

Development application guidelines

Environmental impact statement/study

What is the purpose of this?

An *environmental impact statement/study* is an assessment of a development proposal in or adjacent to a natural heritage feature, function and/or system and identifies what impact the proposed development will have on the area, feature and/or function as per the requirements of the Official Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement. The study should describe the anticipated adverse impacts of the proposal on the area or feature and recommend ways to avoid, minimize or where necessary mitigate these effects. The *environmental impact statement/study* should also demonstrate how the proposal will enhance the natural features in or adjacent to the development proposal, if feasible.

Who should prepare this?

An *environmental impact statement/study* should be prepared by a qualified professional with expertise in species identification, biological, ecological and/or environmental functions and processes.

When is this required?

An *environmental impact statement/study* is required to be conducted when a development is proposed within or adjacent to a natural area, system and/or feature, or is reasonably expected to have adverse effects on the area, system, feature or function.

Applications which may require an *environmental impact statement/study* include, but are not limited to:

- Official Plan Amendment
- Zoning By-law Amendment
- Plan of Subdivision / Condominium
- Consent
- Site Plan

Why do we need this?

The *environmental impact statement/study* is required to:

- outline potential impacts on natural heritage features, functions and/or systems
- demonstrate how development avoids, minimizes or where necessary mitigates impacts
- determine compliance with relevant sustainability and land use policies
- assist staff with their analysis and report preparation

How should this be prepared?

An *environmental impact statement/study* should:

- demonstrate compliance with municipal, provincial and federal policies and regulations
- describe the development proposal in relation to the existing natural features and functions on the subject lands and adjacent lands
- characterize the surrounding environment by completing biophysical studies and analyzing the results
- identify the limits of natural features and natural hazards and may require demarcation per the *demarcation of the limits of natural features and natural hazards* terms of reference
- identify and assess the potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural

- features and systems
- identify any lands and/or features to be preserved in their natural state, restored or enhanced
 - identify alternative mitigating measures to address the negative effects of development on the natural features and their ecological functions, including setbacks for development
 - include a monitoring program to assess the implementation and efficacy of mitigation measures
 - recommend how the proposal will maintain, restore, protect or enhance the natural features and ecological function of the area, and not have a negative impact on the natural features or natural systems (note that negative impacts may result in a denial recommendation)

This list may be modified in pre-consultation with the review agencies.

What else should we know?

The *environmental impact statement/study* should also meet the standards identified in the *Greenbelt Act (2017)*, where applicable. The *environmental impact statement/study* should begin early in the development process when there is the greatest opportunity to design in harmony with the natural environment.

Pre-consultation with the Town, the respective Conservation Authority, and Halton Region is strongly recommended to ensure that all requirements are incorporated into the first draft of the study.

What other resources are available?

Halton Region - Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines, 2020:
<http://www.halton.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=13319>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry - Natural Heritage Reference Manual, 2010:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/natural-heritage-reference-manual>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry - Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide, 2000:
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/significant-wildlife-habitat-guide>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Significant wildlife habitat ecoregion criteria schedules: Ecoregion 7E, 2015: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/significant-wildlife-habitat-ecoregional-criteria-schedules-ecoregion-7e>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry – Significant Wildlife Habitat Mitigation Support Tool, 2014: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/significant-wildlife-habitat-mitigation-support-tool>

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