

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Executive Committee
Friday, September 9, 2022 Meeting

FROM: Michael Tolensky, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

RE: **2022 MID-YEAR GRANT PROGRAM UPDATE**
Funding and Grants Program

KEY ISSUE

To provide a mid-year update to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Board of Directors on the Funding and Grants program and to highlight program successes as of July 31, 2022.

RECOMMENDATION:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the staff report highlighting the mid-year Funding and Grants program update for 2022, be received.

BACKGROUND

Attachment 1 provides a summary of the status of funding applications submitted as of July 31, 2022, which are organized based on their status of approved, under review, and declined grants.

RATIONALE

Attachment 1 provides a summary of the status of funding applications submitted as of July 31, 2022, which are organized based on their status of approved, under review, and declined grants.

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 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

Strategy 9 – Measure performance

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Between January 1, 2022, and July 31, 2022, the Funding and Grants program facilitated a total of 50 grant submissions with a total request of \$15M. The additional revenues and support generated through the program help to provide projects and programs with an increasingly sustainable business model by reducing reliance on partner municipality funding.

TRCA currently has \$7.4M in grant applications under review with various funding programs following grant applications that were submitted in 2022. Throughout 2022, TRCA received notice that \$8.8M had been awarded and that \$3.8M has been declined. This indicates a program success rate of 70% as of July 31, 2022.

Item 7.6

Table 1: Year-End Grant Program Update

Grant Status	# Of Grants	Approved/Requested Funding \$ (000's)
Under Review Grants	19	\$7,419
Awarded Grants	27	\$8,777
Declined Grants	17	\$3,817

The Funding and Grants team has developed a standard operating procedure for declined grants, including a follow-up interview with a funder representative conducted using a series of standardized questions to determine why the application was not funded and how future applications could be improved. These follow-up interviews provide valuable information regarding funder preferences as well as general improvements that could be made during the application process. Staff are informed of areas for improvement, and the Funding and Grants team makes note of lessons learned to apply to future grant cycles.

In addition to the funding applications submitted and/or awarded in the 2022 fiscal year, TRCA continues to manage successful grants and funding from previous fiscal years that are still active. TRCA had budgeted a total of \$20.1M in revenues for 2022, which is representative of all sources of grant funding.

As of July 31, 2022, TRCA had earned 18% of its budgeted grant revenue. The percentage of revenue earned appears low as a result of the timing of invoicing for the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF). TRCA staff continue to work closely with Infrastructure Canada program officers and will continue to report on the status of these projects.

The following section highlights some of the major projects and programs that make up the budgeted total for each revenue category:

Federal

TRCA Parks and Trails Infrastructure Development and Renewal – With funding from the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, TRCA will update critical infrastructure at ten sites across its jurisdiction. Improvements include paving of roads and parking lots, retrofit and rebuild of park washrooms, trail construction, installation of picnic benches and shelters and hazard removal.

Toronto Region Ravine Erosion Management and Hazard Mitigation Project and Waterfront Erosion Hazard Mitigation Project– With funding from the Government of Canada's DMAF program, these projects continue to be implemented to address erosion issues within TRCA's jurisdiction. The projects address erosion along ravine systems in the Region of Peel, York Region, and the City of Toronto, as well as maintaining and restoring TRCA's extensive network of shoreline erosion control structures over the next 7 years.

The Newcomer Youth Green Economy Project (NYGEP) – With funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, NYGEP supports newcomer youth interested in careers in the environmental sector by providing access to experiential learning opportunities and job skills training. Despite challenges posed by restrictions to in-person learning, staff have mobilized virtual alternatives to ensure NYGEP's continuous and successful implementation.

Item 7.6

TRCA's New Administrative Office Building – With funding from Natural Resources Canada's Green Construction through Wood (GCWood) Program, TRCA is constructing a new mass timber head office building which promises to be one of the most energy-efficient office buildings in North America once completed.

Provincial

Professional Access into Employment (PAIE) Program – With renewed funding from the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development for a further 3 years of programming, the PAIE Program will continue to help internationally trained environmental engineers, geoscientists, planners, ecologists, and green building specialists to obtain commensurate employed in Ontario.

Municipal

Toronto Tree Cover Project – The Toronto Tree Cover Project has engaged communities throughout Toronto in support of the development and expansion of native tree cover on commercial, industrial and institutional lands throughout the city for over three years.

Non-Government

The Meadoway – With funding from The Weston Family Foundation, implementation of Section 5 of The Meadoway trail network has commenced with continued extensive meadow restoration, adaptive management and outreach and education programs to engage and inform members of the surrounding community. TRCA continues to work with other stakeholders to find additional funding for The Meadoway and leverage the generous investment of the Weston Family Foundation.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

In late 2021 and early 2022, the Funding and Grants team increased its outreach and collaboration with funding partners to refine the application process, accurately identify funding opportunities that align with TRCA priorities, and streamline agreement negotiations. The team continues to develop close relationships with its funding and implementation partners to strengthen its funding applications and build upon past successes.

The *Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF)* delayed the second phase of its recent intake to accept applications to its small-scale stream (projects with budgets between \$1M and \$20M) and large-scale stream (projects with budgets greater than \$20M). The Funding and Grants team is currently collaborating with TRCA staff and municipal partners to identify eligible projects, secure matching dollars and develop and submit strong funding proposals in anticipation of an upcoming call for proposals.

The Funding and Grants team has continued to work closely with TRCA's partner municipalities to leverage grant funding received through municipal applications towards collaborative projects. TRCA has recently partnered with the City of Toronto and the City of Brampton to implement DMAF-funded projects originating from municipal-led applications, as well as the Town of Ajax to implement Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP)-funded collaborative works. TRCA is also working with the City of Toronto to implement projects funded through Infrastructure Canada's Natural Infrastructure Fund.

Item 7.6

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: 2022 Mid-Year Grant Program Update