

Item for the Action of the Regional Watershed Alliance

TO: Chair and Members of the Regional Watershed Alliance
Wednesday, March 02, 2022 Meeting

FROM: Sameer Dhalla, Director, Development and Engineering Services

RE: **WATERSHED PLANNING UPDATES**
Carruthers Creek, Etobicoke Creek, and Humber River

KEY ISSUE

To provide an update on the status of watershed planning at TRCA, including the implementation of the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan (CCWP), and the development of the Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan (ECWP) and the Humber River Watershed Plan (HRWP).

RECOMMENDATIONS

WHEREAS Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has begun implementation planning for the Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan (CCWP);

AND WHEREAS TRCA is finalizing the future management scenarios stage for the Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan (ECWP) and planning the next round of engagement to share results and receive feedback;

AND WHEREAS TRCA has initiated the scoping and characterization stages for the Humber River Watershed Plan (HRWP);

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) members identify two members to participate in the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for the CCWP and to champion implementation initiatives through their networks;

THAT the RWA members encourage their contacts and networks to participate in the upcoming engagements for the ECWP to provide feedback to identify priority actions;

THAT staff continue to work closely with municipal partners, including the Region of Peel, Toronto, Mississauga, Brampton, and Caledon on coordinated engagement related to the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) and ECWP;

AND FURTHER THAT the RWA members review the draft Engagement Strategy for the HRWP and provide comments, including suggestions on any other stakeholders that TRCA staff should engage.

BACKGROUND

TRCA currently has three active watershed plans in various stages as part of TRCA's next generation of watershed planning, as follows:

Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan (CCWP)

The CCWP was approved by the TRCA Board in September 2021 and is now in the implementation stage. Watershed Planning and Reporting (WPR) staff have been working closely with partner municipalities to identify implementation actions for 2022.

Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan (ECWP)

At the RWA meeting on May 19, 2021, TRCA staff provided the results of the ECWP characterization stage and provided initial information on the future management scenario stage, informed by land use planning in Peel, Caledon, and by the Province. Since then, various technical analyses have taken place for the future management scenarios stage and additional engagement is planned for the ECWP for 2022.

Humber River Watershed Plan (HRWP)

TRCA is undertaking the scoping and characterization stages of the HRWP in 2022. Like the ECWP, a Steering Committee with key partners will be established and an Engagement Strategy developed. The initial engagements will help draft the vision for the watershed and guide future work. The watershed characterization stage is expected to be completed by the end of the year.

RATIONALE

Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan

Based on the initial discussions with our municipal partners, TRCA will establish an Implementation Steering Committee and a Stakeholder Advisory Committee in 2022 to support implementation of the CCWP.

The Implementation Steering Committee will consist of staff from TRCA, the Region of Durham, City of Pickering, Town of Ajax, and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. This committee will advocate for effective implementation of the CCWP, provide input on annual prioritization of actions and budgeting, and track progress for regular reporting.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will consist of diverse stakeholders from across the Carruthers Creek watershed including residents, business representatives, developers, the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD), agricultural organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other community groups. Membership on the committee will be open to individual residents, or representatives of businesses, developers, agricultural organizations, community organizations, or NGOs, who reside or have interests within the Carruthers Creek watershed and support the implementation of the CCWP.

Initial membership of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee will be on a first-come, first-serve basis and applications of interest will be submitted through the project website. Membership will consist of up to a maximum of 18 to 24 persons. The Stakeholder Advisory Committee will play an important role in encouraging and enabling stakeholders within the watershed to participate and engage more directly in various implementation activities to ensure implementation of the CCWP.

To facilitate reporting on implementation progress, TRCA will expand the functionality of the existing [Watershed and Ecosystems Reporting Hub](#) by developing both a watershed planning platform that would incorporate the CCWP (and each watershed plan as they are developed), and a watershed plan implementation tracking platform to track and report on implementation progress / watershed trends over time to ensure public accountability on the part of TRCA and municipal partners.

Several actions are planned for 2022 in collaboration with various TRCA teams and municipal staff. These actions are intended to address various management recommendations from the

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CCWP as outlined in the table below:

Management Recommendation	2022 Planned Action
1.1.1	Town of Ajax Green Development and Environmental Design Guidelines – anticipated completion in Q2 2022
1.1.6	Update to Town of Ajax Salt Management Plan – Town is collaborating with TRCA to complete a salt vulnerable areas assessment
1.1.7	Ajax SNAP – Council approved funding to implement a Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program
2.1.3 and 3.1.3	Priority restoration areas in southern portion of the watershed (Kingston Road East, Rossland Road, and Warbler Woods) – TRCA, the Region of Durham, and Town of Ajax have funding for some on the ground restoration projects and have applied for additional funds to the Nature Smart Climate Fund grant administered by Environment and Climate Change Canada
3.1.4	Land securement – Ajax is in the process of securing additional lands for environmental protection in the three priority restoration areas identified above
3.3.1 and 3.3.2	Update to Urban Forest Management Plan – Ajax and TRCA are partnering to complete an urban forest technical assessment

Request to RWA on CCWP: For CCWP implementation, TRCA requests the RWA identify two members to sit on the Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Further, we request that RWA members circulate information to their networks on the CCWP Stakeholder Advisory Committee when provided by TRCA staff.

Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan

TRCA staff is finalizing the future management scenarios stage of the watershed planning process, which will result in a consolidated scenario analysis report examining how the watershed may respond to different land use changes and climate change (see Figure 1).

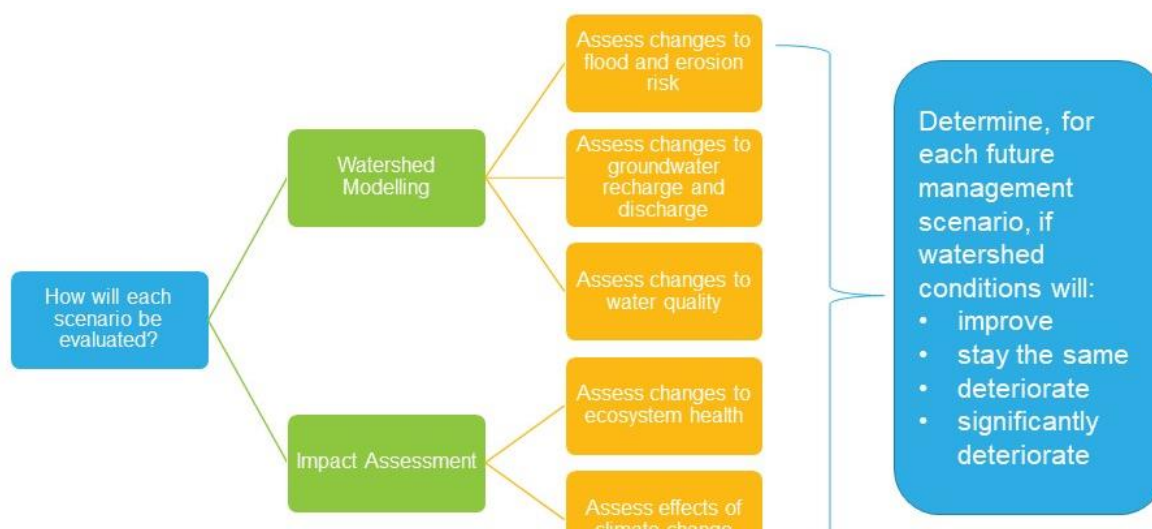


Figure 1 - ECWP Future Management Scenarios Stage

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As part of this stage of the watershed planning process, TRCA is analyzing four future management scenarios as outlined below. It is important to note that this work is being closely coordinated with the MCR, Official Plan reviews, and Minister's Zoning Order reviews.

	Scenario 1: Urban Expansion with Minimal Enhancements	Scenario 2: Urban Expansion with Mid-Range Enhancements	Scenario 3: Urban Expansion with Optimal Enhancements	Scenario 4: Existing Urban Boundary with Optimal Enhancements
Description	Build-out of whitebelt lands in headwaters. No stormwater retrofits in existing developments and no changes to natural cover from existing.	Same as scenario 1, but enhancements to stormwater management, urban forest, and natural cover. Includes the GTA West Highway	Same as scenario 1, but further enhancements to stormwater management, urban forest, and natural cover than scenario 2.	Same enhancement assumptions as scenario 3, but there is no urban boundary expansion into the headwaters.
Rationale	Compares current conditions to headwater build-out with minimal other watershed interventions.	Compares additional watershed interventions to scenario 1.	Compares a higher level of watershed interventions.	Compares the higher level of watershed interventions without further greenfield expansion.
<p>Notes: Scenario 1 is compared to current conditions, while scenarios 2, 3 and 4 are compared to scenario 1.</p> <p>The urban expansion in scenarios 1, 2, and 3 assumes a full build-out of the whitebelt lands in the headwaters of Etobicoke Creek. Peel Region staff guided these scenario assumptions. TRCA staff have also been heavily involved in the Scoped Subwatershed Study being conducted by Peel Region to inform any potential Settlement Area Boundary Expansion in the headwaters. This involvement includes providing data and commenting on reports in collaboration with municipal staff and planning consultants to ensure alignment between the ECWP and that work.</p>				

TRCA staff will prepare the future management scenario report based on ongoing discussions with the Region and Town of Caledon and circulate it for review in the spring of 2022. In addition, another round of ECWP engagement will be undertaken in spring 2022. The main objective will be to provide an overview of the results from the characterization and future management scenarios stages, to solicit feedback on the objectives and indicators for the management framework, and to determine priority actions to address key issues of concern in the watershed.

This engagement will include public and stakeholder engagement on the ECWP that will consist of an online survey, map viewer commenting tool, virtual webinars, and in-person open houses (if permitted). There will be email notifications, postcards at events, newsletters, and posters at

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TRCA sites in the watershed, which will allow for wider dissemination of information about the engagement. Discussions are underway with the Town of Caledon and the Region of Peel to continue sharing and coordinating information and engagement processes with the MCR process also underway. For example, any engagement events will occur after Peel Regional Council makes a decision on the MCR package that will ultimately be submitted to the Province.

The table below provides details on various components of the engagement plan and timelines.

Engagement component	Details	Timeline
Project webpage	Will be updated to highlight all engagement details, including link to survey, storymap/ArcGIS map viewer, times/dates/locations of engagement events, and supporting information.	By early April
Virtual Webinars and Open Houses	Three one-hour webinars consisting of a presentation, demonstration of map viewer, interactive polling, and question and answer session. Up to three evening drop-in open houses (if permitted) at locations throughout the watershed. There will be information panels, comment sheets, and a large map for sticky notes.	May, 2022
Survey	Short ranking, multiple choice, comment questions (approximately eight) focused on watershed plan objectives, indicators, and priority watershed actions.	Available for a month before the first webinar / open house and for one week after the last webinar / open house
Story Map and ArcGIS Map Viewer	An interactive version of the Etobicoke Creek watershed with various data layers for reviewers to leave comments on main issues of concern and priority actions spatially. An accompanying story map will include general information on watershed planning, the ECWP, types of feedback requested and how to leave a comment.	Same as the survey
Watershed Walk	One or two events along parts of the Etobicoke Creek (if permitted) to explain the importance of watershed planning, discuss the watershed plan and recommendations, and tour watershed features.	April or May (possibly coinciding with Earth Day)

Request to RWA on ECWP: TRCA staff requests RWA members to distribute notifications about the ECWP engagement through their networks, once provided.

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Humber River Watershed Plan (HRWP)

TRCA staff has initiated the development of the HRWP, which is expected to be completed in a three-year timeframe by early 2025. A general overview of the timeline for completion of the various stages of the HRWP is provided below.

Stage	Timeline
Preparation and scoping	Early 2022
Watershed characterization	2022 – 2023
Future management scenarios	2023 – 2024
Implementation planning and watershed plan development	2024 - 2025

As part of 2022 workplan, TRCA staff is undertaking the first two stages of the watershed planning process, scoping and watershed characterization stages. As such, we are in the process of establishing a Steering Committee with relevant partners and have prepared a draft Engagement Strategy (attached to this report), which is consistent with the process followed for the ECWP. Similar to the ECWP, work is underway with all relevant municipal partners to ensure this is coordinated with the MCR process and provincial land use and infrastructure planning processes.

Request to RWA on HRWP: TRCA staff requests that RWA provide input on the stakeholder list in Table 5 in the draft Engagement Strategy to ensure it is comprehensive and representative of this watershed.

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 12 – Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funds to support watershed planning are provided through capital levy by our regional partner municipalities (accounts 120-02 and 120-04).

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

Carruthers Creek Watershed Plan

TRCA will establish a Stakeholder Advisory Committee to support implementation of the CCWP and develop tracking tools to report on implementation progress. Implementation actions will be identified annually by the Implementation Steering Committee, subject to available budget and capacity.

Etobicoke Creek Watershed Plan

A Scenario Analysis Report outlining the results of the future management scenarios stage will be publicly released once it has undergone internal TRCA and Steering Committee review. TRCA staff will carry out engagement on the results of watershed characterization and the future management scenarios, and initial implementation planning as outlined in the engagement plan discussed earlier in this report. Based on the results of that engagement, a

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draft management framework will be developed in collaboration with Steering Committee members and ultimately a draft watershed plan, which will result in further engagement.

Humber River Watershed Plan

The HRWP is in early preparation and scoping stages with the next steps being the establishment of the Steering Committee and finalization of the Engagement Strategy. Watershed characterization consistent with the process carried out for the ECWP will also be conducted in 2022.

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Date: January 26, 2022

Attachments: 1

Attachment 1: **Humber River Watershed Plan Engagement Strategy**