

Environmental Impact Study

Purpose:

The purpose of an Environmental Impact Study is to demonstrate that a proposed development or infrastructure undertaking may proceed in or adjacent to lands designated as Natural Heritage, Environmental Policy Area A or B and/or Candidate Natural Heritage Site without causing negative impact on the feature or its associated ecological functions.

Environmental Impact Studies under this Terms of Reference will be considered fulfilling the requirements of an Environmental Impact Statement as described in Provincial policy and/or guidelines. When an Environmental Assessment of a proposal is carried out under the Environmental Assessment Act, or other relevant Federal or Provincial legislation, that assessment may be considered by Council as fulfilling the Environmental Impact Study required by this Plan. Where an Environmental Impact Study is required, it shall:

1. Identify current land uses;
2. Describe the historical and present uses of the property;
3. Description of site context/study area and the subject property's relationship to the surrounding landscape;
4. Include maps of the development location and extent of the area to be studied; orthographic maps with known natural heritage features/ areas overlaid;
5. Describe designation and zoning for the subject property and for the adjacent lands;
6. Type of required development applications;
7. Include map(s) of the development location and extent of the area to be studied, including current zone and land use;
8. Identify environmental legislative, regulatory, and policy requirements that may affect the development proposal;
9. Identify relevant information including existing studies, plans, databases, and other sources to be analyzed. (E.g., such as current and historical air photos, watershed or subwatershed studies, secondary plans, master plans, and supporting studies, EIS or EIR information from adjacent lands, natural heritage databases (NHIC), data on file with the City of Windsor and/or Essex Region Conservation Authority);

10. Scan for endangered species and species at risk and their associated habitats within the Study Area using the NHIC database, preliminary site visits and pre-consultations with relevant agencies and the City
NOTE: Natural heritage records are generally considered in need of field verification after a period of 5 yrs;

11. Characterize the natural environment in the study area(s):
 - I. Identify whether there are potential natural heritage features and areas that do not need to be assessed and provide a rationale for their exclusion;
 - II. Using the background information, determine whether or not field verification studies are required and describe the approach and methods chosen;
 - III. Conduct field studies using protocols that are:
 - a. Suitable for the type of natural heritage features and areas on site
 - b. Are designed to provide the information needed to determine whether a feature is significant (or not).
 - c. Appropriate timing or work (season, time of day, weather, etc.), level of efforts (number of site visits, field hours, number of searchers, etc.), maps showing locations for species-specific surveys, technology being used, spatial extent and level of effort for supporting field studies
 - IV. Identify and describe the approach and methods to be used to assess the natural environment and ecological function of the subject property and the adjacent lands for:
 - a. Geology and soils
 - b. Hydrology and hydrogeology
 - c. Aquatic and fish habitat
 - d. Terrestrial vegetation (including wetlands)
 - e. Vegetation communities
 - f. Plants
 - g. Wildlife
 - h. Natural Hazards
 - i. Connectivity and ecological linkages
 - j. Species at Risk and Species at Risk Habitats

12. Assess the various natural heritage features against the appropriate policies, guidelines, and plans to determine significance;

13. Assess the various natural heritage features and areas against the appropriate policies and guidelines related to natural hazards;

14. Carry out an analysis of the individual and cumulative environmental effects that are expected to occur as a result of the proposed development and future uses;

15. Provide recommendations for appropriate environmental buffers and/or setbacks for each natural heritage feature and area, and natural hazard lands;

16. Identify, explain and recommend specific actions to be undertaken to eliminate, reduce or compensate for the expected impacts consistent with accepted ecological, planning, engineering, and resource management techniques and practices;

17. Provide a mitigation strategy, including measures for compliance and long term monitoring, and the ongoing management of measures for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of natural features, functions and linkages to achieve long term ecosystem health;
 18. Include a monitoring plan for performance and effectiveness of mitigation measures. Consider whether adequate baseline information have been collected and provide recommended timeframe for monitoring program;
 19. Indicate the nature and extent of public and agency consultation and/or input;
 20. Recommend appropriate planning designations and policies for the Study Area;
 21. Include a concluding statement with appropriate: appendices and attachments; mapping and figures; species lists; and additional technical studies, as applicable
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Qualifications:

An Environmental Impact Study must be completed by a professional biologist or ecologist, certified to practice in the Province of Ontario, to the satisfaction of the City.
