

A Five-Year Biodiversity Action Plan for Hamilton, 2024

City Staff Update Climate Change Advisory Committee

Jennifer Allen
Planner I
Sustainable Communities
Planning & Economic
Development

Shauna Hasselman
Sr Program Coordinator
Environmental Services
Public Works

Lauren Vraets
Sr Project Manager
Community Engagement
City Manager's Office

March 25, 2025



What is the Biodiversity Action Plan?

- Collaborative partnership across different organizations in Hamilton
- Action oriented for the next 5 years
- Responsive to threats (Climate change, invasive species, pollution, habitat fragmentation and alteration)
- Structured around 4 goals (Protect, Explore, Connect, Restore)
- Actions organized into 7 Key Priorities



History of the BAP Development

Timeframe	Outcome
2018	Ad hoc biodiversity working group with representatives from Hamilton's Conservation Organizations established
February 2020	Staff directed to investigate the feasibility of developing a BAP in collaboration with the Conservation Community
April 2021	Staff from the PED Department and the PW Department, partner with local conservation community organizations (lead group) to undertake a Biodiversity Action Plan
May 2023	Draft BAP received by council, and staff directed to engage with the public on the Draft BAP document
June 2024	Engagement, document review and editing to finalize BAP document, internal budget discussion. Presentation of Final BAP document to council.

Final Biodiversity Action Plan Document

Key Priority 4: Education and Stewardship

OBJECTIVE

Enhance public awareness of the importance of biodiversity and engage them in stewardship actions through partner agencies.



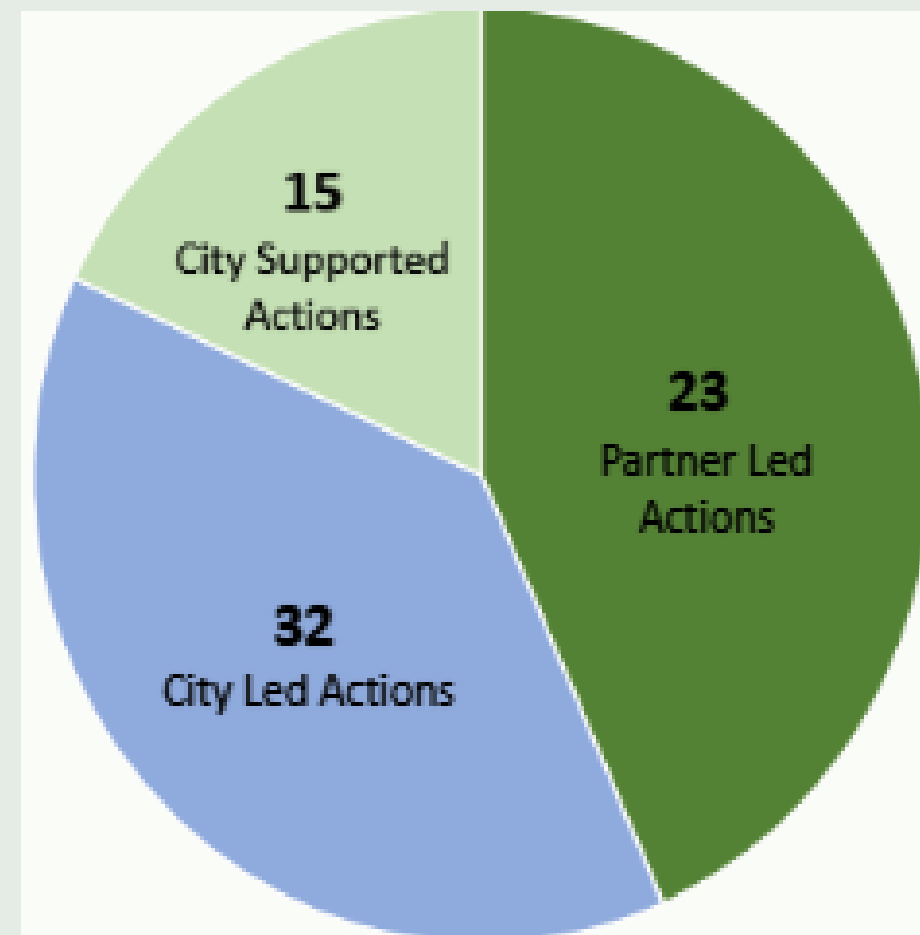
Goal	Action	Timeframe	Leading Partner(s)	Supporting Partner(s)
 Protect	4.1 Include consideration of biodiversity in the evaluation of submissions for the City of Hamilton's Urban Design and Architecture Awards.	Mid-term (1–3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Hamilton (Planning and Economic Development – Planning Division) 	
	4.2 Develop a community science program to educate and engage residents in collecting information about Hamilton's biodiversity and to learn more about previously inventoried areas.	Mid-term (1–3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAP Coordinator to facilitate Bay Area Restoration Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Green Venture Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
 Explore	4.3 Encourage increased use of natural burial in City of Hamilton cemeteries that will consider biodiversity through landscape design, species selection and maintenance approach.	Mid-term (1–3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Hamilton (Public Works – Environmental Services – Parks and Cemeteries) 	
	4.4 Develop tools that will support biodiversity friendly plantings on cemetery properties by cemetery patrons.	Mid-term (1–3 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Hamilton (Public Works – Environmental Services – Parks and Cemeteries) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
	4.5 Investigate opportunities with the local school boards to determine existing activities to manage invasive plants and enhance biodiversity, as well as opportunities for additional activities including curriculum components.	Long-term (3–5 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAP Coordinator Bay Area Restoration Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

chart continues on next page

City of Hamilton Actions at a Glance



Implementation and Timeline – Planning Division

- The Planning Division is the Leading Partner for 9 Actions and the Supporting Partner for 14 Actions related to new and existing work programs. Some of the key actions are as follows:
 - Short term support for BAP partners to develop governance model and agreements for funding;
 - Development of a process for updating and maintaining the Natural Areas Inventory (NAI);
 - Preparation of a State of the Environment Report based on Natural Areas Inventory (NAI);
 - Review of wildlife corridors within the Natural Heritage System and investigation of best management practices;
 - Review of Natural Heritage policies in the Rural and Urban Hamilton Official Plan;
 - Development of Conservation Organization Working Group;
 - Inclusion of biodiversity in evaluation of Urban Design and Architecture Awards;
 - Development and Implementation Green Building Standards and Low Impact Development Guidelines; and,
 - Initiation of Ecosystems Services Study to explain benefits of natural assets in urban and rural areas.
- One FTE position was requested and approved in the 2025 budget to assist with these actions.

Implementation and Timeline - Public Works

- 19 Actions where Public Works is the Leading Partner
 - 4 Actions in Progress with Environmental Services' sections as the lead
 - Future Parks and Landscape Architectural Services Actions will be part of workplan for new staff
 - 4 FTEs were requested and approved in 2025 budget
 - 1 Completed Action for Hamilton Water
 - Watershed Action Plan
 - Working with Office of Climate Change Initiatives in Low-Impact Development planning
 - Working with CityLabs to investigate Green Infrastructure
- PW Actions align with other Environmental Strategies & Projects
 - Clean & Green Hamilton
 - Natural Areas Inventory
 - Natural Asset Management Plans
 - Urban Forest Strategy
 - Watershed Action Plan

Biodiversity Action Plan – Next Steps

- 1) Establish Governance Model
- 2) Development of TOR for Management and Steering Committees
- 3) Implementation of BAP Management/Steering Committee
- 4) Continue Facilitating Conversations Between Agencies
- 5) Development of a Communications Strategy
- 6) Data Collection and Sharing Program
- 7) BAP Coordinator Role
- 8) BAP Progress Report to Council (June 2025)

Community Level Actions



Actions

- Share information from the BAP with friends, family, co-workers and community groups.
- Follow the BAP partners on social media to learn about opportunities to get involved in volunteer opportunities or local events.
- Support existing efforts to promote and enhance biodiversity by participating in learning events, workshops, campaigns and stewardship initiatives.
- Engage with community science initiatives like iNaturalist and eBird to record the species you see around Hamilton.
- Use iNaturalist to share where you see wildlife, alive or deceased, at road crossings.
- Learn how to identify Hamilton's invasive species and stop their spread. Learn how to manage and dispose of invasive species at home through resources such as the Ontario Invasive Plant Council and their "Grow Me Instead" guide.
- Learn about and implement techniques like a rain garden or rain barrel to manage stormwater at home.



Actions

- Participate in municipal planning approvals processes to understand how natural areas are being protected in decision-making.
- Get in touch with your Councillor to let them know what your concerns are about biodiversity and natural spaces in your community.



Actions

- Provide habitat for nature by planting native trees, shrubs, and wildflowers to enhance biodiversity on your property. In agricultural areas, use agricultural best management practices to improve water quality and wildlife habitats.
- Participate in invasive species management activities through volunteer events hosted by BAP partners.
- Stop the spread of invasive species: clean boots and equipment regularly, particularly between visits to different natural areas.
- Protect drinking water by decommissioning abandoned water wells and making sure that your well and septic are upgraded to current standards and in good working condition.
- Participate in local recycling, waste reduction, composting and hazardous waste removal programs to reduce litter and pollution.



Actions

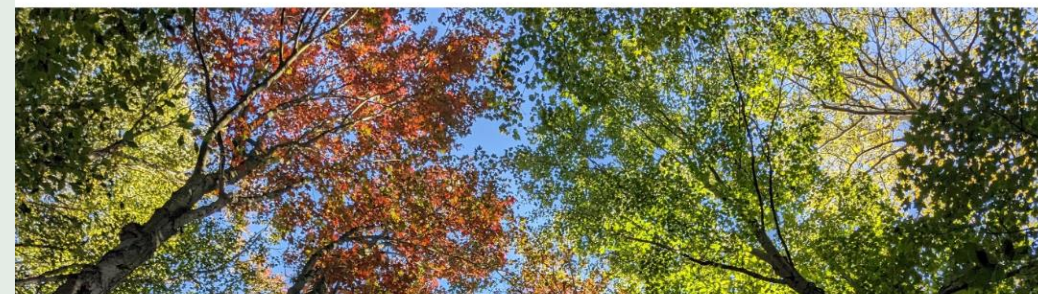
- Encourage your workplace to donate time or funds towards local biodiversity enhancement efforts.
- Do not release live aquatic plants and animals, including live bait, into rivers, streams and lakes.

Upcoming Events

- **Biodiversity in Hamilton Open Houses**
 - March 26, 6-8pm, Westfield Heritage Village
 - April 2, 6-8pm, Virtual (Zoom) - Registration Required
- **Environmentalist of the Year Awards**
 - April 4, 6-9pm, McMaster University - Registration Required
- **Design Your Native Landscape Workshop**
 - \$45 fee, April 5, 9am-4pm, Flamborough Baptist Church
- **Importance of Small Wetlands in Recovery of At-Risk Species**
 - April 14, 7:30-9pm, The First Unitarian Church of Hamilton

Biodiversity in Hamilton

Open Houses



Come learn about Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan, Natural Areas Inventory (NAI), Watershed Action Plan, ongoing projects supporting biodiversity, resources for landowners, and more!

Conclusion

- Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan is commitment across organizations to protect, restore, connect and explore Hamilton's biodiversity
- Not a static plan, and will be revisited in 5 years
- A celebration of collaboration!

