



**Pelham Advocates for Trees and Habitat (PATH)
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Pelham PATH's Review of: Town of Pelham Natural Asset Management Project.

October 15, 2024

Pam Duesling
Director of Community Planning and Development,
Town of Pelham,

Greetings, Pam,

I am hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving Holiday.

PATH (Pelham Advocates for Trees and Habitat) welcomes the release of the June 2024 document on the Pelham Natural Asset Management Project.

This report is the first accounting of Pelham's Natural Assets from the perspective of how they can be managed using the Non-Profit NAI's (Natural Assets Initiative) approach. NAI has experience locally, having previously worked with The Region of Niagara and the Municipality of Lincoln.

We read the report with great interest, we'd like to thank Shannon Larocque for her invitation to comment.

We encourage the council to embrace the NAI approach as it changes the way local governments and conservation authorities perceive their natural assets, such as forests, trees, streams, swamps, wetlands and watercourses. Leveraging natural assets can help the municipality deliver on infrastructure commitments with potentially lower costs and reduced risk.

The NAI report's initial valuation of our natural assets is a minimum of \$22 million. By comparison, the 2022 Town of Pelham budget was \$36 million.

This exciting news needs to be widely shared.

We have some observations:

1. It is important that all ten recommendations in the report are accepted and followed through diligently. New by-laws may be necessary.
2. We encourage a larger study of the entire municipality in the next iteration. This report covers only 25% of Pelham which is the upper 12 Mile Creek watershed.

3. Natural assets may be accompanied by natural liabilities. Amongst these are:

- Storm and Wildfire risk
- Pollution – Agricultural as well as Industrial
- Invasive species – emerald ash borer, spongy moth (FKA gypsy moth), oak wilt ,etc.
- Academic studies have urged more studies to avert repeating the 2021 Wheatley disaster which became a \$100-million class-action lawsuit against the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. The southern part of Pelham is at risk of carbon dioxide/methane leakage from uncapped water wells. Pelham Fire Service may have greater insights on how to monitor this public safety and climate concern.

4. Partnerships are essential.

- A. We encourage greater communication, and collaboration with local Aboriginal peoples.
- B. Private property owners in our community are critical stakeholders. Outreach and dialogue about NAI methods would be of mutual benefit.
- C. Support from and partnership with NPCA (Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority) is essential.
- D. Nature Conservancy of Canada (owners of the Lathrop property)
- E. Trout Unlimited

We look forward to further developments and participation in the future.

Follow the PATH

Mike Jones

President of Pelham Advocates for Trees and Habitat (PATH)