

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Executive Committee
Friday, October 25, 2024 Meeting

FROM: Kathryn Lockyer, Director, Legislative and Property Services

RE: **DISPOSITION TO PARKS CANADA AGENCY FOR EXPANSION OF ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK**
Request from Parks Canada Agency for Conveyance of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority-owned Lands Required for the expansion of Rouge National Urban Park, City of Pickering, Regional Municipality of Durham, Petticoat Creek Watershed & Duffins Creek Watershed (CFN 46156)

KEY ISSUE

Request from Parks Canada Agency for the conveyance of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) owned lands located in the vicinity of the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP), in the City of Pickering, Regional Municipality of Durham, required for the expansion of the RNUP, Petticoat Creek Watershed & Duffins Creek Watershed (CFN 46156).

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT WHEREAS TRCA is in receipt of a request from Parks Canada Agency (PCA) for the conveyance of TRCA-owned lands located in the vicinity of RNUP, in the City of Pickering, Regional Municipality of Durham, required for the expansion of the RNUP, Petticoat Creek Watershed & Duffins Creek watershed;

AND WHEREAS TRCA has conveyed over 2,200 hectares of land to PCA for the RNUP since 2014 and has identified additional TRCA-owned lands with the potential to support future expansion to the RNUP and local and regional trail connections;

AND WHEREAS it is in the best interest of TRCA in furthering its objectives as set out in Section 20 of the Conservation Authorities Act to cooperate with PCA in this instance;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT 16 parcels of TRCA-owned land containing 119.23 hectares (294.62 acres), more or less, of vacant land in the vicinity of and required for the expansion of the RNUP, as identified in Attachment #3 and Attachment #4 in the City of

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Pickering, Regional Municipality of Durham, be conveyed to the PCA, subject to the following conditions;

THAT land transferred to PCA must achieve a net ecological and community benefit, including additional investment and sustained maintenance by the Federal government;

THAT consideration be the nominal sum of \$2.00 and that all legal, survey and other costs to be paid by the PCA;

THAT the PCA is to fully indemnify TRCA from any and all claims from injuries, damages or costs of any nature resulting in any way, either directly or indirectly, from this conveyance;

THAT PCA accept any additional reasonable terms and conditions as deemed appropriate by TRCA staff or its solicitor;

THAT if the Region of Durham or the City of Pickering request lands and or easements for municipal infrastructure projects, TRCA will work to fulfill such reasonable requests subject to PCA concurrence;

AND THAT where the Minister has made a grant under section 39 in respect of said conveyance, where applicable, that such land be subject to Section 21(2) 90 days notification to the Minister and Section 21(4) and (5) 45-day consultation period of the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND FURTHER THAT authorized TRCA officials be directed to take the necessary action to finalize the transaction, including obtaining any necessary approvals and the signing and execution of documents.

BACKGROUND

PCA has requested the conveyance of TRCA-owned lands located in the City of Pickering, required for the expansion of the RNUP.

At Executive Meeting #11/13 held on January 17, 2014, Resolution #A239/13 was approved, allowing TRCA to transfer 2,266 hectares (5,600 acres), to PCA for the Rouge National Urban Park.

In June 2019, TRCA completed the transfer of lands (save a few parcels in the vicinity of the Toronto Zoo) to PCA pursuant to the original conveyances approved in 2014. Realizing the vision for, and importance of,

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this National Park, and as a valued partner of PCA, TRCA has conveyed land to PCA for inclusion in the RNUP over the years for nominal consideration.

At Board of Directors Meeting #3/23 held on March 24, 2023, Resolution #A169/23 was approved. This resolution directed staff to liaise with Parks Canada staff and Provincial MECP staff in the context of the Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park (UUPP) initiative to ensure consensus on the appropriate lands to be included in the expansion of the RNUP. Further to the above,

through the on-going working relationship with PCA, the conveyance of additional lands by TRCA has been identified. TRCA is also in receipt of correspondence from municipal officials to PCA and Transport Canada officials indicating their support for the expansion of the RNUP.

The identified TRCA lands are located in the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve (DRAP) and in the Rouge Park Neighbourhood of the City of Pickering and are proximate to the RNUP and connected to the Park via terrestrial and aquatic linkages via the Rouge Duffins Wildlife Corridor and Petticoat Creek. The lands are also connected to other TRCA and PCA holdings with significant ecological features and functions including the Townline Swamp and Amos Pond Provincially Significant Wetland complexes and the Altona Forest Area Environmentally Sensitive Area. TRCA has been working with landowners to strategically acquire parcels of land in the Rouge Park Neighbourhood of the City of Pickering through the development process. In addition, TRCA, with investments from the Federal government, involvement of the City of Pickering and Durham and through partnerships with organizations including Waterfront Regeneration Trust and Friends of Altona Forest, has been upgrading trails and conducting stewardship work for these assets. The Region of Durham with advice from TRCA is currently advancing The Meadoway East project within the Gatineau Hydro Corridor within this part of Pickering.

TRCA land holdings in Uxbridge being considered for inclusion in the RNUP had included the Goodwood Resource Management Tract, Secord Forest and Wildlife Area and Clubine Forest, which connect the RNUP to the Durham Regional Forest and Provincially owned lands in Uxbridge via the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail and Trans Canada Trail. However, after TRCA staff facilitated discussions regarding future ownership amongst the parties, it was recognized by all parties that the Ontario MECP would be

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the preferred steward of these lands as this would assist the Province with the park boundary expansion of the UUPP and provide an integral connection between the RNUP and UUPP.

RATIONALE

The subject TRCA-owned landholdings adjacent to or in close proximity to RNUP were not part of the original 2014 approved conveyance, and therefore require further Board of Directors approval prior to conveyance. The identified lands have significant ecological value, are important for water conveyance and flood mitigation, and offer nature-based recreational activities along their trail networks.

At the request of PCA and in consultation with municipal officials, TRCA is seeking to contribute to the expansion of this world-renowned legacy park for future generations of Canadians. TRCA and other levels of government currently have land holdings which are ecologically important and which, if knit together to combine ownership and/or management, will leave a significant legacy in Canada's National Park system.

The various parcels of lands, operated as a National Park with sufficient tax supported funds for operations and management, will provide and support ecological and trail connectivity, environmental education, and natural stewardship objectives, as well as better protect these landholdings in the context of large-scale growth and development pressures facing the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding regions.

Municipal parties may also identify several road improvements (ex/ road widening, daylight triangles, turning radius') which may be required in respect of municipal roads and other infrastructure within the vicinity of lands that may have to be conveyed. Prior to disposing of the parcels, the lands will be circulated internally through TRCA staff as well as externally with our Regional and Municipal partners to obtain any pertinent information and comments. In addition, consistent with the previous TRCA conveyances to PCA, TRCA may be requested to grant certain easements or to approve nominal conveyances of land for infrastructure purposes to municipalities prior to transfer of lands to PCA.

Once all Board of Directors approvals, circulations, public consultations, Ministerial notifications, and any other due diligence required by PCA has been completed, in accordance with provincial requirements TRCA will be able to convey the lands enabling for the expansion of the RNUP.

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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:

1.2 Leadership in greenspace conservation

Pillar 1 Environmental Protection and Hazard Management:

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

Pillar 3 Community Prosperity:

3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

FINANCIAL DETAILS

PCA will be responsible for all survey, legal and other costs associated with the contemplation and completion of any land transfers.

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Date: October 25, 2024

Attachments: 4

Attachment 1: Correspondence from Parks Canada Agency

Attachment 2: TRCA Additional Lands for Expansion of the RNUP

Attachment 3: Sketch Illustrating the Location of the Subject Lands

Attachment 4: Orthophoto Illustrating the Location of the Subject Lands