

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Executive Committee
Friday, April 10, 2026 Meeting

FROM: Sameer Dhalla, Director, Development and Engineering Services

RE: **VOLUNTARY PROJECT REVIEW AND TRCA PROJECT COMPLIANCE REVIEW 2025**
Works Undertaken by Organizations Exempt from Conservation Authorities Act and associated Regulations

KEY ISSUE

Summary report on letters issued through the TRCA Voluntary Project Review (VPR)/TRCA Project Compliance Review (TPCR) regarding works undertaken by organizations exempt from the Conservation Authorities Act regulations.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the summary report on letters issued through the TRCA Voluntary Project Review (VPR)/TRCA Project Compliance Review (TPCR) regarding works undertaken by organizations exempt from the Conservation Authorities Act (CA Act) regulations, be received;

THAT staff continue to advocate for organizations exempt from CA regulations to consider working with TRCA on voluntary project reviews when they are advancing projects located within TRCA's regulated area to ensure their projects do not affect the control of flooding, erosion, and dynamic beaches or unstable soil or bedrock valuations and not likely to create conditions or circumstances that, in the event of a natural hazard, might jeopardize the health or safety of persons or result in the damage or destruction of property;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff continue to report back to the TRCA Board of Directors on a yearly basis for projects completed under this review process.

BACKGROUND

Since 2014, TRCA has provided an option for provincial and federal government ministries and Crown corporations exempt from the CA Act to

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apply for a VPR/TPCR under the requirements of Section 28 regulatory approval processes. The intent of this application process is to assist ministries and government agencies in reducing risk from natural hazards and to better protect the natural environment and address flooding, erosion, and all applicable tests under the CA Act.

To protect the environment, reduce risk and achieve greater certainty for provincial and federal government proponents, TRCA developed a process whereby the exempt ministry or crown corporate may voluntarily request TRCA to review and comment on detailed design activities to confirm that TRCA policies and procedures applicable to non-exempt proponents are being addressed. Once TRCA concerns are satisfied, a VPR/TPCR letter is provided by TRCA staff at the design stage confirming TRCA objectives and requirements have been satisfied as set out in The Living City Policies and the CA Act and associated regulations. This voluntary compliance process is increasingly viewed as an important means of meeting corporate sustainability requirements for the crown corporations and agencies participating in such programs and meeting federal and provincial sustainability objectives.

The TRCA Voluntary Project Review program began in 2014, with the signing of the first TRCA-Metrolinx Service Level Agreement, which includes stipulations related to TRCA's review of GO Expansion, Bus Rapid Transit, Light Rail Transit and Subway projects. Applications received by TRCA for Metrolinx and their contractors include works such as retaining walls, bridges and culverts, track expansions, station and parking facilities, staging, storage and access, erosion and sediment controls, restoration, and utility relocations. During the past decade, TRCA has issued a total of 158 VPR/TPCR letters, 91.51% of which were issued to Metrolinx or their contractors. The remaining letters have been issued for 407 ETR, Ministry of Transportation, Ports Toronto, Parks Canada, Waterfront Toronto, and Colliers Project Leaders and Infrastructure Ontario projects.

In 2025, TRCA issued 21 VPR/TPCR letters, 20 of which were issued for Metrolinx projects. The remaining letter was issued to Colliers Project Leaders on behalf of Infrastructure Ontario. Details are provided in Attachment 1: Summary of 2025 Voluntary Project Review Projects. Also in 2025, Metrolinx staff advised that from a contract administrative perspective, the term "Voluntary" Project Review has been misinterpreted by their staff and contractors and respectfully requested TRCA rebrand the

program.

RATIONALE

In executing its contracts, similar to Infrastructure Ontario, Metrolinx has also advised that the term “Voluntary” Project Review has been interpreted as a voluntary process in their contracts and by their staff, which it is not. The term “voluntary” was originally intended to reflect Metrolinx’s (and other crown agencies’) commitment to complying with the CA Act and associated regulations, which they are not legally obligated to follow, on a voluntary basis. Metrolinx follows a similar process for Planning Act reviews with the City of Toronto which is branded as a “Compliance Review” and the City subsequently issues a “Notice of Completion” letter. Metrolinx has recently and respectfully requested TRCA follow suit to reduce future misinterpretations.

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:

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

Pillar 2 Knowledge Economy:

- 2.3 Advocacy and adaptability in the face of policy pressures

NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to work with partners to advocate for and review projects submitted under the TRCA Project Compliance Review process and report back to the TRCA Board of Directors through the Executive Committee on TPCR-Notice of Completion letters issued in 2025.

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Attachments: 1

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Attachment 1: Summary of 2025 VPR/TPCR Notice of Completion Letters Issued