



CITY OF HAMILTON
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
Transportation Operations and Maintenance Division

TO:	Chair and Members Public Works Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	November 18, 2019
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Cootes Paradise and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Land Management Plans - Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System (PW19099) (Wards 1, 13 and 15)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	Wards 1, 13 and 15
PREPARED BY:	Jennifer DiDomenico (905) 546-2424 Ext. 5596
SUBMITTED BY:	Edward Soldo Director, Transportation Operations & Maintenance Public Works Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Appendix "A" attached to Report PW19099 respecting the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Management Plan be approved as a guiding document regarding future management actions for these lands;
- (b) That Appendix "B" attached to Report PW19099 respecting the Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plan be approved as a guiding document regarding future management actions for these lands.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is a collaborative initiative to protect Heritage Lands. It is important to note that the Heritage Lands Management Plans are not "land use" plans, governed by the *Planning Act*, but rather contain voluntary guidelines that partners, and adjacent landowners can choose to adopt in their land management efforts to protect and enhance the biodiversity and cultural history of the area.

Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands are the fourth and fifth out of a total of six Heritage Lands Management Plans to be completed.

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This report is intended to request approval of the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Management Plan and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plan that will serve as management directions for these lands.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 5

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: N/A

Staffing: Staff from the Planning and Economic Development Department (Planning Division) and Public Works Department (Environmental Services Division) will continue to participate as members of the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System Management Committee, with Planning and Economic Development as the Corporate Lead.

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The City of Hamilton is one of 10 partners within the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System initiative; nine of which own lands within the geographical boundaries of the EcoPark and signed a memorandum of understanding in 2013 (extended in 2016 to the year 2021). Since 2007, the EcoPark partners have worked together and with other local environmental groups to deliver sustainable recreation and education opportunities.

The first three Heritage Lands Management Plans were completed and endorsed by Hamilton City Council in 2015 and 2016. Work on the Cootes Paradise and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Plans began concurrently in late 2017 and were completed in late 2018 and now Council's approval of the Plans is being sought through Report PW19099.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

There are no policy implications or legislated requirements that will result from the endorsement of these land management plans.

Prior to any development, site alteration or activity on the Heritage Lands, staff will review applicable policies and regulations to determine conformity and approval requirements, as required.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

The following City of Hamilton Departments/Divisions have been consulted in the development of these Plans:

Planning and Economic Development – Community Planning and Design (Natural Heritage); Development Planning (Cultural Heritage); Planning (GIS); Tourism and Culture (Heritage Resource Management); Transportation Planning and Parking

Public Works – Environmental Services (Parks and Cemeteries, Landscape Architectural Services, Forestry and Horticulture); Engineering Services (Asset Management); Hamilton Water (Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection)

The Wards 1, 13 and 15 Councillors were consulted and are supportive of the concept of the Heritage Lands Management Plans.

The public were consulted during development of the plans in various ways, including public meetings, Indigenous engagement and Stakeholder Advisory committee meetings; their input is reflected in the final Land Management Plan reports.

Conservation Halton and Hamilton Conservation Authority sought approval/endorsement of the plans by the respective Conservation Board of Directors. As well, the Royal Botanical Gardens will be recommending approval of the plans to their Board.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is a collaborative initiative to protect, restore and connect more than 3,900 hectares (9,600 acres) of natural lands in west Hamilton, Dundas, Flamborough, and Burlington. This is one of the most biologically rich areas of Canada and the natural features of the study area include a portion of the Niagara Escarpment, and the lands and waters associated with the Cootes Paradise Marsh and Grindstone Creek.

➤ Heritage Lands Management Plans

The Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System is divided into six core areas, called Heritage Lands, which include:

1. Burlington Heights;
2. Clappison-Grindstone;
3. Waterdown-Sassafras Woods;

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4. Cootes Paradise;
5. Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel; and
6. Lower Grindstone.

Heritage Lands Management Plans provide a consistent framework for the future planning, implementation and management of lands under ownership of the partners. The plans are intended to enhance the protection and management of important natural and cultural heritage features and improve sustainable recreation activities, education, and research opportunities.

The plans are not meant to supersede or replace, but rather enhance land use plans or zoning by-laws that are currently enacted within the EcoPark area; including, but not limited to, the Greenbelt Plan, the Niagara Escarpment Plan, and Hamilton Official Plans.

➤ Cootes Paradise

The Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands comprise 762 ha of land and marsh located at the north end of the City of Hamilton. Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands includes an area generally extending between Olympic Drive east to Highway 403 and from Cootes Drive/McMaster University campus and Westdale neighbourhood in Hamilton north to York Road (including all of Cootes Paradise and adjacent lands). The majority of the current EcoPark System Lands are owned by the Royal Botanical Gardens (582 ha), with smaller areas owned by the City of Hamilton (98 ha) and Hamilton Conservation Authority (30 ha). Lands are adjacent to the Burlington Heights Heritage Lands (on the east) and the Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands (on the northwest). Refer to map attached as Appendix "C" to Report PW19099.

➤ Borer's Fall – Rock Chapel

The Borer's Falls - Rock Chapel Heritage Lands comprise 498 ha of land north of the urban boundary of the City of Hamilton. Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands includes an area generally extending between Sydenham Road east to Highway 6 and from the Canadian National Railway (CN) north to Rock Chapel, Valley and Patterson Roads. Of the 498 ha within the Heritage Lands, 323 ha (65%) are currently owned and managed by partner organizations; the majority of the current EcoPark System Lands are owned by Hamilton Conservation Authority (127 ha), Royal Botanical Gardens (124 ha), with smaller areas owned by Conservation Halton (57 ha) and the City of Hamilton (15 ha). To the south, Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands is located adjacent to urban areas including the former Town of Dundas. North of Rock Chapel, Valley and Patterson Roads, the Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands are bordered by privately-owned lands, some of which are open space, as well as rural residential areas.

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Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands are adjacent to the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands (on the south) and the Clappison-Grindstone Heritage Lands (on the east). Refer to map attached as Appendix "D" to Report PW19099.

This initiative is an excellent example of engaged collaboration, collective efforts and utilized expertise from all partners. Additionally, feedback from community members, including landowners from within the EcoPark boundaries, were also incorporated into the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System: Cootes Paradise and Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plans.

A full copy of the "Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Management Plan" and "Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plan" can be found on the Cootes to Escarpment EcoPark System website:

<https://www.cootestoescarpmentpark.ca/cootes-paradise-plan>

<https://www.cootestoescarpmentpark.ca/borer%27s-falls-rock-chapel-plan>

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

Council may choose to not approve the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Management Plan.

Council may choose to not approve the Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plan.

Staff do not recommend either of these alternatives as the plans provide voluntary guidelines to further enhance and protect the unique and significant lands within the EcoPark and aligns with its vision and objectives.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive City where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Clean and Green

Hamilton is environmentally sustainable with a healthy balance of natural and urban spaces.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PW19099 – Summary of Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Management Plan

Appendix "B" to Report PW19099 – Summary of Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Management Plan

Appendix "C" to Report PW19099 – Map of the Cootes Paradise Heritage Lands Boundary

Appendix "D" to Report PW19099 – Map of the Borer's Falls-Rock Chapel Heritage Lands Boundary