

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

**TO:** Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance  
Meeting #1/20, Wednesday, March 04, 2020

**FROM:** Alex Taranu, Senior Advisor, Design, Environment and Development  
Engineering, City of Brampton

**RE:** **AN INTRODUCTION TO BRAMPTON RIVERWALK URBAN DESIGN MASTER PLAN PROJECT**

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#### KEY ISSUE

To inform and engage the Regional Watershed Alliance regarding the scope and status of Brampton Riverwalk Urban Design Master Plan Project.

#### RECOMMENDATION

**WHEREAS the Brampton Riverwalk Urban Design Master Plan Project has been initiated,**

**THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Regional Watershed Alliance receive the City of Brampton staff report on the Riverwalk Urban Design Master Plan Project;**

**AND FURTHER THAT City of Brampton staff be requested to continue to engage the Regional Watershed Alliance through the duration and implementation of the project.**

#### BACKGROUND

##### **Brampton's Riverwalk Project: Introduction**

Initiated in 2011 as a partnership between the City of Brampton and Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), the Riverwalk initiative, which will be located along the Downtown Brampton portion of Etobicoke Creek, has initially focused on updating the Special Policy Area (SPA) in place since the 1980s. The SPA update was approved by the Province in 2014 and a series of feasibility studies have been initiated to evaluate potential flood protection and mitigation solutions.

The first feasibility study was completed in 2014 with a flood mitigation study led by TRCA and an Urban Design Study led by the City of Brampton, which included a Vision and principles. The associated report and the Vision for the area were approved by Brampton City Council in 2014.

A second, more detailed Feasibility Study was completed in 2018, led by the City of Brampton and with TRCA participation, and resulted in a detailed flood mitigation technical study and an accompanying Urban Design study.

As part of this work, preliminary urban design and development concepts were drafted, and intense advocacy, communication and visualization work was undertaken. The Vision for the area, approved by Council in June 2014, has the moniker "The City Faces the River, the City Discovers the River" and includes a number of key principles. "Green", "protect" "discover" and

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“diversity” are the main principles driving the resilience, sustainability and healthy development concepts, including environmental remediation and enhancement and identifying the Riverwalk area as a pilot demonstration project in this area in the city.

These concepts were further advanced through the City of Brampton 2040 Vision, endorsed by Brampton Council in 2018, which focused on “green” and “eco-design” as overarching concepts and identified the Riverwalk as a priority for revitalizing the Downtown.

A Downtown Brampton Flood Protection Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) was initiated in 2018, led by TRCA in partnership with the City of Brampton, and is currently being finalized.

In conjunction with the EA, an Urban Design Master Plan (UDMP) study has been initiated to study the entire Etobicoke Creek valley through Downtown Brampton. The current report presents the UDMP scope and its current status.

### **CURRENT CONDITION**

The Riverwalk project is an important initiative in Downtown Brampton - an infrastructure, as well as a city building, initiative integrating flood protection and infrastructure with open space/public realm and placemaking, downtown revitalization and re-development, environmental protection and enhancement, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Its ultimate goal is to remove a significant portion of the Downtown from the threat of flood, transforming a liability into a sustainable asset and attraction. The Riverwalk is a complex program integrating a number of projects, was deemed to be a game-changer project for the City and has been designated a Term of Council Priority.

There are currently three major active projects as part of the Riverwalk initiative:

#### **Downtown Brampton Flood Protection Environmental Assessment (DBFP)**

This project has commenced in 2018 in order to assess solutions for flood protection in the Downtown and is being led by TRCA in partnership with the City of Brampton. So far, three public information centres (PICs) have been held and the draft Environmental Study Report is currently available for public review. Further information on this project will be shared with the Regional Watershed Alliance at a future meeting.

#### **Urban Design (Open Space) Master Plan (UDMP)**

The UDMP, which is being led by the City, commenced in 2019 and is intended to complement the EA. Its goal is to produce an overall master plan for the area's open space with design concepts for the main parks/spaces, including preliminary programming, integrating resilience and sustainability concepts.

#### **Economic Impact Study (ROI)**

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An Economic Impact Study (ROI) has been initiated to identify the full economic benefits of unlocking development in downtown Brampton. The study has been completed recently.

### THE URBAN DESIGN (OPEN SPACE) MASTER PLAN

#### Scope Overview

- The UDMP assists and complements the EA to assess urban design and landscape impacts of engineering solutions, identify opportunities, and propose landscape treatments for flood mitigation solutions and their integration within the broader planning and design concepts
- It studies the broader valley area, with a focus on: open space and public realm perspective; integration of sustainable mobility, in particular active transportation; improvements in the area's character and identity; its attraction to the city's diverse population and for visitors; making it Brampton's "Emerald Necklace", "Central Park" and "High Line"; and bringing the river back as the approved vision anticipated.
- The UDMP will provide urban design and landscape concepts and guidelines, preliminary programming, as well as a framework for resilience and sustainability.
- Based on the EA outcome, the UDMP will also include detailed concepts for parks, trails, and public realm development facilitating advancement towards Riverwalk implementation and its contribution to Downtown revitalization.

Along the way, the study is also looking at best examples and innovative case studies, to learn from the most advanced approaches that are striving to integrate resilient infrastructure, placemaking, sustainable mobility, revitalization and economic development.

#### Scope of work details and deliverables:

The Open Space Plan is looking at the Etobicoke Creek valley between Vodden Street and Clarence Street (see Attachment 1 for the study area) and has the following major areas of focus:

- Opportunities for environmental enhancements, parks development, programming (including for environmental education), character and identity, public art, and celebration of local history, including that of Indigenous communities
- Opportunities to make the entire area more resilient, sustainable, healthy, and accessible, as well as an economic development attraction and trigger for revitalization/redevelopment

A main component and deliverable is the Resilience, Sustainability, and Healthy Development Framework:

- This component will look in more detail at opportunities for environmental enhancements (vegetation, ecology, water, air), resilience (climate change mitigation), sustainable development (e.g. low impact development, storm water management, energy), as well as opportunities for healthy development (walkability, healthy living, social/mental health)
- Based on this Framework, a comprehensive Resilience, Sustainability and Healthy Development Plan will be developed consequently for the area including key indicators

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and performance monitoring in conjunction with the broader City initiative to further develop the Sustainability Indicators

- The Riverwalk should become Brampton's pilot/demonstration project for resilience and sustainability, a landmark eco-park as anticipated by the Vision 2040

At the end, the UDMP will also produce urban design concepts and guidelines for five areas (Dugan Park, Central Public School Park, Rosalea Park, the revamped channel and Centennial Park), feeding into the detailed design for the flood mitigation solutions. It is expected that preliminary concepts will be developed in Spring 2020, with stakeholder engagement and possible public communication efforts in late Spring/early Summer 2020. It is expected that the study will be completed by the end of Summer/early Fall 2020.

### CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

The Riverwalk is an important, innovative initiative in Brampton and the surrounding region, which sets a new, integrative approach to resilience, sustainability, flood mitigation and open space design.

When complete, the Riverwalk will:

- Protect from flood and disasters
- Revitalize Downtown Brampton and the city as a whole
- Trigger infrastructure renewal
- Generate employment and attract people and investment
- Build community, support diversity and bring people together
- Develop a central park system and contribute to Brampton Eco Park initiatives
- Make a more resilient, sustainable, and healthy Downtown
- Support diversity and culture and improve social balance
- Stimulate new approaches, innovation, change

Further details will be presented as the project evolves, at which point Brampton staff would like to engage more thoroughly with the Regional Watershed Alliance, likely in September 2020.

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**Attachments: 1 (Study area)**