

## Conservation Halton Client Service Standards Policy Approved by the Board of Directors on June 27, 2019

### Background

Under the *Conservation Authorities Act*, Conservation Halton (CH) has a mandate to protect life and property from natural hazards such as flooding and erosion, to prevent environmental degradation and loss of natural features and their ecological and hydrological functions, and to prevent pollution of natural features and watercourses. To do this, CH undertakes a wide range of programs and services.

In the planning and development process, CH exercises its roles and responsibilities in accordance with the Province's *Policies and Procedures for Conservation Authority Plan Review and Permitting Activities (2010)*, including:

- a regulatory agency under Section 28 of the *Conservation Authorities Act*;
- a body with delegated authority, under the *Provincial Policy Statement*, to represent the 'Provincial Interest' regarding natural hazards in the review of municipal policy documents and planning applications under the *Planning Act*;
- a public commenting body under the *Planning Act* and other Acts and Provincial Plans;
- a service provider for environmental advice and technical clearance to municipalities in accordance with signed *Memoranda of Agreement*; and
- a resource management agency operating on a local watershed basis.

Pursuant to *Ontario Regulation 162/06*, CH regulates:

- all development in or adjacent to river or stream valleys, wetlands and surrounding lands where development could interfere with the hydrologic function of the wetland, Lake Ontario shorelines, and hazardous lands such as karst and any prescribed allowances;
- alterations to a river, creek, stream or watercourse; and
- interference with wetlands.

Permission is required from CH for undertaking any works within regulated areas. Any development, which in the opinion of the CA does not affect the control of flooding, erosion, pollution, conservation of land, or dynamic beaches may be approved or approved with conditions. Interference to watercourses and wetlands may be approved, approved with conditions or refused. CH's Board-approved *Policies and Guidelines for the Administration of Ontario Regulation 162/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document (2015)* outlines the policies and technical requirements which must be met before permission may be granted. As part of a CH permit application, an applicant must demonstrate that CH's Board-approved policies and technical standards can be met.

CH provides a wide range of planning advisory services to watershed municipalities and other agencies through Memoranda of Agreement or Understanding (MOA or MOU). Staff provides technical input regarding potential environmental impacts and advice about how damaging impacts can be avoided or reduced and/or how opportunities for restoring or improving environmental features and functions can be realized. Comments apply to a range of matters including but not limited to natural hazards, natural heritage, and water quality and quantity. The terms of the agreements differ depending on the in-house staff expertise and resource issues of concern within the specific municipality or agency jurisdiction. Policy documents and planning applications are circulated to CH for review and input under the *Planning Act*.

These applications typically include:

- Official Plans and Official Plan Amendments
- Secondary/Area Plans and Infrastructure Master Plans
- Zoning By-laws and Zoning By-law Amendments
- Plans of Subdivision and Condominium
- Consents (severances and lot-line adjustments) and Minor Variances
- Site Plans

CH staff (i.e., environmental planners, regulations officers, ecologists, water resource engineers and hydrogeologists) work together on interdisciplinary teams to deliver timely and comprehensive reviews and advice to provincial agencies, municipalities and landowners across CH's jurisdiction.

### Our Commitment

Our commitment to client service is an important element of the planning and regulations programs.

For permit applications, it is our policy to:

- Return phone calls and inquiries within 24-48 hours;
- Encourage pre-consultation with applicants and ensure that all CH application requirements are clear and understood by applicants;
- Provide clear submission guidelines for technical studies and reports;
- Provide regulatory screening maps to the public;
- Keep applicants for permits under Ontario Regulation 162/06 informed regarding the status of their application;
- Provide timely reviews and approvals;
- Track review and approval times for specific permits;
- Work toward on-line permit submissions; and
- Seek continuous process improvements.

Further, our targets are to:

- Notify applicants within 21 days regarding the completeness of their permit application;
- Review technical documents/submissions within 6 weeks;
- Approve minor permits that meet policy requirements within 30 days; and
- Approve major permits that meet policy requirements within 90 days.

For planning applications, it is our policy to:

- Return phone calls and inquiries within 24-48 hours;
- Work with municipal staff to streamline plan review processes;
- Participate actively in pre-consultation meetings;
- Provide clear submission guidelines for technical studies and reports;
- Provide timely reviews of applications and technical studies;
- Track files and review times for specific applications; and
- Seek continuous process improvements with municipalities.

Further, our targets are to:

- Review technical documents/submissions within 6 weeks;
- Provide comments on planning applications according to the MOU or MOA to municipalities by the specified date due or within the time frames specified in agreements; and
- Review technical documents/submissions and provide technical comments according to the MOU or MOA to municipalities within 6 weeks.

**For public information and transparency**, it is our policy to post the following to the CH website:

- CA/Municipal MOUs or Technical Service Agreements (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/memoranda-of-understanding>)
  - Region of Halton
  - City of Hamilton
  - Peel Region
  - County of Wellington
- CA plan review and regulation approvals policies/guidelines, including current and subsequent Board-approved versions (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/policies-and-guidelines>):
  - *Policies and Guidelines for the Administration of Ontario Regulation 162/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document (2015)*;
  - *Policies and Guidelines for the Administration of Ontario Regulation 162/06 and Land Use Planning Policy Document - Update to Shorelines Policies – Sections 3.41 to 3.50 (inclusive) (December 2015)*; and
  - *Conservation Halton Large Fill Policy and Procedural Guidelines, (December 2016)*
- CA Complete application requirements (checklists) (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/permit-review-process>)
- Current CA Fee policies and schedules (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/plan-review-fees>); (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/permit-fees>)
- CA Online screening maps (<https://conservationhalton-camaps.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/web-maps>)
- CA Annual report on review timelines (<https://www.conservationhalton.ca/annualreport>)

**For Issue Management** on planning and permit files, it is our policy to apply the following protocol:

- The file manager and/or Coordinator will resolve file issues by working with the municipality/applicant to find solutions which are supported by CH policies and MOUs/MOAs;
- If a resolution is not achieved, the Sr. Manager, Planning and Regulations or Director, Planning and Watershed Management will act as the ‘client service facilitator’;
- If not satisfied with a decision on whether a permit application is deemed complete, the applicant can request an administrative review by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and then if not satisfied, by the CH Board of Directors. This review will be limited to a complete application policy review and not the technical merits of the application; and
- If a decision on a permit application has not been rendered by the CA within the appropriate timeframe (i.e., 30 days for minor applications / 90 days for major applications), the applicant can submit a request for administrative review by CAO and then if not satisfied, by the CA Board of Directors.
- Any dispute of fee calculations that cannot be resolved through consultation with CH’s Senior Manager, Planning & Regulations, Director of Planning and Watershed Management, and/or CAO’s office, can be appealed to the CH Board of Directors.