



Vital Signs®

A REFLECTION OF HAMILTON

Photo by Mike Kukucska

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 2031.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 12,100 over the last 15 years.

A MESSAGE FROM HAMILTON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Hamilton's Vital Signs is the starting point of a roadmap to an increasingly hopeful future. It tells us where we are so we can decide where we need to go.

The Hamilton Spectator's original Code Red, and our first Vital Signs report in 2010, heightened awareness that Hamilton is a city with great potential, but some serious challenges, especially the inequalities and disparities that exist.

Despite the momentous challenge of reducing poverty and social exclusion, Hamiltonians have not stood down. We have joined forces at multiple levels to improve collective outcomes: from neighbours working together, to the basic income pilot, to initiatives that increase the likelihood of educational success and finding ways to amplify marginalized voices.

Eight years after our first Vital Signs report, we now have a major update to mark Hamilton's progress.

Many changes are for the better. High school and post-secondary completion are going up. The number of people living in poverty is going down. Overall air pollution is declining. The arts are booming, unemployment rates are lower and our economy is increasingly diverse.

Other domains remain troubling. Too many families still rely on food banks and waiting lists for social housing have gotten longer. Deep inequality between our richest and poorest neighbourhoods continues and reflects harsh disparities by race and gender, further highlighting findings from The Spec's recent *All About Us* series.

Voter turnout is one area of sharp disparity between Hamilton's affluent and marginalized communities. Elections matter, and we must encourage broader voter participation so that all voices are heard.

But democracy is mostly about what happens beyond the ballot box. We need to continue cultivating diverse leadership that reflects our community, to engage, advocate, build and support citizen engagement every day.

Creating positive change takes a collective effort. We ask that you please read this report, then take a look at your community and ask: What else can I do to help create a more equitable, vibrant and inclusive Hamilton?



Teresa Smith
Board Chair



Terry Cooke
President & CEO

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 higher rates of charitable giving than provincial averages, 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
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION**

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ARTS AND CULTURE



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 types are musicians or singers. The past decade in Hamilton has also seen a 23% increase in the number of people working in cultural occupations to 8,975 in 2016. Hamilton is slightly above the national average in artists (0.81% vs. 0.78%) as a 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 \$2.15 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 \$1.14 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 properties • 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 34% 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 44%, while Flamborough and downtown wards 2, 3, and 4 were all below 30%. At 51%, voter turnout for the 2014 provincial election was slightly higher, and above the 48% who voted in 2011 — both similar to provincial averages. The 2015 federal election was a different story: the local turnout of 67% and the national turnout of 68.3% were 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 health care. Using an established methodology from Ryerson University, researchers drew on publicly available pictures and biographies to identify the gender and visible 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 19% of Hamiltonians, but in 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 2.5%.

Building permits

In 2017, the City of Hamilton issued building permits valued at over \$1.36 billion, an increase of 29% over 2016 (\$1.06 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 416,300, an increase of 8% 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 65%.

Air pollution: fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5})

Fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) is a major component of outdoor air pollution, a known carcinogen and a main contributor to respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. PM_{2.5} 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 PM_{2.5} 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 19.3 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 (83%), transportation (6%), residential (5%), commercial (4%), waste, water, and agriculture (1% each). 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



6%



GETTING AROUND


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 transit crept 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.

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



HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



Hamilton's youth are less active than their Ontario counterparts, and obesity rates are trending up for all ages. Teen pregnancy rates are dropping.


Physical activity
In 2015-2016, more than 60% of Hamiltonians over 18 reported being physically active for more than 150 minutes per week, enough to have health benefits and similar to provincial and national averages. Less than half (46%) of Hamilton youth age 12-17 reported being active for the recommended daily 60 minutes, significantly below the 60% provincial and national averages.

Overweight and obesity
In 2015-2016, almost two-thirds of Hamiltonians were overweight or obese (65%), slightly higher than the provincial and national averages of 61%. Youth age 12-17 had a slightly higher rate than the provincial and national average of 25%. From 2003-2014, the number of adults and youth who are overweight or obese trended upwards: 62% in 2003 to 68% for adults, and 22.7% to 27.0% in youth.

Teen pregnancy
The number of teen pregnancies in Hamilton has fallen by more than half in the last 15 years. In 2016, the rate of teen pregnancy was 19.7/1,000 female teens, down substantially from 2003 when the rate was 38.7/1,000. While the provincial rate of teen pregnancy has seen a similar decline, Hamilton's rate remains slightly higher (19.7 per 1,000 vs. 15.8 per 1,000 in 2016).

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Low birthweight babies • Life expectancy • Chronic disease • Access to a family doctor • Self-rated general and mental health





HOUSING

Rents and house prices have increased at rates that far exceed those of average household income. Overall emergency shelter use is decreasing — but for women, demand continues to exceed supply.


Homeownership affordability
Hamilton's average house price in 2017 was \$501,533, up 17% from 2016, double the average price in 2009 of \$244,653, and over three times the 2000 average of \$145,192. As the *Spectator's All About Us* reported, 2016 average house sale prices ranged from just over \$172,000 in the least expensive neighbourhood to almost \$880,000 in the most. Over the past four years, Hamilton has had some of the fastest rising house prices in Canada. Average Hamilton homebuyers can now expect to spend six times their annual income on a house purchase, up from 3.5 times in 2010.

Renter affordability
In 2017, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment was \$1,029, still below provincial average, but up from \$962 in 2016, and \$854 in 2012. Since

2012, Hamilton rents have risen 4.1% annually, Southern Ontario's fastest increase, and twice the rate of inflation. Supply has also tightened: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation considers a 2%-3% rental vacancy rate to be "healthy". Hamilton's 2017 vacancy rate for all apartments dropped to 2.6% from 4.6% in 2016, and the city-wide vacancy rate for the most affordable units was 2.1%.

Homelessness
The number of people using emergency shelters dropped to 2,808 people in 2015 (the most recent data available) from 3,680 in 2010, a decrease of 24%. The gains have been seen primarily in the men's shelter system, as occupancy rates in women's emergency shelters have been over 100% for each of the last four years. Over the past four years, the City and community agencies have successfully housed 631 people who were homeless.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: Housing starts • Rental starts • Social housing waitlist



LEARNING

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

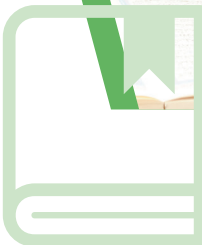

High school completion
The 2016 census showed 88% of Hamiltonians age 25-64 have at least a high school diploma, up from 84% in 2006, but lower than the 90% provincial average. Just over 86% of HWCDSB and 79% of HWDSB students finish high school within five years; the provincial average is 86.5%. Girls have higher completion rates than boys, and 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 from 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* showed that in seven neighbourhoods, over 80% of residents age 25-64 had completed some post-secondary education, while in another nine, less than 40% of residents had done so.

Standardized student test scores
The EQAO tests students in Grades 3, 6, and 9 against provincial standards for reading, writing, and math. In 2016, HWCDSB 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 20% of Grade 6 students meet provincial math standards, while six schools had more than 75% meet the standard.

On hamiltonvitalsigns.ca: High school and post-secondary completion by neighbourhood • Early Development Instrument



LOW INCOME

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 Statistics Canada 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, skipping 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 using the Low Income Measure • Number of people on Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support Program • Poverty rates by sub-population

SAFETY

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 2006 and had been falling steadily until 2016 when it rose by nearly 20% to 767 incidents/100,000 people — still down considerably from 1,434 incidents/100,000 people in 2000. The violent crime rate in the Hamilton CMA is similar to provincial rates (790), and lower than the national rate for violent crimes (1,052).

Road and pedestrian safety

In 2017, motor vehicle collisions rose to a seven-year high of 10,124. Over 1,360 collisions resulted in injuries, including 16 fatalities — two more than the previous year. In 2016, police reported 279 collisions involving pedestrians, 257 resulting in injuries — the highest

since 293 in 2007 — and four fatalities. Collisions involving bicycles increased in 2016 to 179, the highest since amalgamation, but there were no fatalities. Since 2011, there have been three cyclist fatalities.

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 2011. 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 (30%, 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

HOW TO USE THE VITAL SIGNS REPORT



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.

**THE
HAMILTON SPECTATOR**

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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 has 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.

Vital Signs is a community check-up conducted by community foundations across Canada that measures the vitality of our communities and identifies significant trends in a range of areas critical to quality of life. Vital Signs is co-ordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

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