

# TRANSIT FUNDING

Transport Canada has confirmed funding support for EH's innovative Passport to Hamilton transit promotion project. Launched last summer with support from the city, the project promotes the use of the HSR day pass as a ticket to family travel in Hamilton.

The \$8 pass allows six people, including up to two adults, to get on any HSR bus all day long. EH has enhanced the deal by recruiting over 70 locations to offer discounts to people using the pass. They range from 2 for 1 deals on waterfront attractions, to restaurant discounts, and reduced entry costs for museums, art galleries, ice rinks and swimming pools.

The project scored earlier successes – generating a 30 percent increase in sales of the day passes within two months of the July launch. It is now moving into the schools where students – with parental permission – will be offered a free pass to take their family on a day trip planned by the student.

The federal contribution comes through the Moving on Sustainable Transportation program of Transport Canada. It provides \$50,000 over 18 months for staff time and promotional materials. It is back-dated to July 1, 2008.

In-kind support for the project has come from many sources including the Hamilton Community Foundation, Tourism Hamilton, Union Gas and the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce.

## WHAT SHOULD THE CITY DO ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE?

Two years ago EH presented city council with a ten point list of initial baby steps to take to address the threat of global climate change. A report card to rate progress is in the works, but climate change isn't going away, so we're compelled to keep the heat on council with a new list.

A small group of EH board, staff and volunteers has come up with a new short list of municipal actions, and we want your input! Join a meeting for members and friends on Thursday, February 26 at the EH offices, starting at 7:30 pm.

We'll present our list, describe our criteria for inclusion, and then turn it over to you. What do you think EH should ask Hamilton city council to do about climate change?



## WALK THERE!

We've launched a new Environment Hamilton web tool to empower walkers across the city and help drivers to switch to more sustainable means of transport.

*Walk There!* is an online service that helps you find amenities and destinations, and shows them how easy it is to walk, ride a bike, or take transit to nearby locations.

Users enter a departure address, choose a category of destinations and are then shown a map. Their departure point is at the centre, with a circle showing a 2 km radius, and all the sites that fit the category chosen.

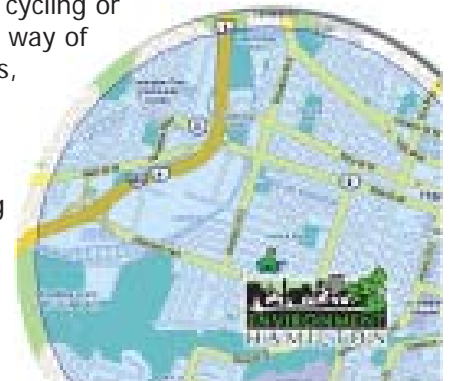
Just by clicking on the spot you would like to visit - perhaps a school, library, church or restaurant - you are shown the time it would take an average walker to get there.

The web tool also comes with a challenge – the *Walk There! Challenge*. Residents can commit to travel to destinations within 2 km of home by foot, bike or bus, with the goal of reducing vehicle trips by 10 per cent.

Walk There! also includes links to alternative transportation websites, a list of EH community walking events, and opportunities to take action to make your community more pedestrian friendly.

In North America, the average car makes 2,000 trips a year that are shorter than 3 km. Replacing short trips with walking, cycling or taking public transit is a significant way of reducing greenhouse gas emissions, saving on fuel costs and living a healthier life.

This website was developed by Environment Hamilton with funding from Environment Canada's EcoAction Community Funding Program. It's part of our Kirkendall Walks project highlighted in recent issues of our newsletter.



## INSIDE:

CLIMATE CHANGE...2

MAYOR LAUNCHES CHALLENGE...3

DIRTY DELAYS...4

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE...6

PLAGUE IN DUNDAS...7

STEEL UPDATE...8

# EOY AWARDS

Nominations have opened for the Environmentalist of the Year (EOY) awards.

The nomination package and background information are at [www.eoyawards.org](http://www.eoyawards.org).

Nomination packages can also be requested by contacting John Struger at (905) 547-5116 (home); (905) 336-4966 (office) [john.struger@sympatico.ca](mailto:john.struger@sympatico.ca).

# OCEAN ACIDIFICATION

The climate crisis unfortunately has multiple aspects. One of the scarier ones is the acidification of the oceans as those bodies of water absorb more and more carbon dioxide from our overloaded atmosphere. A recent UN panel of 155 scientists from 55 countries is reporting that the acidity of surface waters has climbed by 30 percent since the beginning of the industrial revolution.

The Monaco Declaration was released on January 30 by the Second International Symposium on the Ocean in a High-CO2 World and warns that changes in ocean chemistry will "severely affect marine organisms, food webs, biodiversity and fisheries" if quick action isn't taken to cut CO2 emissions.

"By mid-century, ocean acidification may render most regions chemically inhospitable to coral reefs. These and other acidification related changes could affect a wealth of marine goods and services, such as our ability to use the ocean to manage waste, to provide chemicals to make new medicines, and to benefit from its natural capacity to regulate climate," says the statement.

The scientists call for "ambitious, urgent plans to cut emissions drastically" as the only reasonable response to the problem and they specifically reject some stop-gap measures that focus on reducing global temperatures in artificial ways.

"So-called *geo-engineering* strategies that would not aim to restrict future atmospheric CO2 concentrations would not reduce ocean acidification", they advise. "Climate-change negotiations focused on stabilizing greenhouse gases ... must also consider atmospheric CO2 as a pollutant, an acid gas whose release to the atmosphere must be curtailed in order to limit ocean acidification."

# THE PLANETARY TIPPING POINT

The scientific consensus on climate change reported by Al Gore in his documentary film, *An Inconvenient Truth*, continues to remain strong. A recent survey of more than 3,100 scientists listed in the 2007 edition of the American Geological Institute's Directory of Geosciences Departments revealed that 97% of climatologists believed in human involvement, but only 47% of petroleum geologists did, the latter not surprisingly.

What Gore was not aware of at the time of his film was the imminence of the tipping point beyond which there is nothing humans will be able to do to prevent severe climatic change.

Jim Hansen, director of NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies as well as an internationally renowned climatologist, has recently warned Barack Obama that his four-year administration offers the world a last chance to get things right:

"We cannot now afford to put off change any longer. We have to get on a new path within this new administration. We have only four years left for Obama to set an example to the rest of the world. America must take the lead."

The leaders of Britain, Germany, Japan, and Australia have all received the same urgent message from Hansen, who is not alone in his predictions of "imminent peril".

James Lovelock, originator of the Gaia hypothesis, goes so far as to predict that the number of people remaining at the end of the century will probably be a billion or fewer.

On top of this come the predictions of the peak oilists. Energy depletion is on the horizon but with oil so cheap, at least for the present time, significant money is not being invested in renewable energy technologies. A realistic fear is that governments faced with oil shortages will fall back on the expedient availability of dirty coal and dirty oil for the production of electricity.

We are close to the time when the choices we make to address peak oil may exponentially increase the rapidity with which climate change is already occurring.

If ever there were a time for in-activists to get active, if only to write to their political representatives about their wishes for the future, this would surely be it.

---

*The Canadian government's current targets will only decrease greenhouse gas emissions by three per cent from 1990 levels by 2020.*

---

## Join Us!



**ENVIRONMENT  
HAMILTON**  
1130 Barton East  
Suite 207  
Hamilton L8H 7P9

[contactus@  
environment  
hamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)

**905 549-0900**  
[www.environment  
hamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

*Memberships  
\$25 per year  
\$15/unwaged  
or student*

---

# MAYOR BACKS CLIMATE CHAMPIONS PROJECT

The official launch of EH's Climate Change Champions project included Mayor Eisenberger who spoke about his commitment to fighting climate change and creating green jobs in Hamilton.

The mayor was one of more than 40 guests in attendance at Bryan Prince Booksellers in Westdale – one of the first businesses to come aboard our program. Representatives from other Champions were also present and acknowledged.

Climate Change Champions is the first Environment Hamilton program to formally have so many partners – twenty-two so far and still room for a couple more.

The project offers free audits (both walk thru and a formal review of billing) that assess ways to help organizations reduce their greenhouse gas emissions at least 10% by 2010 and 20% for 2020.

Each action plan is custom-made to suit our Champion's needs – and in these tough economic times help to save money as well as the environment.

In addition to the audits, we also offer a combined toolkit of programs and services available through EH and our partner, Green Venture, to help Champions and their clients,

## Our Champions to date:

1. Bryan Prince Booksellers
2. Carmen's Banquet Centre
3. Welcome Inn Community Centre
4. Hamilton District Labour Council
5. Neighbour to Neighbour Centre
6. Hamilton-Wentworth Jewish Community Centre
7. St James Anglican Church, Dundas
8. Westdale United Church
9. First Unitarian Church of Hamilton
10. Temple Anshe Sholom
11. Parkside High School
12. Spencer Valley School
13. Dundas Valley Montessori School
14. Waterdown District High School
15. St Agnes School

## Champions in the Wings:

16. St Michael's Elementary School
17. Nicholas Mancini Centre (Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic School Board Centre)
18. Dyment's Family Farm
19. Bishop Ryan Catholic Secondary School
20. Coca-Cola bottling plant in Hamilton
21. Cathedral High School
22. Redeemer University College
23. TBA



*Labour council president Don Fraser (right) joins Mayor Eisenberger and EH's Julia Kollek at Climate Champions launch*

students or congregations do their part.

We're also looking for more people to make personal commitments to fight climate change by registering on our on-line calculator (provided by EcoAction Teams) in a competition with cities across the country. To do your part and find ways you can make a difference, go to our website at [www.climatechangehamilton.ca](http://www.climatechangehamilton.ca).

If you are part of a faith group, community centre, business or school interested in taking part, please contact EH's program co-ordinator Julia [champions@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:champions@environmenthamilton.org) or Jordan [energy@greenventure.ca](mailto:energy@greenventure.ca)

## BOARD NOMINATIONS

Our annual general meeting will include elections for the EH Board of Directors. Four of the eight positions are automatically up for election at each AGM and at least one of the incumbent directors is not running for re-election. Members in good standing may nominate individuals to stand for election to the Board. These nominations should be forwarded to the chair of the Nominating Committee at the EH mailing address (1170 Barton Street East, Suite 207, Hamilton ON L8H 7P9) no later than March 1, and should be accompanied by the supporting signatures of three EH members. Nominations can also be made from the floor at the AGM.



# POSCOR BILL OF RIGHTS REVIEW:

In February of 2008, Environment Hamilton used the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) to ask the MOE to review the two certificates of approval for air emissions from the Poscor/Triple M scrapyards operation located on Parkdale Avenue North.

We prepared the application because of our own observations and complaints from the public regarding visible pollution emissions from the facility's outdoor metal-cutting operations.

Complaints included concerns raised by consultants working for the city of Hamilton on the naturalization of the Windermere basin beside the Poscor site. They told us they could not tolerate working in the area when metal cutting was taking place at Poscor.

The company has MOE approvals for two oxypropane metal cutters but, incredibly enough, the approvals include no requirements for pollution control equipment for these cutters.

This situation is in stark contrast to another local business using oxypropane metal cutters: in that case, MOE issued an air permit back in 1995 that required a

baghouse dust collector to capture metal-cutting emissions.

Our request to the MOE was simple and straightforward – impose the same pollution control requirements on the oxypropane cutters at this facility that exist at other metal-cutting operations in the city.

We highlighted the discrepancy that existed in Poscor's air permits – both issued in 2006 – and the air permits MOE had issued to the other local metal cutting operation.

In May of 2008, MOE informed us that our request for review had been granted mainly because "(I)t was determined that the concerns with the emissions demonstrate a potential for harm to the environment".

On December 17, 2008, MOE provided us with a review report. The report proved to be riveting reading as it included a chronology of MOE efforts to respond to public complaints about the metal-cutting emissions dating back to 2003!

Highlights of the chronology provide some interesting insight into the MOE-Poscor dynamic over this problem.

The MOE concluded the chronology by stating that its effort at the Poscor site "...is consistent with the ministry's Compliance Policy".

Meanwhile, on December 12<sup>th</sup> of 2008, an Environment Hamilton volunteer stack watcher snapped this picture of Poscor's emissions:

Problem emissions continue at the site today, with no visible signs of improvements to those who have been observing the problem over a number of years now.

This is a problem with a very simple solution but continues to persist, imposing problematic impacts on our local airshed.

The sad story of this site also raises concerns about the documented history of MOE's attempts to get the company to take action to resolve the metal-cutting emission problems.

The first complaints about this problem emerged at the company's Sherman Avenue site back in 2003. It is now over 5 years later and the metal cutting emissions continue to occur at Poscor's Parkdale location.

It is time to stop these dirty delays!

---

*Incredibly MOE approvals have no requirements for pollution control equipment for the company's oxypropane metal cutters*

---



**4** *Poscor emissions on December 12, 2008 - EH volunteer stack watcher*

# A HISTORY OF DIRTY DELAYS

## The MOE's Chronology of Poscor's Emission Problems:

**December 2003** - Prior to setting up its operations on Parkdale Avenue North, Poscor was cutting metal at 500 Sherman Avenue North. Complaints were received on December 15, 2003 regarding visible yellow emissions from metal cutting at this location. MOE issued an order requiring the company to "investigate methods of ensuring that torch cutting emissions do not migrate off Poscor's property". The company, just about to relocate to its current Parkdale site, responded by providing "...a Voluntary Action Plan to assess and, if necessary, put in place strategies to manage any potential adverse effects from visible emissions that may result from torch cutting operations...". MOE revoked the order it had issued and allowed the company to move forward with its proposed Voluntary Action Plan.

**March 2007** - After an MOE inspection on March 21, 2007, Poscor "...was requested to update their BMP (Best Management Practices) plan to summarize sources of particulate, including the torch cutting operations, and to formulate a plan to manage off-site migration of particulates".

**July 2007** - MOE received a letter dated July 27, 2007 from Poscor's consultants indicating that "...Poscor's Emission Summary and Dispersion Modelling report demonstrates that there are no off-site health impacts from their torching operations".

**September 2007** - MOE conducted another site inspection on September 21, 2007 in response to public complaints about metal cutting and other dust emissions. The company was required to do an analysis of the emissions and "(A)s with other operations of this kind, the ministry instructed Poscor to construct equipment to properly control emissions from the operation and to seek to amend their CofA (certificate of approval) for the facility accordingly". Further, MOE noted that the company plans to relocate its outdoor metal cutting to an indoor facility on Strathearne Avenue. In the interim, MOE noted, the "(C)ompany is also researching the use of portable (pollution) controls at the Parkdale site to address any remaining fugitive issues".

**February 2008** - MOE received the Environment Hamilton application for review, noting that the company responded by indicating it had received no formal complaints regarding emission problems. The MOE added that "(O)nce notified of these complaints, the company has taken corrective action" but provided no detail regarding the nature of any corrective actions.

**March 12, 2008** - MOE reported that Hamilton staff prepared another order to "...resolve the concerns with emissions from the torch cutting operations". The order required the company to retain experts to identify suitable pollution controls and to recommend dates for implementation of these controls.

**March 20, 2008** - MOE staff visited the Poscor site "...to reinforce the ministry's need for action to address visible emissions". Poscor produced the application for approval to move the cutting operation to the indoor facility on Strathearne Avenue. MOE reported that "(B)ased on the submission of this new application, the Provincial Officer Order was not issued".

**May 7, 2008** - MOE met with Poscor to discuss more public complaints received on May 6 regarding visible emissions from metal cutting. They agreed the company would submit a plan to reduce visible emissions by May 16, 2008. Key components of the plan included:

- Requirement for visual screening (earth berms) around the primary cutting area.
- Reduction or stopping of metal cutting if the emissions are travelling offsite.
- Cutting operations shall be reduced or stopped with any stagnation or intensification of the emissions from the cutting .

**September 2008** - MOE met with Poscor on September 2 and "...a suggestion was made by HDO (Hamilton District Office) staff that Poscor consider utilizing a portable apparatus to collect fumes and particulates from the two torch cutting operations...".

**October 23, 2008** - Poscor reported to MOE that it purchased "...equipment that uses water misting technology to capture and remove particulates and fumes from torch cutting operations." And further that "...testing is being carried out to determine the effectiveness of this equipment in cold weather". Results of the testing are anticipated in March 2009.

---

*The MOE concluded the chronology by stating that its effort at the Poscor site "...is consistent with the Ministry's Compliance Policy".*

---

---

*Memberships and donations to Environment Hamilton allow us to expand our advocacy work for a cleaner and healthier Hamilton.*

---



## ENVIRONMENTAL PRIZE

Nominations are invited for the 2009 Betty Blashill Environmental Prize. This award is intended to support Hamiltonians who have gone above and beyond in their volunteer efforts to improve the natural and/or social environment.

Nominees are evaluated on their long-term efforts, resolve, and

effectiveness supporting organizations or projects that improve or protect the social or natural environment. Recipients of the prize will have demonstrated extraordinary efforts leading to an improvement in quality of life of Hamiltonians and/or others. Additionally, the selection committee will consider aspects of that nominee's everyday life and interactions

that benefit the environment.

We particularly encourage nomination of individuals who work behind the scenes like Betty. The cash prize that accompanies this award may be used to advance the recipient's environmental efforts and knowledge or his/her efforts to minimize his/her ecological footprint.

The prize will be presented at the 30th Annual Environmentalists of the Year Awards Dinner, held during Environment Week at Michelangelo's Banquet Centre on Upper Ottawa Street Hamilton on Wednesday June 3, 2009. We are grateful to the EOY Committee for allowing us to make the presentation at their celebration of Hamilton's environmentalists.

Nomination forms can be requested by contacting the Environment Hamilton office at 905-549-0900 or via email at [contactus@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org). The nomination form is also accessible on the EH website ([www.environmenthamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)). Nominations must be postmarked by April 1, 2009.

## CARBON OFFSETTING

If you're feeling concerned about the carbon dioxide emissions connected to your travel plans, you might want to consider the response of Hamilton mountain MP Chris Charlton. She's making a regular donation to EH to offset her unavoidable trip emissions.

Air travel imposes a particularly large

## NEW EAT LOCAL MAP COMING

EH's Hamilton Eat Local project staff are currently working to finalize the third edition of our local food map.

For 2009 we will be printing 40,000 copies of the "Hamilton Let's Eat Local!" map. We are encouraging registered farmers to place a listing at the nominal cost of \$50, but there are also opportunities for sponsorship and advertising on the map.

Note that the deadline for all of these is February 20th, 2009.

Please contact Juby Lee, Communications Manager for Hamilton Eat Local if you are interested in listing or advertising at [jlee.eatlocal@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:jlee.eatlocal@environmenthamilton.org) or 905-549-0900.

burden on earth's atmosphere, leading to appeals from competing companies seeking your dollars for promised compensatory activities such as planting trees. There is a danger such schemes will actually encourage extravagant activities that damage the planet – as long as they are offset.

This approach is further complicated by the challenge of ensuring that the offsetting is actually effective. Will those trees actually get planted in some far off place, and would they have been planted anyway? At the same time, we should be concerned about personally damaging the atmosphere, even when it's part of our jobs or responsibilities – such as politicians travelling back and forth from Ottawa to serve their constituents.

So EH suggested that carbon offset payments might be better directed to environmental organizations working to counter dangerous climatic changes – and Chris agreed, choosing EH as the recipient.

We're happy to be the beneficiaries, but Chris would be the first to agree that we'd all be even happier if you can avoid generating more emissions. In a choice between more donations or less air travel, we don't hesitate to choose the latter.

*EH's Eat Local work is generously supported by Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation*







# STEEL MILL AIR STANDARDS

In the December issue of the EH newsletter we described the *alternative standard* option available under our new air regulation and the fact that both US Steel and ArcelorMittal have applied for such standards for certain contaminants.

Both companies have indicated to the provincial Ministry of the Environment (MOE) that they need more time to

make the necessary plant changes to meet the tougher new standards in the regulation.

The new air regulation also requires companies seeking an alternative standard to consult extensively with the public throughout the process.

In January of this year, the second of a

series of public meetings was held. Hosted by the Community Advisory Panel of the Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association (HIEA), the purpose of the session was to give staff from MOE's Standards Development Branch an opportunity to walk interested community members through the alternative standard setting process.

There were plenty of questions & concerns raised by the audience, including whether the companies would face any penalties if, after many years, they are still above the standards to questions about whether the government would provide any funding to help the companies to upgrade the plants so they reach compliance.

As part of alternative standard setting, both companies must do a combination of computer modelling and actual air quality monitoring in order to generate a picture of what their air emissions look like. But meeting attendees learned that US Steel was unable to complete its air monitoring before the economic downturn hit.

The slowing economy has forced the company to reduce production at the plant, including putting its blast furnace on idle. This means that air monitoring done now will not reflect the reality of emission levels during normal plant operations.

The company must wait until its operation gets back to normal before this additional monitoring can be done.

The result is a likely delay in US Steel's ability to complete the necessary requirements for its alternative standard application, which will likely mean additional delays in the company's ability to make progress towards compliance with the new air regulation.

The next step in the process will be the creation of a public liaison committee which will be regularly consulted as the alternative standard applications are refined, reviewed and ultimately approved or denied by the MOE.

Environment Hamilton has already expressed a strong interest in participating in this public liaison committee

Anyone interested in learning more about Hamilton's steel companies and alternative standards is encouraged to contact Lynda at EH at [contactus@environmenthamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org) or (905) 549-0900.

## LAW STUDENT INTERN AT EH

For most of January, EH benefitted from the efforts and expertise of University of Ottawa law student Ned Nolan.

A resident of Hamilton, Ned decided to do an internship with us as a result of his strong interest in environmental law and his desire to contribute to his community.

Ned has been a huge help during his time here, working with EH staff and community members to help us all to better understand the legal implications of the province's new air regulation and, more specifically, the alternative standard setting process that is a part of the regulation.

As it turns out, Ned is also an ace photographer and he couldn't resist snapping some shots of stack emissions while we were checking out the industrial core.

He will continue doing work for us from Ottawa for the first part of February. Thanks for your help, Ned and all the best with the rest of your law degree work!

Join Us!



1130 Barton East  
Suite 207  
Hamilton L8H 7P9

[contactus@  
environment  
hamilton.org](mailto:contactus@environmenthamilton.org)

905 549-0900  
[www.environment  
hamilton.org](http://www.environmenthamilton.org)

Memberships  
\$25 per year  
\$15/unwaged  
& student