

From: Howard Cole [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, February 5, 2026 11:34:23 AM
To: Office of the Mayor <Officeofthe.Mayor@hamilton.ca>
Cc: clerk@hamilton.ca <clerk@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: Meeting 6 Feb, budget debate at Planning Committee

External Email: Use caution with links and attachments.

Dear Mayor Horwath, Members of Council, and Clerk,

I am writing as a resident of Ward 12 regarding the upcoming budget debates on February 6 and 13.

I strongly oppose any cuts to Hamilton's environmental and climate programs and urge Council to protect — and expand — funding for the Office of Climate Change Initiatives (OCCI), the Climate Change Reserve, cycling infrastructure, transit improvements, urban tree canopy growth, biodiversity initiatives, and home retrofit programs.

Recent comments from several councillors suggest that these programs are being targeted for reductions under the banner of "fiscal restraint." That approach is short-sighted. These investments are not extras or ideological luxuries — they are practical, cost-effective measures that improve daily life in Hamilton.

Climate action saves money over time by reducing flood risks, heat impacts, and infrastructure damage. Cycling and transit investments reduce congestion and road costs while improving safety and health. Tree planting and biodiversity programs cool our neighbourhoods, improve air quality, manage stormwater, and make Hamilton more livable. These are basic city-building functions.

It's also important to remember that these programs exist because residents asked for them. Hamilton declared a climate emergency. The City created OCCI and adopted climate and biodiversity strategies in response to community advocacy and clear evidence. Rolling them back now would ignore both the science and the will of the people.

If anything, these programs are modest compared to their benefits. Cutting them would barely dent the budget but would set Hamilton back years in resilience, affordability, and quality of life. Instead of reductions, Council should be strengthening staffing, accelerating implementation, and expanding active transportation, transit service, and green infrastructure across all wards.

Please stand up for a healthier, safer, and more sustainable Hamilton. Protect these programs in the 2026 budget.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Sincerely,

Howard Cole