

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, January 26, 2024 Meeting

FROM: Anil Wijesooriya, Director, Restoration and Infrastructure

RE: **CENTENNIAL PARK STREAM RESTORATION PROJECT**

KEY ISSUE

To provide an update on TRCA's role in the implementation of Centennial Park Stream Restoration Project.

RECOMMENDATION:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the report on the Centennial Park Stream Restoration Project, be received for information;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff work with the City of Toronto and stakeholders on implementation of the Centennial Park Stream Restoration Project and potentially other components of the Centennial Park Master Plan subject to the outcome of ongoing discussions and Agreements.

BACKGROUND

Centennial Park, located in Etobicoke, is one of the largest publicly owned parks in the City of Toronto and an important component of the City's greenspace and natural heritage network. The park opened in 1967 for Canada's 100th birthday and is home to a variety of programs, activities and amenities which include a conservatory, a golf course, picnic areas, natural areas, sports facilities, public gathering spaces, and a large athletic centre. Centennial Park attracts an estimated 1.5 million people from across the Greater Toronto Area each year, and given its age and heavy use, the park has been in decline and is in need of upgrades.

The City of Toronto updated the Centennial Park Master Plan in 2021 to guide decision-making around improvements, programming, and management of the park. The plan outlines the overall vision for the park and guides implementable actions to improve the park's natural systems, amenities, infrastructure, and programming. The plan focuses on four major themes: Water, Ecology, Movement and Culture highlighting various parkwide environmental and recreational improvement opportunities to improve user experience while protecting and enhancing ecological function. Further, the plan aims to address the pressures of a growing population as well as improve resiliency against the impacts of climate change.

As part of the first phase of Master Plan implementation, the City of Toronto requested that TRCA oversee the rehabilitation of a degraded section of Elmcrest Creek that runs directly through the middle of Centennial Park. The project will include the removal of 600 metres of failing hardened channel and restoration of approximately 1 km of natural

Item 9.2

meandering stream to create a resilient naturalized stream and riparian corridor. The goals of this project are to: 1) improve user experience, 2) incorporate water quality treatment, 3) replace failing infrastructure, 4) increase flood storage capacity, 5) remove fish barriers, and 6) improve natural area connectivity. Wetlands will be constructed within the floodplain to intercept and treat stormwater and provide habitat for amphibians. Riparian areas will be planted with native trees and shrubs. The project will also include trail improvements and bridge replacements to improve user movement through the park to protect the natural environment. Overall, this restoration project makes up a significant portion of the Phase 1 Centennial Park Master Plan implementation and will be executed in coordination with the Capital Projects team of the City of Toronto Parks Forestry and Recreation division.

RATIONALE

The 2018 Master Service Agreement between the City of Toronto Parks and Forestry and Transportation Divisions and TRCA identifies the scope and type of projects that can be undertaken by TRCA on behalf of the City. Eligible services within the agreement include management and construction of stream and wetland restoration projects, pedestrian bridge construction/replacement, and trail development. All these activities are a part of the Letter Agreement between the City of Toronto and TRCA to restore Elmcrest Creek within Centennial Park.

TRCA and the City have a long history of partnering on many successful projects throughout City parks and ravine systems. TRCA and the City will work closely to find logistic and cost efficiencies during implementation and to ensure projects within Centennial Park are coordinated to minimize overall disturbance to park users and natural features. This first phase will protect and enhance the natural assets of the park and facilitate the implementation of additional and later phases. TRCA is currently in discussions with the city to undertake further works as part of the Master Plan implementation. This additional work may include the decommissioning of existing facilities, park regrading to manage water across the site, improvements to existing wetland areas, improved stormwater infrastructure, and landscape plantings.

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:

- 1.3 Maintain healthy and resilient watershed ecosystems in the face of a changing climate

Pillar 1 Environmental Protection and Hazard Management:

- 1.4 Balance development and growth to protect the natural environment ensuring safe sustainable development

Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:

- 3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

Item 9.2

FINANCIAL DETAILS

The budget to complete the Centennial Park Stream Restoration Project as part of the Centennial Park Master Plan implementation is \$4.15 million, including taxes and contingency. Funds to complete the project will be available in project account 180-03.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

TRCA has executed a Letter Agreement under the 2018 Master Service Agreement with the City of Toronto to undertake the works. The project has started and will be completed by Spring of 2025. TRCA's major milestones and estimated timeline is included below. Any additional work beyond this existing scope that arises through ongoing discussions with the City would result in an amendment to the existing Letter Agreement or the development of a secondary Letter Agreement.

Milestone Activity	Timeline
Stream Restoration Implementation - Phase One (300m)	Fall 2023 – Winter 2024
Stream Restoration Implementation - Phase Two (300m)	Spring 2024 – Winter 2025
Demobilization and Site Restoration	Winter 2025
Tree and Shrub Plantings	Spring 2025

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