Linkage Assessment

PURPOSE:

This document provides guidance for the preparation of a Linkage Assessment which may be required for the submission of an application under the *Planning Act*. All Linkage Assessments shall follow the guidelines referenced in this document.

A Linkage Assessment provides information that is required when development or site alteration is proposed within a linkage identified in Hamilton's Official Plans.

The purpose of the City's Official Plan policies is to:

- Protect and enhance connections between Core Areas to enhance the ecological functions of the Natural Heritage System;
- Maintain or enhance linkages wherever possible; and,
- Integrate the design of a development proposal in a manner that protects or enhances the ecological functions of the Linkage.

Linkage Assessments:

- Identify and assess linkages (vegetative/wildlife/landscape features or functions);
- Assess the potential impacts of development/site alteration on the viability and integrity of a linkage; and,
- Recommend how to protect, enhance, or mitigate impacts on a linkage and its functions.

PREPARED BY:

Linkage Assessments must be prepared by a qualified expert in fields relevant to the natural environment, including an ecologist, biologist, hydrogeologist, arborist/forester, or geologist, depending on the area of expertise required. In some cases, expertise in

storm water management, geology, aquatic ecology, terrestrial ecology, hydrogeology, or fluvial geomorphology will be required.

CONTENTS:

A Linkage Assessment must follow the City's approved Linkage Assessment Guidelines.

Where an Environmental Impact Statement is also required for a proposal, the Linkage Assessment should be included as part of the Environmental Impact Statement. The contents of a Linkage Assessment will be scoped on a site-by-site basis. The applicant's qualified expert shall prepare a Terms of Reference outlining the contents and scope of the Linkage Assessment to the satisfaction of the City. **Natural Heritage, Planning and Economic Development Department must approve a Terms of Reference for a Linkage Assessment prior to the initiation of the study.**

OTHER INFORMATION:

City of Hamilton Linkage Assessment Guidelines

Linkage Assessment Guidelines | City of Hamilton

CONTACT:

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