



COMMUNICATION UPDATE

TO:	Mayor and Members of City Council General Issues Committee
DATE:	May 4, 2023
SUBJECT:	City of Hamilton and Mohawk College Partnership on Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (Drone) Research Site
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	4 & 5
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SIGNATURE:	

The use of remotely piloted Aircraft System (RPAS), commonly referred to as drones, is increasing and expanding across a broad range of sectors including municipal use cases.

At the request of Mohawk College, the City of Hamilton initiated a detailed review to identify City-owned properties to support a potential RPAS Research site.

Mohawk College hosts the [Unmanned and Remote Sensing Innovation Centre](#) (URSIC) and is both a leader and active partner in this technology space. The URSIC has RPAS capabilities embedded in many programs of study including Building and Construction Sciences, Community Services, Chemical and Environmental Technology and Biotechnology and Communication Arts, as well as industry-specific research projects.

The City of Hamilton, in partnership with the Economic Development Division, Digital & Innovation Office, and Mohawk College has entered into a 3-year pilot agreement until March 31, 2026, to allow the use of the Windermere Basin located at 105 Eastport Drive, Hamilton for limited RPAS research-based operations.

After reviewing multiple City-owned sites, the Windermere Basin location was selected for its proximity to a variety of environments including transportation networks, water, industrial lands, and harbour, as well as uncontrolled airspace designation that allows for RPAS bases research to occur in alignment with Transport Canada Regulations. RPAS technologies and use cases are also applicable to Municipal areas of interest

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including wastewater management, by-law enforcement, and public safety emergency response (such as firefighting incident management response, search and rescue, as well as pollution and air quality monitoring potential).

A detailed review was then undertaken via internal consultation with the Corporate Real Estate Office, Bylaw, Legal, and various City departments as well as a Circulation of Property for a Licenses agreement that included feedback from both internal and external partners. A review was also undertaken of other Municipal RPAS research sites that already exist, such as Calgary.

A third-party rostered environmental consultant that is involved in the operations and ongoing monitoring of the site (Resilient Consulting Corporation) was engaged by the City to develop a Guidance Document for the use of the location at a cost to the City of \$3,771. Mohawk College is paying the City \$2,500 to cover Real Estate Division and related legal costs to enter into the agreement and will pay a \$1 per year licensing fee as part of the pilot agreement.

Work by the consultant included engagement with the Windermere Task group that included a variety of community stakeholders including the Hamilton Conservation Authority. Based on that consultation, and detailed review of Transport Canada regulations, the consultant established a set of usage criteria for the unique site-specific conditions. Those criteria have been included in the license agreement and include a limited take-off and landing zone that is accessed via Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority (HOPA) lands, flight restrictions, and no-fly zones within the basin designed to protect the natural environment and bird habitat present on the site. None of the operations or research will involve residential areas or infringe on resident privacy in any manner.

This partnership has multiple benefits including, but not limited to, an RPAS research site serving as a hub for research, innovation, economic growth, and related education pathways. It will also support testing of RPAS-related technology developments via Mohawk's Unmanned and Remote Sensing Innovation Centre, attracting technology companies and RPAS solution developers to the region and advancing innovation in the RPAS sector.

RPAS Operations Guidance Site-Specific Controls Diagram can be found on page three which outlines the flight conditions that are part of the agreement as developed by Resilient Consulting.



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