

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Directors
Friday, February 26, 2021 Meeting

FROM: Anil Wijesooriya, Director, Restoration and Infrastructure

RE: **TRAIL STRATEGY FOR THE GREATER TORONTO REGION**

KEY ISSUE

A progress update on the implementation of the [Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region](#).

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region was approved at Board of Directors Meeting held on September 27, 2019;

AND WHEREAS TRCA staff were directed to engage with partner municipalities and trail partners on priority projects, service level agreements, and funding agreements in support of the development of the regional trail network;

AND WHEREAS TRCA staff were directed to request that the Province recognize and build components of the Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region into the Province's transit and transportation strategies, projects, and provincial land use plans including the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and official plan update and conformity processes;

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the progress update on the implementation of the Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region be received.

BACKGROUND

The [Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region](#) (the Trail Strategy) has been developed in collaboration with municipal partners and trail stakeholders. Between 2018-2020, TRCA staff engaged these partners in the development of the Trail Strategy, including the development of an implementation plan to construct proposed trail and amenity capital projects. The Trail Strategy received final approval by the TRCA Board of Directors at the September 27, 2019 meeting (Res.#A158/19) in part, as follows:

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the TRCA Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region be approved;

THAT TRCA staff be directed to meet with partner municipalities to discuss priority projects, service level agreements, and funding agreements in support of the expansion and management of the regional trail network;

THAT TRCA request the Province recognize and build components of the TRCA Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region into the Province's transit and transportation strategies, projects, and provincial land use plans including the Metrolinx Regional Transportation Plan, the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and official plan update and conformity processes;

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A summary of engagement with municipal partners on implementation progress on priority projects during 2019-2020 is outlined below.

2019

TRCA staff collaborated with municipal partners and trail stakeholders to discuss a draft implementation plan. TRCA staff and municipal partners developed a draft list of priority trail and amenity infrastructure projects that aligned capital project planning priorities. These projects present opportunities for collaboration; both advancing the implementation of the Trail Strategy and achieving municipal capital improvement goals. The municipal partners engaged included:

- Town of Ajax
- Township of Uxbridge
- City of Pickering
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- City of Richmond Hill
- Township of King
- City of Markham
- City of Vaughan
- City of Mississauga
- City of Brampton
- City of Toronto
- Town of Caledon
- Region of York
- Region of Durham
- Region of Peel
- Waterfront Regeneration Trust
- Ontario Ministry of Transportation (MTO)

2020

TRCA staff re-engaged with an initial group of municipal partners to confirm priority trail and amenity projects for 2021-2025. Meetings included discussions on project scoping and capital planning timelines. The initial group of municipal partners engaged included:

- Town of Ajax
- Township of Uxbridge
- City of Pickering
- City of Richmond Hill
- City of Vaughan
- City of Brampton
- City of Toronto

Engagement meetings to discuss ongoing prioritization of trail and amenity implementation projects will be scheduled with the remaining partner municipalities and trail organizations beginning in early 2021.

Discussions with partner municipalities have confirmed a shared desire to streamline the delivery of priority trail and amenity implementation projects. In this engagement, TRCA staff reiterated the ongoing desire to advance Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) between TRCA and municipal partners. These instruments will help

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facilitate the implementation of priority trail and amenity projects by streamlining the execution of agreements necessary to engage TRCA services. With an SLA in place, a municipality may quickly engage TRCA to provide services to execute Trail Strategy implementation projects through a simple, standardized Letter Agreement process. As an example, TRCA maintains a Master Servicing Agreement with the City of Toronto – Transportation Services and Parks Forestry and Recreation. This arrangement simplifies delivery of projects and strengthens our partnerships. The detailed list of services can be found [here](#).

RATIONALE

Since September 27, 2019 meeting, TRCA staff have achieved significant progress in advancing the Trail Strategy:

- TRCA staff and municipal partners have progressed the implementation of trail and amenity infrastructure projects identified in the Trail Strategy. TRCA has received new project grant funding to initiate infrastructure projects, executed new project agreements to undertake infrastructure projects, and reached capital project construction milestones. Progress achieved on these items is detailed in *Trail Strategy: Implementation Progress Achieved (2019-2021)* (**Attachment 1**).
- TRCA staff and municipal partners are developing the *Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan (2021-2025)*, an implementation plan for priority trail and amenity infrastructure projects (**Attachment 2**).
- TRCA staff circulated the endorsed Trail Strategy for TRCA staff and municipal staff to reference in the review and advancement of related projects and plans.
- TRCA staff convened the internal TRCA Trails Working Group.
- TRCA staff incorporated Trail Strategy initiatives and actions into work plans and business planning processes. For example, TRCA is currently undertaking a review of Greenspace Master and Management Plans, as well as the TRCA Asset Management process.
- TRCA staff pursued funding to deliver priority trail and amenity capital projects through the budget planning process, the grants centre and partnership funding with municipalities.
- TRCA staff developed the [Trail Strategy Dashboard](#) to communicate progress in building the proposed interregional trail network.

TRCA will ensure that the priority trail and amenity projects outlined in the *Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan (2021-2025)* (**Attachment 2**) are incorporated into the annual TRCA capital budget planning process. As the implementation of these projects moves forward, TRCA will re-engage annually with municipal partners to discuss implementation progress, confirm future priority projects, and discuss capital budget planning timelines for these projects. This engagement will occur in Q3 of a given year and will inform an annual update to the *Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan* in Q4. As TRCA's capital budget planning process begins in Q1 of the following year, the appropriate Trail Strategy implementation priorities will be captured based on the latest implementation plan update. Annual re-engagement with municipal staff project planning teams will support alignment on TRCA capital budget priority discussions with municipalities in Q2. This process for project planning in 2021 and 2022 is illustrated in Figure 1.

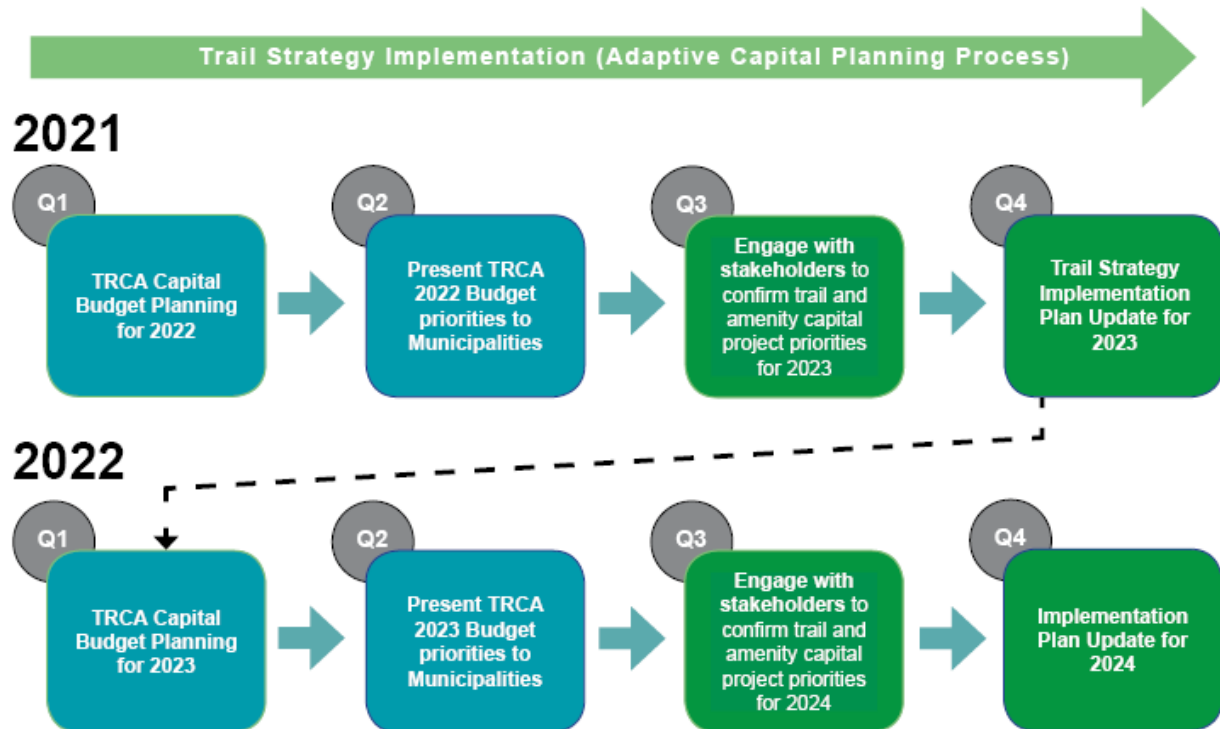


Figure 1: Trail Strategy Implementation Integration with TRCA Capital Budget Planning Process

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 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Undertaking the coordination of the Trail Strategy is currently an ongoing capital project funded through the Peel Trail Strategy (440-25) and York Trail Strategy (442-93) accounts.

Trail and amenity capital project implementation are funded through TRCA's Peel Trail Program (440-03), York Trail Program (442-04) and Durham Trail Program (444-09) accounts as well as through fee-for-service agreements with our municipal partners and grant funding.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- Continue to advance the *Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan (2021-2025)* (**Attachment 2**) with municipalities and other trail partners.
- Based on the *Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan (2021-2025)* (**Attachment 2**), develop trail and amenity project plans in collaboration with municipal partners to include: Scope of Work, List of Recoverable Services, Project Timeline, ROM Cost Estimate, Estimated Project Budget, Funding.
- Draft and execute project agreements.
- Initiate projects identified with executed agreements.

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Attachments: 2

Attachment 1: Trail Strategy: Implementation Progress Achieved (2019-2021)

Attachment 2: Trail Strategy: Trail and Amenity Projects Implementation Plan (2021-2025)