Present: Deputy Mayor S. Merulla (Chair)  
Mayor R. Bratina  
Councillors B. Clark, C. Collins, S. Duvall, J. Farr,  
L. Ferguson, T. Jackson, B. Johnson, B. McHattie, B. Morelli,  
M. Pearson, R. Powers, J. Partridge, T. Whitehead

Absent with Regrets: Councillor R. Pasuta – Personal

THE GENERAL ISSUES COMMITTEE PRESENTS REPORT 12-032 AND RESPECTFULLY RECOMMENDS:

1. Hamilton Police Service Monthly Report PSB12-087 (Item 5.1(a))
   That the Hamilton Police Service Monthly Report PSB12-087 be received.

2. Hamilton Police Service Monthly Report PSB12-099 (Item 5.1(b))
   That the Hamilton Police Service Monthly Report PSB12-099 be received.

3. 2013 Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up Benefit (Item 8.12(a))
   Whereas Discretionary Benefits and the Community Start-Up Benefit are important elements within the social assistance system within Ontario and have historically been cost-shared with the province;
   
   And Whereas, effective July 1, 2012, the Province of Ontario implemented a funding cap on discretionary benefits paid to Ontario Works (OW) and Ontario Disability Support Payment (ODSP) recipients;

Council – November 14, 2012
And Whereas, effective January 1, 2013, the Province of Ontario will consolidate five existing housing and homelessness programs into a new Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative;

And Whereas, effective January 1, 2013 the Province of Ontario will eliminate the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit from the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program;

And Whereas these provincial funding reductions will result in a municipal cost pressure to the City of Hamilton of $7.6 million annually;

And Whereas a reduction or elimination of these benefits would result in serious consequences to the most vulnerable residents in our community.

Therefore Be it Resolved:

(a) That effective January 1, 2013, the fee schedule used for Adult Emergency Dental Services provided to OW adults, ODSP dependant adults and low-income adult residents be harmonized with the fee schedule used by the province for dental services provided to ODSP adults and OW children, which is of 60% of the Ontario Dental Association fee guide;

(b) That effective January 1, 2013, the net levy portion of existing housing program costs in the following amounts be restated to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative:

(i) $892,270 from the Emergency Shelter Program;
(ii) $1,363,800 from the Domiciliary Hostel Program;
(iii) $138,250 from the Domiciliary Hostel Reinvestment;
(iv) $96,760 from the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program;
(v) $860,000 from the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit;

(c) That one time municipal funding in the amount of up to $3.4 million be provided to maintain the current service levels for Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit for a period of six months beginning January 1, 2013, to be funded from Community Services department surplus, corporate surplus, tax stabilization reserve, Social Services Initiative reserve, OMPF reconciliation, or any combination thereof;

(d) That the funding required for continued operation of Discretionary Benefits and the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit for the balance of the 2013 transition year be referred to the 2013 Budget deliberations, with consideration of 2013 Ontario Works upload savings and/or the Hamilton Future Fund;
(e) That should any tax levy increase result from changes in provincial funding for Discretionary Benefits or the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit, a notice be included in Hamilton municipal tax bills indicating the reason for this increase;

(f) That the General Manager of Community Services, or designate, be authorized to implement spending caps, benefit frequency limits or other controls necessary to ensure costs are contained within the approved budget amounts.

4. Development Charges – City Square Condominiums (former Thistle Club) (FCS12089) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) (Item 8.2)

(a) That the feasibility analysis of adding the City Square Condominiums parcel to the recently expanded Downtown Community Improvement Project Area (CIPA) be deemed complete and that no inclusion of said parcel be made to the Downtown CIPA and/or the corresponding Downtown development charges exemption area;

(b) That any reduction in apartment/condominium Development Charges rates from the City’s 2014 Development Charges Study and associated By-law be applied retro-actively to the City Square Condominiums Phase 2 development and any other apartment/condominium developments that occur between November 1, 2012 and the implementation of the 2014 DC By-laws.

5. War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration Program – 2012 Reallocation of Approved Funds (PED12204) (City Wide) (Item 8.3)

(a) That the Bicentennial closing event, *William Claus Wampum Belt and 200 Years of Peace Project*, be approved as part of the War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration Program;

(b) That the $80,000 in funding approved through the City of Hamilton’s War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration Program Report CS11075 for the *Movement of Troops from Fort George to Stoney Creek* event be reallocated to support the *Tall Ships® Hamilton 2013* and the Bicentennial closing event *William Claus Wampum Belt and 200 Years of Peace Project*;

(c) That recommendation (b) of Report CS11075 be amended such that the capital funding in the amount of $447,200 be distributed annually over four years as follows: $118,500 in 2012; $251,700 in 2013; $47,000 in 2014; and $30,000 in 2015; and,
(d) That the General Manager, Planning and Economic Development Department, be authorized to initiate, negotiate and execute all agreements and documents (including grant applications, funding, programming and logistical contracts, and sponsorship agreements) relating to the City of Hamilton’s War of 1812 Bicentennial Commemoration Program, in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

6. City of Hamilton Gage Park Concert Series (PED12203) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) (Item 8.4)

(a) That the 2013 Gage Park Concert Series Program, as outlined in Report PED12203, be approved;

(b) That the transfer of responsibility for the delivery of the Gage Park Concert Series in Gage Park from the Tourism and Culture Division to a third party service provider, beginning with the 2013 Summer concerts, be approved;

(c) That an enhancement in the amount of $25,000 be referred to the 2013 operating budget process in order to fund the Gage Park Concert Series in 2013, with an additional $4,000 to be sourced from the Planning and Economic Development Department’s current budget.

7. Reallocation of 2012 Downtown Block Funding (PED12206) (Wards 1, 2 and 3) (Item 8.5)

(a) That the Gore Pedestrianization Project, including a temporary closure of King Street (south side) from James Street to Hughson Street, be extended until commencement of construction activities associated with implementation of the Gore Master Plan, and that the associated 2013 implementation cost in the amount of $19,100 be funded from the Area Rating Special Capital Re-investment Reserve Account No. 108052;

(b) That the one-time total estimated cost of $120,000 required to procure durable, modular planter boxes and planting material for the Gore Pedestrianization Project be funded from the existing Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program Project ID 8201203515, subject to the approval of operating costs set out in Recommendation (c), below;

(c) That funding required to implement the West Harbour Shoreline Rehabilitation and Transient Docks, in the amount of $340,000, be funded from the Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program Project ID 8201203515, subject to the approval of operating costs set out in Recommendation (e), below;
(d) That the associated annual operating cost for the West Harbour Shoreline Rehabilitation and Transient Docks, in the amount of $13,600, be referred to the 2013 Operating Budget process for consideration by City Council;

(e) That funding required to implement the continuation of a Social Navigator Pilot Extension Program, in the amount of $90,000, be funded from the Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program Project ID#8201203515;

(f) That funding required for the development of a Downtown Alleyway Study and Implementation of Alleyway Improvements, in the amount of $100,000, be funded from the Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program Project ID#8201203515;

(g) That subject to the approval of recommendations (a) – (f), the Hamilton Downtown Supermarket Incentive Program Project ID#8201203515 be closed.

8. Report 12-005 of the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities – October 9, 2012 (Item 8.6)

(i) Transportation Sub-Committee Reports of – August 28, 2012 & September 25, 2012 (Items 4.2 & 4.3)

(a) That the Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities supports the staff recommendations of Report PED10063(e) as a proposed approach to implementing the AODA Transportation Standard with respect to accessible taxis;

(b)(i) That the target for the number of accessible taxis be a number that provides equitable service between accessible and non-accessible taxis; so that anyone who needs an accessible taxi will get one in the same amount of time as a person requesting a non-accessible or standard taxi, for a similar day, time of day, time of year, and location; and

(b)(ii) That a communication strategy be developed to inform the public of reforms to the accessible taxicab system including fares, and the availability of licensed accessible taxis;

(c) That the consultants involved in the implementation of accessible taxis be directed to conduct a service delivery review as part of their evaluation and consider options to replace the current shared ride specialized transportation model in whole, or in part, to coincide with the expansion of accessibility taxi services.
(ii) **Equity Policy By-law Review Update (Added Item 7.1)**

That Access and Equity staff be directed to provide ACPD with a Report Annually, or more frequently if desired by staff, that provides a summary of Accessibility issues from the community that they have reported to the Access and Equity Office.


(a) **Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair**

(i) That Councillor Collins be appointed as the Chair of the School Board Properties Sub-Committee for the 2010-2014 term of Council;

(ii) That Councillor Johnson be appointed as the Vice-Chair of the School Board Properties Sub-Committee for the 2010-2014 term of Council.

(b) **Approval of the School Board Properties Sub-Committee Terms of Reference (Item 6.1)**

That the Terms of Reference for the School Board Properties Sub-Committee, attached hereto as Appendix “A”, be approved.

10. **Report 12-004 of the Pan Am Stadium Precinct Sub-Committee – October 12, 2012 (Item 8.8)**

(a) **Pan Am Stadium Technical Briefing - Release from Pan Am Stadium Confidentiality Agreement**

That the recommendation of the Pan Am Stadium Precinct Sub-Committee respecting release from Pan Am Stadium Confidentiality Agreement, be received.


(a) **June 2012 Semi-Annual Report for the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport**

That the June 2012 Semi-Annual Report for the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport, be received.
(b) Municipal Capital Facility Status of John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport (PED12202) (City Wide)

(i) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute an Agreement, attached as Appendix “A” to Report 12-002 of the Airport Implementation Task Force, to amend the Airport Lease between the City and TradePort International Corporation to the effect that payments due under Article 5 of the Lease continue as additional fees/rent rather than in respect of taxes;

(ii) That the By-law, attached as Appendix “B” to Report 12-002 of the Airport Implementation Task Force, to extend the Municipal Capital Facility (MCF) designation for the John C. Munro Hamilton International Airport (HIA), be passed.


(a) Public Input – Next Steps (Item 4.1)

(i) That staff be directed to logistically establish two public education forums, one to be located at City Hall and one in Flamborough, related to the casino input process;

(ii) That the questions proposed for polling be drafted and provided to Council for perusal and approval;

(iii) That the cost be charged to the 2012 Non-Departmental Operating Budget.

13. Report 12-001 of the Web Redevelopment Sub-Committee – November 2, 2012 (Item 8.11)

(a) Election of Chair and Vice Chair

(i) That Councillor R. Powers be appointed Chair of the Web Redevelopment Sub-Committee;

(ii) That Councillor C. Collins be appointed Vice Chair of the Web Redevelopment Sub-Committee.
(b) Terms of Reference (Item 4.1)

That the Terms of Reference for the Web Redevelopment Sub-Committee, attached hereto as Appendix “B”, be approved.

14. Establishment of a Specialized By-law Enforcement Unit (Item 9.2)

Whereas a 2008 Consultant report recommended that Municipal Law Enforcement Officers’ hours of operation "for safety reasons should not exceed 1:00 a.m., at which time responding to noise complaints would become the responsibility of the Police”;

And whereas police are not always available to immediately respond to night-time noise complaints because of demand for higher priority calls for service.

Therefore Be It Resolved:

That City staff investigate the practices of other municipalities and, in consultation with the Hamilton Police Service, be directed to investigate and report to the Planning Committee on the feasibility of establishing a specialized enforcement unit, fully equipped and highly trained in self defense and conflict resolution, in order to provide an appropriate level of service to overnight noise complaints.

15. Parkland Acquisition, 154 and 156 Cannon Street East Adjacent to Beasley Park (PW12084) - (Ward 2) (Item 12.2)

(a) That the Real Estate Section of the Economic Development and Real Estate Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department be authorized and directed to enter into negotiations with Lockwood Motors Limited and Ronald Allan Lockwood; regarding the lands (154 Cannon Street East) Pt. Lots 42 to 47, Plan 255, as in CD338286, and Pt. Closed Alley, Plan 255 described as Part 1 on Plan 62R-12068 and (156 Cannon Street East) Pt. Lots 42 to 47, Plan 255, as in VM233541, comprising a conjoined area of approximately 0.25 ha and 0.22 ha (0.63 acres and 0.55 acres) City of Hamilton as shown on Appendix “A” to Report PW12084;

(b) That staff be directed to report back to the General Issues Committee regarding the final negotiated value of the land acquisitions and impact to the Parkland Dedication Reserve (104090);
(c) That the financial details of the acquisition of 154 and 156 Cannon Street East, remain confidential until the completion of the transaction and that the balance of Report PW12084 not be released as a public document, following approval by City Council;

(d) That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized and directed to execute all necessary documents in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

16. Update on Legal Issues for Airport Contamination (LS12032) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item) (Item 12.3)

That Report LS12032 respecting Update on Legal Issues for Airport Contamination remain confidential.

FOR THE INFORMATION OF COUNCIL:

CEREMONIAL ACTIVITIES

Recognition of Olympic Athletes

Mayor Bratina recognized Reid Coolsaet (marathoner) and Shona Thorburn (basketball), two star Olympians who competed in the 2012 Summer Olympics and recognized their achievements in their respective sports, both during the Olympics and throughout their careers. On behalf of the City of Hamilton, Mayor Bratina presented Certificates of Achievements and gifts to Reid and to Mrs. Audry Nicholson, who attended on behalf of her daughter, Shona.

(a) CHANGES TO THE AGENDA (Item 1)

The Committee Clerk advised of the following changes to the agenda:

DELEGATION REQUESTS

For Today’s Meeting

(i) Laura Cattari, on behalf of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, respecting Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.1)

(ii) Sandy Leyland respecting the Ontario Disability Support Program (Added Item 4.2)
(iii) Erika Morton, on behalf of Street Youth Planning Collaborative, respecting street-involved and homeless youth relative to the cuts to the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.3)

(iv) Renee Wetselaar, on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, to outline the impacts of cuts to CSUMB and discretionary benefits within the context of housing and homelessness in Hamilton (Added Item 4.6)

(v) Katherine Kalinowski, on behalf of Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, respecting discretionary benefits and CSUMB (Added Item 4.7)

(vi) Medora Uppal, on behalf of Woman Abuse Working Group, respecting consideration of a moratorium on Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefits and Discretionary Benefits (Added Item 4.8)

For Future Meetings

(vii) Ken Hall, Enbridge Pipelines Inc., to provide additional information respecting the Enbridge Line 9B Reversal and Line 9 Capacity Expansion Project (Added Item 4.4)

(viii) Susan McMaster, on behalf of Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment and the Stop Escarpment Highway Coalition, to speak to the Niagara to GTA highway issue (Added Item 4.5)

DELEGATION WITHDRAWN

(ix) Item 6.1 – Nic Schultz, Director of Outreach, Social and Environmentally Responsible Aggregates/Aggregate Forum of Ontario (SERA/AFO)

ADDED DISCUSSION REPORTS

(x) Report 12-002 of the Gaming Facility Proposal Sub-Committee – November 1, 2012 (Added Item 8.10)

(xi) Report 12-001 of the Web Redevelopment Sub-Committee – November 2, 2012 (Added Item 8.11)

(xii) Motion respecting 2013 Pressures related to Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB) (Added Item 8.12(a))
(xiii) 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options (CS12020(b)) (City Wide) (Added Item 8.12(b)) (Referred from Emergency & Community Services on November 1, 2012)

MOTIONS

(ixv) Item 9.1 respecting Enbridge Pipelines Line 9 Flow Reversal Project – WITHDRAWN

(xv) Item 9.2 respecting Establishment of a Specialized By-law Enforcement Unit – REVISED Motion

On a motion, the agenda was approved, as amended.

Tim McCabe, General Manager of Planning and Economic Development, spoke to the publication entitled, “Commercial Property Perspective”, copies of which were distributed to the Committee. Mr. McCabe reported that this publication will be distributed to 45,000 companies in Etobicoke, Oakville, Mississauga, Burlington and Brantford that have 5 to 100 employees. An additional 5,000 copies will be distributed to real estate offices throughout the GTA.

On a motion, Item 8.12(a) respecting 2013 Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up Benefits and 8.12(b) respecting 2013 Proposed Discretionary Benefits Budget Options, will be considered by the Committee following the delegations speaking to this matter.

(b) DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item 2)

(i) Item 1 of Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities Report 12-005

Councillor L. Ferguson declared an interest as a family member is involved in the taxi industry.

(ii) Item 8.12(a) – Motion respecting 2013 Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up Benefit

Councillor R. Powers declared an interest as a family member is employed with a local social services agency which receives funds through these programs.

(c) APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

On a motion, the November 7, 2012 Minutes of the General Issues Committee meetings were approved, as presented.
(d) **DELEGATION REQUESTS**

On a motion, the following delegation requests were approved and the rules of order were suspended in order to allow these delegations to appear before the Committee at this meeting:

(i) Laura Cattari, on behalf of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, respecting Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.1)

(ii) Sandy Leyland respecting the Ontario Disability Support Program (Added Item 4.2)

(iii) Erika Morton, on behalf of Street Youth Planning Collaborative, respecting street-involved and homeless youth relative to the cuts to the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.3)

(iv) Renee Wetselaar, on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, to outline the impacts of cuts to CSUMB and discretionary benefits within the context of housing and homelessness in Hamilton (Added Item 4.6)

(v) Katherine Kalinowski, on behalf of Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, respecting discretionary benefits and CSUMB (Added Item 4.7)

(vi) Medora Uppal, on behalf of Woman Abuse Working Group, respecting consideration of a moratorium on Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefits and Discretionary Benefits (Added Item 4.8)

On a motion, the following delegation requests were approved to appear at a future meeting:

(vii) Ken Hall, Enbridge Pipelines Inc., to provide additional information respecting the Enbridge Line 9B Reversal and Line 9 Capacity Expansion Project (Added Item 4.4)

(viii) Susan McMaster, on behalf of Citizens Opposed to Paving the Escarpment and the Stop Escarpment Highway Coalition, to speak to the Niagara to GTA highway issue (Added Item 4.5)

(e) **CONSENT ITEMS**

(i) Minutes of Various Sub-Committees (for information purposes only):

On a motion, the following Minutes were received:

Council – November 14, 2012
(aa) Advisory Committee for Persons with Disabilities – August 21, 2012 (Item 5.2.1)

(bb) Hamilton Association of Business Improvement Areas – September 11, 2012 (Item 5.2.2)

(f) PUBLIC DELEGATIONS/HEARINGS

(i) John C. Munro/Hamilton International Airport – Annual Report (No Copy) (Item 6.2)

Frank Scremin, Director of Operations, John C. Munro/Hamilton International Airport, provided a power point presentation respecting the 2012 Update, which included the following:

- Financial Performance for 2011 and 2012 (6 months to June)
- 2012 Investment and Initiatives
- Activity Highlights – passenger, cargo, general aviation
- Cargo Activity – Top 5 Canadian Airports
- Key Regional Airport Competitors
- Economic Benefits to the City to Date
- Significant Return to the City of Hamilton
- Environmental Update
- Understanding the Market: Passenger Research
- Why do People Fly from Hamilton
- How to Increase Market Share at Hamilton
- Cargo Development at Hamilton International
- Government-Funding Initiatives
- Future Airport Growth Areas.

A copy of the power point presentation was submitted to the Clerk for the public record and is available on the City of Hamilton website.

Guy Paparella, Director of Growth Planning, was in attendance to respond to questions of the Committee.

On a motion, the presentation from Frank Scremin, Director of Operations, John C. Munro/Hamilton International Airport, respecting the 2012 Annual Report, was received.
(ii) **Lou Castellani, Municipal Relations Representative, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, Hamilton, Brantford, Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk – Overview of MPAC (Item 6.3)**

Lou Castellani, Municipal Relations Representative, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), Hamilton, Brantford, Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk, provided an overview of MPAC, which included the following:

- Roles, Responsibilities and Relationships
- Property Assessment in Ontario
- Current Value Assessment (CVA)
- Valuation Process
- Legislative Framework
- Assessment Cycle
- Assessment Phase-in Example
- Property Assessment Notice Mail-out
- Property Assessment Notice, Notice Insert, History of Request for Reconsideration and Assessment Review Board Appeals
- "www.AboutMyProperty.ca" website
- Average Percent Change by Tax Class
- Average Assessed Value by Selected Residential Properties
- 2012 Assessment Update – Important Dates
- How to contact MPAC

A copy of the power point presentation was submitted to the Clerk for the public record and is available on the City of Hamilton website.

Larry Friday, Director of Taxation, was in attendance to respond to questions of the Committee.

On a motion, the presentation from Lou Castellani, Municipal Relations Representative, Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), Hamilton, Brantford, Brant, Haldimand & Norfolk, respecting an overview of MPAC, was received.

(iii) **Laura Cattari, on behalf of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, respecting Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.1)**

Laura Cattari appeared before the Committee to speak to the matter of Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefits, stating that there is nothing discretionary about these benefits. For people on these programs, there are no choices. She requested that consideration be given to a one-year moratorium on these services while the City seeks to reverse the Provincial decision.
A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Cattari is attached hereto as Appendix “C”.

On a motion, the presentation from Laura Cattari, on behalf of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, respecting Discretionary Benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits, was received.

(iv) **Sandy Leyland respecting the Ontario Disability Support Program (Added Item 4.2)**

Sandy Leyland and Pat Reid appeared before the Committee to speak to the matter of the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Ms. Reid called on the Committee to become an unrelenting voice for the help of the poor and become an advocate for those in need.

Ms. Leyland, a member of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty, spoke of the terrifying thoughts of losing Community Start-up, discretionary and maintenance funding.

A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Reid and Ms. Leyland are attached hereto as Appendix “D” and “E” respectively.

On a motion, the presentation from Pat Reid and Sandy Leyland respecting the Ontario Disability Support Program, was received.

(v) **Erika Morton, on behalf of Street Youth Planning Collaborative, respecting street-involved and homeless youth relative to the cuts to the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits (Added Item 4.3)**

Erika Morton appeared before the Committee to demonstrate how youth will be impacted by cuts to the Community Start-Up and Maintenance benefits (CSUMB).

A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Morton is attached hereto as Appendix “F”.

On a motion, the presentation from Erika Morton, on behalf of Street Youth Planning Collaborative, respecting street-involved and homeless youth relative to the cuts to the Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits, was received.
(vi) Renee Wetselaar, on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, to outline the impacts of cuts to CSUMB and discretionary benefits within the context of housing and homelessness in Hamilton (Added Item 4.6)

Renee Wetselaar appeared before the Committee on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council, with the support of their Board of Directors, to speak to this issue.

Ms. Wetselaar’s remarks included that to not have these programs in place will contribute to food and housing insecurity and the cuts will impact people’s ability to find housing. She also spoke to tracking outcomes i.e., monitoring impacts and reporting back from the community.

Ms. Wetselaar expressed support for Council in their decision, and to work with the City to communicate that these cuts should not be made at a provincial level.

A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Wetselaar is attached hereto as Appendix “G”.

On a motion, the presentation from Renee Wetselaar, on behalf of the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton, to outline the impacts of cuts to CSUMB and discretionary benefits within the context of housing and homelessness in Hamilton, was received.

(vii) Katherine Kalinowski, on behalf of Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, respecting discretionary benefits and CSUMB (Added Item 4.7)

Katherine Kalinowski appeared before the Committee on behalf of the Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, which consists of local agencies engaged in providing emergency shelter and transitional housing services and supports to women who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness. She expressed concern that if these vital benefits are no longer available to women, there will be an increased demand for emergency shelter services for women, women already in shelter will find themselves unable to move out of shelter and the actual cost to the community and social services will balloon as more women become homeless.

A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Kalinowski is attached hereto as Appendix “H”.

On a motion, the presentation from Katherine Kalinowski, on behalf of Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, respecting discretionary benefits and CSUMB, was received.

Council – November 14, 2012
(viii) Medora Uppal, Co-Chair, on behalf of Woman Abuse Working Group, respecting consideration of a moratorium on Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefits and Discretionary Benefits (Added Item 4.8)

Medora Uppal, Co-chair, spoke on behalf of the Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG), a coalition of 20 agencies in the City working toward ending violence against women and children, and expressed their deep disappointment with the Province’s decision to cancel discretionary benefits and CSUMB.

A copy of the comments provided by Ms. Uppal is attached hereto as Appendix “I“.

On a motion, the presentation from Medora Uppal, Co-Chair, on behalf of Woman Abuse Working Group, respecting consideration of a moratorium on Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefits and Discretionary Benefits, was received.

(g) DISCUSSION AGENDA

(i) 2013 Discretionary Benefits and Community Start-Up Benefit (Item 8.12(a))

On a motion, Sub-section (e) was deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following in lieu thereof:

“(e) That the one-time costs related to the Provincial downloading of Discretionary Benefits and the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit be included in Hamilton’s municipal tax bills indicating the reason for the contribution.

The Amendment CARRIED.

The Main Motion, as amended, CARRIED on the following Standing Recorded Vote:

| Total Yeas: 14 |
| Nays: 0 |
| Absent: Pasuta, Powers |
| Total Absent: 2 |

The Committee recessed and reconvened at 3:00 p.m.

Council – November 14, 2012
(ii) Strategic Plan 2012 Update and 2013 Corporate Business Plan (CM12017) (City Wide) (Item 8.1)

On a motion, Report CM12017 respecting the Strategic Plan 2012 Update and 2013 Corporate Business Plan was deferred to the November 21, 2012 meeting of the General Issues Committee.

(iii) Reallocation of 2012 Downtown Block Funding (PED12206) (Wards 1, 2 and 3) (Item 8.5)

On a motion, Report PED12206 respecting Reallocation of 2012 Downtown Block Funding was amended by deleting sub-sections (a) and (c) in their entirety and replacing it with the following in lieu thereof:

“(a) That the Gore Pedestrianization Project, including a temporary closure of King Street (south side) from James Street to Hughson Street, be extended until commencement of construction activities associated with implementation of the Gore Master Plan, and that the associated 2013 implementation cost in the amount of $19,100 be funded from the Area Rating Special Capital Re-investment Reserve Account No. 108052”;

The balance of the sub-sections were renumbered accordingly.

(h) MOTIONS

(i) Establishment of a Specialized By-law Enforcement Unit (Item 9.2)

Deputy Mayor S. Merulla relinquished the Chair to Mayor R. Bratina in order to introduce his Motion.

See Item 14 for the disposition of this item.

(i) GENERAL INFORMATION/OTHER BUSINESS (Item 11.1)

11.1 Outstanding Business List Items

(a) On a motion, the revised due dates for the following items on the Outstanding Business List were approved:

Planning

Item F: Hamilton LEEDing the Way
Due Date: November 7, 2012
Revised Due Date: December 5, 2012
Item I: Financial Incentive Programs – Urban Renewal Section  
Due Date: November 7, 2012  
Revised Due Date: November 21, 2012

(b) On a motion, the following items were removed from the Outstanding Business List:

**Corporate Services**

Item I: City Square Condominiums – New Horizon Development Group

**Planning**

Item E: PFOS – John C. Munro/Hamilton International Airport

Item H: Gage Park Summer Concert Series – EOI

(c) On a motion, the following item was removed from the Outstanding Business List of the Emergency & Community Services Committee:

Item K: Funding options for discretionary benefits for OW and ODSP for 2013 budget

(j) **PRIVATE & CONFIDENTIAL**

On a motion, the Committee moved into Closed Session at 3:03 p.m. pursuant to sub-sections (c), (d), (e) and (f) of the City’s Procedural By-law and Section 239.1(c), (d), (e) and (f) of the Municipal Act as the subject matters pertain to:

(c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board

(d) labour relations or employee negotiations

(e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board; and

(f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose

respecting:

12.1 CUPE Local 1041 Collective Agreement Status Update (No Copy)

12.2 Parkland Acquisition, 154 and 156 Cannon Street East Adjacent to Beasley Park (PW12084) - (Ward 2)
12.3 Update on Legal Issues for Airport Contamination (LS12032) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)

The Committee reconvened in Open Session at 4:04 p.m.

12.1 CUPE Local 1041 Collective Agreement Status Update (No Copy)

Staff direction provided In Camera.

12.2 Parkland Acquisition, 154 and 156 Cannon Street East Adjacent to Beasley Park (PW12084) - (Ward 2)

See Item 15 for the disposition of this item.

12.3 Update on Legal Issues for Airport Contamination (LS12032) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)

Staff direction provided In Camera.

See Item 16 for the disposition of this item.

(I) ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Committee adjourned at 4:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Councillor S. Merulla
Deputy Mayor

Carolyn Biggs
Legislative Co-ordinator
Office of the City Clerk
SCHOOL BOARD PROPERTIES SUB-COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate

That the City of Hamilton will establish a Sub-Committee, with a balance of urban and rural Councillors, to review the list of school board properties scheduled to be declared surplus. And that the Sub-Committee report back to a future General Issues Committee (GIC) meeting with recommendations including a financial strategy for any potential acquisitions.

Sub-Committee Objectives

1. That the Sub-Committee will develop a school board (Public and Catholic) acquisition strategy based on the two fundamental criteria of “need” and “affordability”.

2. That the Community Services “Outdoor Recreation Facilities & Sports Fields Provision Plan” and the Public Works “Parkland Acquisition Strategy” be used as the primary basis for the determination of any green space shortage and the need for associated recreation/community centres in each Ward.

3. That the priority ranked locations will be established based on those Wards that demonstrate the greatest need and/or those neighbourhoods with the most substantial parkland deficits.

4. To give high priority to those school board properties that have joint school/City of Hamilton Recreational facilities and to those properties with high priority on joint facilities or programs in the community, which, if closed, would have the most significant impact on the Ward and its respective neighbourhoods.

5. That a comprehensive Pro Forma Financial Strategy be developed to quantify the estimated net expenditures for this initiative in total and on an annual basis.

General Scope of Committee Work and Deliverables

1. Review the current practices, staffing resources, core functions, and key services, as they relate to acquisition of School Board properties, and identify specific issues and strategies that need enhancement or improvement that would lead to a more efficient and cost effective acquisition process.

2. Review any Memorandums of Understanding and the current process of the acquisition of school board properties and, in doing so, identify any gaps and/or shortcomings that may exist, and recommend any actions or policies for improvements.
3. Examine the feasibility of acquiring School Board properties with the intent of “up-zoning”, demolishing, remediating, putting development concept approvals in place, and disposing of the acquired properties at market value or higher.

4. In the preparation of a multi-year financial strategy for the future acquisition of School Board properties that a business case analysis be undertaken for each one of the properties identified for consideration.

Sub-Committee Staff Support

With the objectives of the Committee being specific to the current processes, a close working relationship between staff and the Sub-Committee will be important. Therefore, the General Managers of Planning and Economic Development, Public Works, Corporate Services and Community Services will assign a Director/Manager level member of their staff to be available to serve as a resource to the Sub-Committee. As well, they will ensure that any other key staff members relevant to the objectives of the Sub-Committee are regularly made available to assist and support the Sub-Committee’s work.

Membership and Reporting Structure

Sub-Committee membership will consist of eight (8) members of Council, with the Chair being appointed by the Sub-Committee at its first meeting. It is recommended that Council membership take into consideration the differing needs of the older developed Wards, the suburban Wards, and the rural area of the City.

The following Senior Staff from the Portfolio Management Committee (PMC) will be required resources to this Sub-Committee:

Director of Economic Development (PMC Chair), Planning and Economic Development
Manager of Real Estate, Planning and Economic Development
Director of Planning, Planning and Economic Development
Director of Community Facilities, Community Services
Director of Energy, Fleet and Facilities, Public Works
Director of Strategic Planning, Public Works
Director of Financial Planning, Corporate Services
Manager of Capital Budgets, Corporate Services
Senior Solicitor (Commercial), Legal Services, City Manager’s Office

The Sub-Committee shall report back to General Issues Committee (GIC) periodically at the discretion of the Committee.

Meetings

As required at the call of the Chair.

Time Frame

Sub-Committee will begin work in September 2012. It is expected to have a report of preliminary findings by January 2013, with a final report to the GIC by no later than the end of March 2013.
WEB REDEVELOPMENT SUB-COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

**Mandate**

To provide oversight to the City of Hamilton’s Web Redevelopment Strategy with the goal of creating a citizen-focused website.

**Sub-Committee Objectives**

1. To ensure that the City of Hamilton delivers a website which meets the following objectives:
   - Improve the City’s online image by:
     - creating a new and visually pleasing consistent look-and-feel
     - ensuring online services are working well with relevant and easy-to-find content
     - by implementing industry standards, policies and guidelines that help reinforce the City’s image
   - Improve communication to citizens and opportunities for engagement by:
     - providing and maintaining relevant, timely and simplified online content
     - ensuring compliance with AODA guidelines
     - keeping citizens informed with a regularly published opt-in e-newsletter to begin a more coordinated way of keeping citizens aware of important City initiatives
     - supporting the function of social media
   - Improve online customer service by:
     - making it easier to find information and online service tools
     - improving five important online services which will go a long way to serving a majority of citizens and business
     - aligning the way we organize our website with what citizens need
     - ensuring that our content is accessible on mobile devices, which will certainly become more and more critical to the future of our service delivery
     - providing on-line customer service and exploring the potential role of kiosks
   - Enable the City to provide services at a lower cost by:
     - identifying new ways to cost-effectively provide our services online
     - decommissioning or consolidating City owned or operated websites (where warranted) and their associated spending
     - by moving routine tasks from more expensive channels (such as telephone and in-person) to the website
General Scope of Sub-Committee Work and Deliverables

1. Provide oversight to ensure the successful implementation of the City's Web Redevelopment Strategy.

2. Review significant project deliverables and provide input, guidance and direction for the phases within the Strategy.

3. Recommend any relevant actions or policies for improvement.

Membership and Reporting Structure

Sub-Committee membership will consist of four (4) members of Council, with the Chair being appointed by the Sub-Committee at its first meeting.

The Sub-Committee shall report back to General Issues Committee (GIC) periodically at the discretion of the Sub-Committee.

Sub-Committee Staff Support

The following Senior Staff from the Web Redevelopment Team (WRT) will be required resources to this Sub-Committee:

- Mike Zegarac, Director of Financial Planning (WRT Chair), Corporate Services
- Ken Roberts, Special Advisor to the Web Redevelopment Team
- Jane Lee, Director of Customer Service, Corporate Services
- Bill Janssen, Director of Strategic Services, Planning and Economic Development
- Cathy Kealey, Service Delivery Advisor, Financial Planning Division, Corporate Services
- Jay Adams, Service Delivery Analyst, Financial Planning Division, Corporate Services
- TBD, Corporate Content Producer, Financial Planning Division, Corporate Services
- Al Little, Manager of Business Applications, Information Services Division, Corporate Services

Meetings

Twice monthly, with special meetings at the call of the Chair.

Time Frame

Sub-Committee will begin their work in Q3 2012. It is expected to have a report of preliminary findings by Q2 2013, with a final report to General Issues Committee (GIC) at the discretion of the Sub-Committee.
Good morning Mr. Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors,

Thank you for receiving my delegation request this morning.

I am speaking to you this morning as a representative of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction, but to be quite frank, I speak for myself as well.

Due to circumstances beyond your control, you are faced with a very difficult decision. The province has placed in your laps, the fate of social programs, that by rights should not be there. I understand this.

I do not pretend the discussion today will be popular or easy. What I will share with you is a glimpse of what will the result if these programs are not maintained as they are.

I currently receive approved treatment for periodontal disease. It is called scaling. Due to medications I take for my primary illness, this is unavoidable for me.

Those on OW, ODSP adult dependents i.e. those in school, and low income individuals in Hamilton don't even have that security. There is no preventative maintenance.

With proposed caps, these recipients may not be able to even get necessary extractions when they need them nor be able to afford denturing to an adequate level if they do lose their teeth.

I don't know about you but I am 42 years old and the thought of losing my teeth horrifies.

Those impacted by these cuts cannot afford carrying private insurance on their own.

And this is the meaning of social services. It is a method of last resort that is meant to provide basic needs. We need teeth, they are not luxuries. I need my teeth to eat. We need healthy gums not only to keep our teeth but to avoid heart disease. I need my teeth to keep my dignity.

There is nothing discretionary about these benefits for the recipients of them.

Though difficult and seemingly a contentious discussion, it's not about pitting people against each other, geographically in this city, or based on income, nor classes. It's not about "Well, I can't so why should you?". It's not about "I have had to make tough choices too".

For people reliant on these programs there are no choices.

This is about acting as community. Lifting each other up, when we are down, so that we all stand stronger.
The community start up and maintenance benefit got me out of an apartment with steep stairs and into safe housing for me when I got ill. It meant not spending weeks at a time housebound. It will mean the same for those hospitalized for long periods, who worked low income and do not have benefits; who cannot afford to keep an apartment while spending months in hospital.

For the courageous women I have had the honour to have meet through my community work, it has meant quite literally their lives to have the funds for first and last when leaving their abusive partners. Women from all walks of life. And their children.

Programs not only help the homeless to transition to housing but CSUMB keeps entire families from becoming homeless. It keeps people healthy and safe. These programs keep the divide between “us and them” from deepening. It keeps the divide between you and I from deepening. These programs deliver humanity.

Truly, what you are looking to purchase is not a service. It's not just another program. What you have before you are the potential fates of more than 12% of your population. What you will be avoiding, is deepening poverty, or even increasing that number.

I hope today you resolve to fight on the behalf of the most vulnerable of your citizens. Fight the province, work with the province. Leverage what you will.

I most humbly beg, personally, you place a moratorium on these services for one year while you seek to reverse this provincial decision with us, the Roundtable and so many others in the community who understand and witness the dire need that these services fill.

Thank you so much for your kind attention.

Laura Cattari
I am incensed with the cuts proposed, where once again the Ontario Government refuses to live up to its obligation to poverty reduction. As far as I can see they are in fact committed to poverty increases. They have no desire to raise people out of poverty but to inflict further humiliation on the poor.

I call on you, I beg of you, to become an unrelenting voice for the help of the poor. Please do not stay silent. Please become an advocate for those in need. We, the poor, need strong voices and determination to strike at this archaic thinking.

Personally, I am approaching the closing years of my life. I do not want a large funeral and I do expect to be buried in a paupers field, however, I do expect to be treated with dignity and that my religious beliefs are upheld for burial.

The issues here are many and at the very heart of the matter is the greed of the rich that are dictating the policies. Again, I ask you to be a voice on our behalf. Treat us with dignity and nobility as we are all creatures of God.

I thank you and call you to action

Pat Reid
For those of us who live this horrible yet wonderful life of subsistence the thought of losing community start-up, discretionary and maintenance funding is a terrifying thought. That it has been happening for some time is a nasty jolt back to the reality of surviving life on government assistance, both OW and ODSP.

Early this year I was able to get new orthotics and new glasses. I followed all the steps for my orthotics but had a hard time getting the shoes that best suit my feet. It was decided that new balance shoes were not suitable for orthotic footwear. For health reasons, for my body’s needs, those are the best shoes that last two years. I must say that caused a lot more stress in my life. Finally I did get the new balance shoes about 5 months or so later.

Then I went to get new glasses that was another ordeal. I had to go to the ODSP office to get the right forms for the glasses. I was in for a shock when I found out that I was no longer eligible to have new frames. My new lenses would go back into my old frames, don’t worry she said if your frames break come in and get the form to go and have them repaired. So I went to an eyewear store on Queenston Rd. and was told that lenses are made to order to the frame. It would be near impossible to fit a new frame around existing lenses. I phoned two different stores explained what was going on, I needed new glasses, with new frames but the government didn’t want me to get the frames. Would they send a letter by fax to my worker? Lucky for me they both said yes and I was able to get my new glasses. But before that I had to go without my glasses for a week, which caused all kinds of hardship for me. The main one being that I wasn’t able to drive my seniors to our congregant dining. I was there but someone else had to pick them
up and drop them off. I missed doing that and my ladies missed me picking them up and taking them home. The government decided to save money by not paying for new frames for us, in the end they paid for two new lenses and one frame. Where is the sense in that? Where is the money being saved? Why do we have to go through all of this stress? Why whenever the government needs to cut spending we are the first ones to feel the pinch, to have programs meant to help us get cut? Why are we being punished?

We didn’t cause this huge amount of debt.

I’m having a really hard time finding a good home to move to. Rent is impossibly high; finding something that is inclusive is elusive. Something that isn’t a dump, or dangerous, has mould, bugs, drunks, dopers, and so much more. It takes time to find something and I’m willing to wait it out until I find what I want and can get it at my price that is inclusive. It can’t be a dump, old I don’t care, but taken care of is the key and they are hard to find. I have seen so many terrible apartments it is terrifying thinking about moving from my dump, so I need to be picky. I’m lucky in a way because it is only me. Imagine what families go through, that thought makes me feel very ill.

I need that community start up money to be there so I can make the move when I find the right place. I am not alone in this there are people on the system that are going through the same thing, or they had a bug infestation and need new furniture, beds and so on. This money does not go far, it does help a lot, but it isn’t enough. In fact it should be doubled.
I'm only one person going through this stuff, just think about the 100,000 people in this city having similar problems and needing those funds. These benefits need to stay we really cannot lose them. We understand that city council is in a terrible spot, but think of what we go through on a day by day basis.

If we had a supportive system that the provincial government put in place with all the effort to help us find the work we can do. The case load could drop by 80% think of the tax base growing with all those people working and spending all that money in this city. Then Hamilton would be the best place to raise a child.

Thank you

Sandy Leyland

Community member of the Hamilton Roundtable for Poverty Reduction
Good morning to All. My name is Erika Morton. I am presenting on behalf of the Street Youth Planning Collaborative, which is a collaboration of youth serving community agencies and youth, who strive to meet the needs of Street-involved and Homeless youth in Hamilton. I would like to take a few minutes to share with you, how youth will be impacted by cuts to the community start up and maintenance benefits-CSUMB.

Youth – Context of SIHY

This community has experienced great efforts and achieved good successes with regards to addressing youth homelessness issues. The responses that have been put in place, have been effective in supporting youth to transition away from being street-involved and homeless. While we have made good progress, there remains a large number of SIHY in this community. The number of youth who accessed the youth shelter in the past year reached to 700 individuals, but there are many more youth also experiencing homelessness.

The pathway that leads to youth becoming homeless ranges from one youth to the next. The reasons often include fleeing from family conflict, experiencing physical, sexual, or other forms of abuse, neglect, living with parents/guardians who have mental health or addictions—or they can’t support their child’s mental health or addictions, intergenerational conflict, parent/guardian homophobia or transphobia and living in situations of poverty. Common to the experiences of many SIHY is that they severely lack resources or belongings, as when they leave home they often take only the clothes on their backs. They struggle to have their basic needs met, such as worrying about how they are going to get food to eat and whether they will find somewhere safe to sleep at night. This is concerning when we are talking about individuals who are 16, 17, 18 years old and who are already facing barriers in having the capacity to lead fulfilling and successful lives.

What Housing Means for Youth

Housing support is a key component for youth to successfully transition away from being street-involved and homeless. But finding or maintaining housing can be a challenge for SIHY, as they have little or no money or resources and are without family or other strong support networks. However, our community can make a difference and ensure that there are resources that aid youth’s housing needs. We need to maintain the CSUMB funds because it is a resource that can provide youth opportunities to secure and keep housing—they often use the benefit to pay a rent deposit, rent or utility arrears, or to obtain basic needs and housing items when they first move into housing.

More so, with housing comes stability and security for young people, which promotes an environment where they can truly thrive. We have heard from community partners that housing is a doorway for youth to begin to address some of the other complex issues they are experiencing. With housing in place, we have seen formerly SIHY move forward with their lives—they become re-engaged with attaining educational goals, and start to think about their futures, such as attending post-secondary school or looking for employment. It has been said that youth are resilient, but that resilience is partly promoted by how their surrounding community responds to their needs.
The Importance of CSUMB

The CSUMB is a critical resource for the prevention and early intervention of youth homelessness. Time is critical to move youth away from the system, but resources, especially CSUMB, are needed to divert youth away from the shelter. It can take as few as 24-48 hours for a youth who is new to the streets or the shelter to become engaged street culture and be engaged in the shelter system, which can lead to longer term homelessness. Often youth homelessness results in additional issues, such as developing physical health problems, exacerbating mental health issues and creating serious addictions. These issues lead to youth accessing additional services and utilizing other various systems, especially health care. If we want to prevent youth from longer term usage of services and systems, we are best to ensure that in the short term, there is access to an adequately resourced programs.

What will be the impacts if the CSUMB is reduced?

What is most concerning is that cuts to the CSUMB means that we are taking away critical resources from youth who have/own nearly nothing. When I asked youth and youth housing workers what they would do as a result of the CSUMB, they stated that there is no other good option for them. Concerned community partners share that SIHY will face increasingly negative situations. They will remain in abusive relationships, have their children in the care of child welfare for longer times, compromise their quality of life, turn to couch surfing, or worse staying in unsafe and inappropriate housing, resort to criminal activity and sex work to survive and have basic needs met and mental health and addictions issues will be exacerbated. It doesn’t make sense to me to reduce the benefits and risk the occurrence of even deeper youth homelessness issues. Overall, reduced benefits for youth will mean confronting greater barriers to their efforts to exit street-involvement and homelessness.

Our community agencies and partners will feel more pressure to fill in the gaps in resources created by these reductions. Youth will stay longer in the care of the programs and services that they access, challenging the efforts of support staff to move youth away from being homeless. It will decrease the resources that not for profit agencies do have, however, these agencies already do so much with so little.

Finally, in the community, there will be more street involved and homeless youth, and youth will get stuck in cycle of poverty. Our community should consider all youth as key investments and resources, yet we are facing a situation where there will be young people without adequate supports and there will be challenges for them in making efforts to find stability and success in their young lives. These potential youth impacts defy this community’s vision as being the best place to raise a child, and there will be a backwards turn on the progress towards addressing poverty and youth homelessness.

Some food for thought - What the youth say:

When they hear about the reductions:
“you are kicking us down when we aren’t able to stand, you are taking away from us and we have so little” and “we want a new life, a sense of security, a new chapter and get off the system and this decision leaves us in a bad situation”
Renée Wetselaar,
Social Planner,
Social Planning and Research Council

Presentation in support of council voting to not make the cuts to discretionary benefits and Community Start Up and Maintenance Benefits

I’m here today as a Social Planner, from the Social Planning and Research Council of Hamilton. I’m here to congratulate and support you as a city council on your bold move to protect Discretionary benefits and CSUMB.

The Social Planning and Research Council raised the alarm bells on poverty in this community with the release of our report on Incomes and Poverty in 2009. Our Basic Needs Trends report in 2012 showed that the before tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO) (one of Statistics Canada’s most widely available measures of low income, and used extensively as a poverty line) was $22,229 for a single person, $27,674 for a single parent with a child, and $41,307 for a family of four, in large cities like Hamilton. Still today, many Hamiltonians fall below this line – leaving them with the risk of having to choose between food and shelter on a daily basis.

Social assistance rates are far from being a basic standard of living. A single person on Ontario works receives less than $8,000 per year, which is only 35% of the poverty line. Efforts to reduce child poverty in the last fifteen years have included increases in child tax benefits, which have helped lift many families out of poverty. But even with these increases, families on social assistance are still living well below the poverty line. The combined Ontario Works and tax credit incomes of a lone parent with one child and a two-parent family with two children are only 71% and 64% of the poverty line, respectively. All of this contributes to food and housing insecurity – which will now be further exacerbated by these most recent proposed cuts.
The impact on people in Aboriginal communities is harder. These community members face housing and food insecurities at higher rates. For example, studies show that First Nations populations in Hamilton move on average of 17 times over a period of 5 years.

To not have these programs in place will contribute to food and housing insecurity:

We know that most people who are food insecure do not access a food bank. Approximately four in ten Hamiltonians who are food insecure are food bank clients. There were 18,400 food bank clients in March 2011 counted by Hamilton Food Share. There has been a significant rise in the proportion of children accessing food from a food bank in Hamilton in the last few years. Approximately 40% of food bank users were children in 2008, and that has risen to 46% in 2011. In March 2011, 8,500 Hamilton children were part of families using food banks, breaking the previous record set in 2009 during the most recent recession.

The cuts will impact people’s ability to find housing:

Large families have an especially hard time finding suitable and affordable rental housing in Hamilton. The rate of overcrowding has been steadily increasing since at least 1991. In 2006, there were 6,550 renter households who didn’t meet occupancy standards.

In March 2012, there were over 5,700 Hamilton households with an active application for the affordable housing waitlist. This represents a dramatic 48% increase since 2007, just before the recession. This jump in demand for affordable housing is among the highest in the province – the provincial average was a 25% increase in the number of affordable housing waitlist applications this same period.

Singles are disproportionately represented in the Hamilton population of households waiting for affordable housing. While singles under age 65 represent slightly more than 20% of the
combined total of working age singles and families and senior singles and families in Hamilton, they represent 41% of Hamilton’s affordable housing waitlist applicants.

The high proportion of singles on Hamilton’s affordable housing waitlist is directly connected to the very low social assistance income available for singles, and the enormous challenge single persons on social assistance have in finding affordable, stable and safe housing for themselves. The average rent for a bachelor apartment in Hamilton costs $524/month in October 2011, representing 80% of the income of a single Ontario Works beneficiary (including tax credits).

**Tracking outcomes – monitoring impacts and reporting back from community?**

How will these changes be evaluated and or measured?

The upcoming changes to the provincial Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit will reduce by half this funding which is designed to help families and individuals on social assistance establish a residence, prevent eviction, and prevent heat and utilities from being cut off.

We are here to support you in your decision and to work with city council to communicate that these cuts shouldn’t be made at a provincial level.

Thank you.
ADEQUATE INCOME

- The before tax Low Income Cut-Off (LICO), is one of Statistics Canada's most widely available measures of low income, and used extensively as a poverty line. In 2011, the before tax LICO was $22,229 for a single person, $27,674 for a single parent with a child, and $41,307 for a family of four, in large cities like Hamilton.

- Social assistance rates are far from being a basic standard of living. A single person on Ontario works receives less than $8,000 per year, which is only 35% of the poverty line.

- Efforts to reduce child poverty in the last fifteen years have included increases in child tax benefits, which have helped lift many families out of poverty. But even with these increases, families on social assistance are still living well below the poverty line. The combined Ontario Works and tax credit incomes of a lone parent with one child and a two-parent family with two children are only 71% and 64% of the poverty line, respectively.

- A person working full time at minimum wage cannot lift themselves out of poverty, either as a single person or as a lone parent (even when taking into account all tax benefits). Only when a family has two full time minimum wage earners would their income be slightly above the poverty line, and only due to child tax credits.

- The minimum wage, at $10.25, represents only 68% of the living wage of $14.95, calculated by Living Wage Hamilton to afford a decent standard of living in Hamilton.

- There was a major increase in poverty during the 1990s recession. Between 1996-2007, the poverty rates in the Hamilton Census Metropolitan Area (includes Burlington and Grimsby) improved significantly. The 2008 recession has led to an increase in poverty rates in our community, and there is no evidence that the poverty rates have recovered yet. In real terms, social assistance rates are significantly lower now than they were in the 1990s and it is more difficult for workers to qualify for programs like Employment Insurance. The weaker social safety net makes climbing out of poverty more challenging today.

HEALTHY FOOD

- "Food security is commonly understood to exist in a household when all people, at all times, have access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food for an active and healthy life. Conversely, food insecurity occurs when food quality and/or quantity are compromised, typically associated with limited financial resources" (Statistics Canada).

- Over 35,000 Hamiltonians are food insecure, which is over 8% of the population. The rates are even higher in women: 10.9% of Hamilton females over age 12 were food insecure in 2007/8. Teenagers and persons aged 35-64 are the age groups with above average rates of food insecurity.
Lone parent families are most likely to be food insecure: 23% of Canadian lone parent families in 2007/2008 were food insecure (Hamilton-specific data was not available).

Most people who are food insecure do not access a food bank. Approximately four in ten Hamiltonians who are food insecure are food bank clients. There were 18,400 food bank clients in March 2011 counted by Hamilton Food Share.

There has been a significant rise in the proportion of children accessing food from a food bank in Hamilton in the last few years. Approximately 40% of food bank users were children in 2008, and that has risen to 46% in 2011. In March 2011, 8,500 Hamilton children were part of families using food banks, breaking the previous record set in 2009 during the most recent recession.

Vegetable and fruit consumption is also partly associated with income: while less than half of Hamilton households across all income groups eat vegetables or fruits 5 times a day, this percentage goes down with income, reaching just 40% in the lowest income bracket.

Affordable Housing

Large families have an especially hard time finding suitable and affordable rental housing in Hamilton. The rate of overcrowding has been steadily increasing since at least 1991. In 2006, there were 6,550 renter households who didn’t meet occupancy standards.

In 2011, there were over 5,300 Hamilton households with an active application for the affordable housing waitlist. This represents a dramatic 48% increase since 2007, just before the recession. This jump in demand for affordable housing is among the highest in the province – the provincial average was a 25% increase in the number of affordable housing waitlist applications this same period.

Singles are disproportionately represented in the Hamilton population of households waiting for affordable housing. While singles under age 65 represent slightly more than 20% of the combined total of working age singles and families and senior singles and families in Hamilton, they represent 41% of Hamilton’s affordable housing waitlist applicants.

The high proportion of singles on Hamilton’s affordable housing waitlist is directly connected to the very low social assistance income available for singles, and the enormous challenge single persons on social assistance have in finding affordable, stable and safe housing for themselves. The average rent for a bachelor apartment in Hamilton costs $524/month in October 2011, representing 80% of the income of a single Ontario Works beneficiary (including tax credits).

The upcoming changes to the provincial Community Start-up and Maintenance Benefit will reduce by half this funding which is designed to help families and individuals on social assistance establish a residence, prevent eviction, and prevent heat and utilities from being cut off. The Hamilton Community Legal Clinic has said the consequences will be dire for Hamilton’s most vulnerable families and that the cuts will lead to an increase in homelessness.
November 7, 2012

Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative Delegation to Council

Thank you Members of Council for allowing me the opportunity to speak today to this urgent issue.

I am here representing WHPC, the Women’s Housing Planning Collaborative, which consists of local agencies, engaged in providing emergency shelter and transitional housing services and supports to women who are homeless or at imminent risk of homelessness.

The threat of losing Discretionary and Community Start-up benefits is particularly alarming to those of us who represent some of the most marginalized people in our community— that being homeless women. We are faced with a crisis in Hamilton today. Our ability to respond to the most basic needs of homeless women is seriously compromised. The occupancy rates in women’s shelter locally have been at or over capacity for months and months. In fact, our women’s shelters are collectively turning women and their children away from their doors, due to lack of space, hundreds of times each month. More specifically, Good Shepherd Mary’s Place, the only City funded shelter dedicated to single homeless women, is turning away between 70 and 100 unique individuals each month due to lack of space.

The homeless women we serve in our emergency shelters face a myriad of barriers to moving along the housing continuum and establishing safe, meaningful lives in our community. CSUMB is an essential resource that can mean the difference between a woman maintaining her housing or losing it. It is also one of the few tools available to homeless women trying to find a home.

The member agencies of WHPC are currently piloting a program called Project SOS that is funded through the Federal Homelessness Partnering Strategy. Project SOS works with homeless women to find and sustain appropriate housing and to build enhanced quality of life in our community. It is a program that is showing early successes in assisting homeless women with highly complex needs find home. Without the ability to access CSUMB these successes would be deeply compromised.
Hamilton has a well-earned reputation for innovation in responding to homelessness. We are making gains – the development of initiatives like Project SOS or the Hamilton Emergency Shelter Blueprint and the subsequent closure of the Wesley overnight program demonstrate that we can make real headway on this issue. It is beyond distressing to think that such hard won victories could be so short-lived as a result of these cuts.

We anticipate 3 things will happen if these vital benefits are no longer available to women:

- **First, we will see an increase in demand for emergency shelter services for women.** This means that the current occupancy pressures will escalate and the already concerning turnaway rates will continue to grow.

- **Second, women already in shelter will find themselves unable to move out of shelter.** Without 1st and last months rent – there is no place for them to go. Hence an already over-burdened system will be further bottle-necked.

- **Third, the actual cost to community and social services will balloon as more women become homeless.** They will require shelter and other costly services and interventions as they experience the inevitable decline in their physical and mental health.

Did you know that the average Canadian woman is expected to live 81 years? For homeless woman the average life expectancy is only 39 years.

We don’t consider these “nice to have benefits”……these are “need to have benefits”. !!

We could give you mountains of data and reams of stats – but at the end of the day…it’s getting cold out there. We are worried about how we will meet the most basic need for shelter and safety for homeless women in Hamilton this winter. On behalf of a group of women who rarely have a voice in matters that so profoundly impact their lives, we ask you to search for solutions to problems that – while not of your making – will directly impact the entire community you represent.
The Woman Abuse Working Group (WAWG) is a coalition of 20 agencies in the city working towards ending violence against women and children. We receive some funding from the province to act as the local Domestic Violence Coordinating Committee.

WAWG is deeply concerned about the Province’s decision to eliminate funding for Community Start-Up and Discretionary Benefits. We believe this is an unfair download onto municipalities and we intend to reach out to members of the Provincial government and the Provincial staff to compel them to reverse this decision. WAWG would like to work with City Council and continue to work with other community stakeholders towards this endeavour.

Community Start-Up has been critical for women and children fleeing domestic violence and the number of women and children relying on this funding is significant. Just one women’s shelter in this city sees over 300 women and children a year. In total there are 5 women’s shelters in Hamilton and about 100 transitional / second stage housing beds in the City. There are just as many women who contact us through our counselling services, crisis lines and other supports looking for help. One of the first questions we hear from women when they are contemplating leaving an abusive partner is, “How will I survive?” Knowing that when women leave they lose half their income and if they aren’t already living in poverty many of them will be and they wonder how can they start-up all over again with so much less. For years the response we have been able to provide and to offer a real solution is the Community Start-Up funding, helping women to pay last month’s rent on their new home and acquire some basic necessities they need for their children to begin again.

Each year the Province’s Domestic Violence Death Review Committee issues a report through the Coroner’s Office making recommendations after having reviewed the many homicides and suicides that take place in Ontario as a result of domestic violence. Consistently, the recommendations speak to the importance of an economic social safety net and that without a net there will be more deaths related to domestic violence in our province.

We understand the burden put on Council today but believe that it is necessary for Council to protect women and children and put a moratorium on Community Start-Up Maintenance Benefits and the Discretionary Benefits, to provide us time to work with you and reach out to the provincial representatives to get back the funding from the Province.