

Dundas Valley 50-Year Vision & Strategy 2008-2058

Securing the Future of our Urban Wilderness
Final Draft for Review - February 2009



1958 • Celebrating 50 Years of Conservation • 2008



Summary

2008 marked The Hamilton Conservation Authority's 50th anniversary of excellence in watershed protection and stewardship. During this time, a remarkable 1,460 hectares of natural lands in the Dundas Valley area have been brought under the management of HCA.

Beautiful vistas, stunning waterfalls, fascinating wetlands, undisturbed expanses of forests, fields, rivers and streams characterize the natural attributes of the Valley lands. Most of the lands lie within the Niagara Escarpment – a UNESCO designated International Biosphere Reserve. The Niagara Escarpment Plan, the provincial Places To Grow legislation, and the Greenbelt Act largely protect the area. At the municipal level, the City of Hamilton has incorporated these natural areas and countryside protection policies into their current urban and rural official plans.

Nonetheless, the area is becoming stressed and encroached upon by urban growth, accompanied by all the concomitant impacts and side effects. Financial resources for land acquisition are constrained, and the support and commitment of other partners and owners would be needed to assure the area's protection into the future.

Leading the Way: In 2007, the Board of Directors of HCA and the Conservations Areas Advisory Board embarked on an ambitious 50-year Vision and Strategy for 5,400 hectares of land that encompasses the Dundas Valley. Recognizing that less than one-third of the area was under management by the HCA, the year long 50-year Vision and Strategy project set out as a collaborative effort among HCA, its stakeholders and members of the public.

Collaborative Process: At the outset, the scope of the project recognized that protection and enhancement of Dundas Valley lands would rely on a number of integrally connected factors, such as: the importance of economic sustainability and vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities; the need for infusing knowledge and stewardship into the community culture; and, the vital importance of a financially sustainable future, built on partnerships.

The project was undertaken, on behalf of HCA, by Lura Consulting, a firm of experienced sustainability planners based in Hamilton, Ontario, known for their ability to initiate collaborative projects.

Project Organization, Stakeholder and Public Collaboration: A staff Task Team, led by Sandy Bell of HCA provided oversight to the consulting team. This team was supported by a Steering Committee (with representatives of the Conservation Areas Advisory Board, and Watershed Management Advisory Board), the City of Hamilton, and Environment Hamilton. A Multi-stakeholder Committee met three times to provide input, advice and guidance, and two public workshops were held to help shape the vision, goals, strategies and actions.

The resulting Vision and Strategy 2008-2058, is designed to establish a firmer foundation for securing the future of this valued urban wilderness. It is organized into four major themes, has 11 measurable goals, 41 strategies (with accompanying actions and partners) and an approach to implementation.

With strong stakeholder, public policy and financial support, most of these strategies can

be implemented or commenced within five years. Taking action on any one of them will enhance the current conditions of the Valley area for generations to come. Doing nothing is not an option.

Our 50-Year Vision

Over 100 people actively participated in developing this vision. As well, community values and aspirations were identified by people participating in surveys at festivals and events.

By 2058, Dundas Valley continues as a diverse, sustainable and essential Niagara Escarpment ecosystem. The area’s forests, streams, meadows, farmlands and neighbourhoods connect people living in vibrant urban and rural Hamilton communities with their natural and cultural heritage.

Theme Areas, Goals and Strategies

The vision and aspiration of participants focused around four common themes – each founded on the priority of protecting and enhancing Dundas Valley lands. Each theme is interdependent on, and intricately connected to, the others.

Dundas Valley Themes, Goals and Strategies

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands

1. Protect and enhance the Valley’s ecology and natural areas
2. Maintain and protect the Valley’s cultural heritage and historical features
3. Promote sustainable passive recreational opportunities within the Valley’s green spaces
4. Ensure conservation area facilities are accessible and convenient

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities

5. Promote the natural assets of the Valley to the neighbouring business communities
6. Instill agricultural stewardship, protect the viability of agriculture and encourage local food production in the Dundas Valley community
7. Ensure development best practices that are compatible with the natural environment
8. Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly Valley communities
9. Promote sustainable tourism in the Valley

Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture

10. Ensure the community values the Valley’s ecological and cultural features

Financial Sustainability and Partnerships

11. Secure long-term, sustainable financial resources

Readers are reminded that many of these goals lie outside of the formal jurisdiction of the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Achieving this Vision will rely on securing the long-term commitment of the Authority, its partners, key stakeholders and the general public. It is an opportunity for exceptional organizational and individual leadership.

Implementing the Strategy

The Hamilton Conservation Authority will continue to take a leadership role, while carefully evaluating and developing a durable organizational and financial model within which to implement the Strategy.

Annual performance reports will be prepared, with the Strategy being renewed every five years.

Acknowledgements

Lura Consulting had the privilege of working with a dedicated team of staff and stakeholders from the Hamilton Conservation Authority, our Steering Committee, and our Stakeholder Group in preparing this Strategy.

It is the result of the work of many contributors and leaders. The Strategy development was overseen by the Hamilton Conservation Authority's dedicated **Strategy Task Team**:

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And,
Sally Leppard and **Susan Hall** – Project Co-Directors, Lura Consulting

The Steering Committee members graciously donated their time to hard work and dedication to the development of the 50-Year Vision and Strategy:

Mr. Chris Firth-Eagland, Chair, Hamilton Conservation Authority

Mrs. Anne Redish, Conservation Areas Advisory Board

Mr. Philip Krakar, Watershed Management Advisory Board

Ms. Christine Lee-Morrison, Acting Manager, Environmental Planning, City of Hamilton

Ms. Heather Donison, Senior Project Manager, Sustainability, City of Hamilton

Ms. Lynda Lukasik, Executive Director of Environment Hamilton

Thanks go out to the Strategy's **Stakeholder Group** who volunteered valuable information, local knowledge, opinions and time to the development of the 50-Year Study and Strategy. We are also grateful to the members of the community for their support and participation in our surveys, public events and meetings.

Support for the 50-Year Study and Strategy was received from The Hamilton Conservation Foundation, which provided funding to enable focused discussions to fine-tune the strategies in the document.

Lura Consulting also wishes to thank:

Lura's Natalia Hahn – Project Coordinator; **Kim Peters**, **Sasha Benevides**, **Diana Murchie**, **Michelle Hrabí** and **Adrian Opiela**

Ken Hall, Giants' Rib

Mrs. Truglia, Our Lady of Peace and her Grade 3 Class

Mrs. Garofalo, Our Lady of Peace and her Grade 2/3 Class

Mrs. Jamie Walker, Chedoke Elementary School and her Grade 4 Class

About the Hamilton Conservation Authority

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA), headquartered at the western end of Lake Ontario, is the region's largest environmental management agency. For more than 50 years it has spearheaded grassroots environmental efforts to help ensure a safe and sustainable community.

Amid a swirl of growth in the 1950s, Puslinch, East and West Flamborough, Beverly, Ancaster and Dundas petitioned the Province to establish a watershed unit charged with the management of water resources. That request was approved, and the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority was founded and held its first meeting June 20, 1958, becoming one of only 12 conservation authorities in existence across the province at that time.

Sensing an urgent need to temper growth with environmental responsibility, the City of Hamilton and parts of the surrounding communities of Stoney Creek, Saltfleet, Binbrook, and Glanford decided in 1966 to join the Spencer Creek Conservation Authority. This move resulted in the creation of the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority — which has since been re-named the Hamilton Conservation Authority.

HCA is continually pursuing acquisition of new properties considered important for environmental and recreation purposes. To date, the Authority holds or manages 4,400 hectares (10,800 acres) in public trust and is responsible for the environmental protection of approximately 56,800 hectares (140,355 acres) of watershed area.

Much of it is home to rare plants, birds and mammals whose existence depends on an environment that is not pressured by human activity.

A broad range of activities supports HCA's comprehensive, coordinated approach to watershed management, including:

- Flood forecasting and flood control
- Environmental planning, watershed management and regulation
- Open space protection and public use.

The HCA is a member of Conservation Ontario, an umbrella organization for the province's network of 36 Conservation Authorities. It is also a founding member of the eco-tourism marketing alliance, and the Conservation Lands of Ontario.

The Hamilton Conservation Foundation generously supports projects undertaken by the HCA. The Foundation is dedicated to raising funds for the preservation and rehabilitation of the natural environment for the enjoyment of present and future generations. With a focus on trail development, environmental education and land acquisition, Hamilton Conservation Foundation has, and continues to make, a lasting contribution to the legacy of protection in Dundas Valley.

For more information about HCA, visit:

www.conservationhamilton.ca

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Appendix A: Strategic Directions, Actions, Lead Organizations and Priorities Matrix

Under Separate Cover: Dundas Valley 50-Year Vision & Strategy 2008-2058, *Securing the Future of our Urban Wilderness*, Appendices:

- Appendix B: Contributors to the Plan
- Appendix C: Community Outreach Report
- Appendix D: SWOT Analysis Roll-Up Report
- Appendix E: Current State Matrix
- Appendix F: Task Team Meeting Minutes and Corresponding Presentations
- Appendix G: Steering Committee Meeting Minutes and Corresponding Presentations
- Appendix H: Stakeholder Group Meeting Minutes and Corresponding Presentations
- Appendix I: Community Meeting Reports

1 Introduction

The Hamilton Conservation Authority (HCA) has, over the past 50 years, advanced the protection of significant ecosystems, natural lands and the Escarpment in the Dundas Valley area.

Now, to ensure this legacy is protected in perpetuity, HCA is taking a proactive approach to the preservation and stewardship of the natural “gem” in Hamilton’s Crown by developing a 50-year Vision and Strategy to secure its future.

Through stakeholder and community engagement, discussion and collaboration, the framework identified in Figure 1 guided the Visioning process.

The first step, to identify a Vision for the future, was followed by a thorough analysis of the current conditions in the Valley. Based on this,

the HCA and its stakeholders identified the challenges that face the future of the area.

Goals, Strategies and Actions were identified under four main themes:

- Protecting and Enhancing Valley Lands
- Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities
- Infusing Education and Stewardship in Community Culture
- Financial Sustainability and Partnerships.

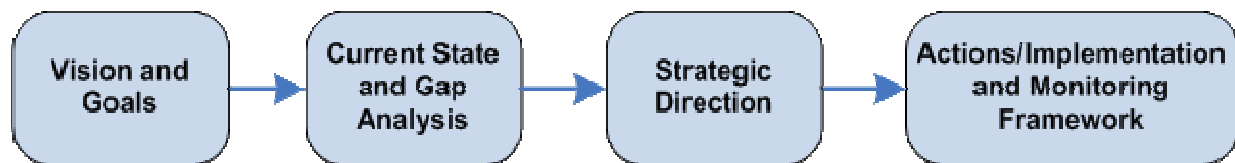


Figure 1: Sustainability Framework

2 The Dundas Valley Area

The setting for this natural “gem” in Hamilton’s crown is becoming increasingly urbanized. Because of the efforts of the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the HCA, the City of Hamilton, and numerous other stakeholders, a large part of this natural area remains protected.

The Vision for the Valley encompasses 5,400 hectares of land (1,464 owned by HCA). The area extends beyond the HCA’s lands into the rural countryside.

Beautiful vistas, stunning waterfalls, fascinating wetlands, and undisturbed expanses of forests (including Carolinian forest), fields, remnant prairie, rivers and streams characterize the natural attributes of the Valley lands.

Indigenous and First Nations Peoples used the land for centuries before European settlement. Ancient trails lie under many of the roads that now span the area between Hamilton Harbour/Cootes Paradise and the Grand River.

In the late 1700s, pioneers began to settle the area, forming the communities that are now known as Ancaster, Flamborough, Greensville

and Dundas. Their legacy – which is reflected in heritage main streets, the Hermitage Ruins & Gatehouse, the Griffin House and Woodend – lives on, reminding us of their community building efforts.

Now, the lush Valley area surrounds the community of Dundas (pop. 24,400) with parts of Ancaster (pop. 27,500), Flamborough (pop. 39,220) and Greensville either within or adjacent to the area. The area, in its entirety is within the larger boundaries of the City of Hamilton.



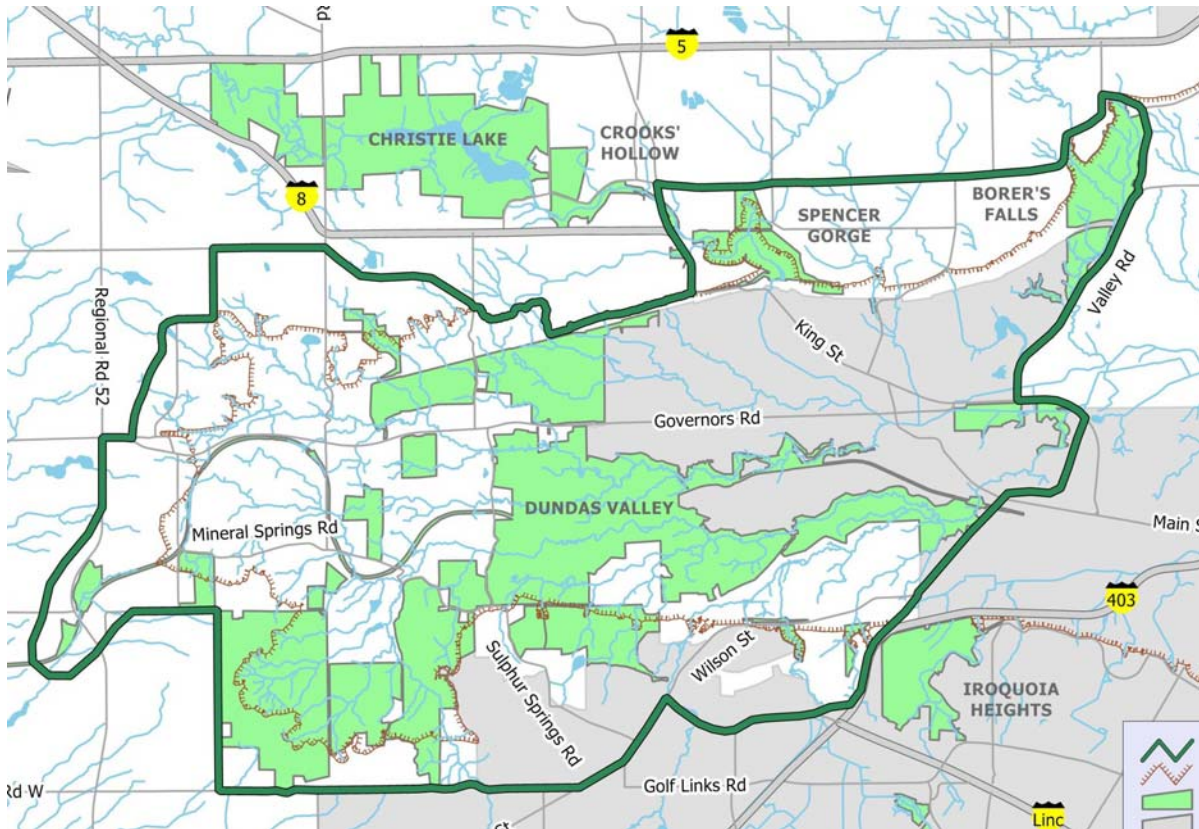


Figure 2: Dundas Valley Study Area



3 50-Year Vision Statement

The Vision for the future of Dundas Valley was created through the efforts of participants. For over six months, they honed it down to a single statement:

In 2058, Dundas Valley continues as a diverse, sustainable and essential Niagara Escarpment ecosystem. The Area's forests, streams, meadows, farmlands and neighbourhoods connect people living in vibrant urban and rural Hamilton communities with their natural and cultural heritage.



4 Current Management Conditions and Future Stresses

For the past 50 years, the HCA has demonstrated considerable organizational strength in protecting the Dundas Valley area. In particular, the staff is highly knowledgeable about the local environmental conditions, recognizes the values the community puts on the area, and has assumed the leadership role through land acquisition. HCA has established a number of programs and activities including land stewardship, education, ecology, engineering and planning – all of which contribute to its focus on protecting the Dundas Valley.

HCA is recognized as a champion of the Valley, and works with all stakeholders, including the Niagara Escarpment Commission, the City of Hamilton, and numerous active and dedicated stakeholder and citizen groups in this mission.

The City of Hamilton’s policy framework, including its emerging official plans, provides a strong basis of support for the Valley Vision and Strategy. The City implements a “triple bottom line” decision-making process when considering the future of the City. Vision 2020, provides a vision of strong and healthy communities, and outlines a set of principles for the City to follow. The Dundas Valley Vision and Strategy will help the City to achieve multiple objectives within Vision 2020.

Many others are working to protect the Valley area on an ongoing basis. There is an extensive, well-developed network of environmental and outdoor groups who dedicate their time to this

area. Designation of the Niagara Escarpment as an International Biosphere Reserve should ensure its protection for the future.



Harnessing and organizing this energy and attention, through the development and implementation of this Strategy, can protect the area for generations to come.

Within this context, protecting the Valley for future generations is one of many burgeoning priorities of the HCA. Recognizing that the HCA’s land ownership comprises only around 27% of the total Valley area, there has been, and will continue to be, challenges in gaining landowner and public support to ensure the entire valley area remains protected for the next 50 years. With pressures on the City of Hamilton for growth (from 504,599 people in 2006 to an expected 660,000 in 2031), and given the Valley’s strategic location, the natural lands may become vulnerable to impacts from the development of roads and residences. Care must be taken to ensure that this growth does not result in the loss of ecologically important

natural systems, the agricultural economy and the erosion of the rural lifestyle.

The Conservation Areas are also under threat from the impacts of conflicting trail uses (e.g. ATVs, mountain bikers, hikers). Without public and user education, signage and controls, some of the area may become degraded over time. Currently, some users have little understanding of the need to protect the area. These impacts may be exacerbated in the future as more people seek out the area for their recreation and healthy lifestyle activities.



Conflicting land use activities are also creating pressures on the area. While a number of farmers practise sustainable agriculture, other farm practices can impact the quality of rivers and streams and environmental protection efforts.

With improved funding and political support, the constituency can become more receptive and responsible for its protection. The continued leadership that has been taken, and will be taken by the HCA is vital to the success of protecting the Valley.

This Strategy sets out a framework for multi-stakeholder collaboration where all levels of government, landowners and users – led by the HCA – can work together to protect this special area. Through establishing this collaborative process, the HCA and Valley stakeholders have committed to work towards achieving this Vision.

5 Goals, Current State and Strategic Directions

The Dundas Valley community identified a number of goals for the Valley to help direct efforts to achieve the Vision. The comprehensive goals, which are listed in the table below, span over a range of land use protection, economic, education and stewardship, and financial sustainability priorities identified by stakeholders and residents.



This chapter provides a section for each identified goal that includes:

- The reason for each goal
- Highlights of the current policy framework and gaps in the area

- Strategic directions that will guide the Valley stakeholders and communities towards reaching the goal.



Appendix A lists specific actions that have been identified for implementation under each strategic direction. Not all of the goals are within the jurisdiction of the Hamilton Conservation Authority. In these cases, partner organizations are identified who will be approached to support these elements of the strategy's implementation.

Dundas Valley Goals

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands

1. Protect and enhance the Valley’s Ecology and Natural Areas
2. Maintain and protect the Valley’s cultural heritage and historical features
3. Promote sustainable passive recreational opportunities within the Valley’s Green Spaces
4. Ensure conservation area facilities are accessible and convenient

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities

5. Promote the natural assets of the Valley to the neighbouring business communities
6. Instil agricultural stewardship, protect the viability of agriculture and encourage local food production in the Dundas Valley community
7. Ensure development best practices that are compatible with the natural environment
8. Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly Valley communities
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Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture

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Financial Sustainability and Partnerships

11. Secure long-term, sustainable financial resources

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands Goals 1 - 4



Goal 1: Protect and Enhance the Valley's Ecology and Natural Areas

Development pressures, coupled with increases in population and infrastructure requirements, will continue to increase the stress on the Valley lands in the next 50 years.

Currently, less than one-third of the area is protected from development through HCA's land ownership. Another 72% lies within the greenbelt, escarpment natural, protection and parks and open space system. The policies contained within the Niagara Escarpment Plan for escarpment natural, and parks and open space, are reflected in the City of Hamilton's Official Plan, zoning by-laws and natural heritage system (NHS). These policies offer considerable protection for the area in perpetuity. However, lands outside of these zones are vulnerable to development pressures. Understandably, the amenities of the area are valuable marketing tools used by developers to promote growth.



The driving public easily accesses the area, either through the formal visitor entrances to

properties managed by the HCA, or through private property. Concerns are growing about the impact that increasing numbers of visitors to the area will have on the precious natural areas of the Valley.

Our Valley is home to:

- Over 100 species of birds and fish.
- Amphibians, reptiles and butterflies.
- Mammals
- An abundance of native trees and shrubs, including a designated Carolinian Forest and species at risk.
- Historic waterfalls and spectacular geographic formations (Borer's Falls, Spencer Gorge, Webster Falls, Tiffany Falls, Copetown Bogs, Dundas Valley ESA, and many others).

While there is extensive knowledge of the ecological attributes of Dundas Valley, there lacks a comprehensive natural features and areas inventory within the study area. Mapping to provide information on wetland habitat, land classifications, forest habitat, and a composite map showing key areas of connectivity would be highly valuable when planning for the future protection of the area.

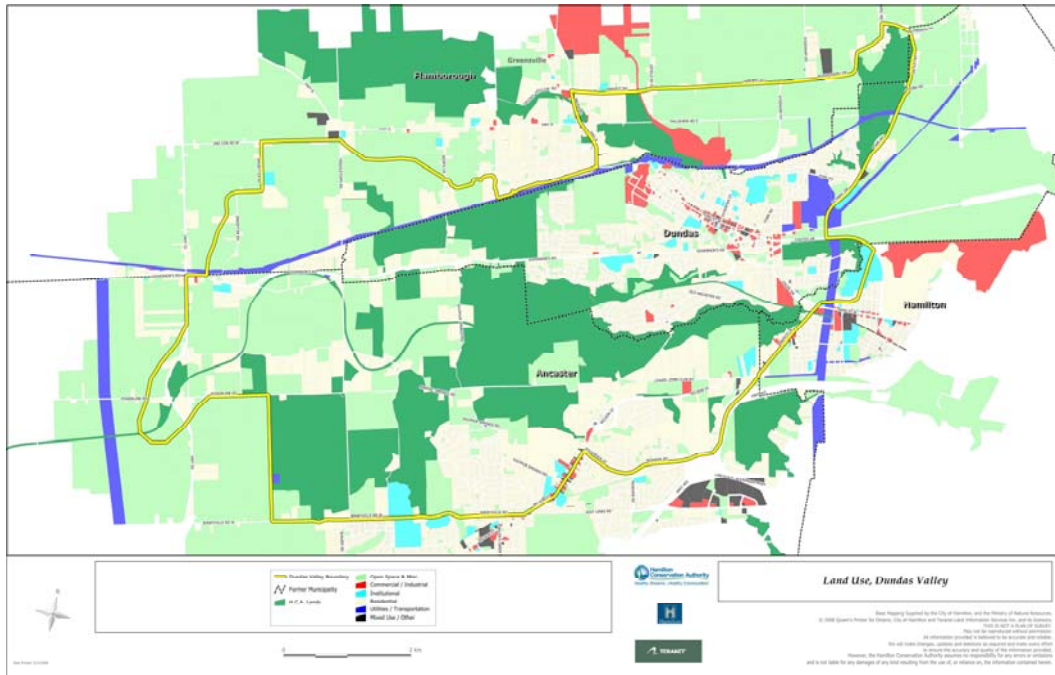


Figure 3: Dundas Valley Land Uses

Stakeholder Perspectives on Current and Future Stresses on the Valley Lands:

- Encroaching residential development
- Future transportation corridors dissecting the Valley
- Impact of disease and invasive species causing deforestation
- Impact of agricultural operations on ecologically sensitive areas
- Impact of increasing numbers of visitors in ecologically sensitive areas
- Threats to integrity of the corridor between RBG/Cootes Paradise (York Road) and the conservation lands below the escarpment

Reaching our Goal: Strategic Directions to Protect and Enhance our Valley’s Ecological and Natural Areas

The HCA, the City of Hamilton, the Niagara Escarpment Commission and Valley-wide organizations, will continue to protect and enhance the Valley’s ecology and natural areas

by following these ten Strategic Directions and accompanying actions:

- Maintain and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of the Valley habitats

- Preserve and enhance connectivity of ecosystems in the Valley and adjacent lands
- Preserve the escarpment and rural countryside, including selected vistas



- Preserve identified ecological and geographic zones, and ensure limited access
- Protect rare, endangered and species at risk within the Valley area
- Combat the impact of invasive and nuisance species within the Valley



- Protect and enhance the health of streams, watercourses and waterfalls
- Develop a climate change action, mitigation and adaptation strategy
- Reduce the impact of increasing numbers of visitors to the natural areas over time
- Recognize, protect and connect urban forest areas in surrounding communities

Goal 2: Maintain and Protect the Valley’s Cultural Heritage and Historical Features

Dundas Valley was inhabited first by Aboriginal peoples, and settled by pioneers in the early 1700s. These early settlers were attracted by the area’s scenic beauty, its potential for farming, abundance of wildlife, and proximity to Lake Ontario.

Did you know that...

- Over 3,000 artifacts have been unearthed at the Griffin House – an important Canadian Black History site
- In 1837 the Desjardins Canal enabled Dundas to emerge as an economic powerhouse?
- Thomas A. Beckett, the first chairman of the HCA, spearheaded the major land acquisition program in the late ‘60s that led to the protection of the Dundas Valley for present and future generations?

A number of provincial and municipal policies and strategies are in place to protect our cultural history. HCA has also developed Heritage Reports and recommendations that focus on interpretative plans for the Valley’s 19th century settlement history.

Great examples of heritage protection are the Hermitage ruins and the Griffin House properties that are designated through the Ontario Heritage Act as lands and buildings of

historic interest. The Griffin House was designated a National Historic Site in 2008.

While lists of historic sites are available, no comprehensive cultural heritage plan for the area exists. Aboriginal and First Nations sites of significance have not been comprehensively documented. Ancient trails, such as the Mohawk Trail, and the native portage trail that runs through the Valley, linking Cootes Paradise with the Grand River, are not visibly identified.

Achieving our Vision: Strategic Directions to Protect the Valley’s Cultural Heritage and Historical Features

The following strategies and accompanying actions will assist in maintaining and protecting the Valley’s heritage and cultural resources:

- Recognize the rich history of Aboriginal people and early settlers within the Valley
- Maintain and protect local architectural and natural heritage
- Preserve the small-town atmosphere of Dundas Valley communities

Goal 3: Promote Sustainable Passive Recreational Opportunities within the Valley’s Green Space

The Valley offers abundant opportunities for passive recreation.¹ With the current community focus on healthy living, the area is the perfect natural setting for enjoying the outdoors. Care must continue to be taken to ensure that environmentally or culturally significant areas are protected from over-use and incompatible activities.

Demand for access will only increase, caused not only by population increases, but the heightening awareness about the health benefits gained from exposure to and appreciation of nature. Current plans, such as the Hamilton Recreational Trails Master Plan, and the Dundas and Ancaster Transportation Master Plans, are expected to promote the establishment of a connected trail network as a priority in this area. Trail connections between the Valley lands, Dundas, Ancaster and Cootes Paradise would provide a valuable asset.

In the future, the impacts of climate change on recreational opportunities will need to be understood and mitigated where possible. Impact mitigation and adaptation strategies can be developed now to protect and manage the area for the future.

¹ Passive recreation means non-motorized activities such as biking, horseback riding, skiing, snowshoeing, hiking, walking, birding.



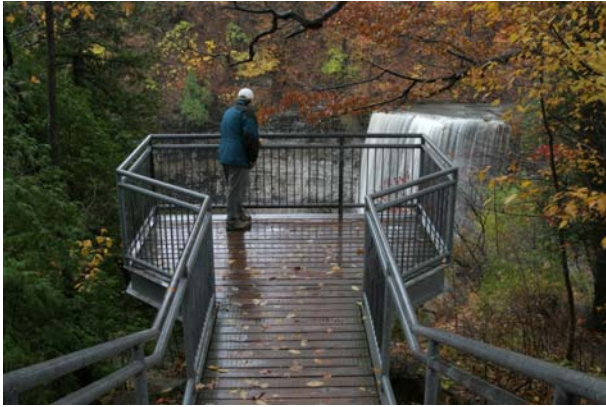
Existing trails within the HCA Valley properties span some 40 kms. The 32 km Hamilton-Brantford rail-trail is used by pedestrians, horseback riders, commuters and cyclists as a major recreational link to surrounding communities. Twelve kilometres of the world-recognized Bruce Trail runs through the Valley.

Trail maintenance and improved connections/extensions are high priorities for stakeholders. Over the years, several trail plans and strategies have been prepared.

Trails, such as Borer’s Falls trails, have narrow paths that show some degree of erosion and widening. Opportunities to expand corridors such as the Rail Trail could improve access. With the focus of this strategy on the Valley area, this is an opportune time to focus on developing a comprehensive trails, parks and bikeways plan for the Valley.

Current and Potential Stresses:

- Abuse of the area by users
- Conflicting uses on trails
- Climate Change impacts
- Lack of trail maintenance funds
- User profiles and needs are not understood



Achieving our Vision: Strategic Directions to Promote Passive Recreation

The HCA is committed to work with its partners (e.g., the City of Hamilton and the Bruce Trail Conservancy) to assist in implementing the following strategic directions:

- Encourage passive recreation within the Valley and provide opportunities for exercise
- Create a Dundas Valley Trails Master Plan

Goal 4: Ensure Conservation Area Facilities are Accessible and Convenient

Ensuring that people have easy, affordable and convenient access to the area will assist in protecting the natural areas from degradation. Policies and procedures within HCA lands, the Bruce Trail Conservancy, and various Conservation Area (CA) master plans address these issues.

The Dundas Valley CA has 11 public access zones. Parking is available in most areas. While comprehensive trail maps exist for parts of the Valley lands, information showing access points, facilities and services for the entire Valley area does not exist, since the area has not previously been planned in its entirety. A comprehensive accessibility policy and plan, for the entire Valley area would be useful when planning to achieve this goal.

Encroachment onto Conservation Area lands, by private landowners creates stress on the relationships between HCA and adjacent property owners. In addition, there are encroachment issues between CA users on private property, creating tensions among the landowners.

Visitor education, trail etiquette, proper demarcation of property boundaries in problem areas, and notification of acceptable uses will all help in maintaining the harmony between visitors and conservation area neighbours. Improved relationships among private property owners, developers and the Conservation Authority will enable the development of

improved, managed access to the entire Valley area.



Creating access to the natural spaces within Conservation Areas for physically challenged visitors is also a priority for some user groups. As there are some areas where the natural features of the area are not conducive to universal access, it is (and will be in the future) important to ensure that access by all members of the public is available, where viable and feasible.

Achieving the Vision: Strategic Directions to Ensure Accessible and Convenient Facilities

Three strategic directions, with accompanying actions, were identified to help realize this goal:

- Develop an Accessibility Policy and Plan for the physically challenged
- Continually improve visitor facilities and services within Conservation Area lands
- Develop a Visitor Access and Management Plan for the Dundas Valley lands



Current and future considerations relating to accessibility:

- Geographically challenging areas are not universally accessible
- Ensure affordable access to lower income visitors
- In the future, controlled and uncontrolled access by a larger number of visitors may create negative impacts on the area
- Unauthorized encroachment by some private property owners on Conservation Area lands

Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities

Goals 5 - 10



Goal 5: Promote the Valley as an Economic Asset to the Neighbouring Business Communities

Natural and culturally significant areas such as the Dundas Valley are a marketable attraction to adjacent communities and businesses. The continued promotion of tourism opportunities, and the development of a supporting green economy in neighbouring communities presents a significant opportunity for the future of this area.

Tourism attractions in the Dundas Valley are promoted by Southern Ontario Tourism, Trail associations, historical societies, the Conservation Authority, and the City of Hamilton, among others. Initiatives such as the promotion of Hamilton as the “Waterfall Capital of the World”, its designation as a World Biosphere Reserve (UNESCO), and the designation of the Griffin House as a national historic site designation can combine into powerful economic development and marketing opportunities.

The greening of communities and businesses in neighbouring urban areas will require a concerted effort and marketing plan by local business organizations, such as the Business Improvement Areas and Chambers of Commerce. While the City of Hamilton’s current focus is to develop the economy by providing a cost competitive environment and to develop a skilled labour supply within the area, a demonstrated focus on the areas around the Dundas Valley could provide the opportunity to

pilot a number of green marketing, and business improvement strategies

Establishing a business environment that promotes local food, eco-tourism and cultural tourism, are opportunities for the future that were identified through the Strategy’s development.

Full engagement of the local business community in the neighbouring towns will assist in determining the feasibility of implementing and testing a pilot project of this nature.

Achieving our Vision: Strategic Directions to Encourage the Area’s Green Economy

The HCA recognizes that the economic viability of local businesses is outside of its mandate and areas of expertise. To realize the potential of natural areas marketing, HCA commits to work with the business sector and the City’s economic development sector to develop a pilot project that will test the feasibility of these strategies. Strategic directions are as follows:

- Enhance the economic viability of local business through “sustainable natural areas” marketing
- Promote green business practices within the community

Goal 6: Instill Agricultural Stewardship, Protect the Viability of Agriculture and Encourage Local Food Production in the Dundas Valley Community

Dundas Valley farms and food producers provide essential food supplies to the surrounding urban areas. Protection of agricultural land and production both within and in the vicinity of the Valley, is a key element of the Dundas Valley Vision and Strategy.

In the vicinity of the Valley....

- There is the highest number of farms in the Hamilton area. 61% of the City's gross farm receipts came from Flamborough and Dundas, with 13% from Ancaster.
- The agricultural business provides nursery and sod, cash crops, poultry, fruit, vegetables, horse/pony and greenhouse operations to Ontario's economy.
- Farmland creates important linkages, critical habitats and wildlife corridors for many species.

Trends in farming activities in Dundas, Ancaster and Flamborough generally show a decline over the past decade. In some areas, farming is becoming less viable as development pressures drive land prices up.

Should the current trends continue, and the threat to viable and sustainable agriculture be

realized over the next decade, the rural culture of the area will significantly diminish. It is a priority of this Strategy to restore the appreciation for agriculture, both as an activity and a lifestyle. Lack of understanding about the profession and lifestyle of farming, is contributing to the erosion of this vital form of livelihood in the area.



Protection for agricultural land and agricultural activities is enshrined in Hamilton's Rural Official Plan policies. With the provincial Green Belt and Places to Grow legislation and supporting policies, lands within the Dundas Valley area will be set aside for agricultural purposes for the foreseeable future. While protection of agricultural uses is paramount, it is equally important to assure the farming community that a reasonable living can be made from the activity.



Realizing our Vision: Strategic Directions to Support and Promote Agriculture

The protection and promotion of agricultural lands is outside of the mandate of the HCA. In light of the importance of this Goal, HCA will assist and support initiatives to plan and implement the strategies and actions set out in

the Vision. HCA will encourage stakeholders from the agriculture and economic development communities to work together to assist agriculture in renewing its economic viability.

The following three strategic directions and accompanying actions will assist in achieving this goal:

- Develop farmer-generated mechanisms to develop public support for agriculture
- Increase awareness of the importance of local agriculture as both an activity and a lifestyle
- Support the promotion of locally grown and processed crops in close proximity to residents

Goal 7: Ensure Development “Best Practices” that are Compatible with the Natural Environment

Current provincial policy ensures local official plans comply with focusing development within settlement area boundaries and protecting the ecological processes that support natural areas. In the Dundas Valley area, the majority of the open spaces and farmland fall under the protection of the Niagara Escarpment Plan, the Greenbelt plan, and municipal policies.



Nonetheless, if we are to realize this vision, increased efforts by all stakeholders must be made to protect Valley lands from incompatible developments. HCA reviews development

permits from the perspective of watershed management, protection and regulation. Many other jurisdictions, such as the City of Hamilton, Niagara Escarpment Commission and others, need to continue to exercise their jurisdictional responsibilities if the area is to be protected from incompatible growth.

Development Statistics

In 2004,

- In Dundas, 122 building permits were issued within urban boundaries, and 11 issued outside the built boundary;
- In Ancaster, 22 infill permits were issues, and 386 issued outside the built boundary; and
- In Flamborough, 2 infill permits were issued and 80 issued outside the built boundary.

The provincial Places to Grow plan, requires that 40% of new residential development occur within built-up areas, and the balance, 60% outside the urban area. As a result, development pressure on Dundas Valley lands is expected to increase.

Regardless of this protective policy context, development pressures (for both residential, commercial big box stores and aggregate extraction) persist adjacent to the area. The communities of Copetown, Greensville, Dundas and Ancaster are particularly affected, since intensification, in some cases, is thought by some residents to affect the historic and cultural nature of their communities.

Achieving Our Vision: Strategic Directions for Environmentally Sustainable Growth

Three strategic directions have been identified to achieve this goal. These approaches recognize the jurisdictional limitations that affect the influence both the City of Hamilton and the Conservation Authority have over development decisions. It is also recognized

that continual leadership to protect the Valley lands can be advanced regardless of jurisdiction. They are:

- Minimize growth impacts on the ecological integrity of the Valley within privately held Valley lands
- Develop a “Best Practices” management plan for development and enhancement of HCA owned lands
- Ensure sufficient environmentally sustainable infrastructure capacities for water, sewer, roads, etc. within the Valley areas to minimize impacts on the environment

Goal 8: Ensure Pedestrian, Bicycle and Transit-Friendly Valley Communities

As Valley communities become more self-reliant, and the trend moves towards residents living closer to their places of employment, the demand for transit, bike lanes and pedestrian walkways is increasing. For the City of Hamilton as a whole, the 2006 Census Community Profiles indicate that around 65% of employed residents worked within their municipality of residence. We can visualize a future with complete and strong communities that are moving away from driving, towards taking public transportation, car pooling, and active transportation modes.

Transportation Master Plans for Dundas and Ancaster were under development at the time this Strategy was prepared. Their focus is on minimizing the impact of roadways on urban character, improving pedestrian and cycling connections, and providing a variety of transportation choices, including transit. This focus is not new, and yet it has not yet been realized. Over thirty years ago, in 1976, the Dundas Valley Conservation Area master plan identified the need to minimize the expansion of the present road system, and focus on public transit by providing bus service to the Valley. Realizing this vision remains a challenge.

Limiting automobile access to the Valley area can only be accomplished by a focused effort to provide alternate forms of transportation. This access can be provided by establishing connections between neighbouring communities and the Valley through trails, bike lanes, and mass transit. Access to the Valley

area, by public transportation for all Hamilton residents is a strong focus of this Strategy.



Realizing our Vision: Strategic Directions for Transportation

Stakeholders from the City of Hamilton, neighbouring communities, and the HCA will commit to ensuring that alternative forms of transportation are available to access the Valley lands. The result of this shift away from the automobile will be decreased pollution and congestion, Valley access to all Hamiltonians, and an increased profile of the Valley, and, with careful visitor management planning, the result will be improved protection of the valued natural assets. The strategic directions are as follows:

- Create transit, pedestrian and bicycle linkages and visible gateways and entrances between the Valley and neighbouring communities
- Develop a long-term sustainable transportation plan for the Valley

- Achieve public awareness and increased use of active transportation and transit opportunities
- Work with the City of Hamilton, within the context of their Transportation Master Plan, to implement a policy to define and preserve “special character” roads through Valley

Goal 9: Promote Sustainable Tourism in the Valley

HCA anticipates that increasing numbers of visitors will be attracted to the area, as it becomes more accessible. Increasing public awareness about the benefits of nature, resulting from healthy community campaigns focusing on combating “Nature Deficit Disorder”² will result in demand for the “outdoors” in close proximity to urban areas.

Protection and promotion of the vibrant “village feel” of Valley communities will also result in increased visitors to the communities of Dundas, Greensville, Flamborough and Ancaster. There is potential for Valley communities to capitalize on this, such that tourism will contribute to a part of local employment for residents. Building on the strategies identified in Goals 5 and 6, opportunities exist for developing niche businesses in ecological tourism, culinary tourism and recreational tourism, utilizing the Valley’s proximity and natural attributes as the main attraction.



The Strategic Directions and accompanying actions fully support Tourism Hamilton’s Strategic Plan, 2008-2010, which encourages tourism marketing, and local partnerships to enhance tourism opportunities in Hamilton.

Tourism Statistics - 2005

- Over 3 million tourists visited Hamilton in 2005
- 24% participated in outdoor/sports activities; 12% visited historic sites
- \$132 million generated towards the Gross Domestic Product (GDP)
- 2,384 local jobs
- 250 people visited the Griffin House

² Richard Louv: Last Child in the Woods, 1995.

Reaching our Goal: Strategic Directions for Enhancing Tourism

Stakeholder leadership in developing sustainable tourism programs for the Valley is vital to achieving this goal.

HCA will stimulate the engagement of these stakeholders, and participate with business and tourism agencies in pursuing the following strategic directions, and accompanying actions:

- Develop a Valley-wide focused, sustainable tourism plan and marketing strategy to promote eco, cultural, culinary and outdoor recreational tourism
- Develop a Management Plan for increased numbers of visitors (in concert with Goal 4)

Infusing Education and Stewardship into the Community Culture

Goal 10



Goal 10: Ensure the Community Values the Valley's Ecological and Cultural Features

The promotion and delivery of environmental and natural areas education and awareness is a priority for a number of area organizations. These organizations include the Hamilton Conservation Authority and the Hamilton Conservation Foundation, Dundas Valley Historical Society, the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Giants Rib, Carolinian Canada, and the Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Project among others. These organizations are significant promoters of environmental, cultural and natural areas education and awareness.

The need for increased outdoor educational awareness programs and activities is driven by a number of factors, including:

- The requirements for environmental education as part of the school curriculum program set by the Province
- HCA's conservation and natural resource management mandate
- User demand exceed the capacity to deliver services through HCA's existing environmental education programs
- Lack of information and respect for the sensitivity of the local ecosystems
- Vandalism
- Mis-use/conflicting uses of trails by users

Achieving a higher level of awareness, both from visitors and Valley landowners, would contribute significantly to the natural areas protection goals. Once educated, today's users would pass their knowledge down to the generations to come. The Valley area and HCA's conservation lands in particular, offer a significant opportunity to meet the needs for both formal and informal environmental education.



The benefits of environmental education in young people cannot be understated. In its 2007 "Reconnecting Children Through Outdoor Education", the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario validates that children who use outdoor education as a part of their curricula demonstrate: increased engagement with, and enthusiasm for, learning; improved academic performance including better language skills; greater sense of pride and ownership in accomplishments; and, a variety of substantially increased critical thinking skills. Youth can also

serve a vital volunteer role in maintaining and improving the area through planting and land stewardship programs.

Constraints on achieving this goal include lack of funding to deliver education and awareness, the need for improved facilities (e.g. outdoor education centre), and the diffusion of visitors throughout the Valley, thus making it difficult to provide messaging and information at key points.

The Hamilton-Halton watershed stewardship program has identified a number of strategies and actions to expand education and stewardship that include collaboration on a common vision and program, (all groups working together), financing approaches, landowners programs, engaging new Canadians, demonstration sites, and mechanisms to measure success.

The Hamilton Conservation Authority is well-positioned to develop an outdoor education centre to provide expanded programs for both formal and informal environmental education. The need for curriculum based outdoor learning opportunities for local school boards, colleges and universities outpaces the availability of service.

In the future, the Valley can continue to serve as a significant natural resource for environmental education and stewardship. It can serve the increasing population's needs for both recreation and knowledge. It can demonstrate best practices in land management – for rural, agricultural and conservation area land owners.

Achieving our Vision: Strategic Directions for Education and Stewardship

Four strategic directions have been identified that will work to support the plans and strategies already in existence by numerous organizations.

Collaboration and partnership is a key element of future success, and HCA's role, together with others such as the Royal Botanical Gardens, educators, and non-government organizations can maximize available funding, and leverage new funding to make this goal a reality. The strategic directions are:

- Continually promote good environmental stewardship practices to the local community and work in partnership to implement them
- Provide new and improved outdoor education facilities and programs to meet the current and future demands
- Promote opportunities for demonstration sites
- Develop marketing and visitor attraction plans that focus on the urban wilderness and the proximity of the Valley's beauty to residents (in concert with Goal 10).

Financial Sustainability and Partnerships

Goal 11



Goal 11: Secure Long-Term, Sustainable Financial Resources

This Vision and Strategy encompasses lands that are both privately and publicly held. Up until now, efforts to secure properties within the Dundas Valley Area have been led by the Conservation Authority. Since the late 1960's, successive Conservation Authority Chairs and senior staff (such as Thomas A. Beckett and Ben Vanderbrug) have championed the acquisition and protection of Dundas Valley lands. Private landowners have donated important areas, and the Hamilton Conservation Foundation continues to graciously support land acquisition programs. These initiatives have been remarkably successful, resulting in 1,464 hectares out of a total of 5,400 hectares of Dundas Valley lands that are either owned or managed by the HCA.

Since HCA's property interests represent just over a quarter of the total Valley area, the HCA, together with Valley stakeholders will need to develop a comprehensive and sustainable financial plan to ensure the realization of goals, strategies and actions within this Vision.

From HCA's perspective, Dundas Valley Conservation lands are but one valuable portion of HCA's assets. While the goal of the HCA is to achieve financial independence for its Conservation Areas, the reality is that revenue from user fees and fund raising efforts only generates about 50% of the required expenditures. Thus, the continued success of HCA's leadership in protecting Dundas Valley is predicated on its ability to generate sufficient

funds for land management, acquisition of natural areas, and programming. The collaboration of area stakeholders will also be needed in leading the realization of the numerous other goals, strategies and actions within this Vision.



With increasing demand for programs, development pressures, and the burgeoning need for protection of ecologically sensitive areas, HCA is moving forward to develop a comprehensive program for land acquisition and/or securing lands to ensure protection of the area in perpetuity. With continually increasing land acquisition costs, the HCA will continue to depend upon the generosity of adjacent landowners, alternative mechanisms to secure lands (such as conservation easements, land trusts, leases), and contributions from the City of Hamilton and other levels of government.

As we enter the next decade, availability of funds is becoming increasingly limited, and expected to decrease further over time. Unless

there is a focused effort by key stakeholders, protection of the Valley may hinge entirely on the entrepreneurial qualities of HCA staff, land donations, and the good work of the Hamilton Conservation Foundation.

This Vision and Strategy is intended to provide the necessary focus that will result in the protection of the Valley for future generations.

Much work has been done in the past to identify secure sources of funding. It is now paramount that Valley stakeholders concentrate all efforts on securing long term financial security for this special area.

Consideration should also be given to exploring the potential to combine the financial strategy for Dundas Valley area with the adjacent Cootes to Escarpment Conservation and Land Management Strategy. Together, these two areas of natural beauty and cultural significance may qualify for designation as a World Heritage Site. The Cootes to Escarpment strategy is scheduled for completion in June 2009.

Achieving the Vision: Strategic Directions for Financial Sustainability

Building on current efforts, HCA commits to working with its municipal partner, government and non-government organizations, and private landowners, to develop a financial plan for the Dundas Valley area. Support for this initiative should be procured through sources such as capacity-building grants through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' green municipal funding, economic development funding, Ontario Greenbelt fund, Ontario Trillium Foundation, tourism grants, or others, in partnership with the City of Hamilton.

To achieve this goal, the HCA will work with its stakeholders and strive to:

- Explore all opportunities for revenue generation both within HCA conservation lands and the Valley as a whole
- Ensure affordable access to all visitors
- Ensure financial sustainability to maintain HCA lands
- Continue to acquire and secure additional lands for protection in accordance with HCA's land acquisition strategies (2006 Strategic Plan)
- Secure funding to sustain HCA's stewardship efforts to undertake these actions
- Explore the co-benefits of connecting with the Cootes to Escarpment natural areas strategy financial plan
- Explore funding for dedicated staff to champion this initiative, including a Strategy co-ordinator

6 Implementation and Monitoring

The Dundas Valley area that is the focus of this Vision and Strategy is owned and managed by a large number of property owners. As such, the implementation cannot be developed by the HCA alone.

Recognizing this, throughout the development of the Dundas Valley 50-year Vision and Strategy, the HCA, its Task Team and Steering Committee, engaged numerous stakeholder groups and residents. These individuals have actively participated in the development of the Strategy, through providing their knowledge and priorities to secure the future of the Valley. It is therefore important that the approach to implementation reflects both the mandate of the HCA and its stakeholders.

6.1 Implementing the Plan: Organizational Design

A number of organizational options for implementing the Plan were considered. These were:

- HCA Board of Directors delegates the Strategy’s oversight and implementation to its Conservation Areas Advisory Board;
- HCA and/or its Conservation Areas Advisory Board initiate a special purpose, multi-sectoral implementation committee to develop an organizational and operational plan that focuses on Strategy implementation
- Exploring the co-benefits of linking the Dundas Valley Vision and Strategy with the Cootes to Escarpment Park System

study and developing a joint implementation strategy

- A hybrid model.



The success of this Strategy will rely not only on HCA support, but more importantly on the commitments of partner organizations and members of the public. Potential partner organizations are identified in the strategies and actions listed in Appendix A.

Upon Board approval of this Vision and Strategy, the HCA will move forward and develop a strong basis of support for the implementation of this long-term vision.

To facilitate this, HCA will develop a partner engagement strategy that includes obtaining support for the Goals and Strategies within this document from the following organizations:

- The City of Hamilton
- Environment Hamilton
- Bruce Trail Conservancy
- Agriculture and Small Farm Organizations

- Boards of Education/Outdoor Educators
- Royal Botanical Gardens
- Tourism Hamilton
- Business Improvement Associations
- Members of the public

organizational model has been identified and approved by HCA's Board of Directors.

6.2 Reporting

HCA will prepare annual performance reports on the progress of this Strategy. The Strategy could be renewed every 5 years.

The current Task Team should continue to provide staff support to this initiative in 2009, until partners have been recruited, and an

Appendix A: Strategic Directions, Actions, Lead Organizations and Priorities Matrix

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 1: Protect and enhance the valley’s ecology and natural areas			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Maintain and improve the ecological integrity and diversity of the Valley habitats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a broad, ecological focused Forestry Management and Restoration Plan for the entire Valley, that includes forestry protection measures (including Carolinian forest remnants); count a tree inventory, and regeneration plans and projects for heavily used areas of the Valley • Implement sub-watershed plans • Strengthen awareness of and compliance with International Biosphere designation • Identify and apply for applicable international conservation designations (e.g. IUCN, UNESCO, World Heritage) • Implement biological monitoring program – include volunteer monitoring program • Document change every 10 years using aerial photography • Assess removal/development of infrastructure 	HCA, Public agencies, Land owners, Community volunteers	

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 1: Protect and enhance the valley’s ecology and natural areas			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2 – Preserve and enhance connectivity of ecosystems in the Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create naturalized and green corridors to maintain and enhance connectivity, including connecting HCA properties to Lake Ontario and Cootes Paradise (along Spencer Creek), and connect Spencer Creek to Webster Falls • Look at City of Hamilton Trails Master Plan to see what linkages are shown • Link in with Cootes to Escarpment Strategy 	HCA, Land stewards	
3 – Preserve the escarpment and rural countryside, including selected vistas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a “Viewsheds” study for Dundas Valley, that includes developing criteria for identifying areas of Visual Significance for viewsheds in areas excluded from NEC development controls (i.e. urban areas) • Check OHF Component B funding for study early 90’s to identify lookouts & interpretation sites on Hamilton escarpment (was done for Bob Chrystian) • Identify existing protection measures (e.g. within and outside of NEC jurisdiction) • Identify protection policy for inclusion in City of Hamilton’s zoning by-law review in 2013 (e.g. height control by-laws) (City of Hamilton to develop protection principles within its 2009 zoning by-law) • Develop community groups to support work to preserve areas 	Niagara Escarpment Commission, City of Hamilton	
4 – Preserve identified ecological and geographic zones, and ensure limited access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create preservation areas with limited or no access • Expand and increase number of protected areas 		

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 1: Protect and enhance the valley’s ecology and natural areas			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
5 – Protect rare, endangered and species at risk within the Valley area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement protection plans for individual species (based on natural areas inventory, and nature counts) • Inquire about how HCA’s HHWSP funding can assist to do species at risk work with landowners • Implement protection policies and plans • Focus HCA land acquisition and protection in priority areas • Develop landowner/awareness/protection/stewardship program (look at Hamilton-Halton Watershed Stewardship Program) • Develop visitor management/awareness/protection/stewardship program • Ensure NEC motorized vehicles policy in natural areas parks is implemented to ensure minimized detriment to species 	HCA, MNR, DFO, Provincial Government, Federal Government	
6 – Combat the impact of invasive and nuisance species within the Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and implement volunteer programs such as annual native planting days and invasive plant picking days (could be both public and private lands) • Identify, monitor and control invasive and nuisance species (both indigenous and non-indigenous) (could be on both public and private lands) • Implement a deer management strategy, including deer count; number of deer the Valley can support, and population control measures 	MNR, DFO, Provincial Government, Federal Government	

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 1: Protect and enhance the valley’s ecology and natural areas			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
7 – Protect and enhance the health of streams, watercourses and waterfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect surface and ground water through Source Water protection plans (including wells and aquifers) • Implement sub-watershed plans • Monitor water quality • Develop and implement long-term erosion prevention plan • Naturalize water channels where appropriate • Restore Spencer Creek • Continue to implement multi-year access and enhancement plan (joint management approach) for Waterfalls and Watercourses Plan (January 2004) 	HCA, City of Hamilton, Well-Aware/Well-Wise, MNR, DFO, Provincial Government, Federal Government	
8 – Develop a climate change action, mitigation and adaptation strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HCA to participate in and support NEC/Other government agencies’ Climate Change investigative monitoring plots • Identify “quick start” actions to address climate change – e.g. HCA conduct a GHG inventory and develop an action plan to halt/reverse the local impacts of climate change on the valley, and for HCA lands and operations • Participate in a Climate Change Adaptation Strategy • Encourage Climate Change awareness for business and residents in the Valley area. Couple this action with image development/marketing of “Nature Valley” in valley communities • Encourage and drive public dialogue on the impact of climate change 	HCA, City of Hamilton	High

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 1: Protect and enhance the valley’s ecology and natural areas			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
9 – Reduce the impact of increasing numbers of visitors to the natural areas over time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look into acquisition of additional lands to mitigate impact of increasing numbers of visitors • Develop education plan to expand public awareness of impacts of visitors 	HCA	High
10 – Recognize, protect and connect urban forest areas in surrounding communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage tree planting and design/promote gardening plots • Take part in stewardship for urban green spaces and support this through the vision 		

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 2: Maintain and protect the Valley’s cultural heritage and historical features			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Recognize the rich history of Aboriginal people and early settlers within the Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For areas outside of HCA properties, educate the public about cultural heritage features of the Dundas Valley, including the indigenous trails (develop program to generate awareness) • Provide guided tours and programs to generate and create awareness of culture and history • Identify native portage trail running through the valley Link Cootes Paradise with the Grand River (ancient aboriginal trails) • Implement heritage conservation guidelines • Recognize and conserve heritage sites on HCA properties and conduct study to inventory and assess the status of resources/sites and develop action plans • Develop heritage conservation guidelines • Foster appreciation of heritage to all age groups through education programs, photo and art contests, etc. • Affix plaques in prominent places recognizing historical sites (i.e. Native history, Governor’s Rd., etc.) 	First Nations, HCA, Landowners, GRCA	

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands:			
Goal 2: Maintain and protect the Valley’s cultural heritage and historical features			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2 – Maintain and protect local architectural and natural heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Dundas Valley Visitor Services Plan and create a distinct identity and promotional program for the Dundas Valley and neighbouring communities with the natural and cultural heritage theme • Undertake an evaluation of properties/buildings for consideration of designation under the Ontario Heritage Act • Promote the historic role of the Spencer Creek in the development of the Dundas community • Identify and ensure the long term sustainability of historic buildings and resources (e.g. Hermitage Ruins, Gatehouse, Darnley Mill Ruins, Griffin House) • Utilize area heritage designation to preserve local heritage. Maintain and protect local heritage sites and buildings • Work with local galleries and Dundas Valley School of Art • Limit building heights • Seek and provide financial incentives to property owners to maintain their buildings in keeping with its heritage 	Community Councils, City of Hamilton, Local heritage committees, HCA	
3 – Preserve the small-town atmosphere of Dundas Valley communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote village atmosphere through streetscape and urban design • Conserve green spaces to protect small-town/village atmosphere 	City of Hamilton, BIAs	

Protect and Enhance Dundas Valley Lands: Goal 4: Ensure conservation area facilities are accessible and convenient.			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Develop Accessibility Policy and Plan for the physically challenged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of accessibility, develop accessibility policy and implementation plan 	HCA	
2 – Continually improve visitor facilities and services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For HCA Properties, Review HCA Visitor Services and Facilities to update and include: • Implement looping transit facility/shuttles that bring visitors to/from conservation areas • Develop a small trail centre at the Administrative building/workshop area • Link Ancaster Village core & DV Trails as part of subdivision development on Mt. Mary lands (23 acres being donated to HCA) • Work with developers to donate & build simple trails info and servicing centre • For All Valley Lands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support implementation of NEC motorized vehicles policy in natural areas ○ Consider changing access fee programs and implement annual fee through taxes 	HCA	

<p>3 – Develop Visitor Access and Management Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create parking near the Trail Centre to avoid conflict between trail users with residents • Encourage land owners to allow walking trails through properties for Bruce Trail Route • Maintain the ‘Good Neighbourhood Policy’ between the HCA and Valley residents • Undertake a public education campaign about the conservation areas • Encourage adjacent residents to be aware of invasive species and non-native plants • Encourage trail users to refrain from parking on residential streets • Improve signage on trails (private areas, trash cans, etc.) 	<p>HCA</p>	
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Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of the Dundas Valley Communities

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities: Goal 5: Promote the natural assets of the Valley to the neighbouring business communities			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Enhance the economic viability of local business through ‘sustainable natural areas’ marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in economic development strategies to promote the natural assets of the Valley • Install promotional signage at urban gateways 	BIA, Chambers of Commerce	
2 – Promote green business practices within the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote environmentally friendly behaviour (e.g. reusing & recycling, energy conservation, anti-idling, etc.) • Celebrate and recognize business leadership in natural resource/green business stewardship • Establish good contact between HCA and Business Improvement Associations • Encourage residents to shop locally rather than at ‘big box stores’ 	BIA, Chambers of Commerce	

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities:			
Goal 6: Instill agricultural stewardship, protect the viability of agriculture and encourage local food production in the Dundas Valley community			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Develop farmer-generated mechanisms to develop public support for agriculture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide incentives for farmers to use sustainable and green agricultural practices • Strengthen and promote Environmental Farm Plans and agricultural leadership • Strengthen and promote Environmental Stewardship Programs • Promote low impact, organic agriculture • Promote Greenbelt and participate in its program 	HCA, Agriculture Federations	
2 – Increase awareness of the importance of local agriculture as both an activity and a lifestyle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate the public about the importance of agricultural land, farming as a lifestyle and as a profession • Promote urban food production and hobby farms • Incorporate opportunities for agricultural knowledge and best practice sharing between youth and seniors 	HCA, Agriculture Federations	
3 – Support the promotion of locally grown and processed crops in close proximity to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reintroduce a farmers’ market in the Valley’s adjacent communities • Develop a marketing strategy for locally grown food • Expand agriculture and encourage people to grow food in their yards 	HCA, Agriculture Federations	

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities: Goal 7: Ensure development best practices that are compatible with the natural environment			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Minimize growth impacts on the ecological integrity of the Valley within privately held Valley lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In accordance with the Provincial Growth Plan and Greenbelt Plans, support intensification and development within current approved boundaries to reduce land requirements for new developments and encourage the focus of development to Hamilton’s downtown core • Utilize/enforce NEC criteria and guidelines for development and control in urban and rural areas • Encourage development to utilize alternative power supplies (e.g. wind, solar) • Maintain HCA’s policy commitment to influence all regulatory bodies to minimize residential and commercial development impacts on the Valley in areas that are outside NEC’s development control zones • Encourage green development 		
2 – Develop a ‘best practices’ management plan for development and enhancement of HCA owned lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developments should meet LEED standards or similar standards where feasible • Construction and site management should use best practices environmental management • Utilize ‘triple bottom line’ decision making 		
3 – Ensure sufficient environmentally sustainable infrastructure capacities for water, sewer, roads, etc. within the Valley areas to minimize impacts on the environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to include environmentally sustainable infrastructure in City plans 	City of Hamilton	

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities:			
Goal 8: Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly Valley communities			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Create transit, pedestrian and bicycle linkages and visible gateways and entrances between the Valley and neighbouring communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish walking and bicycle linkages between the Valley and neighbouring communities • Add or maintain foot trails and bike paths in the downtown cores (in addition to green spaces) 	City of Hamilton	
2 – Develop a long-term sustainable transportation plan for the Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement strategies and plans to achieve pedestrian and bicycle friendly communities within the City of Hamilton’s Transportation Master Plan processes for Dundas and Ancaster • Perform traffic surveys to find problem areas • Creation of ‘no car zones’ in the short term (on conservation lands) • In the long term, contemplate limiting access to automobiles and providing transit accessibility to conservation lands • Incorporate bike lanes as a requirement if a road is constructed or widened • Implement wheeled trains or trolleys on rail trail or within conservation lands for transportation 	City of Hamilton/HCA	
3 – Achieve public awareness and increased use of active transportation and transit opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure conservation area access by mass transit • Encourage people to use public transit when possible or bike/walk • Publish maps of various trails and how to access the conservation area by transit 	City of Hamilton/HCA	

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities:			
Goal 8: Ensure pedestrian, bicycle, and transit friendly Valley communities			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
4 – Support the implementation of the City of Hamilton’s ‘special character’ roads through the Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify criteria for ‘special character road’ designation • Implement policies to protect from expansion/widening where feasible • Prevent through traffic from utilizing special character roads • Ensure safety of special character roads • Ensure no new roads or highways through ESAs or ANSIs • Close in opened road allowances which go through ESAs, ANSIs and Natural Heritage Lands • Obtain information from community on why they value the roads • Reduce and restrict development on these roads • Affix plaques detailing the nature of the ‘special character’ to foster awareness 	City of Hamilton/HCA	

Enhancing the Economic Sustainability and Vibrancy of Dundas Valley Communities:			
Goal 9: Promote sustainable tourism in the Valley			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Develop a Valley-wide sustainable tourism business plan and marketing strategy to promote eco, cultural, culinary and recreational tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and coordinate with Tourism Hamilton (advocate for TH to give higher priority to Outdoor Tourism Strategy) • Develop an Escarpment trails & waterfalls marketing plan for waterfall project partners (HCA, BTC, TH, HNC) • Create partnerships for long term promotion of tourism and culinary tourism • Coordinate a bus or shuttle that can transport people into the Valley • Create tourism programs that do not require automobile transportation to participate – rethink tourism without the car • Circulate books and articles to let people know about the Valley’s environment, culture, history and agriculture 	BIA/Chambers of Commerce/Tourism Hamilton/City of Hamilton	
2 – Develop management plan for increased number of visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a strategy to identify and predict the potential impact of increasing numbers of visitors (recommend maximum capacity to sustain) • Develop management plans 		

Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture

Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture: Goal 10: Ensure the community values the Valley’s ecological and cultural features			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
1 – Continually promote good environmental stewardship practices to the local community and work in partnership to implement them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to expand HCA’s Environmental Stewardship Program • Educate residents about the many beneficial uses of local native plants in their area • Create an Artist in Residence program for the HCA (ecology-based art) • Promote Stewardship Forum • Promote trail etiquette 	HCA, Board of Education, Educational NGOs	

Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture:			
Goal 10: Ensure the community values the Valley’s ecological and cultural features			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
2 – HCA to provide new and improved outdoor education facilities and programs to meet the current and future demands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop outdoor education facility in HCA lands • Review 2 options and develop business plan for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A nature centre for outdoor environmental education program, or ○ A visitor centre, serving multi functions (HCA’s outdoor education program, visitor management and servicing, DV and Escarpment interpretation, stewardship education on HCA lands in the Valley) • Identify location and secure financial resources to build preferred visitor/outdoor education facility • Develop strong environmental education program for Valley residents • Educate the public about how to be conscientious watershed residents • Promote an understanding of the uniqueness of the Carolinian ecosystem • Engage youth in conservation through schools and Envirothon • Promote integration of the value of the Valley’s ecological features into school curriculum and promote education partnership opportunities • Explore Escarpment centre concept) • Promote youth education opportunities that address consumerism, sustainable land use practices, transportation, agriculture, etc. • Add more signage in the valley describing aspects of its natural history • Include guided hikes and interpretation 	HCA, Board of Education, Outdoor educators, RBG – potential agency	High – should be part of Vision
3 – Promote opportunities for demonstration sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage land owners to volunteer their land as a demonstration site (e.g. show your native garden) 		

Infusing Education and Stewardship in the Community Culture:			
Goal 10: Ensure the community values the Valley’s ecological and cultural features			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
4 – Develop marketing and visitor attraction plans that focus on the urban wilderness and the proximity of the Valley’s beauty to residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate residents about lesser know conservation sites • Create a new scenic map of the conservation area with points of beauty, vistas, historical info, etc. 		

Financial Sustainability and Partnerships

Financial Sustainability and Partnerships: Goal 11: Secure long-term, sustainable financial resources			
Strategic Directions	Actions	Lead Agencies	Priority
1 – Explore all opportunities for revenue generation both within HCA conservation lands and the Valley as a whole	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure long-term financial resources through fund raising and land dedication Engage partners in co-marketing opportunities 		
2 – Ensure affordable access to all visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop admission fee policies that ensure access to all income groups 		
3 – Ensure financial sustainability to maintain HCA lands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore additional opportunities for revenue generation Work with local businesses and community members to organize fund raiser events (tree planting, etc.) Secure Provincial financial support (grants, awards) When HCA acquires properties of culture or historical significance, it should partner with historical groups to ensure protection (museums) 		
4 – Continue to acquire and secure additional lands for protection in accordance with HCA’s land acquisition strategies (2006 Strategic Plan)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate alternative methods to land acquisition (e.g. land easements or land trusts including the Ontario Realty Corporation) Encourage landowners of Valley properties to continue to donate or sell their lands or participate in stewardship programs to contribute to protection Partner with the Nature Conservancy Canada which would secure lands and raise profile of the Valley nationally Develop land acquisition plan Update protection/acquisition guidelines 		
5 – Secure funding to sustain HCA’s stewardship program to undertake these actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> See Strategic Direction #1 above 	HCA	

Financial Sustainability and Partnerships: Goal 11: Secure long-term, sustainable financial resources			
<i>Strategic Directions</i>	<i>Actions</i>	<i>Lead Agencies</i>	<i>Priority</i>
6 - Explore the co-benefits of connecting with the Cootes to Escarpment natural areas strategy financial plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HCA management to work with the Cootes to Escarpment Project Team to identify benefits from combining the Vision and Strategies 	HCA/Royal Botanical Gardens	
7 - Explore funding for dedicated staff to champion this initiative, including a Strategy co-ordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take steps to apply for available funding for internships/staffing (e.g. Greenbelt Foundation) 	HCA	