

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Executive Committee
Friday, June 10, 2022 Meeting

FROM: Richard Ubbens, Director, Conservation Parks and Lands

RE: **UXBRIDGE TRAIL SUSTAINABILITY FUND AND PAID PARKING AT TRCA TRAIL HEADS**
Pilot Project

KEY ISSUE

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) participation in Township of Uxbridge trailhead parking permit pilot project.

RECOMMENDATION:

THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) participate in the Township of Uxbridge trailhead parking permit pilot project;

AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to the Board of Directors on the results of the pilot project.

BACKGROUND

TRCA has identified the opportunity to utilize pay-for-parking services at passive use properties to generate additional revenues which will be allocated to state of good repair needs and visitor amenity initiatives within these properties. Passive use properties are defined as greenspaces where select public use activities are permitted without a cost for access or use, but where few facilities are provided.

At Board of Directors Meeting, held on October 22, 2021, Resolution # A209/21 was approved as follows:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT this report regarding the Paid Parking on Conservation Lands initiative be received;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff report back on the City of Richmond Hill and the Township of Uxbridge interest on pursuing a future paid parking pilot on TRCA-managed lands.

There are over 300 kilometres (km) of trails in the Township of Uxbridge, managed or on lands owned by the Township of Uxbridge, the Regional Municipality of Durham or Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority (LSCA). TRCA has a network of approximately 120 km of trails on TRCA-managed lands in the Township of Uxbridge, including the East Duffins Headwaters Properties (Skyloft, Dagmar Forest, Glen Major, Walker Woods North and Walker Woods) and West Duffins Headwaters Properties (Clubine Forest, Secord Forest and Wildlife Area, and Goodwood Resource Management Tract). These lands are home to sections of the Trans Canada Trail, the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail and many other multi-use trails that provide recreational space for walkers, hikers, mountain bikers, equestrians, cross-country skiers,

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snowshoers, and fat bikers. Trails on TRCA lands are closely linked with trails in municipal rights of way and neighbouring Durham lands managed by LSRCA.

TRCA installed trail counters at eight trail access points in the East Duffins Headwaters Properties in mid-2021. Between July 2021 and April 2022, TRCA has recorded approximately 96,600 visitors at these locations. Over 45,600 of those visitors have been recorded at trail access points off the Aggregate Pit lot (1469 Concession 6) and the Three Rocks lot (1120 Concession 7).

The Township of Uxbridge is reviewing trailhead parking in their municipality. The public trail network is a feature of the Township of Uxbridge (Trails Capital of Canada) and the trails have been immensely popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Parking along rural and narrow concession roads when the parking lots are overwhelmed was frequent in 2020 and 2021. All public trail owners and managers expressed an interest in collectively leveraging this popularity to secure financial investments in trail program and services. In addition, the Township of Uxbridge wanted to further economic development by attracting trail visitors to local businesses.

RATIONALE

The Township of Uxbridge is currently developing a smartphone app-based parking permit system for trailheads in the Township. These trailhead parking areas are owned and/or managed by the following:

- Township of Uxbridge
- Regional Municipality of Durham (managed by LSRCA)
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

The parking permit project's objectives are to:

- Generate through the Trail Sustainability Fund, revenue from non-residents for maintenance of the public trail system located in the Township of Uxbridge, being over 300 km of trails.
- Use the Trail Sustainability Fund for programs and services in support of the public trail system in the Township of Uxbridge.
- Encourage economic activity throughout the Township of Uxbridge through use of advertising and promotions within a smartphone app used for parking payments.

The Township of Uxbridge will be piloting the parking permit system for a one-year period at certain trailheads (see details in **Attachment 1: Uxbridge Parking Permit and Trail Sustainability Fund Memorandum of Understanding - draft**). The first phase includes two TRCA-managed lots at the East Duffins Headwaters Properties (Aggregate Pit lot at 1469 Concession 6 and Three Rocks lot at 1120 Concession 7), so the Township has requested TRCA's participation in the pilot project. The Regional Municipality of Durham has also been asked to participate in the one-year pilot. Two additional lots that feed directly into the TRCA trail network in the East Duffins Headwaters Properties (Albright lot at 2989 Concession 6 and Towers lot at 2990 Concession 7) are on Township of Uxbridge Road rights-of-way and will be included in the pilot project.

The pilot is targeted to start in summer 2022. Near the end of the one-year pilot period, the parties will evaluate the project and determine next steps.

The following fee structure is proposed for the pilot.

- \$6.00 for a one-day parking permit for non-residents, where a permit can be purchased

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- at one location and used at other locations during that same day.
- \$75.00 for an annual pass.
- Where payments are processed at the Township office or the Township website, rather than through the smartphone app, there will be an additional \$4.00 processing charge to cover administrative resources.
- No fee will be required for residents of the Township of Uxbridge. They will need to confirm a permit through the app, but no fee will be charged.

Free or discounted parking can be enabled in the app with codes. This is being investigated for the participating parties, their service providers, including volunteers, and special permit holders.

All revenues collected through parking permit fees will be held by the Township in escrow as part of the Trail Sustainability Fund. The fund will finance maintenance, improvement, and expansion of infrastructure in connection with the public trail system in the Township of Uxbridge. TRCA will prioritize improvements to its existing trail and trailhead to address state of good repair and visitor experience issues.

The Township of Uxbridge, the Regional Municipality of Durham, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and TRCA will form a Steering Committee to direct the release of funds from the Trail Sustainability Fund. The Steering Committee will meet quarterly to review finances and investment priorities and will maintain a Project Prioritization document to support the decision-making.

The Township of Uxbridge will provide parking permit enforcement and will install parking permit signs. All of the above, is being considered in the development of the enabling TRCA and Township of Uxbridge Memorandum of Understanding and ongoing efforts to advance the TRCA Trail Strategy through partnerships with organizations and support from all levels of government.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 3 – Rethink greenspace to maximize its value

Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

TRCA participation in the Steering Committee is covered in 444-04 Durham Land Care.

Revenues from the pilot project for TRCA trail-related programs and services in Uxbridge are yet unknown and the Project Prioritization document still needs to be developed.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- Execute any necessary agreements to full participate in the pilot project.
- Report back to the TRCA Board of Directors on the results of the pilot project.

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Date: May 2, 2022

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Attachment 1: Uxbridge Parking Permit and Trail Sustainability Fund Memorandum of Understanding (draft)