



HAMILTON ACORN 2022 MUNICIPAL PLATFORM



INTRODUCTION

Hamilton ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now), is a membership based community union made up of low-to-moderate income individuals and families. The group started in 2017 and has grown to 4 organized chapters - Downtown, Mountain, East End and Stoney Creek with just over 7,000 members.

ACORN believes that social and economic justice can best be achieved with a city-wide membership who are invested in their organization and focused on building community power for change.

The Hamilton municipal election is on October 24, 2022.

This document provides a summary of the local campaigns Hamilton ACORN members need candidates to commit to champion if elected! ACORN members need to see the following changes to make Hamilton an affordable and livable city.





MUNICIPAL PLATFORM

HOUSING - HEALTHY HOMES & RENOVICTION

The housing crisis in Hamilton has gone from bad to worse. Low and moderate-income tenants are facing the brunt of the crisis and Hamilton ACORN is demanding the City of Hamilton develop policy that puts the health and housing security of tenants ahead of the profit of developers.

The City of Hamilton needs to...

- Develop and implement a city wide landlord licensing program to protect tenants from substandard housing conditions and restrict renoviction
- Make further improvements to the Tenant Defense Fund (increased funding, expansion of issues covered, tenant outreach and support)
- Create a robust proactive tenant education program to inform tenants of their rights when a building is sold and track reports of tenant displacement
- End municipal incentive grants to developers who have a history of displacing Hamilton tenants

ACORN wins during 2018-2022 term

- Hamilton property standards by-laws updated in August 2021 to include more health and safety issues tenants face
- Landlord licensing pilot passed in August 2021 for Wards 1, 8 and part of Ward 14.
- Funding was approved for the city to hire a consultant to develop local anti-renoviction policy based on the by-law from New Westminister, BC
- Stopped \$152,000 worth of grants to renovictor Malleum
- Changes to the city's grant program that stops incentive grants to buildings where tenant displacement took place

HOUSING - DEMOVICTION

Renoviction and demoviction are having a substantial impact on Hamilton's existing market affordable housing stock.

The City of Hamilton needs to...

- Create a city wide rental replacement and tenant assistance policy to protect tenants from demoviction and prevent loss of affordable housing

The city already has policy in place in the Downtown Secondary Plan that

"require development proposals that will result in the demolition or redevelopment of affordable housing units to demonstrate that as a result of the proposed development there is no net loss in the number of affordable housing units within the Central Hamilton Local Housing Market Zone and provide an acceptable tenant relocation and assistance plan."

This policy needs to be expanded city wide and to be strengthened by adding that tenants have first right of refusal in the new development and that landlords provide rental top up payments. Similar to the rental replacement policy in Burnaby, British Columbia.

Impacts of renoviction & demoviction

- Displacement of low income & vulnerable residents
- Destroys existing stock of market affordable housing
- Drives up rents in the neighborhood
- Housing instability for tenants
- Increases demand for social housing
- Incentivizes landlords to deliberately let their buildings fall into disrepair
- Increasing pressure on social and health services
- Increase in homelessness



Progress on the campaign:

A motion was passed in May 2022 for the city to look into potential policy changes regarding demolition of rental housing.



HOUSING - DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The city's current definition 125 per cent of the average market rent is not affordable to low and moderate income tenants. We need the City of Hamilton to prioritize affordable housing for ODSP & OW recipients, fixed income seniors and low wage workers - target people making \$10,000 - \$30,000 with affordability programs.



HOUSING - AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON PUBLIC LAND

Since the mid 1990s, investment in affordable housing by the federal and provincial governments has dwindled. Municipalities have not picked up the slack, failing to produce, deliver or maintain affordable housing, including social and supportive housing, and has resulted in a heavy reliance on the private market and recently investment companies to deliver housing.

In an effort to tackle the city's multimillion-dollar repair backlog in social housing and their "community revitalization strategy", the city has been selling off its real estate assets. Notable current projects underway are Roxborough Park & Jamesville. In both redevelopments, the city maintains a portion of the land for city owned and operated social housing. The rest goes to developers or non-profit housing providers.

For future redevelopment project or projects that involve public land, ACORN is calling on the City of Hamilton to:

- Ensure rent control in all market rentals created.
 - Due to weakening of the province's rent control laws, units built after November 2018 are not required to have rent control.
- Keep public land in public control.
- 100% affordable housing on public land targeting low to moderate incomes (\$30,000 individuals / \$60,000 households and under)



HOUSING - AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON PRIVATE LAND

After persistent organizing and campaigning by ACORN Ontario chapters and its allies, the Province began to introduce legislation in 2016 enabling municipalities to establish inclusionary zoning policies.

Bill 108 limits the scale of IZ in Hamilton but remains a powerful planning tool that ensures a predetermined amount of affordable housing is included in new residential developments, close to high density transit developments .

ACORN Hamilton is calling on the City of Hamilton to create a bold inclusionary zoning policy that includes:

- A set aside rate of minimum 40% affordable housing in all new condo & apartment developments where IZ can be used
- Affordable units built with IZ policies be kept affordable forever
- Require targets for accessible housing
- Target incomes of \$30,000 or less for affordability.
 - We need affordable housing for Hamiltonians, ODSP/OW recipients, low wage workers and fixed income seniors
- IZ policy apply to minimum amount of units as set out in the provincial policy (10 units or more)

ACORN and allies win during 2018-2022 term:

In May 2022 motion was passed at the Planning Committee to incorporate the development of an inclusionary zoning planning into work already being done for the city's Official Plan and create a policy to indicate the city's intent to implement inclusionary zoning. This is a step in the right direction to speed up the process. Hamilton city staff are targeting early 2023 to present a draft by-law to Council.



HOUSING - COMMUNITY BENEFITS AND THE LRT

While ACORN's demands for tenant protections from displacement and strong targets for affordable housing on public land are applicable and needed across Hamilton, bold inclusionary zoning will be vital to ensuring that the LRT benefits working class Hamilton residents and is not just a driver of gentrification and filling the pockets of rich developers.

In addition to a strong IZ policy being mandated for the LRT project, ACORN is demanding (specific to the transit project) that:

- The project adopts a zero tenant displacement policy. Tenants across the route and adjoining neighbourhoods are anxious that the project will lead to further displacement of tenants and loss of affordable housing as the project attracts investors looking to buy properties along and near the route and flip affordable housing stock into luxury rentals
- Communication to tenants along the route about the project and their rights as a tenant and resources available to them (include contacts of Hamilton Community Legal Clinic, Housing Help, ACORN)



INTERNET FOR ALL

The efforts made by the federal government to address the barriers to digital equity remain far too limited. ACORN won the federal Connecting Families Program in 2018 but the program falls short on several counts.

With progress stalled at the federal level and the urgency in low income Hamiltonians having access to affordable internet, ACORN Hamilton is calling on the City of Hamilton to take action on the digital divide!

The City of Hamilton needs create a city owned and controlled municipal broadband program.

- The City of Hamilton has the power to address the digital divide by ensuring low and moderate income residents have access to affordable home internet through a city run and publicly owned service.

Expand free public WiFi to more of Hamilton's parks:

- ACORN supports the expansion of Wi-Fi to Hamilton parks.
- Any expansion should be focused on bringing free Wi-Fi access to public parks in low income tenant communities

Free Wi-Fi access on HSR buses, bus terminals and the LRT

- The pilot program for free Wi-Fi on select HSR buses was not continued or expanded. Offering internet access on public transit is an important step to expanding internet access to low income Hamilton residents.



EXTREME HEAT

Extreme heat is a growing issue for Hamilton tenants. For years, tenants have been raising the alarm on unsafe conditions in rental housing during the hot summer months. Currently, there are no laws provincially or municipally requiring air conditioning or that indoor temperatures do not exceed a maximum temperature.

The climate crisis will mean heat events will continue to increase in intensity, duration, and frequency. And it is well documented that those disproportionately affected by heat related deaths and illness are seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income, racialized and tenant communities.

Below are Hamilton ACORN campaign platform demands:

1. The City of Hamilton needs to develop and implement a maximum heat bylaw for rental housing.

- The bylaw needs to apply to all rental housing (all densities, market and social housing)
- 26 degrees has been recognized by other jurisdictions as a maximum indoor temperature but development of the bylaw should include consultation with tenant, housing organizations and health professionals to determine the maximum temperature.
- Support from Hamilton's licensing department to ensure landlord compliance
- Similar to Hamilton's minimum heat bylaw, financial penalty for landlords who fail to comply with the maximum heat bylaw.



EXTREME HEAT

2. The City of Hamilton needs to develop a municipal program to support retrofits at market rental housing.

- Similar to the development of the Home Retrofit Program (HERO) for homeowners, Hamilton needs a program for landlords to reduce energy consumption and retrofit older market affordable housing stock to adapt to a hotter climate.

3. The City of Hamilton needs to expand measures in community and public spaces for Hamilton residents to keep cool when outside the home.

More drinking fountains.

Improvements to Hamilton's tree canopy especially in low- and moderate-income tenant communities.

4. The City of Hamilton needs to track heat-related deaths and illness

To better understand the extent of the problem and demonstrate the urgent need for local action on extreme heat, the city needs to initiate monitoring of the impact of extreme heat on human health.



OTHER DEMANDS

- No encampment evictions
- Expand public transit
- Affordable public transit for low income users
- Freeze Hamilton's Urban Boundary
- City wide sidewalk snow removal
- Increase funding and support for Hamilton's homeless



WARD SPECIFIC - WARD 5 - FIX THE PARK OUTSIDE DOMINIC AGOSTINO RIVERDALE COMMUNITY CENTRE

The playground and park outside of the Dominic Agostino Riverdale Community Centre is the go to green space for tenants and their families in the Riverdale neighborhood.

ACORN is calling on the Ward 5 Councillor to commit to working with tenants in the neighborhood and the Hamilton School Board to improve this vital green and community space:

- Daily garbage clean up in the summer
- More garbage cans and recycling bins
- Fix and/or replace the existing picnic tables and benches, and add new seating for families throughout the park
- Expand the playground
- Install drinking fountains
- More trees planted around the park perimeter to provide more shade during the hot summer months.
- Consult the community on fixing or replacing the broken cricket court
- Enforce property standards to the adjacent apartment building who has allowed the fencing to degrade causing dangerous conditions next to the park





HOW TO VOTE

October 24, 2022: Voting Day

Hamilton voters will elect these offices:

- Mayor
- 15 City Councillors
- 11 English Public School Board Trustees



Register to vote in the 2022 Municipal Election at voterlookup.ca

ACORN HAMILTON - CONTACT DETAILS

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