

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board of Directors

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Meeting #10/19, Friday, November 29, 2019

FROM: Michael Tolensky, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

RE: **THE MEADOWAY PROJECT – PHASE 1 UPDATE**

KEY ISSUE

Update to the Board of Directors regarding Phase 1 of The Meadoway Project.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Phase 1 update for The Meadoway Project be received;

AND FURTHER THAT updates be brought back to the Board of Directors on an annual basis as implementation of the project proceeds.

BACKGROUND

Led by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), in partnership with Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation, City of Toronto, Hydro One, and The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, The Meadoway Project will transform 16 kilometres of hydro corridor in Scarborough into one of the largest urban linear greenspaces in Canada.

On April 11, 2018, Mayor John Tory along with the Directors of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation, and representatives from TRCA and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation jointly announced the launch of The Meadoway at a ceremony in Scarborough. As part of this announcement, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation pledged up to \$25 million in support of the project, with a firm commitment of \$10 million available immediately to support Phase 1 of the project. The City of Toronto committed \$6.3 million to realize the shared vision for The Meadoway by supporting the multi-use trail infrastructure, and to support the City's ongoing operations and maintenance activities in the hydro corridor.

At Authority Meeting #7/18, held on September 28, 2018, an update on The Meadoway and recommendation to advance implementation of key priorities was approved per Resolution #A143/18, in part, as follows:

WHEREAS The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has made a \$10 million of the \$25 million pledge available immediately to TRCA to implement Phase 1 of the project; ...

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT with appropriate Board Authority approvals including purchasing approvals, authorized TRCA and LCF officials be directed to take all necessary actions regarding retaining consulting services, the hiring of contract staff including project managers, and the signing and execution of any service agreements within the limit of the confirmed approved funding agreement for Phase 1; ...

THAT updates be brought back to the Authority on an annual basis as implementation of the project proceeds.

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A budget spanning from 2018-2020 was prepared to support the following key objectives in Phase 1:

- *Active Transportation and Connections* - Completion of the necessary technical analysis, planning, permitting, and design to provide for a connected 16 km active transportation network across The Meadoway along with beginning implementation for incomplete sections of the trail;
- *Education and Community Learning* - Undertaking of engagement and education programs that facilitate opportunities for the community to help implement The Meadoway and utilize this new connection between downtown Toronto and Rouge National Urban Park;
- *Public Relations and Communications* - Undertaking of communications and public relations programs that will effectively position The Meadoway as a world class opportunity for greenspace revitalization; and
- *Meadow Revitalization* - Completion of an additional 40 ha of meadow habitat and the continued monitoring and maintenance of 80 ha of habitat in the Meadoway.

RATIONALE

This Report serves as an update for The Meadoway - Phase 1 and is organized by each of the four major objective areas outlined above.

Active Transportation and Connections

The planning, design, and implementation of the multi-use trail network for The Meadoway is following the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (Class EA) Schedule C process.

The following technical items have been advanced during January 1, 2019 to November 1, 2019 in support of the Class EA:

- Guiding principles and opportunity statement reviewed and finalized;
- Stage 1 Archaeological Assessment completed;
- Biological inventory report for entire project area;
- Baseline conditions report and data gaps analysis completed;
- Fluvial geomorphological assessment for proposed water crossings completed;
- Flood risk assessment for proposed water crossings completed;
- Planning and approval to undertake traffic and public use assessment in 2020;
- Planning and approval to undertake a geotechnical drilling program in support of proposed bridge crossings;
- Alternative trail alignments and crossings for existing gaps in the network identified, evaluated, and mapped;
- The preferred alternative alignment for existing gaps selected and approved;
- Design concept refinements identified, evaluated, and mapped;
- Preferred design concept refinements to trail and bridge infrastructure selected and approved;
- Environmental and socio-economic impacts and mitigation strategy drafted;
- Permits and approvals document for trail implementation drafted;
- Preparation of final Phase 4 Environmental Study Report (ESR) started; and
- Coordination with Ministry of Environment, Climate Change, and Parks regarding submission of ESR for public review period started (submission target is December 2019).

An extensive stakeholder and public consultation program was undertaken in support of the Class EA. The following occurred from January 1, 2019 to November 1, 2019:

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- Consultation with local Councillors, Members of Parliament (MP), and Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP), including email correspondence, letters, and meetings at key milestones of the Class EA process;
- Stakeholder register compiled and continuously updated;
- Over 30 emails from the public tracked and responded to;
- Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) established and three meetings held;
- Community Liaison Committee (CLC) established and four meetings held;
- Three Public Information Centers (PICs) held;
- Consultation with Indigenous communities, letters and emails sent at key stages of the Class EA; and
- Social media campaigns and the project website were updated continuously to reflect key information associated with the Class EA.

Education and Community Learning

As of November 1, 2019, there have been 6,027+ community members engaged through interactive school programs, educational presentations, community workshops, local events and business programs.

Education

Elementary and Secondary Schools

The Meadoway Schools Program was developed and launched with schools across the corridor. In this three-phase, curriculum-linked school program, students grow native plants in their classrooms, take class field trips to The Meadoway to support restoration and stewardship activities, and participate in follow-up learning experiences back at school. Highlights from 2019 include:

- 2,160 student and teacher participants;
- 94 participating Kindergarten - Grade 8 classes;
- 13 participating schools; and
- 1,844 native plants transplanted into The Meadoway - 1,193 of which were grown by students from seed.

Post-secondary Schools (Colleges and Universities)

An educational presentation about The Meadoway, suitable for guest lecturing at local colleges and universities was developed and delivered. Highlights from 2019 include:

- 79 post-secondary participants;
- Four guest lectures; and
- Four participating post-secondary institutions including: Ryerson University, University of Toronto – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE), University of Toronto Scarborough Campus, and Centennial College Ashtonbee Campus.

New Canadians

Through TRCA's *Multicultural Connections Program*, which helps to introduce new Canadians to their local natural environment, an English language learning presentation was developed focusing on The Meadoway. Highlights from 2019 include:

- 728 newcomer participants; and
- 14 presentations through English as a Second Language (ESL) classes and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) centres.

Community Learning

Community Workshops and Events

High-energy, engaging workshops about The Meadoway were developed for a wide range of community groups. These workshops helped to explain why The Meadoway matters and how it will enhance the landscape for plants, people, and wildlife. Educational activities and interactive displays were also developed to help animate a mobile event booth that travelled throughout The Meadoway corridor. Highlights from 2019 include:

- 2,540 community members engaged through workshops and events; and
- 39 workshops and events.

Partnerships

Collaborating with partner organizations and community groups provided a powerful opportunity to help engage residents. These partners are all stakeholders associated with The Meadoway project and are an important bridge to community members. Some of these partners include:

- Centennial College
- Centre for Connected Communities
- Golden Mile Impact Project
- Green Neighbours Network of Toronto
- Morningside Community Changers
- Ontario BioBlitz
- Park People
- PlazaPOPS
- Rouge National Urban Park
- Ryerson University
- Scarborough Museum
- Scarborough Seedy Saturday
- Toronto Catholic District School Board
- Toronto Community Housing
- Toronto District School Board
- Toronto Field Naturalists
- Toronto Public Library
- Toronto Zoo
- University of Toronto

Community Planting

The first “Experience The Meadoway” fall community planting event was held on Sunday September 22 at the Scarborough Centre Butterfly Trail. This free, family friendly, outdoor event included meadow plantings, guided hikes, bike tours, and displays from key partners. Over 120 members of the public of all ages attended the event, which included interviews and reporting by CBC.

Look After Where You Live

Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation (TRCF) recruited business prospects for three (3) Look After Where You Live planting and clean-up activities which included over 400 participants who planted 1,700 native meadow species and removed 2,957 pounds of invasive species. As part of this program corporate groups pay for a half or full day program and they get ‘taken to work’. The experience provides them with a team building opportunity while protecting our natural resources and ensuring lasting contributions to our communities with tangible results. CLIF Bar, CI Financial and Proctor and Gamble took part in 2019 activities as part of their staff

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development programs. Five (5) Lunch & Learn or Wellness fairs (Cognizant, Ivori Insurance, Siemens, CI Financial and KPMG) have also been attended to date with The Meadoway project as the main topic of discussion with maps and images that highlight program opportunities for corporations.

Public Relations and Communications

In 2019 communications efforts focused on supporting the active Class EA process and associated public consultation. The following activities were completed/undertaken:

- A Manager of Communications for The Meadoway was hired to help leverage communications efforts in support of the active transportation and connections, education and community learning and meadow revitalization programs in 2019 while creating a broader Communications Strategy for the overall project that will be implemented in 2020;
- Branding guidelines were updated to support the Class EA and ensure a consistent look and feel to the project;
- On-going liaison with media was undertaken to promote The Meadoway through the Class EA, including a news article, a radio and a television spot on CBC, and an article in the Scarborough Mirror;
- Collaboration between The Meadoway teams was facilitated through monthly team meetings to ensure consistent messaging;
- Risks were managed by developing responses to potential questions and concerns via FAQs on The Meadoway website;
- Social media campaign plans were developed utilizing Twitter and Facebook platforms which has increased project social media presence;
- Post cards were developed and printed to promote The Meadoway, encourage sign up to mailing list and promote social media and website;
- A display map of The Meadoway was completed showing existing trails and connections to neighbourhoods;
- An overhaul of The Meadoway website was completed, which now serves as a one-stop-shop for all major key objective areas, consultation materials, interactive maps, and resource database;
- Development and release of a monthly newsletter program for Meadoway subscribers started in October;
- Preliminary networking meetings were undertaken with other internationally recognized linear revitalization projects including: The High Line, The Bentway and Arbutus Greenway;
- A media content position with Toronto.com was earned. One article published with future content in the works; and
- Various correspondence/discussions with the Region of Durham regarding their interest in expansion of The Meadoway was had and a site visit with Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority to overview the restoration process took place in September.

Visualization Toolkit

In January of 2019, Perkins &Will were retained to develop The Meadoway Visualization Toolkit – an illustrative plan developed to define the vision and overall design direction and philosophy of the project. All deliverables under this contract have now been completed and include:

- Two field investigations and completion of a full landscape analysis;
- A visually striking Existing Conditions Report, which serves as a compilation of research, case analysis, field investigations, and conceptual layout of The Meadoway;

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- Facilitation of two visioning workshops (held concurrently with the Class EA public open houses) and the final open house in October;
- The Meadoway flip book, which takes the viewer on a journey of the corridor using imagery obtained from helicopter flights;
- A comprehensive 24' map of The Meadoway concept plan, which serves as a blueprint for the future build out of The Meadoway;
- Three video animations to spread awareness and educate the public and stakeholders. This includes The Meadoway of Today, The Meadoway of Tomorrow, and an implementation and phasing animation;
- Virtual reality models of major infrastructure components, such as water crossings;
- 3D printed to-scale models of the future Highland Creek and Ellesmere Ravine water crossings; and
- The Meadoway Visuals Book which is a compilation of renderings, sketches, precedents, and cross-sections developed for the future The Meadoway.

Meadow Revitalization

Meadow restoration and adaptive management continue to occur across The Meadoway. As restoration can take up to five years, from seed to full establishment, each section of The Meadoway requires a different application of restoration techniques based on progress and timing of planted meadow. The following activities have been completed to date in 2019:

- Section 1 (19 ha) – East Don Trail connection to Pharmacy Avenue
 - Meadow footprint delineated with flagging
 - Limbed trees to provide clearance for mowers
 - Cleared woody debris
 - Garbage removal from meadow footprint and fence lines
 - Post and informational signage installed and mapped
 - Two rounds of site preparation (spray, till, seed with cover crop, harrow, mow) on 7.5 ha
 - Buffer mow around meadow footprint
 - Invasive species adaptive management
- Section 2 (30 ha) – Pharmacy Avenue to Kennedy Road
 - Meadow footprint delineated with flagging
 - Limbed trees to provide clearance for mowers
 - Cleared woody debris
 - Garbage removal from meadow footprint and fence lines
 - Post and informational signage installed and mapped
 - One round of site preparation (spray, till, seed with cover crop, harrow) on 25.2 ha
 - Buffer mow and trim around meadow footprint
 - Invasive species adaptive management
 - Soil samples taken
- Section 4 (40 ha) – Thomson Memorial Park to Scarborough Golf Club Road
 - Garbage removal from existing meadow
 - Maintenance mow on 23.5 ha
 - Buffer mow around existing meadow footprint
 - Invasive species adaptive management including non-native woody vegetation removal

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- Soil samples taken
- Community events (garbage removal, invasive management, planting)
- Section 7 (16 ha) – Conlin’s Road to Rouge National Urban Park
 - Garbage removal from existing meadow
 - Maintenance mow
 - Buffer mow around existing meadow
 - Invasive species adaptive management including non-native woody vegetation removal
 - Soil samples taken
 - Three rounds site preparation (mow and till) on 1.5 ha area
 - Site preparation and native seeding on 3 ha area
 - Post and informational signage installed and mapped

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 3 – Rethink greenspace to maximize its value

Strategy 4 – Create complete communities that integrate nature and the built environment

Strategy 5 – Foster sustainable citizenship

Strategy 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

FINANCIAL DETAILS

The Meadoway project has a total proposed budget of up to \$85 million. The City of Toronto committed \$6.2 million from 2018 – 2020 from their existing budgets to support implementation of the multi-use trail. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has committed \$10 million to TRCA to fulfill Phase 1 (2018 – 2020) of the project. An additional \$15 million was pledged by The W. Garfield Weston Foundation for Phase 2, which would bring their potential total grant to \$25 million. This pledge was made with the understanding that additional funds would be secured from other sources as leverage for the overall project delivery. TRCA and the City of Toronto have made efforts to seek funds from the Provincial and Federal government, but requests have been unsuccessful to date.

The Phase 1 budget has been strategically assigned to best position the project in 2020 to appeal to other funding sources and programs should The W. Garfield Weston Foundation pledge not be made available. Discussions continue with The City of Toronto and The W. Garfield Weston Foundation regarding the future funding model.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

The following summary outlines the remaining work to be done for Phase 1, organized by key objective areas.

Active Transportation and Connections

Following filing and approval of the Class EA ESR, expected in January of 2020, if no unforeseen delays, work will begin on detailed design of the preferred multi-use trail alignments and bridge infrastructure for all three incomplete sections of the trail network.

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Other activities that will be undertaken during the detailed design phase include additional flood hydraulic and fluvial geomorphology assessments to guide bridge placement and design; a Stage 2 archaeological assessment; geotechnical work; confirmation of utilities; obtaining easements under the secondary land use program from Infrastructure Ontario and Hydro One; and applying for all necessary permits and approvals.

Education and Community Learning

In 2020, education and community learning initiatives for The Meadoway will continue to grow. *The Meadoway Schools Program* will expand to new schools both inside and outside of The Meadoway corridor. Collaboration with partner organizations and community groups will also expand by building upon existing relationships and fostering new ones.

Public Relations and Communications

As the regulated planning aspect of the project (Class EA) will be complete by the end of 2019, communications efforts will be expanded. A Communications Strategy for The Meadoway will be finalized in December 2019 and 2020 will focus on implementing this strategy. In addition, a Wayfinding Strategy for the corridor will be explored with key stakeholders.

Meadow Revitalization

In 2020, meadow restoration works will include site preparation of new sections (48 ha), mowing and seeding for 33 ha, adaptive management for previously restored sections (99 ha), and continued monitoring across the project footprint (99 ha).

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