

**Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action**

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Board of Directors  
Friday, March 20, 2026 Meeting

**FROM:** Anil Wijesooriya, Director, Restoration and Infrastructure

**RE:** **THE MEADOWAY: 2025 UPDATE**

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**KEY ISSUE**

Update on Phase 2 (2023-2025) achievements of The Meadoway project and outlook to Phase 3.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

**WHEREAS** Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), in partnership with the City of Toronto, with funding support and approvals from federal and provincial agencies including Housing Infrastructure and Communities Canada, Parks Canada, Infrastructure Ontario and Hydro One have led The Meadoway project with an objective of revitalizing a 16 kilometre, 200 hectare transmission corridor, providing a vital east-west linkage between downtown Toronto and Rouge National Urban Park through a multiuse trail and meadow habitat;

**WHEREAS** the Weston Family Foundation announced on April 11, 2018, a pledge of up to \$25 million to support The Meadoway;

**WHEREAS** TRCA has now successfully implemented grant deliverables from Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the pledge from the Weston Family Foundation;

**WHEREAS** TRCA has received approval for a two-year \$4.5 million grant (2026-2027) which will complete the \$25 million pledge from the Weston Family Foundation;

**WHEREAS** to release payments for the Phase 3 grant, the Weston Family Foundation made it a condition that TRCA and the City of Toronto execute a Master Services Agreement that details long-term roles and responsibilities in The Meadoway corridor from a maintenance and management perspective;

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**THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the update on Phase 2 progress for The Meadoway be received;**

**THAT TRCA, within the limit of confirmed funding, be directed to take all necessary actions to retain appropriate consulting services, hire contract staff, and execute any service agreements needed to advance Phase 3 deliverables;**

**AND THAT TRCA work with the City of Toronto to finalize and subsequently execute The Meadoway Master Service Agreement with an effective date of November 15, 2024, to ensure that long-term maintenance and management responsibilities in the corridor are confirmed;**

**AND FURTHER THAT staff continue to bring annual updates to the Board of Directors as implementation of the project proceeds.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The Meadoway is an innovative city naturalization initiative linking 16 km of the Gattineau Hydro Corridor between the East Don River in downtown Toronto to Rouge National Urban Park. The Meadoway has been undergoing a significant transformation from a barren hydro corridor to become a vibrant expanse of urban greenspace and meadow habitat. It connects seven river systems, 15 parks, and 13 neighbourhoods over 200 hectares, housing more than 1,000 diverse species of flora and fauna. The multi-use trail provides critical connections between communities and a safer and more naturalized option for users. In addition to the revitalization of the corridor, the project seeks to build meaningful community engagement and educational opportunities that will facilitate an increased sense of community pride and ownership of this important natural connection.

At Authority Meeting #7/18, held on September 28, 2018, an update on The Meadoway and recommendation to advance implementation of key priorities was approved per Resolution #A143/18, in part, as follows:

“WHEREAS The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has made a \$10 million of the \$25 million pledge available immediately to TRCA to implement Phase 1 of the project; ...

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THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT with appropriate Board Authority approvals including purchasing approvals, authorized TRCA and LCF officials be directed to take all necessary actions regarding retaining consulting services, the hiring of contract staff including project managers, and the signing and execution of any service agreements within the limit of the confirmed approved funding agreement for Phase 1; ...

THAT updates be brought back to the Authority on an annual basis as implementation of the project proceeds.”

From 2018 – 2022 TRCA worked closely with the City of Toronto (the City) and other key stakeholders to advance Phase 1 of the project. During this timeframe a total of \$11.348 million was granted by the Weston Family Foundation in concert with a commitment from the City of \$1.075 million to advance the project. TRCA was also successful in securing an additional \$1.681 million from grants and senior levels of government to leverage the Weston Family Foundation funding and City investment. In total, \$14.104 million was raised to support Phase 1 priorities. Work focused on planning and design of the multi-use trail with continued advancement of meadow habitat across the corridor. Throughout this, education, outreach, and communications were integrated into all aspects of project delivery.

In May 2023, based on the success of past work and TRCA and TRCF efforts to generate additional funds, the Weston Family Foundation committed another grant of \$6.332 million over 2023- 2025 to support Phase 2 of The Meadoway. At Authority Meeting #6/23, held on June 23, 2023, an update on the status of The Meadoway project and Phase 2 funding was approved per Resolution #A117/23. TRCA has successfully wrapped up Phase 2 deliverables associated with this grant and have received approval for Phase 3. This phase of work will take place over two years (2026 and 2027) with a total value of \$4.5 million from the Weston Family Foundation. This will be the last grant of their pledge.

Since 2018 TRCA has been in discussions with the City around formalization of roles and responsibilities in The Meadoway to ensure that long term maintenance and management is sustained. By the adoption of [MM23.27](#) on November 13 and 14, 2024, City Council authorized the City to enter into an operation and maintenance agreement with the TRCA. The

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execution of the Master Service Agreement was a requested deliverable in the Phase 2 grant from the Weston Family Foundation. For the Phase 3 grant, execution of this agreement by both parties is a requirement that must be met prior to any payments being released. This agreement is in the final stages of review and will be executed shortly by both parties.

### **RATIONALE**

On an annual basis TRCA compiles a year-end report to the Weston Family Foundation to narrate overall progress on The Meadoway project, along with directly accounting for grant specific deliverables. With the completion of Phase 2 (2023-2025) a report summarizing cumulative deliverables during this timeframe has been prepared. The report is available on The Meadoway's [website](#). In addition to this, a summary presentation is attached.

At a high level, the following key deliverables were achieved from 2023 - 2025:

- TRCA staff conducted adaptive management and monitoring of 151 ha of native meadow and mown buffer areas;
- Collaborative research was undertaken with the University of Waterloo, University of Toronto Scarborough, and Trent University on plant-pollinator relationships and meadow site preparation methods;
- Building on Phase 1 work, the Meadoway Restoration Manual, [A Blueprint for Naturalizing Infrastructure Corridors](#), continued to support practitioners, academics, and the public. During Phase 2, expanded research partnerships advanced understanding of meadow ecology and informed an updated edition of the manual, released in fall 2025 which captured lessons learned through implementation efforts and new best practices. This resource provides a strong foundation for ecological progress in Phase 3 and has been internationally recognized as groundbreaking work related to re-imagining and restoring infrastructure corridors;
- Two new multi-use trail segments were advanced. A 650 m segment of multi-use trail was completed at Military Trail east Morningside Avenue which opened in 2024 and 1 km of multiuse trail started construction in 2025 from Arsandco Park (located west of Midland Avenue) east to Marcos Blvd (just west of Brimley Avenue). A portion of this trail from Midland Ave. east to Marcos Blvd. opened in 2025 with the remaining connection to be complete in Spring 2026;

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- Planning for public realm enhancements and wayfinding were advanced with pilot furnishings and a gathering area implemented near Highland Creek in 2025;
- Over 3,000 students and teachers were educated through hands-on activities, field trips and conservation;
- Launched in 2023, The Meadoway Ambassador Program grew from 11 to 33 volunteers and became a key component of community engagement. Ambassadors supported events such as guided walks, cleanups, and educational outreach, while contributing local insight to event planning. Their contributions were recognized through a dedicated celebration in 2025;
- The Meadoway was featured in 42 digital publications, 29 site tours were undertaken for a variety of stakeholders and 35 presentations were made at conferences and other forums. This includes presentations and panel discussion in October 2024 and October 2025 at the internationally renowned High Line Network Symposium and Policy Lab. The Network was formed to share information on infrastructure reuse programs and projects and has membership from across North America;
- TRCA advanced its fundraising strategy for The Meadoway with the guidance of a fundraising consultant. Efforts focused on developing a comprehensive revenue-generation strategy and refining sponsorship offerings, with the goal of establishing a sustainable corporate sponsorship program for The Meadoway. A Strategic Impact Business Case was created to guide the program's launch in late 2025, outlining a tiered partnership model, final ready-to-pitch sponsorship assets, financial projections, revenue targets for 2026, and key performance indicators; and
- The draft Master Service Agreement between TRCA and the City of Toronto was refined throughout 2025 and is targeted to be finalized and executed by both parties in March 2026. The agreement provides a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities in the corridor for long-term maintenance and management. At a high level, TRCA is responsible for the ongoing adaptive management of meadow habitat and the City of Toronto for all other maintenance including the multi-use trail and associated assets. The agreement also includes a commitment to establish a Meadoway Liaison Committee with key City and TRCA staff, and a requirement for TRCA to be made aware of any activities contemplated in The Meadoway that have the

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potential to impact habitat. The City has requested that the Master Service Agreement be effective as of November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024 to align with their earlier Council resolution.

### **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 2 Knowledge Economy:**

2.1 Research and development that drives innovation and climate-based solutions

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

3.1 Connect communities to nature and greenspace

### **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

In addition to the \$6.332 million grant from the Weston Family Foundation for Phase 2, \$6.917 million has been secured from the following sources:

- \$5.6 million Natural Infrastructure Fund, through the City of Toronto: for advancement of two priority trail segments (2023-2025);
- \$1.05 million Parks Canada: for enhancements to the connection and amenities near Rouge National Urban Park (2023-2025);
- \$0.231 million Nature Based Climate Solutions grant (2023) supporting meadow restoration;
- \$0.025 million Canada Summer Jobs Grant (2024) supporting meadow restoration; and
- \$0.011 million Canada Summer Jobs Grant (2025).

Several other contributions have been leveraged from the City of Toronto totaling \$6.545 million and include support for programming, wayfinding, signalized road crossings, public realm enhancements and trail design and construction. The Garden Club of Toronto also contributed \$0.45 million in 2025 towards the Meadowway Entrance Garden with an overall contribution of \$0.95 million through to 2030 for maintenance of the space.

This brings the current total value of Phase 2 deliverables to \$20.244 million from all sources.

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TRCA will continue to seek support from all levels of government, the private sector, and philanthropic organizations to leverage current and future grants from the Weston Family Foundation to advance The Meadoway in Phase 3. As part of the Phase 3 proposal, the Weston Family Foundation has committed \$4.5 million and in addition to this they will match funds that TRCA secures from private sources to a maximum of \$1.5 million. In total, the overall Phase 3 grant could be \$6 million should fundraising targets be achieved.

Funds for The Meadoway project are tracked in account series: 260-01.

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

At a high level, the following will be key next steps in 2026 for The Meadoway:

- Meadow restoration and education and outreach activities to proceed as outlined in the Phase 3 funding agreement with the Weston Family Foundation. New deliverables include a grazing research pilot and enhanced seed collection program;
- Opening of the new multi-use trail east of Kennedy (Arsandco Park to Marcos Blvd);
- Detailed design of a trail connection from Pan Am Drive to Conlins Road, in partnership with University of Toronto Scarborough Campus and City of Toronto;
- Technical studies and the launch of a design competition for the trail connection and bridge over Ellesmere Ravine south of Military Trail and west of Morningside Avenue;
- Public realm furnishings will continue to be installed from west of Midland Avenue to Scarborough Golf Club Road providing rest nodes for users;
- City of Toronto to roll out wayfinding at the intersection of The Meadoway and the Pan Am Path at Highland Creek;
- TRCA to hire a fundraising manager on a two-year contract to implement recommendations of the fundraising strategy; and
- Master Service Agreement to be executed with the City of Toronto to define long-term maintenance and management responsibilities in the corridor.

The overall implementation of The Meadoway has been phased to allow for the best possible coordination with stakeholders and adjacent infrastructure updates.

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Key deliverables that will remain after completion of Phase 3 (2028+) include:

- Completion of the construction of the technically challenging crossing at Ellesmere Ravine in close coordination with Hydro One and Infrastructure Ontario (design and construction funded through City of Toronto capital budget 2025-2027 and Weston Family Foundation Phase 3 grant);
- Detailed design and implementation of the rail crossing east of Kennedy Road in cooperation with Metrolinx (unfunded and not prioritized until 2028+);
- Continued roll out of public realm features (seating, benches, rest areas) and wayfinding across the corridor (currently unfunded);
- On-going adaptive management and maintenance for 151 hectares of meadow habitat (unfunded); and
- On-going funding for project management, education and outreach (unfunded).

Capital costs for the remaining trail connection east of Kennedy Road were estimated to be \$1.25 million, based on conceptual design in the Environmental Assessment (2019). Design and construction continues to be unfunded, however, advancing this work would not be prioritized until 2028+. A crossing of the rail line (Moorgate Bridge) currently exists south of The Meadoway at Tara Avenue close to Lord Roberts Woods Park which is communicated to users as the current alternative route in the public access map. The continued roll out of public realm and wayfinding elements in the corridor is estimated to require \$3.5 million and will be prioritized based on available funding. A grant application to the Federal Active Transportation Fund has been submitted to advance this work.

TRCA will need to secure on-going annual funding beyond 2027 to support adaptive management of meadow habitat. The City has committed, in the draft Master Service Agreement, to support all other maintenance and management responsibilities in the corridor. Funding for overall project management and education and outreach will also need to be secured on an annual basis. In total, it is estimated that TRCA requires approximately \$1.5 million annually in operating costs for The Meadoway, which can be scaled depending on available funding.

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**Date: February 27, 2026**

**Attachments: 1**

Attachment 1: Meadoway Update and Phase 2 Summary