



# Corporate Report

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**DATE:** June 7, 2005

**TO:** Chairman and Members of Planning and Development Committee  
Meeting Date: June 27, 2005

**FROM:** Edward R. Sajecki  
Commissioner of Planning and Building

**SUBJECT:** **Natural Areas Survey Update 2004**

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**RECOMMENDATION:** That the report titled "*Natural Areas Survey Update 2004*" dated June 7, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Building be received for information.

**BACKGROUND:** The Natural Areas Survey (NAS) for the City of Mississauga, completed in 1996, identified the best remaining natural features in the City. The study also developed a Natural Areas System for Mississauga Plan to provide for their long term protection. The Natural Areas System, which consists of natural areas, residential woodlands, special management areas and linkages is shown on Schedule 3: Environmental Areas, in Mississauga Plan.

Each year, natural areas in different quadrants of the City are reviewed to update information on floristics, fauna, impacts, boundary changes and management needs. The updated information is maintained in a series of fact sheets and detailed maps delineating vegetation communities for each natural area which are posted on the City's Environmental Planning webpage.

In 2004, the natural areas in Wards 1 and 2 were reviewed, as well as some additional natural areas throughout the City where new information had been documented since the previous year's update.

**COMMENTS:**

The study titled "*Natural Areas Survey Update 2004*" (attached under separate cover), provides information on the condition of the natural areas surveyed and summarizes the changes to the City's Natural Areas System. The study also provides some recommendations for the mitigation of impacts and management consideration.

The principal findings are as follows:

- The area of the City identified as natural area in 2004 is 1 943 hectares (4,801 acres) or approximately 6.6% of the total City area, which is essentially unchanged from 2002, the year of the previous NAS update. In 1996 the natural areas comprised 7.1% of the total area of the City.
- The total number of natural areas has decreased from 141 in 1996 to 136 in 2004, which amounts to a loss of 147.70 hectares (364.96 acres). Since the completion of the 2002 NAS update, one natural area was removed in Port Credit as a result of residential development.
- The majority of the Natural Areas System (80.3%) is associated with valley lands. Since tableland natural areas account for only 14.7% of the Natural Area System, there is a need to continue to place a high priority on the protection of the remaining tableland features in the City.
- Generally, the natural areas within the City that were surveyed in 2004 were in fair condition with moderate disturbances resulting from *ad hoc* trails, use of mountain bikes, garbage, boundary encroachment and vandalism.
- There has been a continual increase in the proportion of non-native to native plant species in the natural areas surveyed between 1996 and 2004. Without active management, the invasion of species such as Norway Maple, Garlic Mustard, European Buckthorn, Purple Loosestrife and others will result in the loss of native plant species in a number of natural areas.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT:** Not Applicable.

**CONCLUSION:** The NAS information assists in the management of natural areas by facilitating decisions on appropriate uses, protection measures and priority for acquisition. The information from the annual NAS updates is used to monitor and develop strategic and planning policies, and particularly to ensure that the Natural Heritage Policies and Schedule 3: Environmental Areas, in Mississauga Plan are current.

**ATTACHMENTS:** Natural Areas Survey Update 2004 (attached under separate cover)

*Original Signed By:*

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Edward R. Sajecki  
Commissioner of Planning and Building