



SUBJECT: Bay Area Climate Change Council

TO: Committee of the Whole

FROM: Environment and Energy

Report Number: EICS-04-24

Wards Affected: N/A

Date to Committee: April 8, 2024

Date to Council: April 16, 2024

Recommendation:

Reaffirm the City's commitment to supporting the Bay Area Climate Change Council in the amount of \$56,000 annually until 2026, at which time the City's future support for the organization will be re-assessed.

PURPOSE:

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

On May 7th, 2024, the Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC) will be hosting the annual Climate Forum for the public, featuring Burlington Mayor Meed Ward and Hamilton Mayor Horvath to speak about their cities' commitment to BACCC and regional climate action. This report presents information on the history of BACCC, their annual report for 2023 and future strategic objectives.

The Bay Area Climate Change Council (BACCC) was created in 2017 to bring together the cities of Hamilton and Burlington along with Mohawk College to work collaboratively on climate action. The vision for this collaborative was to replicate a similar and successful structure of the Bay Area Restoration Council (BARC) which is focused on

the restoration of Burlington Bay/Hamilton Harbour as part of the Hamilton Harbour Remedial Action Plan. The creation of BACCC to help foster climate action within the Bay Area supported by the cities of Burlington and Hamilton, and Mohawk College was championed by both mayors at the time.

BACCC's vision is for the Bay Area to be a thriving and resilient net-zero carbon community by 2050. Its mission is to catalyze action in the Bay Area on the climate emergency.

Current membership on the council includes:

- BACCC Chair – Richard Koroscil
- Burlington Economic Development – Anita Cassidy
- BurlingtonGreen – Amy Schnurr
- Burlington Sustainable Development Committee – currently vacant
- Burlington Citizen – Anna Pautler
- Clean Air Hamilton – Barry Duffey
- Conservation Halton – Martin Keller
- Environment Hamilton – Ian Borsuk
- Hamilton Chamber of Commerce – Katie Stiel
- Hamilton Conservation Authority – Fionnula Wade
- Hamilton Health Sciences – Victoria Brzozowski
- Hamilton Industrial Environmental Association – Geoffrey Knapper
- Hamilton Regional Indian Centre – Brenda Jacobs
- Sustainability Leadership – Christopher Warren

The Cities of Burlington and Hamilton, along with Mohawk College, are supporters (ex-officio members) of BACCC. The staff for BACCC are overseen and administered by the Centre for Climate Change Management at Mohawk College.

Burlington sustainability staff participate in bi-monthly meetings to provide updates on City activities and feedback and guidance to the council. Burlington city staff have also participated on implementation teams of subject matter experts and community members, focused on sustainable transportation and residential building retrofits. In addition, Burlington city staff help plan and participate in community engagement events, such as the 2024 Climate Forum.

A copy of BACCC's 2023 Annual Report is provided in Appendix A for information. Some highlights include:

- BACCC continued to facilitate two Implementation Teams (BACCITs) – one on transportation and another on buildings.

- The Buildings BACCIT provided ongoing feedback on the development of the Hamilton Home Energy Retrofit (HERO) program. (Note: the BACCIT previously provided feedback in 2021/22 when Burlington was working on its feasibility study for its HERO - Better Homes Burlington program).
- Hosted the 'Your City, Taking Climate Action' virtual event in April 2023, where Burlington and Hamilton city staff made presentations on climate action priorities, initiatives and progress to-date.
- Contributed to the Sustainability Leadership Workshop on 'Building Capacity in Trades and Construction to Meet the Housing Crisis'.
- Participated in the Burlington day at Mohawk College in December.
- Engaged the community through its website, a quarterly newsletter and a variety of social media platforms.
- Advocated to local City Councils in 2023 (7 times) and submitted provincial and federal budget recommendations for measures that would support achieving the net-zero carbon target for the region.

BACCC has also just completed its three-year Strategic Plan (2024 – 2026). There are four areas of focus in the plan summarized here (refer to the document in Appendix B for full wording and additional details of individual actions):

1. **Reduce emissions from transportation** – through programs, initiatives, research, and advocacy, as well as supporting increased infrastructure investments.
2. **Reduce emissions in building construction and operation** – through research, advocacy and investment in programs to support energy efficient and resilient buildings.
3. **Reduce emissions from industrial operations** – by connecting small and mid-sized industry with incentives, funding and research, and advocating for changes in policy and regulations.
4. **Ensure low-emission and reliable energy to meet demand** – advocating for low emissions energy generation infrastructure.

Many of these goals align with Burlington's climate action priorities:

- Better Homes Burlington program
- Deep energy efficiency retrofits
- Sustainable Buildings and Development Guidelines
- Electric mobility initiatives and Green Fleet Strategy
- Integrated Mobility Plan – sustainable transportation measures
- Burlington Transit – ridership incentive programs
- Renewable energy – solar pilot

Strategy/process/risk

In 2023 a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed with Mohawk College to continue supporting BACCC until 2026. The MOU is non-binding and includes options for both parties to terminate their participation if necessary and/or to amend the MOU as long as both parties are in agreement. The City of Hamilton has also committed to a similar agreement.

Performance measures over the four years of the MOU include:

Performance Measure	Targets	2023 Progress to Date
Number of Climate Change events, virtual and/or in-person, tracking the number of attendees	3 per year	Hosted 1 virtual event plus participated in 4 external events
Number of attendees for BACCC implementation teams	240	28
Number of impressions on social, digital and print media on BACCC activities and advocacy actions	2,000,000	306,298
Number of delegations and formal correspondence, including letters and submissions regarding policy, legislation and budget decisions, across all 3 levels of government, in support of climate action in the bay area	48	7 delegations to local city councils 2 budget submissions (provincial and federal budgets)

Going forward, BACCC staff have implemented strategies to continue meeting the above targets:

1. Events – implementing an annual events schedule that includes both spring and fall webinars, plus the annual Climate Forum (hybrid event).
2. BACCCITs – four implementation teams of subject matter experts and community members will be assembled to focus on the four strategic goals.
3. Communications – a new strategy has been developed to support BACCC’s on-line presence aligning with the strategic plan.
4. Delegations – implementing a system to better track public delegations and policy submissions.

Options Considered

The City could choose to discontinue/terminate its support for BACCC, however, this would risk losing the support of BACCC and its members, and resources which augment the City's climate action efforts. A loss of consistent funding from the City may risk BACCC's ability to leverage other external funding opportunities. The loss of potential future partnership and collaboration with BACCC would need to be made up by additional direct investment by the City in local climate action.

Financial Matters:

Total Financial Impact

The City's annual contribution to support BACCC is \$56,000.

Source of Funding

Ongoing funding to support BACCC has already been approved as part of the Environment and Energy base operating budget for 2024.

Other Resource Impacts

The City of Hamilton's has also signed an MOU with Mohawk College. Hamilton's annual contribution to BACCC is \$160,000. The contribution by both cities is pro-rated based on population. Mohawk College also supports BACCC through the administration of staff and providing office and meeting space. Its contribution is budgeted at \$39,500. BACCC has also leveraged grants from external sources since 2020, including \$57,325 from the McConnell Foundations Innoweave Program between 2020 and 2023 and just under \$106,000 from Service Canada through the Canada Summer Jobs Program (since inception of BACCC).

In the early days, Mohawk College was successful in obtaining funding from the federal department of Environment and Climate Change to help establish BACCC through the Climate Action and Awareness Fund in the amount of \$262,000 (2018/19). Early funding was also obtained from The Atmospheric Fund in the amount of \$46,000 to assist in the development of the BACCC work plan.

In addition to funding, City staff time is required to attend BACCC meetings, lend a helping hand to plan and participate in community engagement events as well as participate on implementation teams.

Climate Implications:

BACCC's ultimate goal is to achieve net zero emissions in both Hamilton and Burlington by 2050. Their interim goal is to reduce emissions in the region by 50% by 2030 from a 2016 baseline. Both goals align with the City's community greenhouse gas reduction targets.

To achieve their goals, BACCC is targeting emissions reductions from the 'Big Three' sources in the Bay Area:

- Buildings (18% of regional emissions)
- Industry (60% of regional emissions)
- Transportation (17% of regional emissions)

Engagement Matters:

City sustainability staff engaged with the program manager of BACCC to prepare this report. Sustainability staff participated in the February 27th webinar panel discussion on residential home energy retrofits and are also assisting in the planning for the May 7th in person community Climate Forum. As noted above, Burlington and Hamilton Mayors will participate in the forum. The keynote speaker will be Jennifer Keesmaat, former chief planner for the City of Toronto. BACCC staff will also speak, presenting information on their new strategic plan.

Conclusion:

In 2019, Burlington Council declared a climate emergency. The Community Climate Action Plan requires support from all sectors of the community, not just City Hall, to achieve the target to become a net carbon neutral by 2050. The City's ongoing support of BACCC helps to build opportunities for regional and local collaboration to take action on climate change, supporting the City's Climate Action Plan priorities.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. BACCC Annual Report
- B. BACCC Strategic Plan 2024 - 2026

Notifications:

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Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.