WHAT IS VITAL SIGNS?

Hamilton's Vital Signs checks the pulse of our city. Under the guidance of a panel of community experts, it curates existing data from 10 key areas of community life into research you can read, providing an insight into Hamilton's overall vitality and identifying significant trends and issues that matter to all of us.

Vital Signs is intended to stimulate awareness and to spark conversations and action. We encourage you to share this report widely and to learn more by visiting hamiltonvitalsigns.ca where you'll find expanded sections that include more indicators, sources and links to the original research.

HAMILTON’S POPULATION AT A GLANCE

- **Growing:** Over the last decade, the population grew 6.4% to 536,000, and is projected to grow to 680,000 by 2021.
- **Disparate:** Hamilton’s 2016 median household income increased by 25% in the last decade to $69,024. Almost 13,000 households (6%) reported income over $200,000, while over 20,000 households (10%) had total annual incomes under $20,000.
- **Older:** The 2016 median age is 41.5, up from 39.6 in 2006 — the highest median age of any large Canadian city. Two-thirds of Hamiltonians are working age (15-64), 16% are under 15, and 17% are seniors.
- **Diverse:** Visible minorities make up 19% of the population, more than doubling the proportion from 20 years ago. The number of people reporting Aboriginal identity has doubled to more than 12,900 over the last 15 years.

WHAT THE FINDINGS SHOW

Progress to celebrate. This year’s Vital Signs found increases in high school graduation rates and post-secondary school completion, continued improvements in reducing air pollution, overall reductions in poverty and homelessness, drastically reduced teen pregnancies and strong economic indicators.

Evidence of Hamilton’s “renaissance” — positive and negative. The number of artists calling Hamilton home is growing, as is the amount of funding they receive. The economic picture shows low unemployment, strong building permit values and growing numbers of jobs across sectors. However, not everyone is sharing in the prosperity — housing and apartment prices are multiplying at rates outstripping income increases and some Hamiltonians are being left behind.

Worrying trends, ongoing concerns. Less waste is being diverted from landfills, youth are not meeting recommended physical activity targets and obesity is trending up. Child poverty and women’s shelter use remain high, and some areas of student achievement, especially math, showed little progress.

More work to be done on equity and inclusion. Some groups in our community are two to three times more likely than the general population to live in poverty, and big differences continue to exist among neighbourhoods on issues like unemployment rates, educational attainment and academic achievement. Racial, religious and sexual orientation biases are still resulting in hate crimes and incidents. Women and visible minorities continue to be under-represented in leadership positions across sectors.

Implications for citizen participation. While Vital Signs found Hamiltonians have a higher sense of belonging and a greater expectation of public services, voter turnout for municipal elections is below the provincial average. Voter turnout for municipal elections is below the provincial average and varies widely by neighbourhood. To sustain progress and address our challenges, we need to work to eliminate the causes of social exclusion and enable all Hamiltonians the chance to fully participate in their city.
Hamilton's arts and culture employment, grants and festivals are all on the rise.

Employment in arts and culture
In 2016, there were 2,205 artists living in Hamilton — a 31% increase from 1,680 in 2006. The most common ages for musicians or singers. The past decade in Hamilton has also seen a 23% increase in the number of people working in cultural occupations. In 2016, Hamilton is slightly above the national average in artists (0.81% vs. 0.79%). The percentage of the labour force and slightly below for cultural workers (3.3% vs. 3.8%).

Grants to the arts
In 2016-2017, Hamilton artists and cultural organizations received $2.49 million in grants from Canada's most prominent arts funders — the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council — a 16% increase from 2010-2011 when $215 million was received, and a 75% increase since 2002-2003. The City of Hamilton has also increased its funding to the sector, enhancing the City Enrichment Fund by $114 million for arts and cultural heritage projects for the three-year period 2015-2017. Through this fund, the City provided $9.2 million from 2015-2017 to support arts organizations, festivals, events, artist projects and capacity building.

Number of festivals and events
In 2017, there were 336 festivals and events held outdoors on City of Hamilton property, up from 302 in 2016, and 288 in 2015. The wide range of events included festivals like SuperCrawl and Festival of Friends, which each attracted over 200,000 people, as well as many smaller neighbourhood events. On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Library use • Number of heritage projects • Proximity to open spaces/parks • Public art

CITIZENS AND ENGAGEMENT

Voter turnout is low for municipal elections. The rate of immigration has not changed over more than a decade. Leadership does not yet reflect Hamilton's gender and cultural makeup.

Voter turnout
Just 24% of eligible Hamiltonians voted in the 2014 municipal election, a decrease from the 40% turnout in 2010. Turnout varied by ward. Dundas had the highest turnout at 52% and the Mountain wards 2, 3, and 4 were all below 30%. At 51%, voter turnout for the 2014 provincial election was slightly higher than the 48% who voted in 2011 — both similar to provincial averages. The 2015 federal election was a different story: the local turnout of 67% among Hamiltonians above 18 years was the highest rates since 1993.

Immigration
Between 2011 and 2016, 13,150 permanent residents arrived in Canada and lived in Hamilton, similar to the number for 2001-2006 and 2006-2011. The most common countries of origin were: Syria (1,245), Iraq (1,095), the Philippines (1,080), and India (1,005). As pointed out in The Spec's All About Us, Arabic has overtaken Italian as the most common language spoken at home, after English.

Diversity in leadership
A recent report by the YWCA Hamilton's EXCLerator project examined senior leadership and management positions for six Hamilton sectors: elected, education, public sector, corporate boards, voluntary boards, and non-profit. Using an established methodology from Ryerson University, researchers drew on publicly available pictures and biographies to identify the gender and minority status of leaders across sectors. While women comprise just over half the population, they were under-represented in every sector ranging from a low of 14% in corporate boards to 47% in the voluntary sector. Visible minorities make up 13% of leadership positions, but out of leadership positions occupy a range of 11% to almost none across sectors. On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Charitable giving • Life satisfaction • Sense of belonging

ECONOMY

Unemployment rates, building permits and increases in the number of jobs across sectors point to a local economy that has improved overall over the last decade.

Unemployment rate
The March 2018 unemployment rate for the Hamilton CMA was 5.3%, lower than the provincial (5.5%) and national (5.8%) averages. Over the past few years, Hamilton's unemployment rate has been among the best in the country — in November 2017, it was 4.2% and the lowest since April 2005. The CMA average masks wide variances across Hamilton; however, the Spectator's All About Us showed unemployment rates varied among neighbourhoods from over 16% to under 4%. Building permits In 2017, the City of Hamilton issued building permits valued at over $3.16 billion, an increase of 29% over 2016 ($2.4 billion), and the highest since 2012 ($1.5 billion). Industrial, government/institutional and residential sectors all saw substantial increases from the year before. Building permit value has exceeded the $1 billion mark for the last six years, compared to 2001-2009, when the average annual value was $675 million.

Number of jobs by sector
Hamilton continues to have one of Canada's most diverse economies and 2017 was a strong year for job growth across all sectors. The number of jobs in the Hamilton CMA rose to 416,100, an increase of 6% from 2016 when there were 384,200 jobs. Health care and social services added 8,000 jobs while construction, manufacturing, and retail trade added 5,000 each. Overall, retail trade (65,300), and health care and social services (60,900) are the largest employment sectors. Manufacturing is still the third largest sector, employing 49,100 people in 2017, but is down from a post-amalgamation maximum of almost 80,000 in 2004.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Employment and labour force participation rates • Gross Domestic Product • Source of municipal tax revenue

ENVIRONMENT

Air quality has been getting better over the long term, but emissions from transportation are not improving. Waste diversion is getting worse.

Waste diversion
The amount of waste being diverted from landfills through green bin, blue box and leaf/yard waste programs has decreased over the past seven years. In 2010, 49% of all waste collected was diverted from landfills. This has fallen steadily, and in 2017, only 42% of residential waste was diverted. The City's target for waste diversion is 60%.

Air pollution: fine particulate matter (PM2.5)
Fine particulate matter (PM2.5) is a major component of outdoor air pollution, a known carcinogen and a main contributor to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. PM2.5 comes from motor vehicles, industry, and residential fireplaces and woodstoves. Over the past 17 years, it has been reduced by 26% — slower than many other air pollutants. Hamilton and Burlington continue to have the highest PM2.5 rates in Ontario.

Greenhouse gas emissions
Greenhouse gas emissions — the release of carbon dioxide, methane, and other gases — are the leading contributor to climate change. In Hamilton in 2015, they fell to the targeted 18.5 million tonnes per year from 18.1 million tonnes in 2014, but were still higher than the low of 16.5 million tonnes in 2012. The leading sources of emissions in Hamilton are industry (36%), transportation (31%), commercial (4%), waste, water, and agriculture (17%). Since 2006, emissions from all sources, except transportation, have fallen.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Air pollution trends and smog days • Water consumption • Percent days public beaches are open • Tree canopy coverage
More Hamilton workers are commuting and getting to work by car than the provincial average. The amount of bike lanes is increasing.

Getting to work
Over four out of five (83%) Hamilton workers travelled to work by car according to the 2016 census — unchanged from 2006, and higher than the 79% provincial average. The percentage who used public transportation slightly upward to 10.5% in 2016 from 9.3% in 2006. The percentage who cycled (1%) or walked to work (5%) stayed steady over the same time period.

Average commuting time
In 2016, 73% of Hamilton workers had jobs in Hamilton, a drop from 2006 when the percentage was just over 75%. The remaining 27% of Hamilton workers commute to a different city for work — higher than the provincial average of 20%. About 20% of Hamiltonians spend less than 15 minutes getting to work, while another 20% spend more than 45 minutes.

GETTING AROUND

Kilometres of biking lanes and multi-use trails
In Hamilton, there are just over 200 km of designated bike lanes, an increase of 130 km since 2007. Shifting Gears, the City’s 2009 cycling master plan, recommended adding 910 km of bike lanes by 2029 to create a comprehensive network. There have been 46 bike lane projects completed in the last five years and 25 projects in the planning stages (11% of the targeted projects). The City reports summer ridership along the Cannon Cycle Track at 700 riders per day.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Passenger trips from Hamilton International Airport • Multi-use trail utilization

LEARNING

High school and post-secondary completion is up, but remains below provincial averages and shows wide variations across the city.

High school completion
The 2016 census showed 88% of Hamiltonians age 25-64 have at least a high school diploma, up from 84% in 2006, but lower than the 90% provincial average. Just over 65% of HWDSB and 79% of HWDSB students finish high school within five years; the provincial average is 86.5%. Girls have higher completion rates of 25%, while overall graduation rates vary across schools.

Post-secondary completion
The percentage of Hamiltonians age 25-64 who have completed a post-secondary certificate, trades program, diploma or degree rose to 62% in 2016 compared to 58% in 2006, but was lower than the 65% provincial average. One-quarter of Hamiltonians age 25-64 had a university degree, compared to the 32% provincial average. Hamilton is slightly higher than provincial average (7% vs. 6%) for trades program completion. Women achieve university degrees at higher rates than men (27% vs. 22%). The Spectator’s All About Us reported in 2016 that 82% of students in Grades 6 and 9 against provincial standards for reading, writing, and math. In 2016, HWDSB students, on average, scored higher than provincial averages in all subjects except Grade 6 math and Grade 9 applied math. Students from the HWDSB fell below the provincial average in all areas. There is a great variation among schools in both boards: 13 elementary schools had less than 5% of in all subjects except Grade 6 math and Grade 9 applied math. Students from the HWDSB fell below the provincial average in all areas. There is a great variation among schools in both boards: 13 elementary schools had less than 5% of

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Poverty rates have decreased since 2000, but remain higher than provincial and national averages. Certain groups have twice the rate of poverty as the general population.

Rates of low income
Using the Ontario Family Low Income Cutoff, poverty rates for Hamilton have dropped to 16.7%, from 19.8% in 2000, but remain above provincial (13.7%) and national (12.8%) averages. Poverty rates vary by neighbourhood and group. Indigenous people, recent immigrants, many visible minorities, and lone mother families experience twice the rate of poverty as the general population.

Child poverty
In Hamilton in 2015, 21.5% of Hamilton children lived in families below the Low Income Cutoff. Similar to the overall rates of poverty, this percentage has fallen steadily over the past 15 years from 26.4% in 2000, and remains higher than provincial (16.4%) and national averages (14.4%).

Food insecurity
According to the Canadian Community Health Survey, 14.8% (76,580) of Hamiltonians reported experiencing some food insecurity in the last year. Additionally, 4.2% (over 22,000) reported severe food insecurity, which means reduced food intake, sleeping meals and disrupted eating patterns.

Greater Hamilton Foodshare tracks food bank usage across Hamilton, and in 2017 reported that over 5,200 households used a food bank. These households included almost 8,000 adults and 4,600 children.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Rates of low income • Number of people on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program • Poverty rates by sub-population.

S A F E T Y

Crime rates are on the decline, while motor vehicle collisions and police-reported hate incidents are on the rise.

Violent crime rate
Overall crime rates in Hamilton CMA, Ontario, and Canada have been declining for the last two decades. The violent crime rate in Hamilton is currently 34% lower than in 2000, and has since amalgamation, but there were no fatalities.

In 2017, motor vehicle collisions rose to a seven-year high of 10,124. Over 1,360 collisions resulted in injuries, 257 resulting in injuries — the highest rate for violent crimes (1,052).

The violent crime rate in Hamilton is currently 34% lower than in 2000, and remains higher than provincial (16.4%) and national averages (14.4%).

Police-reported hate/bias incidents and crimes
In 2017, police-reported hate/bias incidents rose by 18% to 136 from 115 in 2016, but was below the 180 incidents in 2015. The number of hate/bias crimes (i.e. those resulting in a criminal charge) fell from 15 in 2016 to five in 2017 — the lowest level in over a decade — and much lower than the 54 crimes in 2011.

Incidents are most often based on racial bias (49%), with the Black community the target of two-thirds of the incidents, religion (35%, primarily against members of Jewish and Muslim religions), and sexual orientation (20%).

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Police-reported domestic violence • Property crime rates • Occupancy rates: emergency women’s shelters • Child welfare caseloads

H O W T O U S E T H E V I T A L S I G N S R E P O R T

ABOUT HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Hamilton Community Foundation has been working to drive positive change in Hamilton since 1954. We do this in three ways:

• Helping people give in a way that makes meaning to them and impact in the community.

• Supporting all aspects of community life through grants and financing to a wide range of charities.

• Bringing people, ideas and resources together to address priority issues that affect Hamiltonians.

We want to hear what you think about Vital Signs and how you plan to use it. We’d also love to talk to you about presenting it to your group. Please drop us an e-mail: VitalSigns@hamiltoncommunityfoundation.ca or complete our online feedback form at hamiltonvitalsigns.ca

Continue the conversation online using #HamiltonVitalSigns. Follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

 Statistical notes

Information presented pertains to the city of Hamilton where possible. In the case of some Statistics Canada information, data was available only for the Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) which includes Burlington and Grimsby. This is indicated in the report where applicable.

Hamilton Community Foundation would like to thank The Hamilton Spectator for the generous support that has made Hamilton’s Vital Signs possible.