

Section I – Items for the Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, April 24, 2026 Meeting

FROM: Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

RE: **CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT REGULATED AREA MAPPING**

KEY ISSUE

Consistent with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 41/24 under the Conservation Authorities Act, staff have updated Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) regulated area mapping based upon the most current information available for regulated natural hazards and natural features.

RECOMMENDATION:

WHEREAS in 2019, TRCA staff undertook the first jurisdiction-wide review and update to TRCA's regulated area mapping since 2006 in consultation with member municipalities, the public, and the building industry;

AND WHEREAS at TRCA Board of Directors Meeting #6/19, held on Friday, June 21, 2019, Resolution #A116/19 was approved, stating that staff continue to make updates to the regulation mapping on an annual basis;

AND WHEREAS staff have now completed the latest review and update of the regulated area mapping as required by section 4 of Ontario Regulation 41/24 under the Conservation Authorities Act;

AND WHEREAS staff will continue to maintain the mapping for internal use, for municipal staff use, and for public viewing on TRCA's website;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the report on the annual review and update to TRCA's regulation mapping be received by the TRCA Board of Directors;

AND FURTHER THAT the Clerk and Manager, Policy so advise the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks, TRCA municipal partners, Conservation Ontario and the TRCA-BILD Working Group.

BACKGROUND

Under the Conservation Authorities Act (the “Act”) and Ontario Regulation 41/24: Prohibited Activities, Exemptions and Permits (the “Regulation” or “O. Reg. 41/24”), TRCA has a legislative and regulatory permitting responsibility to protect people, the environment and property from natural hazards associated with flooding, erosion and slope instability, and to conserve valleylands, wetlands, watercourses and the shoreline of Lake Ontario.

The Act and the Regulation enable TRCA to prohibit “development activity” (with some exceptions) without first obtaining a permit from TRCA. In the Act, “development activity” means a development activity as defined by the regulation.

From O. Reg. 41/24: “Definitions

1. (1) In section 28 of the Act and in this Regulation, “development activity” means,
 - a) the construction, reconstruction, erection or placing of a building or structure of any kind;
 - b) any change to a building or structure that would have the effect of altering the use or potential use of the building or structure, increasing the size of the building or structure or increasing the number of dwelling units in the building or structure;
 - c) site grading; or
 - d) the temporary or permanent placing, dumping or removal of any material, originating on the site or elsewhere.”

The Act and the Regulation also prohibit activities to change or interfere with a watercourse or wetland, in the absence of a TRCA permit.

From the Act: “Prohibited activities re watercourses, wetlands, etc.

28 (1) 1. Activities to straighten, change, divert or interfere in any way with the existing channel of a river, creek, stream or watercourse or to change or interfere in any way with a wetland.”

The Act (s. 28 (1)) and the Regulation apply to the following within TRCA’s area of jurisdiction, referred to as the “regulated area”:

- **River and stream valleys**, including valleys with defined, stable or unstable slopes, plus an allowance of 15 metres;

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- **Flood plains and areas subject to stream-related erosion** (meander belts) where valley slopes are not clearly defined, plus an allowance of 15 metres;
- **Lake Ontario Shoreline**, including associated flooding, erosion, slope instability and dynamic beach erosion hazards, plus an allowance of 15 metres inland from these areas;
- **Watercourses**;
- **Wetlands**, plus 30 metres around all wetlands; and
- **Hazardous land**, which are areas that could be unsafe for development due to flooding, erosion, dynamic beaches or unstable soil or bedrock.

RATIONALE

The natural hazards and natural features and their associated allowances outlined above comprise the regulated area and are more specifically described in law through the text of the Act and the Regulation. Given the specific geographic areas to which the Act and the Regulation apply, and the need to represent these areas visually, the Regulation requires the creation of maps. The maps depict the areas within the authority's area of jurisdiction where development activities are prohibited under the Act.

From O. Reg. 41/24:

"Maps of regulated areas

4. (1) An authority shall develop maps depicting the areas within the authority's area of jurisdiction where development activities are prohibited under paragraph 2 of subsection 28 (1) of the Act which shall be filed at the head office of the authority and made available to the public on the authority's website, and by any other means that the authority considers advisable."

This mapping must be reviewed annually, updated by TRCA staff as new information becomes available, and made available to the public, as follows.

From O. Reg. 41/24:

"Maps of regulated areas

4. (2) At least once annually, the authority shall,
(a) review the maps referred to in subsection (1) and determine if updates to the maps are required;
(b) make and file such updates to the maps at its head office if required; and

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(c) make the updated maps available to the public on its website and by any other means it considers advisable.

(3) Where new information or analysis becomes available that may result in significant updates to the areas where development activities are prohibited under paragraph 2 of subsection 28 (1) of the Act, including enlargements or reductions to such areas, the authority shall ensure that stakeholders, municipalities and the public are notified of the proposed changes in any manner that the authority considers advisable, including making any relevant information or studies available online at least 30 days prior to an authority meeting during which the proposed changes are on the agenda.

(4) Where significant changes to the areas where development activities are prohibited have been made in accordance with subsection (3), the authority shall promptly update the maps described in subsection (1).”

Reviewing and updating the regulated area mapping annually has been a practice of TRCA since 2019.

TRCA Board of Directors Meeting #6/19, held on Friday, June 21, 2019, Resolution #A116/19 was approved as follows:

“THAT staff continue to make updates to the Regulation mapping on an annual basis...”

Notification

A requirement of Ontario Reg 41/24 (s. 4(3)) is to ensure that stakeholders, municipalities and the public are notified by making relevant information available online at least 30 days prior to an authority meeting during which the mapping update is on the agenda.

TRCA fulfilled these requirements in March 2026 by posting the updated regulation mapping as DRAFT on TRCA’s [website](#), issuing TRCA social media posts with a call for review and questions, and through correspondence to municipal partners and the BILD (Building and Land Development Industry) members of the TRCA-BILD Working Group. In addition, staff presented on the draft mapping update at the TRCA-BILD Working Group meeting held on March 25, 2026.

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The draft mapping on TRCA's website is accompanied by explanatory text and graphics, pointing users to the areas of change. In addition, a TRCA point of contact is provided (regulationmapping@trca.ca) for any questions or comments. TRCA staff document and respond to each inquiry received.

Changes to the regulated area mapping are tracked in TRCA's Geographic Information System (GIS) databases and are recorded on each of TRCA's 132 regulated area maps that span the jurisdiction.

Using Regulated Area Mapping

TRCA maps of regulated areas are based on the best technical information available to TRCA at the time of the preparation of the map. The mapping represents the location and extent of regulated natural features and natural hazards plus their associated allowances, which are integrated to form the regulated area.

The mapping is used by TRCA, municipalities and the public as an illustration of where the Act and the Regulation apply, thereby assisting with implementation of TRCA's permitting responsibilities. The description of the regulated area in the Act and the Regulation prevails over the maps.

From O. Reg. 41/24:

"4. (5) For greater certainty, in case of a conflict regarding the boundaries of the areas where development activities are prohibited under paragraph 2 of subsection 28 (1) of the Act, the description of those areas in that paragraph and in section 2 of this Regulation prevail over the depiction of the areas in the maps referred to in subsection (1) of this section."

Regularly updated mapping of regulated areas helps ensure that TRCA staff, municipalities, stakeholders, and the public have the most current information available to help inform decision-making. It also contributes to TRCA's service delivery, such as through pre-consultation meetings and walk-in counter service, and enhances coordination between TRCA and municipal staff.

In addition to facilitating TRCA's permitting responsibilities, the regulated area mapping is also used to inform:

- Solicitor/Realtor Property Inquiries to TRCA;
- TRCA's review of applications under the Planning Act and Environmental Assessment Act, in accordance with the Act and associated regulations, including Ontario Regulation 686/21: Mandatory Programs and Services Regulation for all conservation

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authorities;

- Municipal Official Plan Reviews and Comprehensive Zoning By-law updates, including natural hazard and natural system mapping; and
- TRCA's delivery of mandatory programs and services related to the risk of natural hazards (e.g., flood forecasting and warning).

Regulation Mapping Update Results

Generally, each year as part of the regulated area mapping update, staff survey the most current information available to inform mapping updates, which may include:

- flood plain mapping updates;
- provincial wetland identification mapping;
- TRCA ecological land classification wetland identification mapping;
- digital elevation models;
- aerial photography;
- Lake Ontario shoreline hazard assessment studies; and
- file specific information on certain regulated features or hazards, which have been altered through the development review and approval process.

More specifically, in 2025, changes to the mapping were minor (approximately 0.1% net decrease in regulated area from 2024) as a result of:

- Revised limits associated with new and updated wetland mapping by Ministry of Natural Resources and TRCA;
- Changes to natural features and natural hazards resulting from as-built development approved by TRCA (e.g., watercourse channel realignments); and
- General refinement of regulated features resulting from detailed site examination and field verification of properties through the development and infrastructure review processes (e.g., top of bank staking) and/or site visits.
- Shoreline hazard update on the Toronto waterfront where the City of Toronto's new Ashbridges Bay Landform was constructed.

Site-specific field investigations and studies may be required to more precisely define the limit and extent of natural hazards and natural features. This occurs outside the regulation mapping update process and is typically

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a part of consultation between landowners and TRCA development planning staff during the review of an area- or site-specific development application or proposal.

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:

1.3 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 2 Knowledge Economy:

2.4 Integrate environmental considerations and science into decision making

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funding to support policy and planning input and GIS services for the mapping products was provided by capital funding from TRCA's participating municipalities in account 120-12.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Following the Board's receipt of this report, TRCA staff will:

- Update the [Regulated Area Search](#) page on TRCA's website with the final updated regulated area mapping and place notification on the website;
- Give notice of the final updated regulated area mapping to municipal partners with a link for downloading the updated Regulated Area limit on their own mapping platforms;
- Provide training to municipal staff on the regulation mapping or

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- the Act and Regulation upon request;
- Continue to provide regulation mapping criteria data layers to municipalities upon request for informing comprehensive planning document reviews (e.g., official plan or zoning by-law updates);
 - Inform the TRCA-BILD Working Group and provide training upon request; and
 - Continue to monitor the mapping for future changes that will be compiled and processed on an annual basis in accordance with the requirements of Ontario Regulation 41/24.

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