

Report PED21065

Feasibility Report for a Biodiversity Action Plan

Feasibility of a co-ordinated Biodiversity Action Plan with the City of Hamilton and local conservation community partners

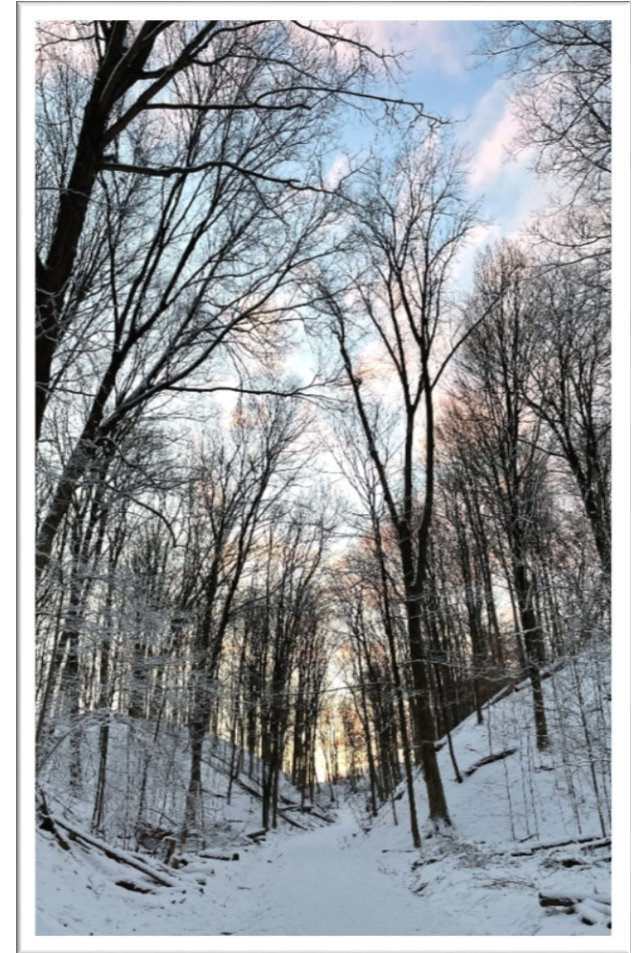
April 7, 2021 – General Issues Committee

Background

- February 19, 2020 GIC motion:

“That the appropriate staff be directed to **investigate the feasibility and resources required** to develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for Hamilton **in collaboration with** the conservation and report back to the General Issues Committee.” (emphasis added)
- This presentation will review
 - the rationale for the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP);
 - the proposed project framework (including project leadership by the local conservation community partners);
 - the potential City resources available; and,
 - the summary of recommendations from report PED21065.

Hamilton's Biodiversity – a unique 'hotspot' for biodiversity



Why is a Biodiversity Action Plan needed?

Biodiversity is the variety of living organisms in an ecosystem and forms the basis for a healthy and resilient community.

Biodiversity threats:

- Climate change
- Urban development
- Habitat removal
- Invasive species

Biodiversity decline is being experienced on a global scale, and a response is needed to prevent further loss to species and their habitats

Biodiversity Policy – Provincial

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

Policy 2.1.2

“The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.”

Growth Plan (2019), as amended

Policy 4.2.2.3 (a) i) ii) iii) – Natural Heritage System for the Growth Plan

- New development or site alteration will demonstrate:
 - No negative impact on key features or functions
 - Connectivity between areas maintained or enhanced
 - Removal of other natural features is also avoided

Biodiversity Policy – City of Hamilton

Urban Hamilton Official Plan & Rural Hamilton Official Plan – Core Natural Heritage Areas

- Core Areas are the most important components of the Natural Heritage System in terms of biodiversity
- Natural Heritage features are detailed in UHOP and RHOP Schedules B – B-8
- Development is prohibited, and development adjacent to the Core Areas is carefully reviewed to ensure no negative impacts
- Linkages are movement corridors for plants and wildlife

Consultation for BAP feasibility

Internal

- Planning – Natural Heritage, Policy Planning
- Public Works – Hamilton Water, Environmental Services Division

External

- Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group:
 - Hamilton Naturalists' Club
 - Environment Hamilton
 - Hamilton Conservation Authority
 - Bay Area Restoration Council
 - Royal Botanical Gardens
 - Local ecologists

BAP Project Leadership

Proposed project lead:

- Local conservation community organizations – Hamilton Naturalists' Club, Environment Hamilton
 - Project lead staff person to be housed at this organization
 - Responsible for coordinating the development of the BAP and organizing communications between project stakeholders

City involvement:

- Planning and Economic Development - Planning Division staff
- Public Works – Environmental Services staff
 - City staff as liaisons between BAP project lead and various City departments throughout project development

BAP Project Framework

Project Goals: Protect, Enhance, Restore, Educate

Phase 1 – Background review of data and existing biodiversity initiatives

Phase 2 – Develop draft Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), and present to GIC

Phase 3 – Engage public on the actions proposed in the draft BAP

Phase 4 – Finalize BAP with actions of each partner agency clearly defined

Phase 5 – Initiate actions, report back to GIC every 2 years on progress

Estimated time for BAP completion: 12 – 18 months

Implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan

Potential 'Actions Items' for the City resulting from the BAP:

- Updated Official Plan policies in the UHOP and RHOP respecting protection and enhancement of biodiversity assets within and outside of the Natural Heritage Core Areas and Linkages
- Direction for utilization of certain plant species / landscaping / construction techniques on City owned properties
- Identification of certain areas of the City for future natural asset data collection and monitoring

Resources Required

Estimated project cost: \$91,500

- Project coordinator at lead organization
- Public engagement (in-person and online) and advertising
- Graphic design and printing costs

City financial contribution available: \$40,000 matching

- \$20,000 from PED - 2021 Data Management for Natural Areas account
- \$20,000 from Public Works / Hamilton Water Division
- City financial funding can be used to match external funding sought by lead organization through grant requests

City in-kind contributions: \$25,500 (approx. value)

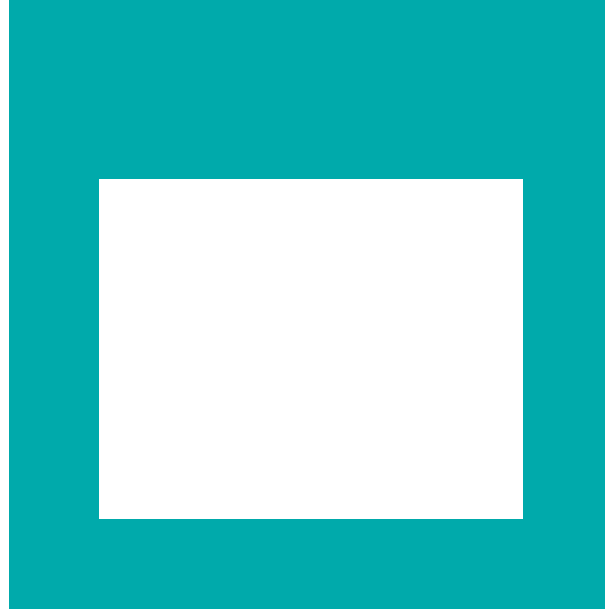
- Online public engagement, social media advertising
- Graphic design services and printing
- Staff time on working group, public engagement events, report review

Recommendations to Committee

- a) That staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department and Public Works Department, partner with local conservation community organizations (lead group) to undertake a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP);
- b) That Council authorize a one-time financial contribution of:
 - i. \$20,000 from the Planning and Economic Development Department / Planning Division, budget (2021 Data Management for Natural Areas account (812020-54378)), and;
 - ii. \$20,000 from the Public Works Department / Hamilton Water Division account 510360-55916.
- c) That prior to allocating the funds to lead environmental organization, City staff be authorized to prepare an agreement between the City and the Hamilton Naturalist Club, the lead environmental organization, that will be responsible for hiring the BAP coordinator to provide for the clarification of roles and responsibilities and the regular accounting for municipal funds;

Recommendations to Committee (continued)

- d) That City staff report back to Council to present the draft Agreement between the City and the lead environmental organization;
- e) That the City provide in-kind resources in the form of staff time, previously collected data, mapping, graphic design, online public engagement tools, and printing;
- f) That City staff report back in six months to update the Committee/Council of the progress of the BAP;
- g) That the matter respecting the Feasibility of Developing a Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan, be considered complete and removed from the General Issues Committee's Outstanding Business List.



THANK YOU