both here and abroad.

The more climate action we take now, the better off our future health and safety. By now, all councillors should be able to agree on that. If you don't, then please educate yourselves more please. This is very important for understanding your role in the job you hold as a public representative. Ignoring climate action would unnecessarily cost taxpayers, like myself, much more in the not-so-distant long term and we simply can't afford that.

For these reasons and so many more which I studied at university, please use the city's Biodiversity Action Plan to improve climate resiliency in our neighbourhoods, and retain all funds and employees for the OCCI in our new budget. These programs are truly indispensable today.

This is what myself, my husband, my next door neighbours and the rest of my family in ward 8 want. Please don't be fooled by climate change denial, it's not productive or efficient to have this type of inaccurate attitude at Council.

Thank you all for your service to the people of Hamilton.

Sincerely,

Lyn Folkes, Rick Folkes, Jim Folkes, Naomi Folkes and Brian Folkes - Ward 8 Hamilton