

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR CONSERVATION
AUTHORITY PLAN REVIEW AND PERMITTING
ACTIVITIES**

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The intent of this chapter is to describe the roles of Conservation Authorities (CAs) in the areas of municipal planning, plan review, and Conservation Authorities Act S. 28 permitting related to development activity and natural hazard prevention and management and the protection of environmental interests.

PART A - BACKGROUND

1.0 DESCRIPTION OF CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ROLES AND ACTIVITIES

Conservation Authorities (CAs) are corporate bodies created through legislation by the province at the request of two or more municipalities in accordance with the requirements of the *Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act)*. Each CA is governed by the CA Act and by a Board of Directors whose members are appointed by participating municipalities located within a common watershed within the CA jurisdiction. CA Board composition is determined by the CA Act according to the proportion of the population from participating municipalities within the watershed.

Section 20 of the *CA Act* sets out the objects for CAs to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal and minerals. Section 21 of the CA Act outlines the powers of CAs including the power to establish watershed-based resource management programs and/or policies and the power to charge fees for services, the services for which are approved by the Minister of Natural Resources.

The fundamental provincial role for all CAs focuses on water related natural hazard prevention and management and includes flood and erosion control.

CAs may undertake the following roles and activities:

- i. Regulatory Authorities- Under Section 28 of the CA Act, subject to the approval of the Minister of Natural Resources and in conformity with the Provincial Regulation 97/04 governing the content, CAs may make regulations applicable to the area under its jurisdiction to prohibit, restrict, regulate or give required permission for certain activities in and adjacent to watercourses (including valley lands), wetlands, shorelines

of inland lakes and the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River System and other hazardous lands

- ii. Delegated 'Provincial Interest' in Plan Review- As outlined in the Conservation Ontario/ Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) /Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on CA Delegated Responsibilities (Appendix 1), CAs have been delegated responsibilities from the Minister of Natural Resources to represent the provincial interests regarding natural hazards encompassed by Section 3.1 of the *Provincial Policy Statement, 2005 (PPS, 2005)*. These delegated responsibilities require CAs to review and provide comments on municipal policy documents (Official Plans and comprehensive zoning by-laws) and applications submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act* as part of the Provincial One-Window Plan Review Service
- iii. Resource Management Agencies- In accordance with Section 20 and 21 of the CA Act, CAs are local watershed-based natural resource management agencies that develop programs that reflect local resource management needs within their jurisdiction. Such programs and/or policies are approved by the CA Board of Directors and may be funded from a variety of sources including municipal levies, fees for services, provincial and/or federal grants and self-generated revenue.
- iv. Public Commenting Bodies- Pursuant to the *Planning Act*, CAs are 'public commenting bodies', and as such are to be notified of municipal policy documents and planning and development applications. CAs may comment as per their Board approved policies as local resource management agencies to the municipality or planning approval authority on these documents and applications.

CAs may also be identified as commenting bodies under other Acts and Provincial Plans as outlined under Section 2.0 of this document and Appendix 4.

- v. Service Providers- Individual CAs may enter into service agreements with federal and provincial ministries and municipalities to undertake regulatory or approval responsibilities and/or reviews (e.g. reviews under the *Fisheries Act* Section 35; septic system approvals under the Ontario Building Code).

CAs may also perform a technical advisory role to municipalities. as determined under the terms of service agreements. These services may include, matters related to policy input and advice, the assessment or analysis of water quality and quantity, environmental impacts, watershed science and technical expertise associated with

activities near or in the vicinity of sensitive natural features, hydrogeology and storm water studies.

- vi. Landowners- CAs are landowners, and as such, may become involved in the planning and development process, either as an adjacent landowner or as a proponent. Planning Service Agreements with municipalities have anticipated that as CAs are also landowners this may lead to a conflict with the CA technical advisory role to municipalities. This potential conflict of interest is addressed by establishing a mechanism for either party to identify a conflict and implement an alternative review mechanism as necessary.

2.0 LEGISLATION

2.1 *Conservation Authorities Act*

2.1.1 Section 20 of the *CA Act* describes the objects of a CA, which are to establish and undertake, in the area over which it has jurisdiction, a program designed to further the conservation, restoration, development, and management of natural resources other than gas, oil, coal, and minerals.

2.1.2 Section 21 of the *CA Act* lists the powers which CAs have for the purpose of accomplishing their objects. The objects identified in the *CA Act* relevant to this chapter include:

- (a): to study and investigate the watershed and to determine a program whereby the natural resources of the watershed may be conserved, restored, developed and managed;
- (e) to purchase or acquire any personal property that it may require and sell or otherwise deal therewith;
- (l) to use lands that are owned or controlled by the authority for purposes, not inconsistent with its objects, as it considers proper;
- (m) to use lands owned or controlled by the authority for park or other recreational purposes, and to erect, or permit to be erected, buildings, booths and facilities for such purposes and to make charges for admission thereto and the use thereof;
- (m.1) to charge fees for services approved by the Minister (see Policies and Procedures manual chapter on CA fees);
- (n): to collaborate and enter into agreements with ministries and agencies of government, municipal councils, local boards and other organizations;
- (p) to cause research to be done;
- (q) generally to do all such acts as are necessary for the due carrying out of any project. R.S.O. 1990, c. C.27, s. 21; 1996, c. 1, Sched. M, s. 44 (1, 2); 1998, c. 18, Sched. I, s. 11.

2.1.3 Pursuant to Section 28 (1) of the *CA Act* and in accordance with Ontario Regulation (O. Reg.) 97/04 “Content of Conservation Authority Regulations under Subsection 28(1) of the Act: Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses” (i.e. Generic or Content Regulation)”, “subject to the approval of the Minister, an authority may make regulations applicable in the area under its jurisdiction,

(b) prohibiting, regulating or requiring the permission of the authority for straightening, changing, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream or watercourse, or for changing or interfering in any way with a wetland;

(c) prohibiting, regulating, or requiring the permission of the authority for development if, in the opinion of the authority, the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches or pollution or the conservation of land may be affected by the development.

2.1.4 Section 28 (25) of the *CA Act* defines development as meaning:

- a) the construction, reconstruction, erection, or placing of a building or structure of any kind
- b) any change to a building or structure that would have the effect of altering the use or potential use of the building or structure, increasing the size of the building or structure or increasing the number of dwelling units in the building or structure
- c) site grading
- d) the temporary or permanent placing, dumping, or removal of any material originating on the site or elsewhere

Note: This definition for “development” differs from the definition that is contained in the *PPS, 2005* (see Section 2.2.5). The relevant definition needs to be applied to the appropriate process.

2.1.5 *CA Act S. 28 and the Green Energy Act*

Conservation Authorities review renewable energy project proposals within their regulated areas as per the provisions of *CA Act* sections 28. (1)(b) and (c). Permission of the CA is required for straightening, changing, diverting or interfering in any way with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream or watercourse, or for changing or interfering in any way with a wetland.

As per Section 28. (13.1), permission will be granted, with or without conditions, for development related to a renewable energy project unless it is in the opinion of the Conservation Authority, the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches or pollution will be affected by the development or activity. Where possible, CA permit application review and decision-making will be concurrent with the review and issuance of approvals from provincial Ministries. The timelines for permit

applications related to renewable energy projects may differ from the timelines prescribed in this document due to the alignment with provincial Ministries.

2.2 *Planning Act*

2.2.1 Section 3(1) of the *Planning Act* provides for the issuance of policy statements on matters relating to municipal planning that are of provincial interest (e.g. *PPS, 2005*). Through the Minister's delegation letter and the accompanying MOU (Appendix 1), specific responsibilities have been delegated to CAs to ensure that decisions on development applications by planning approval bodies made pursuant to the *Planning Act* are consistent with the natural hazard policies of the *PPS, 2005*.

2.2.2 Section 3(5) and 3 (6) of the *Planning Act* requires that in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter including comments, submissions, advice and decisions of the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister of the Crown and a ministry, board, commission or agency of the government, including the Ontario Municipal Board, shall be consistent with provincial policy statements that are in effect on the date of the decision and conform with and not conflict with provincial plans (e.g. Greenbelt Plan, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Central Pickering Development Plan, Lake Simcoe Protection Act etc.) that are in effect on that date (See Appendix 4 for listing).

2.2.3 Section 26 of the *Planning Act* requires municipalities to revise Official Plans every five years to ensure the Municipal Official Plans do not conflict with and must conform to provincial plans and have regard to provincial interests as outlined in Section 2 of the *Planning Act* and are consistent with provincial policy statements issued under Section 3 (1).

2.2.4 Development, as defined in the *PPS*, means the creation of a new lot, a change in land use, or the construction of buildings and structures, requiring approval under the *Planning Act*, but does not include:

- a) activities that create or maintain *infrastructure* authorized under an environmental assessment process
- b) works subject to the *Drainage Act*, or
- c) for the purposes of policy 2.1.3(b), underground or surface mining of *minerals* or advanced exploration on mining lands in *significant areas of mineral potential* in Ecoregion 5E, where advanced exploration has the same meaning as under the *Mining Act*. Instead, those matters shall be subject to policy 2.1.4(a).

2.3. *Other Acts*

While the primary purpose of this chapter is to address the roles of CAs under the *Planning Act* and the *CA Act*, CAs may have responsibilities under additional

legislation including the federal *Fisheries Act* and the *Clean Water Act*. In addition to these pieces of legislation, there are various authorizations, approvals, permits, etc., which may be required from other agencies. It should be noted that a *CA Act* Section 28 permission, if granted for work, does not exempt the applicant from complying with any or all other approvals, laws, statutes, ordinances, directives, regulations, etc. that may affect the property or the use of same.

2.3.1 *Fisheries Act*

CAs may have individual agreements with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) to review proposed works for its potential harmful alteration, disruption or destruction (HADD) of fish habitat pursuant to Section 35 of the federal *Fisheries Act*.

There are three different levels of agreements:

- Level 1 screening where the CA conducts the initial review of the project to identify any impacts to fish and fish habitat and if potential impacts to fish and fish habitat are found, the project is forwarded to the local DFO district office for further review;
- Level 2 screening and mitigation planning where in addition to the above, the CA determines how the proponent can mitigate any potential impacts to fish and fish habitat and if mitigation is not possible the project is forwarded to the local DFO district office for further review; and,
- Level 3 full mitigation and compensation planning, where in addition to all of the above, the CA works with the proponent and DFO to prepare a fish habitat compensation plan and the project is then forwarded to the local DFO office for authorization under the federal *Fisheries Act*.

CAs do not possess the authority to grant an authorization for a HADD of fish habitat. Applications requiring an authorization for a HADD are referred by the CA to DFO for approval.

2.3.2 *Clean Water Act*

CAs have a role in the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) led provincial initiative under the *Clean Water Act* (CWA)(2006) in exercising and performing the powers and duties of a source protection authority for a source protection area established by CWA regulation. In acting as source protection authorities under the CWA, during the source protection plan development phase, tasks include:

- Collection, analysis and compilation of technical and scientific information and data (watershed characterizations, water budgets, etc.)

- Local engagement, consultation, information management and communications
- Key supporting role to respective source protection committees which includes funding
- Coordinating technical work with municipalities and others

Once the first source protection plan is approved, the Minister of the Environment will specify a date by which a review of the plan must begin and the source protection authority ensures that the review and those that follow are conducted in accordance with the *CWA* and the regulations

2.3.3 *Environmental Assessment Act (EA Act)*

The purpose of the *Environmental Assessment Act* is the betterment of the people of the whole or any part of Ontario by providing for the protection, conservation and wise management in Ontario of the environment. CAs review and comment on Class and Individual Environmental Assessments that occur within their jurisdiction under the *EA Act*. CAs bring local environmental and watershed knowledge into the review and assessment process.

It is a requirement for proponents to identify and consult with government agencies and may include CAs if the proposed project may have an impact on an item related to the CA's areas of interest (e.g. regulatory authority or as service providers-see section 1.0). The MOE is responsible for the administration of the *Environmental Assessment Act* and ensuring that proponents meet the requirements of this Act. The Minister of Environment is the approval authority for decisions under the *Environmental Assessment Act*.

CAs as landowners may also be the proponent under the *EA Act* for proposed projects that may occur on CA lands. The *Class Environmental Assessment for Remedial Flood and Erosion Control Projects* (Class EA) establishes a planning and approval process for a variety of remedial flood and erosion control projects that may be carried out by CAs. This Class EA sets out procedures and environmental planning principles for CAs to follow to plan, design, evaluate, implement and monitor a remedial flood and erosion control project so that environmental effects are considered as required under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. Approval of this Class EA allows CAs to undertake these projects without applying for formal approval under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, on the condition that the planning and design process outlined in the Class EA is followed and that all other necessary federal and provincial approvals are obtained.

2.3.4 *Aggregate Resources Act (AR Act)*

The purposes of the *AR Act* are to provide for the management of the aggregate resources of Ontario; to control and regulate aggregate operations on Crown and private lands; to require the rehabilitation of land from which aggregate has been excavated; and to minimize adverse impact on the environment in respect of aggregate operation.

Under *CA Act* Section 28 (11), areas licensed for aggregate extraction under the *AR Act* are exempt from CA permitting activities. However, CAs may bring local environmental and watershed knowledge into the application review process. CAs are afforded an opportunity to review and provide comments directly, or through their participating municipalities, to MNR on applications submitted under the *AR Act*, during the application review and consultation process. MNR is the approval authority for license applications submitted pursuant to the *AR Act*, whereas municipalities are the approval authorities with respect to applications submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act*.

As with other applications submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act*, CAs may review Official Plan amendments, zoning bylaw amendments and other applications for proposed new or expanded aggregate operations submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act*, and comment in an advisory capacity to municipalities making decisions on *Planning Act* applications.

2.3.5 *Drainage Act*

The Drainage Act is administered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) and is implemented by the local municipality. The Drainage Act defines the terms by which a drainage project may be initiated and prescribes the various stages of the procedure (e.g. engineer's report, consultation, appeals, construction) that must be followed by municipalities in the development of this municipal drainage infrastructure. The local municipality is also responsible for the maintenance, repair and management of the drainage systems that are developed through this procedure.

CAs are involved with drainage matters in three ways:

- 1) Since 1949, drainage petitions for new drains and improvements to existing drains are circulated to CAs for comment as required under the Drainage Act S. 4 and S. 78 respectively. CAs may request an environmental appraisal for new drainage works. Once an engineer's report has been drafted for the proposed drainage works, the Drainage Act provides CAs with a right to appeal the proposed project to the Drainage Tribunal.
- 2) CAs under agreement with Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) undertake *Fisheries Act* Section 35 authorization reviews under a drainage class system. While CAs do not give final approval on authorization requests, they review applications and form recommendations that are forwarded to DFO for approval decisions.

- 3) As some drains meet the definition of a 'watercourse' under Section 28 of the CA Act, CA permissions (permits) may be required for new drainage works and drain improvements, maintenance and repair activities. Please refer to the Drainage Act and (CA) Regulation Protocol (under development 2010) for more details.

2.3.6 Ontario Water Resources Act (OWRA)

Under the OWRA, Certificates of Approval are required for stormwater management infrastructure from MOE as the approval authority. CAs often undertake a public commenting role on Certificates of Approval applications.

SUMMARY TABLE: CA Roles, Relevant Reference Sections and Legal Authority

Role	Relevant Section in this document	Legal Authority-legislation (or other)
Regulatory Authorities	Section 3.7 Section 6.0 (6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6, 6.7) Section 7.0 Section 8.0 Appendix 2c Appendix 3	CA Act S. 28 O. Reg 97/04 O. Regs 42/06, 146/06 to 179/06, 181/06, 182/06, and 319/09.
Delegated 'Provincial Interest' in Plan Review	Section 3.0 (3.1, 3.2, 3.7) Section 6.0 (6.1,6.2,6.3,6.4, 6.5, 6.8) Section 8.0 Appendix 1 Appendix 2 a and b	CO/MNR/MMAH MOU of CA Delegated Responsibilities Section 3.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement
Resource Management Agencies	Section 3.0 (3.4, 3.6, 3.8) Section 4.0 Section 6.0 (6.5, 6.8, 6.9,6.10) Section 8.0	CA Act S. 20 and S. 21 CA Board Approved policies and programs
Public Commenting Bodies	Section 3.0 (3.3,3.4,3.6,3.7) Section 6.0 (6.2,6.5,6.6,6.8,6.9, 6.10)	Planning Act: S. 17.15, 17.20, 17.21 Other legislation: Clean Water Act S. 4.2, S. 6, S. 7.6, S. 10.1 etc. Drainage Act S. 4, S. 5.1, S. 6.1, S. 10.2, S. 10.8, S. 41.1, S. 49, S. 74, S. 78.2, Aggregates Resource Act Environmental Assessment Act Provincial Plans (see appendix 4)
Service Providers	Section 3.0 (3.4,3.5, 3.7, 3.8) Section 4.4 Section 6.0 (6.2, 6.3, 6.5, 6.6,.6.7,6.8,6.9) Section 8.0	CA Act S. 21 Federal Fisheries Act via Agreements MOUs (Municipal and other agency)
Landowners	Section 3.0 (3.8)	CA Act S. 21, and S. 29

PART B – POLICY

3.0 GENERAL

3.1 CAs have been delegated responsibility to review municipal policy documents and applications under the *Planning Act* to ensure that they are consistent with the natural hazards policies Section 3.1 of the *PPS, 2005*. CAs have not been delegated responsibilities to represent or define other provincial interests on behalf of the Province under the *Planning Act*, the *PPS, 2005* or other provincial legislation (e.g. *Endangered Species Act, 2007*) or provincial plans (e.g. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, etc.).

3.2 Under the CO/MNR/MMAH MOU on CA Delegated Responsibilities, CAs have a commenting role in approval of new or amended ‘Special Policy Areas’ for flood plains under Section 3.1.3 of the PPS, where such designations are feasible. Special Policy Areas (SPAs) are areas within flood plain boundaries of a watercourse where exceptions to the development restrictions of the natural hazards policy (3.1) in the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), 2005, may be permitted in accordance with technical criteria established by the MNR.

CAs provide supportive background and technical data regarding existing and proposed SPAs. New SPAs and any proposed changes or deletions to existing boundaries and/or policies are approved by both the Ministers of Natural Resources and Municipal Affairs and Housing, with advice from CAs, prior to being designated by a municipality or planning approval authority.

3.3 CAs are considered public commenting bodies pursuant to Section 1 of the *Planning Act* and regulations made under the *Planning Act*. As such, CAs must be notified of municipal policy documents and applications as prescribed. To streamline this process, CAs may have screening protocols with municipalities, normally through service agreements, which identifies those applications that CAs should review.

3.4 In addition to CAs’ legislative requirements and mandated responsibilities under the CA Act, Section 28 Regulations as regulatory authorities, and Section 3.1 of the PPS as delegated plan reviewers for provincial interest, the CAs’ role as watershed-based, resource management agencies also allows CAs to review municipal policies, planning documents and applications pursuant to the *Planning Act* as a ‘public commenting body’ as outlined in the CO/MNR/MMAH MOU on CA Delegated Responsibilities. (Appendix 1)

To inform their review of municipal planning documents and planning applications, under the *Planning Act*, CAs may develop policies and strategies related to their CA Board mandates and agreements for technical services with municipalities and other levels of government. Such CA policies are advisory

and may be incorporated into an Official Plan in which case they become adopted as municipal policy. When providing comments to municipalities or planning approval authorities, CAs should identify the role(s) and legislative authority under which they are doing so (e.g. *PPS, 2005, CA Act* Section 28 Regulations, *Federal Fisheries Act*, advisory, etc.).

3.5 Where CAs have entered into an agreement with municipalities or other levels of government for any technical services, CAs should provide the technical services (e.g. providing natural heritage advice), as prescribed by the agreement. Technical service agreements with municipalities may cover a broad range of issues, including stormwater management, natural heritage features and systems advice, groundwater monitoring, etc. These agreements may also include a process to resolve disputes that may occur in the delivery of the services between the municipality and a conservation authority.

3.6 In some cases, provincial plan (e.g. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan; Greenbelt Plan; Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, Central Pickering Development Plan) requirements may exceed CA regulatory requirements and such greater requirements take precedence. For example, the provincial plans may have greater requirements for vegetation buffers or more restrictions on the uses permitted than the CA regulatory requirements.

A typical requirement of the legislation for those plans is that comments, submissions, or advice provided by CAs, that affect a planning matter within those areas, shall conform with the provincial plan (refer to 6.9). Similarly, where there are regulations (including *CA Act* Section 28 and the *Fisheries Act*) that are more restrictive than those contained in these provincial plans, the more restrictive provisions prevail.

3.7 The “principle of development” is established through *Planning Act* approval processes, whereas the *CA Act* permitting process provides for technical implementation of matters pursuant to Section 28 of the *CA Act*. The scope of matters that are subject to *CA Act* S. 28 regulations is limited to the activities in areas set out under Section 28(1) and Section 28(5) of the *CA Act*.

CAs should ensure that concerns they may have regarding the establishment of the “principle of development” are conveyed to the municipality/planning approval authority during the preparation of a municipal Official Plan, secondary plan or Official Plan amendment, or during the *Planning Act* approvals process and not through the *CA Act* S. 28 permitting process.

An established ‘principle of development’ does not preclude the ability of the CA (or MMAH as per the MOU) to appeal a planning matter to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) (e.g., based on newer technical information relevant to the PPS). It is recognized that there may be historic planning approval decisions that were made in the absence of current technical information which could now preclude

development under the *CA Act* regulations. Where possible, if an issue remains unresolved, the CA should work with the proponent and the municipality to pursue a resolution.

3.8 CAs may provide a number of other programs and services (extension services, community relations, information, education services and permissions under other legislation) that may or may not be linked to applications made pursuant to the *Planning Act* or *CA Act* S. 28 regulation permissions. These programs and services are not governed by this chapter.

4.0 CONSERVATION AUTHORITY POLICY FORMATION AND CONSULTATION

4.1 CAs should give public notice and undertake public and stakeholder consultation prior to submission for CA Board approval of all proposed policies, watershed and subwatershed plans, guidelines or strategies that are intended to be used by the CA to comment on future land use and land use planning and inform CA review of applications made pursuant to the *Planning Act*. The CA is only responsible for coordinating consultation where it has been delegated as the lead for the watershed or subwatershed planning processes by the participating municipality or municipalities..

4.2 CAs should give public notice and undertake public consultations prior to submission for CA Board approval of proposed service delivery policies and procedures for *CA Act* Section 28 permit applications (e.g. complete applications).

4.3 The public should be provided the opportunity to speak to the proposed policies and guidelines referenced in 4.1 and 4.2 at the relevant CA Board meetings.

4.4 CAs should make any agreements between the CA and participating municipalities or other government agency publicly accessible (e.g. posted on the CA's website where available).

5.0 APPLICATION PROCESSES

Attached are **three charts** which illustrate the application processes under both the *Planning Act* and the *Conservation Authorities Act* S. 28 and practices to promote effective and efficient processes between them:

- municipal planning application process with CA review (e.g. stand-alone site plan control) (Appendix 2a)
- municipal planning application process (e.g. subdivision) with CA review and requirement for *CA Act* S. 28 permit(s) (Appendix 2b)

- stand-alone CA Act S. 28 “Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses” regulation permit application process (Appendix 2c)

6.0 POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR MUNICIPAL PLAN REVIEW BY CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES

6.1 ‘Provincial Interest’ Memorandum of Understanding of CA Delegated Responsibilities

Through the Minister’s delegation letter and under the accompanying MOU signed in 2001, CO, MNR and MMAH agreed to support the provisions of the MOU as an appropriate statement of the roles and responsibilities of the relevant Ministries and CAs in the implementation of the *PPS* and now continued in the *PPS, 2005*.

Pursuant to the delegation letter and the MOU, CAs have been delegated the responsibility to review municipal policy documents and planning and development applications submitted pursuant to the *Planning Act* to ensure that they are consistent with the natural hazards policies found in Section 3.1 of the *PPS, 2005*. These delegations do not extend to other portions of the *PPS, 2005* unless specifically delegated or assigned in writing by the Province. For further detail, please refer to the MOU in Appendix 1.

Note: At the time of signing, the 2001 CO/MNR/MMAH MOU stipulates that plan review was to determine whether application had “regard to” Section 3.1 of the *PPS, 1997*, while the amendment made to the *Planning Act* 3 (5) and 3 (6) by the *Strong Communities (Planning Amendment) Act* (Bill 51) and described in S. 4.2 of the *PPS, 2005* changes this wording, “to be consistent with” the policies outlined in the *PPS, 2005*.

6.2 The *PPS, 2005* provides for appropriate development while protecting resources of provincial interest, public health and safety, and the quality of the natural environment. The policies of the *PPS* may be complemented by provincial plans or by locally-generated policies regarding matters of municipal interest. Provincial plans and municipal Official Plans provide a framework for comprehensive, integrated and long-term planning that supports and integrates the principles of strong communities, a clean and healthy environment and economic growth, for the long term.

CAs are encouraged to develop watershed and subwatershed management plans to inform municipalities in the municipalities creation and updating of Official Plan policies*. Watershed plans may also provide technical information and recommendations for municipalities when making decisions on planning applications.

In carrying out their delegated responsibilities, CAs should identify natural hazard lands for protection in Official Plans and comprehensive zoning by-laws. This will ensure that development is directed away from areas of natural hazards where there is an unacceptable risk to public health or safety or of property damage (Section 3.1, *PPS, 2005*). The understanding by all parties as to the establishment of the “principle of development” by *Planning Act* approval process and the location of proposed works at the planning stage, as per section 3.7 of this Chapter, allows the CA to focus on technical requirements and site constraints at the *CA Act* S. 28 permitting review process.

*Footnote: in some areas of the province (e.g., Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan Area) there is a requirement for every municipality to prepare a watershed plan and to incorporate the objectives and requirements of the watershed plan into the Official Plan if the municipality wishes to permit major development within that watershed.

6.3 CAs should collaborate with municipalities to recommend policies and provisions for inclusion into Official Plan policies for complete planning application requirements so that information or studies needed by the CA for reviewing *Planning Act* applications from the delegated responsibility for natural hazards policies found in Section 3.1 of the *PPS* is addressed early in the process.

6.4 CAs should ensure that all concerns relevant to their delegated responsibilities for natural hazards are made available to municipalities and planning approval authorities under the *Planning Act* during the application review process.

In participating in the review of development applications under the *Planning Act*, CAs should, at the earliest opportunity:

- (i) ensure that the applicant and municipal planning authority are also aware of the Section 28 regulations and requirements under the *CA Act*, and,
- (ii) assist in the coordination of applications under the *Planning Act* and the *CA Act* to eliminate unnecessary delay or duplication in the process.

6.5 CAs should confer with municipalities to recommend policies and provisions for potential inclusion into Official Plans and comprehensive zoning by-laws that may be complementary to their CA Board-approved policies as resource management agencies and other planning responsibilities as outlined in Section 1.0 to ensure that municipal land use decisions may address them.

6.6 Recognizing that there is no requirement for municipalities to invite CAs to pre-consultation meetings, CAs should also contact municipalities, where appropriate, to ensure that the CAs are involved in pre-consultation and attend associated meetings on *Planning Act* applications, especially where such

applications may trigger a related permit application under the *CA Act S. 28*. Technical service agreements between municipalities and individual CAs may formalize arrangements for CA involvement in pre-consultation. As coordinated by the municipality or planning approval authority, depending on the scope of the project, pre-consultation could include staff from the following parties: CAs, the municipality (for example, planning and engineering staff), the applicant, consultants, the developer (owner) and may be supplemented by staff from provincial ministries, Parks Canada and any other government agencies.

6.7 If involved in providing a technical advisory role, CAs and municipalities should establish formal technical service agreements. CAs should ensure that the service agreement with a municipality addresses obligations of the CA to participate in pre-consultation and other meetings; how the CA may participate in OMB hearings or other tribunals; how the parties or participants may be represented at hearings for the purpose of legal representation; and, limits on the CA's ability to represent the municipality's interests. Service agreements or contracts should specify that regular reviews by the parties of the agreement or contract are required and should be publicly accessible (e.g. posted on the respective CA and municipal websites).

6.8 CAs shall operate in accordance with the provisions of the CO-MNR-MMAH MOU when undertaking their roles in plan review. This will include informing a municipality as to which of their CA comments or inputs, if any, pertain to the CA's delegated responsibilities for the provincial interest on natural hazards and which set of comments are provided on an advisory basis or through another type of authority (e.g. as a 'resource management agency' or as a 'service provider' to another agency or the municipality).

6.9 MNR has natural heritage responsibilities under the *PPS 2005* and some provincial plans (as outlined in appendix 4) for the delineation and technical support in the identification of natural heritage systems, the identification or approval of certain natural heritage features as significant or key features, and the identification of criteria related to these features. As part of the CA commenting or technical advisory function, some CAs identify natural heritage features and systems through the initial plan review process. CA developed natural heritage systems are advisory unless corresponding designations and policies are incorporated into the municipal Official Plan (i.e., municipality has the decision-making authority under the *Planning Act*). Where service agreements are in place with participating municipalities, CAs are encouraged to collaborate with local MNR District offices to ensure the appropriate and best available information on natural heritage is provided to a municipality. MNR is responsible for notifying municipalities and CAs when there is new information about a feature for which MNR has responsibilities; for example, a wetland is evaluated and approved as a provincially significant wetland (PSW), so that advice can be given and decisions made accordingly.

Where provincial plans and associated guidance materials apply, CA comments shall reflect the policy direction contained in these provincial plans or guidance materials as these pertain to matters relating to natural heritage systems and features, including:

1. Definitions of "significant" features;
2. Minimum setbacks for these defined features;
3. Outlining a process for determining whether the minimum setbacks are adequate and, if not, recommend appropriate setbacks;
4. Specifying permitted uses, set backs and policies within identified significant features;
5. Delineation of natural heritage systems.

6.10 CAs may provide input, as a public commenting body or 'resource management agency', on matters of local or regional interest within their watershed with respect to natural heritage with participating municipalities and liaise with the MNR regarding natural heritage interests including and beyond those covered by 6.9 (those of "provincial interest") to promote sharing of the most up-to-date natural heritage information and to promote coordinated planning approaches for these interests.

7.0 CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT SECTION 28 PERMITTING

7.1 Background Information

Pursuant to Section 28 of the *CA Act*, under Ontario Regulation 97/04 "Content of Conservation Authority Regulations under Subsection 28 (1) of the Act: "Development, Interference with Wetlands, and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses" (Generic or Content Regulation), each CA has developed individual regulations approved by the Minister that identify and regulate certain activities in and adjacent to watercourses (including valley lands), wetlands, shorelines of inland lakes and hazardous lands'. In general, permissions (permits) may be granted where, in the opinion of the CA, the control of flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches, pollution or the conservation of land is not impacted..

An application for a CA Act S. 28 permission (permit) is made, usually by the landowner or an agent on behalf of a landowner or an infrastructure manager and owner such as a Municipal Corporation. Information required to support an application is outlined in Appendix 3.

When the O. Reg 97/04 (the Content or Generic Regulation) was developed, three related procedural guidelines were prepared to assist in delivering the individual CA regulations:

1. Guidelines for developing schedules of regulated areas
2. Section 28(12) *CA Act* Hearings Guideline
3. Approvals Process Guideline

These and other future MNR approved guidelines or protocols may be used in implementation of the Regulation (e.g. *Drainage Act* and Regulation Protocol currently being prepared for 2010).

7.2 Pre-consultation on Permission (Permit) Applications

7.2.1 Pre-consultation is encouraged to provide clarity and direction, to facilitate receipt of complete applications and to streamline the CA Act S. 28 permission (permit) review and decision making process. To meet these objectives, depending on the scale and scope of the project, pre-consultation may include staff from the following parties: CAs, the municipality (for example, planning and engineering staff), the applicant, consultants, the developer and owner, and may be supplemented by staff from provincial ministries, Parks Canada and any other appropriate government agencies; and may occur concurrently with *Planning Act* pre-consultation.

7.2.2 CAs may request pre-consultation, prior to the submission of a permission (permit) application, to provide an opportunity for CAs and applicants to determine complete application requirements for specific projects. Applicants are encouraged to engage in pre-consultation with CAs prior to submitting an application.

7.2.3 Applicants may request CAs to undertake pre-consultation, prior to the submission of a permission (permit) application, to provide an opportunity for CAs and applicants to determine complete permit application requirements for specific projects. CAs should engage in pre-consultation in a timely manner so as not to delay the proponent's ability to submit an application.

7.2.4 In order to determine complete application requirements, applicants should submit in writing adequate information for pre-consultation, such as property information (lot number, concession number, township, etc.), a concept plan of the proposed development which shows the property limit, and a description of what is being proposed (i.e. what is being planned and when the work will take place).

7.2.5 CAs should identify and confirm complete application requirements for specific projects, in writing, within 21 days of the pre-consultation meeting. However, substantial changes to a proposal or a site visit after pre-consultation may warrant further pre-consultation and/or necessitate changes to the complete application requirements.

7.3 Complete Permission (Permit) Application

7.3.1 CAs are encouraged to develop written, CA Board-approved, publicly accessible, procedures and guidelines or checklists that define the components

of a complete application, and reflect recommended timelines to process applications and provide comments in response (see Appendix 3 for examples of Section 28 Regulation information requirements).

7.3.2 CAs are to notify applicants, in writing, within 21 days of the receipt of a permission (permit) application, as to whether the application has been deemed complete or not.

7.3.3 If a permission (permit) application is deemed incomplete, CAs should provide the applicant with a written list of missing and needed information when notifying the applicant that the application has been deemed incomplete.

7.3.4 If not satisfied with the decision on whether an application is deemed complete, the applicant can request an administrative review by the CA General Manager (GM) or Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and then if not satisfied, by the CA Board of Directors. This review will be limited to a complete application policy review and will not include review of the technical merits of the application.

7.3.5 During the review of a 'complete application', a CA may request additional information if the CA deems a permission (permit) application does not contain sufficient technical analysis. Delays in timelines for decision making may occur due to CA requests for additional information to address errors or gaps in information submitted for review (refer to 7.4.3). Thus, an application can be put "on hold" or returned to the applicant pending the receipt of further information. If necessary, this could be confirmed between both parties as an "Agreement to Defer Decision".

7.4 Decision Timelines for Permissions (Permits)

7.4.1 From the date of written confirmation of a complete application, CAs are to make a decision (i.e. recommendation to approve or referred to a Hearing) with respect to a permission (permit) application and pursuant to the *CA Act* within 30 days for a minor application and 90 days for a major application.

Major applications may include those that:

- are highly complex, requiring full technical review, and need to be supported by comprehensive analysis
- do not conform to existing CA Board-approved Section 28 policies

7.4.2 If a decision 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 the GM or CAO and then if not satisfied, by the CA Board of Directors.

7.4.3 Subsequent to receipt of a complete application, delays in timelines for decision making on a permission (permit) may occur due to CA requests for

additional information to address errors or gaps in technical information submitted for review (refer to 7.3.5). Through an “Agreement to Defer Decision” between the applicant and the CA, applications can be put “on hold” or returned to the applicant pending the receipt of further information to avoid premature refusals of permissions (permits) due to inadequate information.

7.5 Hearings and Appeals

7.5.1 If the decision is “referred to a Hearing of the Authority Board” the *MNR/CO Hearings Guidelines* (approved 2005) referenced in Section 7.1 will be followed. Copies of the Hearing Guidelines can be obtained by contacting the Integration Branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources.

As per the guidelines and subsections 28 (12), 28 (13), 28 (14) and 28 (15) of the *CA Act* and in summary:

After holding a hearing, the CA shall: refuse the permission (permit); grant the permission with conditions; or, grant the permission without conditions. If the CA refuses permission or grants permission subject to conditions, the CA, shall give the person who requested permission written reasons for the decision.

A person who has been refused permission or who objects to conditions imposed on a permission may, within 30 days of receiving the written reasons appeal in writing to the Minister of Natural Resources.

The Office of the Mining and Lands Commissioner (OMLC) has been delegated the authority, duties and powers of the Minister of Natural Resources under the *Ministry of Natural Resources Act O. Reg. 571/00* to hear appeals from the decisions of CAs made under *CA Act S. 28* regarding a refusal to grant permission (permit) or with respect to conditions imposed on a permission (permit) granted by the CA. The Mining and Lands Commissioner (MLC) may: refuse the permission; or, grant the permission, with or without conditions.

If the applicant does not agree with the MLC decision, under the *Mining Act* an appeal can then be made to the Divisional Court, a Branch of the Superior Court of Justice.

7.6 Expiry of Permission (Permit)

By regulation, a permission (permit) shall not be extended. The maximum period of validity of a permission (permit) is 24 months. If the works covered by the application are not completed within the legislated timeframe, the applicant must reapply and delays in approval may result. Typically, the policies in place at the time of the re-application will apply.

7.7 CA Act S. 28 Permission (Permit) Review Procedures

7.7.1 CA Act S. 28 permission (permit) review procedures should be determined in such a manner as to ensure applicants receive due process.

7.7.2 When developing CA permission (permit) review procedures, CAs should consider:

- the timely delivery of services through efficiency of process and adherence to timelines as outlined;
- the “best practices” and procedures used by neighbouring CAs, to promote consistency;
- the nature and level of procedures used by local municipalities and other agencies and ministries for related application reviews to prevent duplicative procedures and to promote consistency;
- the setting of application review procedures is dependent on the complexity of applications and the level of effort required to administer the application.

8.0 SERVICE DELIVERY ADMINISTRATION

8.1 CAs shall develop policies, procedures and guidelines for their municipal plan review activities and for CA Act S. 28 permitting activities (i.e. administration of the regulation and review of applications) with regard to the best practices outlined in this Policies and Procedures chapter. The CA documents should be approved by their Board of Directors and made available to the public.

8.2 Fees

See separate chapter regarding fees in the Policies and Procedures Manual.

8.2.1 Fees for planning services should be developed in conjunction with the appropriate planning authorities and are set to recover but not exceed the costs associated with administering and delivering the services on a program basis.

8.2.2 Fees for permitting services should be developed and are set to recover but not exceed the costs associated with administering and delivering the services on a program basis.

9.0 ADHERENCE TO POLICIES

9.1 All CAs are required to adhere to these policies and procedures.

9.2 MNR reserves the right to audit CAs for adherence to these policies and procedures and to review the effectiveness of the policies and procedures with regard to implementation of provincial policies and protection of the provincial interest.

APPENDICES

As identified in body of the chapter:

1. **CO-MMAH-MNR Delegated Responsibilities MOU**
2. **Schematics of Application processes under both the *Planning Act* and the *Conservation Authorities Act***
3. **Information Requirements – Section 28 Regulation Application**
4. **Provincial Plans and Associated Guidelines/Technical Papers**

Appendix 1: CO/MNR/MMAH – DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITIES MOU

CONSERVATION ONTARIO, MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES & MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS CONSERVATION AUTHORITY DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY

PURPOSE OF THE MOU

The MOU defines the roles and relationships between Conservation Authorities (CAs), the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) in planning for implementation of CA delegated responsibilities under the Provincial One Window Planning System.

BENEFITS TO SIGNATORY PARTIES

It is beneficial for all parties to enter into this agreement because it clarifies the roles of CAs and the unique status of CAs in relationship to the Provincial One Window Planning System.

DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY FOR NATURAL HAZARDS

CAs were delegated natural hazard responsibilities by the Minister of Natural Resources. A copy of the delegation letter is attached. This letter (dated April 1995) went to all CAs and summarizes delegations from the MNR including flood plain management, hazardous slopes, Great Lakes shorelines, unstable soils and erosion which are now encompassed by Section 3.1 “Natural Hazards” of the Provincial Policy Statement (1997). In this delegated role, the CA is responsible for representing the “Provincial Interest” on these matters in planning exercises where the Province is not involved.

This role does not extend to other portions of the PPS unless specifically delegated or assigned in writing by the Province.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Ministry of Natural Resources

- a) MNR retains the provincial responsibility for the development of flood, erosion and hazard land management policies, programs and standards on behalf of the province pursuant to the *Ministry of Natural Resources Act*.
- b) Where no conservation authorities exist, MNR provides technical support to the

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on matters related to Section 3.1 of the Provincial Policy Statement in accordance with the “Protocol Framework – One Window Plan Input, Review and Appeals”.

- c) MNR, in conjunction with MMAH, co-ordinates the provincial review of applications for Special Policy Area approval under Section 3.1 of the PPS.

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

- a) MMAH coordinates provincial input, review and approval of policy documents, and development proposals and appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board in accordance with the “Protocol Framework One Window Plan Input Review and Appeals”.
- b) Where appropriate, MMAH will consult conservation authorities as part of its review of policy documents and development proposals to seek input on whether there was “regard to” Section 3.1 of the PPS.
- c) Where there may be a potential conflict regarding a Conservation Authority’s comments on a planning application with respect to Section 3.1 of the PPS and comments from provincial ministries regarding other Sections of the PPS, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will facilitate discussions amongst the affected ministries and the Conservation Authority so that a single integrated position can be reached.
- d) Where appropriate, MMAH will initiate or support appeals to the OMB on planning matters where there is an issue as to whether there was “regard to” Section 3.1 of the PPS.
- e) MMAH, in conjunction with MNR, coordinates the provincial review of application for Special Policy Area approval under Section 3.1 of the PPS.

Conservation Authorities (CAs)

- a) The CAs will review policy documents and development proposals processed under the *Planning Act* to ensure that the application has appropriate regard to Section 3.1 of the PPS.
- b) Upon request from MMAH, CAs will provide comments directly to MMAH on planning matters related to Section 3.1 of the PPS as part of the provincial one window review process.
- c) Where there may be a potential conflict regarding a Conservation Authority’s comments on a planning application with respect to Section 3.1 of the PPS and comments from provincial ministries regarding other Sections of the PPS, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing will facilitate discussions amongst the

affected ministries and the Conservation Authority so that a single integrated position can be reached.

- d) CAs will apprise MMAH of planning matters where there is an issue as to whether there has been “regard to” Section 3.1 of the PPS to determine whether or not direct involvement by the province is required.
- e) Where appropriate, CAs will initiate an appeal to the OMB to address planning matters where there is an issue as to whether there has been “regard to” Section 3.1 of the PPS is at issue. CAs may request MMAH to support the appeal.
- f) CAs will participate in provincial review of applications for Special Policy Area approval.
- g) CAs will work with MMAH, to develop screening and streamlining procedures that eliminate unnecessary delays and duplication of effort.

FURTHER CA ROLES IN PLAN INPUT, PLAN REVIEW AND APPEALS

CAs also undertake further roles in planning under which they may provide plan input or plan review comments or make appeals.

1. Watershed Based Resource Management Agency

CAs are corporate bodies created by the province at the request of two or more municipalities in accordance with the requirements of the *Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act)*. Section 20 of the *CA Act* provides the mandate for an Authority to offer a broad resources management program. Section 21 of the *CA Act* provides the mandate to have watershed-based resource management programs and/or policies that are approved by the Board of Directors.

CAs operating under the authority of the *CA Act*, and in conjunction with municipalities, develop business plans, watershed plans and natural resource management plans within their jurisdictions (watersheds). These plans may recommend specific approaches to land use and resource planning and management that should be incorporated into municipal planning documents and related development applications in order to be implemented. CAs may become involved in the review of municipal planning documents (e.g., Official Plans (OPs), zoning by-laws) and development applications under the *Planning Act* to ensure that program interests developed and defined under Section 20 and 21 of the *CA Act* are addressed in land use decisions made by municipal planning authorities. In this role, the CA is responsible to represent its program and policy interests as a watershed based resource management agency.

2. Planning Advisory Service to Municipalities

The provision of planning advisory services to municipalities is implemented through a service agreement with participating municipalities or as part of a CAs approved program activity (i.e., service provided through existing levy). Under a service agreement, a Board approved fee schedule is used and these fee schedules are coordinated between CAs that “share” a participating municipality. The “Policies and Procedures for the Charging of CA Fees” (MNR, June 13, 1997) identifies “plan review” activities as being eligible for charging CA administrative fees.

The CA is essentially set up as a technical advisor to municipalities. The agreements cover the Authority’s areas of technical expertise, e.g., natural hazards and other resource management programs. The provision of planning advisory services for the review of *Planning Act* applications is a means of implementing a comprehensive resource management program on a watershed basis.

In this role, the CA is responsible to provide advice on the interpretation of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) under the terms of its planning advisory service agreement with the municipality. Beyond those for Section 3.1 “Natural Hazards” where CAs have delegated responsibility, these comments should not be construed by any party as representing the provincial position.

3. CAs as Landowner

CAs are landowners and as such, may become involved in the planning process as a proponent or adjacent landowner. Planning Service Agreements with municipalities have anticipated that this may lead to a conflict with our advisory role and this is addressed by establishing a mechanism for either party to identify a conflict and implement an alternative review mechanism.

4. Regulatory Responsibilities

a) *CA Act* Regulations

In participating in the review of development applications under the *Planning Act*, CAs will (i) ensure that the applicant and municipal planning authority are aware of the Section 28 regulations and requirements under the *CA Act*, and, (ii) assist in the coordination of applications under the *Planning Act* and the *CA Act* to eliminate unnecessary delay or duplication in the process.

b) Other Delegated or Assigned Regulatory/Approval Responsibility

Federal and provincial ministries and municipalities often enter agreements to transfer regulatory/approval responsibilities to individual CAs (e.g., Section 35 Fisheries Act/DFO; Ontario Building Code/septic tank approvals). In carrying out these responsibilities and in participating in the review of development applications under the *Planning Act*, CAs will (i) ensure that the applicant and municipality are aware of the requirements under these other pieces of legislation and how they may affect the application; and, (ii) assist in the coordination of applications under the *Planning Act* and those other Acts to eliminate unnecessary delays or duplication in the process.

CANCELLATION OR REVIEW OF THE MOU

The terms and conditions of this MOU can be cancelled within 90 days upon written notice from any of the signing parties. In any event, this document should be reviewed at least once every two years to assess its effectiveness, its relevance and its appropriateness in the context the needs of the affected parties. “Ed. Note: 90 days is to provide time for the parties to reach a resolution other than cancellation”.

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ON PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS
CONSERVATION AUTHORITY DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY**

I hereby agree to support the provisions contained in this Memorandum of Understanding as an appropriate statement of the roles and responsibilities of relevant Ministries and Conservation Authorities in the implementation of the Provincial Policy Statement.

Jan 19, 2001: Original signed by

David de Launay
Director
Lands and Waters Branch
Ministry of Natural Resources

Date

Feb 12, 2001: Original signed by

Audrey Bennett
A/Director
Provincial Planning and Environmental Services Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Date

Jan 01, 2001: Original signed by

R.D. Hunter
General Manager
Conservation Ontario

Date



Ministry of
Natural
Resources

Minister

Ministère des
Richesses
naturelles

Ministre

Queen's Park
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1W7
416 / 314-2301

APR 19 1995

95-01252-MIN

Mr. Donald Hocking
Chair
Upper Thames River Conservation Authority
R.R. #6
London, Ontario
N6A 4C1

Dear Mr. Hocking:

This letter is with regard to the responsibilities of Conservation Authorities in commenting on development proposals.

The Government of Ontario is continuing to move forward on reforms promoting greater local involvement in decision-making, streamlining of municipal planning and other approval processes, and improved environmental protection. Ontario's Conservation Authorities continue to be important partners in this process.

In 1983, Conservation Authorities were delegated commenting responsibility on flood plain management matters. This was followed in 1988 by a similar delegation of commenting responsibility for matters related to flooding, erosion, and dynamic beaches along the shorelines of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River system.

At present, the Ministry and Conservation Authorities continue to independently review and provide input to municipalities and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on development matters related to riverine erosion, slope, and soil instability. Although Authorities and the Ministry share similar objectives, this overlap and duplication of efforts have occasionally led to differences in comments which, in turn, have sometimes resulted in confusion, delays and expense for development proponents. As part of the current Planning Reform initiative, there is an opportunity to clarify the roles and responsibilities related to these important hazard management issues.

- 2 -

Through their flood plain, watershed and Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River shoreline management planning initiatives, Conservation Authorities have made good progress in streamlining approval processes and strengthening provincial-municipal partnerships. By extension, I believe that it would be appropriate to recognize the well-developed expertise and capabilities of Conservation Authorities in the evaluation of riverine erosion, slope and soil instability matters and to formally confirm Conservation Authorities as the lead commenting agency. This would result in further streamlining of approval processes, the promotion of environmentally sound development, and the provision of an economic stimulus for the province.

As of March 29, 1995, Conservation Authorities, where they exist, will have sole commenting responsibilities on development proposed in areas subject to riverine erosion, slope instability and soil instability, such as in areas of high water tables, organic or peat soils, and leda, or sensitive marine clay, soils. Implementation of this policy by authorities would continue to be eligible for provincial grant. Where Conservation Authorities exist, I have asked Ministry staff to focus their comments on all other matters of direct interest and concern to the Ministry. Where Conservation Authorities do not exist, the Ministry will continue its commenting role on these matters.

The Ministry of Natural Resources will continue as lead administrative Ministry having overall Government responsibility for hazard management policies and programs. In this regard, the Ministry will continue to provide leadership, policy direction and advisory assistance to the Conservation Authorities.

Your continued participation in the delivery of this important component of the overall provincial hazard management program will serve to strengthen the partnership between the Ministry and the Conservation Authorities.

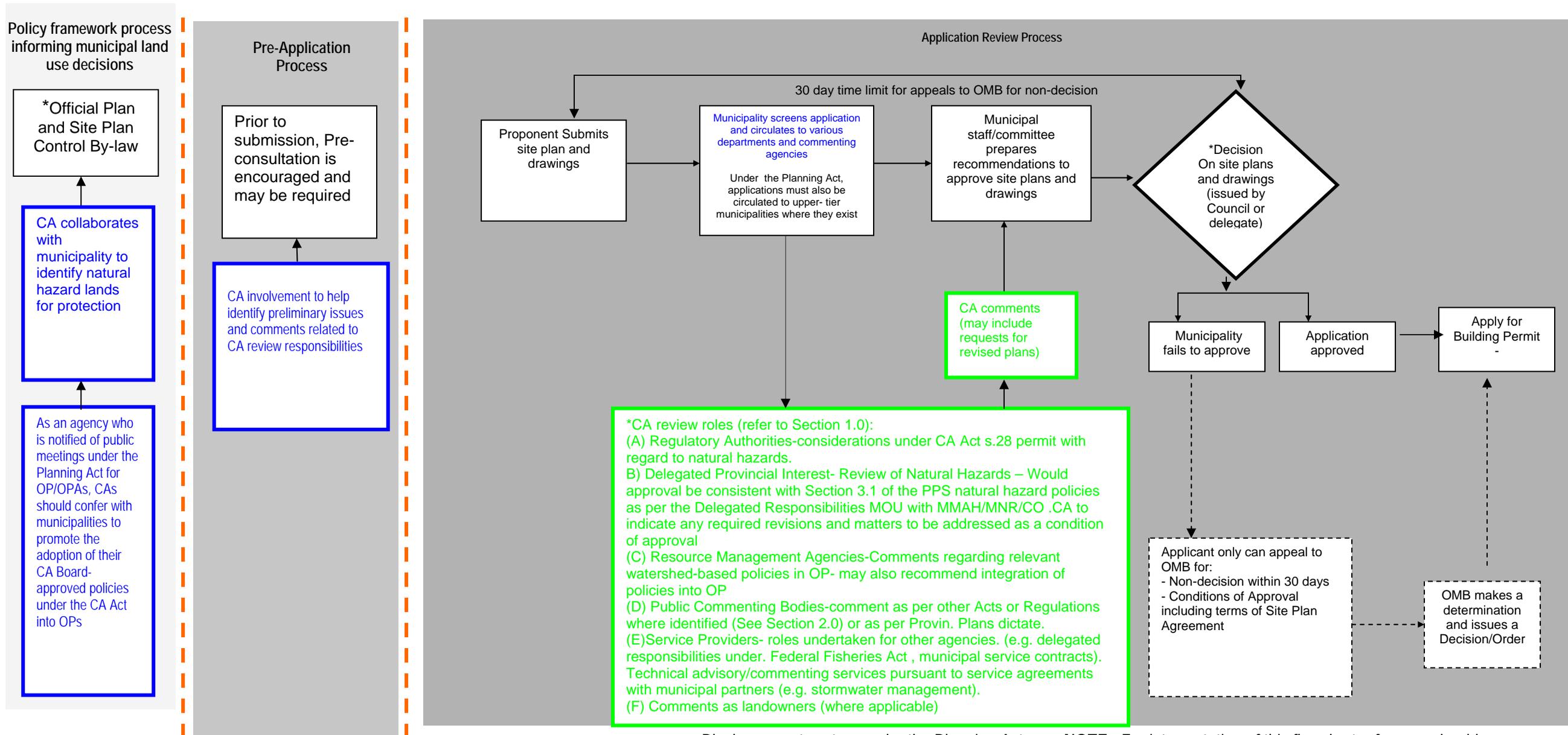
Yours sincerely,



Howard Hampton
Minister

**Appendix 2: Schematics of Application processes under both the *Planning Act*
and the *Conservation Authorities Act***

Appendix 2(a): Municipal Planning process for Site Plan Control with CA Review in a non- CA regulated area (i.e. Section 28 does not apply)



*OPs are required to be consistent with the PPS and conform to or not conflict with applicable provincial plans. Note: Not all OPs have been updated to reflect the PPS 2005 and provincial plans, yet advice and decisions on planning matters must be consistent with the PPS and conform to applicable provincial plans.

Black - current system under the Planning Act
 Green highlight – current CA role/input
 Blue highlight – proposed best practices

NOTE: For interpretation of this flowchart reference should be made to the full Policies and Procedures chapter

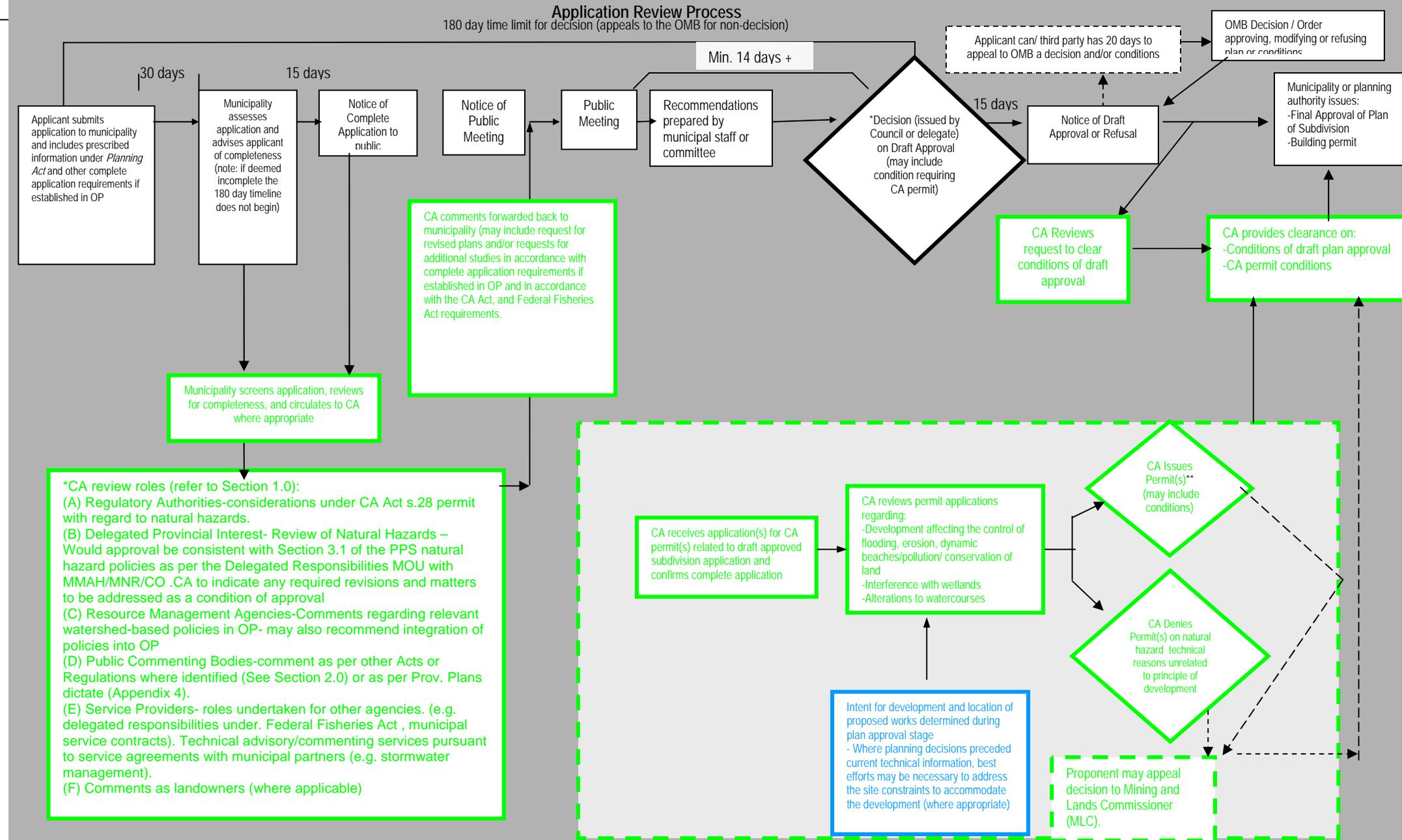
Appendix 2(b): Municipal Planning Application Process for Plan of Subdivision with CA Review and Requirement for CA Permit(s) (i.e. within a CA Regulated Area)

Policy framework process informing municipal land use

- *Official Plan - Sets out policy framework for physical development of communities and municipal land use decisions
- CA collaborates with municipality to identify natural hazard lands
- CA confers with municipality to determine Complete Application requirements in OP (based on application type and/or geographic area e.g., master servicing plan for stormwater management)
- As an agency who is notified of public meetings under the Planning Act for OP/OPAs, CAs should confer with municipalities to promote the adoption of their CA Board-approved policies under the CA Act into OPs

Pre-Application Process

- Prior to submission, Pre-consultation is encouraged and may be required
- CA Involvement to help identify:
- Limit of hazard lands on subject property
 - Developable area (within regulated area)
 - Environmental aspects of development (if acting on behalf of municipality through service agreement)
 - Proposed works that may require CA permits



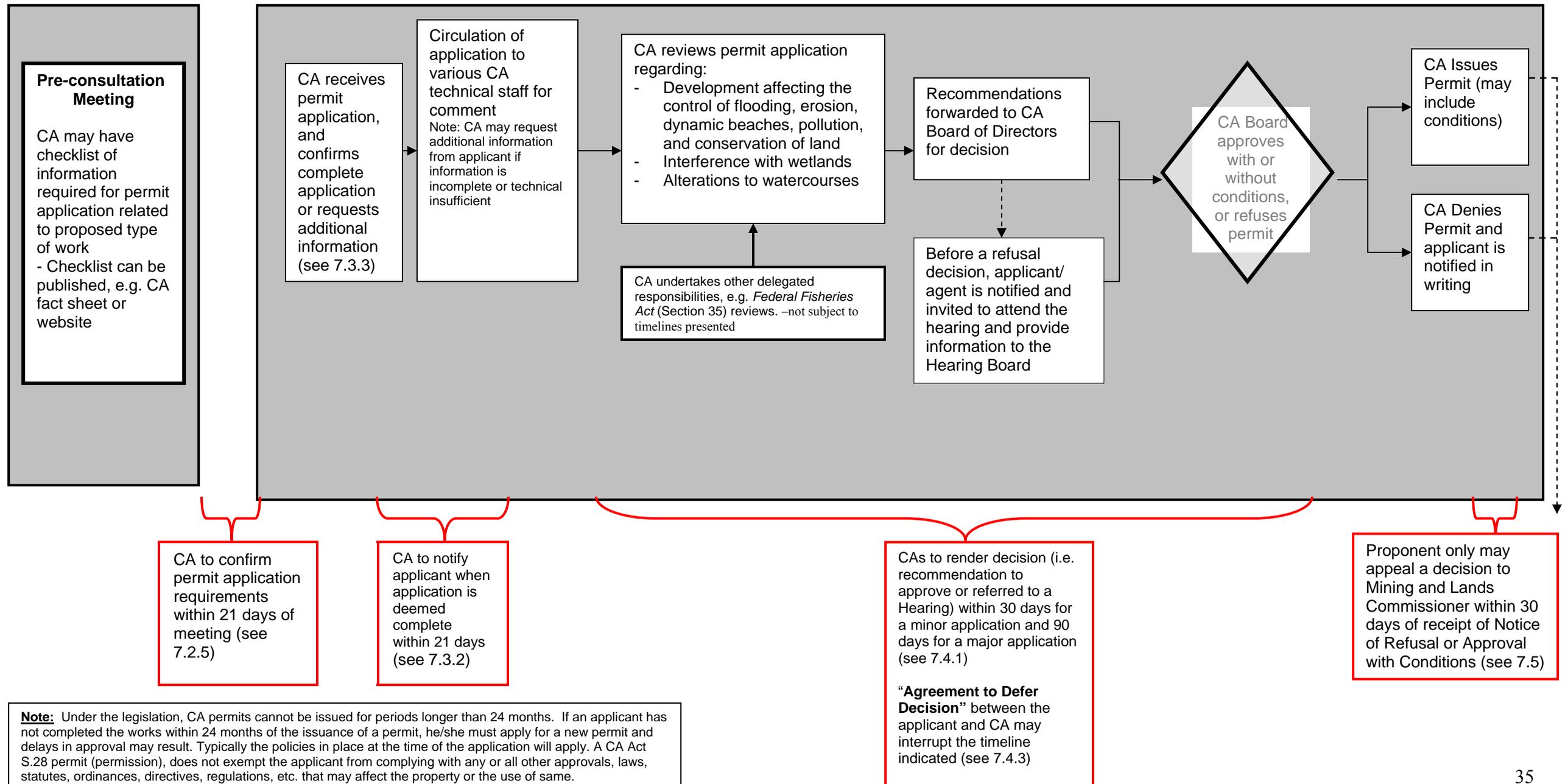
NOTE: For interpretation of this flowchart reference should be made to the full Policies and Procedures chapter

Black - current system under the Planning Act
Green highlight – current CA role/input
Blue highlight – proposed best practices

* OPs are required to be consistent with the PPS and to conform to provincial plans. Note: Not all OPs have been updated to reflect the PPS 2005 and provincial plans, yet all advice and decisions on planning matters must be consistent with the PPS and conform to applicable provincial plans.

** Under legislation, if an applicant has not completed the permitted works within 24 months, they must reapply. CA permits cannot be extended for periods longer than 24 months. Generally, policies in place at time of re-application will apply to permit decisions.

Appendix 2(c): Stand-Alone CA Act S. 28 “Development, Interference with Wetlands, Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses” Regulation Permit Application Process



Appendix 3: Information Requirements – Section 28 Regulation Application

Specific information is required from the applicant in support of a permit application.

Two examples are set out below.

Permission to Develop

A signed application may contain, but is not limited to the following information:

1. four copies of a plan of the area showing the type and location of the development
2. the proposed use of the buildings and structures following completion of the development
3. the start and completion dates of the development
4. the elevations of existing buildings, if any, and grades and the proposed elevations of buildings and grades after development
5. drainage details before and after development
6. a complete description of the type of fill proposed to be placed or dumped
7. signed land owner authorization for the CA to enter the property (may not be applicable for works completed under the Drainage Act-see Drainage Act protocol for more details)
8. technical studies/plans as required to meet the regulatory provisions of CA Act S.28 (NOTE: this is dependant on the proposed extent of intrusion into a regulated area and/or the associated potential negative impacts. Major applications generally require more complex technical studies).
9. submission of the prescribed fee set by the CA for review of the application.

Permission to Alter

A CA may grant a person permission to straighten, change, divert, or interfere with an existing channel of a river, creek, stream, or watercourse or to change or interfere with a wetland. A signed application may contain, but is not limited to the following information:

1. four copies of a plan of the area showing plan view and cross-section details of the proposed alteration
2. a description of the methods to be used in carrying out the alteration
3. the start and completion dates of the alteration
4. a statement of the purpose of the alteration
5. signed land owner authorization for the CA to enter the property (may not be applicable for works completed under the Drainage Act-see Drainage Act protocol for more details)
6. technical studies/plans as required to meet the regulatory provisions of CA Act S.28 (NOTE: this is dependant on the proposed extent of intrusion into a regulated area and/or the associated potential negative impacts. Major applications generally require more complex technical studies).
7. submission of the prescribed fee set by the CA for review of an application.

When all of the information listed above is received in a form satisfactory to the CA, and a pre-consultation or site assessment is conducted as necessary, an application will then be deemed to be complete. An application can be put “on hold” or returned to the applicant pending the receipt of further information.

Appendix 4a: Provincial Plans and Associated Guidelines or Technical Papers

1. Greenbelt Plan, 2005

- 1) Greenbelt Technical Paper 1: Technical Definitions and Criteria for Key Natural Heritage Features in the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside Area of the of the Greenbelt Plan, 2005 (Draft posted in the EBR on Sept. 19, 2008 (EBR Registry Number: 010-4559)
- 2) Greenbelt Technical Paper 2: Technical Definitions and Criteria for Significant Woodlands in the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside Area of the Greenbelt Plan, 2005 (Draft posted in the EBR on Sept. 19, 2008 (EBR Registry Number: 010-4559)
- 3) Greenbelt Technical Paper 3: Technical Process for the Identification of Significant Habitat of Endangered, Threatened and Special Concern Species in the Natural Heritage System of the Protected Countryside Area of the Greenbelt Plan, 2005, (Draft posted in the EBR on Sept. 19, 2008 (EBR Registry Number: 010-4559)

2. Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2002

Following technical papers are available online:

- 1) Identification of Key Natural Heritage Features
- 2) Significant Wildlife Habitat
- 3) Supporting Connectivity
- 4) Landform Conservation
- 5) Identification and Protection of Vegetation Protection Zones for Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest (ANSI, Life Science)
- 6) Identification of Significant Portions of Habitat for Endangered, Rare and Threatened Species
- 7) Identification and Protection of Significant Woodlands
- 8) Preparation of Natural Heritage Evaluations for all Key Natural Heritage Features
- 9) Watershed Plans
- 10) Water Budgets
- 11) Water Conservation Plans
- 12) Hydrological Evaluations for Hydrologically Sensitive Features
- 13) Subwatersheds - Impervious Surfaces
- 14) Wellhead Protection - Site Management and Contingency Plans
- 15) Recreation Plans and Vegetation Management Plans
- 16) Sewage and Water System Plans
- 17) Stormwater Management Plans

4. Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009

5. Central Pickering Development Plan, 2006

6. Niagara Escarpment Plan (Office consolidation, March 11, 2010)

7. Parkway Belt West Plan (Consolidated to June 2008)

8. Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006

9. Source Protection Plans (pending completion 2012)

Appendix 4b: Provincial Plans Map

