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Protecting the Natural
Environment from
Lake to Escarpment

April 3, 2019

Dear Mayor Meed-Ward,

There is an opportunity for Conservation Halton (CH) and the Cities of Burlington and Hamilton to partner on a project through The Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI). The project would support and guide municipalities in identifying, valuing and accounting for natural assets in their financial planning and asset management programs, and developing leading-edge, sustainable, cost-effective and climate resilient infrastructure. The objectives of the project are to help participating partners identify, prioritise, value and manage key natural assets with the goal of saving money relative to engineered alternatives, reduce risk and potential liability, and result in sustainability service delivery to the community. This project aligns with our goals to increase climate resiliency in the watershed by promoting natural solutions such as green infrastructure.

In my opinion, this represents an excellent opportunity to collaborate on a watershed project that has practical outcomes. It will help participating organizations better-manage our infrastructure and natural assets in the face of climate change, development pressures, and increasing challenges associated with asset management. It also presents an opportunity to leverage financial contributions as the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation is also contributing funds.

The Initiative started in British Columbia but has grown over the past five years to provide services across Canada. Within our area, MNAI has worked on pilot projects with Oakville and Peel Region/Credit Valley Conservation. MNAI recently partnered with the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and is soliciting expressions of interest for up to 7 smaller/rural local governments (as attached) to host a pilot project located in a watershed area within or originating within Ontario's Greenbelt. Through this project, MNAI offers guidance and support through scientific, financial and municipal services management expertise. Partners are expected to commit to the approach, provide in-kind multi-disciplinary staff support, provide data, designate a project/partner lead, commit a total of \$105,000, and participate in evaluation interviews/follow up exercises for 3 years after the close of the project.

Conservation Halton has reviewed the Expression Of Interest (EOI) and is interested in partnering on a pilot project for the Grindstone Creek watershed which originates in the Greenbelt and flow through rural portions of Burlington and Hamilton. There is no set date for the submission of expressions of interest, but the EOI period will close as soon as suitable candidates are found. A copy of the EOI is attached. MNAI can be found at <https://mnai.ca>

Given the rolling intake (some urgency to submit), I'm reaching out to you to see if we can establish a partnership between CH, Burlington and Hamilton. CH would be the coordinating partner and costs would be shared. This project can provide the kind of urban/rural connections we need to look at to mitigate downstream stormwater costs by investing in, and valuing/accounting for upstream green infrastructure.

We look forward to sharing our expertise and combining our efforts to advance this initiative and work collaboratively with our colleagues from Burlington and Hamilton to establish Terms of Reference and a joint team to work on implementation.

Regards,
Hassan Basit

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Hassan Basit', followed by a horizontal line.

Chief Administrative Officer
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C.C: Councillor Rory Nisan, City of Burlington
Tim Commisso, Interim City Manager, City of Burlington