SUBJECT: Proposed Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (PED09007) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

(a) That staff be directed to prepare a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Strategy and report back to Economic Development and Planning Committee by September 2009.

(b) That this strategy in (a) above include an appropriate governance, business and financial model for a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This Report has been prepared in response to a Council direction requesting staff to “research different municipal models for the establishment of a Hamilton Natural Areas Acquisition Fund and report back to the Economic Development and Planning Committee”.

The general purpose of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund is to receive and hold monies in order to provide funds to conservation bodies and organizations. Organizations typically include Conservation Authorities, non-government organizations, not-for-profit bodies, and other such organizations interested in preserving and managing natural heritage features, and would use such a fund for the acquisition or securement (usually by donation, purchase, conservation easement and the relinquishment of other legal interests in land, see Appendix “B”) of natural areas within a municipality. Monies from a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund may be used to:
• Purchase available lands outright;
• Partner with a conservation organization to provide funds in exchange for management of the lands;
• Provide monies for education programs on land stewardship and preservation; or,
• Pay legal and other fees to finalize the sale and/or management agreement for natural heritage lands.

Currently, both the Federal and Provincial Governments have established funding sources for the acquisition and/or securement (see Appendix “B”) of significant natural heritage features. In addition, three Regional governments, four local municipalities, and one not-for-profit organization within the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area have established, or are in the process of establishing, a “Natural Areas Acquisition Fund” for natural heritage features within their jurisdictions. The municipalities and not-for-profit organization included within this report are not the only programs currently available. The explanations are meant to provide an understanding of the numerous options and models available.

The development of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund will require an overall acquisition strategy to identify and prioritize the natural heritage features within the City that would apply or qualify for purchasing, as well as the identification of appropriate funding sources. This report demonstrates that the development of a natural areas acquisition strategy would be consistent with numerous existing approved policies within the province and City, including the Provincial Policy Statement, Places to Grow Growth Plan, the City of Hamilton’s Corporate Strategic Plan, Vision 2020, the Regional Official Plan, the City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan, and the Official Plans of the former area municipalities. Accordingly, further direction is required to develop a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Strategy for the City of Hamilton, including an appropriate funding source or sources to implement the strategy.

**BACKGROUND:**

In January 2008, the following motion was approved by Council, directing staff to review the potential for a Hamilton Natural Areas Acquisition Fund:

“Whereas, other municipalities such as Halton, Niagara, and York have established municipal Natural Areas Acquisition Funds; and;

Whereas, there is an on-going need to protect natural areas such as wetlands and forests that provide important ecosystem services to Hamilton such as water storage and filtration, carbon storage, air purification, and biodiversity protection; and,

Whereas, the establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund may provide the City with an opportunity to leverage funds from non-governmental organizations, such as the Nature Conservancy of Canada.”
Now, therefore, staff be directed to research different municipal models for establishment of a Hamilton Natural Areas Acquisition Fund and report back to the Economic Development and Planning Committee."

In response to the motion, Planning staff reviewed existing and proposed “Natural Areas Acquisition Funds” of other government organizations, area municipalities and non-government organizations within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. To date, the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of Natural Resources, along with the Regions of York, Peel and Halton, have established, or are in the process of adopting, property acquisition strategies for existing natural areas.

In addition, the Cities of Kitchener, Cambridge, Toronto, and London are currently working on similar initiatives. Finally, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and the Nature Conservancy of Canada are examples of Non-government Organizations (NGO) with similar land acquisition strategies. This report examines the programs for the noted organizations.

**What is a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund?**

A Natural Areas Acquisition Fund (NAAF) is typically a continuing or perpetual source of funding available for a municipality to use for the securement, (with ultimate goal of acquisition) of available natural heritage features. The funds may be used by a municipality to purchase and manage the land outright, or it could be leveraged with other organizations (e.g. a Conservation Authority) for land purchase. The municipality would not be responsible for the management of the lands. Within the City of Hamilton potential lands could include:

- Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs);
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI);
- Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs);
- Significant woodlots; significant valley lands; significant wetlands; significant habitat of threatened, endangered and special concern species;
- Linkage areas; or,
- Other types of natural areas deemed important ecologically to the City of Hamilton, and as identified within the Official Plan.

The Provincial Policy Statement has provided direction on how to determine significant woodlots, valley lands, wetlands, and habitats of threatened, endangered and special concern species. The Council adopted City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan has incorporated these directions and defined significant woodlots, wetlands, valley lands and habitat of threatened, endangered and special concern species. Finally, the City’s Corporate Strategic Plan identifies “Environmental Stewardship” as a key Focus Area, including specific objectives regarding the protection of significant natural areas.
Why does Hamilton need a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund?

Currently, the City has no secure source of funding for the purchase and/or securement of significant natural heritage lands within the rural and urban boundaries. The Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan (Section 1.1 k) states that in order to conserve and enhance the Natural Heritage System, the Region will “investigate the establishment of an Environmental Reserve Fund for the acquisition or conservation of natural areas”. In addition, the Official Plans of the former municipalities (Cities of Hamilton and Stoney Creek, Towns of Ancaster, Dundas and Flamborough, and the Township of Glanbrook) all include a statement within their Official Plans indicating the importance of protecting and preserving the natural features within their boundaries.

Purchasing natural heritage lands is important for the overall health of a municipality. Increasing forest cover and preserving wetlands not only improves air quality, but can also improve the water quality within watercourses and ultimately Lake Ontario. Forest cover along the edge of a watercourse (known as the riparian zone) allows for filtering of surface runoff, decreases erosion and sediment entering the rivers, shades and cools the water which benefits fish and their habitats and improves air quality. Acquiring natural areas also creates a diverse City that is enjoyed by the residents and visitors alike. All of these benefits will lead to a healthier city.

The City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan, along with the Greenbelt Plan, provides significant protection of natural features within the rural boundaries. However, there is no updated Urban Official Plan that currently is in place which provides a comparable level of protection of natural heritage features within the urban boundary. While policies provide strong protection for natural features, acquisition provides the most secure and long-term protection, and ensures that an appropriate body will hold and manage the property. Increased development pressures within the City of Hamilton have put continued stress on the remaining natural heritage features. The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund could focus on purchasing only those lands currently not protected through Official Plan policies. It is an opportunity to protect natural heritage features that would otherwise be subject to development pressures.

The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund would provide an opportunity for the City to secure privately owned, natural areas within the rural and urban boundaries that are deemed to be of important ecological significance to the City. Public ownership of natural heritage lands is the most effective tool for securement in perpetuity. While conservation easements and other securement strategies do provide some form of protection, there is always the possibility of a change in land ownership and continued pressure from development on privately owned lands.

What is the Federal Government Doing?

Environment Canada implemented a Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) for Species at Risk (Appendix “A”) across Canada. The HSP became operational in 2000-2001, and allocates up to $10 million per year to projects that conserve and protect species at risk and their habitats. The overall goal of the HSP is to “contribute to the recovery of endangered, threatened, and other species at risk, and to prevent other species from
becoming a conservation concern by engaging Canadians from all walks of life in conservation actions to benefit wildlife”. Although this program is not strictly for the acquisition of natural heritage lands, it is a $45 million commitment by the Federal Government ($10 million annually) for the protection of Canada’s Species at Risk.

The purpose of the HSP is to provide funding for stewardship projects directly related to the preservation of species at risk, as indicated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) (Refer to the Glossary of Terms in Appendix “B”). The program fosters land and resource use practices that maintain the habitat necessary for the survival and recovery of species at risk, enhancing existing conservation activities, and encouraging new ones.

There are no specific numerical figures available for projects that have occurred within Ontario; however, a list of organizations that have benefited from this program include Conservation Authorities, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Toronto Zoo, Royal Botanical Gardens, Town of Richmond Hill, Niagara Parks Commission, Ontario Streams, numerous Stewardship Councils (Hamilton-Halton, Bancroft Area, Bruce Resource), and the City of Windsor.

To date, the City has not received funding through this program. With the establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, the City would have specific direction as to the types of natural areas suitable for funding under this program (areas for monitoring and/or maintaining Species at Risk). Lands that currently contain Species at Risk would be suitable candidates for this type of funding.

What is the Provincial Government Doing?

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources has prepared a document titled Our Sustainable Future (Appendix “D”), which outlines the Ministry’s commitment to land securement activities such as conserving Ontario’s biodiversity and promoting stewardship, partnerships, and community involvement.

The Ministry’s land securement activities also help protect and restore Species at Risk (SAR) (refer to the Glossary of Terms in Appendix “B”) habitat through its support of SAR related acquisition and habitat enhancement activities. The Ministry’s land securement program also supports property securement and ecological protection of the Niagara Escarpment by helping to secure the Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System.

The ministry has allocated $5.62 million for land securement in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. $5.47 million has been granted to three key partners as follows:

1. $4.219 million to the Nature Conservancy of Canada for the Greenlands, Ontario Parks, Eastern Habitat Joint Venture, and Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem programs;
2. $1.07 million to Ducks Unlimited Canada for the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture program and Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem; and,

3. $180,000 to the Ontario Land Trust Alliance for the Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program.

In addition, a program has also been initiated through Our Sustainable Future called The Natural Spaces Program (Appendix “C”), which was launched on August 3, 2005. The Province provided a $6 million one-time allocation to the Ontario Heritage Trust (see Appendix “B”) for the acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands. The Program currently has $4.5 million available to conservation bodies (The Crown, conservation authorities, a municipality, an incorporated company that is a registered charity, and a trustee of a charitable foundation) for fee simple purchase (see Appendix “B”) and conservation interests on privately owned lands. The Ontario Heritage Trust works with interested land owners and conservation bodies (Conservation Authorities, Bruce Trail Association, Niagara Escarpment Trust, and Carolinian Canada) to acquire the natural heritage features on the privately owned lands. The remaining $1.5 million is allocated for stewardship activities on newly acquired lands.

Currently, the City has not used this resource for the purpose of land acquisition or securement. With the establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, City of Hamilton staff could have clear direction on priority acquisition areas and determine whether either of these programs would be suitable as a source of additional funding.

What are other Municipalities doing?

The following information relates to three regional municipal governments and four local municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe that have established, or are in the process of establishing, acquisition funds for the purpose of protecting natural areas. (This information does not pertain to every municipality within the Greater Golden Horseshoe that could have similar programs, but is meant to give an example of different options available). Each municipality has focused on different natural heritage features to protect based on priority.

1. Region of York:

The Region of York has established a Greenlands Property Securement Strategy (Appendix “E”). This Strategy includes a partnership between the Region of York and the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC), and was initiated to achieve the Regional Official Plan objectives of maintaining and protecting urban and rural forest cover and natural heritage areas. The long-term goal is to achieve 25% forest cover throughout the Region, with 5% annual land acquisition targets. A number of protection tools are considered including stewardship, policy planning, monitoring and acquisition (bequests, easements/covenants, leaseback agreements), long term lease, donations and purchase. Purchase is only an option if all other means have been exhausted.
2. **Halton Region:**

Halton Region has established a Greenslands Property Securement Strategy (Appendix “F”) through its 2002 Official Plan Review Process. Halton’s 2002 Official Plan Review resulted in a number of new policies on Environmental and Land Stewardship stemming from an understanding that the Region’s Greenslands, rural and agricultural system were critical components of a healthy and prosperous community. A cooperative effort among the Province, Region, the Local Municipalities, and the three Conservation Authorities in Halton, will work towards the acquisition of critical parts of the Greenslands System through the development approval process. In addition, the Region will provide funding, as deemed appropriate by Council, towards the implementation of the Greenslands System.

3. **Region of Peel:**

The Region of Peel established the Greenslands Securement Project (see Appendix “G”) as part of the Liveable Peel Strategy. The Liveable Peel Strategy (refer to Glossary of terms in Appendix “B”) provides the opportunity to engage in long-term sustainability planning by improving the community’s health and social well-being by preserving, protecting, and enhancing the natural environment and resources of Peel. The Greenslands Securement Project supports the goals of the Liveable Peel Strategy, the Region of Peel Strategic Plan, and the Regional Official Plan policies.

Conservation Authorities will be responsible for identifying priority acquisition areas, (at least on an annual basis), provide ongoing landowner contact, request funding from the Region following CA Board approval, and liaise between the Region and landowner to obtain the necessary reports and approvals from the Region. Currently, the project is funded through the combined water and waste water utility rate. Annual contributions are made to a Greenslands Securement Reserve account, which funds annual capital project accounts.

4. **City of Kitchener:**

The City of Kitchener currently has two sources of funding for the acquisition of natural areas. The Natural Lands Acquisition Fund (Appendix “H”) is strictly to be used for the acquisition of lands at risk for development, and that cannot be acquired through any other means. There is no specific criteria as to the types of natural lands to protect through acquisition, but the focus is to be on those lands not yet protected in policy or zoning; and significant natural lands designated and/or zoned for development. A good example would be a tableland woodlot.

The Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF) (Appendix “I”) was proposed by Council to creatively fund different types of environmental projects or programs (internal, external, partnerships) in Kitchener. The intent of LEAF is to act as a catalyst to leverage participation and investment by all stakeholders in the
community to improve the environment of the City of Kitchener. It is not to be exclusively used for the acquisition of lands.

5. City of Cambridge:

The City of Cambridge does not budget for the acquisition of natural lands; however, in 1993, the Natural Heritage Trust Fund was established. Formation of the Natural Heritage Trust Fund is a result of the Cambridge Environmental Advisory Committee’s (CEAC) goal to provide the community with a way to make financial contributions for the purpose of purchasing and maintaining local natural areas. Securement of natural areas through their purchase, and subsequent stewardship and maintenance, is recognized as a valuable tool in the long-term protection of natural areas, especially in urban settings.

The Natural Heritage Trust Fund is administered by a subcommittee that reports annually to the Cambridge Environmental Advisory Committee and City Council. Its main purpose is to assist not-for-profit organizations in natural heritage area acquisition in the City of Cambridge. Lands eligible must be one or more of the following:

- An evaluated wetland;
- ANSI;
- Regional ESPA (Environmentally Scientific Policy Area);
- High Quality Woodlot;
- Open Space (OS1) zoned lands; or,
- An area necessary or desirable to maintain as a natural state.

The not-for-profit organizations are to assume the long-term maintenance of the acquired lands.

6. City of Toronto:

The City of Toronto has established the Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Reserve (Appendix “J”) for the sole purpose of the acquisition of natural areas. A high priority for the City of Toronto is to protect Lake Ontario as the source of potable water for the City. It is recognized that protecting and improving the water quality of the various river systems and watersheds that flow into Lake Ontario through the GTA is an important objective in source water protection. The Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan is currently being implemented to meet the objectives of source water protection. However, protecting the river systems and watersheds through acquisition of key parcels of land is another opportunity to achieve improved water quality.

7. City of London:

The City of London established the Woodlot Acquisition Fund in 1999 to acquire upland woodlands that are at risk from development pressure and are located within the 20 year Urban Growth Boundary. The overall objective is to maintain
a healthy ecosystem with linkages along the Thames River and its tributaries, and to provide adequate distribution of open space throughout the City.

The funds will be used to acquire upland woodlots in areas subject to development where the woodlot has been identified as significant, but not identified as an Environmentally Significant Area (ESA). Woodlot significance will be determined in accordance with Official Plan policies, and will include criteria such as size, species diversity, connections, and function.

These criteria, and a review by the City's Ecologist and Environmental and Ecological Planning Advisory Committee (EEPAC), will be used to determine if a woodlot is significant, and eligible for acquisition under this program. The final decision to purchase any identified eligible woodlots will be a decision of Municipal Council, based upon a recommendation of the Commissioner of Planning and Development.

These funds may be used to purchase woodlots that are subject to development, but will not be used to acquire woodlots in lands outside the identified Urban Growth Boundary that are not subject to development pressures. These funds will not be used to acquire wooded areas within regulated floodplains, as these lands are acquired as part of the City's program of floodplain acquisition.

In 2000, London City Council established a capital budget of $200,000, with the long-term goal being $500,000 annually. No information is available to date on the total amount of funding available.

Table 1: Summary of Some Existing Natural Areas Securement Programs for Municipalities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>FUNDING PROGRAM</th>
<th>FUNDING ALLOCATED TO DATE</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>WHO ALLOCATES FUNDS</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environment Canada</td>
<td>Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk</td>
<td>$62 million plus an additional $153 million from leveraging</td>
<td>Protect Canada's Species at Risk</td>
<td>Administered by Environment Canada, managed by Department of Fisheries and Oceans, and Parks Canada Agency</td>
<td>Federal Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>FUNDING PROGRAM</td>
<td>FUNDING ALLOCATED TO DATE</td>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>WHO ALLOCATES FUNDS</td>
<td>FUNDING SOURCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Natural Resources</td>
<td>Natural Spaces Program</td>
<td>$6 million ($4.5 million for acquisition, $1.5 million for stewardship)</td>
<td>Acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands.</td>
<td>Ontario Heritage Trust</td>
<td>Provincial Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of York</td>
<td>Greenlands Property Securement Strategy</td>
<td>$1.4 annually</td>
<td>ESAs, ANSIs, PSWs with the main focus on lands that provide linkages.</td>
<td>Regional Council</td>
<td>Capital reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halton Region</td>
<td>Halton Green Fund/Greenlands Securement Strategy</td>
<td>None to date</td>
<td>All wetlands, floodplains, ESA's, ANSIs, Significant Woodlands, Carolinian Canada Sites, Habitat of Endangered and threatened species, land contiguous to Halton Regional Forest, Conservation Area or other protected land, Escarpment Natural Area, priority lands for Conservation Authorities, lands which provide connectivity between above features</td>
<td>Regional Council</td>
<td>Either through Regional Council resolution or annual budget process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORGANIZATION</td>
<td>FUNDING PROGRAM</td>
<td>FUNDING ALLOCATED TO DATE</td>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
<td>WHO ALLOCATES FUNDS</td>
<td>FUNDING SOURCE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region of Peel</td>
<td>Greenlands Securement Project Project</td>
<td>$2 million total</td>
<td>PSWs, Regionally Significant Woodlands, ESAs, ANSIs, habitats of vulnerable, threatened or endangered species, Niagara Escarpment Plan Natural Areas, valley and stream corridors, lands identified by Conservation Authorities and locally significant wetlands.</td>
<td>Greenlands Securement Subcommittee provides fiscal oversight with Regional Council approving all funding applications. In addition a Stakeholders Group (Region, Municipal staff, Conservation Authorities) to discuss priority acquisition areas.</td>
<td>2006 was $500,000 from existing CA Reserve and $500,000 approved by Regional Council. In 2007 $500,000 through the budget process. In 2008 $500,000 through the budget process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kitchener</td>
<td>Natural Lands Acquisition Fund</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>No specific criteria but focus in on those lands not yet protected in policy or zoning</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>2007 budget process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Kitchener</td>
<td>Local Environmental Action Fund (LEAF)</td>
<td>$5 million</td>
<td>Act as a catalyst to leverage participation and investment by all stakeholders in the community to improve the environment of the City of Kitchener</td>
<td>None to date as criteria has not been finalized.</td>
<td>$2 million from proceeds form sale of Atria in 2007 with $1 million per year for three years from the Economic Development Investment Fund</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table: Funding and Purposes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORGANIZATION</th>
<th>FUNDING PROGRAM</th>
<th>FUNDING ALLOCATED TO DATE</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>WHO ALLOCATES FUNDS</th>
<th>FUNDING SOURCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>City of Cambridge</td>
<td>Natural Heritage Trust Fund</td>
<td>None to date</td>
<td>Evaluated wetland, ANSI, Regional ESPA, High Quality Woodlot, Open Space zoned lands, an area necessary or desirable to maintain in a natural state</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Not determined</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of Toronto</td>
<td>Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Reserve</td>
<td>$2 million</td>
<td>Protection of river systems and watersheds as it pertains to the protection of Source Water</td>
<td>Toronto and Region Conservation Authority</td>
<td>Wastewater Stabilization Reserve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City of London</td>
<td>Woodlot Acquisition Fund</td>
<td>$200,000 with a goal of $500,000</td>
<td>Existing woodland patches that are not currently designated open space.</td>
<td>Council</td>
<td>Capital Budget</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What are Non-Government Organizations (NGO’s) doing?**

A non-governmental organization (NGO) is a legally constituted organization created by private organizations or people with no participation or representation of any government. The majority of their funding comes from public donations, and leveraging opportunities with other organizations (including government and non-government organizations). The following is a review of two existing NGO’s and a brief outline of what they do.

The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (Appendix “K”) works with interested parties including municipalities, Conservation Authorities, Provincial and Federal governments, other NGOs, Oak Ridges Land Trust, and trail organizations, to expand the amount of publicly or privately conserved land on the Oak Ridges Moraine. The initial goal is to secure lands for the Oak Ridges Trail System, critical natural areas that enhance or strengthen existing holdings, restoring natural linkages where the resulting connections improve ecological integrity, and protecting key water resources such as wetlands, kettle lakes or buffers for coldwater streams.
The Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation provides a good example of a NGO that provides not only funding sources but expertise and leveraging abilities.

The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) is Canada's leading national land conservation organization. It is a private, non-profit group that partners with corporate and individual landowners to achieve the direct protection of our most important natural heritage features through property securement (donation, purchase, conservation easement and the relinquishment of other legal interests in land) and long-term stewardship of the portfolio of properties currently under the management of the NCC. NCC works in partnership with conservation organizations, governments, corporations and other groups to determine how to help strategically with conservation projects. In addition, the NCC often will secure leveraging with other organizations to increase the amount of resources available for the long-term protection of natural heritage features across Canada.

Since 1962, NCC and its partners have helped to conserve more than 800,000 hectares (2 million acres) of ecologically significant land nationwide.

The City of Hamilton has the potential to partner with similar NGOs, including Carolinian Canada, and the Hamilton Naturalists Club, for acquisition and/or securement opportunities.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

Through the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS), the City has projected that Hamilton will have a population of 700,000 and an additional 100,000 (40,000 within the current urban boundary) households by the year 2031. In order to achieve the objectives of sustainable development and the goals of Vision 2020, consideration for a balance between social, economic and environmental pressures must be included.

In order to achieve environmental sustainability, some additional tools (planning policies, easements, acquisition) for the protection of existing natural areas have potential. A goal of Vision 2020 is to develop a system of interconnected protected natural areas, which provides for the growth and development of natural flora and fauna and, where appropriate, provides access for all citizens of the City of Hamilton.

A number of natural lands within the City of Hamilton are currently protected through existing policies and zoning; however, additional tools are often required in order to ensure the long term protection and maintenance of significant natural areas within a municipality. Establishing a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund is an opportunity to provide a stable source of funding to ensure that when lands do become available, or development pressures prevail, the necessary protection measures can be implemented.
There are a number of options available to achieve environmental protection including, but not limited to: easements, covenants, right-of-first refusal, testamentary (i.e., will donations), outright donation, and acquisition. These terms are defined in Appendix “B”.

However, acquisition is the most effective way to preserve existing natural heritage features in perpetuity within the City. Current regulatory approaches, such as planning policies and zoning, do allow for some protection of natural areas, but the most effective and long term solution is for these lands to be within public ownership (either by a municipality, Conservation Authority, or non-government organization). The establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund would provide an opportunity to secure important natural heritage features within the City of Hamilton.

**Historical Context:**

While the City of Hamilton historically has not acquired natural areas, Conservation Authorities and other organizations such as Carolinian Canada, Ontario Naturalists Club, and the Nature Conservancy of Canada, have acquired and managed natural areas.

In October 1994, a report titled *Towards a Regional Greenlands System* explained and provided recommendations on how to establish a Greenlands system within the City of Hamilton. From 1994 to 1997, the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth developed a Natural Heritage System (NHS) and Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) policies to protect the remaining important natural areas within the City. Many of these policies are currently being implemented today. Acquisition was an option that was examined as a long term goal for achieving a City-wide Greenlands system; however, to date, no program has been established.

In 1994, it was estimated that the acquisition costs of open space/conservation lands can range from $607 - $1,214 per hectare ($1500 - $3000 per acre). Today, acquisition costs can range from $4,047 - $6,070 per hectare ($10,000 - $15,000 per acre) within Golden Horseshoe municipalities (Toronto, Halton, and Niagara).

Following the 1994 Report, a joint project between the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth, Hamilton Conservation Authority, and Hamilton Naturalists Club was completed. The purpose of “The Natural Areas Evaluation Project” (presented to the Environmental Services Committee by Arnold Pierre in December 1998) was to examine the state of Environmentally Significant Areas within the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth. The results found that ESAs in the City were being adversely impacted (i.e., activities that result in a physical, chemical or biological change in an ecosystem), through stresses caused by agricultural practices; the introduction of invasive, exotic species; recreational uses; encroachment; infrastructure development; aggregate/peat extraction; watercourse realignment; dumping waste; importing ‘clean fill’; tree/vegetation removal; and/or light/noise pollution.
Since the completion of “The Natural Areas Evaluation Project”, the former Cities of Hamilton and Stoney Creek, along with the former Towns of Ancaster, Dundas, Flamborough, and the Township of Glanbrook, amalgamated to form the new City of Hamilton in 2000. The amalgamation created a diverse city with distinctive urban and rural areas.

The Natural Heritage System - What are the potential cost implications in acquiring natural areas?

At present, there are 34,353 hectares included within the City’s Natural Heritage System (NHS) including the following:

- 81 Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) 21,035 hectares
- Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI’s) 5,218 hectares
- Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) 8,100 hectares

**TOTAL** 34,353 hectares

Of the total 34,353 hectares included within the Natural Heritage System, approximately 12,030 hectares (57%) of Environmentally Significant Areas (ESAs) in the City of Hamilton are protected by Official Plan policies, zoning or public ownership. The remaining lands (22,323 hectares) are currently not protected by Official Plan policies, zoning or public ownership. Careful consideration of potential environmental impacts to these lands should be examined before any land use change in or adjacent to these areas is permitted. The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund could provide an opportunity to purchase or suitably protect the ESA, ANSI and PSW lands currently not protected through policies.

Potential costs to the City to incorporate all such natural lands not protected through policies, zoning, or stewardship agreements into public ownership would be approximately $134 million (22,323 hectares x $6,000 per ha. While it is not reasonable to assume that the City could or would purchase all of these lands through a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, specific guidelines would need to be established to determine what types of habitat and/or priority areas would be most suitable for acquisition. As a result, not every hectare of identified Natural Heritage System lands would have to be acquired. Leveraging opportunities with other organizations could also provide the opportunity to secure more lands for a smaller amount.

Evaluation and selection of potential lands for acquisition:

While the ultimate goal for long term environmental health would be to protect all natural areas in perpetuity, there are a number of potential tools to evaluate and select the most appropriate lands. The following presents guidance in determining those factors in selecting suitable natural areas for acquisition and/or securement.
In determining which lands are most suitable for securement, potential considerations include: habitat rehabilitation, City of Hamilton Corporate Strategic Plan, Vision 2020 goals and objectives, and other natural area attributes (including lands outside of identified Significant Areas)

(a) **Habitat Rehabilitation:**

Environment Canada established habitat restoration guidelines for Great Lakes Areas of Concern (AOC) in 1998 in a report titled “A Framework for Guiding Habitat Rehabilitation Great Lakes Areas of Concern”. The guidelines recommend that:

- At least 30% of a watershed should be in forest cover, including 10% Interior Forest Cover (100m inside from edge) and 5% Interior Forest Cover (200m inside from edge). Forest cover within a watershed should be representative of the full diversity of forest types found at that latitude.

- Streams should have 75% of their length naturally vegetated with a minimum 30-metre wide naturally vegetated area of land on both sides of the stream (riparian zone) to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

- In addition, greater than 10% of each major watershed or greater than 6% of each sub watershed should be in wetland habitat.

A report prepared by consultants Gartner-Lee Ltd. (1998) analyzed forest cover in the former Hamilton-Wentworth Region and compared it to the Environment Canada report. The Gartner-Lee report indicated that average forest cover across the City of Hamilton is 17.7%, with 4.2% encompassing Interior Forest Cover (100m inside from edge) and 1.4% Interior Forest Cover (200m inside from edge). A “Draft Priority Restoration Areas” map was included as part of the Gartner-Lee Report. These target areas could be a guideline to determine high priority acquisition areas within the City of Hamilton. The Report also identified that in some areas like the urbanized Redhill Creek watershed, forest cover will never reach the 30% target. However, in the Spencer and Grindstone Creek watersheds, priority areas for acquisitions have been identified, which will maximize natural area connectivity and size.

The following graph illustrates that based on the City’s Rural Official Plan 34.7% of stream lengths are naturally vegetated with riparian vegetation being 30 metres or greater; and that overall wetland coverage within the City is 8.3%, with an overall target of 10%. While the Rural Official Plan does not specifically breakdown the percentage cover within each sub watershed, areas with greater urban development tend to have a lower percentage of wetland cover.
The City of Hamilton has produced a map of a Targeted Natural Heritage System, which identifies sites where habitat restoration and management can occur to increase the percentage of natural habitat cover to the levels recommended in the Environment Canada habitat restoration guidelines. This map could be used as a basis for identifying possible sites for acquisition, restoration, and habitat management for the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund.

However, the Greenbelt Plan (2005), and the completion of the City of Hamilton Rural Official Plan (2006), have provided additional policies and implementation strategies to increase the potential for protection of Natural Areas (namely ESAs, ANSIs and wetlands and the connection between them) within the current rural boundary. If this is considered, then perhaps the monies would be directed to only those areas that fulfil the habitat restoration guidelines for the Great Lakes Areas of Concern within the urban boundary.

(b) **Vision 2020:**

Vision 2020 is a vision shared by Hamiltonians to create a sustainable community that balances the economic, social and environmental well being of its citizens. Fourteen theme areas were defined with specific goals set within each theme to help guide the City towards integrating the economic, social and environmental well-being of the City. With the establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund, nine of Vision 2020’s fourteen theme areas could be addressed. These include:

- **Agriculture and Rural Economy:** Preserving and maintaining the agricultural lands and rural areas of the City could be achieved through the long-term securement of natural areas within the rural area.
• Natural Areas and Corridors: High priority natural areas and corridors could be secured with funding through the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund.

• Improving the Quality of Water Resources: Increasing forest cover and wetland habitat will lead to an improvement in water quality within the watershed. The Natural Areas Acquisition Fund provides the funds available to secure high priority areas.

• Improving Air Quality: Improving air quality can be achieved with an increase in forest cover.

• Changing our Mode of Transportation: Acquiring lands within the City of Hamilton could help establish a more walkable community and encourage people to find alternate modes of transportation.

• Land Use in the Urban Area: Encouraging development within the existing urban core allows for existing natural areas to be maintained and secured in perpetuity. This ultimately leads to a healthier community.

• Personal Health and Well Being: Personal health and well-being could be improved with the acquisition of additional natural heritage lands within the City. Becoming more active and appreciating the unique environmental opportunities available in the city will encourage more physical activity.

• Education: Securing and maintaining natural heritage features within the City of Hamilton provides a wonderful educational opportunity for residents and visitors alike. Attracting school children and tourists to experience the natural areas around them provides a positive learning environment.

• Community well-being and Capacity Building: Community well-being and capacity building is important for any city. Through the acquisition of natural heritage features existing communities have an opportunity to create an area to socialize through community activities and organizations.

Therefore, the focus of a potential Natural Areas Acquisition Fund could rationalize high priority acquisition areas on lands that aid in achieving the goals of Vision 2020, and the City’s Corporate Strategic Plan.

(c) Other natural area and land acquisition considerations:

It should be noted that lands suitable for acquisition are not necessarily limited to significant areas such as ESAs, ANSIs or PSWs. There are often other natural areas that have not been included within a significant area, but do provide an important ecological function to the overall health of a watershed. The following are examples of the types of natural areas that have potential to be considered worthy candidates for acquisition based on criteria used by other municipalities:
• Headwater, wetland, recharge/discharge or other areas that have been identified as being important for surface or groundwater quality and flood control (potentially sites identified within the City of Hamilton Storm Water Master Plan).

• Interior forest habitat or adjacent areas that would increase interior forest habitat (significant woodlands, as identified by the City).

• Habitat of rare, threatened, or endangered species.

• Areas that are part of an Evaluated Wetland, Unevaluated Wetland, Core Natural Area or Linkage within the Natural Heritage System, significant woodlot, Carolinian Canada habitat, or Niagara Escarpment.

• Unique habitats (alvar, prairie, slough forest, bogs and fens, escarpment, shorelines).

• Areas of conservation value that would not be adequately protected without acquisition.

• Areas where development pressure is high and areas on the edge of urban lands.

• Areas adjacent to currently protected areas (publicly owned lands, areas under provincial or regional designation, or stewardship agreements), especially those that will provide linkages or buffers.

• Unique geological features (gorges, waterfalls, glacial features, karsts).

• Areas which are necessary to maintain ecological functions.

• Areas that provide unique educational, interpretive, or passive recreational opportunities.

• Areas that facilitate the development of recreational trails or parks.

• Larger areas and those with minimal disturbance.

• Remnant natural areas within the urban boundary.

Discussions with the local Conservation Authorities, the Hamilton Naturalist Club, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ontario Heritage Trust and other similar organizations may also provide a more targeted approach to land acquisition. These organizations often have priority acquisition areas determined and are simply waiting for funding in order to acquire the lands.
The City could evaluate high priority acquisition areas, (using one of the criteria above, or a combination of the criteria above) and compare them to priority areas for other organizations to establish priority acquisition areas.

**Options to consider for distribution of funds:**

A Natural Areas Acquisition Fund does not have to be solely for the outright purchase of natural heritage lands by the City. While acquisition is ultimately the most secure option to guarantee the maintenance of these lands in perpetuity, the City could simply provide funding to be used by other organizations (e.g. Conservation Authorities, Hamilton Naturalists Club, Carolinian Canada, the Nature Conservancy of Canada, and Ontario Heritage Trust) for acquisition and/or securement of the natural areas.

There are a number of options to consider for the potential distribution of the funds, including land acquisition, conservation easements, coordination with other agencies, land management, community land trust and stewardship programs. These options are summarized below:

1. **Land acquisition:**
   - A Natural Areas Acquisition Fund could provide matching funds to registered non-profit organizations to acquire natural areas. The organization would be responsible for purchasing, owning, and managing the land.
   - The City could purchase and own natural areas itself, but enter into an agreement with a partner organization to manage the lands.
   - The City could accept donations of land from individual or corporate land owners, provided no other agreements or legislation (i.e., Bonusing under the Municipal Act) are violated and either manage the land or enter into an agreement with a partner organization to manage the land. The dedication of natural area lands would not be used as part of any parkland dedication under the Planning Act. Also, the City does not wish to compete with existing local organizations that do accept donations of money.
   - The Planning Act allows a municipality to increase the density of development on less sensitive portions of a site, in exchange for protecting the significant natural features on site. This provision is found in Section 37(1) of the Planning Act, which states:

   “The Council of a local municipality may, in a by-law passed under Section 34, authorize increases in the height and density of development otherwise permitted by the by-law that will be permitted in return for the provision of such facilities, services, or matters as are set out in the by-law.”
To allow for this option, the City would need to include a policy in its Official Plan which contains provisions authorizing increases in height and density of development, as outlined in Section 37(2) of the Planning Act:

“A by-law shall not contain the provisions mentioned in Subsection (1) unless there is an Official Plan in effect in the local municipality that contains provisions relating to the authorization of increases in height and density of development”.

2. **Conservation easements or other securement options:**

- The funds could be used for legal fees, administrative fees or other necessary fees to secure land using: conservation easements (see Appendix “B”) or other similar forms of securement; bequests of land or money (Appendix “B”); and/or restrictive covenants (see Appendix “B”).

- The funds could be used to pay for information sessions or mail-outs to educate the landowners on the Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program (CLTIP) and Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program (MFTIP) (refer to Appendix “B”), and how they relate to their properties.

- The funds would not be used to manage the lands.

3. **Coordination with other agencies:**

The NAAF could develop a supportive and coordinated relationship (providing monies for clearly defined programs of stewardship opportunities, meeting with relevant agencies to determine high priority acquisition areas and providing leveraging opportunities, for example) with other conservation organizations in Hamilton who receive land donations, purchase natural areas, or negotiate conservation easements. Coordinating these activities will make it easier for landowners interested in protecting their property to be aware of their options and to be directed to the appropriate agency for assistance.

4. **Land management:**

Non-profit organizations could apply for funding from the NAAF to assist in land management costs for newly acquired land, such as trail maintenance, prescribed burns, controlling invasive exotic species, controlling public access and restoration.

5. **Establishment of Community Land Trust:**

A land trust is an agreement whereby one party (the trustee) agrees to hold ownership of a piece of real property for the benefit of another party (the beneficiary). Land trusts are used by nonprofit organizations to hold conservation easements, by corporations and investment groups to compile large tracts of land, and by individuals to keep their real estate ownership private,
avoid probate and provide several other benefits. A community or conservation land trust is an organization established to hold land and to administer use of the land according to the charter of the organization.

In consultation with the Conservation Authorities, local foundations and clubs the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund could provide funds for acquisition as part of the establishment of a land trust if such a trust was seen as being needed.

6. **Stewardship Programs:**

A key objective of a stewardship program is to educate landowners on the benefits of protecting natural heritage features in perpetuity. Educational initiatives could be advanced through seasonal or annual Open Houses, door-to-door contact, and local newspaper inserts. As a follow-up to these, funds could be made available to eligible landowners to implement focussed stewardship activities on their lands (i.e., tree planting, riparian planting, and other enhancement projects within the community) or lands within the community that would benefit from long term conservation and management.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

**Do nothing:** Currently the City of Hamilton has no source of funding available for the purchase and/or protection of existing natural areas. The option of “do nothing” would maintain the existing situation within the City. Currently the only source of protection for natural areas is relying on current policies, guidelines and zoning.

With increasing development pressures within both the urban and rural areas, there continues to be stresses placed on the remaining natural heritage features and areas within the City. Long term protection of the remaining natural heritage features through acquisition represents a reasonable option available to ensure the unique natural features within the City of Hamilton are maintained for future generations to enjoy. Accordingly, the “do nothing” option is not preferred.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial**

If the City decides to establish a Natural Areas Acquisition fund, there would be financial implications to the City. While there is no current direction to proceed, the following funding options, distribution options, and uses for the funds, is provided for information purposes. These options would be more critically examined if direction is provided to proceed with a more detailed strategy.
1. **Funding Options:**

   There are a number of funding options available to the City for a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. The following identifies three (3) potential funding sources that could be used in the event that a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund program is established:

   **Option 1: Annual Budget Commitment:**

   City Council could commit a set amount of funds, through the capital budget, each year to the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. The majority of municipalities with acquisition funds use this option. Their funding has been implemented over a few years with the majority of the seed monies coming from the capital budget.

   It should also be noted that private landowners are more willing to consider land securement options if there is a consistent and continual supply of funding. Other municipalities within the Golden Horseshoe currently have annual budgets ranging from $500,000 to $1.6 million for land acquisition funds, as outlined above. Over the next 3 years, a total capital budget of $500,000 could be phased in: $150,000 in 2010, $150,000 in 2011, and $200,000 in 2012.

   **Option 2: A water usage fee or other municipal surcharge:**

   Ontario municipalities (with the exception of Toronto) do not have the legislative authority to tax anything beyond “real property”. Accordingly, what has commonly been referred to as a “Water Bill” or “Enviro-Bill” cannot be established on the basis of taxing properties.

   **Option 3: Sale of surplus City land:**

   Potential funding could be realized from revenues from the sale of surplus municipal properties. When a surplus property is sold, a percentage of the revenue could be directed to the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund to be used to purchase and/or secure important natural heritage lands within the City or to pursue other objectives of the Fund Program.

   Consideration could be given to reviewing the merits of using monies from the sale of surplus City lands within a certain watershed, and redirecting these monies for the purchase and/or securement of natural areas within the same watershed.

2. **Distribution of Funds:**

   There are several options for distributing funds from a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund. The following describes four options:
a) The City could provide 2/3 of the required funds to an agency that wished to acquire a natural area. The agency would have to provide the remaining 1/3 of the money. A partial grant to the agency would assist in fund-raising activities, as the agency will be more likely to obtain money from other sources if funding support is already provided by the City. This also has the benefit of carefully using City money, while ensuring that the agency makes reasonable effort to initiate its own fund-raising efforts. The agency would be responsible for owning and managing the land.

b) The City could buy and own the property and a non-profit agency could manage it. This type of agreement is already being used (e.g. the Region owns Confederation Park and the Hamilton Region Conservation Authority manages and operates it).

c) The City could provide complete funding with the non-profit organization buying, owning, and managing the land.

d) The City could form multi-partnerships with The Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) to provide assistance and expertise in acquiring natural areas, and with a local Conservation Authority to manage the land. York Region has recently developed a similar partnership. By pooling resources with the NCC, the City would be able to maximize the amount of land it secures. For every dollar the City contributes, the NCC could match the amount in dollars or land value. The NCC, City, and CA could work together to identify areas for purchase that meet each agency's goals. The City would be responsible for stewardship, providing background information on landowners, legal assistance, and title searches. The NCC would be responsible for working with the landowner to secure the land and conduct any public relations work. The NCC would transfer ownership of the land to the City, a Conservation Authority, or another organization, according to the wishes of the landowner. A partnership with the NCC would lend credibility, expertise, and experience to the City acquisition program.

There are many options to consider in the distribution of the funds if a funding source has been established.

3. **Uses for Funds:**

Permitted uses for the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund include:

- Direct property costs for acquiring partial (conservation easements) or full rights to land (fee simple purchase).

- Costs directly associated with land purchase, including costs for legal, appraisal, property survey work, and land title searches.
Costs directly associated with providing materials for public education or stewardship initiatives to promote the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund.

Legal

There are no legal implications arising from the specific recommendation of this report for the development of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Strategy.

Staffing

The development of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund Strategy can be completed by current staff. However, the implementation of a Natural Areas Acquisition Fund will potentially require administrative staffing.

The majority of municipalities contacted have a staff person as the coordinator of the program, and an administrative assistant. In addition, a Committee (comprised of Councillors, City staff, and Conservation Authority staff) would be set up to determine priority acquisition areas, review potential applications, and provide recommendations to Council. Once the Committee determined which projects are suitable for funding, a report to Council would be required. A certain timeframe could be established in which all funding proposals are submitted (once or twice a year).

Once Council has approved the funding, monies would be transferred to the appropriate organization, which would require some administrative support (issue cheque, mail out letter and monies).

In this regard, the staffing needs would be dependant on the type of funding program established through the Strategy.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

Provincial Policy Statement

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of provincial interest related to land use planning and development. The Provincial Policy Statement provides for appropriate development, while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural environment.

Section 2.0 of the PPS specifically deals with the Wise Use and Management of Resources. It states that Ontario’s long-term prosperity, environmental health, and social well-being depend on protecting natural heritage, water, agricultural, mineral and cultural heritage and archaeological resources for their economic, environmental and social benefits. Section 2.0 also outlines specific guidelines when dealing with both Natural Heritage and Water Resources.

2.1 Natural Heritage

2.1.1 Natural features and areas shall be protected for the long term.
2.1.2 The diversity and connectivity of natural features in an area, and the long-term ecological function and biodiversity of natural heritage systems, should be maintained, restored or, where possible, improved, recognizing linkages between and among natural heritage features and areas, surface water features and ground water features.

2.2 Water

2.2.1 Planning authorities shall protect, improve or restore the quality and quantity of water by:

a) Using the watershed as the ecologically meaningful scale for planning;

b) Minimizing potential negative impacts, including cross-jurisdictional and cross-watershed impacts;

c) Identifying surface water features, ground water features, hydrologic functions, and natural heritage features and areas which are necessary for the ecological and hydrological integrity of the watershed;

d) Implementing necessary restrictions on development and site alteration to:

1. Protect all municipal drinking water supplies and designated vulnerable areas; and,

2. Protect, improve, or restore vulnerable surface and ground water, sensitive surface water features and sensitive ground water features, and their hydrologic functions;

e) Maintaining linkages and related functions among surface water features, ground water features, hydrologic functions and natural heritage features and areas;

f) Promoting efficient and sustainable use of water resources, including practices for water conservation and sustaining water quality; and,

g) Ensuring storm water management practices minimize storm water volumes and contaminant loads, and maintain or increase the extent of vegetative and pervious surfaces.”

With continued development pressure within the urban area of the City of Hamilton, having regard to the Provincial Policy Statement is extremely important when dealing with the existing natural heritage features. Identifying and protecting natural heritage resources is important for the future healthy sustainability of the City of Hamilton. A Natural Areas Acquisition Fund would provide an opportunity for the municipality or other interested organizations (Conservation Authority, Non-government organization) to protect natural heritage resources in perpetuity through securement.
Places to Grow

The Province’s Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, as prepared and approved under the Places to Grow Act, 2005, took effect on June 16, 2006. This Act requires that all decisions under the Planning Act conform to the Growth Plan. Section 4.2.1 of the Growth Plan sets out policies for protecting natural systems.

With downtown Hamilton identified as an Urban Growth Centre in the Places to Grow Plan, and general intensification policies stating that 40% of all new residential development is required to be accommodated within the built-up area by the year 2015, an increasing need to protect and enhance the existing natural heritage features within the urban and rural boundaries is necessary in order to sustain and support the projected population growth.

It is important for the City of Hamilton to be proactive in identifying and protecting existing natural heritage features for communities now and in the future. Funding from the Natural Areas Acquisition Fund provides an opportunity for Hamilton to be proactive in securing lands through easements or acquisition.

Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan

Policy C-1.1 k) of the Hamilton-Wentworth Regional Official Plan (2003) supports investigating the establishment of a Natural Areas Acquisition for acquiring and managing natural areas.

City of Hamilton Corporate Strategic Plan

Focus Area 6 of the Strategic Plan deals with Environmental Stewardship. Desired end results 6.4 and 6.5 read as follows:

“6.4 Maintain or increase the quantity and quality of Significant Natural Areas that are protected.

6.5 Maintain or increase the cumulative amount of tree cover in the City with the objective of moving towards the Environment Canada guideline of 30%.”

These objectives demonstrate the City’s commitment to support the preservation, protection, and management of the City’s natural heritage features.

Relevant Consultation:

The following departments and agencies were consulted with in the preparation of this report:
Internal Departments:

- Corporate Services Department (i.e. information on water rates and number of households).
- Corporate Services Department, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) Services.
- Legal Services Department.

Conservation Authorities:

- Conservation Halton.
- Hamilton Conservation Authority.
- Niagara Region Conservation Authority.
- Grand River Conservation Authority.

Provincial Ministries:

- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

Other Municipalities:

- Region of Peel.
- Region of York.
- Halton Region.
- City of Toronto.
- City of London.
- City of Cambridge.
- City of Kitchener.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, and economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

Community Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Participation in community life is accessible to all Hamiltonians. Public ownership of natural heritage lands promotes physical fitness and an increase in education and appreciation for the environment and community.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No
Ecological function and the natural heritage system are protected. Protection of Natural Heritage Features creates a healthy environment and provides an opportunity to create linkages to support existing core areas.
Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Hamilton's high-quality environmental amenities are maintained and enhanced. Maintaining high quality environmental amenities will help to encourage new business growth within the City by establishing a unique, sustainable and healthy environment.

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Community well-being, environmental well-being and economic well-being are all improved and enhanced.

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☑ Yes  ☐ No
Life-long learning is supported. Acquisition of natural heritage features provides an opportunity to create a community where everyone has the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate the unique natural features within the City of Hamilton. Acquiring a variety of different natural heritage features creates a wonderful framework for continued education and preservation.

:TR
Attachs. (11)
Environment Canada
Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk

The Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) helps implement the Species at Risk Act and, therefore, gives higher priority to activities that support species listed under the Act as endangered and threatened, than it does to those that aid species listed as of special concern. Protecting habitat and contributing to the recovery of species at risk are the HSP's main goals. The program focuses on results in three main areas:

1. Securing or protecting important habitat to protect species at risk and support their recovery;

2. Mitigating threats to species at risk caused by human activities; and,

3. Supporting the implementation of other priority activities in recovery strategies or action plans where these are in place or under development.

In addition to the above objectives, the program aims to achieve 2:1 leveraging on funds that it invests, so that for every $1 provided by the HSP, $2 is raised by project recipients. This leveraging can take the form of either financial or in-kind resources (volunteered labour, products, or services). Partner funding and other support broaden the scope of projects, improve on-the-ground results, and strengthen the public and private collaboration that is essential to involving all Canadians in stewardship activities for species at risk.

By stimulating the creation of a larger pool of funds and the formation of partnerships, the HSP is able to fund activities that support its core objectives.

Since 2000, the Habitat Stewardship Program (HSP) has funded over 1000 projects for a total expenditure of $62 million. These projects have, in turn, leveraged an additional $153 million, for a total investment of $215 million in stewardship projects to support the recovery of species at risk. Projects under the HSP addressed both habitat conservation and threat mitigation, benefiting over 300 COSEWIC-designated species.

The HSP provides funding to “stewards” for implementing activities that protect or conserve habitats for species designated by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) as nationally at risk (endangered, threatened, or of special concern). These activities must take place on private lands, provincial Crown lands, Aboriginal lands, or in aquatic and marine areas across Canada. The program also fosters partnerships among organizations interested in the recovery of species at risk. As such, it supports many organizations and individuals in their efforts to meet the requirements of the National Recovery Program and the Species at Risk Act.
Since its inception, the HSP has contributed to the protection of over 240,000 hectares of habitat, and to the implementation of temporary protection measures on another 370,000 hectares. Moreover, 207,000 hectares of habitat have been improved. The program reaches more than a million people every year through outreach and education activities.

To ensure efficient use of limited resources, the HSP is a “directed” program. Regional and national planning partners establish the overall program and priorities, then specific projects are developed and funded. The HSP is administered by Environment Canada and managed cooperatively with Fisheries and Oceans Canada and the Parks Canada Agency. Activities that respond to regional priorities are coordinated by five regional implementation boards: Pacific and Yukon, Prairie and Northern, Ontario, Quebec, and Atlantic. Members of these boards represent the three responsible departments, as well as provincial, territorial, conservation, and other stakeholder interests.
Appendix “B” to Report PED09007

Glossary of Terms

ANSI: Is defined as an Area of Natural and Scientific Interest.

Bequest: Something left to someone in a will.

CLTIP: Conservation Land Tax Incentive Program is designed to recognize, encourage and support the long-term private stewardship of Ontario’s provincially significant conservation lands by providing property tax relief to those landowners who agree to protect the natural heritage values of their property.

Conservation Easement: A Conservation Easement is a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a qualified conservation agency. When a property owner enters into a Conservation Easement, they give away certain rights for the purpose of conservation, while retaining others. The Conservation Easement is a legal document that is registered on the title of the land, and binds all future owners. Landowners can donate or sell a Conservation Easement. The landowner retains ownership of the land and is assured that the conservation values will be protected into the future. Easements can be applied to the entire property or to just the portion of the property containing significant natural features. The value of the Conservation Easement (for selling purposes) is the difference between the land’s value with the easement and the best land value without it.

COSEWIC (Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada): A Committee of experts that assesses and designates which wild species are in some danger of disappearing from Canada. It was created in 1977, as a result of a decision made at the Conference of Federal-Provincial-Territorial Wildlife Directors held in 1976 in Fredericton, New Brunswick. It arose from the need for a single, official, scientifically sound, national classification of wildlife species at risk.

Covenant: A legally binding agreement between two parties.

CVCA: Credit Valley Conservation Authority.

Easement: A right held by one property owner to make use of the land of another for a limited purpose, as right of passage.

ESA: An Environmental Significant Area.

Fee simple purchase: The outright purchase of land based on current market value.

Life Estate: Property that belongs to a particular person, but that cannot be sold or passed on to anyone else until the death of that person.
**Leaseback Agreement:** The landowner donates the land and immediately leases it back for an agreed use and period.

**Liveable Peel:** A new initiative that promotes long-term planning by balancing the social, economic, environmental, and cultural needs of Peel’s residents. The Region of Peel is working to ensure that future generations are able to live, work and travel in an inclusive and prosperous community. The Liveable Peel initiative also seeks to include growth management strategies to work towards a balance between the natural and built environments.

**MFTIP (Managed Forest Tax Incentive Program):** A voluntary program available to landowners who own four hectares or more of forest land, and who agree to prepare and follow a Managed Forest Plan for their property. The owners are given a tax break on those lands included within the Managed Forest Plan area.

**PSW:** Provincially Significant Wetland as determined by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources.

**Ontario Heritage Trust:** The provinces lead heritage agency dedicated to identifying, preserving, protecting and promoting Ontario’s heritage. The Trust is a non-profit agency of the Government of Ontario and holds land in trust for the people of Ontario. It protects, in perpetuity, important natural heritage features by receiving donations of ecologically sensitive land ("Trust Properties“) and easements that protect ecological features while the land remains in private ownership. The Trust also welcomes donations of funds that can be used in the acquisition and stewardship of natural heritage sites.

**Our Sustainable Future:** Published in February 2005, this document is an expression of the long-term strategic directions and current priorities of the Ministry of Natural Resources. The Ministry will use the plan to guide the Ministry's activities and organizational transformation to ensure that it is well positioned to deliver on its goals, strategies and actions.

**Restrictive Covenant:** A stipulation on a party buying or leasing land to refrain from something such as selling or subletting it.

**Right-of-first-refusal:** The right to decide whether or not to purchase (secure) something before it is offered to other potential buyers.

**Securement:** Land securement includes purchasing lands, acquiring the title to lands through donation, or holding conservation easements and agreements.

**Species at Risk:** Species are at risk due to a number of reasons. These include habitat loss, pollution, land use and resource management activities, as well as the spread of invasive species. The four categories, or classes, at risk are:
• **Extirpated** - a native species that no longer exists in the wild in Ontario, but still exists elsewhere (e.g. Greater Prairie Chicken);

• **Endangered** - a native species facing extinction or extirpation (e.g. Cucumber Tree);

• **Threatened** - a native species at risk of becoming endangered in Ontario (e.g. Fowler’s Toad); and,

• **Special Concern** - a native species that is sensitive to human activities or natural events which may cause it to become endangered or threatened (e.g. Monarch Butterfly).

**Split Receipting**: A portion of the lands are donated to a managing group, with the remainder of the land purchased at market value.

**Stewardship**: Refers to the wide range of voluntary actions that Canadians take to care for the environment, ranging from conserving wild species and their habitats directly, to improving the quality of habitat by mitigating human impact. These types of conservation activities, particularly those that protect habitat, are essential to the recovery of species at risk. They are also instrumental in preventing other species from becoming at risk.

**TRCA**: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.
The Natural Spaces Program was launched on August 3, 2005. It is a $6 million, one-time, allocation to the Ontario Heritage Trust for the acquisition and stewardship of provincially significant natural heritage lands. The program currently has $4.5 million available for the acquisition of fee simple and conservation interests in privately owned lands. The remaining $1.5 million is allocated for stewardship activities on newly acquired lands.

Conservation bodies, only located in Southern Ontario, who can participate include: The Crown, conservation authorities, a municipality, an incorporated company that is a registered charity, and a trustee of a charitable foundation. All applications are reviewed by the Trust’s Land Acquisition and Stewardship Committee made up of members from the Ontario Heritage Trust and Ministry of Natural Resources. The Trust’s Board of Directors makes the final decision on funding.

The partners are expected to contribute 50% towards the acquisition of the lands and the title must be held by the Ontario Heritage Trust or another public agency. The lands eligible for acquisition include:

- A wildlife habitat or corridor;
- Source water area;
- Areas of ecological representation;
- Large woodlands or wetlands and the associated linkages; and,
- Key trails outlined by the Province.

In order to be eligible for stewardship funding to newly acquired lands, one of the following must be proposed:

- Preparation of stewardship plans;
- Costs to inventory, enhance, restore or protect important cultural or natural heritage features;
- Costs to further public understanding of the natural and cultural resources through the use of outdoor interpretive and educational signs and displays;
- Costs to improve public access, safety, use and enjoyment of these lands; and,
- Production costs for approved signs, displays and interpretive media.

This program has been a great success. Combined with additional securement programs offered by the Ministry of Natural Resources, approximately 2000 hectares of ecologically significant land has been protected. In addition, the Province invested $5 million this year to protect private land worth more than $17 million.
Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources  
Our Sustainable Future

MNR’s land securement activities contribute to Ministry commitments identified in Our Sustainable Future, such as conserving Ontario’s biodiversity and promoting stewardship, partnerships and community involvement. The Ministry’s land securement activities also helps protect and restore Species at Risk (SAR) habitat through its support of SAR related acquisition and habitat enhancement activities. The Ministry’s land securement program also supports property securement and ecological protection of the Niagara Escarpment by helping to secure the Bruce Trail and the Niagara Escarpment Parks and Open Space System.

**Current Land Securement Initiatives:**

- **Ontario Parks:** Acquiring lands to expand existing provincial parks and conservation reserves, or create protected areas.

- **Eastern Habitat Joint Venture:** Securing and enhancing wetlands and associated habitats for the conservation of migratory birds, other wildlife and people.

- **Greenlands:** Securing lands for the purpose of meeting a variety of Ontario government greenspace conservation objectives. There are two components:
  1. Direct securement of joint priorities (coordinated by the Nature Conservancy of Canada); and,
  2. Contributions to a variety of partners through a competitive funding process called the Greenlands Challenge.

- **Landbird Conservation Program:** Expansion of traditionally wetland focused activities of the Eastern Habitat Joint Venture to conserve and enhance significant landbird habitats in southern Ontario.

- **Ontario Land Trust Assistance Program:** Provision of grants to the Ontario Land Trust Alliance members through a competitive funding process to support the securement of natural heritage lands across Ontario.

- **Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem:** Secures lands to further the vision of a healthy, prosperous and sustainable Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem for present and future generations.

MNR works with a number of partners to deliver these initiatives, including the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada, and the Ontario Land Trust Alliance. These partners also contribute science and land management expertise during the process of identifying priority areas, negotiating land purchase and ensuring long term conservation.
Land Securement Opportunities:

Over time, MNR and its partners have developed strategic plans to guide securement decisions. MNR and the Nature Conservancy of Canada developed the Great Lakes Conservation Blueprint for Terrestrial and Aquatic Biodiversity, which identifies high quality natural areas in the Great Lakes region. The Blueprint includes suggestions for strategic land securement priorities, based on a variety of ecological criteria.

Combined with provincial level land use planning initiatives such as the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, and the Niagara Escarpment Plan, there is a building portfolio of priority areas in Ontario.

Most of these initiatives are focused in southern Ontario because of the significant amount of private lands and level of threat to natural features. Land securement activities are also occurring in northern Ontario to expand protected areas and conserve significant ecological features and communities.

The Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), and its conservation partners, has worked closely to establish strategic plans to develop the following principles to help guide the activities and priorities of MNR’s land securement program:

- Conserve areas with significant biodiversity attributes and ecological functions that contribute to the long term environmental health and sustainability of Ontario.

- Conserve areas that create new or add to existing conservation lands such as provincial parks, conservation reserves, agency natural areas, conservation authority lands, federal parks, etc.

- Advance mutual objectives of the Ministry and its conservation partners.

- Conserve ecosystems that are representative of Ontario’s natural heritage regions.

- Protect provincially significant elements of Ontario’s natural and cultural heritage.

- Conserve areas that help to maintain Ontario’s biodiversity.

- Conserve areas that are part of a long term strategic and landscape level conservation plan.

- Work in partnership to secure specific properties in identified priority areas.

- Ensure government directives, securement procedures, environmental assessment, and other legal requirements are adhered to.

- Develop memoranda of agreement with partners to ensure accountability.
In order to establish which proposals are suitable for funding the ministry uses, the following ecological and social evaluation criteria:

**Ecological Considerations:**

*Properties:*

- Are within or adjacent to existing conservation lands or protected areas.
- Contribute to the conservation of natural heritage and biodiversity that are identified within a provincial, regional, or watershed plan or strategy developed by a recognized conservation organization.
- Contain provincially or regionally significant natural areas (e.g. Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest, wetlands).
- Contain habitat of species determined to be at risk, as specified in a recovery plan or other biological study or conservation plan.
- Protect Species At Risk or ecological communities of ranked species.
- Contain rare or under represented communities or habitats.
- Have high restoration potential and opportunities.
- Are designated as natural core, natural corridor, sensitive hydrological feature, regional recharge, regional discharge or significant landform within a broader plan area, strategy or guideline.
- Contribute to a provincial context, demonstrating a logical connection and/or contributing to ecological integrity of broader landscape.
- Have potential air quality and atmospheric benefits.
- Are subject to a degree of threat with respect to such things as development, land conversion, inappropriate management, incompatible land uses, etc.
- Are designated through a high level landscape approach or plan.
- Contribute to source water protection.
- Are designated within a municipal Official Plan or Zoning By law under the Planning Act as an environmentally sensitive area, environmentally significant area, environmental protection area, natural heritage system, or other designation intended to conserve biodiversity or protect ecological features or functions as its primary objective.
• Are lands that an eligible organization clearly demonstrates contribute to the achievement of natural heritage protection objectives?

• Contain significant woodlots/forests protecting and enhancing significant woodlands, including large landscape, undisturbed woodlands, or with high afforestation potential or restoration of forest habitat.

**Social and Economic Considerations:**

**Properties:**

• Have outdoor recreation and education opportunities.

• May provide economic benefits to local and/or provincial economy (e.g. recreation, tourism values).

• Contribute to public health and safety.

• Contain cultural heritage features, historic sites, and Aboriginal community significance.

• Support partnership activity with high leveraging and long term management support.

• Have a high level of community support.

• Demonstrate value for money and achievability of purchase.

• Provide opportunities for community engagement through stewardship and other volunteer activities.

From April 2006 until March 2007, the MNR supported the permanent securement of 30 properties in Ontario by 17 conservation partners. In total, 1,534 hectares of ecologically significant lands was protected.
Region of York  
Greenlands Property Securement Strategy

The long term goal of the Region of York is to establish 25% forest cover across the Region. A reasonable annual goal of up to 5% (1,000 acres) of necessary additional land area is to be considered for securement annually. Securement of these lands would occur not only through the available funding, but also through the ability to leverage available resources (technical and financial) with other existing organizations including: Conservation Authorities (through tree planting), other government agencies, Naturalist groups, other Non-governmental organizations, the private forestry industry, and other departments within the Region to establish education programs. Combining these resources will allow the Region to achieve its goal of 5% land securement annually.

This Program was adopted by the Region in 2001. Lands eligible for securement through this program include Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSIs), and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs). However, the main focus is on areas that provide the opportunity to increase and/or protect major linkages (north-south, east-west), protect existing natural areas (adjacent to Provincially Significant Wetlands (PSWs) and ANSIs), or provide opportunities for reforestation (farm fields).

The Region of York, through its Greening Strategy, looks at a number of protection tools including stewardship, policy planning, monitoring and acquisition (bequests, easements/covenants, leaseback agreements), long term lease, donations, and, purchase (only an option if all other means have been exhausted).

Presently, Regional Council commits $1.4 million annually from its capital reserves to the fund to use for the delivery of Greening Strategy Programs ($400,000) (as listed above), as well as a contribution to their Greenlands Property Securement Capital Reserve ($1,000,000) that is debited for major land acquisitions.

Since its implementation in 2001, the Region of York has secured over 525 hectares (1300ac) of conservation lands on 20 properties with a total Regional contribution of $3,737,900 from the Greening Securement Reserve. These properties have been secured either independently by the Region, or by partners with support from the Region. The total value of the 20 properties secured to date is $32,288,650. This reflects a leverage ratio of approximately 8:1 when considering charitable gestures by landowners (donations and partial donations) and funding provided by partners.

The following is a list of some notable examples of 2008 programs, along with the amount of funding that is allocated:
### Annual (Ongoing) Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The York Natural Planting Partnership</td>
<td>$100,000 annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adopt a Stream Crossing Program</td>
<td>$20,000 annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greening support of Local Municipal Community Tree Planting</td>
<td>$15,000 annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature’s Classroom, York Regional Forest Education Program</td>
<td>$15,000 annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Short Term Projects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Amount (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Peggy’s Wood Management Plan</td>
<td>$11,000 (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oak Ridges Trail Key Installation</td>
<td>$4,000 (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rouge Park Afforestation</td>
<td>$10,000 (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Greening Supportive Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initiative</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lagoon Conversion to Habitat Wetlands (W&amp;WW lead)</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sustainability - Natural Heritage Initiatives (P&amp;DS lead)</td>
<td>$0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural Heritage Trails Study (P&amp;DS lead)</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Halton Region
Greenlands Securement Strategy

The 2002 Directions Report - *The Greening of Halton - Smart Growth, Smart Choices* introduces the Halton Green Fund to be used to fund land acquisition opportunities, including:

- Critical areas in the Greenlands System which are in danger of losing its ecological functions or features if not managed under public ownership;

- Significantly disturbed areas that can only be rehabilitated through public ownership;

- Areas that will significantly enhance the ecological functioning in parts of the Greenlands system;

- Essential linkages to provide a system of connected open space accessible by the public (Regional Trail System); and,

- Other areas of a strategic nature that will enhance Halton’s overall environmental quality.

Directions and land securement elements were incorporated into the Regional Official Plan (adopted by Regional Council in June 2004 and the OMB in August 2006). The Region is currently working on a Draft Greenlands Securement Strategy, and hope to have it completed in the near future.

The implementation of the Regional Greenlands System will be a cooperative effort among the Province, Region, the Local Municipalities, and the three Conservation Authorities in Halton. The Region, in conjunction with the Local Municipalities, will consider the acquisition of critical parts of the Greenlands System through the development approval process. In addition, the Region will provide funding, as deemed appropriate by Council, towards the implementation of the Greenlands System.

Regional Council will allocate funding (through approval by specific resolution of Council or through the annual budget process) on an annual basis towards a Halton Green Fund to be used for funding eligible projects, including, but not limited to:

- Regional Waterfront Park developments;
- Green pilot projects;
- Stewardship programs; and,
- Land acquisitions under the Land Securement Strategy.

The Greenlands Securement Strategy will complement existing land securement activities by partner agencies, including conservation authorities, local municipalities and non-government organizations.
Lands eligible for securement or acquisition are identified as one or more of the following:

- Provincially and Regionally Significant Wetlands (PSW, RSW);
- Regulatory floodplains (and associated valley and stream corridors);
- Significant portions of the habitat of endangered and threatened species;
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA);
- Provincially and Regionally Significant Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI);
- Significant Woodlands;
- Carolinian Canada Sites;
- Land contiguous to the Halton Regional Forest, Conservation Areas or other protected land;
- Lands within the Escarpment Natural Area designation;
- Lands identified as priority areas by Conservation Authorities and other partner agencies; and,
- Lands which provide opportunity/potential for enhanced connectivity between any of the above features.

The final Greenlands Securement Strategy has not been fully implemented to date. Works are ongoing to complete the strategy guidelines with full implementation expected in 2009.
Region of Peel
Greenlands Securement Reserve and Land Securement Capital Project

Regional Council established the Greenlands Securement Reserve and Land Securement Capital Project to help support the land securement efforts of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The Greenland Securement Project will be developed to complement the land securement efforts of the local Conservation Authorities.

The Greenlands Securement Subcommittee (GSS) was created to provide fiscal oversight over the Region’s Greenland Securement Project and support land securement initiatives in Peel Region.

Regional Council approved the recommendation of the GSS to refer recommendations for all funding applications to Regional Council for consideration for the initial two years of the project, beginning January 1, 2007.

A Greenlands Securement Stakeholder Working Group comprised of staff from the Region, the area municipalities, and the CA’s, will meet once a year to discuss priority areas for securement within the Region of Peel. A Regional Greenland Securement Staff Working Group comprising staff from Planning, Finance, Housing and Property, Public Works, and Legislative Services Departments, will meet to coordinate efforts of the Working Group.

The Conservation Authorities will be responsible for identifying priority acquisition areas, (at least on an annual basis), provide ongoing landowner contact, request funding from the Region following CA Board approval, and liaise between the Region and landowner to obtain the necessary reports and approvals from the Region. Should the Region deny the application, the CA staff can seek approval from Regional Council to reimburse the CA for the soft costs associated with the above noted works.

Regional staff is responsible for organizing at least one Greenlands Securement Stakeholder Working Group meeting to identify priority areas for land securement. Regional staff will also work with CA staff to arrange one or more Greenlands Securement Stakeholder Working Group meetings with an interested landowner. Once an application has been received, circulated to staff for comments, and completed to the satisfaction of staff, a recommendation to Council is required. All funding less than $250,000 will be made to the Regional CAO, anything over $250,000 will be made by Regional Council, and any recommendations for approval over 50% of the total required funding must be made to Regional Council for approval.

The area Municipal staff must attend at least one meeting annually to discuss Priority land securement areas.
Currently, the project is funded through the combined water and waste water utility rate. Annual contributions are made to a Greenlands Securement Reserve account, which funds annual capital project accounts.

**Lands eligible for funding must contain at least one of the following natural heritage areas and features:**

- PSWs;
- Regionally Significant woodlands;
- ESAs;
- Provincial ANSIs;
- Habitats of vulnerable, threatened or endangered species;
- Escarpment Natural Areas of the NEP (Niagara Escarpment Plan);
- Valley and Stream Corridors;
- Lands identified by Credit Valley Conservation Authority and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; and,
- Locally significant wetlands.

**Types of Land Securement projects include:**

- Lease agreements;
- Management agreements;
- Private dedication;
- Restrictive covenant;
- Conservation easement;
- Testamentary (will);
- Donation;
- Right-of-first-refusal;
- Option to purchase;
- Life estate;
- Land trading;
- Split receipting;
- Purchase/sale back; and,
- Fee-simple estate.
Properties eligible for land securement are confirmed through an evaluation process. It is scored based on its environmental significance as it relates to the goals of the Region of Peel. Regional Council will determine whether the property has any merit for acquisition. It should be demonstrated that other avenues for funding have also been examined and details should be provided.

The CA’s will report back annually outlining achievements of the last year. Information must be provided on the amount of land secured, total funding required, number of unsuccessful projects (including total area, reasons and expenditures), and total area of secured natural heritage features and areas.

The Program was implemented in 2007, and the Region of Peel has secured five properties totalling 93 ha. Prior to the implementation of the Program, the Region of Peel secured 6 ha in 2004, and 81 ha in 2005.

Regional Council has dedicated $2 million to the Greenlands Securement Reserve. In 2006, Regional Council transferred $500,000 from an existing Conservation Authority Reserve to establish the new reserve account. Regional Council then contributed $500,000 to the Greenlands Securement Reserve, through the Budget process, to make a base line of $1,000,000. In 2007, another $500,000 was contributed to the reserve, through the budget process, and then another $500,000 was contributed for the 2008 Budget. Contributions to the reserve account come from the combined water and wastewater utility rate and property taxes (75% combined utility rate and 25% property taxes).

From the $2 million available in the Greenlands Securement Reserve, $794,271.46 has been spent on land securement, with an additional $830,564.27 earmarked for five projects that are pending approval. Money spent from this reserve is to cover soft and hard capital costs necessitated by acquisitions such as the purchase price, legal and real estate fees, demolition costs, fencing, signage, etc. Regional Council approves expenditures from this reserve account based on recommendations from the Greenlands Securement Subcommittee (a subcommittee of Council).

In addition to the Greenlands Securement Reserve, a capital account for $79,682 has been created within the Planning Policy and Research Division Budget to cover the salary for OrLand Conservation ($63,500), who is the Landowner Outreach and Education Coordinator for the Region, and administrative costs ($16,182). Robert Orland and his staff have been retained on a part-time contract basis, and work at arms-length from the Region and its partners to elicit landowner interest in land donations and conservation easement agreements. They also assist with landowner workshops and represent the Region on the Caring for the Moraine CPA2 Steering Committee. This capital account also covers administrative costs for the Region such as staff mileage, internal charge backs, printing, and costs for holding landowner workshops (hall rental, advertisements, food, etc.)
Kitchener Council ratified the “Five Best Bets” recommendation in 2006 to improve Air Quality in the City of Kitchener. Best Bet No. 3 was “Increase Green Space”, with specific recommendations to:

- Promote a Natural Yard Care program;
- Requires developers dedicate a maximum (2%) parkland conveyance for industrial developments;
- Requires developers dedicate a maximum (5%) parkland conveyance for institutional developments;
- Establish a Natural Lands Acquisition Fund;
- Embrace LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles for new developments;
- Encourage use of native plantings and low-maintenance plants;
- Make rain barrels available to all high-intensity development; and,
- Increase the size of garden plots per residential unit to encourage growing their own vegetable gardens.

In order to implement a Natural Lands Acquisition Fund, discussions on “mechanisms for protection of natural lands” were discussed. There are several mechanisms available to ensure that the best natural lands are protected. Efforts to protect such lands, within the City of Kitchener, traditionally occur in this order:

1. Land use designations and zoning;
2. Conveyance, at no cost to the City, as part of the development application;
3. Negotiation for conveyance into public ownership for considerations such as density bonuses, tax receipts, (partial) compliance with parkland dedication requirements;
4. Land exchanges;
5. Combinations 3 and 4;
6. Conservation easements to require private land stewardship; and,
7. Purchase by the City Of Kitchener.
There is no specific criteria as to the types of natural lands to protect through acquisition, but the focus is to be on those lands not yet protected in policy or zoning, and significant natural lands designated and/or zoned for development. A good example would be a tableland woodlot.

Through the 2007 budget process, the Natural Lands Acquisition Fund has secured $50,000. To date, no monies have been allocated as criteria have not been finalized.
The City of Kitchener is undergoing an update to the Strategic Plan for the Environment. Historically funding for environmental initiatives has occurred through the normal capital and operational budgeting process, and the Strategic Plan for the Environment has been the mechanism for tracking them across departments and through time. The intent of the update is to focus the efforts of both the City and its citizens on current and emerging issues of environmental concern. The intent of LEAF is to act as a catalyst to leverage participation and investment by all stakeholders in the community to improve the environment of the City of Kitchener.

Once the Strategic Plan for the Environment has been updated, staff anticipates that some of the potential tools/approaches for funding might include:

- Leading by example;
- Provide seed money for community initiatives;
- Build community awareness through education and advocacy;
- Partnerships with other levels of government, the community, and City owned agencies;
- Require all initiatives to be considered for funding to be supported by a full business plan; and,
- Use a "CO₂-saved-per-dollar-invested" analysis as one criteria to evaluate GHG initiatives.

Catalyst funding for LEAF of $5,000,000 ($2,000,000 from the proceeds from the sale of Atria in 2007; and $1,000,000 per year, for three years, (2008, 2009, and 2010) from the Economic Development Investment Fund (EDIF)) is recommended at this time because the fund has achieved a greater success towards its goals in a shorter period of time than was originally anticipated. The main purpose of EDIF is to act as a catalyst for economic growth, both in Greenfield areas and in the redevelopment of the downtown. To date, the largest part of the investment of EDIF has been on the redevelopment of the downtown, which lessens pressure for growth in Greenfield areas.
City of Toronto
Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Reserve

The benefits of land acquisition related to source protection are:

- **Protection of the valley and stream corridor features and functions:**
  - Convey, and provide storage of storm water and melt water.
  - Protect important areas for groundwater recharge and discharge.
  - Allow nutrient and sediment transport (water quality).
  - Maintain base flow.
  - Provide filtering of overland flows.

- **Protection of headwater areas:**
  - Protect important areas for groundwater recharge and discharge.
  - Enhance water quality.
  - Maintain base flow.
  - Protect headwater/lower order streams.

Lands suitable for funding from the Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Reserve must satisfy one of the following criteria:

1. Lands, where City staff is of the opinion that they need to be acquired due to their unique environmental characteristics as significant water resource features, such as floodplains, stream and valley corridors, natural features contiguous to stream and valley corridors, wetlands, critical fish habitat, significant vegetation/forest cover, hydrological sensitive recharge/discharge areas; and,

2. Lands, where rehabilitation, regeneration and/or treatment works are planned for source water protection, consistent with the City of Toronto Wet Weather Flow Management Master Plan or other relevant source water protection initiatives.

City Council, on November 30 and December 1, 2004, amended and adopted the “Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection Reserve”, and authorized a $2 million transfer from the Wastewater Stabilization Reserve to fund this account.

The objective of this fund is the protection of the river systems and watersheds through acquisition of key parcels of land, including valley and stream corridors and Head Water Areas.

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is the main organization responsible for acquiring lands through this fund. The rationale for approving funding on lands must include at least one of the following criteria: lands with unique
environmental characteristics such as flood plains, stream and valley corridors, natural features contiguous to stream and valley corridors, wetlands, critical fish habitat, significant vegetation/forest cover and hydrological sensitive recharge/discharge area; and lands where rehabilitation, regeneration and/or treatment works are planned for source water protection areas.

A confidential list of potential properties has been established by the TRCA for consideration. The majority of these properties have purchase and sale agreements in hand, or where negotiations are at a stage that a purchase and sale agreement is likely. These property acquisitions represent priority acquisitions, which will protect and enhance City watersheds.
Lands suitable for securement include:

- Lands containing Significant Natural and Hydrological Features and Values;
- Lands within Natural Core and Linkage areas;
- Lands that serve important Ecological Functions; and,
- Lands identified in the Oak Ridges Trail Strategy.

The securement options include:

- Fee-simple acquisition;
- Easements and donations of land; or,
- Rights in land; and,
- Encouraging tax relief through CLTIP, MFTIP.

The initial funding is through a government grant with additional funding provided through partner support.