SUBJECT: Removal of Trees to Facilitate Roadside Drainage on Woodhill Road, Flamborough (PW09032) - (Ward 14)

RECOMMENDATION: That the removal of public trees from the drainage ditch on Woodhill Road adjacent to municipal properties 107 through 135 inclusive be approved in order to facilitate roadside drainage and road improvements as outlined in Report PW09032.

Gerry Davis, CMA
Acting General Manager
Public Works Department

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to remove 672 trees located in the drainage ditch within the road allowance on Woodhill Road (refer to Appendix A) pursuant to the provisions and requirements of the Tree Bylaw 06-151 and the City of Hamilton Public Tree Removal Policy. Council approval is essential when the removal of public trees is greater than or equal to twenty-five (25) trees as deemed necessary to facilitate municipal operations.

There is a history of impaired drainage and road failure occurring on a portion of Woodhill Road adjacent to municipal properties 107, 125 and 135 inclusive, caused by the impediment of water flow within the drainage ditch due to the presence of naturalized alder trees. Removal of these trees is necessary to reinstate proper water flow, eliminate potential flooding hazards and improve the stability of the road.
BACKGROUND:

That the information/recommendations contained within this report primarily affects Ward 14.

Over the last two years, staff has investigated several concerns of ditch flooding along the west side of Woodhill Road between municipal properties 107 to 135. Staff reported that there are 672 Speckled Alder trees (*Alnus incana* subspecies *rugosa*) ranging in size from 5 cm to 15 cm diameter at breast height growing in the drainage ditch along this section.

Speckled Alder is an early successsion species and the trees have quickly established themselves over the last several years. The species quickly in fills an area through the sprouting of underground stems. These trees form a dense network along this stretch of road. Due to the coarse, shrubby growth habit of the Alder, the wood has no commercial value. Also, because of the growth habits of Alder’s, this species is not on the City Of Hamilton’s approved tree species list for planting within municipal roadways.

There have been several instances reported where the water flow in this drainage ditch has been affected and roadside drainage has been impaired due to the presence of the Alders clogging the culverts. The poor drainage has also negatively impacted the stability of the road and has required extensive and costly maintenance repairs by the Roads Operations and Maintenance Section. Due to the spreading habit of this species, it is recommended that all of the Alders be removed from the ditch so that water flow is no longer impeded.

As part of the mitigation efforts, the Roads Operations & Maintenance Section of Public Works plans to ditch the area as necessary following the tree removal.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

Tree removal is necessary to restore the drainage ditch back to its original state and intended function and to protect the stability of the road. Naturalization of the ditch only leads to drainage and flooding problems which will eventually impact the maintenance and safe use of the road. Forestry and Horticulture staff will work with the adjacent property owners to determine if there is an opportunity to plant appropriate street trees along the affected portion of Woodhill Road.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

Alternately, Council may choose to have the existing trees remain. This option is not recommended as roadside drainage problems will continue and become increasingly problematic as the trees mature. This will lead to road surface damage as the granular road base becomes frequently saturated and prone to damage from vehicular traffic causing rutting.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

Financial - Funding for this contractual project is available from the Roads Operations & Maintenance Section, account number 55916-4030917678, *Provincial Dollars Preventative Maintenance*. 
LEGAL - Council approval is required for the removal of more than twenty-five (25) trees in accordance with City of Hamilton Public Tree Removal Policy as referenced in the City of Hamilton Tree By-law 06-151.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:

In accordance with the City of Hamilton Public Tree Removal Policy, Council approval is required for municipal operations where the total number of trees to be removed is greater than or equal to twenty-five (25) trees. The contents of this report are not in conflict with the City of Hamilton or Public Works Strategic Plans.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

The Ward Councillor has been consulted and is in agreement with the removal of the trees.

Roads Operations and Maintenance Section has been consulted in the preparation of this report.

CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, 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

Human health and safety are protected.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

Undesirable tree species replaced with desirable tree species.

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☐ Yes ☑ No

Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines? ☐ Yes ☑ No

Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants? ☐ Yes ☑ No.
SUBJECT: Removal of Trees to Facilitate Roadside Drainage on Woodhill Road, Flamborough (PW09032) - (Ward 14)

Appendix ‘A’