



Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake

1593 Four Mile Creek Road
P.O. Box 100, Virgil, ON L0S 1T0
905-468-3266 www.notl.com

REPORT #: OPS-26-010 **COMMITTEE DATE:** 2026-04-21
REPORT TO: COTW-General **DUE IN COUNCIL:** 2026-04-28
SUBJECT: Invasive Species Management Plans

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is respectfully recommended that:

- 1.1 Council **APPROVES** the Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) and supplemental Priority Species Control Plan;
- 1.2 Council **DIRECTS** Staff to identify and prioritize site-specific invasive species workplans based on operational experience and risk to municipal infrastructure and public safety;
- 1.3 Council **DIRECTS** Staff to establish an invasive species monitoring program, including volunteer participation, to support mapping and early detection; and
- 1.4 Council **DIRECTS** Staff to develop or adopt additional Priority Species Control Plans, as required, to address emerging or escalating invasive species risks.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The purpose of this report is to present Council with a new Invasive Species Management Plan and a supplemental Priority Species Control Plan.
- The proposed Plans intend to establish a coordinated, Town-wide framework for invasive species management while recognizing that each species is unique in biology, which can differ in control activities and mitigation strategies.
- The Plans encompass best management practices and the most current data from established federal, provincial, and sector organizations.
- The Plans allow Staff to proactively respond to invasive species to protect infrastructure, public safety, and environmental stewardship.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of the Town's Invasive Species Management Plan and supplemental Priority Species Control Plan. Together, they provide a structured framework to detect, manage, and reduce invasive species impacts on municipal lands.

4. BACKGROUND

The Town does not currently have a formal, coordinated approach to invasive species management, despite increasing impacts on municipal operations, natural heritage, and community safety. Staff routinely encounter challenges, including impaired access to infrastructure, degraded natural areas, safety hazards, sightline obstructions, and rising maintenance and removal costs, including losses associated with Emerald Ash Borer and the spread of phragmites. Across Ontario, municipalities and Conservation Authorities spend an estimated \$50.8 million annually on invasive species, with the average municipality spending \$28,976 per year ([Invasive Species Centre](#)). These pressures are expected to intensify with climate change, land-use change, and site disturbance, stressing the scale of the issue.

In response, Council identified the development of an Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) as a Strategic Plan priority. The ISMP aligns with the Official Plan, Climate Change Adaptation Plan, and applicable federal and provincial legislation and strategies. Together, the ISMP, supported by a Priority Species Control Plan, will enable the Town to shift from reactive to proactive management while strengthening long-term environmental and community resilience.

5. DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The Invasive Species Management Plan (ISMP) and supplemental Priority Species Control Plan establish a coordinated, evidence-based framework to address the ecological, operational, and financial risks posed by invasive species on municipal lands. The Plans emphasize prevention, early detection, and targeted management while aligning with best management practices from recognized organizations and applicable legislative and policy requirements.

The Priority Species Control Plan focuses resources on a defined set of high-risk invasive species that pose the greatest threat to municipal infrastructure, public safety, natural heritage, and agriculture. Priority species were selected based on Staff expertise, local experience, and assessment of ecological, operational, and economic risk. The approach is intentionally flexible, allowing priorities to evolve, additional species-specific plans to be developed, and resources to be reallocated as new threats emerge.

The Plans were informed through consultation with the Niagara Phragmites Management Area Collaborative, the Environmental Advisory Committee, and the Agricultural Advisory Committee, as well as internal review across multiple departments. Implementation will improve coordination, support public education and stewardship, and provide staff with clear operational direction to manage invasive species proactively and effectively.

6. STRATEGIC PLAN

The content of this report supports the following Strategic Plan initiatives:

Pillar

3. Enrich Community Assets, Environment, & Infrastructure

Priority

3.2 Environment

Action

3.2 a) Sustainable Natural Environment

Pillar

4. Optimize Organizational Excellence

Priority

4.1 Streamline & Modernize

Action

4.1 a) Streamline Processes

7. OPTIONS

- 7.1 **Option 1:** Council approve the Invasive Species Management Plan and supplemental Priority Species Control Plan. **(Recommended)**
- 7.2 **Option 2:** Council continue without a formal invasive species management plan. Not recommended as invasive species pressures are increasing, and the absence of a formal plan would continue to expose the Town to escalating ecological, operational, and financial risks. *(Not Recommended)*

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No additional operating or capital costs are anticipated from adopting the Plans. The Invasive Species Management Plan formalizes and coordinates existing practices within current departmental roles and integrates invasive species management into ongoing operations such as road maintenance and planning approvals. Adoption also strengthens the Town's eligibility for external grant funding and may support future policy tools to offset long-term costs and reduce financial risk associated with unmanaged invasive species.

It is important to note that once the Plans are in place, there may be future budget impacts to help in the mitigation of the invasive species.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Approval of the Plans will enhance the Town's ability to protect natural heritage features, agricultural lands, and municipal infrastructure through prevention, early detection, and targeted control of invasive species. By aligning with best management practices and provincial legislation, the Plans support biodiversity protection, ecosystem function, and long-term environmental resilience.

Without adoption, invasive species management would remain reactive and fragmented, increasing the likelihood of unmonitored spread, environmental degradation, higher remediation costs, and missed opportunities for early intervention. Non-adoption would also undermine the Town's climate resilience and sustainability objectives.

10. COMMUNICATIONS

Upon approval, the Plans will be posted on the Town's website and communicated to all Staff. Public-facing communications, including social media, will support education, prevention, and reporting of invasive species.

11. CONCLUSION

Approval of the Invasive Species Management Plan and supplemental Priority Species Control Plan will provide a clear, proactive, and coordinated approach to invasive species management across the Town. Staff recommend approval of the attached Plans to protect municipal assets, natural heritage, and community well-being.

12. PREVIOUS REPORTS

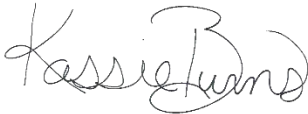
N/A

13. APPENDICES

- Appendix I – Invasive Species Management Plan
- Appendix II – Invasive Species Management: Priority Species Control Plan

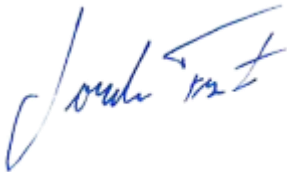
Respectfully submitted:

Prepared by:



**Kassie Burns
Climate Change Coordinator**

Recommended by:



**Jordan Frost
Director of Public Works &
Infrastructure Services**

Recommended by:



**Darren MacKenzie
Manager of Public Works**

Submitted by:



**Nick Ruller, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer**