

Item for the Information of the Regional Watershed Alliance

TO: Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance
Wednesday, March 3, 2021 Meeting

FROM: Michael Tolensky, Chief Financial and Operating Officer

RE: EAST DON TRAIL
A partnership project between Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the City of Toronto

KEY ISSUE

Presentation and information on the East Don Trail project – a successful partnership between the City of Toronto and TRCA.

RECOMMENDATION

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT this report and presentation on the East Don Trail project be received;

AND FURTHER THAT the City of Toronto and TRCA continue to work in partnership involving community and environmental stakeholders where possible toward securing Phase 3 funding from senior levels of government and other potential sources.

BACKGROUND

The East Don Trail Project is being completed by the City of Toronto in partnership with TRCA. The purpose of the Project is to create a key connection in the City of Toronto's multi-use trail system while providing safe and equitable access to nature and recreational opportunities for the public, and to create a safe travel route. A significant gap in the multi-use trail network currently exists within the East Don Corridor between the existing East Don Trail (east of Wynford Heights Crescent), the future Meadoway trail (at approximately Bermondsey Road), and the Lower Don Trail System. The proposed East Don Trail will fill this gap, creating a continuous connected trail network. It supports TRCA's Trail Strategy for the Greater Toronto Region and in addition to this, a section of the East Don Trail will realize one of the strategic connections of the Pan Am Path, a multi-use path connecting Toronto trails and creating an active-living legacy for the TORONTO 2015 Pan Am/Parapan Am Games.

The City of Toronto's Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan identified the need for a trail connection in the East Don Corridor, while the East Don Trail Master Plan Update, completed in 2012, determined that the trail connection was feasible and recommended that further environmental studies were necessary.

The Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan was approved by City Council on June 6, 2012 with the following direction:

- City Council authorized the Acting General Manager, Transportation Services, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and, where appropriate, TRCA, to undertake and manage any Environmental Assessment studies required for the new trail connections contained in the Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan and file the Environmental Study Report with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change as necessary; and

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- City Council authorized the Acting General Manager, Transportation Services, and General Manager Parks, Forestry and Recreation and, where appropriate, TRCA to undertake site assessments, design, public consultation, project management and construction of the new trail connections contained in the Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan.

At Authority Meeting #5/12, held on June 22, 2012, Resolution #A98/12 was approved for TRCA to undertake the Environmental Assessment (EA), as well as, the management of the design and construction of the East Don Trail. The City of Toronto and TRCA initiated the East Don Trail Municipal Class EA, Schedule C in 2013. Through extensive public consultation, the EA identified, evaluated and selected a preferred route for the East Don Trail. The Environmental Study Report for the EA was filed with the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change (now the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks) for a 30-day public review period and was subsequently approved in November 2017.

The recommended solution (preferred trail route), as documented in the Environmental Study Report is a 3.6 to 4 metre-wide by approximately 5 kilometres long, asphalt multi-use trail routed within the East Don Corridor (not including access routes). The route includes nine bridges over the East Don River as well as five crossings through the Metrolinx railway corridor.

The preferred trail route has been divided into three distinct phases for detailed design and construction, with Phases 1 and 2 being prioritized. Phase 1 spans from the Lower Don Trail to the future Meadoway at Bermondsey Road, while Phase 2 spans from the existing East Don Trail off Wynford Heights to Eglinton Avenue. The future implementation of Phase 3 will span from approximately Eglinton Avenue to connect to Phase 1. Attachment 1 includes a map illustrating the location of Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3, respectively.

The East Don Trail has been one of the most significant large-scale projects that the City of Toronto and TRCA have worked collaboratively on through the full project life cycle – planning, design and implementation. It has been used as model for which other similar partnership projects have been developed. It also was the impetus of the completion of the Master Service Agreement between TRCA and the City of Toronto Transportation Services and Parks Forestry and Recreation.

RATIONALE

Work Currently Underway:

- Phase 1 works are largely complete with the exception of a tunnel and pedestrian bridge over the rail west of Bermondsey Avenue. These portions of the project are in the design phase and will still require permitting by Metrolinx through that phase. TRCA has retained RJ Burnside Engineering for the detailed design/engineering work associated with the rail bridge and tunnel designs. Construction of the tunnels and bridge over the railway is anticipated for end of 2021 pending receipts of permits and approvals. Final paving and installation of furnishings, signage and line painting will be undertaken immediately following completion of these components, as conditions permit.
- Phase 2 from Wigmore Park to Wynford Park is anticipated to be complete by end of October, with one small segment left unpaved pending completion of on on-going Metrolinx rail bridge replacement at this location scheduled for Fall 2021.

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Future Work:

Phase 3 of the East Don is not yet funded, it includes two significant sections, one for which detailed design has been completed but has not been built based on the Eglinton LRT schedule and priority for the Phase 1 and 2 work. This segment connects to the Eglinton LRT and travels north to meet the Wynford Park to Wigmore Park trail section already completed. Phase 3 trail improvement between Eglinton and Phase 1 at the Gatineau hydro Corridor (The Meadoway) does not yet have detailed design completed and is also unfunded.

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

Strategy 7 – Build partnerships and new business models

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Phase 1 and 2 have the funding secured for all active construction and completion of the elements undergoing detailed design. This funding has been secured through the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (Federal) program as well as through City of Toronto Transportation and Parks Forestry and Recreation Capital budgets. The cost of these two phases completed is estimated at \$32M.

Funding for Phase 3 has not yet been secured and is estimated to range from \$16M to 24M depending on the final alignment. TRCA and City of Toronto staff have been working closely in preparation for any potential infrastructure funding program announcements from senior levels of governments. This joint effort will continue with involvement of community stakeholders (e.g., Evergreen) where possible.

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: Map of East Don Trail