



Mayoral Directive to Staff MDI-2024-03

Date: October 28, 2024

To: Marnie Cluckie, City Manager/CAO, Mike Zegarac, General Manager, Finance & Corporate Services/City Treasurer

WHEREAS pursuant to Part VI.1 (Special Powers and Duties of Head of Council) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, Sections 284.3 (Direction to Employees) the mayor may direct municipal employees to:

- a) undertake research and provide advice to the head of council and city council on policies and programs of the City or of the head of council as they relate to the powers and duties under this Part; and
- b) carry out duties related to the exercise of the power or performance of the duty, including implementing any decisions made by the head of council under this Part.

AND WHEREAS pursuant to subsection 284.16 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* and section 7 of O. Regulation 530/22, the mayor shall prepare a proposed budget for the City.

I, Andrea Horwath, Mayor of the City of Hamilton, direct the City Manager and the City Treasurer, to prepare the 2025 Budgets (Rate Supported and Tax Supported) for consideration by City Council, with the following directions:

- It is imperative that the City of Hamilton 2025 Budgets are responsive to the economic challenges residents are currently facing, particularly the rising cost of living and the ongoing affordability crisis. This should be achieved through new and expanded revenue streams, and the prudent utilization of debt and reserves, while protecting the city's credit rating to ensure long-term financial stability, as was successfully achieved in the 2024 Budget.
- Rather than directing a specific, arbitrary budget target that risks underfunding of critical programs and infrastructure, and which results in significant deficiencies for Hamiltonians and inflated costs over time, that staff be directed to provide a range of

clear options for Council to consider. These options must balance the significant demands facing the City against property tax impacts on Hamiltonians who continue to grapple with affordability challenges, while clearly addressing the need for multi-year investment plans addressing needs such as infrastructure renewal and programs that Hamiltonians need and deserve.

- As we pursue provincial and federal investments to support housing and related initiatives—including \$14.1 M for establishing and operating a Temporary Outdoor Shelter Site with essential 24/7 wrap-around supportive services, as well as the expansion of 192 temporary indoor shelter beds—it is crucial that we take proactive measures during this interim period. Therefore, staff be directed to strategically utilize reserves as an interim measure to mitigate the financial impact on taxpayers, while municipalities await the real financial partnership from senior levels of government municipalities are calling for.
- Considering urgent pressures, including improvements to transportation infrastructure like roads and transit, cyber response and recovery investments, necessary water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades, and climate response initiatives, that items referred into the 2025 Budget process by City Council shall be prioritized by staff, prior to consideration by Council, according to their potential to advance council-identified priorities.
- That staff demonstrate to Council that they have conducted a thorough review of core maintenance budget submissions. This includes clearly identifying and articulating all redundancies and inefficiencies that will be addressed.
- That any new investment requests (business cases) by city departments, boards and agencies must clearly demonstrate their capacity to advance council-identified priorities. If these requests fall outside such categories, they must outline need and specific and measurable outcomes to support these items for consideration.
- Following the recognition received from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for transparency in the 2024 Budget Process, that the 2025 Budget Process will implement the same council-directed process revisions. This will involve integrating operating, capital, and rate budgets into two annual budgets: Rate Supported and Tax Supported. This integration will again clearly present the operational budget impacts stemming from capital project approvals, thereby enhancing accountability and foresight.
- That the 2025 Budget process will accelerate the adoption of council-directed process revisions by establishing a streamlined, accessible budget review timeline that prioritizes public engagement and promotes transparency throughout the budgeting process.
- That staff will expand the 2025 Budget engagement process by incorporating and promoting online tools, enabling Hamiltonians to identify their priorities.

I am committed to working collaboratively with Council to finalize the 2025 budgets, ensuring an accountable and transparent process that maximizes the effectiveness of our city resources while addressing the economic hardships faced by our residents. Together with City staff, we will implement measurable initiatives that prioritize exceptional customer service that directly serve the people of Hamilton. This approach will help foster a community built on trust, tangible results, and a commitment to accountability, all while ensuring fiscal prudence.

In preparation for the 2026 budget: It is essential that program lines are critically assessed for their ongoing public benefit. This work should include the engagement of Hamiltonians to make informed decisions that align with the needs of our growing community and ensure the responsible allocation of resources.



Andrea Horwath
Mayor, City of Hamilton

c.c. Matthew Trennum, City Clerk