

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Thursday, November 10, 2022 Meeting

FROM: Michael Tolensky, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

RE: **TRCA STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2034**

KEY ISSUE

Approval of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Strategic Plan 2023-2034 including the accompanying Strategic Plan Playbook for the first four (2023-2026) years.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT TRCA's Strategic Plan 2023-2034, be adopted;

THAT TRCA's Strategic Plan Playbook 2023-2026, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT staff be authorized to amend the Strategic Plan Playbook 2023-2026 and future iterations to reflect changing environmental factors and alignment with partners so as to ensure that the Strategic Plan goals can be achieved.

BACKGROUND

At a time of uncertainty and changing environmental factors, effective strategic planning can be more challenging and yet more necessary than ever. Building on a solid foundation of stakeholder collaboration, a diversified and sustainable business model, and leadership and innovation success, TRCA's Strategic Plan 2023-2034 seeks continued excellence in the pursuit of changes that address the needs of today and tomorrow.

TRCA's Strategic Plan 2023-2034 (Plan) advances upon the tradition of providing overarching organizational guidance to ensure continued success. It establishes targeted priorities and drives the focus of day-to-day actions. This Plan's strength lies in the fulsome collaborative development process through which it was developed. Beginning in the summer of 2021, many stakeholders were involved in creating its final form. Those who provided input or lent expertise included TRCA Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Senior Management Team (SMT), staff at various levels, TRCA Board of Directors, representatives from partner municipalities and government agencies, external subject-matter experts. This input was achieved through the support of all divisions in TRCA with co-ordination from the Strategic Business Planning and Performance (SBPP) business unit.

A range of methodologies were employed to extract the most value from the stakeholder engagement. These included a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis exercise, contextual scan of other strategic plans and priorities and expert interviews. The ensuing analysis, coding and mapping of these engagement responses resulted in the ideas that were initially presented in February 2022 to the TRCA Board of Directors.

Although a strategic plan is a forward-oriented framework, revisiting past plans and reviewing the historical context for the direction ahead is inherently part of this process. Since the inception of the last Strategic Plan in 2013 and especially in the past couple of years, a lot has

changed in the operating environment. All business plans now require both more adaptability and also benefit from more precision than before. TRCA's Strategic Plan 2023-2034 was created with these criteria in mind. Maintaining a medium-term time horizon of twelve (12) years ensures sufficient lead time to establish, pursue and succeed at achieving challenging performance-based goals. The Vision statement, which reflects the ultimate end state the entire organization is seeking to accomplish was updated. Likewise for the Mission statement, which expresses the process that the Vision will be achieved. These updated statements read as follows:

TRCA Vision: The achievement of safe and resilient communities.

TRCA Mission: The provincial leaders in conserving, restoring, and managing natural resources to advance safe and sustainable development.

The four (4) underpinning pillars and goal statements that organize the collective TRCA work, were drafted and shared with the Board in February 2022 as well. These pillars and goals will not change over the course of the 12-year timeframe and are elaborated as follows:



Figure 1 TRCA's Four Strategic Pillars and Goals

The ensuing work since February 2022 has finalized the remaining elements of the Strategic Plan Framework detailed below (Figure 2).

RATIONALE

A strategic plan is a higher-order framework mean to provide overall direction. Its utility becomes contingent on how the medium and shorter-term activities and strategies join and fit together to achieve the intended outcomes. The remainder of this project has proceeded through fulsome and ongoing collaboration across the organization to ensure adequate alignment between the directions established and the planned work.

To demonstrate this link, each of the four (4) pillars and overarching goals are expressed as four (4) separate outcomes each, totalling sixteen (16) in all. Each of the sixteen (16) outcomes are made more tangible through descriptive examples of work that will be undertaken to achieve that outcome. Significant coordination across the entire organization to account for anticipated

and planned work and aligning these initiatives with the outcomes has been accomplished methodically and thoroughly in collaboration with senior managers and leaders. In the data-driven era which now critically feeds business planning and execution and building upon previous requests of the Board in TRCA's Strategic Plan update., there is a greater emphasis on the measurement of performance. Performance measurement is critical to ensure outcomes are validated and success can be rightly claimed. What is especially new for this Plan is that each outcome will be validated by a unique performance measure. The sixteen (16) total measures have been carefully selected to account for the longer-term (twelve-year) impact the work of each outcome is meant to accomplish. Each performance measure is purposefully expressed as a percentage. This enables reporting against an established target in a simple and clear way. By reporting on these measures at the conclusion of the 2023-2034 Strategic Plan, and through impact reporting at planned intervals, stakeholders and the broader public will clearly see how accountability is a design feature of this new Strategic Plan framework. The performance measures are clearly identified in *Attachment 1 TRCA Strategic Plan 2023-2034*.

Since the presentation of the initial draft Strategic Plan material to the Board of Directors earlier this year, detailed feedback sought and received from TRCA board members and staff has been diligently and thoroughly addressed at every opportunity. Hundreds of hours, dozens of meetings and many iterations demonstrate a commitment to honouring each piece of feedback received. Revisions also signal how the content has been shaped by the directive of the TRCA Board and leadership. Though time-intensive, benefits to the Plan have ensued: clarity, consistency, and the alignment of wide-ranging but reinforcing priorities. The final result is the realistic and vetted Strategic Plan presented herein for Board of Director approval.

Strategic Plan Phase 1 Playbook (Playbook)

Where the Strategic Plan has a 12-year, longer-term outlook, *Attachment 2 Strategic Plan Phase 1 Playbook 2023-2026* is its companion document. It operationalizes the entire plan by aligning annual work planning along three 4-year terms. The length and timing of these phases ensure the implementation of a strategic plan becomes iterative, as it is meant to be. The Playbook transforms a point-in-time created plan into a living and emerging document that includes impacts and targets. These proposed impacts and targets, like in the Plan, use percentages to evaluate and convey success.



Figure 2: TRCA Strategic Plan Framework

This phased approach has several benefits:

Improved Alignment

Internal work planning and strategic decision-making will better align with Partner Municipalities' terms of council. This makes an important structural change to ensure priorities of mutual interest garner greater attention and momentum, including emphasized funding prioritization.

Increased Transparency and Accountability

At the conclusion of a four-year term, a new external Strategic Impact Report 2023-2026 will detail progress made against established interim targets as well as introduce the Strategic Plan Playbook 2027-2030. This improved approach to impact reporting greatly enhances transparency and accountability, highlighting both progress, gaps and next steps. While Annual Reports will continue throughout, it is through the Strategic Impact Report that the results of our work will be made more consequential.

Learning

Lastly, through evaluation comes learning. If progress towards an interim target is not being achieved, there is a chance in the near-term to assess and re-evaluate a particular approach. This intentional design process allows course-correcting changes to be considered as needed.

The first Strategic Impact Report 2023-2026 will be released in 2026. No fewer than 155 indicators establish the organization's ambition and represent the steadfast commitment to ensuring the changes being sought become reality. The proposed impacts and targets intended to be used in the Strategic Impact Report are shared in the attached (*Attachment 2*) for information and interest.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Throughout the remainder of 2022, staff will continue to prepare for the launch of the new Plan in 2023. Given the Playbook is a living document, ongoing work remains as we move forward to develop fulsome medium-term work plans, associated performance measures, and operationalize new reporting requirements at the different time horizons.

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Attachments: 2

Attachment 1: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Strategic Plan 2023-2034

Attachment 2: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Strategic Plan Phase 1 Playbook
(2023-2026)