

METAMORPHOSIS

Conservation Halton Strategic Plan 2020



OPENING COMMENTS

FROM HASSAAN BASIT

In nature, metamorphosis is the biological process of transformation, differentiation and growth that many species go through as they transition from one life stage to the next. Conservation Halton is going through its own metamorphosis and you will find a few of the phases for this transformation throughout our new strategic plan, Metamorphosis 2020.

Much of this transformation will come in the form of capacity building, as we embrace innovative ideas, creative solutions and new technologies that will enable us to work more efficiently, communicate more effectively and improve service delivery. It will also come in the form of collaboration, as we build on the partnerships that have supported us through the years and create new relationships with community members and organizations that share our vision. This transformation will also mean changing the way we think about challenges, such as climate change and community growth. It will mean seeing these challenges as opportunities for us to start conversations and lead environmental initiatives. Metamorphosis 2020 will enable us to be faster and more agile, to become

better listeners and collaborators and to provide more innovative services and solutions.

I want to thank our municipal, regional and provincial partners and stakeholders for their support throughout this process and we hope that they will continue to share their insights and ideas with us. We also want to encourage our community members to learn more about our initiatives, reach out with their ideas and be part of our vision. The strategic planning process may be complete but the listening, sharing and collaborating has only just begun.



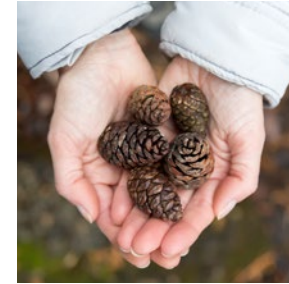
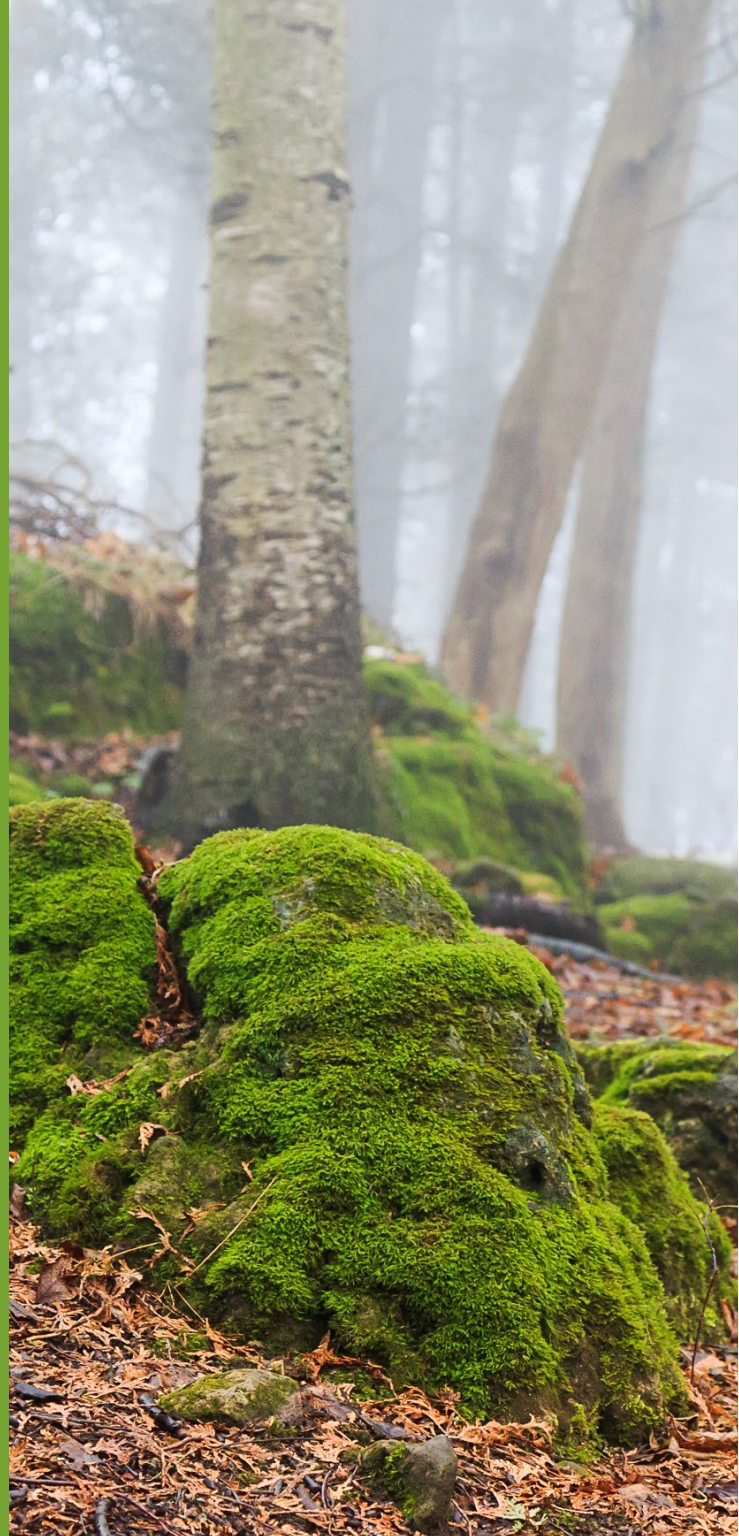
Hassaan Basit
Chief Administrative Officer
hbasit@hrca.on.ca

Metamorphosis 2020 will enable us to be faster, more agile and more streamlined.



OUR **PROMISE**

We are dedicated to a healthy, sustainable natural environment and protecting our communities from flooding and erosion. We are dedicated to offering an education and recreation experience that is accessible, memorable and inspiring. We are committed to providing customer service that is responsive, effective and efficient. We promise to form partnerships that will enable us to better protect our environment and support our community. We promise to provide our customers, partners and stakeholders with opportunities to collaborate and participate in issues and decisions that are important to them. We promise to be transparent and accountable and to make difficult decisions with integrity. We will seek out innovative technologies and creative solutions to manage our natural resources and protect our environment to the best of our abilities. We will work to conserve resources and seek out more sustainable business practices in order to limit our own impact on the environment.



OUR **PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to protect our communities and conserve our natural environment through planning, education and recreation and to support our partners in the creation of sustainable communities within our watershed.



OUR **AMBITION**

Our ambition is a healthy watershed with clean streams, abundant forests and natural habitats that are in balance with our growing communities and engaged residents.



THEMES

Taking care of our growing communities

With many new neighbourhoods and growing communities, it is our priority to protect the people, homes and businesses within our region from the risk of flooding and erosion through planning and regulation. We will also make it our priority to partner with planners, developers and builders to support resilient infrastructure and efficient land use, encourage low impact development and help plan complete communities that contribute to a healthy thriving economy.

Protecting our natural, cultural and scenic assets

The natural systems within our watershed are essential for clean air, safe water, healthy ecosystems, biological diversity, climate change resilience and flood and erosion control. It is our priority to protect the lands, forests, streams and lakes needed to support these natural systems and maintain the features and functions that preserve the environmental integrity of the region. We will also work to protect the landscapes that create opportunities for recreation and tourism and the landmarks that define our natural and cultural heritage.

Preparing for the effects of climate change

Healthy watershed areas and resilient natural systems will enable us to reduce and better respond to the effects of climate change. It is our priority to better understand the impacts of climate change on our region, share our knowledge and help increase the climate change resilience of our watershed. Our goal is to help prepare our agricultural lands, natural areas, communities and infrastructure for climate change weather, including flooding and erosion. We will also address the impacts of climate change on biodiversity, such as habitat loss and invasive species.

Creating opportunities to connect with nature

Our watershed is abundant with forests, trails, streams and lakes that offer endless opportunities for active and passive outdoor recreation. It is our priority to use our parks to connect people with nature, support the health and wellness of those that live in our communities and create a living classroom for children to learn about the natural world. It is also a priority for these opportunities to be created without disrupting plant and animal habitats or any of the natural functions of the environment.

Striving for service excellence and efficiency

In order to achieve our goals and objectives as an organization, we will use innovative technologies and creative solutions to operate in a way that is more effective, efficient and agile. We will listen, cooperate and take a proactive approach to accountability and transparency. We will pursue knowledge, share our expertise and offer leadership. Above all, we will strive for service excellence for our customers, clients, partners and staff.

Honouring the Land and Territory

Halton, as we know it today, is rich in the history and modern traditions of many First Nations and the Metis. From the lands of the Anishinabe to the Wendat, Attawanderon, the Haudenosaunee, and the Metis, these lands surrounding the Great Lakes are steeped in Indigenous history. As we gather today on these treaty lands, we are in solidarity with our Indigenous brothers and sisters to honour and respect the four directions, lands, waters, plants, animals and ancestors that walked before us. All these wonderful elements of creation exist, gifted to us by our Creator. We acknowledge and thank the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation for being stewards of this traditional territory.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Collaboration

We will build strong partnerships and create opportunities for collaboration with our customers and community members.

Innovation

We will seek out innovative technologies and creative solutions that will allow us to be leaders in natural resource management and environmental planning.

Sustainability

We will embody sustainability in everything we do, from the facilities we build to the communities we help plan, in an effort to limit our impact on the environment.

Integrity

We will take a proactive approach to accountability, transparency and financial responsibility and make difficult decisions with integrity.

KEY SERVICE TARGETS

- 1 Limit increases in annual tax-supported operating expenditures to regional budget guidelines.
- 2 Plan for long-term capital needs with a sustainable financing strategy.
- 3 Increase self-generated revenue by 2–5 percent annually.
- 4 Deliver comments on 95 percent of technical reviews of permits and planning applications in 6 weeks.
- 5 Process 95 percent of minor permit applications within 30 days.
- 6 Reach an average customer satisfaction rate of 90 percent across all service areas.



KEY CONSERVATION TARGETS

- 1 Work with partners to increase the amount of protected terrestrial and aquatic area by 2–5 percent.
- 2 Maintain a consistent or improving trend in key water quality indicators, such as phosphorus, nitrate, chloride and suspended solids, across the watershed.
- 3 Monitor 100 aquatic and terrestrial stations across the watershed to assess changes and inform environmental management decisions.
- 4 Increase the number of watershed residents who participate in conservation outreach, education and stewardship activities by 15–20 percent.
- 5 Increase the number of floodplain, wetland and watercourse restoration projects by 5–10 percent.
- 6 Transition our corporate offices and parks operations to a neutral carbon footprint.

KEY OBJECTIVES

- 1

Enhance public safety through maintenance and upgrades of flood control structures and modernization of flood management operations to protect communities from severe weather and natural hazards.
- 2

Strengthen conservation, restoration and responsible management of natural resources with a focus on evidence-based programs.
- 3

Communicate to the public the value of science-based programs that conserve, restore and manage the natural resources of the watershed.
- 4

Remain dedicated to ecosystem-based watershed planning that contributes to the development of sustainable rural, urban and suburban communities.
- 5

Attract visitors to our parks and connect our communities with nature through sustainable recreation, education and tourism.

KEY ENABLERS

- 1

Partner and collaborate with municipalities, government agencies, professional associations, educational institutions, Indigenous communities and others.
- 2

Implement business practices that ensure economic, social and environmental sustainability.
- 3

Work toward a standard of operational management and service delivery that is more agile and streamlined.





KEY OBJECTIVES

1 Enhance public safety through the modernization of flood management operations to protect communities from severe weather and natural hazards.

DIRECTIONS

- ▶ Streamline the processes for watershed monitoring and analysis, flood and low water monitoring, modelling and prediction, water balance modelling and water resource protection.
- ▶ Improve our hydrologic, hydraulic and hydrogeologic modelling tools to increase the predictive capabilities of our water resource management program.
- ▶ Update aerial photography and floodplain mapping technology to improve the accuracy of information regarding floodplain hazards.
- ▶ Work with municipalities to update our database of flood vulnerable areas within our watershed.
- ▶ Monitor, assess and maintain our water and erosion control infrastructure.
- ▶ Strengthen communication and cooperation with our partners to warn our communities about flooding risks and ensure efficient emergency management.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Increased capacity to predict the nature of flooding events.
- ▶ Improved warnings and communication of flooding events.
- ▶ More efficient operation of water control dams and structures

2 Strengthen conservation, restoration and responsible management of natural resources with a focus on evidence-based programs.

DIRECTIONS

- ▶ Use monitoring data to develop an integrated priority setting process for protection, restoration, enhancement and securement projects, watershed studies and related management plans.
- ▶ Develop a forest management plan to ensure sustainability relevance of our forests and forestry services.
- ▶ Develop a land acquisition strategy in collaboration with our partners to better manage our natural spaces.
- ▶ Develop a strategy to monitor, manage and mitigate the impact of invasive species.
- ▶ Develop restoration strategies to increase natural cover and improve aquatic, terrestrial and wetland habitat.
- ▶ Collaborate with our partners and other climate change leaders to develop mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- ▶ Invest in tools to improve access to watershed monitoring data to increase capacity and collaboration with our partners.
- ▶ Continue to support municipalities in implementing a source water protection plan and updating technical reports to ensure safe drinking water.

OUTCOMES

- ▶ Reduction in the impact of climate change on our watershed.
- ▶ Clear ecological metrics that enable us to better monitor the health of our ecosystems.
- ▶ Engaged residents that have an appreciation for nature.

3 Communicate to the public the value of science-based programs that conserve, restore and manage the natural resources of the watershed.

DIRECTIONS

- Position our parks as hubs for environmental conservation, stewardship and education programs.
- Create accessible and engaging communication materials to share our environmental science and planning process with our partners and the community.
- Communicate the benefits of stewardship and restoration to developers, businesses, municipalities and landowners.
- Participate in collaborative research and education projects with academic institutions, environmental organizations, government agencies and businesses.
- Participate in media relations, public speaking and other outreach activities to increase awareness of environmental issues.
- Expand partnerships with local school boards to deliver affordable, innovative outdoor education programs.

OUTCOMES

- Increase in collaborative projects that contribute to the knowledge base of our stakeholders.
- Increase in community participation in stewardship initiatives.
- Increase in school participation in outdoor education programs.

4 Remain dedicated to ecosystem-based watershed planning that contributes to the development of sustainable rural, urban and suburban communities.

DIRECTIONS

- Develop a strategy to integrate various watershed management plans to deliver more effective programs.
- Collaborate with our partners to ensure that conditions of planning and permit approvals are applied and maintained.
- Collaborate with the farming community to ensure that regulatory matters are applied to conventional farming methods in a practical way.
- Review and improve planning policies, permit review processes, regulation enforcement and compliance programs.
- Continue to build relationships with developers, contractors, builders and consultants to improve communication and service delivery.
- Use monitoring data to inform planning decisions and encourage the development of sustainable communities.
- Report the findings of our monitoring programs to our partners through watershed report cards and other channels.
- Adopt and demonstrate the environmental, social and economic benefits of green infrastructure and low impact development.
- Develop and implement an online regulation data and mapping tool for more efficient, convenient customer service.

OUTCOMES

- Integrated watershed plans that guide planning and stewardship.
- Planning and regulation policies that are concise and responsive.
- Reduction in plan and permit approval times.



5 Attract visitors to our parks and connect our communities with nature through sustainable recreation, education and tourism.

DIRECTIONS

- Establish the preservation and appreciation of natural heritage and education as key priorities within the function of our parks and managed spaces.
- Promote the ecotourism opportunities and economic potential of our parks.
- Develop and implement more diverse experiences and events that cater to the needs of our customer segments.
- Support the development of a regional strategy and partnerships to connect Conservation Halton trails and natural areas across other public lands.
- Develop standards of excellence for park operations and visitor services.
- Develop a visitor impact management program to support a more sustainable approach to outdoor recreation.
- Investigate and prioritize the addition of new parks to the Conservation Halton Park System.
- Attract new customers and retain current customers to increase annual membership sales and membership retention.
- Renew and create park and managed area master plans that are organizationally aligned.

OUTCOMES

- Offer a more diverse and accessible range of programs.
- Attract more than one million visitors to the parks per year.
- Reduction in the impact of park visitors on our natural areas.



KEY ENABLERS

1 Partner and collaborate with municipalities, government agencies, professional associations, educational institutions, Indigenous communities and others.

DIRECTIONS

- Strengthen partnerships with municipal and provincial partners to improve plan and permit review services.
- Define the roles and responsibilities between each level of decision making with our municipal, regional and provincial partners.
- Improve relationships with our municipal partners through regular communication with councils and staff.
- Collaborate with municipalities to assist in developing innovative climate change mitigation and adaptation programs.
- Collaborate with other conservation authorities to share knowledge and improve program and service delivery.
- Create relationships with community groups, boards and committees to better understand their interests and concerns.
- Form partnerships with colleges, universities and other educational institutions to create research opportunities.

OUTCOMES

- More knowledge being shared with partners.
- Knowledge is being used to identify issues, find solutions and build capacity.
- Policies and guidelines are relevant and updated according to best available science.



2 Implement better business practices and processes that will provide more financial stability and sustainability.

DIRECTIONS

- Develop partnerships and initiatives in environmental management to create funding opportunities.
- Review program delivery costs, revenue generation and public value for all programs, processes and functions.
- Review current financial policies and processes to strengthen financial controls,, increase automation and reduce exposure to risk.
- Investigate new business models for our lands to generate new sources of revenue and increase operational efficiency.
- Develop an asset management program that defines how assets will be managed to ensure delivery of services as expected, minimizes risk and makes use of all available financial tools and resources.
- Achieve financial stability for our dam and channel maintenance programs and flood forecasting and operations.
- Implement a structured budgeting process to facilitate cost visibility, cost governance and cost accountability and build a culture of cost-management.
- Develop long-range capital and operating budgets that are financially sustainable.

OUTCOMES

- Strong ratio of tax-supported and self-generated revenue.
- Strategic priorities, cost management, asset management and long term financial needs are aligned with budgets.
- Increased operational lifespan of our flood forecasting and erosion control infrastructure.

3 Work toward a standard of operational management and service delivery that is more agile and streamlined.

DIRECTIONS

- Create a corporate performance culture that is results driven and people centric.
- Develop and track service standards to guide all public and stakeholder interactions.
- Launch digital transformation to improve internal information management, increase access to clear financial data and support more informed decision making.
- Conduct routine evaluations of program performance and report on outcomes to increase accountability and drive improvements.
- Strengthen leadership skills, strategic thinking, project management and financial understanding throughout the organization.
- Create and implement a progressive risk management strategy.
- Create a Strategy Council to coordinate, evaluate and implement the strategic plan.
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- Improve safety culture within the organization, using formalized metrics for leading and lagging indicators.
- Implement strategies to promote diversity and inclusivity in our workforce.

OUTCOMES

- Residents view us as a more customer-focused service provider.
- More convenient, accessible online tools for customers.
- Measurable continuous improvement outcomes.

HOW WILL WE DELIVER RESULTS

The plan was constructed with results and barriers in mind

A great deal of thought, planning and analysis has gone into creating Metamorphosis. As we built our strategic plan, we focused on our organizational structure, our financial resources, our internal processes and our people. We assessed past and potential barriers to implementing our priorities and made sure we were just as motivated to address the challenges as we were to embrace the opportunities. Our new plan is structured in a way that rewards collaboration and innovation, encourages lean processes and enables us to track meaningful progress using a Balanced Scorecard approach.

Progress will be monitored, continuously

Progress monitoring will be managed by the Governance and Administrative arms of the organization. The governance arm, consisting of our Board of Directors, will monitor our progress in achieving our expected outcomes and lead the organization through good governance practices. The administrative arm, led by the Chief Administrative Officer, members of the senior team and our Strategy Implementation Team, will employ a combination of online tracking, regular meetings, employee performance management tools, performance based budgets and customer input. Real-time tracking of our progress will enable us to avoid barriers, maintain focus and make adjustments to our strategic priorities when necessary. Quarterly reports will be shared with our board of directors.

KEY OBJECTIVES › DIRECTIONS › OUTCOMES › EVALUATION

STRATEGIC



OPERATIONAL



NOTES



905.336.1158

web@hrca.on.ca

2596 Britannia Road West
Burlington, Ontario L7P 0G3

conservationhalton.ca