

ATTRACTING & KEEPING TALENT

Magnets and Glue

I was on McMaster campus today to discuss the importance of putting the kinds of investments in place today for tomorrow's generation.

The retention of young people, including young graduates, to Hamilton is critical to our city's long-term economic prosperity and Hamilton's ability to finance future city infrastructure and services.

Skilled labour is now ranked as one of the most important factors in a company's locational decision. Hamilton must identify what magnets it has to attract young people and what glue it needs to keep them in place.



1. A Predictable, Forward-Looking Investment Environment

Our young residents need jobs. Job creation requires investment. And private investors are looking for predictability in any investment environment.

Let me be blunt. A municipal council that vacillates on a major, once-in-a-generation

infrastructure project in the form of LRT, even after almost 50 votes in favour of the project, sends the wrong signal to investors. This kind of political volatility is also not conducive to public sector partnerships. A federal and provincial government will simply choose the next municipality on the list asking for help and avoid the risks.

2. Better Transit

When I graduated, freedom meant a car. Today's graduates, facing a future of contractual employment, want and need access to affordable, reliable and quality public transit. Better transit is critical to attracting young people and serves as an incentive to private residential (places to live) and commercial development (jobs) along high order transit corridors in the form of LRT.

3. Deliver a range of housing affordable to all

Young residents need entry-level housing close to their place of employment. Some graduates or skilled youth may earn too much to qualify for housing assistance but not enough to afford market housing. The city of Hamilton requires a housing strategy that will deliver a range of housing affordable to all residents. Please see my housing position paper on my website: maureenwilson.ca

4. Make It Easy & More Affordable to be an Entrepreneur

Despite a decade-long commitment to "cutting red tape", complications in obtaining necessary permits and licenses, along with costs caused by delays, continue to be cited by small business owners and entrepreneurs. The city must commit to a transparent, predictable process that eliminates costly delays and creates a level playing field for all small businesses.

5. Be an Open, Tolerant and Inclusive City

A city that is welcoming to outsiders, views diversity as a strength and is committed to creating and sustaining a civic culture of tolerance will have greater success in attracting and retaining young minds.

6. Be a Clean, Green and Safe City

A city that values connected green spaces, insists on sustainable development and is clean and safe will have greater success in attracting and keeping young, more mobile residents.

7. Civic Engagement

Citizenship enjoys both rights and responsibilities. Individuals are more likely to feel a sense of ownership of their civic domain and

stay in place if a city encourages and welcomes their activism.

8. Support a Living Wage

There is both a moral and economic imperative to supporting a living wage. It is never okay for people who work full time, including our youth, to not be able to afford decent housing and to put nutritious food on their table.

