

December 4, 2023

**Re: 11.3 Municipal Protected Areas Project (PED2360)**

Dear Chair and Members of the Planning Committee:

It is encouraging that planning staff are recommending that Council approve the City of Hamilton's collaboration with Ontario Nature on the MPAP - Municipal Protected Areas Project. I fully support this very promising initiative to build public support for identifying, evaluating and ultimately protecting scores of unprotected wetlands, waterways and natural areas across the city.

Ontario Nature (formerly the Federation of Ontario Naturalists) has long been a leading conservation/environmental organization and its participation in this project is most welcome. This partnership will certainly increase opportunities for Hamilton to contribute to advance Canada's commitment, under the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, to protect at least 30 per cent of our lands and waters by 2030 --- known as the 30 by 30 target.

Productive discussions have already been held among representatives of organizations such as Ontario Nature, the City, the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club. This model of collaboration among various stakeholders has proven very successful with the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System and the MPAP gives every indication of achieving similar positive results.

I also support Save Our Streams Hamilton in urging City Council to halt development on unevaluated wetlands, including those in the AEGD – the Airport Employment Growth District – all the way to the few Hamilton Harbour inlets, until such time as they are identified, mapped and the ecological services they provide are calculated.

As Save Our Streams has noted, City staff have already determined that Hamilton's Natural Heritage Systems mapping and policies are in dire need of updates. A review and update of climate change and biodiversity considerations, as well as natural areas acquisition policies and evaluation of ecological services provided by these areas, are some of the necessary steps to meet growing environmental challenges.

Thank you for your consideration.

Gord McNulty  
Ontario Nature Representative for the Hamilton Naturalists' Club  
Longtime Member of both the HNC and Ontario Nature