



## **Modernizing Conservation Authority Operations - Conservation Authorities Act**

May 20, 2019

## Background

The role that Conservation Authorities (CAs) play in our communities is becoming increasingly important, as extreme weather, especially heavy rains and flooding becomes more frequent due to climate change. Since the Conservation Authorities Act was established, the programs and services delivered by conservation authorities have expanded.

The City of Brampton is supportive of measures that will clarify the core and non-core programs and services carried out by conservation authorities. However, it is noted that among the un-proclaimed provisions of the *Conservation Authorities Act* which the Province is proposing to bring into force is section 21.2. This section includes significant powers for the Minister to determine the non-core services and programs that conservation authorities can charge a fee for, and to set the fees. Brampton relies heavily on the conservation authorities' expertise with respect to non-core matters such as ecology, environmental monitoring, natural heritage restoration, and education and engagement.

The City of Brampton advises that should conservation authorities lose the ability to charge for such services, the result could be increased costs to municipalities to carry out those functions.

Likewise, Brampton is concerned about the implications of the Regional Review, as Peel Region provides significant funding for non-core services to its conservation authorities.

## Detailed Comments

Below are the proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act, with City's comments, that would:

- **clearly define the core mandatory programs and services provided by conservation authorities to be, natural hazard protection and management, conservation and management of conservation authority lands, drinking water source protection (as prescribed under the Clean Water Act), and protection of the Lake Simcoe watershed (as prescribed under the Lake Simcoe Protection Act)**

The City of Brampton is supportive of clarifying the core mandatory programs and services of the conservation authorities; however, municipalities should continue to have the ability to engage the conservation authorities in delivery of non-core programs and services.

- **increase transparency in how conservation authorities levy municipalities for mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services. Update the Conservation Authorities Act an Act introduced in 1946, to conform with modern transparency standards by ensuring that municipalities and conservation authorities review levies for non-core programs after a certain period of time (e.g., 4 to 8 years)**

The City of Brampton supports this direction to add more municipal, stakeholder and public transparency into how conservation authorities are funded and how municipalities are charged for CA programs and services.

The City supports the continued opportunity for municipalities to develop agreements with conservation authorities for the delivery of non-mandatory programs and services.

- **establish a transition period (e.g. 18 to 24 months) and process for conservation authorities and municipalities to enter into agreements for the delivery of non-mandatory programs and services and meet these transparency standards**

The City supports this direction to add a transition period and process that will allow municipalities and conservation authorities to develop agreements to deliver non-mandatory programs and services.

- **enable the Minister to appoint an investigator to investigate or undertake an audit and report on a conservation authority**

The City of Brampton supports this direction.

- **clarify that the duty of conservation authority board members is to act in the best interest of the conservation authority, similar to not-for profit organizations.**

The City of Brampton supports this direction.