

# Natural Heritage Advisory Committee Meeting

September 30, 2020

# Agenda

- Welcome and introductions
- Committee Terms of Reference and procedures
- Nominations and Election of Chair and Vice-Chair
- Meeting Schedule for 2020
- Overview of Natural Heritage System Policies in the City's Official Plan
- Overview of the Natural Heritage Action Plan

# NHAC Terms of Reference

## Purpose

To facilitate the exchange of ideas between Council and the public with respect to natural heritage features and areas and maintaining, restoring, and improving biodiversity, connectivity and ecological functions of the City's Natural Heritage System.

# NHAC Terms of Reference

## Mandate

To provide input and perspectives on strategic, high-level natural heritage conservation matters relating to City-led initiatives, specifically:

- City plans, strategies and studies with a natural heritage focus such as the NHAP, the UFMP and subwatershed studies
- Reviews and updates to the OP natural heritage and watershed planning and resource policies

NHAC's role is advisory, consultative and intended to enhance community engagement

# Advisory Committee Procedures

## Delegations

Notwithstanding the City of Guelph Procedural By-law, delegations are not permitted at NHAC meetings

- City of Guelph's Procedural By-law
- the Advisory Committee Meeting Procedures
- the Public Appointment Policy

# Nomination and Election of Chair

# Meeting Schedule for 2020

Proposed Meeting Date

Wednesday, December 9

# What is an Official Plan?

- Describes the general land use planning policies
- Makes sure that growth is coordinated and meets the community's needs
- Helps with understanding how land may be used now and in the future
- Helps decide where roads, watermains, sewers, parks and other services will be built
- Provides a framework for establishing municipal zoning by-laws
- Shows Council's commitment to the future growth of our community



# Official Plan and Decisions

The Official Plan guides all of the City's planning decisions.

It means that:

- City Council and municipal officials must follow the Official Plan
- All new services must conform to the Official Plan
- All by-laws, including zoning and related by-laws, and all public works must conform with the Official Plan

# Official Plan Natural Heritage System

## NHS

- Made up of a combination of natural spaces that are connected by hydrological and ecological linkages
- Supports the complex ecosystems that provide habitat for plants, fish and wildlife as well as ecosystem services
- Provides permanent protection to Significant Natural Areas, which include significant natural heritage features and areas as well as their buffers
- Identifies Natural Areas for further study to determine features and functions that should be incorporated
- Identified wildlife crossings to ensure that mitigative measures are undertaken

# Natural Heritage System Components

## Significant Natural Areas

- Significant ANSIs
- Significant Habitat for Provincially Endangered and Threatened Species
- Significant Wetlands
- Surface Water Features and Fish Habitat
- Significant Woodlands
- Significant Valleylands
- Significant Landform
- Significant Wildlife Habitat (including Ecological Linkages)
- Restoration Areas
- Minimum or Established Buffers (where applicable)

# Natural Heritage System Components

## Natural Areas

- Other Wetlands
- Cultural Woodlands
- Habitat of Significant Species
- Established Buffers (where applicable)

# Natural Heritage System Policy

- Establish general and feature-specific permitted uses
- Prohibit or restrict development and site alteration
- Set out study requirements
- Provide feature-specific objectives and designation criteria
- Provide minimum buffers

# Related Policy

## Urban Forest

- Addresses trees outside of NHS

## Natural Heritage Stewardship and Monitoring

- Addresses invasive species, land stewardship, pollinator habitat, ecological monitoring

## Watershed Planning and Water Resources

- Addresses watershed/subwatershed studies, water conservation, sourcewater protection

## Public Health and Safety

- Addresses floodplain and erosion hazards

# Natural Heritage Action Plan

## Purpose

- Implementation framework to support achievement of the NHS vision, objectives and policies in the Official Plan
- Provides a mission, principles and actions
- Guides management of NHS and water resources in conjunction with other City plans
- Emphasis on NHS but recognizes the value of human-made habitats, green infrastructure and the urban forest

# Natural Heritage Action Plan

## Mission

The City will:

- Lead by example to protect, maintain, restore and improve the NHS and water resources
- Be supported by community groups and stewardship networks
- Be informed by science to assist in building a healthy community, where the urban environment is inclusive of nature and resilient to climate change



# Natural Heritage Action Plan

37 Actions in Total

18 Priority Actions

# Natural Heritage Action Plan

## Section 1: Watershed planning to manage growth and infrastructure

- Supporting growth through watershed planning
- Environmental monitoring to support science-based decision making

## Section 2: Natural heritage and biodiversity conservation

- Understanding and enhancing our biodiversity
- Continuous improvements in institutional processes and practices
- Plant and wildlife habitat management in the urban setting
- Supporting long-term conservation of natural heritage lands

## Section 3: Data and information management

- Data management and technology to improve efficiencies and share knowledge

## Section 4: Resilience and restoration planning

- Urban ecosystem resilience to support a healthy community
- Restoring urban ecosystems to support biodiversity
- Continuous improvements in institutional processes and practices

## Section 5: Fostering community support, raising awareness and engagement

- Engagement models for supporting implementation
- Education, outreach and stewardship

# Natural Heritage Action Plan

## Implementation Status

### 3 actions completed

- Guelph is a Bee City
- NHAC has been established

### 12 actions underway

- Expanded stormwater management monitoring program
- Establishing a city-wide weather monitoring network
- Natural plant propagation for City operations
- Natural Asset Inventory

### Upcoming

- Invasive Species Strategy
- Subwatershed Studies
- Biodiversity Strategy

# Next Meeting

December 9, 2020