



Hamilton

# ***City of Hamilton Watershed Action Plan***

***LIAISON COMMITTEE***

***TERMS OF REFERENCE***

## 1. Purpose

This Terms of Reference pertains to the Liaison Committee for the City of Hamilton Watershed Action Plan (CHWAP). This committee is being established to provide a forum for collaboration between the City of Hamilton (City) and partners that have care and control over Hamilton's watersheds; to provide strategic direction and consultation in the development of the CHWAP which will drive the actions for implementing the works required by the City to improve the health of Hamilton's Watersheds and provide progress towards delisting Hamilton Harbour as an Area of Concern.

## 2. Background and History

As a result of changes and events within Hamilton's Watersheds leading to a greater focus on non-point sources of watershed stress, there is a desire on the part of the public and Hamilton City Council in seeing an increase in watershed remediation activities planned and executed by the City and partner agencies. Recently, public attention and in some cases demonstrations have been building, associated with events that influence the health of the harbour. This includes, but is not limited to; beach closures, floatables in the west harbour, algae proliferation, and unexpected wastewater discharges. In order to meet public expectations for an improved aquatic environment, address political expectations, and restore the image of effective environmental stewardship, the City is developing the CHWAP for the City to then proceed with implementation. Working together, the Liaison Committee will help to advance City specific actions of priority projects having the greatest influence on the common goals for improving harbour conditions and ultimately delisting Hamilton Harbour.

Many years of work and investment have been put into reducing point source contamination into Hamilton Harbour and by the end of 2022, the majority of this work has been implemented. This shifts the primary harbour impact to non-point watershed sources. In order to continue progress toward improved harbour conditions, which are notably better than in previous decades, a concerted effort is required to assess and execute the most impactful opportunities that will make a difference for harbour water quality.

The City believes that the advice and guidance provided by other agencies, governmental bodies and area partners will lead to a more efficient plan moving forward to deal with outstanding issues including the difficult task of managing the variability of non-point source harbour pollutant contributions. This collaborative approach will improve decision making, align strategic priorities, enhance communications and maximize synergies among us.

The City has been a participant in the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan (HH RAP) since its inception in 1985 and has been a key contributor for many of the projects that have been implemented by the end of 2022. Notable City contributions and investments include:

- Construction of nine (9) Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) tanks over 30 years;
- Sewer lateral cross connection investigations and repairs;
- Primary treatment expansion at the Woodward Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP);
- Construction of tertiary treatment at the Woodward WWTP;
- Implementation of tertiary treatment at the Dundas WWTP;
- Real-time control of key wastewater collection system regulators;
- Decommissioning the Waterdown WWTP;
- Windermere Basin Restoration;
- Financial contribution to the Randle Reef Engineered Containment Facility; and,

- Implementation of the Surface Water Quality Program to better understand and mitigate City infrastructure impacts on receiving waters.

The work of this Liaison Committee is an extension of the direction set by the HH RAP office through the years of 2014 to 2016. A set of recommendations was developed through the Watershed Nutrient and Sediment Management Group for urban and rural contributions in Hamilton and Burlington. The long list of recommendations as well as other contributions from organizations that have developed implementable strategies can be considered as a starting point for this committee.

The focus of this committee fits directly into the City of Hamilton Corporate Strategic Plan under the Clean and Green and Healthy and Safe Community priority areas. The harbour represents one of the largest features in the community that should be safe and accessible to all residents and addressing the remaining issues of contamination will further change the status of health, safety, and image within the City of Hamilton. While the benefits to local wildlife and the human community is the driver for continued efforts, there is a keen interest in successfully contributing to the formal delisting process that identifies Hamilton Harbour as a Canadian Area of Concern.

### **3. Mission**

To establish a strong municipal leadership presence focused on the local watershed with the purpose of prioritizing and implementing City of Hamilton lead actions necessary to support a flourishing natural environment free of unacceptable contaminant releases to benefit the health of our environment, wildlife, residents and visitors within our community.

### **4. Goals and Objectives**

The City of Hamilton wishes to ensure that the momentum toward remediation of Hamilton Harbour remains on a progressive and continuous improvement path. The following list of goals for the CHWAP are in draft form until such time that the Liaison Committee members can provide comment and advice pertaining to actions/objectives proposed that will improve the natural conditions of Hamilton Harbour and its watershed. The goals may be amended as appropriate and at least one supporting action/objective will be assigned to each goal. Draft CHWAP goals include, but not limited to:

- a. Solicit input from all partners;
- b. Establish a water quality baseline to understand key hotspots and contaminant contributions
- c. Inventory all possible watershed activity ideas from City and partner sources that fall within the care and control of the City and contribute toward improved harbour conditions;
- d. Apply a climate change and climate resiliency lens to each watershed action identified;
- e. Prioritize a focus list that will have the greatest impact on advancing the goal of an improved watershed and by extension harbour health;
- f. Develop a workplan for short term and long term activities;
- g. Establish Project Teams to be accountable for activities;
- h. Seek City Council approval for the workplan;
- i. Implement identified priority activities through provision of appropriate resources;
- j. Monitor environmental impacts related to actions; and,
- k. Report on progress on annually.

## 5. Deliverables and Timelines

Goal	Action/Objective	Timeline (ETA)
Research & Assessment	Research, assess and inventory data gathered during previous years to identify issues and pinpoint areas still in need of research (data gaps).	1 year
Outreach	Identify and meet with internal & external partners and the public; review the inventory of existing data and reports; reconfirm/prioritize the identified issues.	8 months
Preliminary Draft	Preliminary draft document providing overall outline and priority issues, goals and actions. Comment period open to all internal & external partners and the public.	2 months
Final Draft	Incorporate all comments into a second draft of the CHWAP. Post the draft on the website and make it available for further comment	1 month
Report to Council	Report to Council for their approval on the resource requirements and timelines for implementation	1 week
Final Watershed Action Plan	Produce, distribute and begin executing the final CHWAP	1 month

## 6. Measures of Success

In order to justify the expenditures involved with implementing the watershed action plan, as well as to add to the collective knowledge of the relative success or failure of specific project components, it is necessary to establish a framework by which these types of evaluations can be made. This framework will involve establishing “milestones”, target dates or thresholds which document whether certain recommended management practices or other control actions are being implemented and /or achieved. For watershed planning, milestones are usually organized into three relative time scales:

- Short-term Milestones (1-2 years)
- Mid-term Milestones (2-5 years)
- Long-term Milestones (5+ years) T

Short-term projects may involve an educational or outreach type of effort that can be implemented fairly quickly, assuming that resources are available to implement that recommendation.

Mid-term projects may involve restoration projects with cooperating project partners who already own or manage the project site location, have an eagerness to implement projects, and have staff dedicated towards managing and enhancing the lands.

Long-term projects will involve recommendations that include construction, retrofits, or acquisition / easements, as these can require a much longer timeframe to implement, and require a larger commitment of upfront staff time and funding.

In addition to establishing milestones, a number of quantitative and qualitative means will be used to gauge the success of the implementation phase including:

1) Pollutant Loading Reductions

Track the implementation of recommended water quality Best Management Practices (BMP's), and maintain a running total of expected pollutant loading reductions throughout the duration of the watershed action plan implementation. Where feasible, update the predicted Pollutant Loading Rates to reflect large scale changes in land use in critical subwatersheds; acquisition / permanent protection of environmentally sensitive land; or the implementation of water quality BMP's not identified in this plan.

3) Expanded Surface Water Quality Monitoring

Implement an expanded surface water quality monitoring program throughout the watershed to increase the baseline water quality data, which will allow comparisons to be made during and after watershed action plan implementation.

4) Community Assessment

Work closely with non-governmental organizations and residents to enhance the natural resource-based 'quality of life' and to encourage behaviors that are supportive of a healthy watershed (determined by water quality measures, control of non-point source pollution, and community satisfaction with the ecological health of the watershed).

## 7. Committee Structure and Governance

### i. Members

The membership of the Liaison Committee is structured to provide a balance of perspectives, skills sets, knowledge and expertise. Its membership may include, but is not limited to, representatives from the following:

- Public Works
  - Hamilton Water
  - Environmental Services
  - Transportation Operations & Maintenance
- Planning & Economic Development
  - Sustainable Communities
  - Heritage and Urban Design
  - Growth Management
- Healthy & Safe Communities
  - Recreation
  - Healthy Environments
  - Indigenous Relations
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Conservation Halton
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- Grand River Conservation Authority
- Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority

### ii. Consultation

The Liaison Committee will provide information updates regarding the CHWAP to the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan (HH RAP) on a regular frequency (TBD). HH RAP members will provide insight, recommendations and additional support to the Liaison Committee which includes membership from:

- Bay Area Restoration Council
- City of Hamilton
- City of Burlington
- Conservation Halton
- Fisheries and Oceans Canada
- Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Indigenous Nations and First Peoples
- Hamilton Conservation Authority
- Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan
- Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- The Regional Municipality of Halton

In addition to the agencies above, the Liaison Committee will also engage with the following consultation and engagement partners throughout the development of the CHWAP:

- McMaster University
- Redeemer College University
- Green Venture
- Environment Hamilton

### **iii. Chair**

Liaison Committee meetings will be chaired by appropriate City of Hamilton Staff.

### **iv. Project Manager**

The Project Manager will be a City of Hamilton employee or City representative who has full responsibility and authority to coordinate, develop and manage the CHWAP as guided by the Liaison Committee. All decisions by the Project Manager are based on benefitting the CHWAP.

Responsibilities of the Project Manager, at a minimum include:

- Develop, review and manage the Terms of Reference;
- Coordinate and facilitate the development and execution of a detailed work plan for each phase of the CHWAP;
- Raise awareness and understanding of the CHWAP with members of the Liaison Committee and the community;
- Provide administrative support to the Liaison Committee, including meeting facilitation, time keeping and note taking for all meetings;
- Develop collaborative planning process to allow for the exchange of information and ideas;
- Review requests for proposals and study reports;
- Ensure accuracy and timeliness of technical documents produced by the Liaison Committee ;
- Day to day management of the CHWAP and the Project Team; and,

- Coordinating reporting to City Senior Leadership and Council on a TBD frequency.

**v. Project Team**

It is acknowledged that Project Team will be needed to focus on specific projects and priorities that have been developed by the Liaison Committee. These Project Teams will be structured and created after the establishment of the Liaison Committee goals and objectives. The Project Team/Working Group will consist of City of Hamilton cross-departmental employees who will at a minimum:

- Develop a short term and long term capital plan that addresses projects identified in the CHWAP to be approved via the City's budget process;
- Develop a charter for each project, to be approved by the Liaison Committee and ultimately Council;
- Consider resources required for each project;
- Define scope, budget and timelines for each project;
- Procure necessary consultants and contractors as per the City's Procurement By-law;
- Monitor the day to day activities of each project;
- Report on completion of each project; and,
- Implement metrics to monitor success and sustainability of each project.

**vi. Decision Making**

It is expected that information provided at each meeting will build from the previous, and in an effort to ensure continuity, Liaison Committee members may send alternates to meetings with efforts to reserve this for significant conflicts only. Valued input from committee members will be expected and member perspectives related to questions, decisions and directions will be requested. As a goal, the Liaison Committee will seek inputs from each member on matters where decisions are required, however the City will reserve the right to make final decisions on works and actions moved forward by this committee based on input discussion and ideas raised in meetings or by other forms of communication as deemed necessary.

**vii. Quorum**

An official quorum will not be established, however the Chair will note when attendance is low and offer discussion regarding the impact and opportunities for improving engagement. The Chair will decide, based on feedback from the Liaison Committee how best to move forward in each circumstance and whether additional input is required prior to action.

**8. Code of Conduct**

**i. Decorum**

Liaison Committee members shall conduct themselves with decorum in the course of their performance, or required performance, of their responsibilities as a member, and at meetings, including but not limited to:

- a. All members shall be respectful of the role of other members and employees to

provide service and advice based on political neutrality and objectivity, and without undue influence from any one or more members;

- b. No member shall maliciously, falsely, negligently, recklessly, or otherwise improperly, injure the professional or ethical Code of Conduct reputation, or the prospects or practice, of any one or more members or guests participating in this process;
- c. All members shall show respect for the professional capacities and position of other members and participants within meetings or activities of the Liaison Committee;
- d. No member shall use, or attempt to use their authority or influence for the purpose of intimidating, threatening, coercing, or otherwise improperly influencing any other member or City employee with the intent of interfering with perspectives or duties; and
- e. All members shall be treated fairly and contribute to an environment free of undue influence or discrimination of any kind; and,
- f. All members shall make every reasonable effort to attend each meeting, however In the event that a member is not able to attend more than two consecutive meetings, the Chair, after consultation with the member, may request appointment of a suitable alternative representative from that agency/group.

Failure by a member to comply with the Code of Conduct may result in the Chair taking appropriate steps to call the member to order with a last resort of removal from meetings and in the event non-compliances continue with no abatement, removal of Liaison Committee membership.

## **ii. Member Responsibilities**

It is the role of Liaison Committee members to work co-operatively to advise other members, staff and consultants toward the satisfactory resolution of issues related to watershed area plans, projects, and actions.

Member responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- a. To learn about the activities and interests of the involved agencies;
- b. To attend meetings of the Liaison Committee coordinated by the City related to advancing the initiatives necessary to improve the Harbour;
- c. To share information about activities, monitoring, and inherent knowledge of Hamilton Harbour and its watershed where appropriate with the goal of advancing actions to improve conditions;
- d. To inform others in respective organizations as is seen fit to ensure that agencies are aware of and supportive of actions taking place;
- e. Support approved communications within the larger community for the remediation efforts;
- f. To identify any synergies which the Project Team can leverage that would make improvements within the community; and,
- g. To work co-operatively with other Liaison Committee members, staff, and consultants with the goal of improving Watershed and Harbour conditions for the benefit of local residents, plants and wildlife.

## **9. Record Keeping**

A draft agenda for the Liaison Committee and related information will be circulated a minimum of two weeks in advance of the meetings. Members may place on the agenda any items that are related to the mandate of the Liaison Committee.

Meeting schedules will be established by the Project Manager in consultation with members of the Liaison Committee.



The proceedings of the Liaison Committee meetings will be recorded in the form of minutes through City resources. The minutes will be circulated two weeks after each meeting. At each meeting, the previous meeting's minutes will be reviewed and approved by the members and action items will be reviewed and reconciled.

## **10. Reporting**

Updates and communication to City Senior Leadership and City Council will be necessary as part of this committee. City staff will identify a frequency and how that process will be structured after the Liaison Committee has been established and some strategy has been discussed with members.

It is expected that the Liaison Committee Chair will provide information updates regarding the CHWAP to the HH RAP on a regular frequency, yet to be determined.

A graphic representing the reporting structure and how this Liaison Committee fits into the greater HH RAP Secretariat is attached as Appendix A.

## **11. Term**

The Liaison Committee will sit for scheduled meetings while actions are being undertaken by the City to improve the health of the Harbour and its watershed until actions are in motion that solidify the shift of Harbour status to an Area of Recovery. This is estimated to be at least 24 to 36 months. At that time discussion will take place in order to determine if there are future works being planned that would be suitable for the continuation of this committee or another one similar in nature.

Appendix A – CHWAP/HH RAP Liaison Committee Reporting Structure

