

Section III – Items for the Information of the Board

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

FROM: John MacKenzie, Chief Executive Officer

RE: **HUMBER RIVER CANADIAN HERITAGE RIVERS SYSTEM 10-YEAR MONITORING REPORT 2020**

KEY ISSUE

Humber River Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS) 10-Year Monitoring Report

RECOMMENDATION

WHEREAS The Humber River was designated as a Canadian Heritage River in 1999 due to its outstanding human heritage and recreational values;

AND WHEREAS Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) is required to report on an annual and decadal basis on the activities that support the protection, restoration and celebration of cultural and recreational values that merit the Humber River's designation as a Canadian Heritage River;

AND WHEREAS TRCA's Strategic Plan priority "Tell the Story of the Toronto Region" promotes the celebration of cultural heritage of the Toronto Region, engagement of Indigenous and diverse communities in TRCA programming and the preservation and restoration of historic assets;

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED THAT the Humber River CHRS 10 – Year Monitoring Report be received for information;

THAT TRCA staff develop an annual CHRS reporting framework for the Humber, which aligns with the CHRS reporting guidelines and TRCA Strategic Plan and Annual Report Reporting metrics;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy this report be circulated to Ontario Ministry of Conservation, Environment and Parks, Parks Canada, and all municipalities within the Humber Watershed.

BACKGROUND

In 1999, the Humber River was officially designated as a Canadian Heritage River and included in the Canadian Heritage Rivers System (CHRS), Canada's national river conservation program. The CHRS program is a Canadian-provincial-territorial managed program, which works with river managers across Canada to conserve and promote designated rivers in recognition that they are essential to our health, our communities, and our identity as Canadians.

The Humber River is exceptional on many accounts. From a natural environmental perspective, it drains the largest watershed in the TRCA jurisdiction and contains many of the most unique and sensitive natural spaces in the Greater Toronto region including portions of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Niagara Escarpment. However, the CHRS designation is based on the Humber River's rich human history as a home for Indigenous peoples along its banks, as a vital

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transportation route known as the Carrying Place Trail and as the site of many of Toronto's early European settlement homes and industries.

In receiving the Canadian Heritage River designation, the Humber River has been formally recognized for its cultural and recreational values and for its fundamental contributions to the development of Canada. Since 1999, TRCA has worked with municipal and community partners, watershed residents and Indigenous communities on several CHRS-inspired or supported initiatives that protect, restore and celebrate the Humber River. Some of the accomplishments include:

- Watershed Plan for Humber River watershed;
- Humber River Watershed Report Cards;
- Humber River Heritage Bridge Inventory;
- The Shared Path Program;
- CHRS Heritage Plaques Program;
- Designation of heritage buildings and structures such as the Wiley Bridge and McVean Barn in the Claireville Conservation Area within the City of Brampton;
- Signature watershed events such as Humber by Canoe; and
- Support of community-led heritage events throughout the watershed.

RATIONALE

As part of maintaining the Humber River's CHRS designation, TRCA is required to submit annual and 10-year monitoring reports to the CHRS following the guidance provided in the CHRS Policies, Procedures and Operating Guidelines for the CHRS Program (2019). The last 10-Year Monitoring Report for the Humber River was submitted to the CHRS in 2009.

At Board of Directors Meeting #8/18 held on October 26, 2018 a 20th Anniversary Celebration Plan framework for the Humber River was presented to the TRCA Board which included development of the 10-Year CHRS Monitoring Report. Since then, TRCA staff have developed the 10-Year Monitoring Report with input from various Business Units and Divisions across TRCA. The report outlines activities related to cultural and recreational values within the watershed from 2009 to 2019, including the Humber River's 20th anniversary celebrations as a Canadian Heritage River. The report is required for TRCA to fulfill its reporting obligations to the CHRS and demonstrate actions and measures to protect, restore and celebrate the cultural and recreation values in order to maintain its Heritage River designation. Furthermore, the report includes an important recommendation from TRCA to the CHRS Board to maintain the CHRS designation for the Humber River.

Schedule 7 of the CHRS Policies, Procedures and Guidelines includes the reporting framework for the ten-year monitoring report, which at a high-level includes:

- A summary of significant events, actions and research within the Humber since the last 10-Year Monitoring Report submitted to CHRS in 2009;
- A summary of changes or threats to the state or condition of the values for which the river was originally designated;
- The status of actions and management measures within the designation document;
- A summary list of benefits for the watershed as a result of the River's designation;
- Assessment of the ability to meet the criteria outlined in the designation document for continued designation as a Canadian Heritage River; and
- A recommendation for the Humber River to maintain its Canadian Heritage River designation, or that it be de-designated.

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In addition, the Humber River 2020 10-Year Monitoring Report also includes additional information such as:

- A report on the Humber River's 20th Anniversary Celebration activities;
- Forewords written by the members of the Humber Heritage Committee and TRCA's Chair;
- A conditions assessment of the 9 CHRS plaques located within the Humber watershed;
- An overview of the number of archaeological and built heritage resources within the watershed; and
- Watershed mapping which illustrates cultural heritage and recreational sites across the watershed.

Moving forward, staff will be developing a framework for annual CHRS reporting which takes into account prescribed CHRS guidelines and metrics that TRCA reports on for Strategic Plan and Annual Report reporting purposes. In addition, staff will identify which internal data and information is useful to include in annual reports and can be reported on consistently. As part of the development of the CHRS annual reporting framework, staff will also reach out to relevant external agencies and partners to determine which external information would be accessible and useful to include on an ongoing basis. Staff will use this framework internally to collect data and information from various programs.

Relationship to Building the Living City, the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan

This report supports the following strategy set forth in the TRCA 2013-2022 Strategic Plan: **Strategy 6 – Tell the story of the Toronto region**

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Staff-time for preparation of the Humber River CHRS 10-Year Monitoring Report is supported by Toronto, Peel and York capital budgets: 126-47, 126-85 and 126-90.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

- Circulate copy of the 10-Year CHRS Monitoring Report to stakeholders and relevant municipalities;
- Develop an annual reporting framework for the Humber River which aligns with CHRS guidelines and TRCA Strategic Plan and annual reporting framework;
- Collect data from various internal programs and external agencies for annual and future CHRS reports; and
- Submit the annual 2020 Humber River CHRS Report to the CHRS.

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Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: Humber River Canadian Heritage Rivers System 10-Year Monitoring Report