



City of Hamilton Report for Information

To: Mayor and Members
General Issues Committee

Date: July 9, 2025

Report No: PED25163

Subject/Title: **Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan 2025 Annual Update**

Ward(s) Affected: City Wide

Recommendations

- 1) That Appendix A to Report PED25163 "Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Update 2025 – Public Works Department" **BE RECEIVED** for information.
- 2) That Appendix B to Report PED25163 "Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Update 2025 – Planning and Economic Development Department" **BE RECEIVED** for information.

Key Facts

- Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted by Council on June 26, 2024, and contains strategic actions to be undertaken by the working partners over five years to protect, restore, connect, and explore biodiversity in Hamilton.
- The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is a multi-partner plan created in collaboration with the BAP Working Group Partners, which includes City of Hamilton staff. Detailed updates on the progress of actions led by the other BAP Working Group Partners may be shared separately by their boards.
- Out of a total of 68 actions, the City of Hamilton is the leading partner on 32 actions and a supporting partner on 24 actions. The Planning and Economic Development Department is the leading partner for 12 actions and the Public Works Department is the leading partner on 19 actions. One action is also led by the Finance and Corporate Services Department.
- Out of the City led or supported actions 32 actions are in progress, 21 actions are pending, and three actions are complete.

- This report is the first annual report on the implementation of Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan to provide an update on the status of the action items led or supported by the City of Hamilton. Annual reports are required as per Recommendation J of Report PED21065(d)/PW24040.

Financial Considerations

There are no financial implications associated with the receipt of Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan Annual Update 2025 attached as Appendix A and Appendix B to Report PED25163.

Background

The Hamilton Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted by Council on June 26, 2024. It is a multi-agency initiative with strategic actions to be undertaken over five years by the partner organizations to protect, restore, connect, and explore biodiversity in Hamilton. A complete chronology of significant dates associated with the Biodiversity Action Plan development was provided in Report PED21065(c) and Report PED21065(d) / PW24040. A summary of the community consultation led by the Biodiversity Action Plan Working Group during the summer and fall of 2023 is also provided in 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 which called on cities across the world to take 15 tangible actions towards preserving ecosystems, and represent City initiatives that are planned over the next five years that will contribute positively to conserving and protecting nature. The City of Hamilton is the leading partner on 32 of the 68 actions in the plan and a supporting partner on 24 actions. Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department and the Public Works Department are working to implement the respective actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan and are collaborating across the City Departments to achieve results. The Planning and Economic Development Department is the leading partner for 12 actions and the Public Works Department is the leading partner on 19 actions.

New Staff Positions

As discussed in Report PED21065(d)/PW24040, through the 2025 budget process City Council approved one new Full Time Equivalent position in the Planning and Economic Development Department and four Full Time Equivalent positions in the Public Works Department to ensure successful implementation and reporting on the departmental actions.

The position within the Planning and Economic Development Department will lead the completion of the Planning Division actions and support natural heritage policy-related special projects which includes the review and update of the City's Urban and Rural Hamilton Official Plan natural heritage system policies and mapping. As of the date of this report a job description has been created for this position and it will be posted imminently.

The four additional positions are within the Environmental Services Division of the Public Works Department. Two positions in the Parks Section include a Senior Project Manager of Biodiversity and a Senior Program Coordinator. Two positions in the Landscape Architectural Services Section include a Senior Project Manager and a Park Planning Coordinator. As of May 2025, one of the four Public Works positions has been filled with the remaining three in internal approval process.

Governance Model / Coordinator Position

The BAP Coordinator role was identified as critical to the implementation of the plan for various reasons, one being that the development and execution of a governance model needs a committed lead person and capacity for this coordination with existing staff resources was not available at any of the partner organizations.

The Biodiversity Action Plan outlines the expected role of the Coordinator 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, facilitating meetings between the governance bodies, and providing regular reporting on the outcomes of the actions that are provided in the plan. As noted above, the new Planning and Economic Development Department position approved by Council will act as the Biodiversity Action Plan Coordinator until the coordinator position is filled.

Final decisions about the Biodiversity Action Plan Coordinator role and long-term governance model for the plan have not been formalized and will be determined by the Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Committee. The development of a funding model for the Coordinator role, and the execution of a governance model that includes a whole of community approach is underway.

Staff are currently working with Biodiversity Action Plan partner organizations and the City's Legal Services staff in drafting an implementation agreement and Terms of Reference(s) for the governance model. A subsequent report will be required to be submitted to General Issues Committee authorizing the City's execution of the implementation agreement.

Analysis

Annual reporting on the progress of the City of Hamilton actions, as well as any other related actions, was a recommendation of Report PED21065(d)/PW24040. A tracking form is used by the Biodiversity Action Plan action leads and supporting partners to track the progress and completion of the actions they are involved in. A minimum of one report per year, per action, is required to be provided by the lead. A project completion report is to be submitted once an action is fully complete or implemented. It is important to note that Appendices A and B to Report PED25163 are focused on actions led by the City and that partner organizations may complete their own updates on actions that they are leading.

Public Works Department

Appendix A attached to Report PED25163 includes a detailed summary of the status updates for all Biodiversity Action Plan actions where Public Works staff are either the lead or supporting partner.

Key highlights include:

- In 2024, Parks staff supported a local resident and the Hamilton Naturalists' Club with in-kind project management and maintenance of a bird habitat structure installed at Johnson Tew Park. This work aligns with action 4.16 in the Biodiversity Action Plan.
- In 2024, the City's Horticulture team created a framework to transform current annual beds into perennial and pollinator beds. The plan spans 5 years. In 2024, one existing bed was converted totalling 483 square metres. This supports Action 4.17 in the Plan. In addition to this, Forestry also completed two depave projects. The first at 193 Cavell Avenue was undertaken in collaboration the Ward 3 office and Roadway Maintenance and included the conversion of 683.76 square metres of asphalt to turf, and the installation of nine new street trees. At 168 Sherman Avenue North, a second project was completed in collaboration with Parking Operations, which included removing 275 square metres of impervious pavers and the installation of three new street trees.
- The Forestry section of the Environmental Services division of the Public Works Department hosted 17 Community Tree planting events and installed approximately 6,775 native trees in 2024.
- Hamilton Water presented their Watershed Action Plan to Council in 2024. This Plan was approved.
- Hamilton Water and Forestry are collaborating to enhance biodiversity at stormwater facilities. The team completed restoration work at three facilities.
- Four Full Time Equivalent staff were approved for the 2025 Operating Budget. Two staff will be working on biodiversity projects and programs as part of the Parks Operations section. Two staff will be supporting biodiversity projects and programs as part of the Landscape Architectural Services section. With the approval of these additional staff, Environmental Services will be able to support actions being led by partner organizations as reflected in Appendix A.

Planning and Economic Development

Appendix B attached to Report PED25163 includes a detailed summary of the status updates for all Biodiversity Action Plan actions where Planning and Economic Development staff are either the lead or supporting partner.

Key highlights include:

- The Green Standards and Guidelines came into effect on January 1, 2025, therefore Action 6.2 to develop City-wide Low Impact Development Guidelines and consider landscape-based stormwater infiltration techniques for enhancement of on-site local biodiversity in accordance with area-specific environmental reviews and sub-watershed study recommendations has been completed.

- The Green Building Standards were endorsed by Council on October 9, 2024, with updates based on engagement with the Climate Change Action Committee presented to Planning Committee on April 29, 2025. Staff will be reporting back in Q4 of 2025 on further review based on public submissions, including cost analysis, prior to the implementation of the guidelines and completion of Action 7.2.
- One Full Time Equivalent position was approved in the 2025 Operating Budget for the Planning and Economic Development Department to support the implementation of the actions led by the Department. This position will also provide interim support as the BAP Coordinator position until the funding model and scoping of the roles and responsibilities has been confirmed and the Co-ordinator position has been filed.

Finance and Corporate Services Department

The Financial Planning and Administration Section of the Finance and Corporate Services Department is the lead partner for Action 6.4 to develop and implement the new stormwater fee program. The Stormwater Credit Program and new stormwater fee was approved by Council on March 26, 2025, and will be in effect as of April 1, 2026.

Community Engagement on the Biodiversity Action Plan

Over the past year, City staff in the Planning and Economic Development Department, the Public Works Department, and within the City Manager's Office – Community Initiatives section have been working together with the Biodiversity Action Plan partners to spread awareness about the plan in community. Staff have sought out opportunities to share information about the Biodiversity Action Plan and engage in conversations with the public about how they can be involved to protect, explore, connect, and restore biodiversity in Hamilton. Staff have also presented information about the plan to other professional groups. The following is a list of the outreach activities that staff have participated in over the past year:

- Spring Tide Bulb Show – March 2024
- Open Streets – June 2024
- Spring Tide Bulb Show - March 2025
- Climate Change Advisory Committee Presentation – March 2025
- Biodiversity in Hamilton Open House series (Binbrook, Westfield, Virtual)
- Ontario Professional Foresters Conference – April 2025
- Ontario Biodiversity Summit – May 2025
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute webinar – May 2025

City staff have also initiated the development of a communications strategy for long-term, coordinated outreach to the public about the Biodiversity Action Plan. The intention is that the communications strategy would create a consistent branding and coordinated messaging across the multiple partner agencies.

City staff have also supported relationship building between action leads from City sections and external organizational partners involved in biodiversity related actions. Staff coordinated hybrid meetings in both July 2024 and February 2025, with the latter meeting hosting 29 agency representatives. The intent of these "Meet and Greet"

sessions is to involve the broader conservation community partners who may not have direct actions in the Biodiversity Action Plan to share what their respective organization is doing and how it relates to the goals of the plan. Participants have indicated that these are valuable sessions to keep having because they create opportunities for additional collaboration and partnership connections.

Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

See [2022-2026 Council Priorities, Outcomes & Measures of Success | City of Hamilton](#) for more information on Council's Priorities.

1. Sustainable Economic & Ecological Development
 - 1.3. Accelerate our response to climate change
 - 1.4. Protect green space and waterways
3. Responsiveness & Transparency
 - 3.1. Prioritize customer service and proactive communication
 - 3.2. Get more people involved in decision making and problem solving

Previous Reports Submitted

- [PED21065](#) – Feasibility Report for a Biodiversity Action Plan
- [PED21065\(a\)](#) – Biodiversity Action Plan – Execution of Agreement with the Hamilton Naturalists' Club
- [PED21065\(b\)](#) – Biodiversity Action Plan – Six-Month Update
- [PED21065\(c\)](#) – Draft Biodiversity Action Plan for Consultation
- [PED21065\(d\)/ PW24040](#) – Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan
- [PED24109\(c\)](#) – Memorandum respecting Final Framework for Processing and Evaluating Urban Boundary Expansion Applications

Consultation

Lauren Vraets, Senior Project Manager, Community Engagement, City Managers' Office

Rob Wagner, Manager, Business Programs, Environmental Services, Public Works

Rory Doucette, Manager, Parks, Environmental Services, Public Works

Robyn Pollard, Manager, Forestry and Horticulture, Environmental Services, Public Works

Wes Kindrie, Manager, Landscape Architectural Services, Environmental Services, Public Works

Kara Bunn, Manager, Hamilton Municipal Cemeteries, Environmental Services, Public Works

Mike Christie, Senior Project Manager (Acting), Watershed Management, Hamilton Water, Public Works

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan – Annual Update 2025 – Public Works

Appendix B: Hamilton's Biodiversity Action Plan – Annual Update 2025 – Planning and
Economic Development

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