

Local Economy and Business

Impacts of Climate Change in Relation to the Local Economy and Business

Participants identified climate change impacts and/or risks that the Hamilton community is already experiencing or might experience in the future in relation to the local economy and businesses. During the conversation, participants noted that more frequent extreme weather events would result in higher costs for businesses as a result of property damage, reduced employee productivity, transportation delays and higher fuel and energy prices. Participants also noted that changing priorities of residents

as a result of climate change might result in less disposal income to spend on luxury items, in turn negatively impacting the local economy. This led participants to question what a zero growth economy might look like. The table to the right summarizes key trends that emerged during the conversation.

Key Trends

- Property damage
- Reduced productivity
- Goods movement
- Employee health
- Energy
- Lowered consumption of luxury items

The detailed feedback reported from the conversation is summarized below:

- *Property damage*
 - Damage to property from flooding
 - Power outages
 - Cost for preparation
 - Insurance costs
 - Damage to infrastructure
 - Increased maintenance and repair costs
- *Reduced productivity*
 - Loss of productivity
 - Employee absenteeism
 - Need to close due to weather event
 - Effects on business from closing or people not being able to get to your business
 - Heat exhaustion for outdoor workers lowering productivity
 - Increased operating costs
- *Goods movement*
 - Effects on supply chain
 - Impacts to shipping due to drop in levels of Great Lakes/rivers, transport by water
 - Transportation of raw materials and products delays due to ice storm and cold temperatures (e.g. frozen railway lines, lakes frozen, salt shortages)
 - Global supply impacts (longer travel distance = higher cost)
- *Employee health*
 - Increase risk to occupational health and safety

- Heat exhaustion for outdoor workers
- *Energy*
 - Rising energy costs – harder for small and medium enterprises to manage with rising energy costs
 - Stressing the power grid
- *Lowered consumption of luxury items*

Vulnerability from an Economic and Business Perspective

Participants discussed who and what is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change from a local economy and business perspective, suggesting that start-up and smaller companies in Hamilton are the most vulnerable. Participants identified low income residents as the most vulnerable population. The results of the conversation are summarized in the table below:

Who or what is most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change?	
Who	What
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low income residents • Individuals who lose their jobs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small to medium businesses • Start-ups • Large companies – due to large property size or number of properties/ locations • Employment opportunities • Insurance industry (and related claims industry) • Global supply chain • Large emitters

Opportunities from an Economic and Business Perspective

Participants discussed opportunities that present themselves from a local economy and business perspective as it relates to climate change. Participants discussed a number of ways that the business community and local economy can adapt to make Hamilton a leader in sustainable business practices. Participants recommend that the City offer incentives and impose regulations to encourage green practices, promote buying and hiring locally to support the Hamilton economy and change the status quo of our business practices in order to reduce our emissions. The City of Vancouver’s goal of being the ‘greenest City in Canada by 2020’ was discussed as an example of a city making the business case for going green. The table to the right summarizes key trends that emerged during the conversation.

Key Trends
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage green practices • Buying and hiring locally • Change our practices to reduce our emissions • Leadership • Community and business relationships

The detailed feedback reported from the conversation is summarized below:

- *Encourage green practices*

- Encourage solar panels/green roof infrastructure in local business communities and downtown (e.g. Copps Coliseum)
- Encourage local enterprise and economic development in each community through incentives or taxation (e.g. similar to what has taken place in Dundas)
- Encourage (through taxation or incentives) manufacturing companies to implement greenhouse gas emission reduction strategies
- Tax incentives for 'greener' processes and industry
- Implement local limits on short term greenhouse gases from industry (e.g. Methane)
- Offer incentives or impose legislation/regulation on business (add taxes or defer taxes)
- Local improvement charges program to offer low interest loans to home owners for improvements that positively impact climate change (e.g. solar energy, rain capture)
- Carbon tax/dividend = re-direction of subsidies and renewable energies
- *Buying and hiring locally*
 - Promote 'buy local'
 - Develop communities that have 'community-based' shopping available that people can walk or bike to
 - Buy local, source local and hire locally as much as possible
 - Changing priorities regarding localization (e.g. encourage 'staycations', provide local employment opportunities, demonstrate the benefits of shorter commutes)
 - Educate consumers on local products
 - Localization of essential needs and goods (e.g. local food movement)
- *Change our practices to reduce our emissions*
 - Upgrade production facilities and manufacturing practices
 - Development and creation of new technologies which will assist manufacturers and businesses to reduce greenhouse gas emissions
 - Change policies to allow for sustainable solutions (e.g. green infrastructure, grey water)
 - Centralization of supply
 - Teleworking and flexible hours/compressed work weeks
 - Construction companies to offer green products and services
 - Encourage investment in ethical and sustainable investments
 - Make the business case for going green
- *Leadership*
 - Businesses need to be motivated to be stewards locally and globally
 - The City of Hamilton should set the bar higher and led by example
 - Support B Corps, Co-ops and green companies
 - Have a conversation with the business community (Chamber of Commerce)
- *Community and business relationships – strengthen/build*