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Ecologist Planner: J. MACKAY

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| TO: | CHAIR AND MEMBERS PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ON November 20, 2017 |
| FROM: | J. M. FLEMING MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER |
| SUBJECT: | HIGHLAND RIDGE SANITARY TRUNK SEWER POST CONSTRUCTION RESTORATION WORKS AND MONITORING PEC DEFERRED MATTER #1 |

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| RECOMMENDATION |
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That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner regarding the Highland Ridge Sanitary Trunk Sewer post construction restoration works and monitoring plan, the following report **BE RECEIVED**.

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| PREVIOUS REPORTS PERTINENT TO THIS MATTER |
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- a) Highland Ridge Sanitary Trunk Sewer Environmental Impact Study (Dillon Consulting July 2011),
- b) Municipal Council Resolution letter dated May 23, 2012

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| BACKGROUND |
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The City of London proposed to construct the Highland Ridge Sanitary Trunk Sewer within the ecological buffer situated along the northern edge of the North Talbot Provincially Significant Wetland located northeast of Cranbrook Road. The Dillon Consulting Environmental Impact Study was to determine the feasibility of the proposed sewer alignment in a manner that would protect the significance and function of the Natural Heritage System. The EIS was completed according to the scoped checklist created in conjunction with the City of London and it prescribed a detailed monitoring plan.

As part of the approvals for the project, Council passed a resolution on May 23, 2012 that required the recommendations for monitoring as identified in Table 7 of the EIS Report be implemented and that the Ecologist Planner be directed to report back on the monitoring program. The Dillon Consulting EIS identified required mitigation measures that were intended to protect and enhance the North Talbot Provincially Significant Wetland. The EIS identified that the buffer was to be ecologically restored. This included seeding and plantings of various native species in multiple 'cells', turtle nesting habitat sites and a snake hibernacula. These were to be implemented post-construction and monitored for a period of 2 years.

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| REVIEW OF MONITORING REPORTS AND SITE VISIT |
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The monitoring reports were completed over a period of 2 growing seasons in 2013 and 2014 as required. The reports identified some dead and dying vegetation over the course of these reports. However, the monitoring reports did not fully discuss the wildlife habitat creation components or monitor them for installation success or use. Staffing changes at the time, resulted in these deficiencies not being properly addressed.

A site visit conducted by the City of London Ecologist during the summer of 2016 confirmed that some of the vegetation was dead or dying and should have been replaced. It did not appear that any replacement plantings had been installed after the monitoring reports were filed with the City of London. It also was clear in 2016 that there are no existing areas that would be

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suitable turtle nesting sites based on the observed existing conditions. The snake hibernacula, which was difficult to identify, likely was not created correctly and is not functioning as intended. There was some evidence of soil erosion in areas where seeding did not take and has exposed a hard clay surface with no topsoil present.

Table 6 of the EIS clearly identified the restoration works required as part of this project and were detailed on the restoration drawings located in Appendix H. Table 7 of the EIS identifies the monitoring requirements post-construction. While the monitoring reports were completed, they did not fully address the wildlife habitat use of these areas.

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| RECOMMENDATIONS |
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In order to fully implement Table 6 and Table 7 requirements identified by the Dillon Consulting EIS (July 2011), the following actions are required:

- 1) Suitable turtle nesting habitat needs to be recreated (in consultation with the UTRCA);
- 2) A suitable snake hibernacula needs to be recreated (in consultation with the UTRCA);
- 3) Replacement plantings for the dead and dying vegetation needs to be undertaken;
- 4) Additional native seeding application for the area needs to be undertaken according to the City of London Construction Specification for Seeding and Cover (2015), and;
- 5) The City will inspect and monitor all works for a further year after construction.

Planning and Wastewater Engineering staff will work with Dillon and the UTRCA to implement these recommendations in the spring of 2018.

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| PREPARED BY: | SUBMITTED BY: |
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| J. MACKAY, M.Sc. ECOLOGIST, ENVIRONMENTAL & PARKS PLANNING | A. MACPHERSON, OALA MANAGER ENVIRONMENTAL & PARKS PLANNING |
| RECOMMENDED BY: | |
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| JOHN M. FLEMING, MCIP, RPP MANAGING DIRECTOR, PLANNING AND CITY PLANNER | |