





CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division
and
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Environmental Services Division

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	June 18, 2024
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan (PED21065(d)/PW24040) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Lauren Vraets (905) 546-2424 Ext. 2634 Kasey Livingston (905) 546-2424 Ext. 7734
SUBMITTED BY:	Anita Fabac Acting Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	
SUBMITTED BY:	Cynthia Graham Director, Environmental Services Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That the "Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan", attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040, be approved as the guiding document for City of Hamilton actions to improve biodiversity across all communities in the City;
- (b) That the Consultation Summary Report, attached as Appendix "B" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040, be received;
- (c) That the Planning and Economic Development Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan, attached as Appendix "C" to Report PED21065(d)

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

SUBJECT: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan (PED21065(d)/PW24040) (City Wide) - Page 2 of 18

/PW24040, be received, and that implementation of actions requiring financial resources be referred to future departmental budget requests, as necessary in accordance with the anticipated timeframes for initiation;

- (d) That the Planning Division staff complement be increased by 1 Full Time Equivalent position to support the implementation of actions outlined in the Planning and Economic Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan, attached as Appendix "C" to PED21065(d)/PW24040, as well as other natural heritage policy related special projects, and that financial requirements associated with this new position be referred to the 2025 budget process;
- (e) That the Public Works Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan, attached as Appendix "D" to PED21065(d)/PW24040, be received, and that implementation of actions requiring financial resources be referred to future departmental budget requests, as necessary in accordance with the anticipated timeframes for initiation;
- (f) That the Public Works Department staff complement be increased by 4 Full Time Equivalent positions to support actions outlined in the Public Works Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan, attached as Appendix "D" to PED21065(d)/PW24040, for a total annual cost of \$560,000.00, to be referred to the 2025 budget process;
- (g) That Planning and Economic Development Department staff consider the findings of the Municipal Protected Areas Project and the Natural Areas Inventory Update in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Rural Hamilton Official Plan through future Official Plan Amendments;
- (h) That Planning and Economic Development Department staff be authorized to undertake an interim role to assist in coordinating the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan until such a time that the Full Time Equivalent position in the Planning Division referred to in Recommendation (d) is created, and that financial resources in the amount of up to \$30,000.00 be allocated from the Planning Division, Sustainable Communities Section's existing Official Plan Review capital budget to support the administrative, communication and consultation expenses;
- (i) That all future staff reports related to the Biodiversity Action Plan be referred to the General Issues Committee;
- (j) That staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department be directed to coordinate an annual Communication

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Update to Council regarding the status of the City's actions outlined in the Biodiversity Action Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan (Appendix "A" attached to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040) is a multi-agency initiative that will guide strategic actions related to biodiversity improvement across the city. It is intended to outline actions by partner organizations that can be undertaken in the next five years to protect, restore, connect, and explore biodiversity in Hamilton.
- This report summarizes the community consultation that was led by the Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group during the summer and fall of 2023 (Appendix "B" attached to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040).
- One permanent position in the Planning and Economic Development Department is recommended, to be referred to the 2025 budget process, to ensure the successful implementation of the departmental actions and to oversee other natural heritage related special projects.
- Staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department will facilitate the development of a governance framework between the partner organizations and oversee the administrative coordination of the Biodiversity Action Plan on an interim basis until a permanent position is secured.
- Four positions in the Public Works Department are recommended, to be referred to the 2025 budget process, to ensure the successful implementation of the departmental actions. Staff resources and funding for any new Public Works Department actions will be required to begin work on projects and initiatives, and the intent is to start with a team that builds on the strategic plans, data and framework to support future actions. Future requests for staff to manage, implement and report on achievement will come in future years, and be dependent on timing of budgets and implementation.
- Annual reporting on the progress of the City of Hamilton actions, as well as any other related actions, will be coordinated between City departments, reporting back to the General Issues Committee.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 17

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: Financial implications for the City of Hamilton Actions are outlined in Appendix "C" and Appendix "D" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 respectively for the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department. Requests for funding for projects related to the City of Hamilton actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan will be referred to future budget cycles in accordance with the projected project initiation

timeframes. The existing Official Plan Review capital budget for the Sustainable Communities Section of the Planning Division will be used to cover up to \$30,000 of administrative, consulting and communication expenses associated with development of the Biodiversity Action Plan governance model.

Staffing: The Planning and Economic Development Department will require one new Full Time Equivalent position to ensure successful implementation and reporting on the departmental actions outlined in Appendix “C” to Report PED21065(d) /PW24040, and coordination of other natural heritage related special projects. Consideration of this position will be included in the 2025 budget process.

Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department in the Planning Division will assist on an interim basis in facilitating the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan governance model and other administrative and communications related duties related to implementation of the plan until a permanent, Full Time Equivalent position is considered through the 2025 budget process. These temporary duties are meant to bridge the gap between approval of the Biodiversity Action Plan and the creation of the long-term governance model. As this work is in addition to existing duties, there may be a delay in delivery of other projects.

Staffing resources for the Public Works Department will be required to undertake actions outlined in the Public Works Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan, attached as Appendix “D” to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040. A request to enhance the Public Works Department staff complement by 4 Full Time Equivalents for a total annual cost of \$560,000.00 will be referred to the 2025 budget process.

Additional staffing resources may be required for certain City of Hamilton actions contained in the Biodiversity Action Plan, and requests for these positions will come through future reports to the General Issues Committee.

Legal: There are no legal implications with the recommendations of this report currently. As staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department work to develop the Biodiversity Action Plan governance model with the partner organizations, Legal staff will need to be consulted on the development of any agreements for funding between the partner organizations.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The development of the Biodiversity Action Plan began in 2018 through an ad hoc working group of conservation community partner organizations, led by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club, as well as members of City of Hamilton staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department and Public Works Department.

A complete chronology of significant dates associated with the Biodiversity Action Plan development was provided in Report PED21065(c), presented to Planning Committee on May 2, 2023, with the draft Biodiversity Action Plan.

On May 9, 2023, Council approved the recommendations of Report PED21065(c), and the inclusion of two additional recommendations (e) and (f) as noted below:

- “(a) That Appendix “A” to Planning Committee Report 23-007, “Draft Biodiversity Action Plan – March 2023”, be received;
- (b) That Planning and Economic Development staff be authorized to assist the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and other Biodiversity Action Plan partners to undertake public and stakeholder consultation on the Draft Biodiversity Action Plan attached as Appendix “A” to Planning Committee Report PED21065(c);
- (c) That Planning and Economic Development staff be directed to report back to Planning Committee, summarizing the public input together with the final Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan by Q4 of 2023;
- (d) That the Clerk provide written communication to the Ville de Montreal to confirm that the City of Hamilton will become a signatory to The Montreal Pledge – Cities United in Action for Biodiversity.
- (e) That the Biodiversity Action Plan partners include as part of the consultation on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan, the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) adopted at the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and that the partners seek input from the public on the potential for including the 23 targets of the GBF as the community-wide targets for Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan; and,
- (f) That as part of the report back on the proposed final Biodiversity Action Plan, that staff include recommendations, including staffing and financial impacts, for a Biodiversity Action Plan governance and staffing structure that ensures a whole-of-community approach to implementation.”

SUBJECT: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan (PED21065(d)/PW24040) (City Wide) - Page 6 of 18

In addition to the recommendations associated with Report PED21065(c), Council also approved the following two motions at the same meeting:

Draft Biodiversity Action Plan - City of Hamilton's Natural Areas Acquisition Fund

- “(a) That \$150,000 from the Climate Change Reserve Account No. 108062 be allocated to the City of Hamilton's Natural Areas Acquisition Fund; and,
- (b) That staff be authorized and directed to initiate an intake for proposals under the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund based on the same Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Strategy Implementation Guidelines previously approved by Council through Report PED09007(b).”

Draft Biodiversity Action Plan - Natural Areas Inventory for the City of Hamilton

- “(a) That \$200,000 from the Climate Change Reserve (108062) be allocated to support the updating of the Natural Areas Inventory for the City of Hamilton, through field work during the next 2-3 field seasons, with a goal of producing an updated Natural Areas Inventory report by 2025 or 2026;
- (b) That City staff work with the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and other Biodiversity Action Plan partners to develop the scope and terms of reference for the update to the Natural Areas Inventory, including identification of other potential funding partners; and,
- (c) That the General Manager of Planning and Economic Development be authorized to enter into the necessary agreements with the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and any other Biodiversity Action Plan partners as required for the implementation of the Natural Areas Inventory.”

Since May 2023, staff have undertaken the following activities with respect to the report recommendations provided through PED21065(c) and the additional motions that were approved by Council:

- Community Engagement - Biodiversity Action Plan engagement and consultation were undertaken during the summer and early fall of 2023 with participation from the Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group (Working Group) partner organizations. Public, organizational, and Indigenous engagement is summarized in greater detail later in this report, with background information provided in Appendix “B” to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040.
- Montreal Pledge - The City of Hamilton signed the Montreal Pledge – Cities United in Action for Biodiversity by way of a letter to the Mayor of Montreal on June 15, 2023, attached as Appendix “E” to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040.

- Global Biodiversity Framework – The Working Group included the 23 targets from the Global Biodiversity Framework adopted at the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in community consultation. Consideration of how the targets could be integrated in a local context was contemplated in the revisions to the Biodiversity Action Plan and subsequent implementation.
- Governance Model Financial and Staffing implications – Staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department and Public Works Department, in coordination with the other Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations, have considered the staffing and financial resources required to implement a governance model for the Biodiversity Action Plan. The development of a governance model needs a committed lead staff person and capacity for this coordination with existing staff resources was not available at any of the partner organizations since May of 2023.

Recommendation h) to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 recommends that staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department Planning Division, take on a temporary role to facilitate the development of the Biodiversity Action Plan governance model with the partner organizations, including co-creation of cross-agency partnership agreements. Recommendation h) also includes the allocation of up to \$30,000.00 from the Sustainable Communities Section's existing Official Plan Review capital budget, set aside for policy review work related to the Official Plans, towards the administrative, communications and consultation expenses incurred through the temporary role the Planning Division until a new, permanent staff position in the Planning and Economic Development Department is considered through the 2025 budget process. A Biodiversity Action Plan coordinator role at one of the partner agencies will be considered through the development of the governance model.

- Natural Areas Acquisition Fund – \$150,000 in funds were transferred from the Climate Change Reserve to the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. There has been one request for funds from a conservation organization for land acquisition since the funds were transferred. An agreement between the city and the conservation organization is in process at this time. Additional applications are expected as potential opportunities for land acquisition by conservation organizations present themselves.
- Natural Areas Inventory update – As directed by Council through the motions associated with Report PED21065(c), \$200,000.00 from the Climate Change Reserve Fund was allocated for the update to the city-wide Natural Areas Inventory project. The update to the Natural Areas Inventory is underway with the execution of a new partnership agreement between the City of Hamilton, the

Hamilton Naturalists' Club, and the Hamilton Conservation Authority. The Hamilton Conservation Authority will house the position for the Natural Areas Inventory Coordinator.

Since May 2023, the Working Group partners have been meeting bi-weekly to collaborate on the required changes to the draft Biodiversity Action Plan. The final version of the Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan, presented as Appendix "A" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 is representative of the community consultation and is considerate of work programs of the community partner organizations involved.

Another initiative related to the Biodiversity Action Plan that has been undertaken since May 2023 is the City's participation in the Municipal Protected Areas Program by Ontario Nature. As a signatory to the Montreal Pledge, the city has been working with Ontario Nature to determine what City owned lands can count towards the federal target of protecting 30% of land and water habitats significant for biodiversity by the year 2030. Report PED23260 presented the work program for the project, with a recommendation that staff prepare a final report to deliver the results of which areas could count towards the federal target. Currently, the selected areas are being evaluated, and a final report is anticipated in Q3 2024.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The development of a Biodiversity Action Plan for Hamilton is not associated with any policy or legislative requirements. For the City of Hamilton, it is intended to build upon the policies of the Urban and Rural Official Plans with respect to the Natural Heritage System, and to guide future work plans across the organization, including future land use policy updates.

Staff from the Sustainable Communities section and Heritage and Urban Design section of the Planning Division have initiated the workplan for the Rural and Natural Heritage Municipal Comprehensive Review. This is a conformity review exercise, looking to Provincial policies and plans for guidance with policy updates. Certain actions outlined in the Biodiversity Action Plan are related to this work program, including mapping reviews of wildlife corridors.

In addition, Staff from the Sustainable Communities section of the Planning and Economic Development Department will be undertaking a review of current Official Plan policies through the Local Context Review work program to evaluate how policies for land development can be strengthened to work towards the goals set out in the Biodiversity Action Plan as well as other related City plans and strategies. The policy review through the Local Context Review presents the opportunity for a made-in-Hamilton approach to guide land use planning, including natural heritage policies for protection and enhancement.

As implementation of City actions from the Biodiversity Action Plan are initiated, there may be review of internal operational policies in both the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department. Any change to operational policies associated with implementation of City actions will be communicated to internal staff and, if required, through Communication Updates to Council.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Public engagement, community partner organization consultation and indigenous community consultation for the draft Biodiversity Action Plan took place in the spring of 2023, following the direction received through recommendations of Report PED21065(c) in May 2023. A Communication Update was provided to the Mayor and Members of City Council on June 5, 2023, outlining the planned consultation opportunities. The following section provides an overview of the methods undertaken, and key findings. Detailed summary of the Biodiversity Action Plan consultation activities is provided in Appendix “B” to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040.

1.0 Public Engagement

Public Engagement for the draft Biodiversity Action Plan was initiated in the Spring of 2023. The goals were to obtain feedback from the public and local environmental organizations about the content of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan presented as Appendix “A” to Report PED21065(c) in May of 2023. The partner organizations involved in the Biodiversity Action Plan also wanted to assess the base level of knowledge of the public about biodiversity generally, and any areas of interest that may improve their outreach and community stewardship programs.

It is important to note that the consultation on the Biodiversity Action Plan took place during a period when there were other Provincial discussions on-going about removal of lands from the Greenbelt Plan area and mandated expansions to the urban boundary to accommodate housing development. There were many comments made during all public engagement that signalled a strong desire for protection of the Greenbelt and rural lands to protect biodiversity. While it was not the intent to engage on questions about the Greenbelt Plan legislation or urban boundary expansions through the Biodiversity Action Plan consultations, there were comments made that used the terms “greenbelt” and “greenspace” interchangeably. Comments also aligned with a desire to protect biodiversity by limiting urban sprawl caused by decisions made to expand the City’s urban boundary.

The following public engagement activities were undertaken and are summarized in detail in Appendix “B” to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040. Information about the engagement events was shared through newspaper advertisements, posters at City

SUBJECT: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan (PED21065(d)/PW24040) (City Wide) - Page 10 of 18

recreation facilities, municipal service centres and libraries, social media posts, and email communications through partner organization mailing lists.

- Engage Hamilton webpage - May 18, 2023 – July 23, 2023.
 - Engagement tools such as survey, online commenting on both the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and Kunming-Montreal Biodiversity Framework 2030 Targets, and stories submission;
 - 1,960 page visits;
 - 123 document downloads;
 - 144 engaged participants; and,
 - Survey was also available at all Hamilton Public Library locations.

- Virtual Public Information Meeting - June 8, 2023, through WebEx Webinar with a presentation by City staff and Hamilton Naturalists' Club. Other Biodiversity Action Plan partners attended to answer any questions that came up through the Q & A.
 - 39 registrants, 31 attendees; and,
 - Q & A questions related to collaboration with indigenous nations, exceeding provincial and federal targets, addressing invasive species, funding, and considerations for city initiatives related to pollinators and public education.

- In-Person Open Houses – two open house events were hosted by the Biodiversity Action Plan partners at City facilities. Presentation boards were arranged and staff from the partner organizations were in attendance with additional information about their respective initiatives.
 - Open House 1 – Gage Park Tropical Greenhouse – June 15, 2023; and,
 - Open House 2 – Dundas Town Hall – June 26, 2023.

- Open Streets – June 18, 2023, activation held at Bernie Morelli Recreation Centre location. Biodiversity Action Plan partners provided information about the draft plan and related initiatives, engaged in one-on-one discussions with community members, and provided activities for children related to aquatic species.
 - Over 120 community interactions between partner organization representatives and community members.

- Other engagement events – some engagement opportunities were coordinated by the partner agencies individually as part of their broader outreach initiatives.
 - Hamilton Naturalists' Club presentation at Action 13 events, and hosting of five Biodiversity in Action walk events; and,
 - Presentation to school classes as part of Grade 6 curriculum (Hamilton Naturalists' Club and City of Hamilton).

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

The following key themes were identified by the Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations following the public engagement events and outreach:

- Strong interest from the public in getting involved with on-the-ground action to improve biodiversity;
- Concern about funding for long-term implementation;
- Coordination with Indigenous nations and consideration of traditional knowledge;
- Desire to act quickly to address loss of habitats and corridors for species and to ensure climate change resiliency;
- Coordination needed to address threats of invasive species;
- Need to protect and improve natural areas for future generations; and,
- Strong commitment to decision making that protects ecosystems from development impacts.

2.0 External Organization Engagement

A half-day workshop with local ecological organizations was coordinated by the Hamilton Naturalists' Club on May 23, 2023. The event was attended by 29 participants representing various local organizations who are involved in ecology and environmental outreach as part of their daily work programs. In addition to representatives from the Biodiversity Action Plan Partner organizations, this event included attendance from the Niagara Escarpment Commission, Grand River Conservation Authority, Bruce Trail Conservancy, Green Venture, Environment Hamilton, Royal Botanical Gardens, Conservation Halton, and Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority. A volunteer facilitator led the attendees through small group discussions based on the seven key priorities in the draft Biodiversity Action Plan. Workshop attendees also were given the opportunity to provide any follow up comments through a short, open-ended questionnaire.

The following key themes were identified through the discussions at the workshop:

- Threat of political uncertainty (all levels of government) and commitment to biodiversity is concerning with respect to long term implementation;
- Need for consistent resourcing to coordinate the action plan amongst partners;
- What resources/funding can be made available for smaller organizations looking to do work aligned with actions, but not listed?;
- Incorporate more opportunities for academic research to understand baseline;
- Urgency to get started on the actions outlined in the plan; and,
- Consider further education and incentives for private landowners to improve biodiversity on their lands.

City staff presented the draft Biodiversity Action Plan at the Development Industry Liaison Group on September 11, 2023. Attendees were provided a digital copy of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan with the meeting minutes and were asked to provide any comments by October 6, 2023. No comments were received by the October 6, 2023, deadline.

Hamilton Conservation Authority staff sought comments on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan from local agricultural sector representatives including from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario, and the Ecological Farms Association of Ontario. Representatives were provided a copy of the open-ended questionnaire that was provided to the ecological organization representatives. No comments from these organizations were received.

3.0 Indigenous Consultation

With assistance from the City's Indigenous Relations staff, Sustainable Communities staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department contacted representatives of the Indigenous communities that were identified as most likely to be interested in providing comments on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan. Staff contacted the Lands and Resources Department at Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council, Missisaugas of the Credit First Nation, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, Haudenosaunee Development Institute, Metis Nation of Ontario, and Huron-Wendat Nation. Correspondence was sent through email to the appropriate representatives in late April, mid-May and early June of 2023 advising of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and asking for a meeting if they were interested in providing feedback.

In response, staff from the Wildlife and Stewardship Office at Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council requested a meeting, which took place virtually on July 10, 2023. The discussion at the meeting included an overview of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan elements, the work programs of the different partner agencies, and general discussion about trends all are observing in their work related to managing wildlife and natural lands in the area. Wildlife and Stewardship Office staff provided comments on the draft Biodiversity Action Plan, and a follow up meeting was held on December 6, 2023, to go over all the comments received.

The following are highlights of the comments provided by Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council staff in the Wildlife and Stewardship Office:

- The City of Hamilton's land acknowledgement is used in the draft Biodiversity Action Plan and partner organizations should be aware that there is a desire to see this reviewed in the future by the City's Indigenous Relations staff;

SUBJECT: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan (PED21065(d)/PW24040) (City Wide) - Page 13 of 18

- Biodiversity can include good and bad players in terms of ecology – invasive species are damaging, and distinction needs to be clearer that not all green is good;
- Putting nature as a primary focus should not be viewed only as an indigenous worldview, but a values-based worldview that respects nature and recognizes the interconnectedness between all life;
- Best management practices and long-term monitoring should be discussed, and action taken if not already planned; and,
- Request for Six Nations of the Grand River Elected Council staff to be circulated on development applications.

A short, virtual meeting was held with representatives from the Joint Stewardship Board of the Haudenosaunee Development Institute on July 26, 2023. A brief overview of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan was provided, and Haudenosaunee Development Institute representatives indicated the meeting would not be considered consultation. A formal application and review fee would be required. The City responded that currently the City's policy is not to remit a review fee.

Planning Division staff recognize the significance of meaningful consultation and relationship building with local Indigenous communities as part of land use policy and development approvals processes. Currently, staff are exploring a requirement for development proponents to demonstrate that consultation has occurred with Indigenous communities as part of a Formal Consultation application or prior to submission of a *Planning Act* application. More information about the implementation of this requirement will be provided through a subsequent report to Planning Committee.

Additional opportunities to learn about the importance of indigenous engagement and incorporation of Traditional Ecological Knowledge in conservation practice have been made available to staff from the various Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations. These include a Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System and Nature at McMaster University co-created event in August 2023, a Best Practices of Indigenous Engagement and Collaboration by McMaster University in February 2024, and a Traditional Ecological Knowledge summit in March of 2024.

City of Hamilton staff who have attended these events have created an internal working group to discuss how Traditional Ecological Knowledge can be incorporated into future plans and initiatives, and how City staff can engage meaningfully in two-eyed seeing through all projects by building greater relationships with the Indigenous communities. Indigenous Relations staff from the City are attending these meetings as well as staff from the Planning Division and the Office of Climate Change Initiatives, and Environmental Services in the Public Works Department.

4.0 Internal City Staff Consultation

City of Hamilton staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department as well as the Public Works Department provided information about the draft Biodiversity Action Plan to other City staff to seek additional input. Sustainable Communities staff provided an overview of the draft Biodiversity Action Plan at the section's Technical Advisory Committee in February 2023. Comments received from internal City staff included:

- General support for the development of the plan as a positive step for local biodiversity;
- Concern about duplication of efforts from existing programs like the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System;
- A need to clearly consider all departments that may need to be involved in executing actions; and,
- The need to have stronger land use planning policies to protect biodiversity and have it be considered in local decision making.

Staff from the Public Works Department as well as the Planning and Economic Development Department have undertaken program specific discussions to clarify certain City-led actions in terms of work program needs, and any additional resources required. A summary of the actions and resourcing requirements for both Planning and Economic Development and Public Works Departments are provided as Appendix "C" and Appendix "D" attached to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 respectively.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

As discussed in the section below, staff recommends approval of the Biodiversity Action Plan and, in consultation with the Working Group, have identified next steps for the City to resource and implement its actions under the Plan.

1.0 Biodiversity Action Plan Coordinator and Governance Model

Coordinated implementation of the actions in the Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 will require financial resourcing for a lead coordinator role at one of the partner organizations and development of a governance model.

The Biodiversity Action Plan outlines the expected role of the Coordinator position over the timeframe of the plan, and provides an outline of the expected governance model to be implemented. The Coordinator would be responsible for actions related to administration and communications about the Biodiversity Action Plan, facilitate meetings of the governance bodies, and provide regular reporting on the outcomes of the actions that are provided in the plan.

The expected governance model for the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan is also outlined in the document and is expected to follow a similar structure to that of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System. A Management Committee made up of key decision makers from the partner organizations would ensure that the financial and operational decisions about the action workplans are coordinated. A Steering Committee would include representatives from the partner organizations that are leading work programs outlined in the actions. The members of the Steering Committee will assist in providing metrics on the implementation of their respective actions to the Coordinator for reporting.

Limited resources attributed to the development and refinement of the final Biodiversity Action Plan by all partner organizations has meant that final decisions about the Biodiversity Action Plan Coordinator role placement and long-term governance model have not been formalized. Additional time is needed to develop an agreed upon funding model for the Coordinator role, and to execute a governance model that includes a whole of community approach. Partner organizations indicated that they did not wish to delay finalization of the Biodiversity Action Plan and slow down the implementation of their actions outlined to wait for a formal governance model to be developed.

As an interim measure to ensure that the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan is not delayed, staff in the Planning Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department are being recommended to temporarily take on limited duties of the coordinator role per Recommendation h) to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040. The limited duties that would be attributed to this role include:

- Facilitation of meetings, as required, with existing Biodiversity Action Plan partner agencies to discuss matters related to actions implementation and reporting, coordinated communications and engagement, and administrative matters;
- Coordination of the long-term Biodiversity Action Plan governance model and associated funding strategy with the existing partner agencies to ensure a whole of community approach to implementation;
- Development of a multi-partner agreement for the long-term governance and funding model between the Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations to be presented to Council and the respective boards of partner organizations for future ratification;
- Delivery of the first Biodiversity Action Plan report card as an Information Report to Council in Q2 of 2025 on behalf of all partner organizations; and,
- Administrative support to the Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations related to the above noted duties.

This temporary measure would assist in wrapping up the development of the agreement between partner organizations with respect to the governance model and long-term

Coordinator position and develop a base framework for reporting on the actions annually to Council. Recommendation d) to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 requests that a permanent, full-time position be created in the Planning Division to monitor the long-term implementation of the Planning and Economic Development Department actions and provide regular updates on these to Council.

2.0 City of Hamilton Action Resourcing – see Appendices “C” and “D” attached to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040

The City of Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan actions are intended to build on the commitment made by the City as a signatory to the Montreal Pledge, and represent City initiatives that are planned over the next five years that will contribute positively to conserving and protecting nature. Staff from both the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department will work to implement the respective actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan and will collaborate across the City Departments to achieve results.

The discreet actions to be undertaken by both the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department are outlined in Appendices “C” and “D” respectively attached to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040. Actions where either department is noted as a supporting partner are also outlined, to ensure that there is clarity about any resources required.

To ensure there is shared knowledge and coordination between all City departments involved in protecting nature across the city, staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department have begun investigating opportunities for bringing various staff together more frequently to share about their work programs. No additional resources are required to facilitate this working group.

The work related to understanding the current state of natural areas including the biodiversity status of City owned lands, is not part of current Public Works Department work plans. To implement strategic master planning to understand the health of biodiversity across City-owned properties, and to guide plans in the future to improve biodiversity across the City, staffing resources will be required. Business cases will be brought forward to the 2025 budget process for consideration to create an initial team in the Environmental Services section. Future resources required to implement, maintain, and report on projects and progress will be identified as needed.

Just as nature is dynamic, the need for action to address change must also be dynamic as well as cooperative. Opportunities or needs for additional work programs that are not outlined in the Biodiversity Action Plan may also arise, in response to certain pressures like development or regulatory and policy change. Annual reporting on the progress of

the City of Hamilton actions, as well as any other related actions undertaken, will be coordinated between Departments, reporting back to the General Issues Committee.

3.0 Consideration of the 23 Global Biodiversity Framework Targets

Throughout the review and revision of the Biodiversity Action Plan, partner organizations have considered how to potentially integrate select targets from the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework developed at the 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity. A target of 30% protected areas to 2030 is often referred to as the 30 by 30 target and is considered for a national commitment. Currently, 33% of gross land area in Hamilton is identified as Natural Heritage System - Core Area in the Urban and Rural Hamilton Official Plans combined.

Partner organizations have identified that there should be consideration given to reviewing the City's existing targets for habitat restoration and natural cover. To determine what the appropriate target(s) may be and how they would be implemented will require consideration of the findings of both the Municipal Protected Areas Project and the Natural Areas Inventory Update. The findings of the Municipal Protected Areas Project are expected from Ontario Nature in Q2 of 2024, and the Natural Areas Inventory Update has just been initiated. The Natural Areas Inventory Update is anticipated to take approximately three years to complete. Should the recommendations of these studies indicate that a greater target for protected areas is necessary, Planning Division staff will consider the findings of both studies through a review of the policies in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan and Rural Hamilton Official Plan.

Simultaneously, there will be a background review done on all Natural Heritage System policies through the Rural and Natural Heritage conformity review workplan undertaken by the Planning Division of the Planning and Economic Development Department. Potential targets for natural area protection may also emerge from best practices in other similar jurisdictions which may further support the field work and findings from the Natural Areas Inventory Update.

As work progresses on both the Natural Areas Inventory Update as well as the Rural and Natural Heritage Systems conformity review, Planning and Economic Development Department Staff will provide updates to Council to advise on project status.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Additional City actions for the Biodiversity Action Plan may be recommended by Council. If this approach is taken, it is recommended that any additional actions be appropriately resourced. Staff do not recommend this alternative because the work programs to implement the City of Hamilton actions have been carefully

considered by each Department, and additional actions may result in delays to implementation of committed actions, or other work programs.

2. Council may choose not to endorse the Biodiversity Action Plan. This alternative is not recommended, as the Biodiversity Action Plan represents a collaborative effort and a commitment by the city to be a partner with other conservation community organizations to achieve common goals. Since this alternative does not advance projects and programs that advance Council's priorities related to Priority 1, Outcome 4 – Protect green space and waterways, staff do not recommend this alternative.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 – Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan (2024)

Appendix "B" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 – Consultation Summary Report

Appendix "C" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 – Planning and Economic Development Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan

Appendix "D" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 – Public Works Department Biodiversity Action Plan Resourcing Plan

Appendix "E" to Report PED21065(d)/PW24040 – City of Hamilton letter for the Montreal Pledge

LV/KL:sd