

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 mitigate these effects and enhance the area 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
- propose mitigations to offset 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:

- describe the development proposal in relation to the existing natural features and functions on the subject lands and adjacent lands
- describe the surrounding environment including a biophysical inventory, specifically indicating species at risk (including vulnerable, threatened and endangered species)
- examine the functions of the natural features, their sensitivity and significance
- identify the location and extent of sensitive or significant natural features
- identify the potential impacts of the proposed development on the natural features and their ecological functions, or the impact of development on the role of the land as a core or corridor
- identify any lands to be preserved in their natural state 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

- identify the potential for restoration and/or creation of wildlife habitat
- include a monitoring program to measure the impacts of development over time
- examine the cumulative impact of the existing, proposed and potential development, including the impact on groundwater function and quality
- recommend how the proposal will maintain, restore, protect or enhance the natural features and ecological function of the area
- a description of potential impacts to the features and functions identified as part of the study (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 (2005)*, if 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 Conservation Halton and the Halton Region Public Works Department is strongly recommended to ensure that all requirements are incorporated into the first draft of the study.

What other resources are available?

Conservation Halton - Environmental Impact Study Guidelines, 2005: <http://www.conservationhalton.on.ca/uploads/Conservation%20Halton%20EIS%20Guidelines%20Final%20Nov%2018%2005.pdf>

Halton Region - Environmental Impact Assessment Guidelines, 2005: <http://www.halton.ca/common/pages/UserFile.aspx?fileId=13319>

Ministry of Natural Resources - Natural Heritage Reference Manual, 2010: <http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@lueps/documents/document/289522.pdf>

Ministry of Natural Resources - Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide, 2000: http://www.mnr.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@mnr/@fw/documents/document/mnr_e001285.pdf