

Items for the Information of the Regional Watershed Alliance

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

FROM: Laurie Nelson, Director, Policy Planning

RE: **MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION ON CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES**

KEY ISSUE

Update on the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' (MECP) multi-stakeholder engagement sessions on conservation authorities to inform the forthcoming enabling regulations associated with the amended *Conservation Authorities Act*.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the update on the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks' multi-stakeholder engagement sessions on conservation authorities be received.

BACKGROUND

The *Conservation Authorities Act*, (CA Act) was amended on June 6, 2019 as part of [Bill 108](#), the "More Homes, More Choice Act", Schedule 2 (refer to TRCA's [web page](#) on the CA Act review). While Bill 108 is now law, many of the provisions of the amended CA Act are still subject to enabling regulations to be proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor (Cabinet) or by the Minister. The content of the regulations that will enact the amended legislation is to include:

- Mandatory Program and Service Regulations;
- Transition Regulation - transition plan, consultation, timeframe to achieve compliance;
- Governing apportionment of operating expenses and capital costs; and
- Classes of programs and services for fees and prescribed amounts.

These regulations will dictate financing arrangements for mandatory services funded by upper tier municipalities. Financing for non-mandatory services will be addressed through the Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) executed as part of future (2021) annual budget processes. An update on the work underway and required support to achieve these agreements with our partner municipalities and agencies was provided in a report to the Board of Directors on January 24, 2020. While timelines associated with the release of the draft enabling regulations are unknown, as noted in the January Board report, the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) had indicated that further stakeholder consultation was being planned. Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) was subsequently advised of three stakeholder meetings planned for Barrie (January 31st), Colborne (February 7th) and London (February 14th).

Summary of Barrie Consultation Session:

The Chair of TRCA's Board of Directors and staff attended the first consultation session hosted by MECP in Barrie on January 31st. Municipalities, conservation authorities, development, agricultural, landowner and environmental organizations were in attendance to provide input on how to improve the efficiencies, consistency, transparency and oversight of conservation

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authorities (CAs). Minister Jeff Yurek provided opening and closing remarks, while Assistant Deputy Minister, Chloe Stuart, facilitated the session.

The session began with short presentations from stakeholders invited to speak about CAs' mandatory programs and services and how all stakeholders can work together on key issues involving conservation authorities. Presenters at this session included Conservation Ontario, Ducks Unlimited, Ontario Federation of Agriculture and the Ontario Home Builders' Association.

Facilitated roundtable discussions with the multi-stakeholder participants followed the presentations. Participants were provided with a series of questions under the following themes:

- Mandatory and non-mandatory programs and services;
- The existing CA model;
- Partnerships and collaborations; and
- Any other feedback that would inform the governments' review of legislation, regulations and policies related to CAs.

The questions and topics discussed during the roundtable discussions were generally consistent with the ongoing dialogue with the Province and stakeholders throughout the CA Act review process to date. Ministry staff took notes during the discussions but encouraged participants to submit written comments. It is staff's understanding that the Ministry will be posting the questions online and stakeholders will be given a deadline to submit comments. Staff will be preparing a written submission to the Ministry, informed by comments and positioning previously endorsed by the Board of Directors. It will be crucial that the forthcoming draft regulations continue to enable TRCA to support provincial and municipal goals and objectives in a growing and intensifying city-region.

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 2 – Manage our regional water resources for current and future generations

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

Strategy 8 – Gather and share the best sustainability knowledge

Strategy 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Staff are engaged in this legislative review and policy analysis work per the normal course of duty with funding support provided by TRCA's participating municipalities to account 120-12. No additional funding is proposed to support the policy analysis work associated with the preparation of these comments.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Staff will prepare a formal submission to MECP in response to the engagement session questions, informed by previously Board endorsed TRCA submissions. Staff will continue to keep the Board informed on the outcome of the consultation sessions and the release of draft regulations associated with the amended *Conservation Authorities Act*.

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