

# Memorandum

**TO:** Board of Directors

**FROM:** Lisa Burnside, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)

**PREPARED BY:** T. Scott Peck, MCIP, RPP, Deputy CAO, Director,  
Watershed Planning & Engineering

**MEETING DATE:** February 4, 2021

**RE:** Natural Heritage Offsetting Policy Development  
Framework and Timing

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## BACKGROUND

On November 5, 2020, the Board of Directors approved the following motion:

**“THAT the Board of Directors direct staff to review and develop natural heritage offsetting policy to be included in the Hamilton Conservation Authority’s Planning & Regulation Policies and Guidelines document.”**

This memorandum has been prepared to detail the framework staff propose to undertake this policy review and development based on a last resort option for the relocation of wetlands as well as to detail the timing and agency consultation to be undertaken for this review.

## STAFF COMMENTS

To facilitate the review and development of a natural heritage offsetting policy, staff will prepare a Discussion Paper. The key purpose of the Discussion Paper will be to provide an overview of the issues at hand relating to offsetting policy and to provide a method to engage and communicate with our stakeholders and the general public regarding the development of a potential offsetting policy. This Discussion Paper will:

- Define what offsetting means in the context of bio-diversity and natural heritage.
- Detail the key principles of offsetting as well as recent work on this issue in Ontario.

- Provide an overview of Provincial policy.
- Include a review and analysis of existing offsetting policy and documentation in Ontario with a specific focus on conservation authority experience in this regard. The following agencies and their associated policy framework will be considered.
  - Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
  - Credit Valley Conservation Authority
  - Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority
  - Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority
  - Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority
  - Grand River Conservation Authority
  - Conservation Halton
  - Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority
- Review City of Hamilton and Township of Puslinch Official Plan policy framework as it relates to offsetting, development and natural heritage.
- Provide an overview of the existing policy framework relating to natural heritage conservation within the current HCA Planning & Regulation Policies and Guidelines document.
- Based on the completed review as noted above, include a draft offsetting policy framework for agency and public comment. This draft policy framework and comments received would be used to develop a final offsetting policy for the Board of Directors consideration.

The following timing is proposed for this policy development process.

- April 1, 2021 – Discussion Paper presented to Board of Directors
- April 8, 2021 – Discussion Paper presented to Conservation Advisory Board
- Mid April to June 2021 – Discussion Paper circulated for agency review and public consultation
- Fall, 2021 – Draft Final Offsetting Policy presented to Board of Directors

## **STRATEGIC PLAN LINKAGE**

The initiative refers directly to the HCA Strategic Plan 2019 - 2023:

- **Strategic Priority Area – Natural Heritage Conservation**
  - Initiatives – › Promote sustainable development by working with the City of Hamilton on natural heritage issues and undertake the HCA plan input and review program

## **AGENCY COMMENTS**

N/A

## **LEGAL/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

N/A

## **CONCLUSIONS**

This memorandum is provided to detail to the Board of Directors the framework and timing proposed to complete the review required to develop a natural heritage offsetting policy to be included in the Hamilton Conservation Authority's Planning & Regulation Policies and Guidelines document.