

Section I – Items for the Action of the Regional Watershed Alliance

TO: Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance
Meeting #2/19, Wednesday, May 22, 2019

FROM: Victoria Kramkowski, Government and Community Relations Specialist,
Community Engagement and Outreach

**RE: REGIONAL WATERSHED ALLIANCE WORKING GROUPS PROGRESS
UPDATE**

KEY ISSUE

To provide an update on the progress of the Regional Watershed Alliance Working Groups, including achievements to date, current actions and future priorities.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the work plan progress and priorities of the Regional Watershed Alliance Working Groups, as appended, be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the RWA endorse the five working groups and their draft 2019 workplans outlined in their report subject to any input received at the meeting.

BACKGROUND

The Working Groups of the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) play a key role in advancing the mandate of both the RWA and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA). Through the Working Groups, RWA members can also voice their interest in, and undertake, activities that align with TRCA goals, as well as those of the partner organizations that members represent. As subcommittees of the RWA, Working Groups are composed of RWA members but can also invite local community representatives or experts to participate as needed. It is intended that the Working Groups be focused on particular projects or issues including more geographically focused specific sites or areas. All Working Groups report back to the RWA on the activities being undertaken.

In order to identify RWA member interests and develop cohesive Working Groups, a consultation process was conducted at the RWA meetings on November 17, 2017 (#1/17) and February 21, 2018 (#2/17) during which members discussed interests, priorities and potential projects. These potential areas of work were then consolidated by staff into several themes that aligned with the collective interest of RWA members, as well as TRCA Leadership Strategies in TRCA's Strategic Plan *Building the Living City*. These consolidated and aligned areas of interest, along with subsequent discussions and identified opportunities, served as the basis for the creation of five Working Groups:

- 1) Greenspace and Ecosystem Services
- 2) Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement

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- 3) Flood and Extreme Weather Outreach (Please note that this Working Group has been consolidated with the Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement Working Group. See below for further details)
- 4) Watershed Engagement
- 5) Youth Council

Potential collective priorities and actions were identified for Working Groups and discussed at the May 23, 2018 RWA meeting (#1/18), as well as in subsequent conversations. It should be noted that as projects progress and new opportunities or issues arise, it is expected that the priorities of Working Groups will similarly evolve. For example, due to an alignment of interests and the desires of Working Group members, the Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement Working Group and the Flood and Extreme Weather Outreach Working Group have agreed to merge into a single Working Group, retaining the name Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement. Selected workplan priorities for each group are provided in attachment1.

Greenspace and Ecosystem Services Working Group (GESWG)

The GESWG seeks to increase the public's understanding of, and influence, the perceived monetary and intrinsic value of nature and greenspace, both regionally and locally. This includes increasing accessibility to nature, encouraging greening on private property and improving the quality of greenspace in TRCA's jurisdiction.

Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement Working Group (IPCEWG) (formerly the Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement Working Group and the Flood and Extreme Weather Outreach Working Group)

The IPCEWG seeks to improve the integration of environmental protection and community well-being in land use planning, design, growth management decisions and consideration of future climate change impacts, including increasing the preparedness and protection of communities from existing and future flooding and extreme weather events. This includes leveraging member networks to help the public navigate the planning system, maximizing opportunities for public consultation and engagement, and bringing together various stakeholders to achieve a common understanding of integrated planning.

Watershed Engagement Working Group

The Watershed Engagement Working Group seeks to support the engagement and outreach to stakeholders around key watershed themes through the design and development of an annual Watershed Forum event. The goals for the Working Group within the context of the Watershed Forum include providing new information on sustainability challenges and opportunities, sharing ideas with community groups, creating networking opportunities and positioning the RWA as a strong voice of civic leadership. Given that 2019 marks the 20th anniversary of the Humber River being designated a Canadian Heritage River, this year the Watershed Engagement Working Group will focus on carrying out these goals within the context of the celebrations surrounding this anniversary.

Youth Council

The Youth Council is comprised of members aged 16 to 24 who either reside, or attend school, within TRCA's jurisdiction. Youth can participate as either general members, or as executive members who are selected through an application process for a term of one year. The goal of

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the Youth Council is to engage, empower and inspire youth, to strengthen a youth network across the Toronto region, and to provide a means for the voices of youth to be heard in the development of plans, projects and programs. There is a Regional Watershed Alliance steering committee for the Youth Council. This group developed the Youth Council Program Framework and provides mentorship, as needed, for Youth Council members. They also act as a liaison between the Youth Council and the Regional Watershed Alliance.

RATIONALE

The RWA Working Groups have established work plans, which are currently being carrying out. Depending on priorities, various Working Groups are at different stages of work on associated action items. Working Groups have also identified future priorities that will be taken on. For example, it is expected that the Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement Working Group will play a role in TRCA's Watershed Planning and Reporting Platform, once the project has progressed to a phase when RWA involvement would be useful and meaningful. As mentioned above, it should also be acknowledged that the priorities and projects taken on by the Working Groups will evolve, deepen or broaden as new opportunities or issues present themselves. As a result, the workplans below (Appendix 1) can be viewed of snapshots of the work being undertaken and planned by the RWA Working Groups for the remainder of 2019 and into 2020.

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

This report supports the following strategies set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan:

Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship

Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

Strategy 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Items outlined in the Working Group work plans are part of TRCA work that is already funded. No additional funding is proposed at this time to support this work.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

RW Working Groups will carry out the items identified in the attached work plans and will identify further areas requiring attention, as needed.

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: **Regional Watershed Alliance Working Group Work Plans**