



# MODEL CITY HALL HAMILTON

## 2018

background guide

---

Committee:  
**General Issues**

Dear General Issues Delegates,

Our names are Sasha Roshan and Koubra Hagggar and it's truly a pleasure to welcome you to the Model City Hall Hamilton conference. We are excited to chair this committee as it is a unique blend of topics, which are prevalent in Hamilton. Sasha is a grade twelve student at Westmount Secondary and is extremely experienced in running and participating in Model UN conferences as she is the President of MUN at her school. Koubra is in grade 12 at l'École secondaire Georges-P.-Vanier and has a lot of exposure to model parliament through le Parlement jeunesse francophone de l'Ontario, organized by la Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne, a federation of which she is the vice-president. With these diverse experiences in addition to our own authentic insights, we are confident that this will be an engaging and invigorating committee.

Despite being busy with the perils of Grade 12, we still find time to be engaged in other things. Koubra serves as Student Trustee for the Conseil scolaire Viamonde and is the president of le Regroupement des élèves conseillers et conseillères francophones de l'Ontario. She has also recently been named governor on the Board of Governors of Ontario's very first independent Francophone university. Sasha is the founder and CEO of a nonprofit called canCODE Inc. which aims to create more opportunities for students to learn about computer sciences and is also in charge of logistics for the Count Me In leadership summit 2018. She is also involved in several clubs including DECA, HOSA, and the Envirothon.

Homelessness is, unfortunately, a common issue around the world. Hamilton specifically is plagued with overcrowded shelters and underfunded housing assistance programs, causing a lot of people to have to live on the streets. With a large and growing population of French-speaking people in Hamilton, offering services in Canada's official language of French could become a necessity. Many people from French-speaking countries wish to settle in the southwest center of Ontario. The official bilingual designation of Hamilton could have a big effect on attracting newcomers, as well as French-speaking citizens from around the country.

We hope that this committee is an opportunity for you to learn more about our wonderful city as well as discuss what we can do to make it even better. If you have any inquiries please do not hesitate to contact either one of us at [sasharshn@gmail.com](mailto:sasharshn@gmail.com) (Sasha) or [koubrahagg@gmail.com](mailto:koubrahagg@gmail.com) (Koubra). We wish you the best of luck and look forward to meeting you!

Kind Regards,

*Lasha Roshan and Koubra Haggar*

## **Topic 1: Francophonie in Hamilton**

The municipality of Hamilton is not obliged to offer services in French to the French-speaking community of Hamilton. Canada is a country with two official languages: French and English. Both languages are spoken all across the country, with one language being more dominant depending on the region. In Hamilton, the general population speaks English in a public setting. However, there is a growing population of French speaking people in the city. Every year on September 25th, many Franco-Hamiltonians gather in front of Hamilton City Hall to celebrate their heritage. The flag is raised and the Franco-Ontarian anthem is sung.

The population of (identifying) Francophones in Hamilton is almost at 10,000. In the Census Metropolitan Area (Burlington, Hamilton, Grimsby), there are 45,000 people speak both English and French, and 13,000 have French as their language of choice (Hamilton). Hamilton is a designated city under the French Language Services Act of Ontario. As such, Francophones can receive their services from the province (health card, driver's license, etc.) in French. Federal government services are also available in French.

Francophones in Hamilton have access to many French-language services offered by the various Francophone organizations in the city such as 5 French schools (3 elementary schools and 2 secondary schools), a Francophone health center, a cultural center, a legal clinic, 3 daycare centers, an employment center, and a post-secondary community education institution (La Francophonie à Hamilton).

A growing number of immigrants to Canada are from French-speaking countries are settling in the city. The major part of these immigrants are from Haiti, France and the Republic of Congo (Hamilton). "Destination Hamilton" is a website designed by the Francophone Immigration Committee of Hamilton. It is a community-based initiative to promote the city of Hamilton to applicants for immigration to Canada as part of the attraction and retention strategies for Francophone immigrants in the south-west center of Ontario (Lancement Du Projet 'Destination Hamilton').

The offer traditionally given by Anglophone agencies as third parties under the French Language Services Act (Act 8 of 1986) is still not efficient enough in Hamilton. In hospitals, mental health treatment centers, or services for adolescents, there could be only one in 20 employees available to serve patients in French (Pierroz).

More often times than not, people coming out of French-speaking countries are not able to hold conversations in English for at least the first few months in their new environment. Adapting to their new environment can be difficult with barriers such as language barriers. There are many reasons as to why it could be a challenge for the municipality to designate Hamilton officially bilingual and make offering services in French an obligation, considering the fact that about 1.4% of Hamilton residents have French as their first language (Pierroz). According to the 2016 Census, most non-English-speaking households in Hamilton speak a Chinese dialect. Arabic is the single most spoken language in households, followed by Italian (Yawar).

With a population of about 10,000, Hamilton's francophone community is only growing and has requirements of the municipality. The number of francophone immigrants in the region is rising and many services are being offered to the French-speaking Hamiltonians across the city including health services, as well as community services. Provincial services are available in French as Hamilton is a designated city under the French Language Services Act, which obliges the province to offer services in French in areas where the francophone population is prominent. Students can receive an education from pre-school, through high school completely in French. Although French is one of Canada's official languages, it is not the most spoken language in Hamilton after English. This raises many questions on how the municipality could adapt itself to accommodate other prominent language groups in Hamilton. The out-population of this community by other language groups could make obligating the municipality to offer services in French a challenge.

### ***Questions to consider:***

- Can the city of Hamilton profit from the bilingual designation of the city?
- What systems can be put in place to provide assistance to francophone individuals in the city?
- What effects will the emergence of this community have on the city?
- What effects would the designation of Hamilton as a bilingual English-French city have on other growing language groups?

## Works Cited

- "Hamilton." *Immigration Francophone Ontario*, Ontario, 2013, [www.immigrationfrancophone-ontario.ca/?q=node%2F279](http://www.immigrationfrancophone-ontario.ca/?q=node%2F279).
- "La Francophonie à Hamilton." *L'ACFO Régionale Hamilton*, L'ACFO Régionale Hamilton, 2018, [www.acfohamilton.org/nouveaux-a-hamilton/services-en-francais-a-hamilton/](http://www.acfohamilton.org/nouveaux-a-hamilton/services-en-francais-a-hamilton/).
- "Lancement Du Projet 'Destination Hamilton.'" *Immigration Francophone*, 2017, [immigrationfrancophone.ca/fr/evenements/semaine-nationale-de-l-immigration-francophone/calendrier-des-evenements/ontario/207-lancement-du-projet-destination-hamilton](http://immigrationfrancophone.ca/fr/evenements/semaine-nationale-de-l-immigration-francophone/calendrier-des-evenements/ontario/207-lancement-du-projet-destination-hamilton).
- Pierroz, Sébastien. "Cinq Enjeux Pour La Francophonie à Hamilton." *#ONfr*, TFO, 22 Dec. 2015, [onfr.tfo.org/cinq-enjeux-pour-la-francophonie-a-hamilton/](http://onfr.tfo.org/cinq-enjeux-pour-la-francophonie-a-hamilton/).
- Yawar, Mahnoor. "Arabic Overtake Italian as Top Language Spoken in Hamilton Homes, after English." *CBCnews*, CBC/Radio Canada, 2 Aug. 2017, [www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/foreign-language-hamilton-1.4232089](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/hamilton/foreign-language-hamilton-1.4232089)

## Topic 2: Homelessness in Hamilton

The term 'homelessness' describes the situation of an individual or family without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate means of acquiring it. There are many causes for homelessness, including systemic barriers, or financial, mental, cognitive, or physical challenges. Homelessness is often not a static situation and can be quite fluid as housing options switch frequently and dramatically. It can be separated into four main categories detailing the specific situation the individual or family may be in:

1. *Unsheltered*: absolutely homeless, living on the streets or in places not generally intended for human habitation.
2. *Emergency Sheltered*: those staying in overnight homeless shelters, as well as shelters for people affected by abuse or domestic violence.
3. *Provisionally Accommodated*: those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security or tenure.
4. *At Risk of Homelessness*: those who are not technically homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious and does not meet public health and safety standards.

Homelessness affects a range of populations including:

- Youth
- A variety of ethnocultural backgrounds
- Families
- Newcomers to Hamilton
- The elderly
- Individuals affected by abuse and domestic violence
- Persons with disabilities

The current housing possibilities in Hamilton are detailed in the figure below:

In 2009, over a thousand women were turned away from Good Shephard Mary's Place women's emergency in Hamilton because it was full. Unfortunately, this is quite a common occurrence in Hamiltonian shelters, as there is simply not enough space to accommodate everyone who needs it.

An article by The Spectator states that 40% of surveyed homeless individuals have been attacked or beat up since becoming homeless, and 47.6% have "tri-morbidity". This means that they suffer from mental and physical health issues in addition to substance abuse issues. As put by the CEO of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), "there are people who are in Hamilton who are going to die unless we house them".

Homelessness is a fluctuating issue, which needs to be addressed in a way that can provide help to those who need it most. In addition to the homeless of Hamilton, the city must also accommodate the displaced individuals sent from the overcrowded shelters of Toronto, in addition to those from the one shelter in Halton. Unlike these regions, Hamilton's solution cannot simply be to relocate the homeless to locations where they'd no longer be this city's problem.

Over the years, Hamilton has developed three notable plans to combat homelessness. The first two, *Keys to the Home (2004)* and *Everyone has a Home (2007)* addressed housing and homelessness respectively, but not both. The third plan, *Hamilton Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (2015)* aimed to do what the last two didn't and address both. This last plan is a 10 year comprehensive plan addressing local affordable housing and homeless needs. The primary focus of the plan is to identify action to take before taking it specifically.

As previously mentioned, people in a multitude of situations require immediate help. It is crucial that any solution passed by this committee address both short term and long term goals, as well as Toronto and Halton's *Housing Contacts* program which is allocating more homeless individuals and families into Hamilton's already overflowing shelters.

***Questions to consider:***

- There are several problems homeless people in Hamilton are facing, how should the city determine which ones need to be prioritized?
- What systems can be put in place to provide assistance to homeless individuals who need it most first?
- What are programs which are already in the works and how can they be improved?
- Are there models being used by other cities in Ontario, how can they be applied effectively to Hamilton's situation, if possible?

## Bibliography

"Homelessness Definition." Homelessness, *Homelessness Hub*,  
[www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition-1pager.pdf?ga=2.217954965.243216280.1524408739-608498485.1524408739](http://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/COHhomelessdefinition-1pager.pdf?ga=2.217954965.243216280.1524408739-608498485.1524408739).

"Hamilton Community Profile.", Homelessness, *Homelessness Hub*,  
<http://homelesshub.ca/community-profiles/ontario/hamilton>

"The Grim Reality of Homelessness", April 30, 2015. Spur, Molly. *The Spec*,  
<https://www.thespec.com/news-story/5595392-the-grim-reality-of-homelessness/>

"Halton's Homeless Often Sent Packing", *Inside Halton*,  
<https://www.insidehalton.com/news-story/2941218-halton-s-homeless-often-sent-packing/>