

## Item 6.4

### Items for the Action of the Regional Watershed Alliance

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance  
Meeting #3/19, Wednesday, September 11, 2019

**FROM:** Victoria Kramkowski, Government and Community Relations Specialist, Peel  
Watersheds, Community Engagement & Outreach

**RE:** **2020 WATERSHED FORUM**

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#### KEY ISSUE

To initiate feasibility work on a proposal for the 2020 Watershed Forum and to thank the existing Watershed Engagement Working Group for their work developing and implementing the events surrounding 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Humber River designation as a Canadian Heritage River.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**THAT preliminary information regarding the proposed 2020 Watershed Forum be received;**

**THAT the current members of the Watershed Engagement Working Group be thanked for their contributions to the year-long celebration of the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the designation of the Humber River as a Canadian Heritage River;**

**THAT the Watershed Engagement Working Group solicit new and/or additional members from the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) in order to discuss the feasibility and options for TRCA and other potential partners to host the 2020 Watershed Forum in collaboration with other Regional Watershed Alliance working groups (Greenspace and Ecosystem Services, Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement, and Youth Council);**

**AND FURTHER THAT a proposal, that includes an outreach and communication plan, potential funding sources, and partnerships considerations for the 2020 Forum be brought back to the RWA for input.**

#### BACKGROUND

Over the course of several Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) meetings on November 17, 2017 (#1/17), February 21, 2018 (#2/17) and May 23, 2018 (#1/18), RWA members discussed interests, priorities and potential projects and consolidated these areas of work into themes that served as the basis for the creation of the RWA Working Groups, including the Watershed Engagement Working Group (formerly the Watershed Forum Working Group). One purpose of the Watershed Engagement Working Group is to develop an annual Watershed Forum to share the newest and best watershed science with municipalities, stakeholders and other partners, as well as discuss associated opportunities for policy and action.

At the RWA meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 2018 (#2/18), members approved the following recommendations for the Watershed Engagement Group to take on the role of Planning Committee for the celebrations surrounding the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Humber River's designation as a Canadian Heritage River:

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*THAT staff report on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration plan of the designation of Humber River as a Canadian Heritage River be received for input of RWA members;*

*THAT the RWA Watershed Forum Working Group consider adopting the Humber Heritage Theme as a priority for 2019 and acting as the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Planning Committee;*

*THAT FURTHER THAT other interested RWA members consider participating in the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary planning activities as appropriate.*

Watershed Engagement Working Group members have contributed to the Humber River 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations, which have included:

- Humber 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Launch Event: TRCA partnered with McMichael Canadian Art Collection to launch the Humber 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Bolton Camp Discovery Garden: Working Group members provided input to the Bolton Camp Discovery Garden Design Charette hosted on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019
- Humber River Stories: Working Group members submitted their personal Humber River stories/narratives to the Humber's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Engagement HQ webpage
- Humber by Canoe: Working Group members helped plan the Humber by Canoe Event on Sunday September 8<sup>th</sup>
- Humber Heritage Committee Exhibit: Working Group members are planning an exhibit commemorating the Humber's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which will be hosted at Lambton House, Toronto from August 1<sup>st</sup> to October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2019
- Humber Public Art Project: TRCA in partnership with Greatness: The Great Lakes Project and Waterlution: A Water Learning Experience are working towards launching a public art project to develop a signature permanent public art piece along the Humber River. This art piece will pay lasting tribute to the importance of the Humber River, Lake Ontario and all Great Lakes through art, culture and natural heritage.
- Open House at Doctors McLean District Park: The City of Vaughan will be hosting an event to celebrate the Humber River's 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary on Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> 2019 which will include wildflower plantings, guided nature walks and an opportunity to learn about the Humber River Urban River Valley and Vaughan's trail network

In addition to acknowledging the successful completion of the Humber River 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations and the important role played in this initiative by the Watershed Engagement Working Group, it is now an opportune time to redirect the efforts of this Working Group towards the feasibility of 2020 Watershed Forum.

### **Watershed Forum 2020**

The inaugural 2020 Watershed Forum is intended to bring watershed planning to the forefront of the professional and public consciousness and to highlight TRCA's role with our partners as a leader in this field. The Watershed Forum is intended to focus on sharing the best science and best practices available in the field of watershed planning and to involve audiences and participants in the journey from knowledge gathering to action. The Watershed Forum is also intended to have a geographical focus and highlight the issues facing TRCA's urban and urbanizing watersheds. As such, it is suggested that the theme of Watershed Forum could be

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*The Urban Watershed: From Science to Action.*

The Watershed Engagement Working Group will act as Planning Committee and will take the lead in determining the feasibility of carrying out the Watershed Forum with support and input from TRCA staff and partners. It is also intended that the other RWA Working Groups (Greenspace and Ecosystem Services, Integrated Planning and Civic Engagement, and Youth Council) will each lead the development of a particular component of the Watershed Forum. This could include, but not be limited to: events that engage youth, such as a hack-a-thon; a roundtable of industry leaders; screening the Watershed Forum in colleges and universities; interactive citizen science-based initiatives; panels; pop-up working group or breakout sessions resulting in a draft white paper; and other engaging opportunities that tie together science, policy and action.

In order to successfully carry out the planning process for the Watershed Forum, additional members and capacity will need to be added to the Watershed Engagement Working Group. As such, it is recommended that new members be recruited to the Watershed Engagement Working Group and existing members reaffirm whether they wish to continue their involvement or join a different Working Group.

Given the emphasis on highlighting the path from science to policy to action within TRCA's watersheds, the work of the Watershed Engagement Working Group in planning the Watershed Forum will be supported through several mechanisms. Partnerships with local academic organizations working in the field should be explored by the Watershed Engagement Working Group. Further, in addition to a TRCA staff lead and relevant subject matter experts for the Working Group, a liaison from TRCA's Science Committee will also be assigned to the Watershed Engagement Working Group to help foster the connections between the science carried out by TRCA and the opportunity to share it and engage audiences via the Watershed Forum.

The Watershed Forum will meet regularly to develop and carry out a feasibility plan, work program and key milestones for the 2020 Watershed Forum.

### **RATIONALE**

Watershed Planning has been recognized as an important component of both environmental protection and growth planning through the 2017 updates to the Provincial Plans for the Oak Ridges Moraine, Greenbelt and Niagara Escarpment, as well as the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Growth Plan recognizes that watersheds are the most important scale for protecting the quality and quantity of water and requires municipalities, partnering with conservation authorities as appropriate, to undertake watershed planning to inform:

- Settlement area boundary expansions;
- Infrastructure planning for water and wastewater systems;
- Stormwater management master plans;
- Identification of water resource systems, including key hydrologic features, key hydrologic areas and their functions; and
- Climate change adaptation goals.

The July 2019 draft Provincial Policy Statement that is currently maintains references to watershed planning as a means for ensuring coordinated and integrated land use planning. The

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Forum will help to ensure best practices are applied to support provincial, municipal and TRCA policy objectives.

### **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 6 – Tell the story of the Toronto region**

**Strategy 8 – Gather and share the best sustainability knowledge**

**Strategy 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability**

### **FINANCIAL DETAILS**

Staff will be involved in the development of the Watershed Forum as part of their existing roles. Any additional funds that may be required for additional expenses associated with the Watershed Forum will be detailed in the Watershed Forum feasibility plan to be developed and shared at the next RWA meeting on November 22, 2019. This work will inform potential budget requests from TRCA to partner municipalities or other potential sponsors or partners.

### **DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE**

The following work has yet to be completed:

- Work program options and key potential milestones for 2020 Watershed Forum to be developed;
- Other working groups to be consulted on assigned specific components; and
- Program options, including an outreach and communication plan with funding options that can be brought back to the RWA for their input and endorsement for TRCA consideration.

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