



REPORT

TO: Mayor Lawlor and Members of Council

FROM: Keith Hamilton, Senior Planner - Policy

DATE: October 30, 2025

REPORT NO.: PD-2025-065

SUBJECT: Proposed Grand River Source Protection Plan Policy
Amendments under Section 34 of the Clean Water Act

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PD-2025-065 dated October 30, 2025 regarding 'Proposed Grand River Source Protection Plan Policy Amendments under Section 34 of the Clean Water Act', be received;

AND FURTHER THAT Council endorse the proposed amendments to the Grand River Source Protection Plan and Assessment Report under the Clean Water Act, 2006 as outlined in Appendix 1 to this report;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report, be forwarded to the Chair of the Lake Erie Source Protection Committee (SPC), Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks, Region of Halton, Grand River Conservation Authority, and the Town of Milton.

KEY POINTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- Amendments are being proposed to the Source Protection Plan (SPP) and Assessment Report for the Grand River Source Protection Area under Section 34 of the *Clean Water Act*.
- The Lake Erie Source Protection Region is seeking endorsement of the proposed amendments from Halton Hills Council.
- The amendments impact the Definitions and Timelines for Implementation subsections of the SPP to align with the most current (2021) Director's Technical Rules under the *Clean Water Act*.

- As part of the proposed amendments, Halton Hills staff will undertake annual reporting to the Lake Erie Source Protection Authority and incorporate necessary source protection policies into the Official Plan.
- The Lake Erie Source Protection Region is seeking a resolution of support for the proposed amendments from all municipalities who are impacted.
- Lake Erie Source Protection Region staff will undertake public consultation on the amendments before seeking approval from the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION:

1. Overview

Municipal drinking water systems are regulated in Ontario under the *Clean Water Act* (CWA). This Act was passed in 2006 to implement recommendations made by the Walkerton Inquiry to better regulate safe drinking water systems, starting at the source. The intent of source protection planning is to protect water sources (both surface and groundwater) through the prevention of harmful contaminants entering the system as a result of human activities.

Drinking water source protection is undertaken in Halton Hills through the implementation of policies found in Source Protection Plans (SPP). These Plans are created and amended under Section II of the *Clean Water Act*. Within its boundary, Halton Hills is subject to three different Source Protection Regions, each with their own SPP: Halton-Hamilton; Lake Erie; and Credit Valley - Toronto and Region - Central Lake Ontario (CTC). The focus of this report is on amendments to the Grand River SPP for the Lake Erie Source Protection Region (for a map see Appendix 2 attached). The original Grand River Source Protection Plan came into effect on July 1, 2016, and has been amended on two previous occasions.

The intent of SPP policies is to protect the quality and quantity of groundwater (drawn by wells) and surface water used for municipal drinking water systems. Regulations created through SPPs are enforced by the appointed Risk Management Official (RMO) through Part IV of the *Clean Water Act*. In Halton, the Town and Region are responsible for SPP policy implementation, largely through Official Plans.

Section 34 of the *Clean Water Act* authorizes Source Protections Authorities (SPA) to make amendments to the SPP, subject to public and stakeholder consultation. Amendments that are appropriate to make under Section 34 include those necessary to ensure new or expanded municipal sources of drinking water are protected, implement important information not available at the time the SPP was first approved, and address other critical implementation issues.

At this time, the Lake Erie Source Protection Region is undertaking Section 34 Amendments that include:

- Necessary updates (revisions and added terms) to the Definitions subsection of the Plan;
- Updates to policy implementation and monitoring responsibilities for Halton municipalities (Milton and Halton Hills); and,

- Added policies to address threats to aquifers and surface water bodies resulting from water-taking activities.

2. Halton Hills Context

2.1 Area Covered

As shown in Appendix 2, the area of the Grand River Source Protection Plan (SPP) covered in Halton Hills is located north of Sideroad 22 and west of Dublin Line. The area is made up of farms and rural properties west of Acton and does not include any urban areas. The area within Halton Hills covered off by the Grand River SPP contains an Intake Protection Zone (IPZ). This is an area of land and water near a municipal intake where source water can be contaminated or depleted. These zones are established to manage risks and regulate land use activities that could threaten the quality or quantity of a drinking water supply from a river, lake, or stream. Currently the portion of this SPP that covers Halton Hills is subject to water quality policies only.

2.2 Policy Impacts

Chapter 9 of the Grand River SPP includes policies that apply to vulnerable areas within Halton Region. Where previously this chapter had only referenced Halton Region and Milton, proposed amendments will now identify Halton Hills, starting in the Definitions subsection (9.1).

Other key changes from the proposed amendments are summarized as:

- **Annual reporting requirements:** As part of the proposed amendments, Halton Hills would be required to report annually on actions taken to implement SPP policies. Town staff already report annually to both the CTC and Halton Hamilton Source Protection Authorities on similar actions.
- **Local policy implementation and monitoring:** As part of the proposed amendments, Halton Hills would be required to implement applicable policies of the Grand River SPP into the Official Plan. As part of this implementation process, Town staff are required to consult with Lake Erie Source Protection representatives to ensure proper implementation.

In preparation of this report, Town staff consulted with Halton Region staff to better understand the impacts the proposed amendments would have on the small area in the Town covered under this SPP. The added policies, as part of the proposed amendments, focus on water quantity policies and do not apply to the SPP area in Halton Hills. As such, the overall impact on Halton Hills as part of these amendments is limited to what is noted above.

3. Next Steps

Upon receiving a resolution of support from all the municipalities impacted by the proposed amendments, Lake Erie Source Protection staff will begin public consultation, focusing on landowners impacted by the proposed amendments. Following this, finalized policy amendments will be submitted to the Grand River Conservation Authority and Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks for approval.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This report identifies natural areas and heritage as one of the Town's Strategic priorities.

Through continued participation in Source Protection working groups and supporting Source Protection Plan policy implementation, the Town is taking steps to protect the natural environment for present and future generations.

RELATIONSHIP TO CLIMATE CHANGE:

This report is administrative in nature and does not directly impact or address climate change and the Town's Net Zero target.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

Public Engagement was not needed as this report is administrative in nature.

INTERNAL CONSULTATION:

Town Planning staff consulted with Halton Region Infrastructure Planning staff in preparation of this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

This report is administrative in nature and does not have any financial implications.

Reviewed and approved by,

Bronwyn Parker, Director of Planning Policy

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning & Development

Chris Mills, Chief Administrative Officer