



Hamilton

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	February 17, 2016
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Red Hill Valley Hydro One Corridor Forestry Maintenance (PW16008) - (Ward 5) Outstanding Business List
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Ward 5
PREPARED BY:	Steve Barnhart (905) 546-2424, Extension 3919
SUBMITTED BY:	Gerry Davis, CPA, CMA General Manager Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

Council at its meeting of December 9, 2015 approved the following:

“That staff be directed to report to the General Issues Committee as soon as possible with the costs associated with the potential maintenance of the vegetation and forestry, which is currently adjacent to the homes on Glen Castle Drive and the area that flows through the valley up to the base of the escarpment, within the Red Hill Valley Hydro One Corridor Easement.”

Information:

Forestry staff met with Hydro One representatives to review options for the City of Hamilton (City) to assume vegetation maintenance within Hydro’s transmission corridor easement and provide the following:

All electricity transmission corridors in the City identified as easements to the Hydro One Corporation are maintained solely by Hydro One staff. Hydro One is responsible for performing all vegetation and tree trimming within their corridors. The easement within the Red Hill Valley in question is a section approximately 1.6 km long and 32 metres wide (105 ft.) from Glen Castle Park south to the escarpment brow as shown in Appendix A. Hydro One staff have notified the City their crews will be performing scheduled tree trimming and vegetation clearing in this corridor this winter for mandatory industry and regulatory clearances from energized conductors.

Hydro One staff communicated to City’s Forestry Section that all maintenance work within the corridor must adhere to the regulations of the Electricity Act 1998 when working around energized overhead electrical conductors of more than 250,000 volts. The City’s Forestry staff is not certified to work in proximity of energized conductors of

**SUBJECT: Red Hill Valley Hydro One Corridor Forestry Maintenance
(PW16008) - (Ward 5) - Page 2 of 2**

250,000 volts nor are any private contractors. Hydro One staff maintains the highest level of certification and are the only ones permitted to work within the electricity transmission corridor. Hydro One Corporation communicated to the City that maintenance activity will not be delegated to the City, which means staff and contractors cannot perform work within the transmission corridor.

Per Council direction, Forestry staff conducted a tree assessment along each side of the Red Hill transmission corridor to evaluate the opportunity for an enhanced level of maintenance within the natural open space. Trees were evaluated for their significant contribution to the urban canopy as well as their contribution to habitat linkages within the Red Hill Valley and the Niagara Escarpment. No significant trees in good condition outside of the 32 metre easement will be impacted by Hydro One maintenance; 54 significant trees inside the easement will be impacted.

Forestry staff requested Hydro One perform selective cutting of only tall tree species within the corridor to prevent any tree from growing to within 6 metres of the transmission line leaving low growing habitat species intact. Hydro One stated that no vegetation higher than 2 metres will be permitted to remain within their transmission corridor. Where possible, Hydro will retain smaller species of less than 2 metres in height. Any trees that meet Hydro's criteria to remain along the periphery of the easement will be trimmed for the safety and security of the transmission line and structures.