

REPORT

REPORT TO: Chair and Members of the Planning, Public Works and Transportation Committee

REPORT FROM: Gabriel Clarke, Manager of Sustainability and Climate Change

DATE: January 15th 2019

REPORT NO.: PLS-2019-0008

RE: Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. PLS-2019-0008, dated January 15th 2019, regarding the proposed Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy for Halton Hills be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the draft Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy – attached as Appendix One to this Report – be approved.

BACKGROUND:

In November 2016, the Ontario government tabled Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act. This bill introduces a series of reforms to the Municipal Act which outlines the legislative, administrative, and financial responsibilities of Ontario municipalities.

Section 270 (1) (7) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 was amended to reflect the above and requires that municipalities to adopt a policy which describes how they intend to protect and enhance their tree canopy and natural vegetation by March 1st 2019.

COMMENTS:

Halton Hills has long recognized the value that a healthy tree canopy and natural vegetation community provide the Town. Past and current efforts include the publication and implementation of the 2007 Green Plan, the introduction of the Green Development Standards program in 2010, the publication of Imagine Halton Hills – The Town's Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy in 2013 and the launch of the Community Forest Strategic Management Plan project in 2018 to develop a management program

for municipally-owned trees. The Town is also including tree and natural vegetation in its Corporate Asset Management Program as part of its infrastructure assets.

The draft Policy proposes to build on this work and specifies the actions that the Town of Halton Hills will undertake to continue to protect and enhance the Town's tree canopy and its natural vegetation in its settled, rural and municipally-owned areas.

RELATIONSHIP TO STRATEGIC PLAN:

The draft Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy supports the Municipal Service Delivery and the Sustainability focus areas outlined in Council's 2014-18 Strategic Action Plan.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no direct financial impact associated with this Report.

CONSULTATION:

The following departments and divisions were consulted during the development of the draft Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy: the Clerks Office, Parks and Open Space, Asset Management, Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Public Works and Planning.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:

There are no direct public engagement implications associated with this Report.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS:

The Town is committed to implementing our Community Sustainability Strategy, Imagine Halton Hills. Doing so will lead to a higher quality of life.

The recommendation outlined in this report advances the following goals from Strategy's Environment Section:

- Increase the total area and connectivity of natural systems, including natural corridors and significant woodlots.
- Expand the tree canopy and increase the number of trees in rural and urban areas.
- Ensure native species are dominant in Halton Hills.
- Restore and remediate degraded natural areas where possible.
- Improve and maintain healthy biodiversity in all areas of Halton Hills.
- Safeguard ecosystems, species, and genetic diversity.

In summary the alignment of this report with the Community Sustainability Strategy is Excellent.

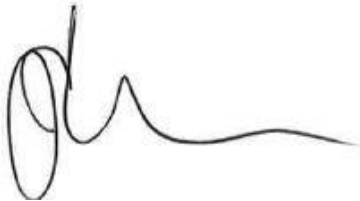
COMMUNICATIONS:

There are no direct communication implications associated with this Report.

CONCLUSION:

Bill 68 requires that all municipalities across Ontario approve a Tree Canopy and Natural Vegetation Policy which outlines how the community will protect and enhance its tree canopy and its natural vegetation by March 1st 2019. The draft Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy – attached as Appendix One – was developed to fulfill this requirement and outlines how Halton Hills proposes to manage this important community resource.

Reviewed and Approved by,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'John Linhardt', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Linhardt, Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brent Marshall', written in a cursive style.

Brent Marshall, CAO



DRAFT POLICY

POLICY TITLE: Halton Hills Tree Canopy & Natural Vegetation Policy

POLICY NUMBER:

DATE: TBD

BACKGROUND:

In November 2016, the Ontario government tabled Bill 68, Modernizing Ontario's Municipal Legislation Act. This bill introduces a series of reforms to the Municipal Act and outlines the legislative, administrative, and financial responsibilities of Ontario municipalities.

Section 270 (1) (7) of the Municipal Act, 2001, S.O. 2001, c. 25 amended to reflect the above, requires that municipalities to adopt a policy which describes how they intend to protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation by March 1st 2019.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to outline the manner in which the municipality will protect and enhance the tree canopy and natural vegetation in the municipality.

DEFINITIONS:

Municipal Lands means lands that are legally owned by the Corporation for the Town of Halton Hills

Private Settlement Area Lands means lands that are legally owned by private individuals and/or entities and located within the Town's Urban Boundaries, its Rural Settlement Areas and its Rural Clusters as defined by the Halton Hills Official Plan.

Private Rural Lands means lands that are legally owned by private individuals and/or entities and located outside of the Town's Urban Boundaries, its Rural Settlement Areas and its Rural Clusters as defined by the Halton Hills Official Plan.

BENEFITS:

The Town of Halton Hills recognizes and values the many environmental, social, cultural and economic benefits that a healthy tree canopy and natural vegetation provide residents and the community. These include:

- Shade which reduces air conditioning loads and the urban heat island effect
- Erosion control/abatement
- Reduced air pollution through filtering and sequestration
- Habitat for native flora and fauna
- Storm water management
- Increased adjacent property value
- Aesthetics and neighbourhood-scale beautification
- A source of renewable fuels and materials for construction
- Wind and snow drift abatement
- Forms an integral component of the community's visual identity

Halton Hills has long recognized the value that a healthy tree canopy and natural vegetation community provide the Town through the publication and implementation of the Green Plan 2007, the introduction of the Green Development Standards program in 2010, the publication of Imagine Halton Hills – The Town's Integrated Community Sustainability Strategy in 2013 and the launch of the Community Forest Strategic Management Plan in 2018 to develop a management program for municipally-owned trees. The Town is also including tree and natural vegetation in its Corporate Asset Management Program as part of its infrastructure assets.

The draft Policy proposes to build on this work and specifies the actions that the Town of Halton Hills will undertake to continue to protect and enhance the Town's Tree Canopy and its natural vegetation.

SCOPE

This Policy applies to all publicly and privately-owned lands within the Town of Halton Hills.

POLICY DETAILS

1. Trees and Natural Vegetation Located on Municipally-owned Lands:

Halton Hills will protect and enhance trees located within municipal road right-of-ways in accordance with Halton Hills By-Law 93-106 to "Regulate the Planting, Trimming, Propagation, Preservation and Removal of Trees on Highways under the Jurisdiction of Halton Hills".

Halton Hills will protect and enhance trees located on municipally-owned lands through the development and implementation of a public tree management program. The nature

and extent of the Public Tree Management Program will be informed by the Community Forest Strategic Management Plan which is currently under development.

Halton Hills will protect and enhance natural vegetation located on municipally-owned lands through the implementation of the Town's existing drought tolerant, non-invasive native vegetation standards.

The Town will inventory and evaluate the services provided by natural vegetation to help develop management strategies under existing municipal frameworks and policies.

2. Trees and Natural Vegetation Located on Private Settlement Area Lands:

Halton Hills will protect and enhance trees and natural vegetation located on private settlement area lands through the following:

- The development and implementation of the Privately-Owned Tree Management Study that is scheduled for 2019
- The development and implementation of the climate change adaptation plan (currently under development)
- Supporting stewardship programs that are delivered by external agencies (i.e. conservation authorities)
- The Introduction of the Sustainable Neighbourhood (Retrofit) Action Plan (SNAP) Pilot Project in the Hungry Hollow Centre for Biodiversity area
- Continued implementation of the Town's existing native vegetation policies/standards
- The continued implementation of the Halton Hills Green Development Standards Program
- Supporting the implementation of Halton Region Bylaw 121-05 to Prohibit or Regulate the Destruction or Injuring of Trees in the Regional Municipality of Halton.

3. Trees and Natural Vegetation Located on Private Rural Lands:

Halton Hills will protect and enhance trees and natural vegetation located on private rural lands through the following:

- Supporting stewardship programs that are delivered by external agencies (i.e. conservation authorities)
- Supporting the implementation of Halton Region Bylaw 121-05 to Prohibit or Regulate the Destruction or Injuring of Trees in the Regional Municipality of Halton.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed every three years.