



Examining the IELECT Hamilton Resident Survey: A Visual and Thematic Analysis

Prepared for

IELECT

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Executive Summary

IELECT is a not-for-profit organization in Hamilton seeking to increase residents' democratic engagement across six priority areas: Infrastructure, Economy, Leadership, Environment, Community, and Transportation. Their recent city-wide survey asked participants to rate their satisfaction with issues relating to each of these priority areas and provide open-ended feedback. With over 2000 responses, IELECT asked the McMaster Research shop to help analyze the survey. Specifically, the objectives were to investigate spatial patterns to the data and themes from the open-ended feedback.

To investigate spatial patterns, the Research Shop team geo-coded survey responses onto a map of Hamilton's wards using postal code data provided by participants. The team then visually examined the resulting distribution for patterns or "clusters" of responses. To analyze the open-ended survey feedback, the team thematically analyzed the responses and organized the resulting themes under each of IELECT's priority areas.

Results from our visual examination of geo-coded survey responses suggest some Hamiltonians, regardless of where they live, hold universally negative views on particular municipal issues, including all aspects of municipal leadership, housing affordability, action to curb climate change and protect the local environment, citizen engagement, and transportation decisions.

For other issues, respondents living closest to Hamilton's city centre appeared to be less satisfied than those living farther from the downtown core, including satisfaction with the city's infrastructure, park maintenance, safety, and job opportunities. As for the analysis of the open-ended survey feedback, most comments pertained to dissatisfaction with current municipal leadership, including a lack of transparency, accountability, and public engagement, followed by comments about transportation, including better road management and both positive and negative feedback about the LRT.

Our findings shed light on what Hamiltonians are concerned about in their city. Potential bias in the survey data we used, however, and our reliance on a visual examination of survey responses (rather than a more sophisticated and objective technique) means all our interpretations and conclusions are tentative. Despite these limitations, our finding that, regardless of location, respondents are universally dissatisfied with a variety of municipal issues, including governance practices, housing affordability, and environmental action, points to the priorities of many residents in electing new leaders.

Introduction

Background

IELECT is a not-for-profit, grassroots organization committed to raising awareness about social issues in the Hamilton community and electing municipal leaders who will address them. The organization's current focus is increasing democratic engagement in Hamilton's upcoming municipal election by facilitating community dialogue and encouraging voter turnout.

The organization bases its work around six priority areas: Infrastructure, Economy, Leadership, Environment, Community, and Transportation (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Six priority areas of IELECT

Together, these priority areas make up the acronym 'IELECT.' Descriptions for each of the priority areas are as follows (IELECT Hamilton, 2022):

- **Infrastructure:** Improving Hamilton's neighbourhoods, parks, playgrounds, roads, bridges, community centres, and wastewater treatment facilities.
- **Economy:** Strengthening the overall financial health and prosperity of Hamilton and all its diverse residents, through better and more secure jobs, a living wage, housing availability and affordability, and access to public services.
- **Leadership:** Treating all residents with respect and dignity, pushing for transparency and good governance, inspiring others through bold vision, and implementing and measuring innovative, equitable and evidence-based decisions to better serve all Hamiltonians.
- **Environment:** Championing actions to address climate change to ensure a healthy, safe, and sustainable environment for all current and future Hamiltonians.
- **Community:** Fighting for the diverse needs of people in an inclusive and equitable way, and improving community engagement so the voices of all Hamiltonians are heard.
- **Transportation:** Supporting safe, effective movement throughout the city for all Hamiltonians by ensuring access to equitable and affordable public transit, safe roads, sidewalks, bike lanes, and trails.

Context

In May 2021, IELECT released a city-wide resident survey that asked Hamiltonians about the issues they care most about in their community. The survey remains active on their website and, at the time of writing this report, has 2007 responses. The survey consists mostly of closed-ended questions asking residents for their opinion on the municipal government and the performance of its leaders in each of the six priority areas.

On November 10, 2021, IELECT released a high-level city-wide analysis of the survey responses, which is available to the general public (IELECT Hamilton, 2022). The organization, however, was interested in conducting a deeper analysis of the survey data, looking for trends at finer geographic levels and relationships with other population variables. However, IELECT staff did not have the internal capacity to conduct this deeper analysis themselves.

In the fall of 2021, IELECT leadership reached out to the McMaster Research Shop for support. The Research Shop agreed to support IELECT in conducting a deeper analysis of their survey and started work in January 2022.

Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this project was to conduct an in-depth analysis of IELECT's resident survey. The objectives of this analysis, which were determined in collaboration with IELECT, included:

1. A geographic analysis of the survey data, which involved geo-coding survey responses using postal code data provided by participants and visualizing the distribution of responses across Hamilton's wards.
2. A thematic analysis of responses to an open-ended question on the survey, "Any additional feedback?"

Results from our analysis will be used by IELECT to engage Hamilton residents and inform political candidates. The intent is for this report to be freely available to the public on the IELECT website, as well as sent to the local media, shared with city council, and distributed to persons on the IELECT mailing list.

Report Structure

Our report is organized by the two research objectives outlined above. We begin by describing the methods used to analyze the data and then report our findings, which are thematically organized by IELECT's priority areas. We present both qualitative and quantitative research findings, including tables and figures to display the data. Finally, we conclude with some key takeaways and next steps.

Methodology and Limitations

Data Source

As described in the Introduction, our analysis is of data collected through IELECT's Hamilton Resident Survey, which was launched in May 2021 and, at the time of writing this report, still active. IELECT's survey data collection methodology is described at-length in IELECT's initial report (Resident Survey Report #1), though the contents of the survey is summarized as follows:

- 4 demographic questions,
- 23 questions related to IELECT's six priority areas (measured on a 5-point Likert scale), and
- 1 open-ended, free-text question asking for additional feedback (*Appendix A*).

The survey was advertised on IELECT's social media channels, email distribution list, local media (i.e., print ad in the Hamilton Spectator), and other forms of mainstream media advertising. The survey was open to all Hamilton residents and could be filled out in hard copy (which were available at participating locations across the city) or online. The Research Team exported existing survey responses on September 25, 2021, leading to a dataset of 2007 records.

Data Analysis

Spatial Analysis: A survey question asked residents for their postal codes, which allowed us to “geo-code” each respondent to geographic coordinates on a map of the city. The research team only geo-coded records with complete and accurate postal codes. The research team obtained geographic coordinates for each postal code from the DMTI Spatial Inc. “Multiple Enhanced Postal Codes” dataset, which was accessed through the McMaster University Library Geospatial Data portal. After the survey responses were geo-coded, all further analyses, described below, were completed using QGIS (version 3.22).

To examine spatial patterns in the survey data, we collaborated with the community partners to visualize survey responses over Hamilton ward boundaries. We obtained shapefiles with ward boundaries online from Open Hamilton. We then visually examined the resulting distribution of responses and discerned patterns, such as clustering within particular wards.

We examined survey responses at the ward-level (rather than the neighbourhood-level) based on the availability of neighbourhood-level data. Neighbourhood boundaries from Open Hamilton identified hundreds of neighbourhoods within central Hamilton, but excluded large areas of Hamilton

(e.g., Dundas, Waterdown). Additionally, based on the small surface areas of the neighbourhood boundaries, we were unable to draw insightful/meaningful conclusions based on the low response rate in some neighbourhoods.

We also used publicly available datasets from Open Hamilton to examine potential linkages based on their relevance to IELECT survey questions. We consulted the community partner to determine which linkages (i.e., map overlays) to pursue. Based on this consultation, we created map overlays for:

- Survey question #3 (satisfaction with local parks) and park area percentage, to investigate potential correlations between proximity to parks and resident satisfaction with parks;
- Survey question #5 (support for small and medium sized businesses) and commercial area percentage, to investigate potential correlations between residents' perceived business support and residency in a commercial area; and
- Survey question #7 (ease of finding affordable housing) and residential area percentage, to investigate potential correlations between residents' perceived ease of finding affordable housing and residency in an urban vs. suburban/rural area.

Qualitative Analysis: The research team conducted a preliminary scan of responses to the survey question, "Any additional feedback?" and conducted a thematic analysis¹ of feedback relating to at least one of IELECT's six priority areas.

We conducted a thematic analysis in Microsoft Word. The research team collectively developed a codebook (*Appendix B*) to organize the themes into categories and sub-categories. The data were initially coded ward-by-ward, and then the findings were analyzed across wards. We developed thematic findings (organized by the six pillars of IELECT) and a summary diagram illustrating the themes from the qualitative analysis.

Limitations

Our analysis was limited to one data source: IELECT's Hamilton Resident Survey dataset. As such, a concern we had is the representativeness of these survey responses. For instance, a primary distribution method of the survey was through IELECT's email list and social media channels, which could have attracted respondents who were already aware of IELECT's mission and who may hold similar views on issues relevant to IELECT.

¹ A thematic analysis aims to identify common or recurring ideas in a qualitative dataset.

For our spatial analysis, after geo-coding the survey responses, our interpretations relied on a visual assessment of trends and patterns across wards by examining dots (responses) on the maps. We did not have the technical expertise to conduct a sophisticated spatial analysis (e.g., a cluster analysis). Due to resource constraints, only one researcher conducted the visual assessment. By relying on one individual's ability to visually detect patterns among spatially distributed datapoints, we recognize this introduces the high possibility of inaccuracies and reduces the specificity of our inferences. As such, findings from the spatial analysis are tentative and should not be used to draw definite conclusions.

Findings

A total of 2007 individuals completed the Hamilton Resident Survey. However, the sample size differed for the spatial and qualitative analysis after applying the following inclusion/exclusion criteria:

Spatial Analysis: We identified 76 survey responses with incomplete or incorrectly entered postal codes. These responses were therefore excluded, leaving 1931 responses for the spatial analysis.

Qualitative Analysis: 987 survey respondents shared written feedback to the open-ended survey question, "Any additional feedback?". Of the responses, 835 responses provided feedback or suggestions pertaining to IELECT's six priority areas and were included in the thematic analysis. Excluded responses involved feedback on the survey or consultation process and other statements irrelevant to the research objectives.

Most respondents were located in central Hamilton (wards 1-4) with a much lower number of respondents from wards located on the outskirts of Hamilton (wards 9, 11, 12, 13, and 15).

Summary of Qualitative Findings

We developed a summary figure to illustrate the interconnected themes across wards in Hamilton, organized by the pillars of IELECT (**Figure 2**). In this figure, the size of the circles relates to the frequency that the pillar was discussed in the free-text survey response. The most frequently discussed codes for each category/pillar are listed in bullet points inside each circle.

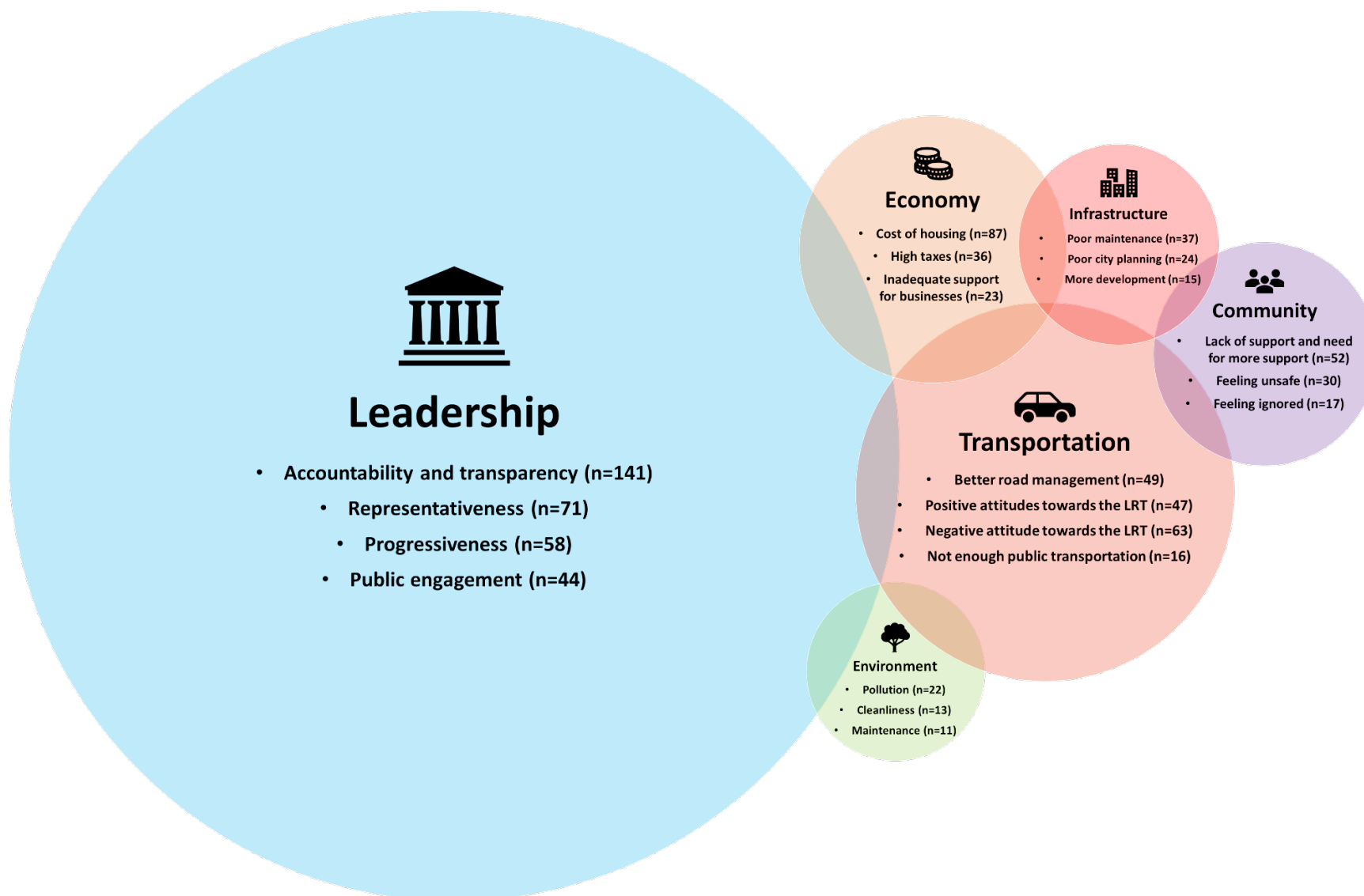


Figure 2. Visualization of free-text responses

In this section, we organize our findings according to each IELECT priority area:

Infrastructure

Sidewalk Conditions and Maintenance: Survey respondents appeared to be generally dissatisfied with the condition and year-round maintenance of sidewalks and roads, with a seemingly higher degree of dissatisfaction among respondents in the more central wards (2-4) and Ward 10 (**Figure 3**). Ward 9 had no respondents who were strongly dissatisfied, which may indicate relatively better sidewalk and road conditions in this ward.

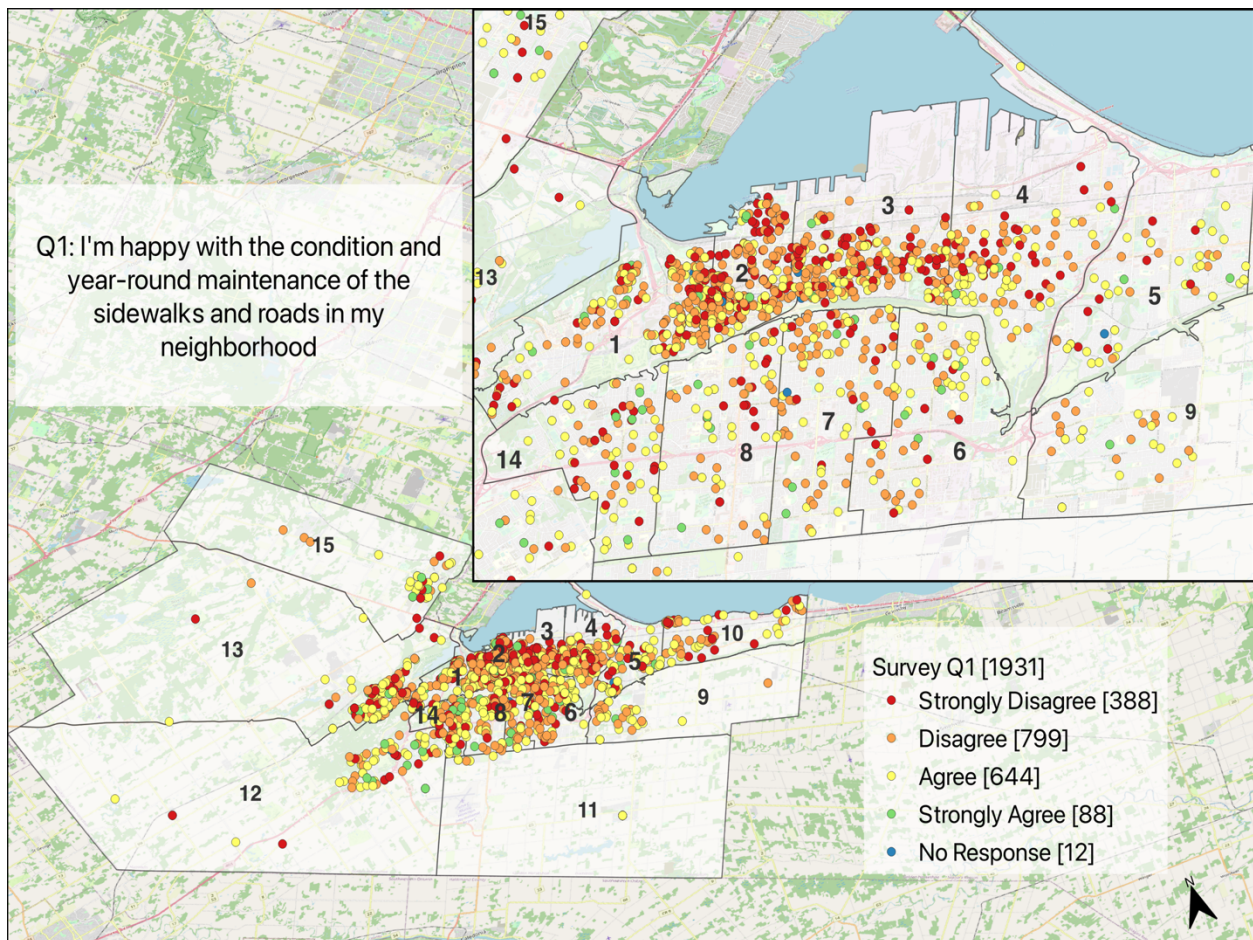


Figure 3. Satisfaction with sidewalk conditions and maintenance

Neighbourhood Safety: Respondents seemed to generally feel safe walking to schools, parks, and businesses in their local neighbourhoods (**Figure 4**). Based on the map, respondents who seemed to not feel safe were primarily located in wards 2-4 and 10.

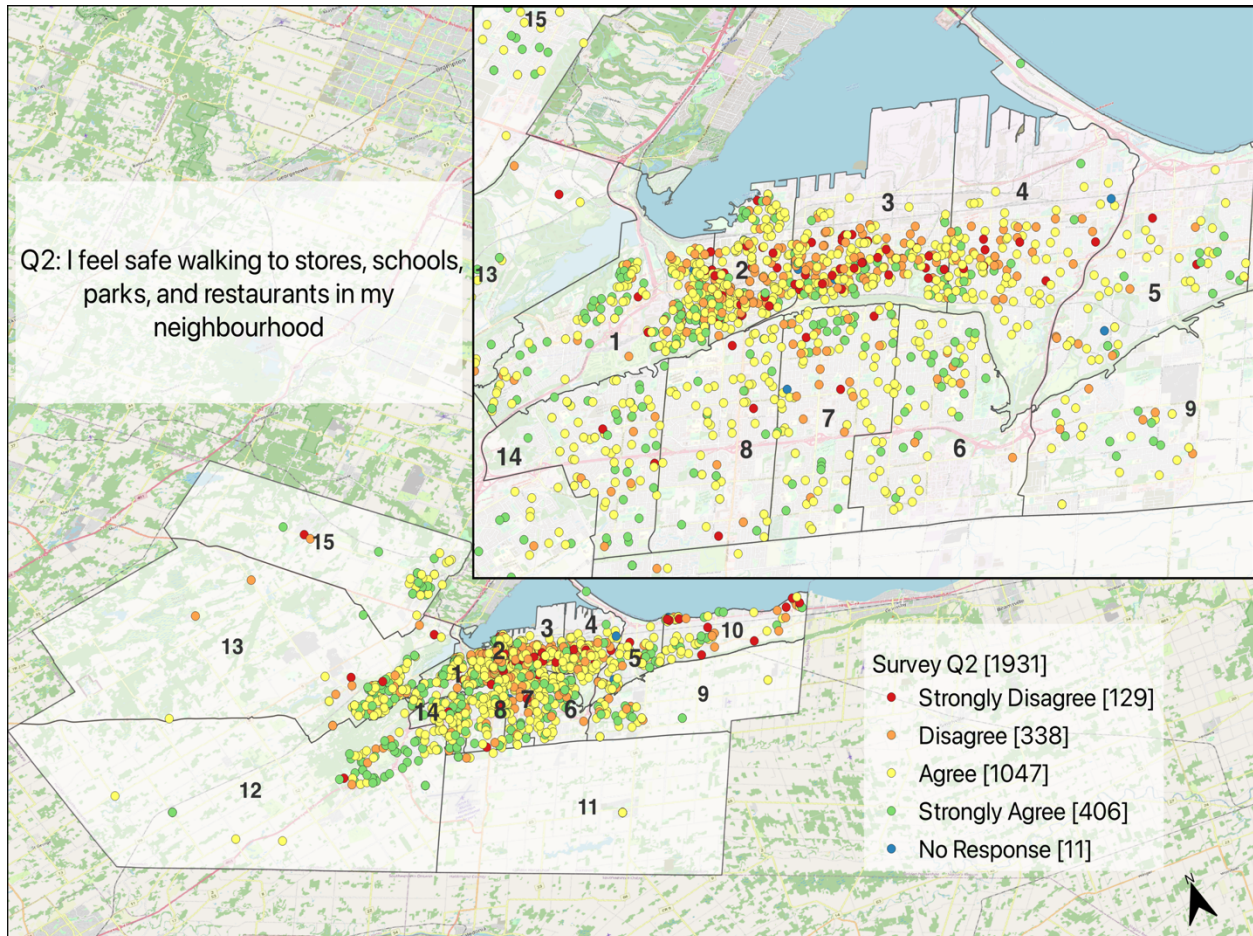


Figure 4. Satisfaction with neighbourhood safety

Parks: A similar pattern was seen in opinions on the condition of local parks, where there appeared to be a higher degree of dissatisfaction in the central wards (**Figure 5a**). Overall, most respondents “Agreed” or “Strongly Agreed” that they are satisfied with the condition of parks. We further examined respondent’s satisfaction of local parks by overlaying the survey data with the percentage of park area in each ward (**Figure 5b**). In general, it seems like respondents in areas with larger proportions of park area (i.e., living more centrally to local parks) are generally more satisfied than those living further away; this seemed especially true for respondents in ward 1. The exception to this pattern was in ward 2, where a high proportion of respondents, particularly in the north section, seemed dissatisfied with the condition of their parks despite a high proportion of park space.

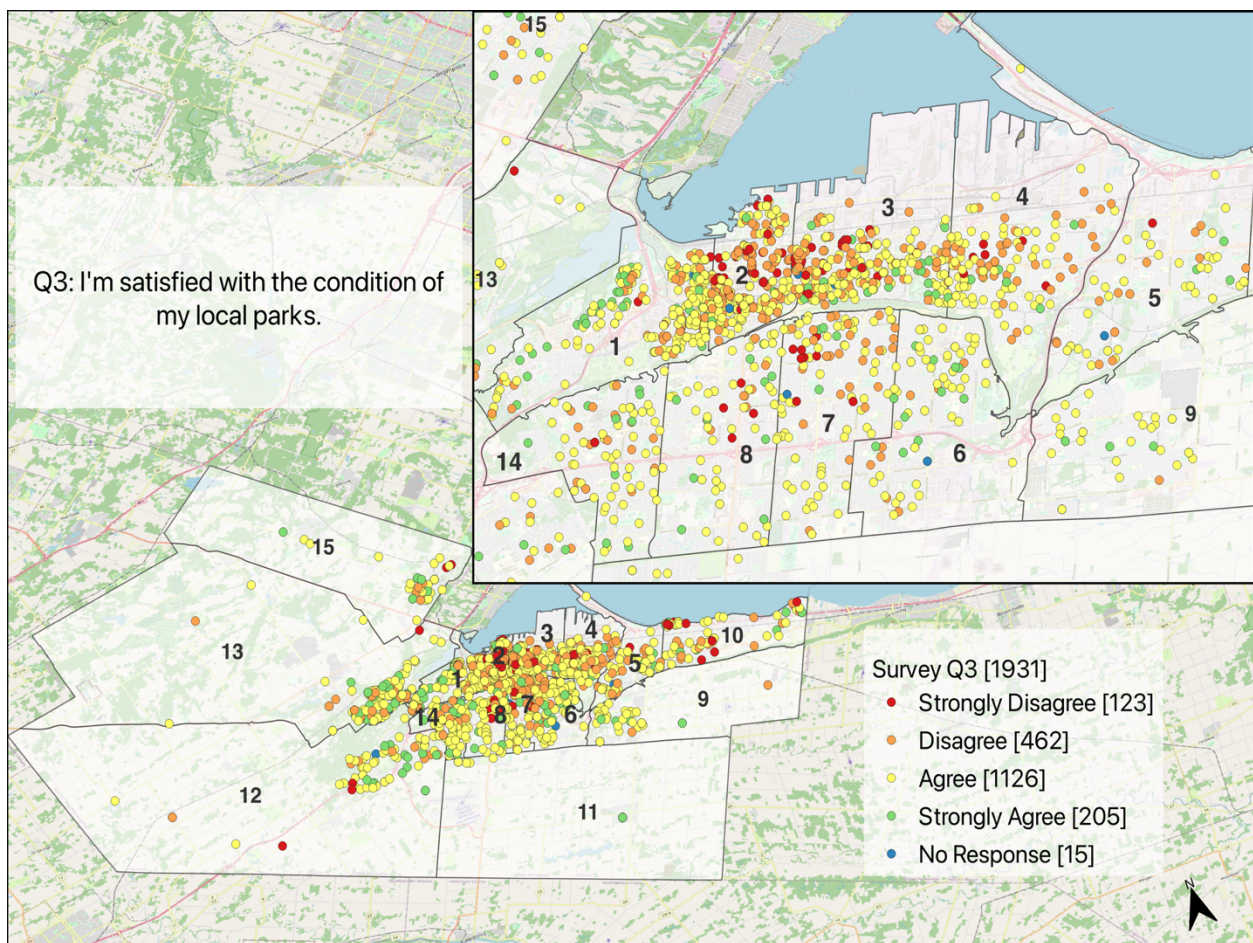


Figure 5a. Satisfaction with parks, overall

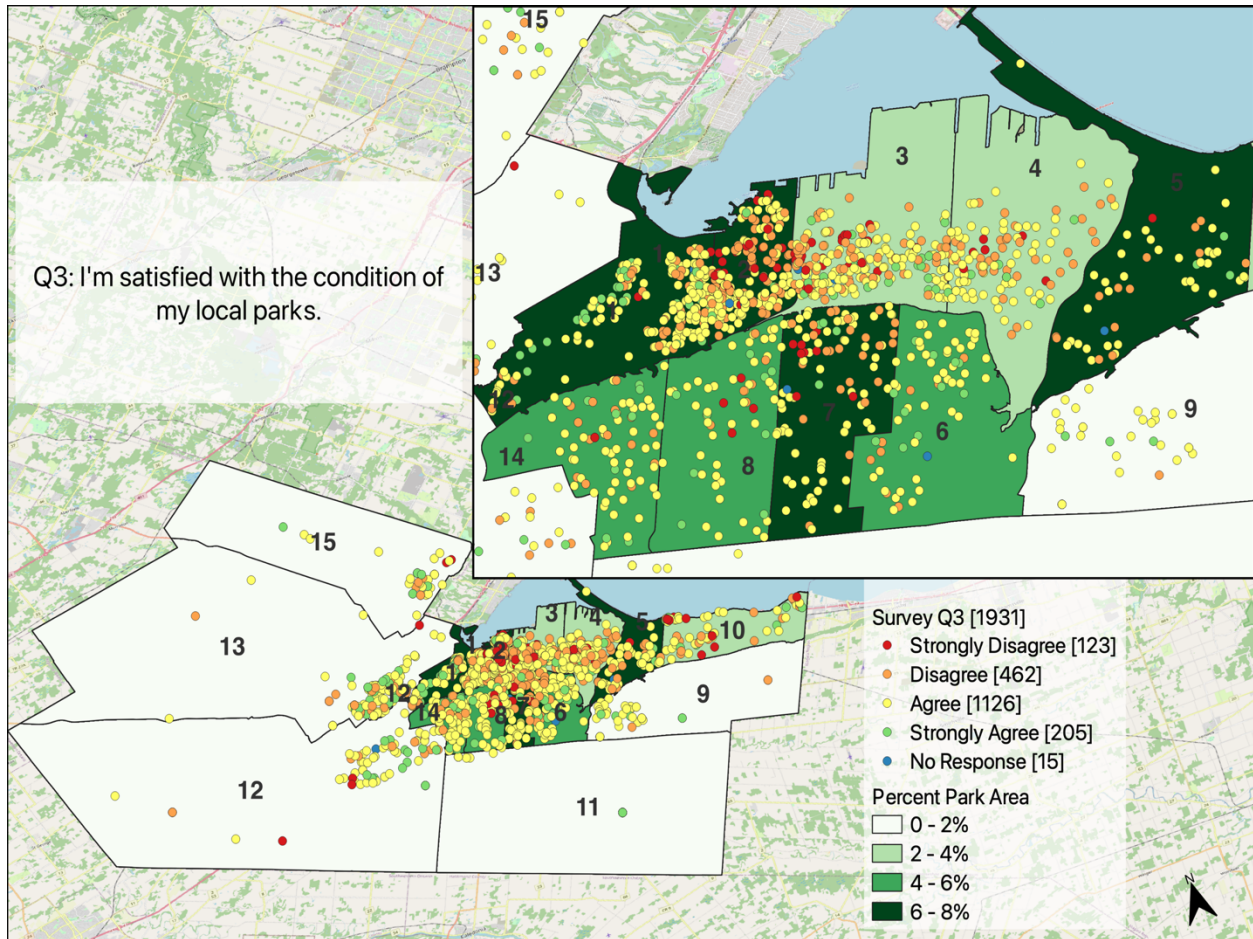


Figure 5b. Satisfaction with parks, by percent of park area

Infrastructure Spending: For allocation of infrastructure spending, there appeared to be a more even distribution of “Strongly Disagree” responses with more dissatisfied respondents in the rural wards than seen in previous questions (Figure 6).

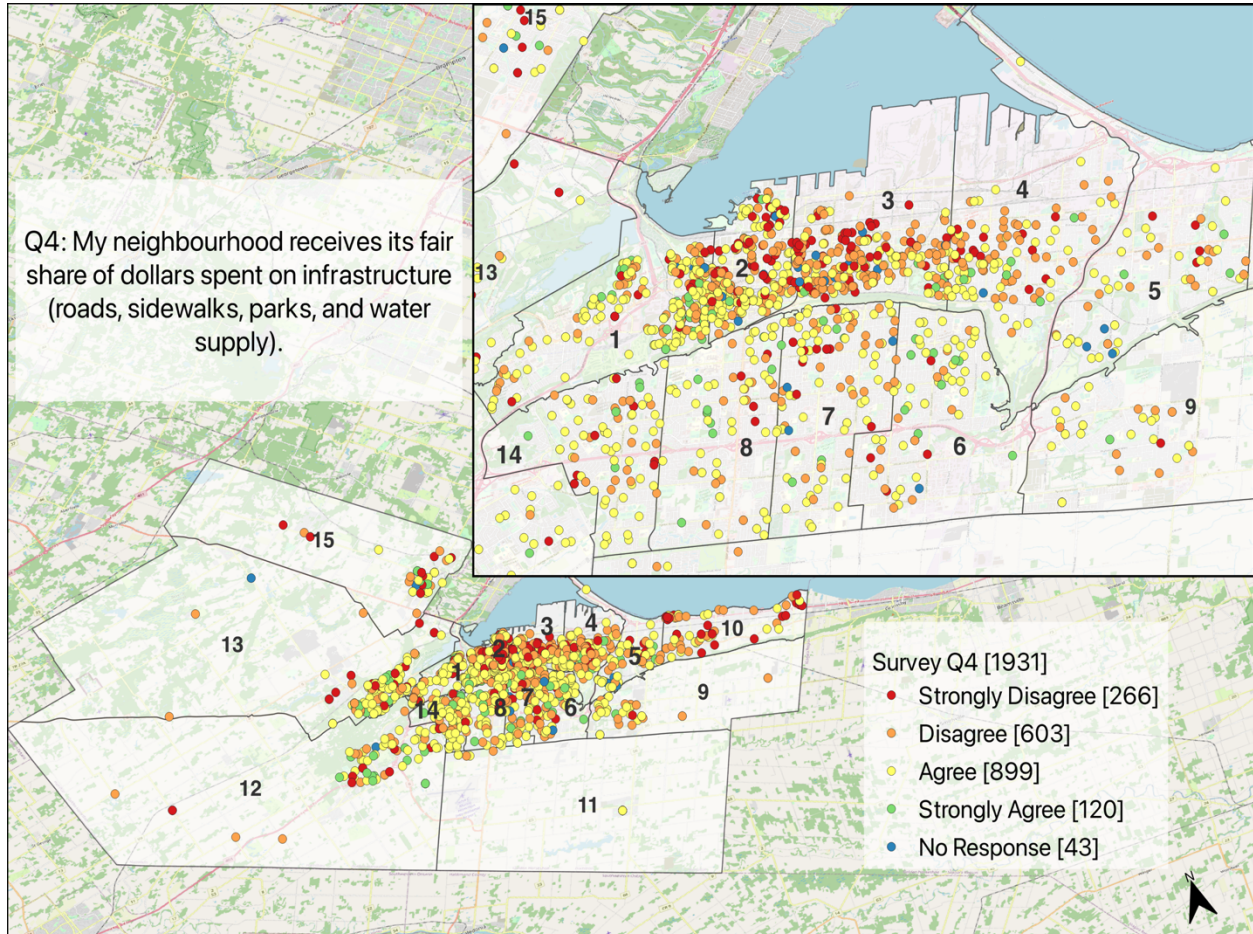


Figure 6. Satisfaction with infrastructure spending

Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified three major themes related to infrastructure in Hamilton: poor maintenance, poor city planning, and more development.

- **Poor maintenance:** Residents across most wards discussed how poorly the city is maintained (n = 37). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 1. One resident from Ward 1 stated, *“The city needs to take a very hard look at its deficit in the maintenance of infrastructure prior to planning any further construction of infrastructure that they cannot afford to maintain.”* Another resident expressed how lack of infrastructure maintenance resulted in their decision to move away from Hamilton.
- **Poor city planning:** Residents across most wards discussed how poorly the city is handling the development of new buildings (n = 24). Some residents mentioned they felt councillors followed through with developers’ proposals and often overlooked residents’ concerns (n = 19). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 10. One resident from Ward 10 noted, *“I’m very concerned that the planning committee does whatever they want when it comes to pleasing large developers. Rarely, if ever, do they listen to the objections, concerns or suggestions of the residents affected. Public meetings are a joke and the committee just goes through the motions.”*
- **More development:** Residents across some wards suggested the city should increase urban development (n = 15). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 11. Residents from Ward 11 mentioned they needed more schools and recreation facilities for children and teens to accommodate their growing community. As one resident from Ward 11, who is concerned about the number of schools in their ward, shared, *“We need more schools in Binbrook another elementary school ASAP. We need a high school going in Binbrook and not another high school in Elfrida. Binbrook is growing immensely and that many students shouldn’t be relying on bussing. Bussing used to be a backup for student that’s don’t live close. Now we rely on bussing soo much that we have a huge bussing problem. There is no back up bussing system from Binbrook. What if a child wants to do extracurricular and their parents have to work? Please help support us in bringing a PUBLIC high school to Binbrook.”*

Economy

Small Business Support and Job Opportunities: Respondents appeared to be generally dissatisfied with City Hall's support for small businesses (**Figure 7a**) and the availability of well-paying job opportunities in the city (**Figure 8**). For both of these issues, the highest degree of dissatisfaction appeared to be concentrated in the central wards.

We further examined respondent's views towards support of small- and medium-sized businesses by overlaying the survey data with the percentage of commercial area in each ward (**Figure 7b**). It seems like respondents in areas with larger proportions of commercial area (i.e., living more centrally to businesses/commercial area) are no more satisfied than those living elsewhere.

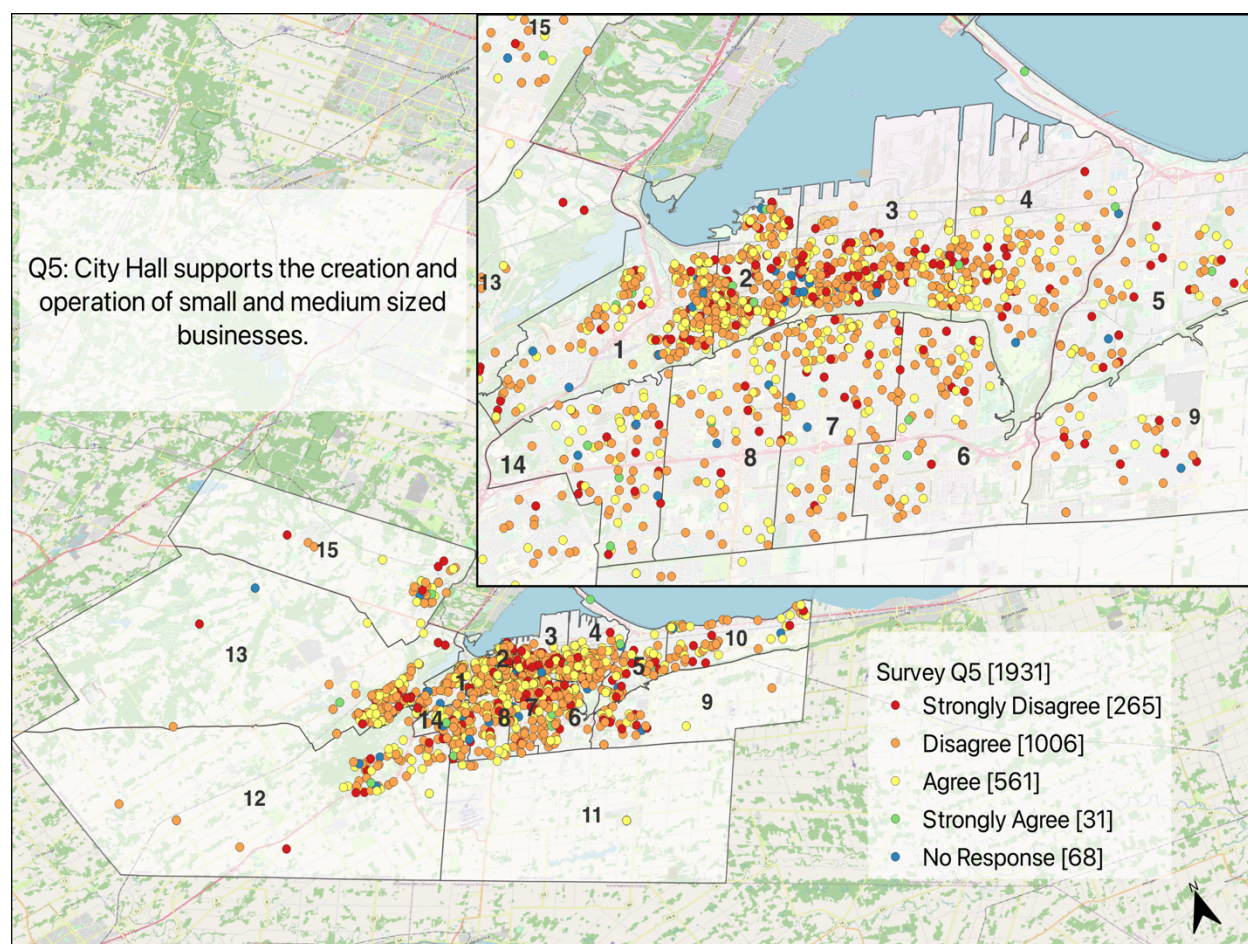


Figure 7a. Satisfaction with small business support, overall

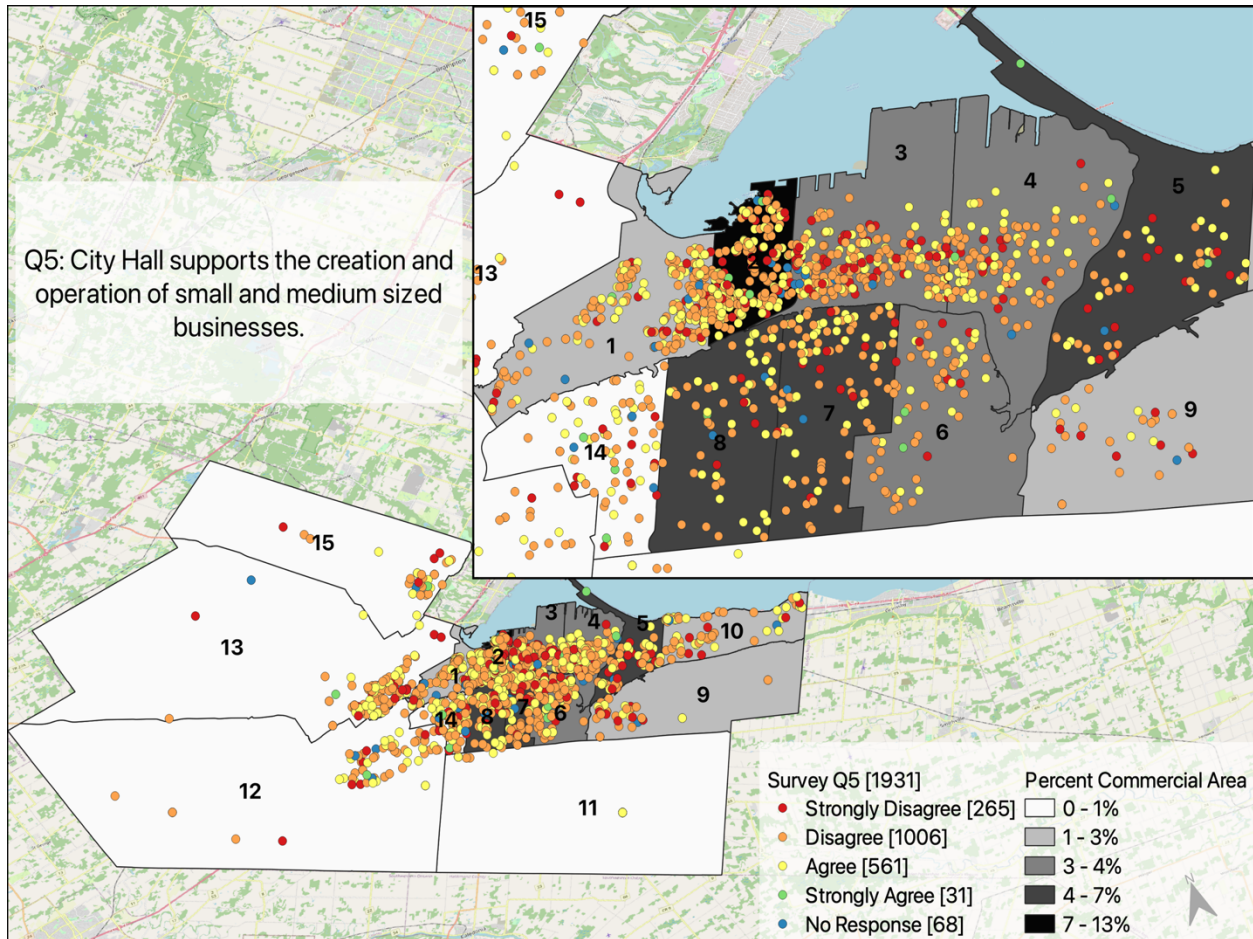


Figure 7b. Satisfaction with small business support, by percent of commercial area

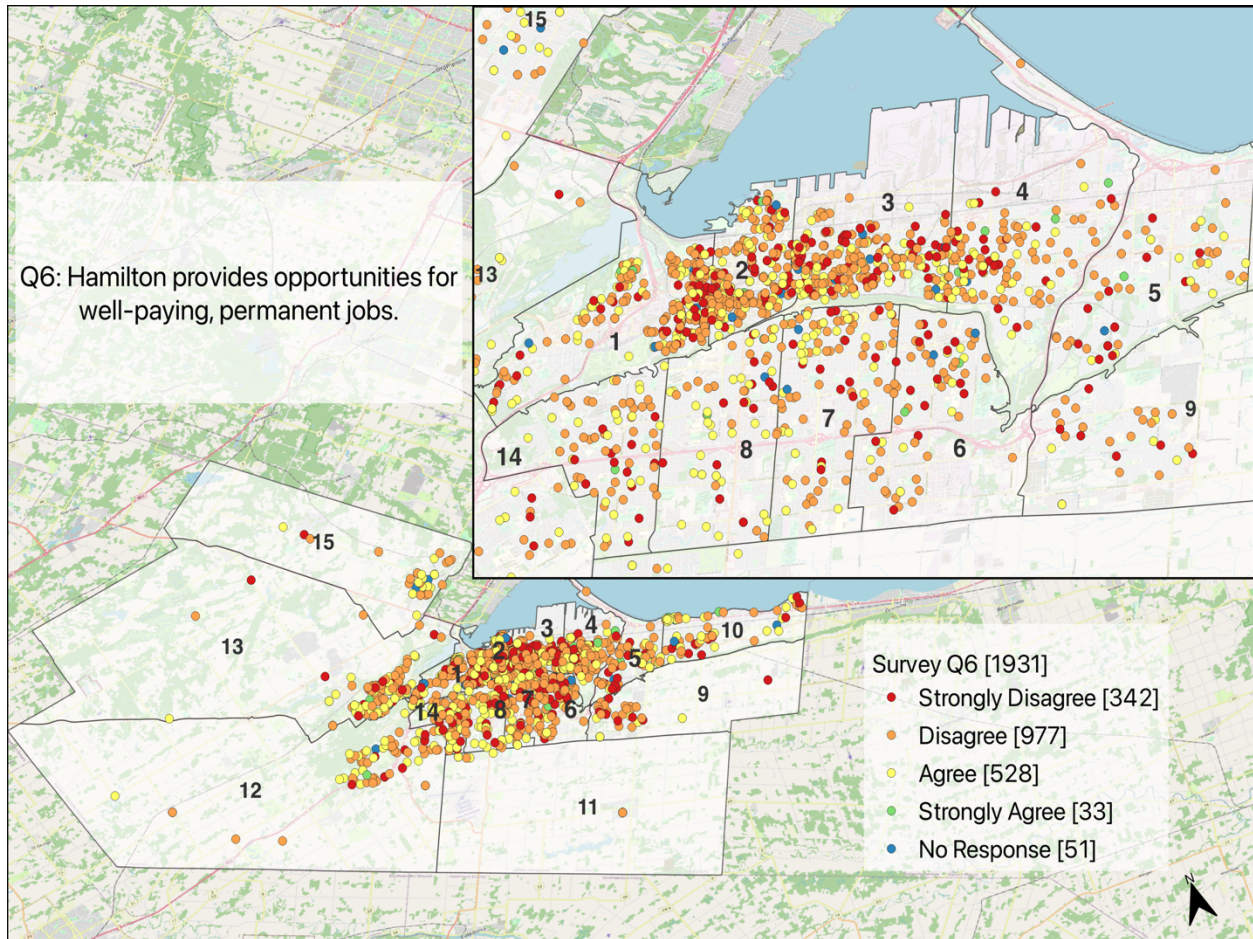


Figure 8. Satisfaction with job opportunities

Affordable Housing: In contrast, opinions on affordable housing seemed to have no spatial patterns whatsoever (**Figures 9a and 9b**). The vast majority of respondents strongly disagreed with the statement “It’s easy to find an affordable place to live in Hamilton,” regardless of their location or the percentage of residential area in their ward.

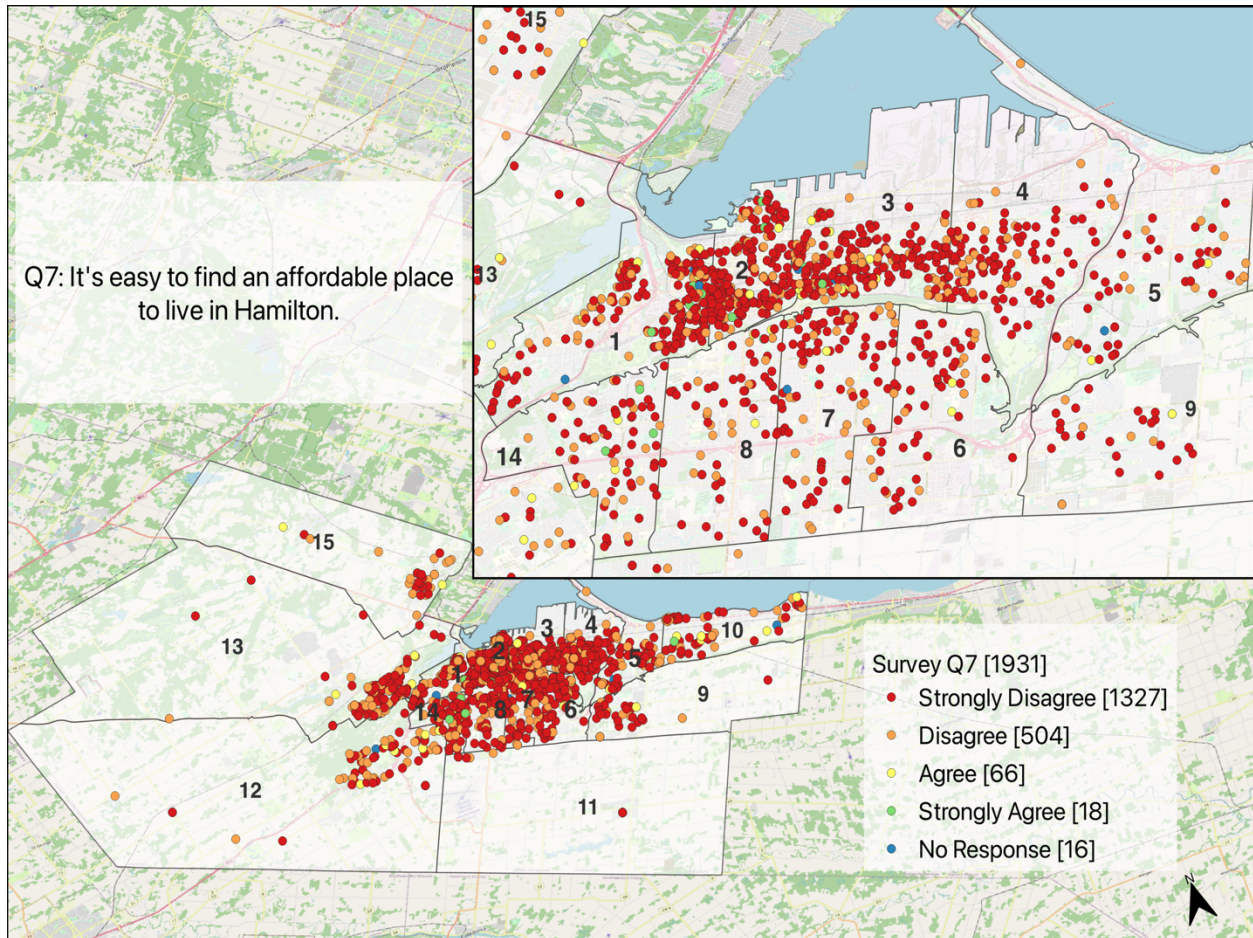


Figure 9a. Satisfaction with affordable housing, overall

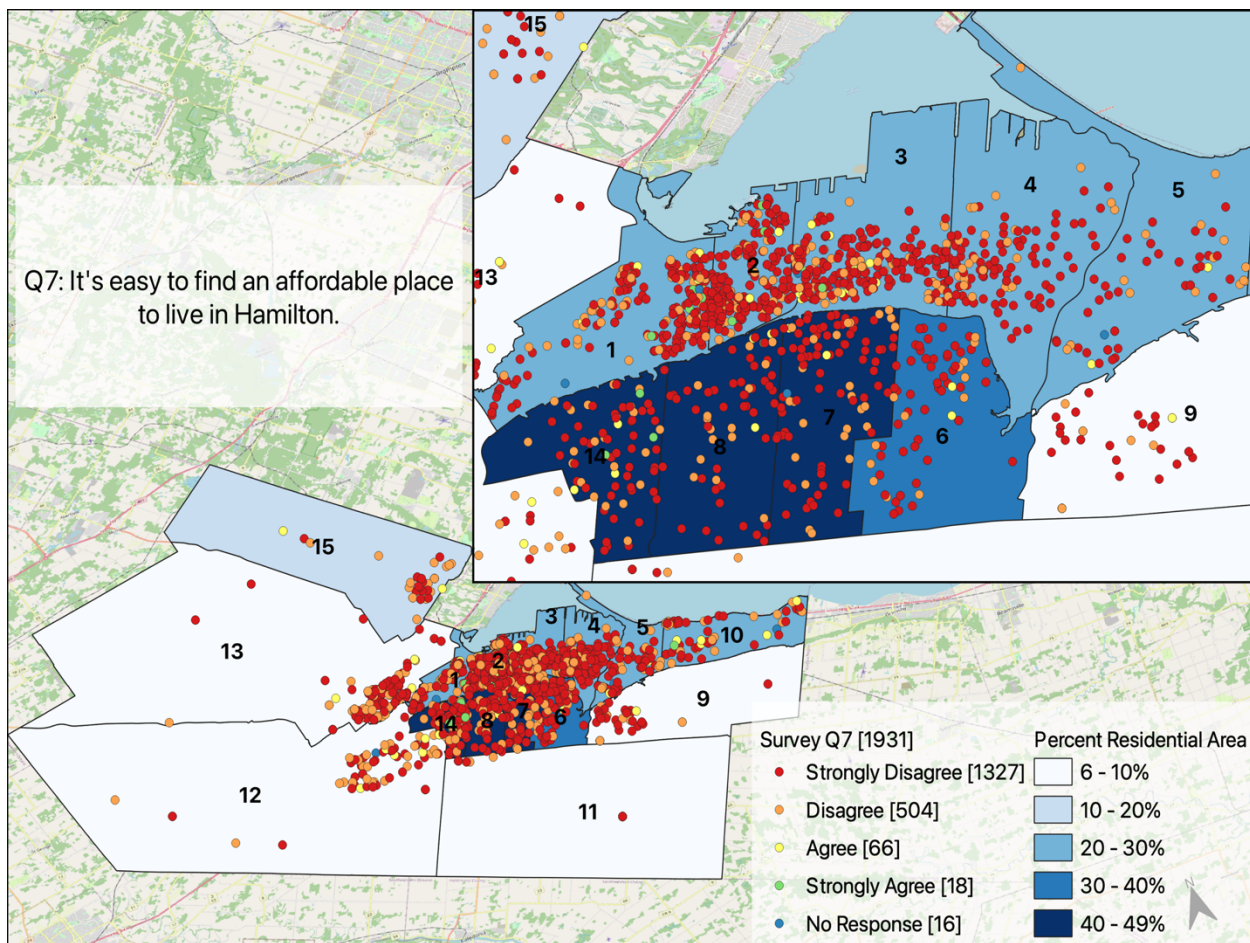


Figure 9b. Satisfaction with affordable housing, by percent of residential area

‘Open for Business’: Respondents seemed to vary in their opinions of whether the city delivered on its promise to be ‘Open for Business,’ regardless of where they lived in Hamilton (**Figure 10**). Those who tended to “strongly disagree” with this statement appeared to live more centrally.

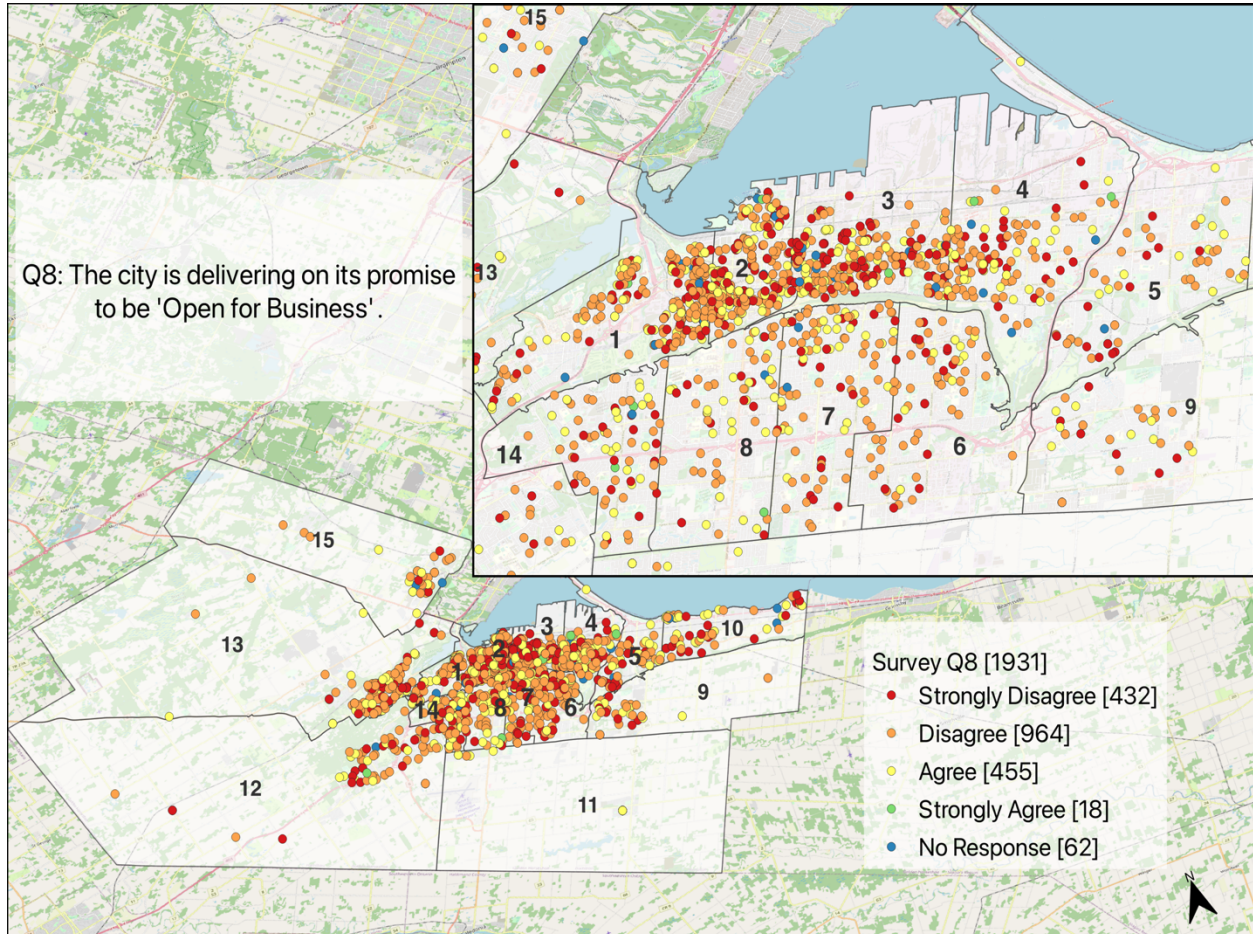


Figure 10. Satisfaction with ‘Open for Business’

Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified three major themes related to the economy in Hamilton: cost of housing, high taxes, and inadequate support for businesses.

- **Cost of housing:** Residents across most wards mentioned that the cost of housing was too high and discussed the need to increase affordable housing (n = 87). As one individual from Ward 1 noted, *“There are a lot of unused parking lots and schools that have been closed which could be used for affordable housing. Many of us cannot afford an apartment and the city keeps building expensive condos.”*
- **High taxes:** Residents across most wards discussed having to pay high taxes and not receiving an adequate level of service in return (n = 36). Some residents also mentioned that lowering property taxes across Hamilton should be a priority (n = 7). As one resident from Ward 15 noted, *“Waterdown pays some of the highest taxes in the city but are left behind in terms of public services in favour of Hamilton central.”*
- **Inadequate support for business:** Residents across all wards discussed the need to better support current businesses and encourage new businesses to come to Hamilton (n = 23). Some residents mentioned that there are many difficulties in starting a business in Hamilton, such as the high taxes and timely process of obtaining permits (n = 4). As one individual from Ward 1 noted, *“I own a small business and feel completely unsupported by the city.”* Some residents also commented on the importance of effectively supporting and attracting new businesses to help provide more jobs (n = 9). As one individual from Ward 1 shared, *“This city has lost large businesses that do not want to come to Hamilton...we have discouraged many possible jobs.”*

Leadership

Municipal Leadership: Our spatial analysis suggested a high level of dissatisfaction among respondents regarding municipal leadership across all wards. We observed no clear patterns when examining these data visually across wards. The majority of respondents “strongly disagreed” that City Council’s leadership has improved their lives (**Figure 11**), that City Council spends their tax dollars responsibly (**Figure 12**), and that City Council puts forward new ideas for improving the city (**Figure 13**).

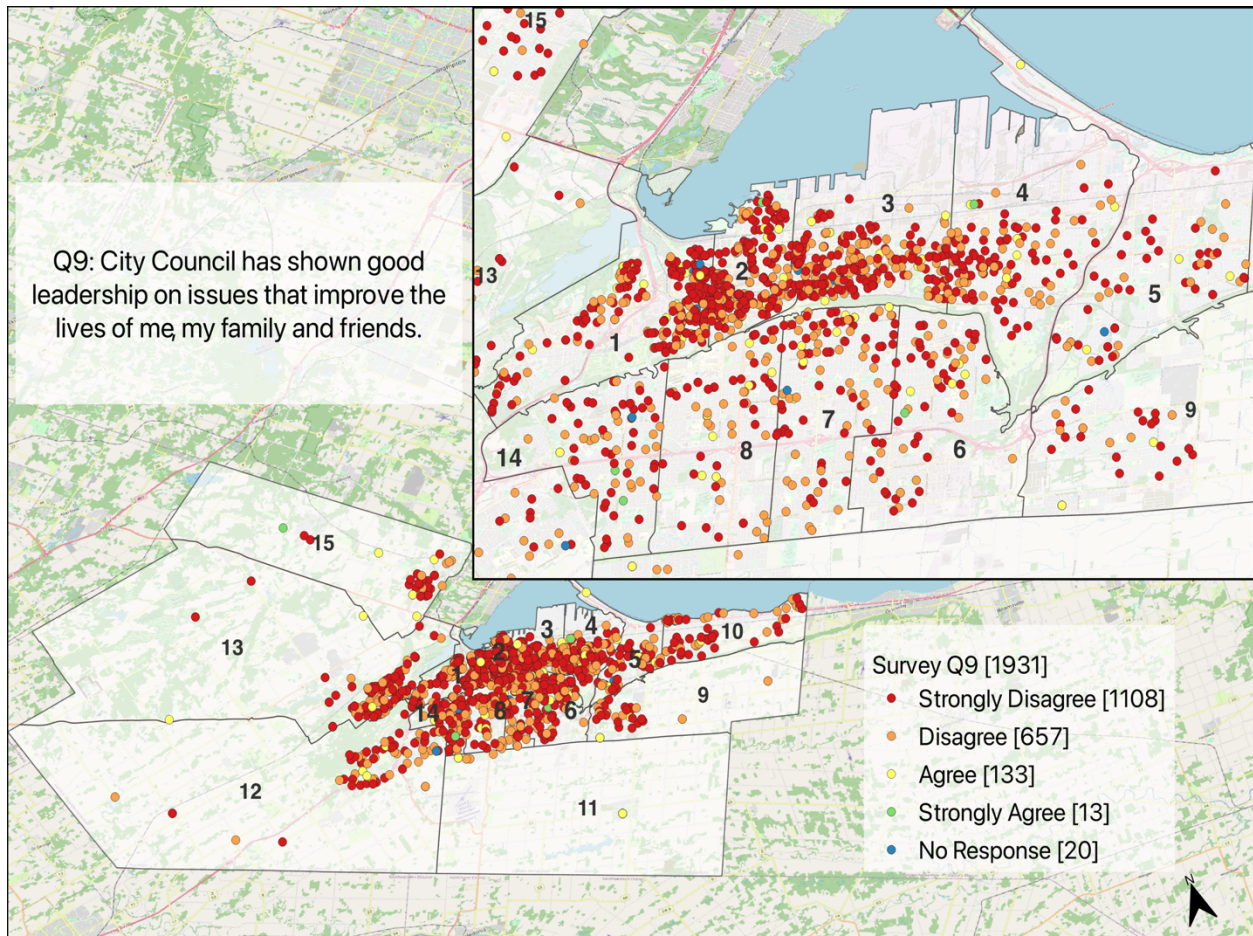


Figure 11. Satisfaction with municipal leadership improving citizen's lives

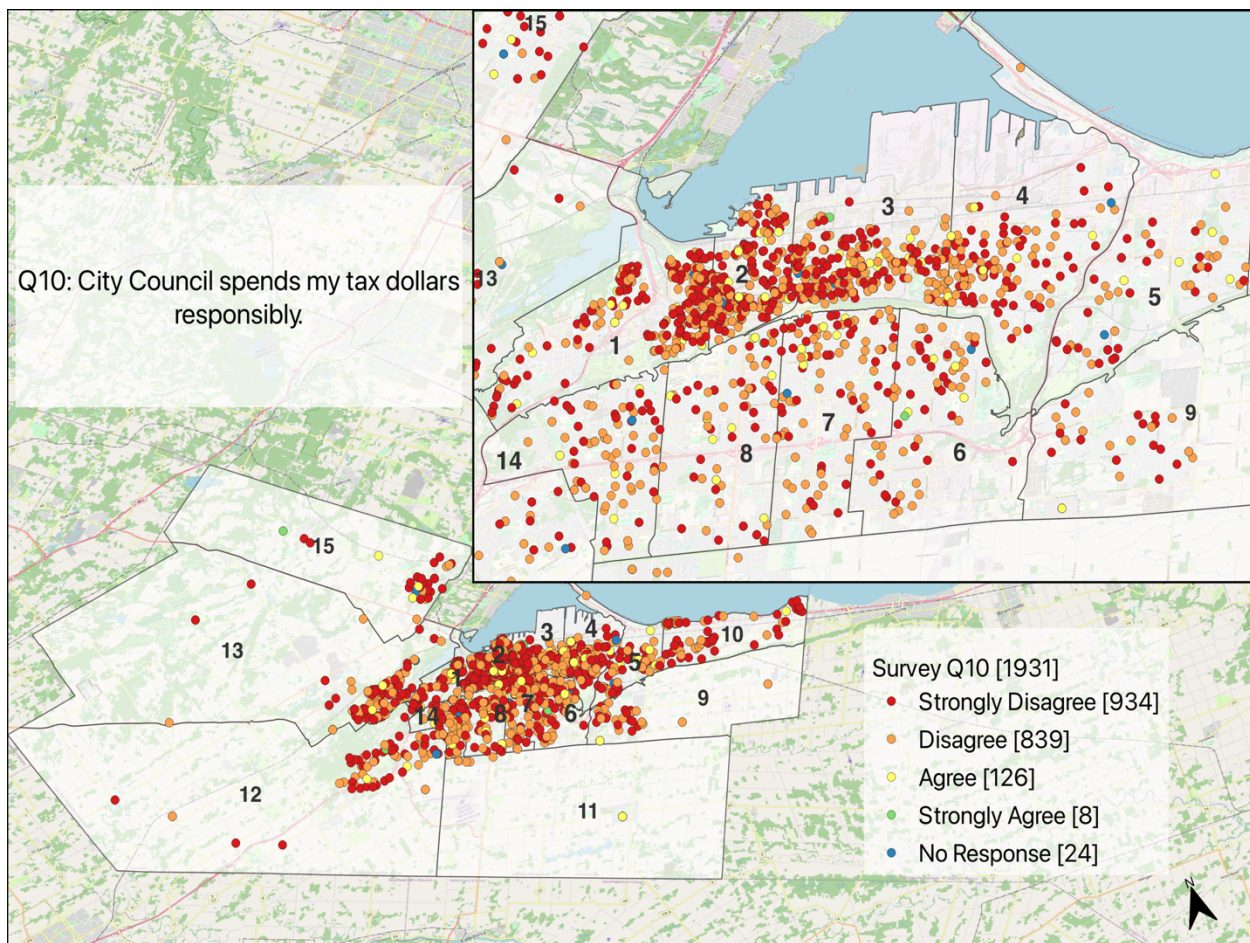


Figure 12. Satisfaction with municipal spending

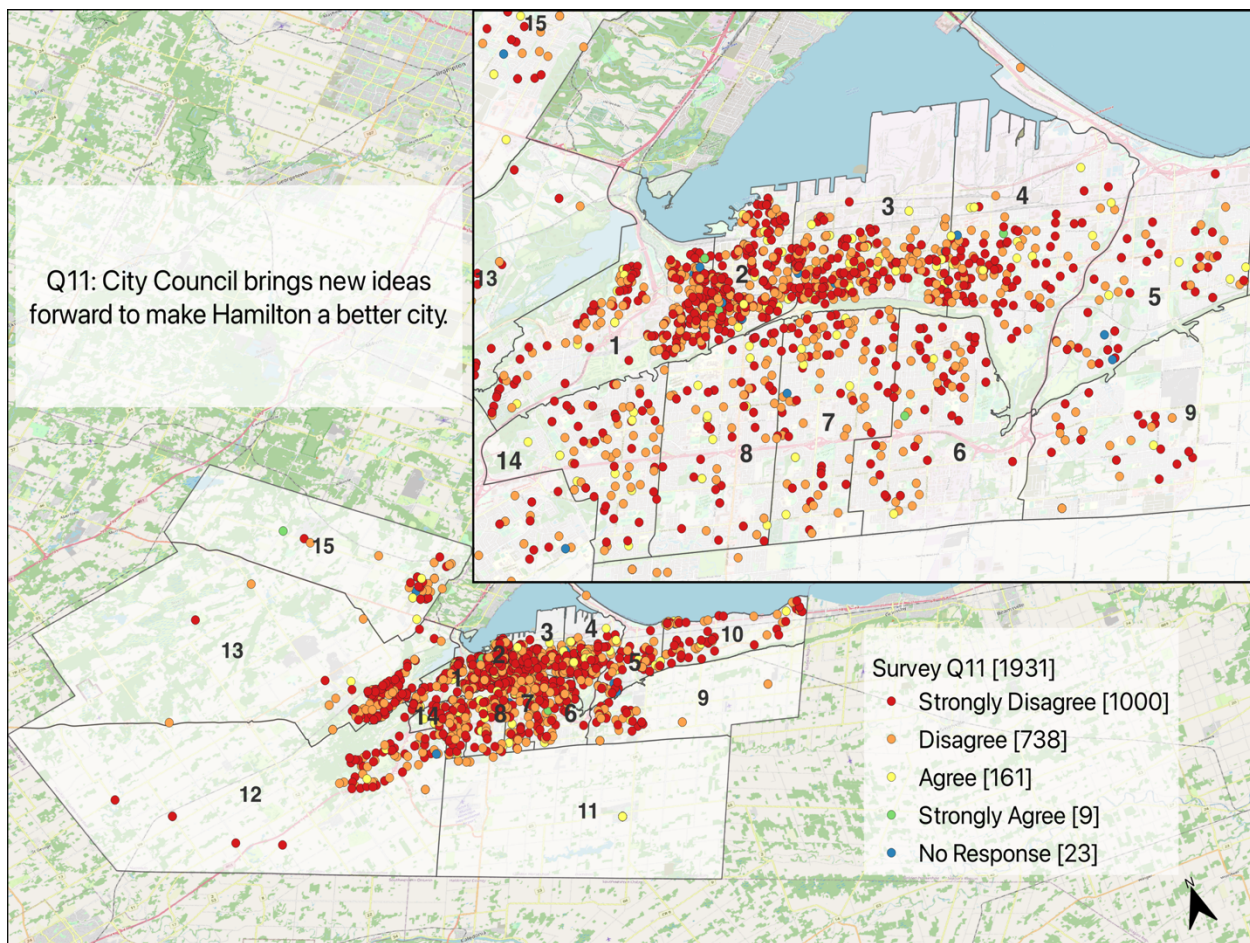


Figure 13. Satisfaction with municipal innovation

In **Figure 14**, respondents located in the central wards appeared to most “strongly disagree” that city council demonstrated transparency, accountability, and openness. Compared to all other survey questions, this question was answered the most negatively by respondents.

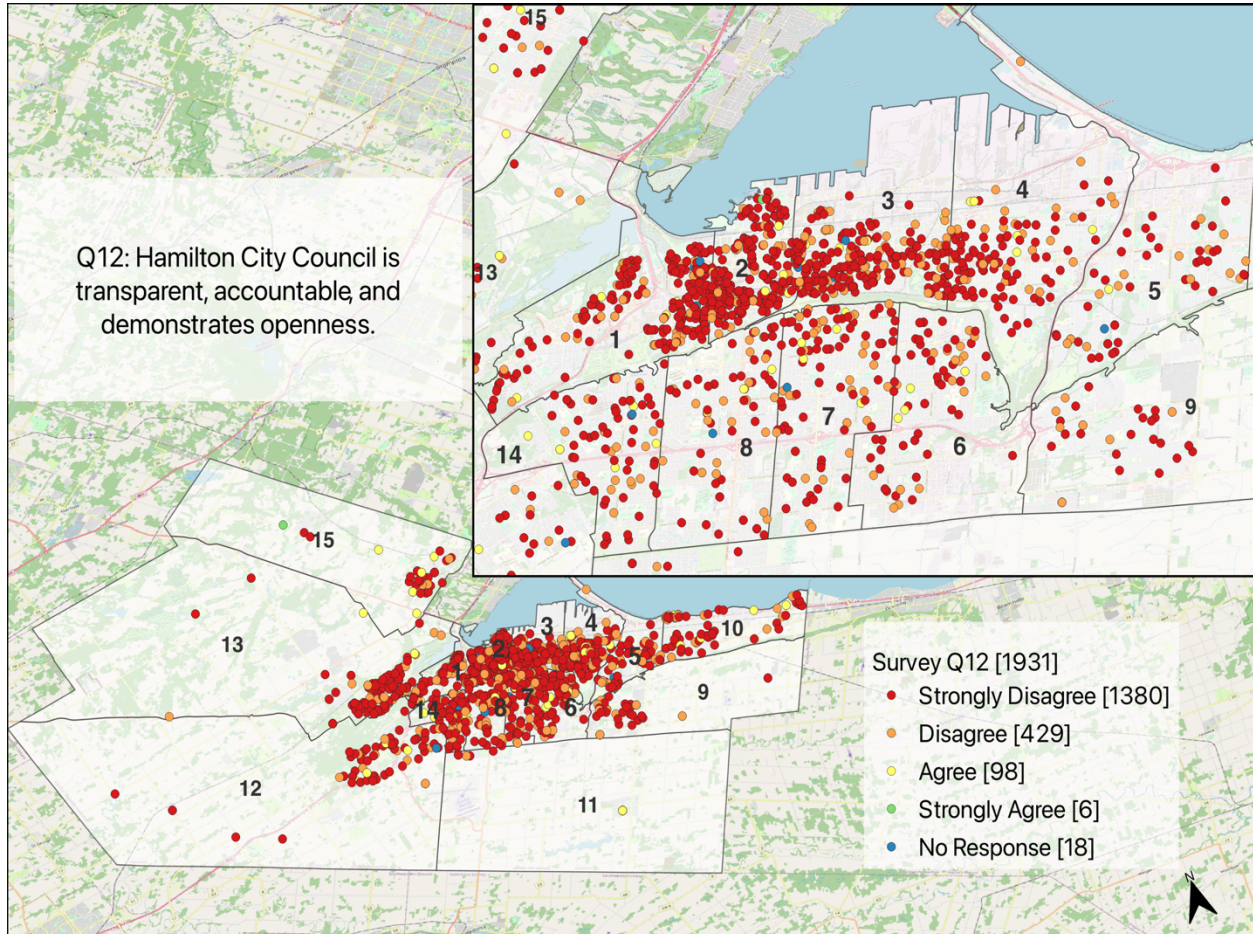


Figure 14. Satisfaction with city council

Residents across all wards held strong views regarding municipal leadership. Consistent with the quantitative survey findings, results were largely negative, with the majority of residents expressing extreme dissatisfaction. However, it is important to note that this dissatisfaction was often centered around specific members or groups within the council, who we are unable to name to protect the identity of individual respondents. Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified four major themes related to leadership in Hamilton: accountability and transparency, public engagement, representation, and progressiveness.

- **Accountability and transparency:** Residents across all wards were generally dissatisfied with the level of transparency and accountability demonstrated by city leadership, but these views were especially prominent in Wards 1 (n=38) and 3 (n=24) and largely directed towards the entire city council, rather than the councillors of these wards. Various “coverups” (e.g., the raw sewage, Red Hill Valley Park) were mentioned where residents felt like the city council had not taken accountability for their mistakes and tried to “*sweep the problem under the rug*”. In addition, residents shared overall dissatisfaction with city council operations, with many residents demanding a breakdown of city spending and meeting minutes as they felt that city money was not being spent responsibly and decisions were not made using sound judgement. A lack of accountability was also echoed in relation to climate change, and the lack of action taken by the city to protect its natural landscape. All of this collectively seemed to compromise resident trust in the council and their ability to make decisions.
- **Public engagement:** A large number of respondents also reported feeling like the city council did not engage its residents in making major decisions (e.g., LRT development plans) or, even after receiving feedback, chose to ignore them. For example, one respondent shared: “*The issue is not that they don't receive enough feedback, the issue is that they aren't obligated to act on the feedback in accordance with the will of the community.*” As a result, many respondents across all wards shared that they felt ignored by their councillors when trying to express their concerns. When wishing to connect with their councillor via phone or email, they were often unable to get past the administrative staff and their concerns were left unaddressed. One resident expressed their frustrations with trying to connect with their ward councillor as follows: “*I have found it extremely difficult to get in touch with the mayor and certain councillors when I wanted a matter looked into. Always got an assistant or whoever. Don't know if it was due to covid, but why couldn't they personally respond by email. Was extremely disappointed I couldn't get my elected officials to respond personally.*”
- **Representation:** Some residents, in Wards 1 and 3 for example, expressed positive views in regard to their own councillor or certain members of the council but were generally dissatisfied with the city council. In Ward 7, concerns regarding ward residency were prominent as residents expressed that there should be mandatory requirements for councillors to reside in the ward they represent. Concerns regarding favouritism and lack of unity of all wards in

making city decisions was also expressed, as many residents described there being a “ward first” mentality from councillors who did not take action to promote the betterment of Hamilton as a whole.

- **Progressiveness:** Many residents expressed that there was a lack of “*big picture vision*” and acting in a progressive manner among many councillors. Heterogeneity in responses was again observed here as some councillors were said to have progressive ideas that the respondents resonated with (e.g., women's hygiene, safe injection sites, active transportation, sustainability), while others were said to be resisting these changes. One resident expressed this conflict as follows: “*Although some councillors have been doing their best to develop an economically, environmentally and socially sustainable plan for Hamilton, all other councillors as well as the mayor continue to act in a self-serving manner.*” A large number of respondents suggested introducing term limits and encouraging young people to join the council as a solution to this issue.

Environment

Climate Change: Respondents across all wards appeared to generally disagree that City Hall has taken proactive steps to address climate change (Figure 15).

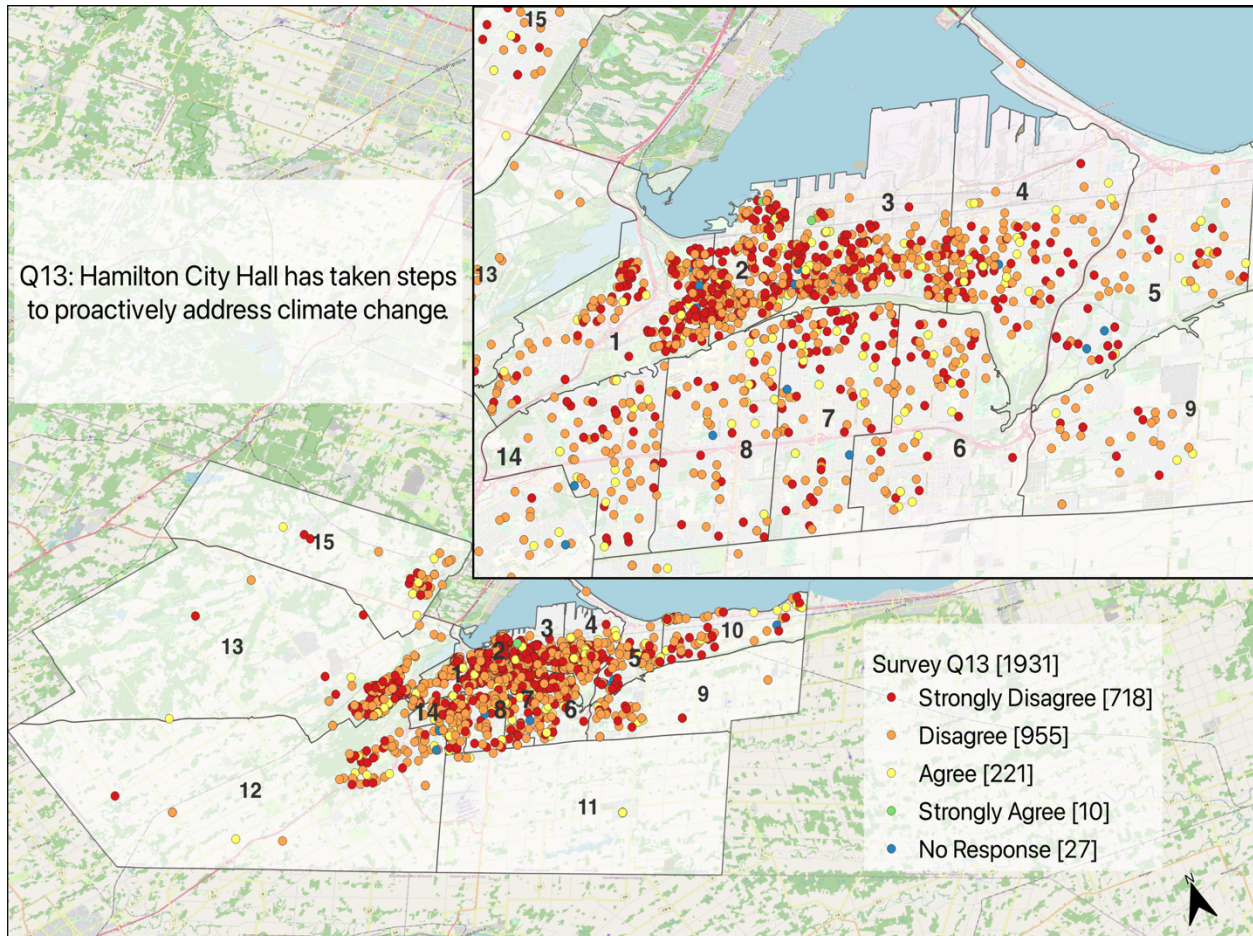


Figure 15. Satisfaction with climate change

Protecting the Local Environment: Respondents across all wards appeared to feel similarly that City Hall does not work to protect Hamilton's local environment (Figure 16).

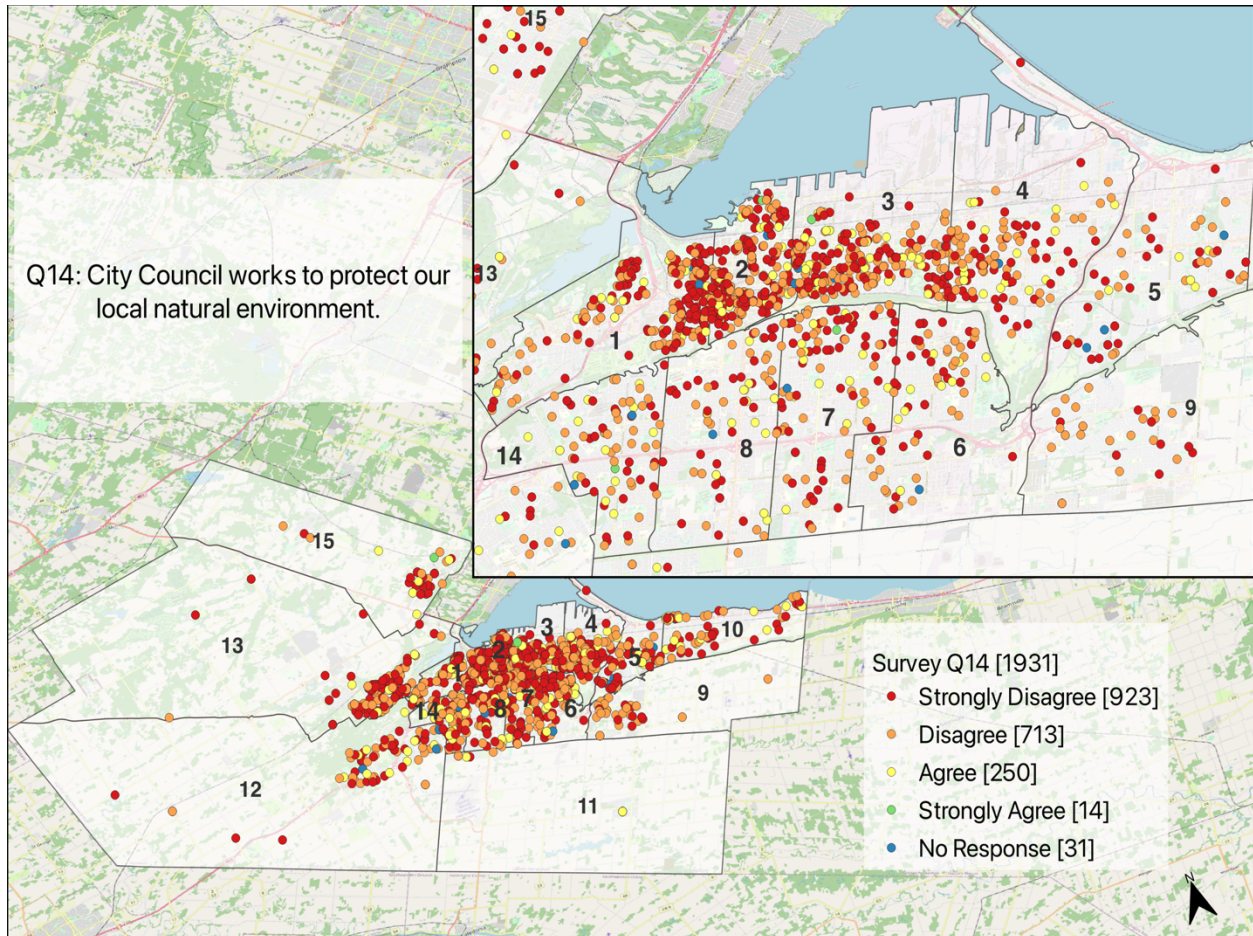


Figure 16. Satisfaction with protecting the local environment

Air Quality: There appeared to be no spatial pattern in opinions towards air quality in Hamilton with a high proportion of dissatisfaction among respondents in both central and rural wards (**Figure 17**).

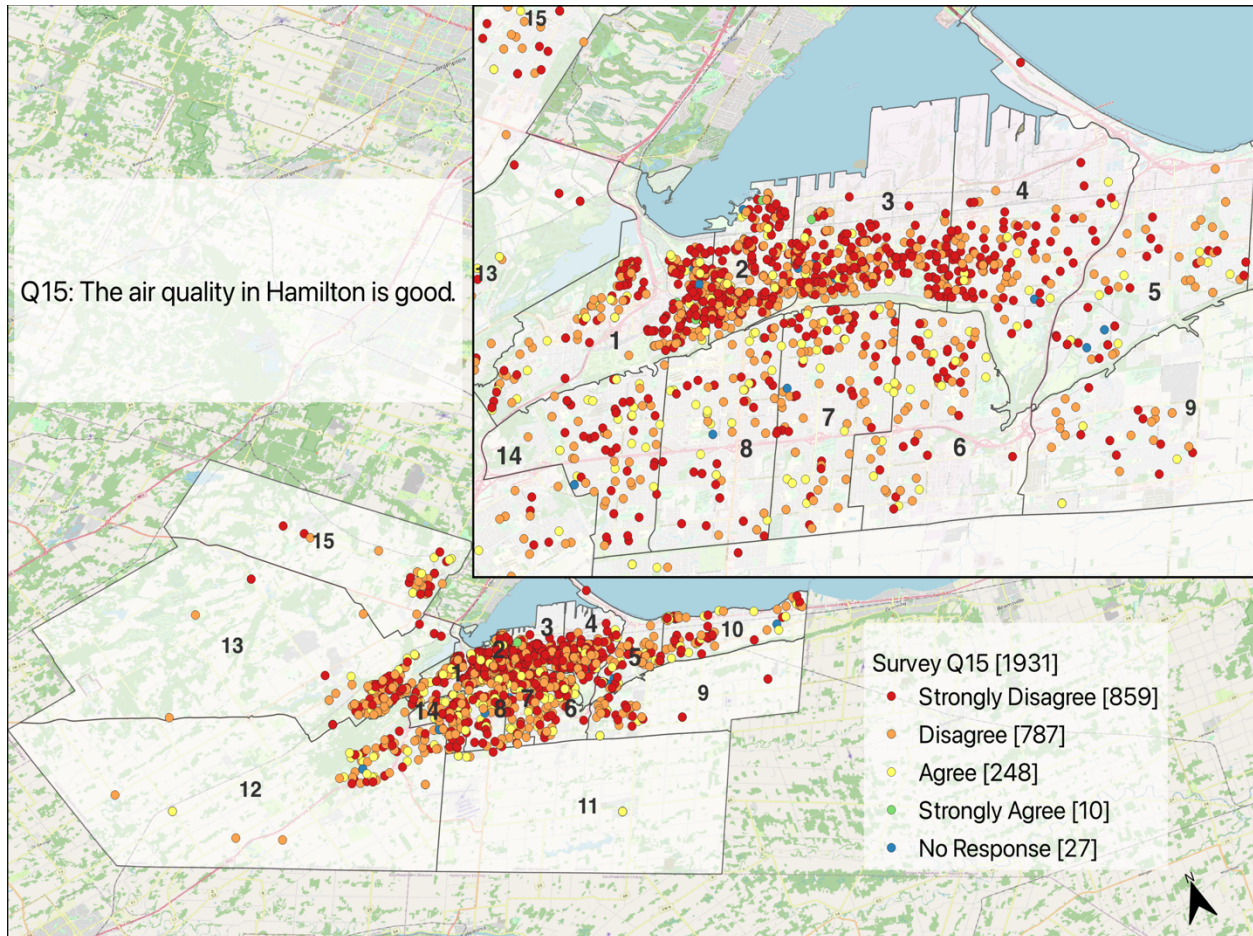


Figure 17. Satisfaction with air quality

Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified three major themes related to the environment in Hamilton: Pollution, Cleanliness, and building/park maintenance.

- **Pollution (air, water, noise):** Concerns regarding protection of Hamilton's environment and mitigation of air and water pollution were prominent across several wards (Ward 1, 2, 3; n=22), especially with regards to traffic and factory emissions. In relation to this area, one respondent described ideal qualities in a councillor as follows: *"We need councillors who will protect our wetlands and mitigate pollution of our air and water. We need councillors who will ensure heritage preservation and protection of our built history."* Concerns regarding noise pollution from local factories, traffic vehicles, and various events were also shared in the responses. One respondent shared their concern and lack of response from the council regarding this issue as follows: *"Noise Pollution in the city from local factories - nothing done despite being reported multiple times."*
- **Cleanliness:** Respondents also shared concerns regarding the cleanliness of their streets and investing in the clean-up of Hamilton's green spaces, specifically, the Chedoke Basin and Cootes Paradise (n=13). Regarding street maintenance, one respondent shared their disappointment as follows: *"Paying almost \$4,000/yr in taxes makes me feel I should at least have a clean street."*
- **Building/park maintenance:** Responses regarding park maintenance were mixed. Some respondents shared their satisfaction with their park spaces (e.g., *"the HAAA park and Locke street are lovely and very well used"*), while others expressed concerns about their maintenance (e.g., *"The new park (Canal Park) has grown up in weeds"*) or shared their disappointment with their limited development in their neighbourhood (e.g., *"We pay extremely high taxes in Waterdown and yet North Waterdown has no parks within a safe walking distance!"*).

Community

Citizen Engagement: Our spatial analysis revealed that respondents across all areas of the city seemed to feel that councillors do not treat all Hamiltonians with respect and dignity (**Figure 18**), nor do they listen to the needs and opinions of residents before making important decisions (**Figure 19**).

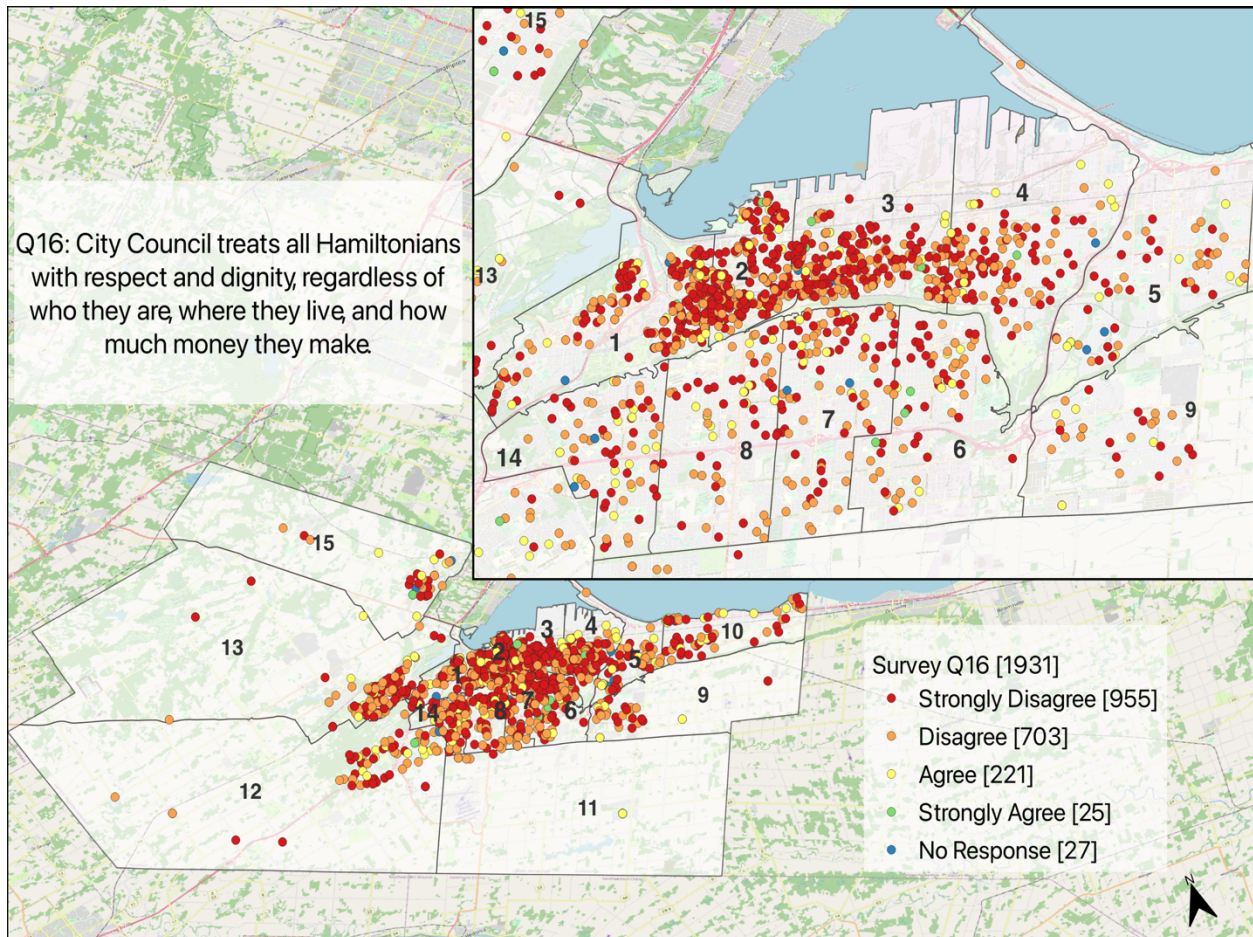


Figure 18. Satisfaction with councillors treating citizens with respect and dignity

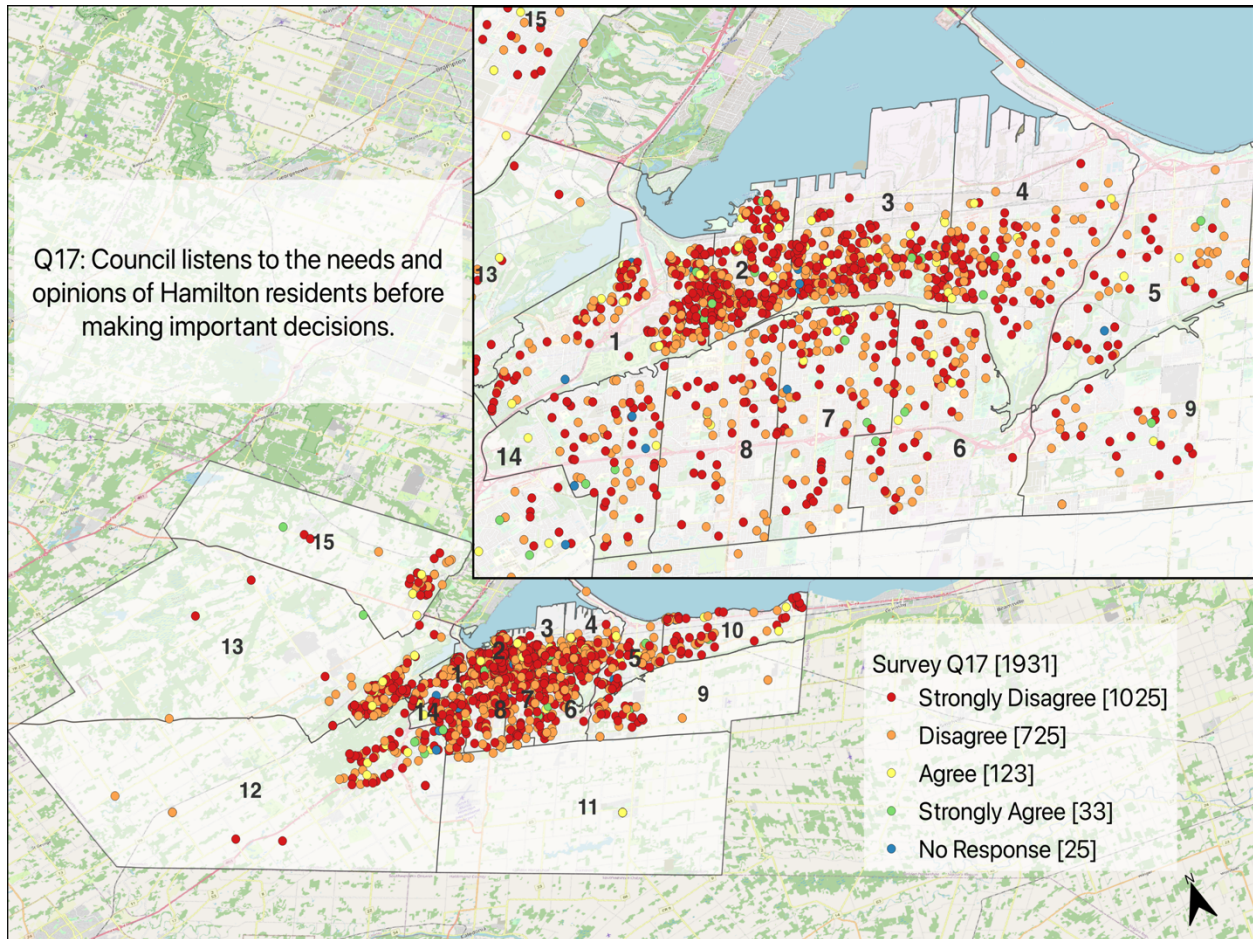


Figure 19. Satisfaction with councillors listening to residents

Similarly, most respondents seemed to feel that Council does not actively seek input from residents (**Figure 20**) and that the annual City Hall budgets do not accurately reflect the needs of their communities (**Figure 21**).

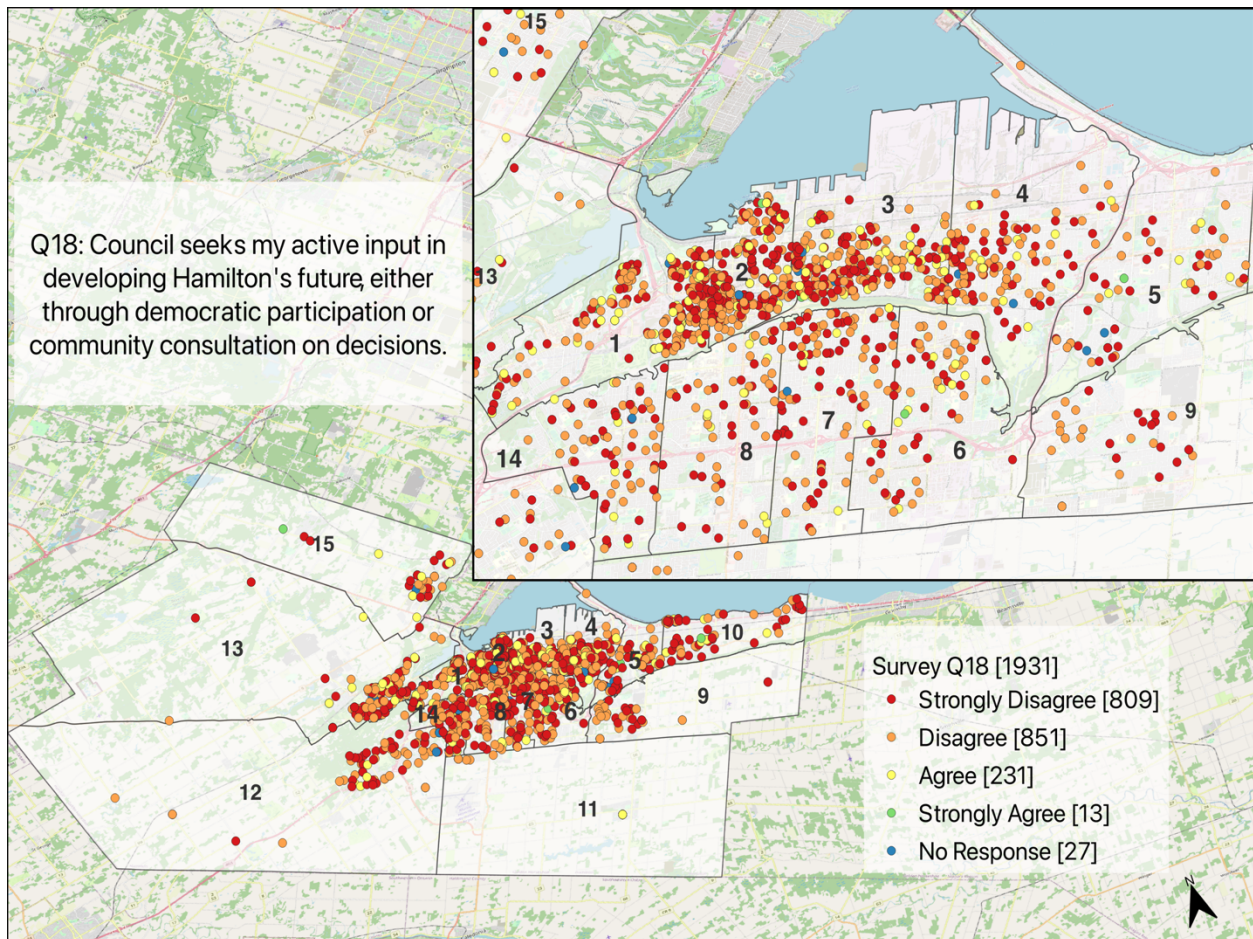


Figure 20. Satisfaction with councillors seeking input from residents

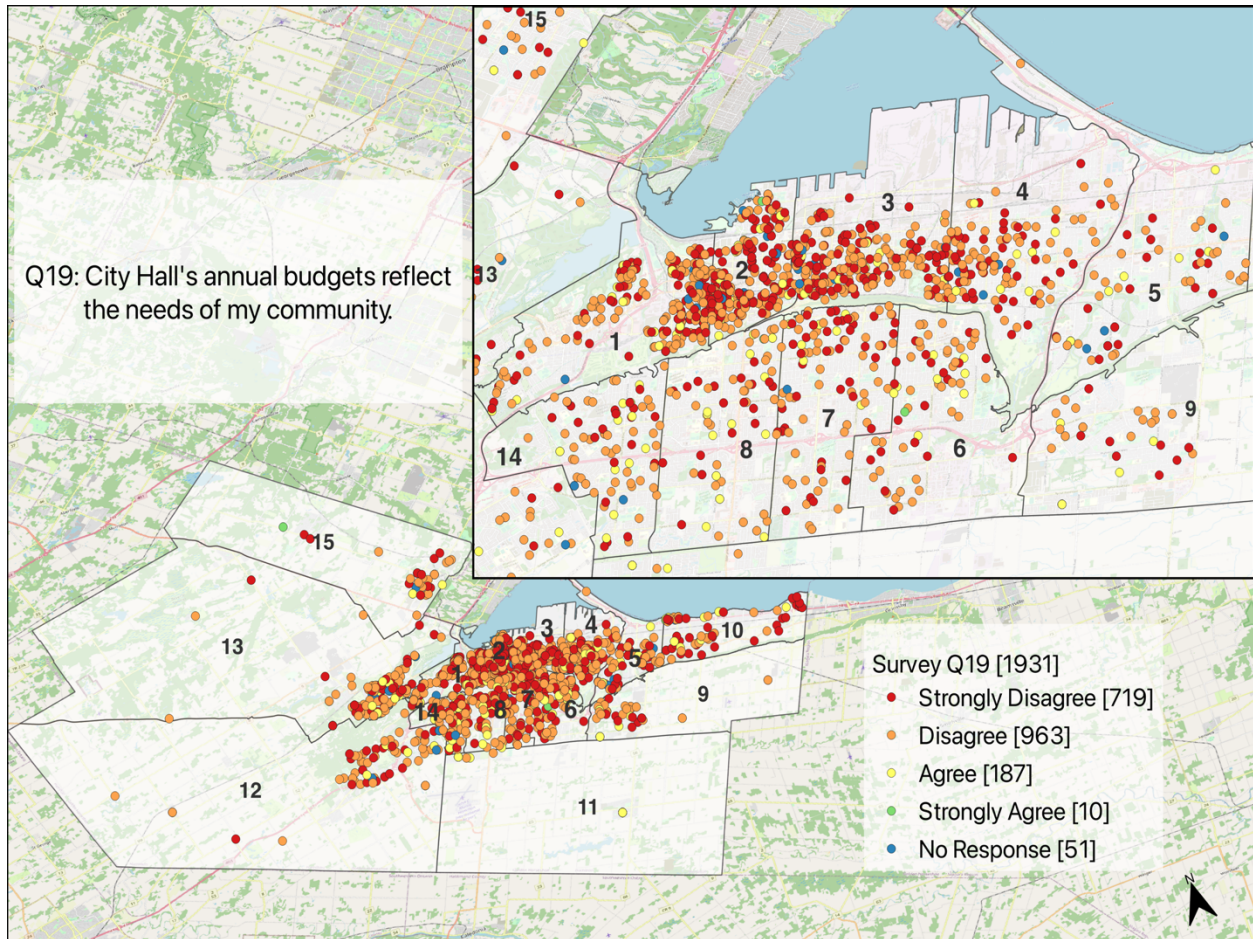


Figure 21. Satisfaction with municipal budget

Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified three major themes related to the Hamilton community: feeling unsafe, feeling ignored, and a lack of support.

- **Feeling unsafe:** Residents across most wards shared concerns about feeling unsafe in Hamilton and increasing crime rates (n = 30). These feelings were most prominent in wards 1, 5, and 13. As one individual from Ward 1 noted, *“Our downtown is disgraceful and embarrassing and not safe to walk around.”* Some residents have mentioned the need to increase police representation in order to create safer communities (n = 9). For example, one individual from Ward 1 noted, *“I would like to see a small police attachment in the town of Binbrook.”*
- **Feeling ignored:** Residents across most wards discussed feeling ignored by City Council when making decisions (n = 17). As one individual from Ward 13 noted, *“I have been soliciting a response from my City Councillor for months via telephone and email and she simply ignores my request.”* Similarly, some residents also felt that City Council only listens to certain groups of residents when making decisions (n = 14). For example, one individual from Ward 13 expressed, *“I get much better feedback in Dundas than I get in Downtown Hamilton where my business is situated.”*
- **Lack of support:** Residents across most wards discussed the lack of services and supports offered by the city (n = 14). For example, one individual from Ward 10 said, *“Stoney Creek (closer to Winona Road) is underserved in the following: recreational facilities, EMS, and police services. Very little police presence and calls take forever to have an officer arrive. Many new subdivisions with no new fire stations, ambulance, and police services.”* Residents across most wards also advocated for providing more support to homeless people and other underserved members of the community (n = 30), as well as seniors and people living with disabilities (n = 8). As one individual from Ward 10 noted, *“It’s time for Hamilton to live up to its potential and please, please, make it a place that is safe and inclusive for all (including but not limited to the LGBTQ+ community, housing the poor, easing the struggles of the working class, more services for those with mental health and/or addictions, etc.).”*

Transportation

Public Transportation: Respondents in the central wards (1-5) seemed to generally agree that Hamilton Street Railway (HSR) service is reliable, while individuals living in the rural wards seemed to express less satisfaction (**Figure 22**).

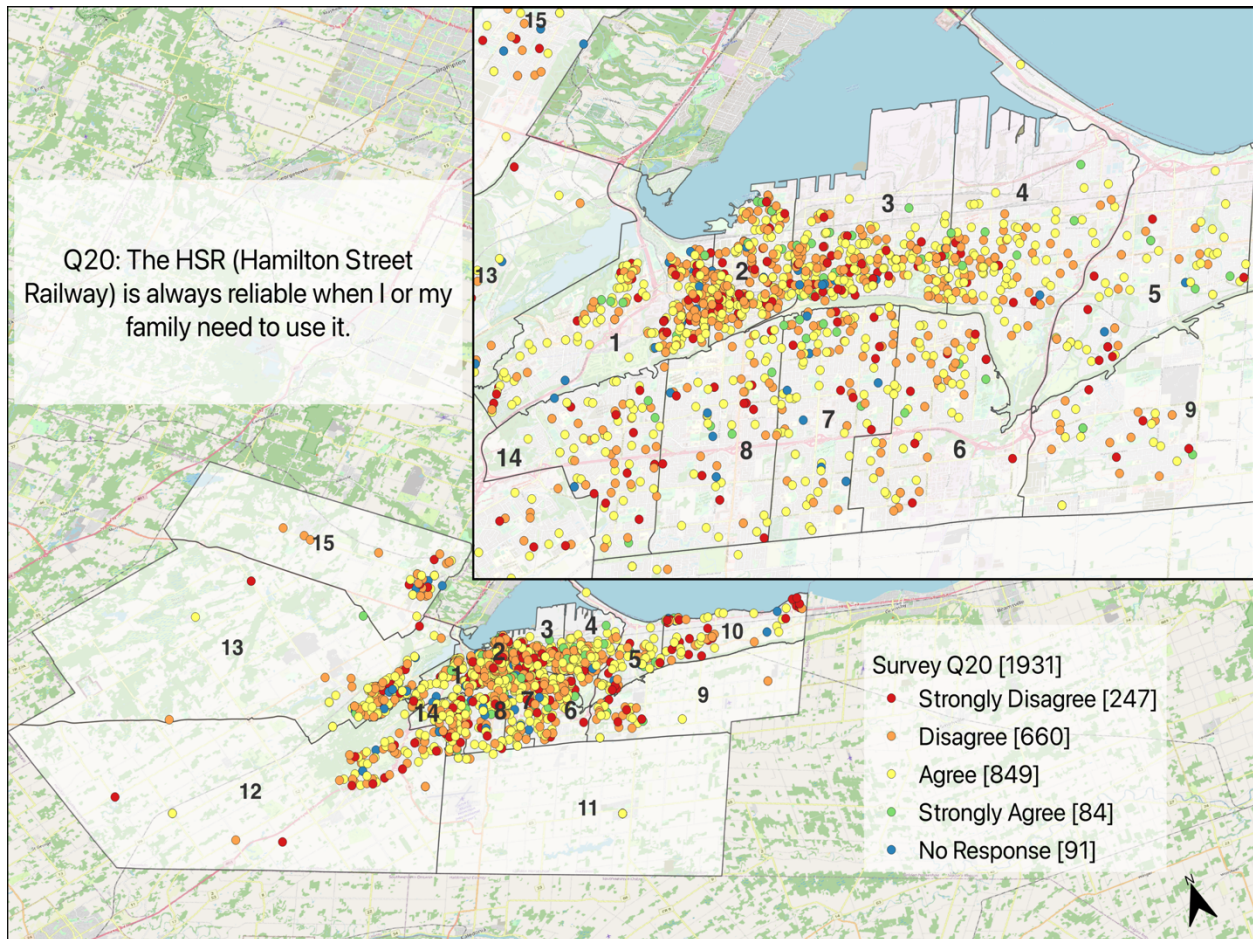


Figure 22. Satisfaction with Hamilton Street Railway

While many respondents agree that HSR service is reliable, most respondents, regardless of their location, appeared to feel that the transportation needs of different demographics are not taken into account by City Hall (**Figure 23**).

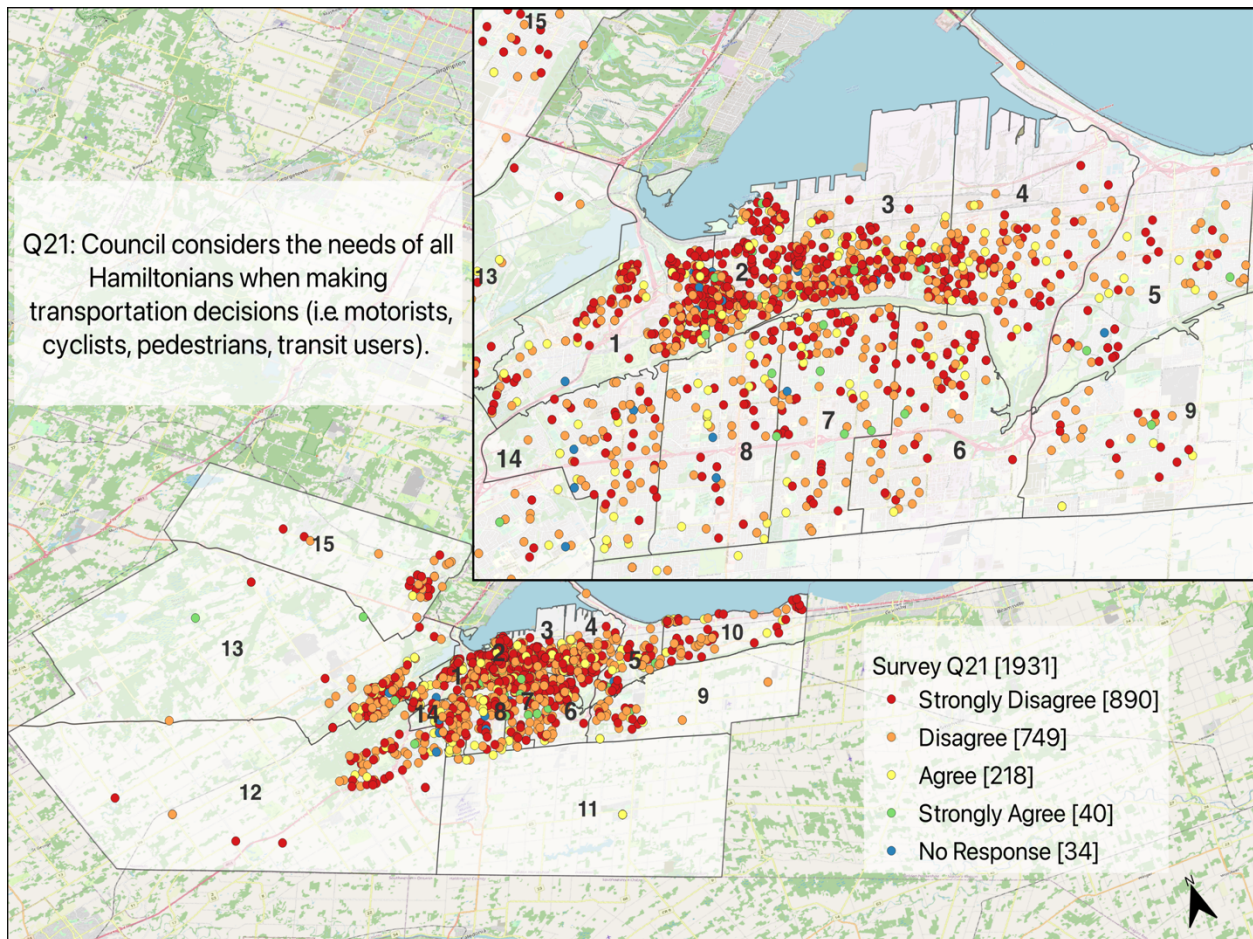


Figure 23. Satisfaction with transportation decisions

Similarly, respondents across all wards appeared to feel that City Council has not made smart investments for the future of Hamilton's transit system (**Figure 24**).

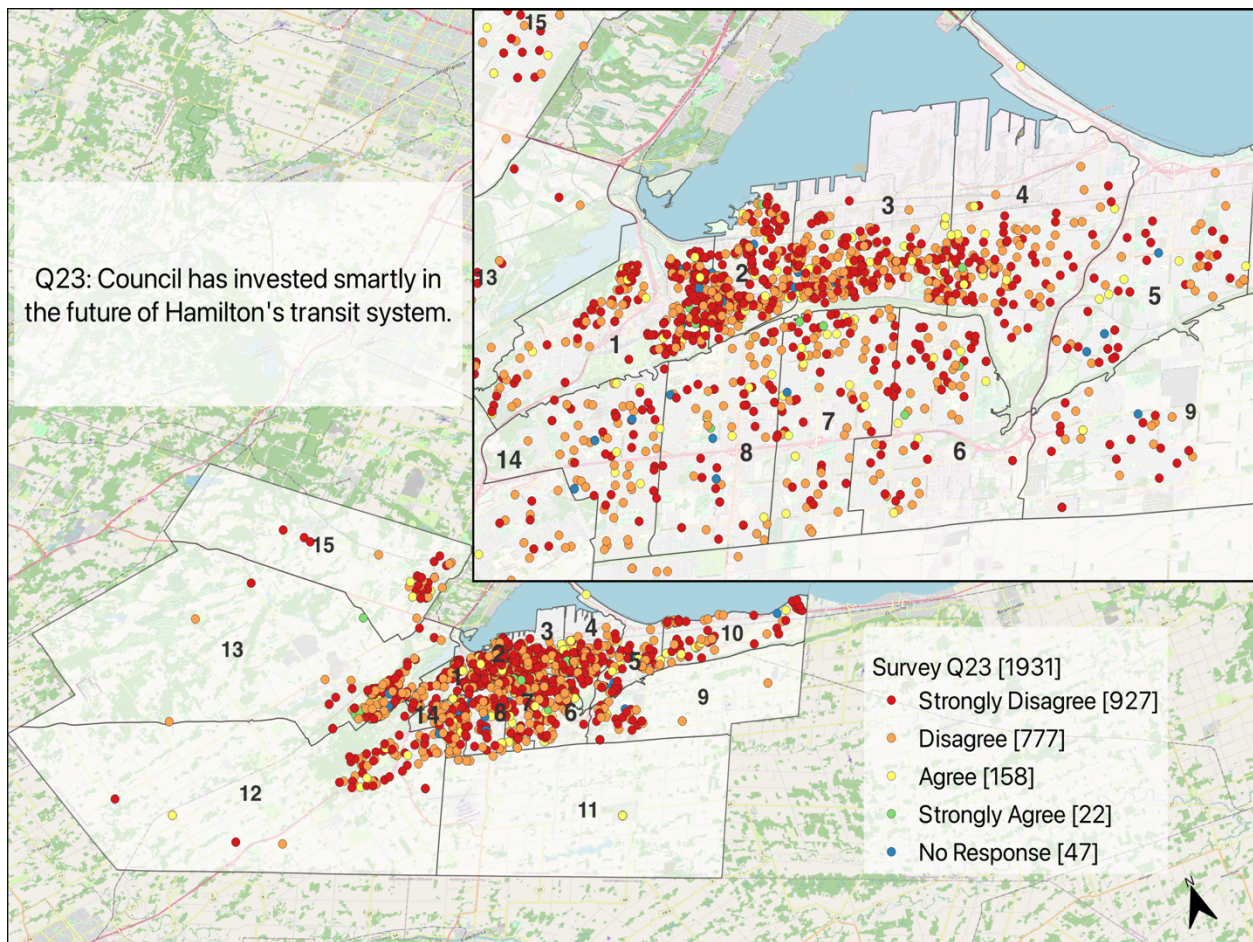


Figure 24. Satisfaction with public transportation investments

Personal Transportation: Many respondents appeared to be in agreement that it is easy to get around in Hamilton with or without a car (**Figure 25**). Surprisingly, many of these positive responses seemed to come from residents of wards on the outskirts of the city, while the more central wards seemed to have a large number of respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

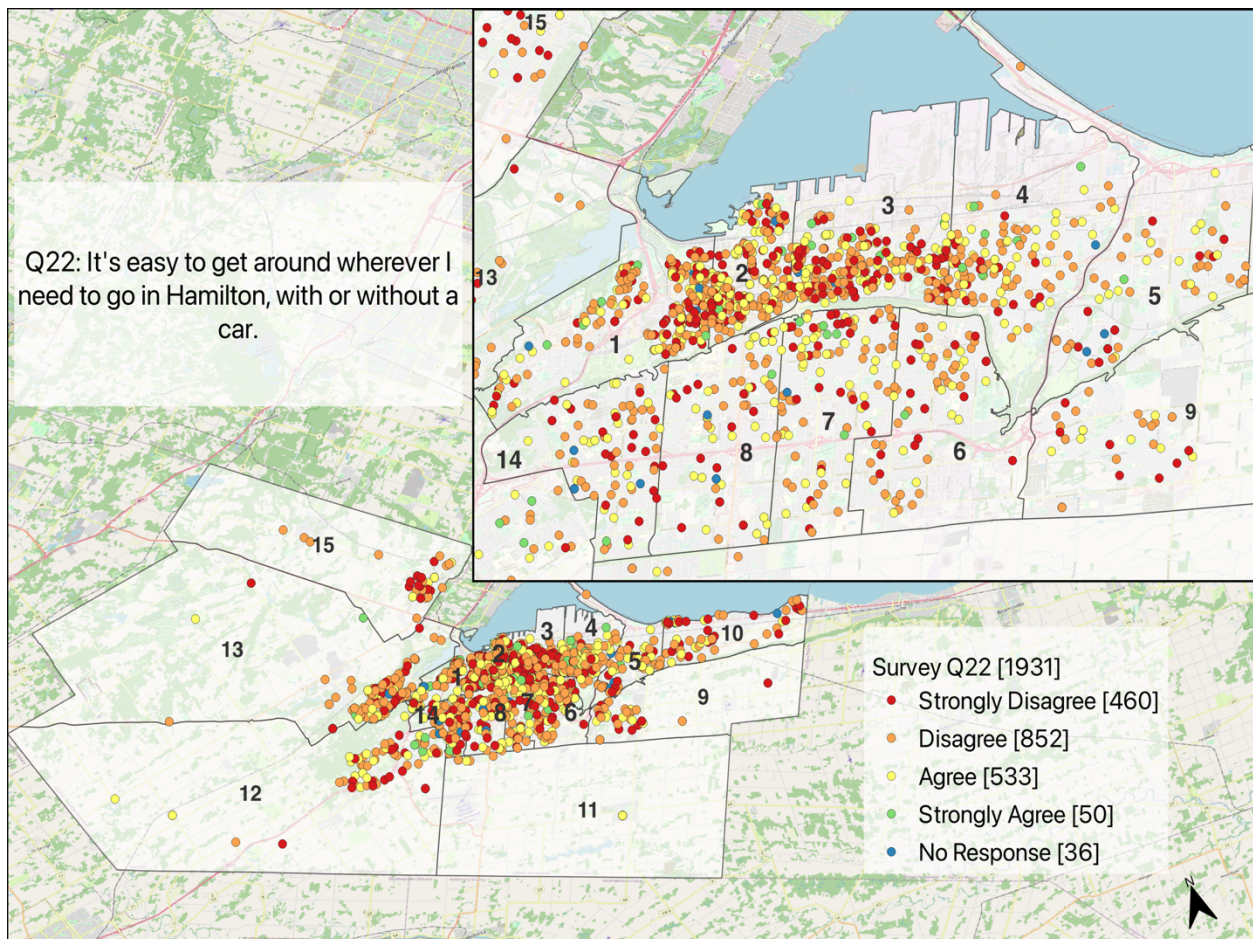


Figure 25. Satisfaction with ease of transportation

Our analysis of the open-ended survey question responses identified four major themes related to transportation in Hamilton: negative attitudes towards the LRT, positive attitudes towards the LRT, road management, and not enough public transportation.

- **Negative attitudes towards the LRT:** Residents across most wards expressed their opposition to the LRT (n = 63). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 1, 4, and 13. One resident from Ward 1 expressed they are against the LRT due to its cost and small service area: *"I am strongly against LRT. Dundas will not benefit from such a costly service. Why not invest in more frequent service on public transit."* Another resident from Ward 13 similarly expressed, *"LRT is a bad decision, it will do nothing but cause cost overruns and greatly affect the flow of traffic during its construction. The long-term goals are not worth the headaches it will cause in the short term."* Overall, the respondents expressed more opposition to the LRT than support.
- **Positive attitudes towards the LRT:** Residents across most wards expressed their support for the LRT (n = 47). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 1, 3, and 13. Residents from Ward 1 and 3 (which will be well serviced by the LRT) explained they support the system because it will increase connectivity in the downtown core. Conversely, a resident from Ward 13 (which is an area that will not be serviced by the LRT) expressed, *"The LRT is necessary to bring Hamilton forward as a tourist friendly vibrant city, it will increase small business along its route. It is a win-win."*
- **Better road management:** Residents across most wards suggested the need for better road management (e.g., number of car/ bus/ bike lanes, sidewalks) to improve traffic flow and make their neighbourhood safer (n = 49). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 1, 10, and 12. As one resident from Ward 10 noted, *"Ward 10 has a very unsafe highway overpass at 50 road. There is no pedestrian access and the population is booming on the lake side of the highway. The walkway on Winona Road is only borderline safe especially with children and teens crossing over the bridge while cars speed across."*
- **Not enough public transportation:** Residents across some wards criticized the inadequate level of available public transportation (n = 16). This theme was most frequently discussed by residents from Ward 11. A resident from Ward 11 mentioned, *"There is no public transportation where I live."* Another resident noted how the lack of public transportation has impact students' ability to obtain a job: *"We have no bus routes out here, making it difficult for students to get to part time job."*

Key Takeaways

Our findings suggest both uniformity and diversity among Hamilton residents regarding key municipal issues. For many of the IELECT survey questions, our visual analysis of the distribution of survey responses across the city detected no obvious patterns between wards. For instance, questions 7 (Economy), 9-12 (Leadership), 13-15 (Environment), 16-19 (Community), and 21-23 (Transportation) generated strong negative responses, regardless of ward, which may indicate major issues across Hamilton and priorities for political action. We also identified that respondents living closest to Hamilton's city centre appeared to be less satisfied with the city's infrastructure, park maintenance, safety, small business support, and job opportunities, compared to those living farther from the downtown core. Respondents living in rural wards seemed to be less satisfied with HSR service than respondents in central wards.

The qualitative analysis resulted in a diversity of descriptive themes under each of IELECT's six priority areas. Most free-text survey responses were collected from central wards, with fewer responses from those living in rural areas. Residents in all wards tended to comment on municipal aspects that were "working well" or provided suggested improvements.

In our thematic analysis of responses to the open-ended survey question, we identified Leadership, Economy, and Community as three of the areas respondents were most concerned with. The comments were generally constructive. For example, some respondents discussed feeling unsafe in their communities and identified the need for improved city services (e.g., Emergency Medical Services and police) and increased supports for those experiencing homelessness.

Most respondents used the free-text survey question to discuss municipal leadership or transportation; the fewest number of responses pertained to infrastructure or environment. Respondents frequently discussed difficulties in contacting city council members and feeling that their input is often ignored. In addition, some residents raised concerns about councillor's accountability and transparency, public engagement, representativeness, and progressiveness.

These findings suggest a starting place for those seeking leadership roles in Hamilton to further support and address the concerns of community members. While this work helps to reinforce and clarify municipal priorities for a subset of Hamiltonians, the findings should be cautioned. Our interpretations may be biased due to the visual analysis of geo-coded survey data and the perspectives of survey respondents may not be representative of all Hamiltonians. A future survey could collect more demographic information to better understand who is completing out the survey, and more advanced spatial analyses could be conducted to elicit spatial patterns in a more accurate and specific way.

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Appendices

Appendix A – IELECT Resident Survey Questions

Name: _____

Email: _____

Ward I Live In: _____

Postal Code: _____

1. I'm happy with the condition and year-round maintenance of the sidewalks and roads in my neighbourhood.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
2. I feel safe walking to stores, schools, parks and restaurants in my neighbourhood.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
3. I'm satisfied with the condition of my local parks.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
4. My neighbourhood receives its fair share of dollars spent on infrastructure (roads, sidewalks parks and water supply)
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
5. City Hall supports the creation and operation of small and medium sized businesses.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree

6. Living in Hamilton provides many opportunities for well-paying, permanent jobs.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
7. It's easy to find an affordable place to live in Hamilton.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
8. The city is delivering on its promise to be 'Open for Business'.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
9. City Council has shown good leadership on issues that improve the lives of me, my family and friends.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
10. City Council spends my tax dollars responsibly.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
11. City Council brings new ideas forward to make Hamilton a better city.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
12. Hamilton City Council is transparent, accountable and demonstrates openness.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
13. Hamilton City Hall has taken steps to proactively address climate change.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

- ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 14. City Council works to protect our local natural environment.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 15. The air quality in Hamilton is good.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 16. City Council treats all Hamiltonians with respect and dignity, regardless of who they are, where they live and how much money they make.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 17. Council listens to the needs and opinions of Hamilton residents before making important decisions.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 18. Council seeks my active input in developing Hamilton's future, either through democratic participation or community consultation on decisions.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 19. City Hall's annual budgets reflect the needs of my community.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly Disagree
- 20. The HSR (Hamilton Street Railway) is always reliable and when I or my family need to use it.
 - ☐ Strongly Agree

- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

21. Council considers the needs of all Hamiltonians when making transportation decisions. (i.e. motorists, cyclists, pedestrians, transit users)

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

22. It's easy to get around wherever I need to go in Hamilton, with or without a car.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

23. Council has invested smartly in the future of Hamilton's transit system.

- ☐ Strongly Agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly Disagree

Did you vote in the last municipal election in 2018?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Any additional feedback?

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Appendix B – Summary of Codes Identified in Thematic Analysis

Category	Parent code	Child code	Total counts of each code															
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	ALL
Infrastructure	Working well		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not working well	Poor city planning	3	3	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	5	2	1	2	0	1	24
		* Developers	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	4	1	1	19
		Poor maintenance	5	1	3	4	1	3	5	2	0	2	4	0	4	2	1	37
	Suggested improvements	Improve/ more development	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9	2	1	2	0	15
		* Stop expansion on natural land	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
		Maintenance	0	2	7	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	3	0	0	15
Economy	Working well		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not working well	Roadblocks to start a business	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	4
		High taxes, low service	6	0	1	0	1	3	1	0	0	6	6	4	0	0	8	36
		Cost of housing	1	3	8	0	3	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	23
	Suggested improvements	Lower property taxes	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	1	0	7
		Increase affordable housing	26	15	4	3	0	0	6	3	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	64
		Increase contract work	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Providing jobs	1	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	9
		Supporting/encouraging more businesses	4	6	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	2	23
		Rework city's budget	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	3

Category	Parent code	Child code	Total counts of each code															
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	ALL
Leadership	Working well	Some councillors representing ideals of ward	39	4	31	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	77
	Not working well	Irresponsible spending	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	2	1	2	16
		Police funding	5	3	4	1	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	18
		Lack of trust & effectiveness	30	10	18	0	0	6	7	0	0	0	2	3	8	2	8	94
		Inappropriate behavior	5	8	7	0	1	1	5	0	0	2	0	7	5	3	1	45
		By-laws	0	1	4	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	7
	Suggested improvements	Term limits	23	12	8	6	0	1	3	11	2	11	9	8	12	5	2	113
		Encouraging young/new talent	3	3	1	0	0	5	6	0	0	1	0	0	1	4	0	24
		Transparency	8	5	6	6	2	0	5	2	0	2	1	2	3	5	0	47
		Progressive	9	8	9	6	0	1	0	8	1	5	2	1	6	2	0	58
		Representative	5	13	6	8	0	1	3	5	1	8	3	3	7	7	1	71
		Qualified	0	0	4	3	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	11
		Decrease council size	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
		Responsible	3	2	5	3	1	0	0	0	1	5	2	0	3	3	0	28
		Greater engagement	6	8	8	0	1	1	6	0	0	6	0	2	1	5	0	44
		Changing voting method/procedure	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	8
		Quicker decision making	1	0	1	2	0	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	5	2	0	18
		Expert consultation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	3
		Big vision picture/working together	0	3	8	0	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	18

Category	Parent code	Child code	Total counts of each code															
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	ALL
Environment	Working well	Green spaces	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Not working well	Destruction of green spaces	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	9
		Cleanliness	5	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	13
		Inaction climate change	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	7
		Air/water/noise pollution	8	6	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	22
	Suggested improvements	Plants and animals	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
		Building/ maintaining parks	2	1	2	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	11
		Protect habitats/ animals	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	5
Community	Working well	Health services	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
	Not working well	Feeling ignored	0	1	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	4	0	0	3	1	1	17
		Favoritism/inequality/mixed-interests	1	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	0	14
		Lack of social service and support	1	0	4	3	0	1	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0	14
		Increased crime/feeling unsafe	6	4	8	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	4	0	2	30
		Snow removal	4	2	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	1	15
		Poor internet	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	2
	Suggested improvements	Views on homelessness (and other disadvantaged members of the community)	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		* Provide more support	10	5	6	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	3	0	1	30
		* Do not provide more support/exclude them from community	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
		Increase support for seniors	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	8
		Increase police	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	9
		More public facilities	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2

Category	Parent code	Child code	Total counts of each code															
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	ALL
Transportation	Working well	Positive attitudes towards the LRT	9	7	6	1	0	4	2	0	0	0	1	4	6	3	4	47
	Not working well	Negative attitudes towards the LRT	10	8	3	9	0	4	2	2	3	4	3	6	7	1	1	63
		Too much traffic	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	6
		Noisy vehicles	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
		Not enough public transportation	0	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0	2	1	2	16
		Unsafe for bikes	2	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	7
		Too many traffic signs	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
		Unsafe drivers and road systems	0	3	9	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	15
	Suggested improvements	Regular HSR schedule	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
		Upgrade HSR service area	2	2	1	0	0	0	3	1	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	12
		Road management	11	6	3	3	0	1	1	1	0	9	1	8	2	1	2	49
		HSR scheduling and routs information	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	4
		Transport trucks	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
		Green transportation	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2