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<b>TO:</b>	<b>CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING ON APRIL 7, 2015</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>JOHN M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PROVINCIAL POLLINATOR HEALTH DISCUSSION PAPER</b>
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	

That on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner the comments by the Advisory Committee on the Environment as amended by the Agricultural Advisory Committee as per Appendix "B" **BE FORWARDED** to the Province's Pollinator Health Discussion process.

<b>PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER</b>
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February 10, 2015 Planning and Environment Committee – Council Resolution. Referred Advisory Committee on the Environment (ACE) submission with respect to Province of Ontario's Pollinator Health Discussion Paper on reducing pesticide use and protecting pollinator health Civic Administration back to staff to report back at the February 17, 2015 Planning and Environment Committee.

<b>BACKGROUND</b>
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City Staff attended the Province's Workshop on Pollinator Health: A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario, at the December 9, 2014 session in London and provided direct comments to the Province through that process which included participation with a range of stakeholders including local farmers, beekeepers and individuals including members of environmental groups such as ACE. Staff will continue to participate in the Province's broad consultation process that extends throughout 2015, including the Pollinator Health Forum in the spring of 2015.

<b>DISCUSSION</b>
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For the City to provide Official Comments to the Province on an issue such as the Pollinator Health Discussion Paper the recommendations should be balanced with comments from advisory committees, and stakeholders who may not share the same perspective on an issue. The Agricultural Advisory Committee (AAC) met on March 18th 2015, and City Staff and ACE provided the ACE Pollinator Recommendations to AAC at the meeting and asked AAC for their feedback.

*ACE Comments on Pollinator Health document [A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario]*

*The Advisory Committee on the Environment for the City of London (ACE) lauds the provincial government for putting pollinator health so high on its agenda. Our members have been encouraged to submit detailed comments regarding the plan. Here we make a few big picture comments regarding pollinator health and how the province can help, especially with respect to cities.*

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**ACE Recommendation 1:** *In thinking about improving habitat for pollinators, the province should work out a strategy for increasing the size and connectivity of natural areas at different geographic scales from regional (e.g. Big Picture Carolinian Corridors; Green Belts) to neighbourhood Pollinator Pathways running through urban neighbourhoods. The province could organize this work through conservation authorities who could work together with local stakeholders such as municipalities and farmers to determine where renaturalization areas and the corridors that connect them should go.*

Staff Response: This important work has already begun as our Official Plan; Schedule B-1 identifies the Big Picture Carolinian Corridors and identifies recommended Potential Naturalization Areas to improve connectivity as determined through the Subwatershed Studies completed by the City in the 1990s. This is described in our Official Plan, Chapter 15.1.1. v) Maintain, restore, and improve the diversity and connectivity of natural features, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems.

AAC Response: AAC supports ACE Recommendation 1

**ACE Recommendation 2:** *The province should work out funding strategies to make this work happen and should work closely with Alternative Land Use System which is already working with farmers in Ontario to get them to also focus on preserving and enhancing ecosystem services. This work needs to be scaled up and be also brought into cities.*

Staff Response: The Alternative Land Use System (ALUS) uses a “bottom up” approach, (i.e. not Province down) as described in their Mission: ALUS is a community-developed, farmer-delivered program that provides support to farmers and ranchers to enhance and maintain nature’s benefits. The City generally has a “bottom up” community-led approach to naturalizing lands. Funding for naturalization from the Province could be directed towards these community projects and implementation of recommendations in our Council approved Thames Valley Corridor Plan, 2011 for example to improve the resiliency of our Natural Heritage System.

AAC Response: AAC supports ACE Recommendation 2

**ACE Recommendation 3:** *The province needs to set targets for different land covers that support the health of pollinators including meadows/prairies as well as wetlands and woodlands. These targets will change depending on the land use and also physiography but at the watershed scale (e.g. Upper Thames River watershed), they should add up to a substantial amount of land that can provide habitat and movement for pollinators.*

Staff Response: The Council approved Urban Forest Strategy and Implementation Plan estimated London’s canopy cover was at 23% in 2014, and set targets for increasing canopy cover in London to 28% by 2035, and 34% by 2065. The Middlesex Natural Heritage Systems Study, 2014 (MNHS) did not set targets or goals for overall cover by habitat type but did conclude that 20.1% of the County (including the City of London and First Nation Reserves) is in natural vegetation, noting woodlands are the largest component and there are significant amounts of meadow especially along major watercourses.

AAC Response: AAC supports ACE Recommendation 3 as amended to read:

*The province needs to set Provincial Goals for different land covers that support the health of pollinators including meadows/prairies as well as orchards, wetlands and woodlands.*

**ACE Recommendation 4:** *The long range plan of the province must be the establishment of ecologically sound agricultural systems that minimizes outside inputs of pesticides, synthetic fertilizer and the use of monocultures. Nature does not do monocultures and in nature there are no weeds. Our agricultural system needs to change from a monoculture of annuals to a polyculture of perennials. In the future we need to do away with the idea of a noxious weed list. The province should do everything in its power to encourage the emergence of agro-ecological systems that work with the cycles of nature and not against it.*

Staff Response: Fortunately, the Province has removed Milkweed, from the Noxious Weed List as it is very important to Monarch butterflies as their caterpillars eat only Milkweed. The list

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currently includes a number of invasive alien-species such as Dog Strangling Vine and Buckthorn that the City strives to manage in our Parks, Woodlands and Environmentally Significant Areas primarily because these species negatively impact the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of our natural heritage system. The intent of the Provincial Weed Control Act is to reduce:

- The infestation of noxious weeds that negatively impact on agriculture and horticulture lands.
- Plant diseases, by eliminating plant disease hosts such as common barberry and European buckthorn.
- Health hazards to livestock and agricultural workers caused by poisonous plants.

AAC Response: AAC cannot support ACE Recommendation 4 and asks that it be deleted.

**ACE Recommendation 5:** *The province is encouraged to develop a comprehensive ecosystem services implementation plan (which of course would include a large section on pollination) and require all of its municipalities to develop such a plan.*

Staff Response: The Natural Heritage Reference Manual (NHRM) for the Natural Heritage Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) describes the precautionary approach for protecting ecosystem services. The PPS requires Municipalities to identify and protect their Natural Heritage Systems as the primary way of protecting ecosystem services. London's Natural Heritage System is identified on Schedule B-1, and protected through the policies in Chapter 15 of the Official Plan, and is consistent with the PPS and the NHRM.

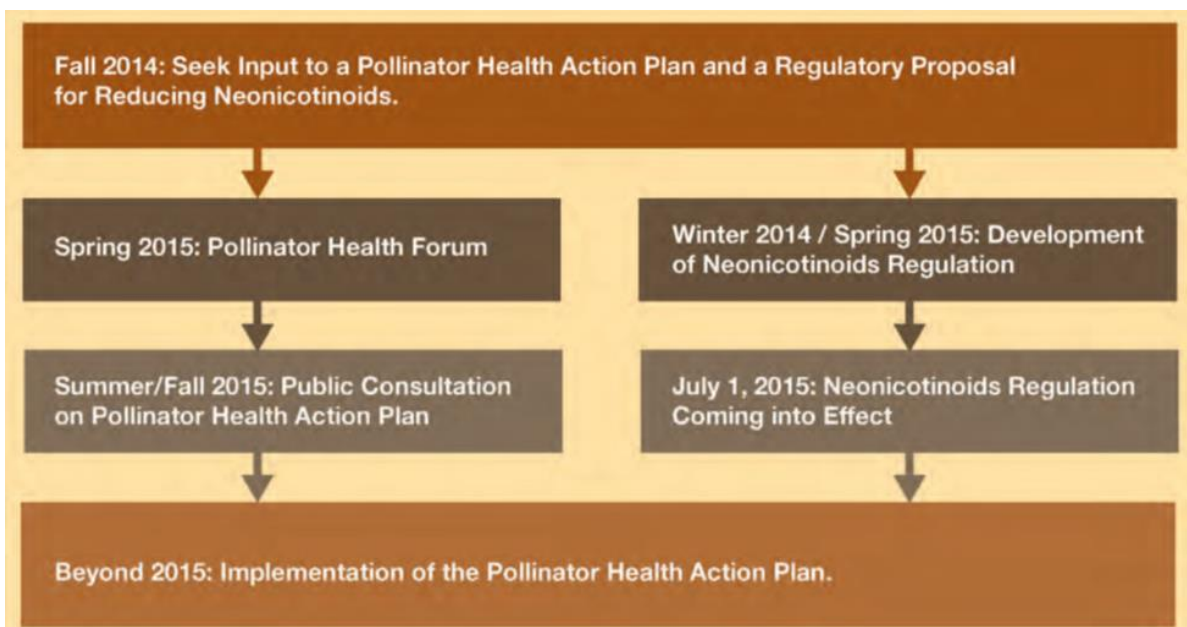
AAC Response: AAC supports ACE Recommendation 5

### Conclusion

ACE Recommendations 1, 2, 3 (as amended by AAC and ACE) and 5 are supported by ACE, AAC and Staff and are generally consistent with the current Official Plan, and Draft London Plan policies identifying that London's Natural Heritage System is to be protected, conserved, enhanced and managed for present and for future generations. We would support a Watershed level approach to further enhance natural corridors with appropriate levels of Provincial funding to address key issues like eradicating invasive-alien species.

### Next Steps

The Province has identified a number of next steps describing and how individuals, beekeepers and farmers can continue to participate through their ongoing 2015 Consultation Process. To ensure both a timely action and broad public consultation, as of January 2015 the following process will be undertaken by the Province:



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<b>SUMMARY</b>
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The referral to staff of ACE Recommendations was received after the original January 25, 2015 deadline for comments on the Discussion Paper to Province. Staff and representatives of ACE met with the AAC on March 18, 2015 to seek their comments on the ACE Recommendations. ACE Recommendations 1, 2, 3 (as amended by AAG and ACE) and 5, are supported by Staff and AAC, and are to be submitted as City of London comments through the Province's engagement process. The Province's Provincial Pollinator Health engagement process extends throughout 2015 and should provide opportunities for stakeholders such as ACE, AAC and City Staff to provide comments and participate directly in the process.

<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>
<b>L. MCDOUGALL ECOLOGIST, MES, OALA, RPP ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; PARKS PLANNING</b>	<b>A. MACPHERSON, OALA MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL &amp; PARKS PLANNING</b>
<b>RECOMMENDED BY:</b>	
<b>JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER</b>	

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**APPENDICES:**

APPENDIX A Original ACE Recommendations of January 13, 2015

APPENDIX B Revised ACE Recommendations as Supported by the Agricultural Advisory Committee

cc: Advisory Committee on the Environment  
Agriculture Advisory Committee

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## APPENDIX A Original ACE Recommendations of January 13, 2015

### Comments on Pollinator Health document [A Proposal for Enhancing Pollinator Health and Reducing the Use of Neonicotinoid Pesticides in Ontario]

The Advisory Committee on the Environment for the City of London (ACE) lauds the provincial government for putting pollinator health so high on its agenda. Our members have been encouraged to submit detailed comments regarding the plan. Here we make a few big picture comments regarding pollinator health and how the province can help, especially with respect to cities.

**Recommendation 1:** In thinking about improving habitat for pollinators, the province should work out a strategy for increasing the size and connectivity of natural areas at different geographic scales from regional (e.g. Big Picture Carolinian Corridors; Green Belts) to neighbourhood Pollinator Pathways running through urban neighbourhoods. The province could organize this work through conservation authorities who could work together with local stakeholders such as municipalities and farmers to determine where renaturalization areas and the corridors that connect them should go.

**Recommendation 2:** The province should work out funding strategies to make this work happen and should work closely with Alternative Land Use System which is already working with farmers in Ontario to get them to also focus on preserving and enhancing ecosystem services. This work needs to be scaled up and be also brought into cities.

**Recommendation 3:** The province needs to set targets for different land covers that support the health of pollinators including meadows/prairies as well as wetlands and woodlands. These targets will change depending on the land use and also physiography but at the watershed scale (e.g. Upper Thames River watershed), they should add up to a substantial amount of land that can provide habitat and movement for pollinators.

**Recommendation 4:** The long range plan of the province must be the establishment of ecologically sound agricultural systems that minimizes outside inputs of pesticides, synthetic fertilizer and the use of monocultures. Nature does not do monocultures and in nature there are no weeds. Our agricultural system needs to change from a *monoculture of annuals* to a *polyculture of perennials*. In the future we need to do away with the idea of a noxious weed list. The province should do everything in its power to encourage the emergence of agro-ecological systems that work with the cycles of nature and not against it.

**Recommendation 5:** The province is encouraged to develop a comprehensive ecosystem services implementation plan (which of course would include a large section on pollination) and require all of its municipalities to develop such a plan.

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**APPENDIX B Revised ACE Recommendations as Supported by the Agricultural Advisory Committee**

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**Recommendation 3.** The province needs to set Provincial Goals for different land covers that support the health of pollinators including meadows/prairies as well as orchards, wetlands and woodlands.

**Recommendation 4.** (Deleted)

**Recommendation 5:** The province is encouraged to develop a comprehensive ecosystem services implementation plan (which of course would include a large section on pollination) and require all of its municipalities to develop such a plan.