

Section I – Items for the Board of Directors Action

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

FROM: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

RE: TRCA AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

KEY ISSUE

Report on TRCA agricultural related program achievements, programs and future directions.

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS Building The Living City, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) 2013 Strategic Plan, identified: Green the Toronto region's economy, Rethink greenspace to maximize its value, Foster sustainable citizenship, and Build partnerships and new business models as key actions to achieve regional sustainability within TRCA's watersheds;

WHEREAS TRCA's The Living City Policies promote the benefits of agriculture to the planning and development of sustainable communities.

WHEREAS TRCA has been administering agricultural leases on its properties since the 1950s and continues to manage productive agricultural lands.

WHEREAS over the past 13 years, TRCA's Urban Agriculture Program has successfully developed four urban farms and partnerships which showcase innovation in urban agriculture and serve as a model for regional sustainability across the globe;

WHEREAS TRCA Agricultural Outreach and Support programs also continue to support strategic partnerships and/or collaborations that help protect, restore and/or create opportunities to implement environmental improvement projects and Best Management Practices.

WHEREAS TRCA Agricultural Education and Training projects provide an opportunity to engage communities through educational programming, special events and outreach to increase awareness about the importance of growing local food and food security;

WHEREAS TRCA's agricultural projects deliver on multiple objectives, including those identified as priorities by federal, provincial and municipal governments, such as climate action, grey and green infrastructure renewal, human health, building community capacity and resilience, and the strategic objectives of the watershed plans;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the TRCA agricultural projects and programs, as outlined in the staff report, be endorsed;

AND FURTHER THAT TRCA staff work with partner municipalities through the process of developing Memorandums of Understanding and Service Level Agreements to capture any fee for service agricultural work conducted by TRCA in support of the

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implementation of agricultural related programs and activities across TRCA's jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has a longstanding agricultural history that includes managing its own agricultural lands, educating the public on local food and associated environmental benefits, and offering programs and services to support agricultural producers in adopting Best Management Practices (BMPs) related to land and water management.

TRCA's agricultural history dates back to the 1950s when TRCA began acquiring land for flood and erosion control. This resulted in an inventory of productive agricultural lands, some of which were leased on an annual basis for agricultural use. TRCA has also been working with the agricultural community since the adoption of the 1980 TRCA Watershed Plan which provided recommendations around managing non-point source water pollution. This was followed by the launch of the Rural Clean Water Program (RCWP) in 1997, a comprehensive program which provides technical assistance and funding incentives for agricultural landowners to implement agricultural BMPs on their land. In 2005, TRCA supported the formation of the Greater Toronto Agricultural Action Plan Committee, which later evolved into the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance (GHFFA) in 2011, a unique partnership involving the four regional municipalities of Halton, Peel, York and Durham, the four Greater Toronto Area Federations of Agriculture, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, along with other agencies and the food sector. TRCA provided secretariat support to the GHFFA from 2011 to 2018. The GHFFA played a prominent role as an organization committed to working on and advancing food and farming issues and addressing gaps to ensure a thriving and integrated food and farming cluster both in the Greater Golden Horseshoe and beyond. Some of the work that the GHFFA has been involved with includes responding to government policy initiatives related to food and farming across the Golden Horseshoe as a collective voice, developing resources such as the Agri – Food Asset Map Project, and public education and outreach.

Collaboration with Municipal Partners

Many of TRCA's partner municipalities have supported TRCA agricultural initiatives. The City of Toronto originally operated the site immediately west of Black Creek Pioneer Village, currently known as the Black Creek Community Farm. From 2003 – 2011 the City of Toronto operated this site as the Toronto Urban Farm, a youth training farm that engaged youth from the Jane and Finch community. In addition, the Regions of Peel and York have supported the Rural Clean Water Program since 2006 and 1995, respectively, as well as other agricultural initiatives, such as their Urban Agriculture program. Currently, TRCA has been working with the City of Vaughan and Brampton on various urban agricultural initiatives.

At [Board of Directors Meeting #6/20](#) held on September 25, 2020, staff were authorized to continue working with partner municipalities to develop and execute MOUs and SLAs for fee for service work and for services that could be considered non-mandatory under the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Related discussions with partner municipalities have included interest in various agriculture-related services.

Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy

Up until 2008, agriculture was regarded as an interim use of TRCA lands, with the long-term goal being that the lands be reforested or used for other purposes. Over the years, TRCA farm rentals declined due to restoration works on the same lands, urbanization, land fragmentation and congested roadways. Furthermore, short-term leases deterred farmers from making

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capital investments and from implementing BMPs, despite many BMPs being practical and/or affordable approaches to conserving soil and water resources on a farm without sacrificing productivity.

Recognizing that agricultural lands are a natural resource of major importance and that farmers and agricultural organizations are valuable contributors to the environment, community and economy, in 2008, TRCA adopted a Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy (“the Policy”) for its agricultural lands. The Policy recognizes TRCA’s commitment for agriculture to be a legitimate and long-term use for some of its lands, the importance of conserving TRCA’s agricultural land base by enabling long-term lease frameworks and encouraging investment and stewardship of its lands. Both urban and conventional farms are covered by this Policy. Specific to agriculture in an urban agriculture setting, the Policy also encourages TRCA to develop new partnerships and introduce innovative farming models, including the production of diverse crops to promote the growth of local food for the Toronto region while incorporating Best Management Practices (BMPs) and complementing other TRCA programs and priorities (i.e., ecological restoration of impaired natural features). At the same time, there is a growing interest in the public consciousness about local food and growing food in an urban setting; this includes new farmers looking to access affordable lands to farm. The Policy facilitated the development of the four urban farms on TRCA lands and also TRCA’s Urban Agriculture Program, which provides support and services to the four urban farms.

TRCA’s The Living City Policies reference the Policy, stating that TRCA will continue to engage in partnerships and programs in near-urban agriculture on TRCA-owned lands, in compliance with TRCA’s Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy for lands owned and managed by TRCA. Implementing this policy is integral to meeting The Living City Policies’ goal of promoting the benefits of near-urban agriculture to the planning and development of sustainable communities.

TRCA Agricultural Lands

TRCA presently has 17 agricultural properties, which includes 13 conventional farms and four urban farms. Of the 247 hectares combined, the conventional farms cover 227 hectares and the urban farms cover 20 hectares. Based on the Canada Land Inventory, the soil quality classes 1-6 are all represented on TRCA agricultural lands. However, of the 247 hectares, 80 hectares are designated as Prime Agricultural Lands (class 1-3). Conventional agriculture practices generally occur outside urban areas and refer to larger production of field crops such as corn, soybeans and hay, as well as livestock operations. Urban agriculture refers to production of food in, and close to, cities using models that produce high value market crops (e.g., garlic, cucumbers, tomatoes); these typically occur on smaller sized properties and are more labour and resource intensive compared to conventional farming. The four urban farms on TRCA properties are: Albion Hills Community Farm in Caledon; Black Creek Community Farm in Toronto; The Living City Farm at the Kortright Centre in Vaughan; and McVean Farm at Claireville Conservation Park in Brampton. Each conventional farm is managed by an individual, while each urban farm is managed by a partner organization or private farm entity. All actively farmed properties are under a lease agreement with TRCA.

Current TRCA Agricultural Programs and Initiatives:

The following section summarizes the various roles, responsibilities and services provided by TRCA in relation to TRCA’s agricultural properties and tenants. It also summarizes programs and services that TRCA offers other agricultural properties and audiences interested in agriculture-related programming.

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1. Land Management and Lease Administration

TRCA has been administering farm lease agreements for TRCA owned and managed property since the 1950s. Mainly, these leases have been for conventional farm purposes to support the growing of conventional field crops. To date, TRCA has 17 active farm leases with four of these leases being urban agricultural leases. These leases are located in the following municipalities: Brampton (2)), Caledon (6), Vaughan (4), King (1), Markham (1), Toronto (1), Pickering (2). The urban agriculture leases in most cases are longer term leases (i.e., five-year fixed, five-year rolling) as urban agricultural operations typically require more costly infrastructure investments on the land compared to conventional operations. A longer lease term provides the farmer with the certainty of having access to the land for a longer period of time in order to justify investments on the land. The term for conventional leases are annual, however, conventional farm tenants have the option to apply for longer term leases should they wish to. Any lease beyond a five-year term would require TRCA to obtain approval from the Minister of Environment, Conservation and Parks. The Property and Risk Management Business Unit has been responsible for negotiating and administering the leases and have been supported by Government and Community Relations for the development and administration of the urban agriculture leases.

In addition, Property and Risk Management provides ongoing operational support to agricultural tenants for property related matters such as building and infrastructure maintenance and repairs, as well as the development and implementation of Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs). For farm leases located within Conservation Areas or Parks, (i.e., Albion Hills and Kortright), Parks and Culture, as well as Education and Training staff have been assisting with some of the day-to-day operations and management of the lands (i.e., clean-ups, maintenance of laneways, coordinating volunteer events related to farm activities, mowing, managing public uses adjacent to the leased properties, etc.).

Environmental Farm Plans (EFPs)

TRCA recognizes that farmers are important stewards of our environment and works with farmers to implement BMPs recommended through the EFP process. The EFP is an assessment voluntarily prepared by farm operators (in this case TRCA staff) to increase their environmental awareness in up to 23 different areas on the farm. Through the EFP process, TRCA works with farmers to highlight the farm's environmental strengths, identify areas of environmental concern, and set realistic action plans with timelines to improve environmental conditions.

The *Property and Risk Management* and *Restoration and Resource Management* Business Units at TRCA collaborate on the development of EFPs. The EFPs are developed in consultation with agricultural tenants to align farming practices with relevant BMPs for agriculture and to ensure restoration activities and agriculture practices are coordinated to enhance farm operations, manage soils, and benefit the natural environment.

Each of TRCA's farm properties has a completed and approved an EFP which is renewed every five years as required by the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association, the body that administers the EFP program. TRCA uses these plans to ensure the lands are managed appropriately and to assist with the selection of BMP projects to be implemented. The EFP can also be used in conjunction with cost-share programs to begin implementing action plans (most cost-share programs, including TRCA's Rural Clean Water Program, require a farm operator to have an EFP in order to be eligible for funding). For example, EFP funding was secured to construct the manure storage facility at the Claireville Ranch property.

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Best Management Practice Projects:

Using the Restoration Opportunities Planning (ROP) assessment process and referencing the EFP's, Restoration Services staff have identified areas for ecological restoration that could be integrated into standard farming practices. Project implementation is prioritized based on the level of impairment that is being mitigated and the degree to which the BMP would benefit the Natural Heritage System. Projects completed to date include:

- Establishment of grassed waterways, and other drainage management solutions, such as installing formalized crossings and removal of degraded drainage tiles;
- Wetland restoration in marginal areas to collect and treat surface water before entering the watercourse;
- On-line pond removal, stream restoration and erosion protection;
- Planting riparian and terrestrial buffers using native tree and shrubs;
- Installation of exclusion fencing to protect headwater drainage features, watercourses or wetlands from livestock;
- Hedgerow plantings;
- Strategic invasive species management such as mowing, removals, and herbicide applications;
- Hazard tree removals and maintenance;
- Essential habitat structure installation (i.e., songbird boxes, owl boxes, hibernacula, perching poles); and
- Custom services such as site prep, tilling, seeding, cover cropping, and general plot maintenance such as garbage clean ups.

2. Urban Agriculture

The Sustainable Near – Urban Agriculture Policy facilitated the development of the four urban farms on TRCA lands, as well as TRCA's Urban Agriculture Program, which provides support and services to the four urban farms. TRCA's Urban Agriculture Program has been managed by the Government and Community Relations Business Unit since 2008 and is currently being transitioned to the Property and Risk Management Unit. Over the years, TRCA has developed long term partnerships with farmers and farm-related organizations to develop urban farms on TRCA-owned lands, which enables new farm entrants and seasoned farmers to access land for farming within urban areas. In addition, these farms have also helped to address food security concerns and provide safe recreational activities, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, by providing local access to fresh local produce, including in priority neighbourhoods.

To further support urban agriculture initiatives on its lands, TRCA introduced long-term lease tenures, specifically five-year rolling or fixed leases, depending on the partnership. Through the TRCA Urban Agriculture Program, TRCA, with support of municipal partners and grants, also provides financial and in-kind support to farm partners to achieve mutually beneficial farm outcomes. Supports made available to the urban farms through the Urban Agriculture Program have included:

- Infrastructure improvements at farm sites to support operational needs of the farms (i.e., greenhouse, access to water, hydro servicing, fencing, farm buildings);
- Planning and approvals for infrastructure projects;
- Strategic planning;
- Events and programming;
- Secretariat support (i.e., GHFFA);
- Marketing and communications;
- Internal TRCA coordination on matters related to urban agriculture and the farm sites;

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- Collaboration with other TRCA programs and services;
- Partnership development;
- Organic certification; and
- Federal, provincial, municipal policy review related to food and agriculture.

The Government and Community Relations Business Unit has been supported by Property and Risk Management, along with other Business Units at TRCA, to develop new partnerships, including support with processes such as Request for Proposals and Expressions of Interest. While the Urban Agriculture Program is being transitioned to Property and Risk Management, Government and Community Relations will continue to provide strategic planning support to the urban farms, support partnership and business development while providing input to federal, provincial and municipal policy initiatives related to food and agriculture.

Community and Allotment Gardens

Community and allotment gardens are an important means to empower communities to grow their own food and contribute towards sustainability. Furthermore, in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, community gardens have been recognized as an important essential service for continuing Ontario's food supply. Although TRCA is not directly involved with the operation of community gardens on its properties, some of TRCA's urban farms currently have community gardens on site which are operated by the farm tenant. These sites include: Black Creek Community Farm and Albion Hills Community Farm.

TRCA has also been working on the Meadoway project, which is transforming the Gattineau Hydro Corridor in Scarborough into a vibrant 16-kilometre stretch of urban greenspace and meadowlands that will become one of Canada's largest linear urban parks. There are three allotment gardens locations within The Meadoway project study area, each permitted through the City of Toronto. Each Allotment Garden is located within the footprint of the Gattineau hydro corridor and is adjacent to The Meadoway multi-use trail network.

3. Agricultural Outreach and Support:

Rouge National Urban Park

For years TRCA has worked closely with farmers to implement best management practices and restoration projects in what is now called the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP) which is administered and managed by Parks Canada. A prime strategy of the RNUP Management Plan (2019) is to collaborate with the farming community to maintain and restore ecological integrity through improvements to natural habitat, soil, and water conservation activities to achieve ecological and agricultural gains. Through a continued partnership with Parks Canada, TRCA implements projects in the RNUP that aim to benefit both the farmer and the environment. Agricultural properties are assessed for their restoration potential and prioritized using TRCA's Integrated Restoration Prioritization (IRP) tool to identify areas of impairment that would provide significant benefit to the natural system if restored.

TRCA works with Parks Canada and the tenant farmers to find restoration solutions that can be integrated into a Best Management Practice scenario. Examples of how restoration efforts have and will continue to result in farmland enhancement include: improving farming conditions by increasing naturalized drainage and water filtration through the creation of vegetated swales, improving farm crossings while incorporating culverts that facilitate aquatic species movement, and restoring the native species composition of hedgerows and associated vegetation buffers that act as wind breaks and prevent loss of soil, and providing habitat for pollinators which benefit nature and are necessary for crop pollination

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Rural Clean Water Program (RCWP)

The RCWP is a voluntary, confidential, agriculturally-based program that offers technical assistance and financial incentives to farm and rural non-farm landowners to assist them with implementing land use BMP projects that address: rural water quality; environmental enhancement and sustainability; and climate change mitigation and adaptation. The program is available to eligible farm and rural non-farm applicants residing within York or Peel Region within TRCA's jurisdiction.

Between 2005 and 2019, the RCWP has worked with 130 individual farm businesses to implement 222 on-farm environmental improvement projects such as fencing to separate livestock from environmental features, constructing wetlands, well decommissioning, in-field erosion control and constructing safer manure storage facilities. Outreach activities include attending events in an effort to promote and encourage participation in the program (i.e., Central Ontario Agricultural Conference, the Ontario Woodlot Association Conference, the Peel Plowing Match, the Peel and York Federation of Agriculture Annual Meetings and the Peel and York Soil and Crop Annual Meetings), as well as hosting workshops and preparing agri-environmentally related articles for media (e.g., newspapers).

4. Education and Training

TRCA Educational Facilities

TRCA Educational Facilities at Kortright and Albion Hills have been involved with developing agriculturally related curriculum-linked educational programming, tours and events in collaboration with farm tenants at The Living City Farm and the Albion Hills Community Farm. In addition, initiatives including a children's garden and adult training workshops related to gardening have also been offered at Kortright in collaboration with the farm tenant.

Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program (SNAP)

SNAP applies a neighbourhood-based approach to sustainable urban renewal and climate action and considers urban agricultural priorities as part of each neighbourhood action planning project. The production of local food, supported with rainwater harvesting and increased food security, are often among the set of sustainability objectives identified that guide the development of the neighbourhood action plans. Resulting implementation projects and programs, delivered in partnership with many local community partners on both public and private land, have included such initiatives as: balcony gardening; community garden installations; backyard agriculture and backyard sharing; urban orchards and surplus harvest sharing; food preservation; and skills training and capacity building for local residents to support ongoing garden and orchard management as a social enterprise. Each SNAP project is designed to achieve numerous co-benefits and as a result, associated urban agriculture projects have also generated environmental outcomes, such as rainwater retention, GHG reduction, waste reduction urban forest (through fruit tree planting and citizen-based restoration), ecological restoration, and socio-economic benefits, such as active living, improved nutrition, cost savings on grocery bills and increased connections for community resilience.

Partners in Project Green (PPG)

In 2012, Partners in Project Green (PPG), in collaboration with the Urban Agriculture Program, piloted a local food procurement initiative with food services at the International Centre (a member of PPG at the time) and farmers at the McVean Farm. This initiative enabled sourcing of fresh local produce from the McVean Farm to the International Centre. PPG developed and published a case study focused on the International Centre's local and sustainable procurement program, which is available on the PPG website.

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Since that time, PPG has continued to work with businesses interested in reducing food-related waste and pursuing local food procurement. Most recently, PPG published a related article and hosted a webinar on the topic entitled “Innovative Business Solutions to Combat Food Waste and Insecurity.”

Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP)

The Sustainable Technologies Evaluation Program (STEP) provides testing services and advice to support broader adoption of sustainable technologies and practices primarily in urban and near urban settings. STEP has been providing support to the Living City Farm at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in developing best practices, such as solar water pumping for irrigation and greenhouse retrofits.

Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV)

Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV) has partnered with the Black Creek Community Farm to develop and deliver a curriculum-based education program for elementary school students. This program provided predominantly urban students with an opportunity to have a hands-on experience in both a garden and heritage kitchen, gaining a deeper understanding of how vegetables are grown, prepared, cooked and consumed.

RATIONALE

TRCA’s interests in agricultural land and practices revolves around the need to responsibly manage our own lands while considering the best use for those lands, as well as support agricultural producers and landowners in implementing BMPs and other improvements that contribute to watershed health. TRCA also has an interest in engaging various audiences in the different uses of our properties, including urban agriculture.

Moving forward, subject to municipal or government support, TRCA will continue to support agriculture on its properties, where appropriate, and align its work in agriculture and urban agriculture with partners, in order to improve the health of our watersheds and communities and make the best use of TRCA properties. The following sections outline the key roles and responsibilities of the relevant business units at TRCA as they pertain to TRCA’s agriculture and urban agriculture work going forward.

In addition, the type of agricultural program offerings and services offered to TRCA municipal partners and Parks Canada for RNUP through the MOU/SLA process, can be tailored to meet the unique needs of each municipality.

1. Land Management and Lease Administration

The leasing of conventional farm properties has been a successful use of certain TRCA lands from a financial perspective and it is recommended that where these lands have already been identified for this use, that this practice continue, assuming that other TRCA priorities do not supersede the use of lands for conventional farming. The internal TRCA procedures for transitioning agricultural lands to other uses, such as restoration, will be addressed through the forthcoming review of TRCA’s Sustainable Near Urban Agricultural Policy.

Property and Risk Management

Property and Risk Management will continue to be responsible for the administration of all farm leases, including both conventional and urban agricultural leases. The transition of any

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agricultural lands for uses other than agriculture (i.e., restoration, fill or other TRCA projects) will also be managed by Property and Risk Management.

Farm Restoration Plans

Agricultural lands can be assessed for restoration priority using the Integrated Restoration Prioritization (IRP) tool to determine the extent to which restoration is needed within a sub-catchment reach based scale. The goal of the IRP is to identify areas of impairment and to understand what might be driving that impairment. This assessment can help to inform the future use scenario for agricultural lands. The IRP uses environmental data gathered through TRCA's Regional Watershed Monitoring Program to identify impairments on the landscape (e.g., poor water quality), as well as terrestrial natural heritage data (e.g., priority natural corridor areas), to identify where restoration efforts will have the most beneficial impact on the natural system if restored. This information combined with site level restoration opportunities assessment (ROP) can identify priority restoration actions within priority restoration areas.

This tool, while considering the potential of the agricultural lands for productivity, partnerships and farm business models can also be utilized on existing agricultural fields, as well as new land acquisitions to help inform future uses of the land and determine agriculture should continue as the best use for the subject property. In the future, TRCA Restoration and Resource Management will work with Property and Risk Management to update Restoration Plans for existing agricultural lands. Restoration opportunities will be implemented as opportunities, priorities and funds arise.

2. Urban Agriculture

The four current urban farm sites will remain a priority for TRCA and moving forward, TRCA will continue to develop these sites with infrastructure, expanded programming, community engagement and outreach through collaboration with farm tenants, TRCA programs and external partnerships. New urban farm sites will not be developed at this time due to staffing resources and capacity.

As the importance of local food is increasingly being recognized for both food security and climate change mitigation benefits, many municipalities are also exploring and implementing their own urban agriculture projects and operations and may require guidance in setting up operations. It is recommended that due to TRCA's experience in this field that TRCA staff can provide this guidance and support to interested municipalities. This work can be undertaken on a fee for service basis and this potential role for TRCA has been raised in the Memorandum of Understanding discussions that TRCA is having with municipalities.

Property and Risk Management

Property and Risk Management will now be responsible for managing TRCA's Urban Agriculture Program, formerly managed by Government and Community Relations staff. This transition will help to optimize greater operational support for our urban farms and partners, while continuing to administer lease agreements within the Property and Risk Management Business Unit. Current urban agriculture farm tenants have been informed of this transition and made aware of the revised roles and responsibilities of applicable business units.

As part of managing the Urban Agriculture Program, Property and Risk Management will provide the following services to urban agriculture tenants:

- Act as main point of contact for TRCA;
- Operational and on-site support;

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- Approvals and coordination with other TRCA Business Units (i.e., Restoration and Resource Management, Education and Training, etc.);
- Infrastructure development;
- Requests for financial support; and
- Inquires related to marketing, communications and media

Government and Community Relations

Government and Community Relations staff have been working with Property and Risk Management on implementing a Transition Plan for the Urban Agriculture Program to help ensure a smooth transition, while providing ongoing support to our valued farm partners.

Government and Community Relations will continue to provide support to the Urban Agriculture Program by being involved in strategic projects which may be of corporate interest from a government and community relations perspective. These projects or activities may include:

- Partnership and business development related to the urban farms, agricultural outreach and support, agricultural education and training related programs, and potential guidance and supports needed by municipalities or other organizations in setting up their own urban agriculture operations and projects;
- Acting as an advisor to internal, municipal or community groups and committees related to urban agriculture;
- Supporting the development of master plan and strategic planning processes for the urban farms; and
- Reviewing and providing comments on federal, provincial and municipal policy initiatives related to agriculture and food.

3. Agricultural Outreach and Support:

TRCA's work related to agricultural outreach and support work directly supports TRCA's efforts to improve watershed health. This work has been popular with both landowners and supporting municipalities and is expected to continue.

Restoration and Resource Management

The Restoration and Resource Management group at TRCA will continue to implement complementary restoration work and natural resource guidance to support agricultural BMPs at TRCA's urban and conventional farms, as indicated above, in addition to administering the RCWP and other complementary programs.

Throughout 2020, RCWP staff developed a report titled 'Agricultural Trends in the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's Jurisdiction'. The purpose of the report was to identify agricultural trends within the jurisdiction and to predict what the agricultural landscape in the jurisdiction might look like by 2031 and post 2031. To predict future trends in agricultural lands within TRCA's jurisdiction, TRCA collected municipal Official Plan and provincial data which identified committed development lands up to the year 2031. Other open data available from municipal and provincial governments was used as well (excluding lands in the greenbelt corridor). A final draft of the report is currently under review; the final report is expected to be available in March 2021 and will inform TRCA's future work related to the RCWP moving forward.

4. Education and Training

TRCA's agriculture-related education and training will continue to focus on engaging outside audiences – including schools, the community and businesses – at the interface between agriculture, food, and environmental sustainability. Relevant business units will focus on the audiences in which they specialize. Where relevant and desired, Education and Training division staff will also work with TRCA's Urban Agriculture sites to deliver engaging events and initiatives.

Education and Training

TRCA's urban agriculture work presents an opportunity to educate our program participants, students and broader community about the importance of local food, sustainable agricultural practices and engaging them directly in sustainable local food processes. The Education and Training Division through its various programs, (i.e., SNAP, PPG, STEP, etc.) and educational sites will continue to collaborate with urban agricultural tenants on developing and delivering educational programming and events as opportunities arise.

In addition, TRCA Educational facilities will continue to source local food from local sources and TRCA urban farms, as appropriate. Food miles for meals served at educational facilities will also be tracked.

Education and Training will also explore new and interactive ways to engage local communities. Some potential examples include:

- In-person and virtual cooking events with participation from the urban farms;
- Delivery of farm talks, inviting guest speakers and experts in the local food and agricultural sector to speak;
- Provide opportunities at relevant events and festivals for visitor engagement with the farm and farmers to promote sustainable agriculture and increase food sales;
- Provide space for promotional literature of the farms and related events in high traffic areas, such as the Kortright Visitor Centre;
- Provide local agricultural businesses with best practice materials and resources through the PPG program and consortia, enabling local agricultural businesses to operate more sustainably in the areas of energy performance, water stewardship, waste management, and community engagement;
- Build partnerships and capacity in local organizations and leaders to deliver urban agriculture projects, in cooperation with other related TRCA programming, in relevant SNAP neighbourhoods;
- Piloting sustainable technology demonstrations at urban farm sites, which help to maximize operations at these farm sites, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, promote water conservation, and showcase environmental benefits to the public.

Black Creek Pioneer Village

BCPV will continue to engage learners of all ages in local food production through:

- In-person school programs developed and delivered in partnership with Black Creek Community Farm;
- Presentation of herb and vegetables gardens along with orchards growing food from heirloom seeds;
- Demonstration of cooking from produce grown on site; and

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- Educational programming for families and students highlighting local food production and preparation.

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 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

TRCA agricultural programs are funded through various Toronto, York, Peel and Durham capital and operating accounts, as well as from certain revenue sources.

The following table summarizes the sources of funding for agriculture related TRCA programming.

Funding Source	Funding Amount
Toronto Capital	\$6,330
Peel	\$270,947.13
York Capital	\$83,568.10
Operating	\$77,178
Special Projects	\$491,070
TOTAL	\$929,093.23

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- TRCA to engage in discussions with regional and local municipal partners through the MOU/SLA process, highlighting TRCA agricultural programs as one of the potential programs offered.
- Property and Risk Management to work with Government and Community Relations on completing any outstanding items associated with the Urban Agriculture Transition Plan.
- Education Training and Outreach Division to explore new programming opportunities in collaboration with the urban farms.
- TRCA to review Sustainable Near-Urban Agriculture Policy in 2021.

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Attachment 1: Map of TRCA Agricultural Properties