

Section I – Items for Board of Directors Action

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #9/18, Friday, November 30, 2018

FROM: Carolyn Woodland, Senior Director, Planning, Greenspace and Communications

RE: **DRAFT TRAIL STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER TORONTO REGION**
Approval in principle

KEY ISSUE

Approval of an approach to consult on the Draft Trail Strategy and Workbook for the Greater Toronto Region and to utilize the Draft Trail Strategy and the Workbook in the review of development projects and plans.

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHEREAS it is the objective of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to collaborate with municipal partners, private interests, community groups and the general public to realize a linked regional open space system with trail networks that connect communities, parks and greenspace through landscapes and landforms like the river valleys, the Lake Ontario waterfront, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment;

AND WHEREAS staff have drafted the Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region through engagement with these external partners to support this objective;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Draft Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region, dated November 2018, be endorsed for the purposes of engaging with external partners to obtain input prior to finalizing the Strategy and Workbook and for informing staff reviews of projects and plans and preliminary budget submissions;

THAT TRCA staff report back to the Board of Directors by Q3 2019 for final approval of the Strategy;

THAT staff use the Draft Trail Strategy and Workbook in their work with project partners to develop budget submissions and to prepare an integrated phasing plan with preliminary priorities and a corresponding financial strategy to kick-start implementation of the Strategy;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA's trail partners and the Regional Watershed Alliance be so advised.

BACKGROUND

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has a long history of nature-based trail planning, development and delivery. Over the past 60 years, TRCA has worked in collaboration with its regional trail partners to provide responsible access to nature through scenic recreational trails and greenways. In 1989, TRCA proposed the concept of a Greater Toronto Region trail network in greenspace that would connect the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment to the shoreline of Lake Ontario. Inspired by the successful establishment of the Bruce Trail, this proposed trail network would provide continuous public access from Lake Ontario through TRCA

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valley lands to the magnificent landscapes of the TRCA region, including the Oak Ridges Moraine and Bruce Trail.

Since 1989, TRCA has developed this network in partnership with community groups and all levels of government. Within our jurisdiction, there are currently over 500 kilometres of regional trails in greenspace connecting the municipalities of Mono, Peel, York, Durham and Toronto, including sections of the Bruce Trail, the Lake-to-Lake Trail, the Oak Ridges Trail, The Great Trail (Trans Canada Trail) and the Waterfront Trail. In addition, TRCA has planned and implemented local and neighbourhood trail connections to connect residents to conservation lands and local trail systems. This comprehensive network has become an important conservation mechanism to secure greenspace, mitigate climate change, improve human health and well-being, promote responsible public access and inspire environmental stewardship.

Our region is experiencing unprecedented urban growth. By 2041, our population is projected to increase by 40 per cent to reach close to 10 million residents (Ontario Ministry of Finance, 2017). Twelve of the Urban Growth Centres in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 2017), including 25 new communities, are in TRCA's jurisdiction. Increasing the amount of greenspace in our natural system is a primary means to accommodate this projected urban growth while maintaining quality user experiences and ecological functions. We must proactively and sensitively locate our trail infrastructure to support these new and expanding communities while mitigating the environmental impact associated with intensification.

Expanding greenspace and providing trails more equitably across our jurisdiction will provide nature-based amenities, recreation opportunities and active transportation options to underserved communities while improving our collective health and well-being. The creation of new trails, trailheads and neighbourhood linkages to our regional system will facilitate access to incredible destinations, allowing people to experience nature through the seasons. TRCA must target our efforts and capitalize on development opportunities to realize these possibilities and service this growth according to our environmental planning policies and objectives. TRCA must also secure adequate and sustainable investment in this community infrastructure on our lands and our partner owned lands that accounts for the full lifecycle costs of trails to maintain assets in a state of good repair so that we can achieve our desired level of service.

In response to these influences, TRCA has prepared the Draft Trail Strategy for TRCA's Jurisdiction (Trail Strategy) to provide a strategic vision for a complete regional trail network in greenspace that facilitates sustainable living in this next generation of trails. As development accelerates, TRCA will employ this Strategy and partner with municipal, provincial and federal colleagues, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community partners and the development industry to inform our efforts to acquire, protect and enhance natural assets and to achieve new and upgraded trails, while connecting people to nature. Through this collaboration, ongoing public securement of greenspace and the provision of scenic trail greenways will occur. At our doorstep, we have precious natural landscapes with nature-based recreation trails across the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment, our nine river valleys and the waterfront. By working together strategically, we can grow and maintain this legacy in support of complete communities, a thriving economy and a healthy environment.

In undertaking the Draft Trail Strategy, TRCA has followed a seven-stage process:

Stage 1: Scoping Study and Brief

Stage 2: Research and Context Review

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Stage 3: Trails Inventory and Existing Conditions Audit

Stage 4: Trails Value and Demand Review

Stage 5: Strategic Objectives and Concept Plan Development

Stage 6: Draft Trail Strategy and Workbook

Stage 7: Communications and Branding Campaign (in progress)

Throughout these project stages, TRCA business units across all divisions were consulted in the Strategy development. This engagement also included working sessions with external groups comprised of: Federal staff (Parks Canada), Provincial staff (Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport), Regional Municipality staff (Peel, York, Durham and Toronto), Local Municipality staff (Township of Adjala-Tosorontio, Town of Ajax, Town of Aurora, City of Brampton, Town of Caledon, King Township, City of Markham, City of Mississauga, Town of Mono, City of Pickering, Town of Richmond Hill, Township of Uxbridge, City of Vaughan, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville), Conservation Authorities (Conservation Ontario, Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, Credit Valley Conservation, Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority), charitable and advocacy organizations (Ontario Trails Council, Nature Conservancy of Canada) and grassroots associations (Bruce Trail Conservancy, CycleTO, Durham Mountain Biking Association, Green Durham Association, Humber Valley Heritage Trail Association, Oak Ridges Trail Association, Trans Canada Trail, Trans Canada Trail Ontario, Waterfront Regeneration Trust).

Through this engagement, our external partners communicated their strong support for the Draft Trail Strategy. They confirmed that the Strategy addresses current shared challenges in trails development, particularly initiatives that provide greater leadership around, investment in, promotion of and full life-cycle management of the Greater Toronto Region trail network. They strongly support coming together as a united voice to advocate for trail funding at the Regional, Provincial and Federal levels.

In September 2018, the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA), which is an advisory board to our Board of Directors, received the Draft Trail Strategy and presentation for information and input. Following this presentation, the RWA voiced overall support for the Draft Trail Strategy. Generally, RWA members wish to advance the objectives of the Strategy through grant and program opportunities within their various networks, and municipalities. The RWA members supported the alignment of the proposed trail and destination capital projects with municipal work plans and budgets. The RWA also advocates that TRCA and partners seek funding from all levels of government to implement the Strategy. The RWA resolved that the proposed working groups of *Greenspace and Ecosystem Services* and *Integrated Community / Watershed Planning and Engagement* consider integrating Trail Strategy priorities into their work plans, including the formation of a Trail Leaders Round Table. Upon approval of this Draft Trail Strategy, TRCA will follow up with these RWA subcommittees on these action items.

OVERVIEW

The Draft Trail Strategy outlines TRCA's plan to complete, expand, manage and celebrate the Greater Toronto Region trail network in this next generation of trails. Its purpose is to express TRCA's policy on regional trails in our greenspace system across our rapidly urbanizing watersheds. It also serves as a framework to guide the planning, development and management of these trails in the current landscape of urban intensification. In addition, the Draft Trail Strategy provides rationale and informs effort to secure greenspace and should be used to support the Greenlands Acquisition Project for 2016-2020 (GAP) and its future iterations. As such, it will facilitate the concerted effort of expanding greenways and building the Greater Toronto Region trail network in partnership with our trail community colleagues. The Draft Trail Strategy consists of:

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- A vision expressing what we want to achieve
- A concept describing our proposal
- Guiding principles to steer our efforts
- Context for our work
- Strategic objectives to translate our vision into specific plans and projects
- Implementation plans to execute our concept
- An action plan outlining the strategic roadmap to achieve our vision

The **vision** for the Greater Toronto Region Trail network sees a complete regional trail system in greenspace that connects our growing communities to nature and to each other, supporting active living and enhancing our conservation legacy.

The **concept** for the Greater Toronto Region trail network sees the development of over **570 kilometres (km) of proposed trails** through the Oak Ridges Moraine, the valleys of the Etobicoke, Mimico, Highland, Petticoat and Duffins Creeks, the major valleys of the Don, Humber and Rouge Rivers, the Lake Ontario Waterfront, through regional infrastructure corridors, including transit, utility and electric power facility corridors and the introduction of blue trails, which are paddling routes on our navigable waterways. Combined with the **530 km of existing trails** in our greenspace system, this concept would see the provision of over **1,100 km of regional trails for the Greater Toronto Region**.

This concept builds on the existing regional trail system and capitalizes on current growth and development opportunities to strategically expand greenspace and trails through a variety of mechanisms. It also proposes investment in 10 conservation destination areas to enhance the trail network and provide amenities. This concept is intended to be a point of departure for discussion. It identifies the existing trail system, key missing links within the regional network, and proposes opportunities for trail connections that would link into both the regional and municipal trail systems. Many of the opportunities to be investigated extend beyond TRCA-owned lands and require collaboration with member municipalities, private landowners and other agencies. The proposed trail alignments are conceptual and represent potential segment alignments to be refined through collaboration and negotiations.

Five **guiding principles** form the foundation of the Draft Trail Strategy, underpinning the vision of the document and informing the rationale and methodology for its implementation: Lead, Collaborate, Steward, Invest and Celebrate. Eight **strategic objectives** have been developed in support of these principles to meet the challenges associated with trail development in the Greater Toronto Region. These objectives, along with their associated initiatives and actions, will guide TRCA and partners toward achieving the overarching vision of the Draft Trail Strategy. The objectives are:

1. Organize effective trail leadership
2. Prioritize trail and destination area capital projects
3. Promote greater trail use and awareness
4. Build a sound knowledge base
5. Balance enjoyment and protection of our heritage
6. Promote meaningful community engagement
7. Support complete communities
8. Secure adequate and sustainable investment

The Draft Trail Strategy also includes an implementation Workbook to outline the steps required to achieve our vision, concept and objectives and complete the Greater Toronto Region Trail

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Network. The Workbook consists of:

- Trail Capital Projects: Candidate List
- Destination Area Projects: Candidate List
- Implementation Plans
- Preliminary Order of Magnitude Costs
- Action Plan

The Trail Capital Projects: Candidate List and Destination Area Projects: Candidate List outline prioritized trail and destination area capital projects by region, to inform capital planning efforts by TRCA and municipal trail partners. Each candidate project has been assigned an implementation priority based on defined investment criteria. These capital projects are illustrated in the Implementation Plans required to complete the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network. The Action Plan organizes the eight strategic objectives and associated initiatives and actions into a timeframe to be phased across short, medium and long-term time horizons.

The Draft Trail Strategy supports The Living City vision for a new kind of community where human settlement can flourish forever as part of nature's beauty and diversity. In particular, it reinforces TRCA's Leadership Strategy 3: Rethink greenspace to maximize its value, identified in TRCA's Building the Living City®: 10 Year Strategic Plan 2013-2022. The expected outcomes of the Draft Trail Strategy will be:

- Provision of connected routes and corridors for wildlife, recreation and active transportation
- Provision of natural spaces for play, exploration and recreation
- Provision and protection of green infrastructure and ecosystem services
- Protection of our cultural heritage and promotion of its understanding
- Support for opportunities for local food production
- Creation of opportunities for land-based education
- Enhancement of our physical landscapes, informing existing and future development
- Encouragement of urban regeneration
- Support for the economic potential of eco-tourism
- Improvement of social inclusion, equity and accessibility to greenspaces
- Improvement of opportunities to enjoy and connect with nature
- Reinforcement of our regional identity

See the [Draft Trail Strategy](#) and [Workbook](#).

RATIONALE

Since the original vision of the Greater Toronto Region trail network proposed in 1989, our region has developed significantly. Thirty years of intensification warrants an update to the Greater Toronto Region trail network concept as well as the development of an associated Trail Strategy to deliver it. TRCA has the ability to bring four key strengths to continue the development of a regional greenway trail network in the Greater Toronto Region.

1. Over 18,000 hectares of greenspace are currently secured by TRCA. This land is largely associated with our large-scale regional natural features, including the valley and stream corridors, Lake Ontario waterfront, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine. These features also serve as corridors where further securement will allow the completion of an inter-regional trail network.

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2. TRCA jurisdiction transcends local and regional government boundaries to include the majority of the river valley corridors and a significant portion of the Lake Ontario Waterfront and the Oak Ridges Moraine within the Greater Toronto Region.
3. Additional trail funding can be facilitated by TRCA and partners through municipal grants, private donations and revenues.
4. TRCA has accumulated considerable technical expertise in the field of trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, assessment, monitoring and programming. As the author of the 1989 concept for the Greater Toronto Region trail network, TRCA is positioned to build on this trails legacy.

FUNDING SOURCES

Regional trail projects are funded from a variety of sources. At TRCA, these sources include revenues and occasional donations or government grants (see **Table 1: Trail Funding Sources**). Financial resilience will require a greater range of eligible funding sources and leveraging the revenue-generating potential of trails and related facilities. In addition to these sources, TRCA will continue to engage with regional trail partners to capitalize on future development opportunities that maximize budgets, time and resources.

TABLE 1: TRAIL FUNDING SOURCES

	SOURCE OF FUNDS	DESCRIPTION
CURRENT SOURCES	Development Charges (DCs)	Development fees
	Development Plan Approvals and Municipal Infrastructure EA Approvals	Co-operative funding agreements obtained through planning and development approvals processes
	Donations / Sponsorships	Funds received through Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation (TRCF) and/or from trail donation boxes, Donations and sponsorships received from volunteer trail associations, the general public, the private sector and donations directed through municipalities
	Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF)	Local infrastructure priority funding
	Government Grants	Municipal, provincial or federal funding
	Government Infrastructure Programs	Provincial or federal funding programs
	Municipal Taxes	Municipal operating and/or capital budgets
	Revenues	Municipal levies, capital, special projects
FUTURE SOURCES	Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)	Co-operative funding arrangements, Site-specific developer agreements
	Pay-Per-Use	Trail user fees (parking, membership)

Many of the proposed trail and greenway connections in the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network require partnerships with municipal partners, NGOs and the development industry.

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Leveraging the development process to secure trail project funding and implementation opportunities provides a mechanism for execution. The inclusion, siting and design of trails should be considered at the initiation of the development process. With proper planning during official plan reviews and from project outset, trails can be situated in the most appropriate location for a particular development area. Municipal departments need to coordinate these potential routes with TRCA and landowners as plans evolve for new community growth areas. Upgrading of existing connections should also be considered with wayfinding, parking and rest areas, as needed.

As Secondary Plans and Master Environmental Servicing Plans (MESPs) are developed, TRCA and partner municipalities should be looking at opportunities to implement the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network plans to ensure that new neighbourhoods are well connected to municipal parks and our greenspace system. Negotiations through the development process would also include acquisition of major land holdings to facilitate inter-regional trails and community connections. Municipalities should work with trail partners to ensure that short-term trail routes and restoration opportunities are implemented with development funding, including Development Charges (DCs) and considered in Section 37 Agreements, where such opportunities are present. Long-term trail connections should be confirmed through the planning process e.g., consent or subdivision process, by agreements, and through infrastructure Environmental Assessments (EAs). Transit and transportation infrastructure also provides key opportunities for implementing active trail linkages to the larger community systems and transit hub stations. This Draft Trail Strategy will be considered where TRCA is reviewing transit and transportation projects to ensure safe crossings, wayfinding and other measures are protected for and designed into such projects.

Ongoing maintenance of trail routes can be challenging for only one agency with limited budget flexibility. In existing neighbourhoods, or in areas that do not have upcoming development opportunities, trail partners should leverage existing budgets and new funding opportunities through federal, provincial and municipal infrastructure funding programs that support active transportation, climate change adaptation and the creation of green infrastructure. Past applicable provincial funding programs have included: Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP), the Ontario Municipal Commuter Cycling Program (OMCC), the Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund (OSRCF), Ontario Trillium Foundation grants and Greenbelt Foundation grants. Current applicable municipal funding programs include: York Region Pedestrian and Cycling Municipal Partnership Program (YRMPP). TRCA and municipal trail partners must also look to seize opportunities to align upcoming major infrastructure projects with the inclusion of trail corridors. By capitalizing on complementary regional infrastructure project opportunities to build trails, we can maximize our infrastructure, leverage funding opportunities and help to complete the remaining gaps that exist.

Trails require sustained investment to address operating fund shortages required to manage and maintain existing and proposed trails. In order to maintain their recreational and active transportation functions, trails require ongoing funding to be maintained in a state of good repair and to achieve their desired level of service. TRCA and its partners must strive to adopt the principles of asset management in accounting for the full lifecycle of the natural and cultural heritage and user monitoring, planning, design, implementation and maintenance of trails. The Strategy recommends developing a Trail Lifecycle Costing Tool to fully account for these activities in order to improve trail cost analysis. In addition, the Draft Trail Strategy recommends TRCA and municipal trail partners create Trail Maintenance Reserve Funds for ongoing trail operations and maintenance expenditures to improve our ability to adequately manage our existing and proposed trail assets in a state of good repair.

GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES AND PROGRAM OPPORTUNITIES

The Draft Trail Strategy provides the government with a unique opportunity to meet its federal, provincial and municipal objectives in a cost-effective manner. The **Government of Canada** is making historic new investments in infrastructure to build the cities of the 21st century and provide communities across the country with the tools they need to innovate and prosper. The **Investing in Canada Plan** provides investment to support three key objectives:

- Create long-term economic growth
- Support a low carbon, green economy
- Build inclusive communities

The Strategy supports these objectives through provision of the five main infrastructure priorities targeted by the Investing in Canada Plan:

1. **Public Transit Infrastructure.** The Greater Toronto Region trail network is a key component of our region's active transportation network. Trails provide transportation alternatives to cars, helping to reduce traffic congestion and long commutes that make it harder for people to get to work and for families to spend time together. Trails also address the current "first mile/last mile" (FMLM) barrier to the success of our regional public transit system.
2. **Green Infrastructure.** The Greater Toronto Region trail network provides green infrastructure that protects our communities and supports Canada's ongoing transition to a clean growth economy. Greenways provide the needed forest vegetation that filters the air and directly improves its quality. The buffering effect of vegetation in our river valleys is important in controlling the delivery of surface pollutants to streams. The development of trails through our greenways offers an opportunity for residents to see and smell, first hand, the benefits of a strong network of natural open spaces in the local community.
3. **Social Infrastructure.** Investing in the Greater Toronto Region trail network is an investment in our social fabric. The Strategy promotes investment in Indigenous communities, out-of-classroom education, and cultural and recreational infrastructure through trails. Indigenous peoples, educators, volunteers and grassroots organizations are key partners in creating and managing our regional trail network. Working in partnership, meaningful relationships can be created to respect and celebrate various cultural ways and beliefs, improving the quality of life for present and future generations.
4. **Trade and Transportation Infrastructure.** The Greater Toronto Region trail network supports the development of stronger, more efficient transportation corridors in our region. Trails integrated into our public transit network provide residents with an active transportation alternative to move about their daily lives, helping to reduce road congestion, bottlenecks and capacity issues. Trails help the transportation system withstand the effects of climate change by acting as a climate change mitigation measure.
5. **Rural and Northern Communities Infrastructure.** The Greater Toronto Region trail network connects rural communities in the protected northern areas of the Niagara Escarpment, the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt to the growing suburban and urban communities of the Greater Toronto Region. It also connects rural communities beyond TRCA jurisdiction by linking into Provincially and Federally significant trails, including the Bruce Trail, the Lake-to-Lake Trail, the Oak Ridges Trail, The Great Trail (the Trans Canada Trail) and the Waterfront Trail.

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Furthermore, nine mandates of the **Government of Ontario** are supported by the Draft Trail Strategy:

1. The **Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS)** has identified walking as one of the most popular active living pursuits in Ontario. Public trails provide an accessible recreation alternative for all Ontarians. Eco-touring throughout Southern Ontario is a growing tourist business that requires a strong network of hiking and cycling trails linking the city to the country. From the standpoint of cultural heritage, trail development in greenway corridors encourages the cataloguing and development of archaeology resources. With over 18,000 hectares of valley and waterfront lands, TRCA is custodian to the largest reserve of archaeological resources in Southern Ontario. The **Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund (OSRCF)** is a grant program that supports a vision of getting and keeping Ontarians active in community sport, recreation and physical activity.
2. The **Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR)** plays a role in the planning and management of natural heritage systems, including the provision of sustainable outdoor recreation opportunities and education on natural heritage. MNR also partners with the natural resources and forestry industry to demonstrate sound forest and wildlife management in Southern Ontario. Greenway trails provide greater access to managed forests and interpretive trails through Conservation Areas can educate the public on a wide variety of vegetation and wildlife habitats in their communities. In terms of mineral resource management, aggregate resource rehabilitation projects can support the development of regional trails on the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Niagara Escarpment with the cooperation of such groups as the Ontario Stone, Sand & Gravel Association. This type of partnership resulted in the successful restoration of a former gravel pit in TRCA's East Duffins Headwaters Properties (EDH) to provide for enhanced biodiversity, sustainable nature-based recreation trails and interpretive education.
3. Trails provide opportunities for the **Ministry of Education** and school boards to animate the course curriculum in out-of-classroom education across the disciplines. The 10 proposed Conservation Area destinations, including TRCA facilities such as the Kortright Centre for Conservation, Conservation Field Centres and Black Creek Pioneer Village, offer incredible education opportunities through the interpretation on the trails.
4. The **Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services** helps to build communities that are resilient, inclusive and sustained by the economic and civic contributions of all Ontarians. A sense of community is one of the most critical elements in sustaining a neighbourhood. The development, management and programming of trails are strong builders of community spirit. The active participation of community service clubs, organized youth groups and creative recreation programs can help build a sense of pride that is critical to the quality of life in our communities. Volunteer contributions range from raising funds to building and maintaining trails. Reduced crime and an increased sense of self-worth are natural by-products when community-driven projects like trails are encouraged.
5. The quality of our air and water are the direct concern of the **Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks**. The buffering effect of vegetation in our river valleys is important in controlling the delivery of surface pollutants to streams. The development of trails through our greenways offers an opportunity for residents to experience the benefits of a strong network of natural open spaces in the local community. The **Waterfront Regeneration Trust** provides strong support for Greenway Trails in its legislative mandate and its ongoing work with Provincial agencies, municipalities and shoreline residents. TRCA actively supports those

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efforts by sharing staff expertise, funding and a coordinated approach to trail management issues.

6. The development of inter-regional trail links throughout the Greater Toronto Region will greatly enhance the community's ability to experience a healthy walk or cycle in a natural setting. The **Ministry of Health** can significantly enhance its promotion of the wellness concept by encouraging communities to use greenway trails. The demonstrated health elements are both physical and mental. A key result of a healthier community will be reduced health care costs.
7. One of the many crossover benefits of greenway trails is the promotion of active transportation and the subsequent reduction in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions. The **Ministry of Transportation** supports the development of pedestrian and cycling networks as a core part of Ontario's transportation system. Increasing cycling opportunities in Ontario offers many benefits, including improved well-being, lower rates of chronic conditions and reduced health care costs as a result of active living, reduced traffic congestion in urban areas, a cleaner environment and increased tourism opportunities across the province. The Greater Toronto Region trail network will offer pedestrians and cyclists an environmentally safe alternative to move about their daily lives. Improved mapping and signage between existing greenway trails will further enhance the enjoyment and safety of such trails.
8. The **Ministry of Indigenous Affairs** works to ensure a better future for First Nations, Inuit and Métis people. Trails provide opportunities for Indigenous communities to enhance awareness about their culture and heritage through the exploration of interpretive trails.
9. The **Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade** supports a strong, innovative economy that can provide jobs, opportunities and prosperity for all Ontarians. There is ample evidence that trails not only enable Canadians to live actively in a healthier environment, but also that trails most often economically benefit both adjacent landowners and the local business community (Go for Green, [The Economic Benefits of Trails](#)). Direct impacts of the Trail Strategy include equal opportunity employment for construction workers, designers, technicians, researchers and planners. Indirect economic benefits include the promotion of private commerce in such fields as increased sales for walking shoes, cross-country skis, bicycles and their repair, public transit use, sport clothing, gift shops and restaurants. The Bruce Trail Association has identified an economic spinoff of \$44 million (2018 dollars) from their trail system.

Finally, municipal mandates of the **Regions of Durham, Peel and York** and the **City of Toronto**, as well as those of their lower-tier municipalities, are supported by the Draft Trail Strategy. Regional and local governments recognize trails as essential green infrastructure through the inclusion of recreational and active transportation trail policies in Strategic Plans, Official Plans, Recreation Master Plans and Transportation Master Plans. These policies set out standards for new communities, managing growth and development and protecting the environment. All of the municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area make recommendations to prioritize walking, cycling and transit to meet the needs of residents and develop complete communities. Several Official Plans also include policies to improve connectivity between greenspaces and cover the role of trails in active transportation, recreational service delivery, community engagement and ecological enhancement. In response to population growth and changing community needs, municipalities are constructing significant regional trail routes. For example, York Region, the City of Toronto and the Town of Richmond Hill are implementing the Lake-to-Lake Cycling Route and Walking Trail that will connect Lake Simcoe to Lake Ontario. The City of Toronto has developed

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the Toronto Ravine Strategy a document that heightens public awareness of the outstanding system of river valleys and forests, parks, major trail routes and natural landscapes connecting to vast urban neighbourhoods. Our Draft Trail Strategy builds on our collaboration for this Ravine Strategy, and sets the regional trail system forming a rich extension of landscape experiences from Toronto, north to the Oak Ridges Moraine and the countryside beyond. New trail segment construction along the Humber Trail, the Etobicoke Creek Trail and the East Don Trail are also recent examples of successful trail building partnership projects between TRCA, the regions and local municipalities.

Based on these overlapping government objectives, implementation of the Draft Trail Strategy with other municipal objectives should be possible and should strive to coordinate major funding requests by TRCA and municipal partners with contributions from all levels of government and include support from public groups and the private sector.

PRELIMINARY COSTING

Basic unit costs per linear metre for the various trail descriptions and types implemented in the concept for the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network are shown in **Table 2: Trail Unit Costs**. The basis for this costing has come from collaborative analysis with our municipal partners.

TABLE 2: TRAIL UNIT COSTS

TRAIL DESCRIPTION (TYPE)	UNIT	2018 DOLLARS
Single-use		
Construct new hiking trail in valley/ridge areas	Linear Metre	\$ 130.00
Multi-use		
Construct new asphalt waterfront trail	Linear Metre	\$ 1,240.00
Construct new asphalt trail in valley/ridge areas	Linear Metre	\$ 702.40
Construct new asphalt trail in road right-of-ways	Linear Metre	\$ 555.40
Construct new asphalt trail in utility corridors	Linear Metre	\$ 372.40
Bike-only		
Construct new cycle-track trail along roadways	Linear Metre	\$ 450.00
Other Costs		
Planning	Percentage	10.0%
Design and Engineering	Percentage	10.0%
Permitting	Percentage	10.0%
Contingency	Percentage	25.0%
Natural Heritage and Tree Compensation	Percentage	5.0%

These metrics were used to calculate the preliminary order of magnitude estimates for trail construction project costs per region shown in **Table 3: Trail Project Costs**. This table includes trail construction project costs per region, according to the high, medium or low implementation priority phase of work categorized in the Draft Trail Strategy. Following partner consultation, the Trail Capital Project List will be updated to include trail project costs on a per-segment basis to highlight the cost of specific proposed trails (e.g., Seaton Trail, Humber Trail, etc.). Table 3 further itemizes trail project cost according to land ownership, by TRCA versus Other, per region and identifies the corresponding expenditures.

TABLE 3: TRAIL PROJECT COSTS

TRAIL PROJECT COSTS (MILLIONS)				
REGION	HIGH PRIORITY	MEDIUM PRIORITY	LOW PRIORITY	TOTAL
Durham	\$2.3	\$16.1	\$21.0	\$39.4
Durham (TRCA lands)	\$1.3	\$0.6	\$1.4	\$3.3
Durham (Other lands)	\$1.0	\$15.5	\$19.6	\$36.1
Peel	\$24.2	\$12.9	\$33.9	\$71.0
Peel (TRCA lands)	\$7.8	\$0.0	\$0.1	\$7.9
Peel (Other lands)	\$16.4	\$12.9	\$33.8	\$63.1
Toronto	\$52.2	\$46.5	\$5.1	\$103.8
Toronto (TRCA lands)	\$11.0	\$3.0	\$0.0	\$14.0
Toronto (Other lands)	\$41.2	\$43.5	\$5.1	\$89.8
York	\$49.9	\$66.0	\$54.7	\$170.6
York (TRCA lands)	\$18.0	\$6.7	\$2.6	\$27.2
York (Other lands)	\$31.9	\$59.3	\$52.1	\$143.4
TOTAL (TRCA lands)	\$38.1	\$10.3	\$4.1	\$52.5
TOTAL (Other lands)	\$90.5	\$131.2	\$110.6	\$332.4
GRAND TOTAL	\$128.6	\$141.5	\$114.7	\$384.9

Based on preliminary high-level costing of the proposed trail connections, the total cost to construct the proposed 570km of trails to complete the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network is **\$384.9 million**. Of this amount, the total cost of these new trail construction projects on TRCA-owned lands is **\$52.5 million**. The accuracy of this estimate is considered to be **+/- 20 to 30% accurate**. This cost is expected to increase annually according to projected inflation. These trail construction project costs include planning, design and engineering, permits and agreements, construction and contingencies. These trail construction project costs exclude crossings, lighting, engineering features, site servicing and trail amenities.

TRCA is already undertaking trail and destination capital project work in support of the Draft concept for the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network within approved capital budgets of multiple TRCA and municipal partner programs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Draft Trail Strategy is an evolving plan for trail connections as user needs change in an expanding region. It will guide strategic planning directions for years to come. As growth area community plans are finalized, municipalities will need to connect local neighbourhoods, old and new, to greenspace attractions to meet community needs. These priority linkages will be set in project discussions with municipal trail planning partners.

Following approval in principle of the Draft Trail Strategy, TRCA staff and external partners will work together to evaluate, finalize and prioritize the proposed trail and destination capital projects required to complete the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network. The Draft **Trail Strategy: Workbook** has been developed as a reference tool to facilitate this effort. The Workbook provides a Draft list of proposed trail and destination area capital projects organized by region and municipality. It also includes implementation plans and an action plan to guide the execution of the Strategy over a multi-year approach, as well as outlining preliminary order of magnitude costs for the proposed trails. The Workbook will assist TRCA and municipal partners in prioritizing trail projects, aligning capital budgets and coordinating funding requests and commitments. This

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exercise will lead to the development of a phasing plan with preliminary priorities for each region within TRCA's watershed and a corresponding financial strategy to kick-start project implementation.

Upon final approval of the Trail Strategy by the Board of Directors, the following three priorities will be immediately pursued:

1. Organize Effective Trails Leadership. Establish an interdivisional Trail Working Group, comprised of staff from Finance, Restoration and Infrastructure, PMO, Greenspace and communications business units to guide the implementation of the Strategy and coordinate its delivery across TRCA business units. The group will also align trail and destination projects with municipal budgets and advocate for projects and funding. This group will promote knowledge-sharing, build capacity and focus fundraising efforts in support of the Strategy.

2. Prioritize Trail and Destination Projects. The Trail Working Group will meet with the Trail Leaders Round Table, that was established via the RWA interest in supporting this initiative, to utilize the Trail Strategy: Workbook to evaluate, finalize and help to prioritize the proposed trail and destination capital projects required to complete the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network. This meeting or meetings will inform staff efforts to finalize the prioritized Trail and Destination Area capital projects lists and perform high-level cost analysis for confirmed capital projects. TRCA staff will work with municipal partners to develop a phasing plan with preliminary priorities and a corresponding financial strategy to kick-start trail project implementation.

3. Promote Greater Trail Use and Awareness. The Trail Working Group and Trail Leaders Round Table will produce a digital and print map of the Greater Toronto Region Trail Network to provide clear wayfinding information for improved user orientation, safety and experience. They will implement a communications plan to promote the network and to generate support to secure funding to implement the Strategy.

Implementation will also be assisted by the development of a Trail Handbook, which will form an update to TRCA's Trail Planning and Design Guidelines Manual (1992), conveying sustainable trail planning, design and best management practices.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funds utilized to prepare and finalize the Draft Trail Strategy are located in the Peel Conservation Land Care and York Conservation Land Care accounts (440-01 and 442-01, respectively). The recommendations in this report can be implemented within current base budgets and resources included in the 2018-2019 Conservation Land Care program budgets.

One full-time equivalent (FTE) Senior Coordinator position in the Master Planning and Greenspace Conservation business unit will be assigned as the primary coordinator for the Trail Strategy. Tasks associated with supporting the Trail Strategy will also require ongoing senior management and staff support from the business unit's Associate Director, Manager, Supervisor, second Senior Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator.

In 2019, TRCA staff in the Planning and Development division will complete the following Trail Strategy work:

1. Finalize the Trail Strategy for TRCA Board of Directors approval.

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2. Initiate administration of the Trail Strategy upon approval. Administration includes overseeing all financial, operating, project planning, reporting and advisory components.
3. Advance the Action Plan.
4. Undertake one high-priority regional trail connection project in collaboration with municipal trail partner(s).
5. Initiate preparation of the Trail Handbook.

The cost to complete this work in 2019 is \$548,930.20.

In 2020 and beyond, TRCA staff in the Planning and Development division propose to complete the following Trail Strategy work on an annual basis:

1. Administer the Trail Strategy, which will include considering all proposed amendments or staff updates from municipalities.
2. Advance the Action Plan (see Workbook).
3. Undertake one or two prioritized regional trail connection projects per year in collaboration with trail partner(s).

The total annual cost to complete this Trail Strategy work in 2020 and beyond is \$353,783.43.

In 2019, monies required to fund the proposed Trail Strategy work will be made available in the Peel Conservation Land Care and York Conservation Land Care accounts (440-01 and 442-01, respectively). This cost will be accounted for in the projected 2019 Conservation Land Care program budget. In 2020 and beyond, the total annual cost for proposed Trail Strategy work required to increase the TRCA's trail program budget to meet the directions provided in the Trail Strategy and its Workbook will be identified as an unmet need on the long list of TRCA's budget planning process. Dependent upon TRCA project priorities, this unmet need may be advanced to the short list, subject to support from the Senior Leadership Team. This budget increase is required as operating funding, in order to support the successful ongoing administration and execution of the Trail Strategy into the future while continuing to advance the full portfolio of project work that is undertaken by the Master Planning and Greenspace Conservation business unit beyond the Trail Strategy initiative.

As well, funding for specific Trail Strategy projects outlined in the Action Plan will be identified as future unmet needs in TRCA's budget planning process. In conjunction with these requests, staff will continue to explore the variety of additional funding sources outlined in **Table 1: Trail Funding Sources** to contribute to the financial implementation of projects outlined in the Trail Strategy.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- Engage with external partners and the public to obtain final feedback to finalize the Draft Trail Strategy (December 2018).
- Pursue and obtain funding to administer the Strategy and deliver priority trail and destination capital projects with trail partners (ongoing).
- Finalize revisions to Draft Trail Strategy, based on the received input (March/April 2019).
- Develop a phasing plan with preliminary priorities and a corresponding financial strategy to kick-start trail project implementation (April 2019).
- Continue to work with the Regional Watershed Alliance towards the establishment of a Trail Leaders Roundtable.
- Report back to the Board of Directors with final Trail Strategy for approval (Q3 2019).

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- Utilize the Draft Trail Strategy in the review of current projects and plans.

Report prepared by: Caitlin Harrigan

Email: caitlin.harrigan@trca.on.ca

For Information contact: Caitlin Harrigan or Mike Bender

Emails: caitlin.harrigan@trca.on.ca or mike.bender@trca.on.ca

Date: November 30, 2018

Attachments: 2

Attachment 1 – [Draft Trail Strategy](#)

Attachment 2 – [Draft Trail Strategy Workbook](#)