

## ITEMS FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE REGIONAL WATERSHED ALLIANCE

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance  
Meeting #2/19, Wednesday, February 13, 2019

**FROM:** Chandra Sharma, Director, Community Engagement and Outreach Division

**RE:** **TRCA RESPONSES TO RECENT PROVINCIAL PLANS AND PROPOSED LEGISLATIVE CHANGES**

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### KEY ISSUE

To brief the Regional Watershed Alliance on TRCA responses to selected Provincial proposals regarding the environment, climate change and land use/housing planning.

### RECOMMENDATION

**WHEREAS** the provincial government has recently brought forward new proposals for plans and legislation related to the environment, climate change and land use planning, including amendments to the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Preserving and Protecting Our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan* and *Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018 and Increasing Housing Supply in Ontario*;

**WHEREAS** the proposed changes in the above plans and legislation relate to, or potentially impact, TRCA's work, projects or mandate;

**THEREFORE LET IT BE PROPOSED THAT** the Regional Watershed Alliance be informed of TRCA's response to these changes through this report and an accompanying presentation by staff.

### BACKGROUND

TRCA's interacts with, and supports, the public, businesses and all levels of government on a variety of issues related to the environment, land use planning and climate change. For example, TRCA acts as a source protection authority under the *Clean Water Act*, is a public comment body under the *Planning Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act*, is a body with delegated authority in plan review to represent the provincial interest for natural hazards, as well as offering climate change services through the Ontario Climate Consortium, partnering with businesses through Partners in Project Green, supporting residents in sustainability through the Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Program (SNAP) and conducting research. As such TRCA's roles, responsibilities and services offered can be impacted by provincial legislation, plans or amendments that touch on these topics.

Recently, the Province of Ontario released a number of legislative, policy, and regulatory proposals of interest to TRCA, the vast majority of which were posted on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) for consultation. TRCA staff has provided, or will provide, written comments, within specified commenting periods, on those proposals that directly or indirectly affect the work of TRCA. Four recent proposals that TRCA has commented on, or is in the process of commenting, include the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, Preserving*

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*and Protecting Our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan and Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018, and Increasing Housing Supply in Ontario.*

### **RATIONALE**

It is important for TRCA to provide input on provincial proposals in order to encourage provincial initiatives to align with and support TRCA's objectives, mandate and interests. The outcomes of such provincial policy initiatives have implications on TRCA's day-to-day work in TRCA's multiple roles as a regulatory agency, public commenting body with delegated authority to represent the provincial interest for natural hazards, resource management agency, proponent of undertakings with and for our partners, and landowner in a region experiencing significant growth and associated land use and environmental challenges.

A good example of the impact that responses from organizations and individuals can have is exemplified by *Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018* ("Bill 66"). Extensive Public feedback, including that from TRCA (See Attachment 1 – TRCA Response to Bill 66) helped to convince the provincial government to removed Schedule 10 from Bill 66.

On November 29, 2018, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks released the proposed *Preserving and Protecting Our Environment for Future Generations: A Made-In-Ontario Environment Plan* ("the Environment Plan") for review and comment. The Environment Plan proposes actions that relate to TRCA's existing programs, while also posing potential roles for TRCA to play in helping to enact some of the goals laid out in the document. TRCA's response to the Environment Plan covers recommended considerations as well as opportunities for utilizing TRCA's breadth of expertise (See Attachment 2 – TRCA Response to Provincial Environment Plan).

TRCA's response on the Ministry of Municipal Housing's *Increasing Housing Supply in Ontario* proposal dated January 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 is also attached (Attachment 3 – TRCA Response to Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's *Increasing Housing Supply in Ontario*)

TRCA staff is also currently preparing feedback for amendments proposed for the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* ("the Growth Plan"). On January 15, 2019 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released a proposed amendment to the Growth Plan for public comments on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (ERO) due February 28, 2019. Conservation Ontario is coordinating a response on behalf of all 36 conservation authorities in addition to the submissions made by individual conservation authorities.

The Ministry states that the Growth Plan amendment is proposed to address, "policies seen as potential barriers to the development of housing, job creation and business attraction." The Ministry states that the changes are intended to streamline growth management in order to achieve the following outcomes:

- More Streamlined Process (faster municipal implementation of the Plan);
- More Land for Housing (more flexibility for additional Greenfield Development);
- More Housing and Jobs Near Transit (increase the supply of housing and jobs near transit infrastructure);
- Greater Flexibility for Municipal Implementation (municipal implementation to better reflect local context).

The four items being circulated for comment concern amendments to the Growth Plan for the

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Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan), modifications to transitional matters surrounding growth plans, designation of provincially significant employment zones, and potential exemptions from the need for the Minister's approval of official plan amendments to aid the implementation of refinement policies for the Agricultural System and Natural Heritage System.

The Growth Plan amendment contains new and revised policies within the framework of the existing Growth Plan across the following six general categories:

1. Employment Planning,
2. Settlement Area Boundary Expansions,
3. Rural Settlements,
4. Natural Heritage and Agricultural Systems,
5. Intensification and Density Targets, and
6. Major Transit Station Areas.

TRCA staff are currently in the process of reviewing the Amendments and drafting comments that will be brought forward in a report to the Board of Directors on February 22, 2019.

### **Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan**

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:  
**Strategy 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability**

**Report prepared by: Victoria Kramkowski, extension 5707**

**Emails: victoria.kramkowski@trca.on.ca**

**For Information contact: Victoria Kramkowski, extension 5707**

**Emails: victoria.kramkowski@trca.on.ca**

**Date: February 6, 2019**

**Attachments: 3**

**Attachment 1 – TRCA Response to Bill 66**

**Attachment 2 – TRCA Response to Provincial Environment Plan**

**Attachment 3 – Response to Request for Comments – Consultation: Increasing Housing Supply in Ontario (ERO #013-4190)**