

Report to Planning and Environment Committee

To: Chair and Members
Planning & Environment Committee

From: John M. Fleming
Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

Subject: Conservation Master Plan for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (South)

Public Participation Meeting on: April 16, 2018

Recommendation

That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken with respect to the Conservation Master Plan for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (South):

- (a) The Conservation Master Plan for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (South) attached as Appendix 'A', **BE APPROVED** in accordance with Section 15.3.8. of the Official Plan and policies 1421 and 1422 of the London Plan;
- (b) Staff **BE DIRECTED** to work with our community partners in the implementation of the Conservation Master Plan with regards to external funding opportunities; and,
- (c) The members of ACCAC, EEPAC and the Local Advisory Committee and the community **BE THANKED** for their work in the review and comments on the document.

Executive Summary

- The Conservation Master Plan (CMP) was completed through the leadership of Dillon Consulting, the Local Advisory Committee, and City Planning Staff. The plan was developed following the Council approved, award winning, Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas (the Guidelines) which ensures ecological protection and inclusive trail use.
- A five year engagement process provided extensive opportunities for community input that shaped the CMP and improved local knowledge about the Medway Valley Heritage Forest Environmentally Significant Area (MVHF ESA) and how to protect it.
- The majority of ecological restoration work, including all the top and highest priorities are underway or completed and being monitored as invasive species are the biggest threat to ecological integrity and Species at Risk in the ESA.
- Sustainable Trail Plan complies with the Guidelines and with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) requirements. The Trail Plan directs use away from sensitive habitats and protects the ESA.
- The CMP includes the most rigorous ecological monitoring framework to date for any ESA in the City.
- The most thorough monitoring and adaptive management program of any ESA in the City is already in place in the MVHF ESA, including permits and requirements from the Province and recognition from the Federal Government for best practices for the protection of False Rue-anemone.
- The CMP recommendations developed by Dillon Consulting and concurred with by City Staff ensure the MVHF ESA will continue to be a provincially and federally recognized, award winning example of best practices for the protection of ecological integrity, biodiversity and species at risk in an urban natural area.

- The CMP supports many of Council’s strategic plan priorities and London Plan policies.
- The Accessibility Advisory Committee of Council (ACCAC) endorsed the March 2018, MVHF ESA CMP at their meeting on March 22, 2018. Consultation with ACCAC is required under AODA legislation.

Analysis

1.0 Previous Reports Pertinent to this Matter

February 6, 2017 - Planning and Environment Committee Report for Phase I Medway VHF ESA CMP Report and Addendum

June 20, 2016 - Planning and Environment Committee Report for Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in Environmentally Significant Areas

2.0 Purpose

2.1 Councils Strategic Plan

Completion of this CMP is one of Council’s strategic priorities under:

“Building a Sustainable City – Strong and Healthy Environment”,
and linked to:

“Strengthening our Community – Healthy and safe and accessible city”

2.2 Official Plan/ London Plan

Under **Section 15.3.8** of the Official Plan, and, **Policy 1421** of the London Plan, “City Council may request the preparation of conservation master plans for environmentally significant areas and other natural heritage areas. Conservation master plans may be adopted by Council, and will function as guideline documents for the purposes of providing direction on the management of these areas.”

Under **Section 15.3.8 ii(c)** “Matters which may be addressed through conservation master plans include: “Programs for site and facility development, including descriptions of recreational programs and facilities to be provided if applicable, and details of access permitted to and within the area, including formalized pathways and trail systems;”

Under **Policy 1422_3** of the London Plan “The identification of management zones based on ecological sensitivity, including descriptions of recreational uses and opportunities for eco-tourism to be provided if applicable, and details of access permitted to and within the area, including formalized pathways and trail systems.”

The CMP reflects a number of other policies in The London Plan including:

- Planning for Change and Our Challenges Ahead / A Growing Seniors Population (Policies 6 and 8)
- City Building for Economic Prosperity and Growth (Policy 23)
- Key Directions / Direction #8 Make wise planning decisions (Policy 62)
- City Owned Lands in the Green Space Placetype (Policy 420)
- Green and Healthy City (Policies 687, 688, 695, 698, 699, and 700)
- Green Space / How Will We Realize Our Vision (Policies 761 and 767)

London Plan Policy 62, #11 identifies that we will:

“Ensure that all the planning we do is in accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, so that all of the elements of our city are accessible for everyone.”

By ensuring that the CMP complies with the Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs and includes the accessible trails and linkages recommended

by ACCAC in the areas of lower sensitivity (Natural Environment Zones), primarily over the existing sewers (Utility Overlays), we can satisfy this requirement, and achieve long-term ecological integrity of the ESA consistent with the goal of the CMP.

2.3 City of London Accessibility Plan

London's Accessibility Plan identifies moving forward that: "Though we are obligated to meet the standards of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA), we recognize that creating a city where everyone can participate fully is necessary to respect the rights and dignity of all citizens."

Under AODA as of January 1, 2016 municipalities by law must make recreational trails accessible when building new public recreational trails or making major changes to existing ones and planning to maintain them. Exceptions to this include cases where making the trail accessible would have a "negative effect on water, fish, wildlife, plants, invertebrates, species at risk, ecological integrity or natural heritage values." There are also exceptions "where making the trail or beach access route accessible would be impossible or inappropriate – for example, where rocks bordering the route make it impossible to meet minimum width requirements."

Municipalities must also consult with their accessibility advisory committees when building or making major changes to recreational trails. Consultation with ACCAC was a key part of the CMP process and the Sustainable Trail Plan was revised in early 2018 to address ACCAC's comments on the draft CMP in order to comply with AODA and align with the Council approved Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs. All proposed trail modifications comply with the Guidelines.

3.0 Conservation Master Plan Process

3.1 Following the Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs, 2016

The CMP process is undertaken in two phases. Phase 1, approved by Council in 2017 provided a detailed life science inventory allowing us to formalize and refine the ESA boundaries, identify management zones and overlays consistent with the ecology first approach in the Council approved Guidelines.

Phase 1

- Community Engagement and Participation
- Life Science Inventory and Evaluation
- Boundary Delineation
- Application of Management Zones and Review of Existing Trails
- Identification of Management Issues

Phase 2

- Community Engagement and Participation
- Goals, Objectives and Recommendations
- Ecological Enhancement and Restoration
- Trail Planning and Design Process
- Priorities for Implementation
- Final Conservation Master Plan

In Phase 2, an **Environmental Management Strategy (EMS)** including prioritized, recommendations for ecological restoration, naturalization and trail planning was formed through the community engagement process, and through consultation with ACCAC as required by AODA. Trail planning following the Guidelines and continued implementation of the EMS ensures the protection of the ESA, Species at Risk (SAR) and Significant Wildlife Habitats (SWH) while providing inclusive, accessible trails for compliance with AODA requirements.

The Sustainable Trail Plan in the CMP is part of the EMS and complies with Council's Guidelines developed with input from and endorsed by EEPAC and ACCAC for protection of ESA ecosystems. The award winning Guideline document is based on the latest science to ensure trail planning protects the natural heritage system in a sustainable way. This principle of sustainability is at the core of the Guidelines and the CMP. While ensuring sustainability, the CMP provides for accessible and inclusive trail use, consistent with AODA requirements. As demonstrated through the recent and ongoing implementation of the Coves ESA CMP, protection of ESAs and inclusive trail use can co-exist in an urban setting.

3.2 The Community Engagement Process

The two phase, multi-year CMP process includes formation of a Local Advisory Committee (LAC), presentations to Advisory Committees of Council, presentations to local community groups, public open houses, mail-outs to all homes within 200 meters of the ESA, notices in the Londoner, information signs in the ESA, information on the City website and collection of information from the public.

Comments received during the engagement process from the public and the LAC were used to identify items for consideration and community members were encouraged to provide feedback on "Ideas, Issues, Opportunities, and Observations" as noted in the CMP and in the LAC minutes. The community's ideas were reviewed with the Guidelines, AODA and other considerations including the goal for the CMP. Further information about the CMP engagement process is outlined in the CMP, and in **Appendix B** of this report.

4.0 Key Recommendations in the CMP

4.1 CMP Goal, Recommendations and Implementation

- The **Goal** of this CMP developed in consultation with the LAC, is: To develop a comprehensive multi-year Conservation Master Plan that presents recommendations for achieving long-term ecological integrity and protection of the ESA through the implementation of an environmental management strategy.
- The **Environmental Management Strategy** in the CMP includes detailed recommendations to continue and expand on the very successful restoration work to date to protect the ESA and Species at Risk, and begin to implement the naturalization and sustainable trail plan actions to meet the goal.
- The proposed **Sustainable Trail Plan** complies with the Guidelines for ecological protection and implements the City's obligations under AODA. The Trail Plan supports ecological protection and restoration.
- The **Implementation Plan** for recommended management actions in the CMP identifies the priority for action, sources for funding as well as direction in regard to measures of success for each management action, and an approximate cost.
- The **Adaptive Management and Monitoring** section includes detailed recommendations to continue and expand on the successful monitoring and adaptive management work to date to ensure the implementation of restoration, naturalization and sustainable trail plan actions in the CMP continues to protect the ESA and achieve long-term ecological integrity. The most thorough monitoring program of any ESA in the City is already in place in the ESA, including permits and requirements from the Province and recognition from the Federal Government for best practices for protection of the False Rue-anemone, SAR habitat.

4.2 Sustainable Trail Plan and AODA

- The majority of the managed, existing Level 1 trails (narrow, dirt, not firm and stable) including all trails located in more sensitive locations, will not be upgraded to Level 2 or 3 Trails (consistent with the Guidelines) but will continue to be maintained to meet AODA to the extent possible following the Guidelines. For example, as sections of boardwalk are replaced for lifecycle renewal they are now designed to meet AODA standards regardless of the connecting trail type or topography. AODA compliant signage at all access points is also recommended in the CMP.
- Greater efforts will be made to close and restore all 5.4 kilometers of unmanaged trails (on City and private ESA lands) and this is prioritized in the CMP to enhance ESA habitats, stop trespassing on private lands and success will be tracked in the monitoring framework in the CMP.
- The Level 2 and Level 3 Trails identified on the Sustainable Trail Plan in the CMP will meet AODA standards and their compliance with Guidelines means the trails were determined to be compatible with the significant ecological features, as the goal of the CMP is to ensure the long-term ecological integrity of the ESA. Upgraded trails can be constructed to reduce the potential for erosion, support a higher level of use and provide improved accessibility in the more culturally influenced, less sensitive areas in the ESAs.
- Subject to the process in the Guidelines, upgraded trails can be installed in these less sensitive areas of the ESAs, and with the advice of the ACCAC there is an obligation to do so where ecologically appropriate under the new AODA requirements.
- Also, 4 meter wide Utility Overlays over existing sewers are already present along the proposed trail enhancements between Access 5 and 10 including creek crossing A, and for most of the trails between Access 11 and creek crossing D. Access for sewer maintenance and repair are already required along these trails and coincide with the majority of the locations where Level 2 trails (firm and stable, 2m wide) and connections are recommended to enhance accessibility as required under AODA and the Guidelines.
- Improvements to trail surfaces, along stretches of existing, Level 1 dirt trails, known to flood or become muddy were requested by the public and are identified on the Sustainable Trail Plan for an “Improved Trail Surface”. If trails are not appropriately surfaced, trail users typically walk around wet areas, creating wider trails. Table 2 and Section 7.1.1 of the Guidelines provide direction for sustainable trail surface options to prevent this. As overviewed in the Council approved Addendum (Dillon 2016), existing managed trails were determined to be compatible with significant ecological features in the MVHF ESA (South); no existing managed trails would be recommended for closure or relocation. Therefore, Chart 2 of the Guidelines, improvements to trail surfaces would follow the option to “*Keep the existing trail and include design features to preserve ecological integrity*”.
- The “Improved Trail Surface” for sections of existing, Level 1 dirt trails identified on the Sustainable Trail Plan would be implemented in compliance with the Guidelines, and, with the Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, 2017 in Appendix C of this report, which identifies in Table 5 that; “*Activities restricted to the surface of existing, authorized roadways/access roads and recreational trails would not result in the destruction of critical habitat.*”
- The Ecologist who authored the initial draft of the Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, 2017 reviewed the CMP (letter in **Appendix D** of this report) and confirms: “*I have reviewed relevant sections and plans within the CMP and I believe it is consistent with the actions proposed in the recovery strategy for this federally Threatened plant species.*” The review concludes with this summary: “*In my opinion, the Medway ESA CMP and supporting work by the City of London will help to protect and restore the False Rue-anemone population within this densely populated urban area.*”

4.3 Trail Usage and ESA Protection following the Guidelines

- The Guidelines, identify that a properly designed and managed trail system limits impacts by concentrating trail use on resistant trail surfaces. Appropriate trail surfacing prevents environmental impacts associated with compaction, trail widening, informal trail formation and alteration of drainage.
- In the Medway VHF ESA north of Fanshawe Park Rd. W., a trail counter installed on the accessible trail found that on average 123 people per day pass the trail counter. The data also shows compliance with ESA rules - all visits were between 6am and 10pm.
- Even if all 123 of the average, daily trail-users in the north, continue south onto the improved, accessible trails from Access 5 to Access 10, the ESA would be protected as trails will be appropriately designed to withstand concentrated trail-use following the Guidelines.
- Increased use of managed trails provides social benefits to all Londoners. Trail use will continued to be monitored for management and habitat protection.
- The experience in London, consistent with Crime Prevention and Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, is that as trail use increases on well-designed trails that comply with the Guidelines, compliance with the rules also increases through natural surveillance.
- Consistent with the Guidelines, a wood rail entrance corral would be installed at the transition point to the existing Level 1 dirt trail south of Access #10 to clearly demarcate the change in trail type and level of accessibility. Interpretive signage posted at the corral would inform trail users about the significant features in the ESA and how to protect them. Given that the sensitive species area is over 250 meters south of this corral, we are not anticipating a great increase in use of the Level 1 dirt trails. The Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, 2017 identifies in Table 5 that; *“Activities restricted to the surface of existing, authorized roadways/access roads and recreational trails would not result in the destruction of critical habitat.”*
- In addition, to ensure any existing and new trail users stick to the trail, a minor Trail Improvement consistent with the Guidelines is proposed on the Sustainable Trail Plan. Considering the significance of the species and efforts to date to protect, restore and enhance the False Rue-anemone and other habitats from the biggest threat, invasive species, the City will be monitoring trail use (and continue to monitor the False Rue-anemone) in this area.
- From 2015-2017 the City reviewed and monitored trails through site visits within MVHF ESA (North) and Kilally Meadows ESA and found through comparison and review of historical aerial photos that all informal trails present along the Level 3 Trails, existed before the Level 3 Trails were installed (in 2006-2014, generally over existing sewers), and, no new informal-trails had formed. A well-designed trail system, with resistant trail surfacing, following the Guidelines can help to minimize or eliminate formation of new, informal trails.

5.0 Current State of MVHF ESA (South)

- **Protection of ESA**

The MVHF ESA is a provincially and federally recognized, award winning example of best practices for the protection of ecological integrity, biodiversity and species at risk in an urban natural area.

The City funds a \$500,000 annual contract with the UTRCA ESA Team to manage the City's 10 ESAs (732 hectares) including the Medway VHF ESA and this work includes:

1. Monitoring and enhancing the ESA (ecological restoration)
2. Enforcing ESA rules and municipal bylaws (with support from City by-law staff)
3. Implementing risk management and encroachment reduction programs
4. Maintaining the trail network
5. Educational programs, events and community projects

In addition to this the City funds \$200,000 a year for capital projects to maintain and protect ESAs. Local donors and Adopt an ESA groups also assist with stewardship, invasive species control, observation reports and funding. In the MVHF ESA (south) a private donor funded over \$10,000 in ecological restoration work in 2016/17 through the London Community Foundation.

Additional funding of \$75,000/year for invasive species control in ESAs is now available for 2018 and 2019 as supported by Council through the 2018 Budget Update (Budget Amendment #9).

- **Environmental Management Strategy**

The City's strong focus on enhancing ecological integrity in the ESA is evident as the majority of the restoration work including all the top, high and most of the moderate priority items are already underway or complete and under a rigorous monitoring program. Control of invasive Goutweed and Japanese Knotweed has successfully addressed the biggest threat to False Rue-anemone (a Threatened SAR), Green Dragon (a species of Special Concern), and Striped Cream Violet (a species of Conservation Concern) in MVHF ESA (south).

The City's leadership in habitat protection is provincially and nationally recognized and has improved the knowledge of False Rue-anemone abundance, distribution, biology and successful implementation of best practices to protect the species is noted in the Federal Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series, Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, 2017. The CMP and the Sustainable Trail Plan align with the Recovery Strategy which identifies in Table 5 that; **“Activities restricted to the surface of existing, authorized roadways/access roads and recreational trails would not result in the destruction of critical habitat.”** No new trails are proposed in the False Rue-anemone habitat, and, additional signage is in place as part of the trail-closure process described in the Guidelines and the CMP to close and restore, un-managed trails leading to private property in the False Rue-anemone habitat.

A good example of an existing bridge and trail protecting ecosystems and False Rue-anemone habitat is the one in Medway south near Metamora. The bridge over the tributary went in nearly 20 years ago funded by the community and is surrounded by False Rue-anemone. ESA visitors stay on the managed trail that directs trail-users over the bridge to successfully protect this population of SAR east of Access 17. The direction provided by the Guidelines and the existing measures in place for the ESA are protecting sensitive species.

Given it took only 4 years to address the majority of the restoration work it is very realistic to expect that the remaining, lower priority work and proposed naturalization work will be addressed over the ten year CMP timeframe.

The most thorough monitoring program of any ESA in the City is already in place in the ESA, including permits and requirements from the Province and recognition from the Federal Government for best practices. Annual invasive species control reports outlining the positive results of active management are circulated to EEPAC and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) and are listed in the CMP.

The Guidelines include a definition of Ecological Integrity from The Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006 and the full definition from the act is as follows:

“Ecological integrity refers to a condition in which biotic and abiotic components of ecosystems and the composition and abundance of native species and biological communities are characteristic of their natural regions and rates of change and ecosystem processes are unimpeded.

Ecological integrity includes, but is not limited to,

- (a) healthy and viable populations of native species, including species at risk, and maintenance of the habitat on which the species depend; and
- (b) levels of air and water quality consistent with protection of biodiversity and recreational enjoyment.”

By implementing the CMP the ecological integrity of the MVHF ESA (south) is expected to continue to improve over the next 10 years. This will be reviewed and continue to be tracked over the ten year period of this CMP as per the extensive, ongoing monitoring recommendations in the CMP.

- **Unique to MVHF ESA – Utilities, Maintenance Access and AODA, Private Lands**

A main trunk sewer line was installed over the last 70 years crossing the Medway Creek in over twenty locations. There are several other underground and aboveground utility lines including watermains, forcemains, and, electrical transmission lines which are identified with a Utility Overlay following the Guidelines. The primary goal for a Utility Overlay is to protect the overall integrity of the ESA, and minimize impact of the utility corridor while ensuring operational access to maintain all these utilities.

The Council approved Guidelines identify that, ***“Where maintenance access is required, trails should be located along the same route to minimize impacts to the surrounding ESA while achieving a social benefit by designing the trails to accommodate persons with disabilities wherever possible.”*** This is required by AODA.

Many private landowners and residents own portions of the MVHF ESA (south) including Western and Huron University College. While existing trails do extend from City lands onto Western’s lands the City does not maintain trails or ESA designated lands on Western’s lands, Huron’s lands or on private property, nor are they subject to the City’s Guidelines for example. The City is working closely with Western who have advised that access points leading to and from their lands be identified as “potential future access points” while they complete their Open Space Strategy.

- **Trails Advisory Group - Metamora Staircase Repair / Ecological Restoration**

In 2016 the Trails Advisory Group recommended that portions of the large wooden-staircase near the Metamora Access #17 be repaired, and boardwalks and ecological restoration implemented to protect the slope and provide sustainable access to the ESA. Completed in 2016, this work required approximately \$70,000 of Medway capital funds previously earmarked for MVHF ESA (south) CMP implementation.

- **Stewardship Opportunities**

Three local groups have adopted portions of the MVHF ESA, these groups had representatives on the LAC and are actively participating in the City’s Adopt an ESA stewardship program. Members of the LAC and the Community will be invited to participate in stewardship opportunities identified the CMP.

- **Financial Considerations of the new Conservation Master Plan**

Recommendations in the new CMP will be implemented over a 10 year period. It has been estimated by our consultant that the full CMP will cost approximately \$2.1M. As with other ESAs, many of the smaller invasive species control, ecological restoration and trail improvement projects can be completed within the existing 5 year ESA management contract with the UTRCA. Larger projects rely on annual capital funding. For 2018, Council has approved \$100,000 for Medway Valley ESA which will be used to continue the on-going ecological restoration works, the relocation of a key hiking trail from a sensitive valley slope and continue the work to close and restore

unmanaged trails (leading to private property) in the False Rue-anemone habitat. An additional \$50,000 has been identified in the 2019 budget.

To fully implement the recommendations within the CMP, including AODA accessibility upgrades, additional funding will be required. This will be considered and prioritized, along with other funding requests, through the next multi-year budget process. Staff will also continue to explore external funding opportunities with community partners.

6.0 Conclusion

The CMP follows and complies with the Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs document and planning process. The CMP provides direction for ecological protection and inclusive trail use as part of the Environmental Management Strategy and a monitoring framework to achieve long-term ecological integrity of the ESA consistent with the CMP goal.

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Submitted by:	Andrew Macpherson, OALA Manager, Environmental and Parks Planning
Recommended by:	John M. Fleming, MCIP, RPP Managing Director, Planning and City Planner

April 9, 2018
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Appendix A

Conservation Master Plan for the Medway Valley Heritage Forest ESA (south) March 2018, Dillon Consulting Inc. – hyperlink to electronic document **do not print in PEC Report**

Appendix B – Public Engagement

CMP Community Engagement

The City's CMP process allows for a level of consultation that far exceeds what the federal and provincial governments are required to undertake for management of Provincial and National Parks. The two phase, multi-year process includes formation of a Local Advisory Committee (LAC), presentations to Advisory Committees of Council, presentations to local community groups, public open houses, notices in the Londoner, mail-outs to all homes within 200 meters of the ESA, information signs in the ESA, information on the City website and collection of information from the public.

The 18 member **Local Advisory Committee (LAC)** included representatives and alternates from each group and was facilitated by staff and Dillon Consulting Inc. The Terms of Reference for the LAC and minutes of the meetings are included in the CMP. A table outlining the steps taken in the CMP Process including LAC meeting dates and Community Open Houses is included later in this section. Consultation with ACCAC was a key part of the engagement process and it is legally required under AODA legislation.

Two Open Houses for the CMP were held at (and promoted to their membership by) the Museum of Ontario Archaeology. Dr. Rhonda Bathurst the LAC representative for the Museum of Ontario Archaeology provided feedback on the CMP which ensured indigenous and First Nation's peoples and traditional territories are recognized in the Introduction, and fact checked the Cultural Heritage section information about the pre-contact Neutral Iroquoian village, known as the Lawson site.

Local Advisory Committee Membership

Accessibility Advisory Committee (AACAC)

Environmental & Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC)

Upper Thames River Conservation Authority (UTRCA)

MVHF ESA Adopt an ESA

Sunningdale West Residents Association Adopt an ESA

Friends of Medway Creek Adopt an ESA

Orchard Park/ Sherwood Forest Ratepayers Adopt an ESA

Orchard Park/ Sherwood Forest Ratepayers

Sunningdale West Ratepayers

Old Masonville Ratepayers

Sunningdale North Residents Association

Attawandaron Residents Association

Western University

Huron University College

Nature London

Thames Valley Trail Association (TVTA)

Heritage London Foundation

Museum of Ontario Archeology

Two Community Open House Events at the Museum of Ontario Archaeology

The community consultation and participation process provided many opportunities for feedback and education about the ESA. The first Community Open House was also the kick-off for a month long (June 1 to July 1, 2017) public engagement period where community members were encouraged to provide feedback on “Ideas, Issues, Opportunities, and Observations”.

The community feedback received helped to guide the following:

- Ecological Protection, Enhancement & Restoration
- Trail System Planning & Design Process
- Priorities for Implementation
- Final Conservation Master Plan

Feedback was obtained through the use of hard copy surveys, comment cards, an online survey and mapping tool as well as feedback from LAC members, representing community groups and other stakeholders. The survey made available to the public had 117 total respondents. The questions included multiple choice questions but also allowed for additional comments to be provided.

The review and compilation of comments was not done quantitatively or statistically as there were no limits on how often someone could comment. For example 23% of the comments on the mapping tool part of the survey came from one Internet Protocol (IP) address. The comments received during the engagement process from the public, and the LAC to date, were used to identify items for consideration in the CMP for review with the Guidelines, AODA and other considerations including the goal for the CMP.

Public Feedback and Frequently Asked Questions

The feedback from the public were generally in the form of comments which were categorized into topics and grouped according to the comment. The comments received were compiled, reviewed and incorporated for consideration in the CMP for review with the Guidelines, AODA and other considerations including the goal for the CMP. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) summary is included in the CMP in response to public comments.

LAC Comments and Responses

Detailed, written responses to the LAC’s comments on the CMP through the process were circulated back to the LAC. The detailed, written responses to ACCAC’s and EEPAC’s technical comments were also circulated directly through their committee agendas and included in the CMP in the Appendix.

Outline of Steps Taken in the MVHF ESA (south) CMP Process (Phases 1 and 2)

Date	Conservation Master Plan Process
Phase I	
February 21, 2013	Phase 1 CMP Draft Terms of Reference circulated to EEPAC
March 8, 2013	Conservation Master Plan (CMP) – Phase 1 launched
March – September 2013	Ecological Data Collection
July 25, 2013	Community Open House #1 for Phase I CMP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explanation of CMP process • Overview of studies being completed / initial findings to date • Collection of community input
October 2013 - January 2015	Report Writing – final Phase 1 report released January 2015

Date	Conservation Master Plan Process
January 15, 2014	First Draft Phase 1 CMP Presented and Circulated to EEPAC
January 27, 2014	Community Open House #2 for Phase I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Phase I CMP results • Opportunity for feedback on Phase I CMP
December 11, 2014	Second Draft of Phase 1 report presented and circulated to EEPAC with responses to EEPAC and Nature London comments
April 16, 2015	Responses to EEPAC's Second Round of Comments and Presentation of Final Phase I CMP to EEPAC
October 2015	Council directed staff to update the Planning and Design Standards for Trails in ESAs (2012)
May 2016	Council approved the <i>Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs</i> (2016)
November 2016	Addendum to Final Phase I CMP (January 2015) report based on the new <i>Guidelines for Management Zones and Trails in ESAs</i> (May 2016) circulated to EEPAC and Trails Focus Group
February 14, 2017	Council approval of Phase I Report and Addendum
Phase II	
February 14, 2017	Phase II of the Conservation Master Plan initiated by City Council
March 8, 2017	Invitations sent to Local Advisory Committee (LAC) stakeholders
March 2017	Formation of the LAC / Roles for the Medway VHF ESA CMP Process circulated to LAC/EEPAC/ACCAC
April to November 2017	Development of a ToR for the LAC (in CMP) which also outlines the five LAC meetings held throughout Phase II. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 27 - Meeting 1 – Introduction of CMP • May 4 - Meeting 2 – Consultation and Engagement • July 27 - Meeting 3 – Public Engagement Results • September 7 - Meeting 4 – Review of Draft CMP • November 2 - Meeting 5 – Endorsement of Final CMP Minutes of the meetings of the LAC are included in the CMP.
May 12, 2017	Notice of CMP Community Open House was circulated to the public. Circulation included an advertisement in the Londoner, mail-out to all homes within 200 m of the entire MVHF ESA, letters and / or emails to those who participated in Phase I and the LAC, signs at every ESA access inviting residents to attend the open house and complete the survey, and a notice on the City website.
May 25, 2017	CMP Update presented to the Orchard Park/ Sherwood Forest Ratepayers at their Annual General Meeting. Information on the CMP has been posted on the community website by the Orchard Park/Sherwood Forest Ratepayers continuously through the consultation process.
June 1, 2017	Community Open House #1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of Phase I results with presentation boards • Explanation of the Phase II process with presentation boards

Date	Conservation Master Plan Process
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity for feedback via hard-copy surveys and an online survey • City staff and consultants on-hand to answer questions
June 1 to June 30, 2017	Web survey and interactive mapping tool open for public input and feedback.
August 24, 2017	First draft CMP distributed to ACCAC, EEPAC, LAC, for review and comment
August 24, 2017	Draft CMP presented to ACCAC and EEPAC for discussion and comment
October 19, 2017	Dillon/Staff presentation to EEPAC in response to EEPAC's comments on the August 2017 Draft CMP (memo with responses to EEPAC provided in the CMP)
October 23, 2017	Revised CMP and responses to comments distributed to ACCAC, EEPAC, LAC
November 15, 2017	<p>Community Open House #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notice for the Open House was circulated to the public. Circulation included an advertisement in the Londoner, mail-out to all homes within 200 m of the entire MVHF ESA, letters and / or emails to those who participated in Phase I and/or II and the LAC, and, a notice on the City website. • Overview of the Phase II outcomes with presentation boards • City staff and consultants on-hand to answer questions
November 16, 2017	Meeting with staff and ACCAC Chair and two committee members regarding trail plan and accessibility
November 23, 2017	Staff ACCAC presentation and responses to ACCAC's comments on the August 2017 Draft CMP (memo with responses to ACCAC provided in the CMP)
December 21, 2017	EEPAC endorsed their statement and recommendations on the October 2017 Draft CMP (EEPAC statement provided in the CMP)
January 8, 2018	Letter from the Chair of AACAC outlining their stance on the October 2017 Draft CMP (ACCAC letter provided in the CMP)
January 8, 2018	EEPAC presented their statement and recommendations on the CMP to PEC, to refer them back to PEC when the CMP and Staff report are presented at PEC. (EEPAC statement provided in the CMP)
February 21, 2018	ESA CMP Planning Process and AODA Information Meeting with LAC and ACCAC Chair to review changes to CMP consistent with the Guidelines, to meet AODA requirements.
March 22, 2018	Staff were asked to attend ACCAC to respond to the January 8, 2018 ACCAC letter. The Accessibility Advisory Committee of Council (ACCAC) endorsed the March 2018, MVHF ESA Conservation Master Plan at their meeting on March 22, 2018. Consultation with ACCAC is required under <u>AODA</u> legislation

Appendix C

Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, 2017
– hyperlink to electronic document **do not print in PEC Report**

Appendix D

Holly J. Bickerton Consulting Ecologist

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3 April 2018

Linda McDougall
City of London
267 Dundas St.
London, ON N6A 1H2

RE: False Rue-anemone recovery and the Medway ESA Conservation Master Plan (CMP)

Dear Ms. McDougall,

Thank you for contacting me to comment on the recovery of False Rue-anemone and the Medway ESA CMP as above. I am an Ottawa-based consulting ecologist and botanist specializing in species at risk, particularly at-risk plants. I compiled the first draft of the (2017) Environment Canada Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada, which is available to the public on the federal Species at Risk Act registry (see reference below).

I have reviewed relevant sections and plans within the CMP and I believe it is consistent with the actions proposed in the recovery strategy for this federally Threatened plant species. By discouraging and decommissioning existing informal trails within the habitat of this species (see Fig. 4b of CMP), the CMP will reduce threats of trampling and disturbance to its sensitive habitat (see p.10 and Table 3, p. 13 of recovery strategy). By improving trail surfaces adjacent to its habitat, the CMP will prevent visitors from widening wet and muddy trails, and further encroaching into suitable or even occupied habitat. The proposed trail upgrade (improving trail surface) outside the population and habitat as shown in the Concept Plan of the CMP (Level Two Trail from A11, Fig. 4b) directs visitors away from sensitive habitat toward other areas. By increasing signage (p. 37 of CMP), the public will be made aware of the sensitive nature of this habitat (Table 3 of recovery strategy, p. 13). All of these activities are consistent with and support the actions listed in the recovery strategy.

It is important to emphasize that improving surfaces of existing trails is not inconsistent with recovery of populations where it reduces threats to the species or its habitat. As stated in the recovery strategy, the "surfacing of existing, authorized...recreational trails would not result in destruction of critical habitat" (Table 5, p. 19). In my experience and 20 years of observation, well-planned, managed and signed trails protect sensitive habitat by encouraging visitors to stay on the path. In Ottawa, the National Capital Commission (NCC) created such a path through the Mud Lake Conservation Area, a birding area of national significance, over 10 years ago. The creation of this path has worked extremely well to discourage visitors from extensive wandering and trampling of vegetation. These observations and

conclusions are supported by both the ecologist who designed the trail route, and by NCC land managers.

The False Rue-anemone population in London is in my opinion, well monitored and managed. The City of London has been active in addressing the most serious threat to this population: invasive Goutweed. By removing this aggressive competitor, monitoring data shows that the native False Rue-anemone populations in Medway Creek are stable to increasing after three years of treatments (see Invasive Species Control Program: Results for the Medway Heritage Forest ESA, January 2018). A clear and detailed plan to mitigate threats and monitor populations is in place (see False Rue-anemone Mitigation Plan: Medway Valley Heritage Forest (South) ESA, July 2014). As stated in the CMP, "on-going monitoring will continue to determine if controlled species re-establish" (p.54). The stable to expanding size of this population suggests that it can persist and even recover when the predominant threat (invasive species) is removed, despite multi-use trails elsewhere in the Medway ESA.

Staff and consultants of the City of London were active contributors to the development of the recovery strategy, freely providing documents and data. In its development, the recovery strategy also underwent extensive review by ecologists and land managers at all levels of government, and was made available for review by the general public for several months.

The Medway Valley False Rue-anemone population is an important one for this species' recovery. In my opinion, the Medway ESA CMP and supporting work by the City of London will help to protect and restore the False Rue-anemone population within this densely populated urban area.

Please feel to contact me at the number above if I can provide any further information or assistance.

Yours sincerely,



Holly Bickerton

Consulting Ecologist, B.A.Sc., MES

Member of COSSARO, Field Botanists of Ontario, Ottawa Field-Naturalists and Ontario Invasive Plant Council.

Reference:

Environment and Climate Change Canada. 2017. Recovery Strategy for the False Rue-anemone (*Enemion biternatum*) in Canada. Species at Risk Act Recovery Strategy Series. Environment and Climate Change Canada, Ottawa. vii + 27 pp.

http://www.registrelep-sararegistry.gc.ca/virtual_sara/files/plans/rs_false_rue_anemone_e_final.pdf