

## Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board of Directors  
Friday, September 22, 2023 Meeting

**FROM:** Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

**RE: TRCA STRATEGIES AND PLANS REQUIRED BY THE MANDATORY PROGRAMS AND SERVICES REGULATION UNDER THE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT**

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### KEY ISSUE

To inform the Board that TRCA staff are working on the Strategies and Plans required of all conservation authorities by Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services under the Conservation Authorities Act. As prescribed in the regulation, all the Strategies and Plans are required to be completed by December 31, 2024.

### RECOMMENDATION:

**IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the report, TRCA Strategies and Plans Required by the Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation under the Conservation Authorities Act, and any input on the proposed All Strategy Engagement Plan approach be received;**

**AND FURTHER THAT staff report back to the Board on the progress and completion of the Strategies and Plans as described in this report.**

### BACKGROUND

Ontario Regulation 686/21, the Mandatory Programs and Services regulation requires all conservation authorities to have complete by December 31, 2024:

- Flood and Erosion Infrastructure Operational Plan
- Flood and Erosion Infrastructure Asset Management Plan
- Ice Management Plan
- Land Inventory
- Conservation Area Strategy
- Watershed-Based Resource Management Strategy

The regulation sets out requirements to be contained in the latter four documents, as follows. The following is a paraphrasing of the content of the regulation and omits some detail for the purposes of this report.

### Ice Management Plan

Per Section 4 of the regulation, if an authority determines that ice management is necessary to reduce the risks associated with natural hazards, an Ice Management Plan must identify:

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- How ice within the authority's area of jurisdiction may increase the risk of natural hazards; and
- The steps that are necessary to mitigate these risks, including identifying equipment and resources needed to carry out these steps.

It further states that an authority may update the ice management plan from time to time as the authority considers it advisable.

### **Conservation Area Strategy**

The regulation states that the Conservation Area Strategy must contain the following:

- Objectives established by the authority that will inform the authority's decision-making related to the lands it owns and controls, including decisions related to policies governing the acquisition and disposition of such lands.
- Identification of the mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services that are provided on land owned and controlled by the authority, including the sources of financing for these programs and services.
- Where the authority considers it advisable to achieve the objectives, an assessment of how the lands owned and controlled by the authority may,
  - Augment any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction; and
  - Integrate with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.
- The establishment of land use categories for the purpose of classifying lands in the TRCA's land inventory based on the types of activities on each parcel of land or other matters of significance related to the parcel.
- A process for the periodic review and updating of the conservation area strategy by the authority, including procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process.

The regulation also stipulates that the conservation authority shall ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the preparation of the conservation area strategy and that the strategy be made publicly available.

### **Land Inventory**

The regulation requires that the Land Inventory include the following information for every parcel of land the authority owns or controls:

- The location of the parcel;
- The identification of any information the authority has in its possession in respect of the parcel, including any surveys, site plans or other maps;
- When the authority acquired the parcel;
- Whether the parcel was acquired using a grant made under section 39 of the Act;
- Whether the parcel was acquired through an expropriation;

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- Whether the authority owns the parcel or has a registered legal interest in the parcel, including an easement;
- Identification of the land use categories that apply to the parcel;
- Identification of whether a recreational activity is provided on the parcel that requires the direct support or supervision of staff employed by the authority or by another person or body;
- Whether or not the parcel or a portion of the parcel is suitable for the purposes of housing and housing infrastructure development, including identifying:
  - Any applicable zoning by-law passed under section 34 or 38 of the Planning Act or any predecessor of them;
  - If the parcel or a portion of the parcel augments any natural heritage located within the authority's area of jurisdiction; and
  - If the parcel or a portion of the parcel integrates with other provincially or municipally owned lands or other publicly accessible lands and trails within the authority's area of jurisdiction.

The regulation also requires that the Land Inventory include a process for the periodic review and updating of the inventory.

### **Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy**

The Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy must include the following components:

- Guiding principles and objectives that inform the design and delivery of the programs and services that the authority is required to provide under section 21.1 of the Act.
- A summary of existing technical studies, monitoring programs and other information on the natural resources the authority relies on within its area of jurisdiction or in specific watersheds that directly informs and supports the delivery of programs and services under section 21.1 of the Act.
- A review of the authority's programs and services provided under section 21.1 of the Act for the purposes of,
  - Determining if the programs and services comply with the regulations made under clause 40 (1) (b) of the Act;
  - Identifying and analyzing issues and risks that limit the effectiveness of the delivery of these programs and services; and
  - Identifying actions to address the issues and mitigate the risks identified by the review and providing a cost estimate for the implementation of those actions.

The regulation also requires periodic review and updating of the watershed-based resource management strategy by the authority that includes procedures to ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the review and update process. The authority must also ensure stakeholders and the public are consulted during the preparation of the strategy and that the strategy be made publicly available.

### **RATIONALE**

Many of TRCA's existing programs and plans fulfill or exceed the information requirements or components of the Strategies and Plans required by the Province. Staff are working to ensure the strategic work of these programs and plans is consolidated and documented, leveraged, and updated where needed to match the requirements of the regulation for each document. Examples of already completed/existing components include TRCA Watershed Plans, the Flood Infrastructure Asset Management Plan and Operations and Maintenance Standards Manuals for all TRCA dams, the Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region, and the TRCA Board approved Greenspace Acquisition Project 2021-2030.

### **All Strategy Engagement Plan**

TRCA staff will coordinate consultation on the development and progress of the Strategies and Plans in early 2024 through meetings with municipal partners, Indigenous communities, the TRCA BILD Industry Working Group, and an online webinar to engage the public and seek input. Other opportunities to obtain input associated with consultation on other TRCA initiatives (e.g., Watershed Plan public meetings) will also be explored. Staff will provide an update on the project approach for the Watershed-based Resource Management Strategy and Conservation Areas Strategy and identify the other Strategies and Plans being developed. Public engagement will occur using online, interactive tools to seek input into Strategy development.

### **Finalizing Strategies**

It is expected that final drafts of the Strategies will be available for public input and circulated to regional municipalities and Indigenous Communities in the Fall 2024 and then submitted to SLT for approval prior to the end of the year. Individual stakeholder meetings will be held as needed. Asset Management Plans for flood and erosion infrastructure will be brought to the Board in November 2023. Input from the Regional Watershed Alliance and endorsement of the Board of Directors meetings for all other Strategies and Plans will be sought in 2024 prior to the required deadline for submission.

The final Strategies and Plans will be posted on the TRCA website as required and distributed to municipal partners and the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry.

### **Relationship to TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following Pillars and Outcomes set forth in TRCA's 2023-2034 Strategic Plan:

#### **Pillar 1 Environmental Protection and Hazard Management:**

- 1.1 Deliver provincially mandated services pertaining to flood and erosion hazards

#### **Pillar 1 Environmental Protection and Hazard Management:**

- 1.2 Leadership in greenspace conservation

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### **Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:**

3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

### **Pillar 4 Service Excellence:**

4.4 Transparent decision making and accountable results

### **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

The development of these Plans and Strategies is funded by the regular operating budgets of TRCA divisions responsible for completing this work.

### **DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE**

Work on the required Strategies and Plans is underway and on track for completion by the provincially prescribed due date of December 31, 2024. Staff are investigating innovative and interactive online approaches for the final formatting of these documents. Staff will report to the Board on the progress and completion of the Strategies and Plans as described in this report.

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