



**OAK RIDGES CORRIDOR CONSERVATION RESERVE TRAIL PLANNING
PROJECTS - Approval of Management Plan Addendum**

**MACLEOD ESTATE TRAIL LINKAGE
SITE MEETING**

Tuesday May 15, 2018

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm

Macleod Estate Court & Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve

PRESENT:

TRCA: Mike Bender, Corinna Thomassen-Darby, Matt Kenel, Marnie Shepley

TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL: Josh Ward, Patrick Lee

MACLEOD'S LANDING NEIGHBOURS: Forouzan and Anna Bazyar, Maged & Névine Farag, Mohsen and Farideh, Stephen Black

MEETING NOTES

Background:

At the Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve Trail Planning Projects Public Engagement Session on February 22, 2018, certain residents whose properties are adjacent to the Oak Ridges Corridor Conservation Reserve (ORCCR) expressed concerns relating to the Macleod Estate Trail Linkage Project. Through correspondence between these residents the TRCA and the Town of Richmond Hill arranged a group site meeting with the interested parties to discuss their concerns in more detail.

On-site Discussion:

Safety:

Concerns were expressed by the neighbours relating to their safety and the security of their homes because the trail alignment is proposed so close to the rear yards of their properties. They feel there is a risk that trail users may intrude into their properties by jumping over the chain link fence that separates their properties from the ORCCR. They feel this risk is elevated by the natural seclusion of the proposed Macleod Estate Trail Linkage within the ORCCR, which is proposed to have no artificial lighting. They added that there should be a legal minimum setback between the trail and adjacent residential properties.

TRCA staff noted that they have not heard of any cases of people jumping fences into residential properties to commit crimes in any other areas in the TRCA jurisdiction where trails are in close proximity to residential properties. TRCA staff identified and described two rows of mixed coniferous and deciduous plantings proposed between the trail and the fence, will significantly help to deter trail users from approaching the fence.

View & Privacy Assurance

The neighbours in attendance relayed that at the time they bought their homes, they were promised by the developer and the Town of Richmond Hill that their view into the ORCCR would remain undisturbed, and there would be no public access in the area behind their properties between their backyards and Philips Lake. This natural view and privacy was factored into the purchase price of their properties, and they have paid a premium for these views, privacy and location. They expressed that they feel cheated by this trail intrusion, which will completely change their view and ruin the privacy of their properties.

Town of Richmond Hill and TRCA staff relayed that at the time the Oak Ridges Corridor Park Management Plan was approved in 2006, there was no trail linkage planned from the Macleod's Landing neighbourhood into the ORCCR. This was primarily due to the lack of an available public access point through the Macleod Estate property and the sensitivity of Philips Lake placing stringent limitations on trail alignment options. This situation has now changed and the landowner and resident of the Macleod Estate property are now open to a trail access. In addition, the broader Macleod Estate community members have expressed their interest and support to connect their neighbourhood to the ORCCR spine trail.

Litter and Environmental Protection

The neighbours in attendance expressed concern for the environmental protection of Philips Lake and the surrounding area; they referenced that Bond Lake has had a proliferation of unauthorized trails, litter, and undesirable activity. They do not want the same to happen to Philips Lake, recognizing the environmental sensitivity and pristine nature of this lake. They noted that even if there is a fence, trail users will want to access the lake and a fence will not deter them.

TRCA staff suggested that the fence proposed between the trail and Philips Lake should provide a relatively good deterrent to prevent trail users from accessing the lake. The Macleod Estate Trail Linkage is proposed to be designed as an access trail to the main ORCCR spine trail, with no overt gathering, viewing, or rest areas near the lake. Efforts to resolve issues of dumping and litter will be made by TRCA staff from Bathurst Glen Golf Course.

Trail Alignment Decision Process

Town of Richmond Hill staff relayed that in 2016 a trail alignment was approved along the remnant silver maple carriageway to the cul-de-sac at the end of Macleod Estate Court. However, this decision was reversed when the opportunity arose to investigate a trail alignment through the Macleod Estate property which would provide more direct trail access to the ORCCR spine trail, and a petition by a number of Macleod's Landing residents was received objecting to the trail alignment from Silver Maple Road to the Macleod Estate Court cul-de-sac. At the site meeting, the Town of Richmond Hill staff offered to provide the public record of the decision history to help illustrate the background to the current trail planning process. The neighbours in attendance expressed concern that there has been a lack of fairness and transparency within this decision-making process. They feel they would inordinately and unfairly bear the impact of this trail connection, and there are political motivations for this trail to be aligned in the proposed location.

Timing and Next Steps

TRCA staff reviewed the tentative plan approval and implementation commencement with the neighbours. It was suggested that the neighbours could provide a delegation when TRCA seeks approval of the Macleod Estate Trail Linkage Plan, now scheduled for the July 20 TRCA Board Meeting. Subject to this approval the Town of Richmond Hill will prepare a future report to Council to finalize the details of the partnership with the TRCA regarding project implementation. Subject to both of these approvals, implementation of the trail plan could commence in the fall of 2018.