

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF SEPTEMBER 20, 2016

Item 21, Report No. 31, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted, as amended, by the Council of the City of Vaughan on September 20, 2016, as follows:

By approving Committee of the Whole recommendation 1) of the meeting of September 7, 2016; and

By approving the recommendation contained in the following resolution:

WHEREAS the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry commenced a review of the Conservation Authorities Act in 2015, which included seeking feedback from municipalities, indigenous communities, conservation authorities, stakeholders and the public in its review;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry identified priority areas of improvement including a review of a number of operational functions of Conservation Authorities with the objective of increasing accountability in decision-making, clarity and consistencies in roles and responsibilities processes and requirements;

AND WHEREAS Council, in keeping with the Ministry's request, on October 20, 2015, directed staff to review the roles and responsibilities of the TRCA for the purpose of creating more efficiencies reducing duplication and providing more accountability in the development process;

AND WHEREAS any amendments in the existing policies referencing the TRCA contained in the VOP2010 were to be reported back to Council in Q1 2016;

AND WHEREAS the Ministry's public review and commenting period closed on September 9, 2016 and a date for the Ministry's final Report, and or any proposed amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act is unknown.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that staff be directed:

- 1. to complete a review of the policies in VOP2010 that reference the TRCA and any other City policies and/or by-laws deemed relevant, to identify those policies and by-laws (if any) that could be better clarified or revised to improve the efficiency of the development review process while ensuring regulatory compliance and submit a Report for Council consideration in December, 2016;***
- 2. to make recommendations in the Report with respect to:***
 - (a) VOP2010 amendments, and/or by-law revisions (if any) that can be potentially revised and/or amended to achieve the intent and purpose of Council's resolution of October 20, 2015 as part of continuous improvements to the development review process; and***
 - (b) the process to be undertaken by the City to implement the recommended policies and/or by-law revisions (if any) in accordance with the Planning Act, the Conservation Authorities Act and/or Municipal Act and in the context of the Ministry's ongoing review; and***
- 3. to prepare to initiate an Official Plan Amendment if required in accordance with the Planning Act requirements to address changes in the TRCA's role and responsibilities arising from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry's final Report and/or amendments to the Conservation Authorities Act immediately upon the release thereof.***

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management and the Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability, dated September 7, 2016, be approved; and
- 2) That the following motion be deferred to the Council meeting of September 20, 2016:

“That staff be directed to commence review of TRCA related policies in the VOP2010 and to initiate an Official Plan Amendment of the VOP2010 in accordance with the Planning Act to effect the Council resolution of October 20, 2015, for the purpose of reviewing the role and responsibilities of the TRCA, creating more efficiencies, reducing duplication and providing more accountability in the development process; and

That a status report be presented for Council consideration in Q1 2017, with the OPA to be finalized upon the outcome of the relevant Provincial reviews."

The Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management and the Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability recommend:

1. That the City reiterate its position of October 2015 that the following matters be prioritized for action through the Conservation Authorities Act Review:
 - a) The provision of more clarity on the statutory non-statutory roles of the Conservation Authorities including the division of responsibilities among provincial, federal and municipal bodies, in order to focus their role and function and to streamline the development review process;
 - b) The provision of sufficient resources and staff to ensure that the Conservation Authorities are equipped to review development applications in a timely manner;
 - c) Ensuring that high growth areas are prioritized for additional funding to address the volume of work resulting from the development approval process;
 - d) Improving data sharing with municipalities;
 - e) Supporting the Conservation Authorities' role as a commenting agency with clear areas of focus and ensuring that the most up-to-date data is available to stakeholders so as to inform the review of development related projects and reviews;
2. That the comments contained in the brief forming Attachment 3 be endorsed as the City's response to the questions posed through the Phase 2 Consultation Process "Conserving Our Future – Proposed Priorities for Renewal" (May 2016); and
3. That this report and any additional Council comments informed by discussion at the Committee of the Whole be forwarded to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (the "Ministry") on the Second Phase of the Conservation Authorities Act Review.

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Contribution to Sustainability

The Ministry is seeking input from municipalities and other stakeholders regarding the roles, responsibilities and governance of Conservation Authorities (CAs) in resource management and environmental protection. If the proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (the “Act”) are adopted, it will impact how Conservation Authorities operate. Conservation Authorities play a major role in achieving the objectives of Green Directions Vaughan.

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts resulting from the approval of the recommendations contained in this report.

Communications Plan

N/A

Purpose

The purpose of this Report is to inform Council that the Ministry has decided to continue the public consultation process regarding its proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act and to provide recommended responses for submission to the Province.

Background - Analysis and Options

Phase 1 – First Round of Consultation

In November of 2014, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry initiated a review of the *Act*. The objective of the Ministry’s review was to identify opportunities to improve the legislative, regulatory and policy framework that governed the creation, operation and activities of Conservation Authorities.

The Ministry released a Discussion Paper outlining potential changes to the *Act* and a public consultation period took place from July 20, 2015 to October 19, 2015. There was wide participation in the review originating from ten different stakeholder sectors, that resulted in a total of 274 submissions. Analysis of the comments received during the public consultation period identified a number of priority areas for improvement including:

- Enhance opportunities for public and stakeholder participation in decision-making;
- Enhance provincial policy direction and oversight;
- Enhance board accountability mechanisms;
- Review and update provincial funding mechanisms;
- Provide clarity around the use of municipal levies;
- Provide direction in the development of a fee structure and schedule to ensure consistency across all Conservation Authorities (CAs) in how costs are determined;
- Clarify and confirm the CA mandate;
- Increase consistency in the CA roles and programs while retaining local flexibility;
- Clarify the scope of the CA’s regulatory authority; and
- Encourage greater collaboration and sharing of science and information.

In October of 2015, the City responded to the request for comments and a summary of the comments is provided below:

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- more clarity around the role(s) of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) through the Conservation Authority Act Review process;
- concerns with the availability of resources and staff necessary to ensure the TRCA is equipped to review development applications in a timely manner;
- a request that additional resources be made available;
- seek opportunities for improved data sharing and working relationships between the City and TRCA; and,
- to support the role of the TRCA as a commenting agency and to ensure the provision of the most accurate up to date information is available to inform the projects and reviews.

These comments were summarized from the Committee of the Whole Meeting on October 7, 2015 (Attachment 2).

Staff were also directed to review the VOP 2010 to create efficiencies, reduce duplication and provide more accountability. Staff have been waiting for the release of this document and the outcome of the Coordinated Plan Review process to inform the City's approach to reviewing VOP 2010 to address the Council direction.

As a result of Phase 1, three reports were prepared during the consultation period by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. The first report was prepared by the public independent facilitator which captures the feedback provided to the Ministry during the engagement sessions held in January 2016. The second report includes the Environmental Registry feedback summary highlighting all of the comments received during Phase 1 of the review. The third discussion paper posted in the first phase of the review sought feedback on governance, funding mechanisms and roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities.

The subject reports can be viewed by following the web links below:

Conservation Authorities Act Review - Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Sessions
<http://apps.mnr.gov.on.ca/public/files/er/ogilvie-engagement-session-summary-report.pdf>

Conservation Authorities Act Review - Summary of Environmental Registry Feedback Report
<http://apps.mnr.gov.on.ca/public/files/er/ca-act-review-er-feedback-summary-report.pdf>

Discussion Paper Conservation Authorities Act - A review of the roles, responsibilities, funding and governance of conservation authorities under the Conservation Authorities Act.
http://apps.mnr.gov.on.ca/public/files/er/Discussion_Paper_2015.pdf

Analysis of the comments received during the public consultation period also identified a number of areas of agreement and disagreement among the stakeholders. Many of the other themes advanced by the City were also identified by the other responding groups.

Phase 2 – Second Round of Consultation

On March 3, 2016, the Ministry decided to conduct a second round of review/consultation with respect to the proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act* (the "Act").

On May 16, 2016, the Ministry released an updated proposal entitled "Conserving our Future: Proposed Priorities for Renewal" (the "Report"). Based on the input the Ministry received from stakeholders during the first round of consultation, the Report identified five priority areas that are the focus of the review of the *Act* moving forward. These five priorities are to achieve:

1. Stronger oversight and accountability in decision making;

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2. Increased clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes and requirements;
3. Improved collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management;
4. Modern funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operations; and
5. Enhanced flexibility for the Province to update the Conservation Authorities Act in the future.

The Province has requested that stakeholders provide their comments and answers to the questions below by September 9, 2016.

1. What do you think of these priorities? Which are the most important and/or least important to you? Are there other priorities that should be considered?
2. What actions would you recommend the province take to help achieve these priorities?
3. What do you see as some of the key challenges in achieving improvements under any or all of these priority areas?

Due to the reporting requirements and the timing of the consultation a report could not be prepared for consideration by the June 2016 Council meeting. As a result, this report is being brought forward now as the September meeting is the earliest opportunity for Committee consideration within the comment period timeframe.

Recommended Response to the Phase 2 Consultation Process

The City's staff responses to the above questions are attached hereto as Attachment 3. Below is a summary of the staff comments:

- The five priorities outlined in the Report are interconnected and of equal importance.
- Recommendations to assist the Province to help achieve these priorities include:
 1. The Province engage with their individual CAs to discuss specific local programs and services and dealings with each of their municipalities.
 2. The Province update the Conservation Authorities Act to reflect a renewed focus on flood protection and mitigation, recognizing the current initiatives the TRCA has taken in watershed management outside of the permitting process.
 3. The Province support a coordinated approach to planning through the development of working agreements between CAs and municipalities dealing with land management and services provided.
 4. The Province request TRCA to provide municipalities with reporting on how compensation money, obtained through negotiations with applicants during the planning approvals process, is used.
 5. The Province continue to support the professional development of CA and municipal staff.
 6. The Province provide their CAs with funding or support updated fees schedules to support the hiring of additional technical staff, in areas of concern to municipalities, in order to improve service delivery.
 7. The Province direct the TRCA to share up-to-date data between public agencies to ensure efficient service delivery.
- Challenges in achieving the improvements under any or all these priority areas include:

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1. Resolving or further stipulating roles to address challenges between the PPS (2014) directing municipalities to be responsible for natural heritage system planning and the broad scope in the CA Act to “further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources”.
2. Establishing clarity on subject areas for CA review and the delegation of approvals towards a one-window approach to streamline the development review process.
3. Accountability on how all CA assets (i.e., valley lands, built heritage buildings and trails) are being managed within our jurisdiction.
4. Developing an implementation strategy for the Humber River and Don River Watershed Plans.
5. Funding for resources to support partnerships and joint stewardship projects (e.g. Black Creek Renewal etc.) and flood protection.

Relationship to Term of Council Service Excellence Strategy Map (2014-2018)

As set out in the *Act*, the purpose of a Conservation Authority is to develop programs that conserve, restore and properly manage natural resources. Accordingly, the purpose of a Conservation Authority is directly related to “Cultivating an environmentally sustainable city”, which is an identified term of council priority.

Regional Implications

The Region of York funds the TRCA and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority and has a major stake in the outcome of the review. The Region will be providing comments to the Ministry on its own behalf.

Conclusion

It is clear from the result of the Phase 1 consultation process that many of the areas identified by the City in October of 2015 for further action have been reflected in responses from other stakeholders. It is recommended that the significance of these issues to the integrity of municipal operations and program delivery be reiterated.

The Phase 2 program has also provided the opportunity for the submission of further comments structured around three questions. The responses suggested in the brief forming Attachment 3, take into consideration the five priorities identified by the Ministry, and serve to support a commitment to a healthy environment that is best achieved through clear roles and responsibilities; review processes that are both rigorous and efficient; the prioritization of regulatory functions; the allocation of resources to high demand areas such as fast growing urban areas; cooperative stewardship of resources and the sharing of information and expertise amongst all regulatory bodies.

Therefore, it is recommended that the recommendations of this report be approved as the City's position on Phase 2 of the Conservation Authorities Act Review, subject to any additional comments resulting from Council's consideration of the item; and that it be forwarded to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in response to the posting of this initiative on the Environmental Register.

Attachments

1. The Conservation Authorities Act Review Consultation Document: Conserving Our Future: Proposed Priorities for Renewal.
2. Committee of the Whole Staff Report – October 7, 2015.
3. Draft Staff Comments to the Proposed Changes to the Conservation Authorities Act for Submission September 9, 2016.

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Report prepared by:

Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner, ext. 8104

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE
CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT – “CONSERVING OUR FUTURE:
PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR RENEWAL”**

Recommendation

The Deputy City Manager, Planning and Growth Management and the Director of Policy Planning and Environmental Sustainability recommend:

1. That the City reiterate its position of October 2015 that the following matters be prioritized for action through the Conservation Authorities Act Review:
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Therefore, it is recommended that the recommendations of this report be approved as the City's position on Phase 2 of the Conservation Authorities Act Review, subject to any additional comments resulting from Council's consideration of the item; and that it be forwarded to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry in response to the posting of this initiative on the Environmental Register.

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Report prepared by:

Ruth Rendon, Senior Environmental Planner, ext. 8104

Respectfully submitted,

JOHN MACKENZIE
Deputy City Manager
Planning & Growth Management

ROY MCQUILLIN
Director of Policy Planning &
Environmental Sustainability

/lm



CONSERVING OUR FUTURE

Proposed Priorities for Renewal

May 2016

MINISTER'S MESSAGE

Last summer, my Parliamentary Assistant, MPP Eleanor McMahon, initiated a review of the *Conservation Authorities Act* seeking to identify opportunities to improve the legislative, regulatory and policy framework that currently governs the creation, operation and activities of conservation authorities. I am pleased to share with you the government's priorities for moving forward with the next phase of this review.

I would like to thank indigenous communities, municipalities, stakeholders, members of the public and conservation authorities themselves for taking the time to participate in the review and for providing us with their ideas. Feedback received represents an important contribution to the Ministry's review, and to the overall objective of ensuring the act meets the needs of Ontarians in a modern context.

This feedback confirmed the continued relevance of the *Conservation Authorities Act* model including the importance of managing natural resources at the watershed scale. In response to the feedback provided, the province has identified five priorities for updating the *Conservation Authorities Act's* legislative, regulatory and policy framework:

- 1 Strengthening oversight and accountability in decision-making.
- 2 Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes and requirements.
- 3 Improving collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management.

4 Modernizing funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operations.

5 Enhancing flexibility for the province to update the *Conservation Authorities Act* framework in the future.






The province recognizes and values the achievements of conservation authorities in delivering programs and services that protect and manage water and other natural resources in the province. Our government is committed to continuing to work with Ontarians to build upon the feedback they provided to develop specific actions in support of achieving these priorities.

Your opinions and insights are important to us. I look forward to building on the relationships we've created and moving forward with the development of legislative, regulatory and policy changes designed to address the feedback you have already provided.

Sincerely,

Bill Mauro
Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry

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1

INTRODUCTION

The Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry was given a mandate in November of 2014 to engage with ministries, municipalities, Indigenous Peoples and stakeholders to initiate a review of the *Conservation Authorities Act*.

The objective of the *Conservation Authorities Act* review is to identify opportunities to improve the legislative, regulatory and policy framework that currently governs the creation, operation and activities of conservation authorities, including addressing roles, responsibilities and governance of conservation authorities in resource management and environmental protection.

In July 2015, as a first step in support in the review, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF) posted a discussion paper to the [Environmental Registry](#) (EBR Registry Number 012-4509) for public consultation and held over twenty stakeholder and indigenous engagement sessions along with targeted meetings across the province to gain feedback on the following three areas:

1. **Governance:** The processes, structures, and accountability frameworks within the act which direct conservation authority decision-making and operations;
2. **Funding Mechanisms:** The mechanisms put in place by the act to fund conservation authorities; and
3. **Roles and Responsibilities:** The roles and associated responsibilities that the act enables conservation authorities to undertake.

The response to the Ministry's discussion paper was substantial. The Ministry received over 270 individual submissions identifying perspectives from ten different sectors, and more than 2,700 individual or distinct comments related to the review. Although comments were provided by a wide range of individuals and groups representing a wide range of perspectives, a number of common areas of agreement were identified.

Comments received in response to the Ministry's discussion paper and during engagement sessions expressed general agreement that the overall conservation authority model and principles upon which it is based remain as relevant today as they were when the act was first established. In addition, most respondents agreed that the watershed continues to serve as an ecologically appropriate scale for many resource management activities, particularly water management, and allows for a balance in developing and implementing locally appropriate solutions and working across larger scales and political boundaries.

All sectors providing input into the review recognized the value and public benefit of conservation authority roles in providing environmental education, landowner and broader stewardship programs, and the provision of access to natural areas and recreational opportunities provided through conservation areas – in addition to the critical role conservation authorities play in protecting people and property from water-related natural hazards.

While the value of conservation authority roles and responsibilities in the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources were clearly acknowledged, all sectors – including conservation authorities themselves – identified a number of opportunities for improvement.

Responses to questions concerning the governance of conservation authorities identified a need to update or enhance existing oversight and accountability mechanisms including formalizing the role of other ministries in providing provincial direction and oversight to conservation authorities. In addition, many sectors identified a need to increase coordination in the collection and sharing of information among the province, municipalities and conservation authorities and to provide indigenous communities, stakeholders and other interested parties with greater opportunities to participate in conservation authority decision-making.

Comments regarding the funding mechanisms contained within the act indicated multi-stakeholder support for addressing disparities in conservation authority resources and capabilities. They also highlighted the need for providing additional clarity, consistency and transparency in the development and use of municipal levies and fees.

Discussions concerning the roles and responsibilities of conservation authorities in Ontario identified a need to clarify and confirm conservation authorities' mandate. There is also the desire to see greater consistency in the programs and services offered by conservation authorities, and some degree of standardization in program and policy design and implementation – particularly among neighboring authorities.

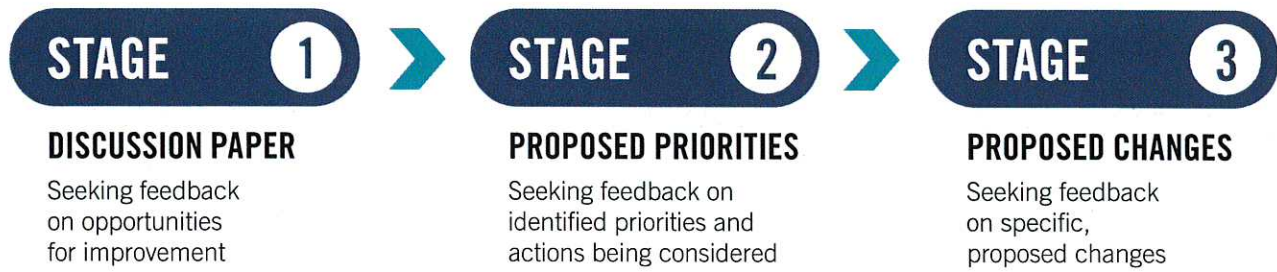
In response to feedback obtained through the initial phase of the Ministry's review, the government has established five priorities for updating the *Conservation Authorities Act* legislative, regulatory and policy framework:

- 1 Strengthening oversight and accountability in decision-making.
- 2 Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes and requirements.
- 3 Improving collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management.
- 4 Modernizing funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operations.
- 5 Enhancing flexibility for the province to update the *Conservation Authorities Act* framework in the future.

While support for taking action in these areas was strong, feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper did not indicate a need for drastic, wholesale changes. Feedback did however indicate a strong desire from all sectors, including from conservation authorities themselves, to update the existing legislative, regulatory and policy framework to match modern expectations for clarity, transparency and accountability in the operation of public sector organizations. In many instances conservation authorities have already taken steps to help meet these expectations by voluntarily incorporating best management practices into their operations and working together to share and coordinate resources and expertise. In fact several of the proposed actions contained within this consultation document are explicitly intended to formally integrate and build upon these best management practices.

This consultation document represents the next stage of the Ministry's review. It provides an overview of the Ministry's priorities for updating the legislative, regulatory and policy framework that currently governs the creation, operation and activities of conservation authorities, and introduces actions currently being considered by the Ministry in support of achieving these priorities.

THE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT REVIEW PROCESS



The objective of this consultation document is to obtain feedback on the Ministry's priorities for updating the *Conservation Authorities Act* legislative, regulatory and policy framework and the actions being considered by the Ministry in support of these priorities. The feedback received in response to this document will be used to inform the development of proposed legislative, regulatory and policy changes. Any changes to the existing legislative, regulatory or policy framework proposed in the future will be subject to further consultation as appropriate, for example through subsequent Environmental Registry postings.

Your opinions and insights are important to us. This consultation document outlines a number of ways people can engage in the review, and we encourage all to participate.

Additional background on conservation authority roles, responsibilities, governance and funding can be found within the Ministry's [discussion paper](#).



2

PRIORITIES FOR UPDATING THE *CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT*

The subsections below provide an overview of the Ministry's priorities for updating the *Conservation Authorities Act* legislative, regulatory and policy framework and actions currently being considered by the Ministry in support of achieving these priorities.



PRIORITY #1:

Strengthening Oversight and Accountability



PRIORITY #2:

Increasing Clarity and Consistency



PRIORITY #3:

Improving Collaboration and Engagement



PRIORITY #4:

Modernizing Funding Mechanisms



PRIORITY #5:

Enhancing Flexibility for the Province



PRIORITY #1: Strengthening Oversight and Accountability



Conservation authorities are governed by the *Conservation Authorities Act* and by a board of directors appointed by the municipalities that form the local authority. The province, through the act, defines the objectives to be pursued by the authority and the powers granted to the authority to achieve these objectives. The activities undertaken by conservation authorities in the pursuit of these objectives are directed by a municipally appointed board of directors. Municipal representatives to conservation authority boards are directly accountable to the municipalities that appoint them and conservation authorities must abide by provincial legislative, regulatory and policy requirements.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper indicated strong support for updating or enhancing accountability mechanisms in the act, including

support for increasing the transparency and oversight of conservation authority decision-making, and updating the act to reflect modern best management practices for board operations.

In many cases, conservation authorities themselves have voluntarily taken steps to align their operations with recognized best management practices for board operations including the development of strategic plans, and aligning conflict of interest provisions and meeting procedures with requirements set for municipalities. Strengthening oversight and accountability provisions within the *Conservation Authorities Act* is intended to formalize these practices across all conservation authorities and ensure that conservation authority programs and services are governed in a fair and transparent manner.

Actions taken by the Ministry to strengthen oversight and accountability, could include, but are not limited to:

- Updating the act to reflect modern legislative structures and accountabilities including, adding a purpose statement to the act and regulations and defining the roles and responsibilities of all parties involved in overseeing and ensuring the accountability of conservation authority operations, programs and services.
- Ensuring governance and accountability mechanisms contained within the act align with recognized governance best practices and requirements for public sector organizations including, expectations for establishing and complying with codes of conduct, addressing potential conflicts of interests, ensuring meetings are open to the public, and the proactive disclosure of information.
- Enhancing the authority of the Minister to ensure conservation authority operations, programs and services are consistent with provincial policy direction and legislative requirements, including new powers to require conservation authorities to collect and disclose information related to the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation authorities' operations, programs and services.
- Clarifying the role of municipalities and the conservation authority board in determining, funding, directing, and overseeing programs and services undertaken by conservation authorities to address local concerns and priorities.
- Developing or updating processes and requirements for the establishment, amalgamation, enlargement and dissolution of a conservation authority, including ensuring that decisions to amalgamate or dissolve a conservation authority are based on sound social, economic and environmental considerations, are informed by public consultation, and are consistent with legislative requirements.



PRIORITY #2: Increasing Clarity and Consistency



The *Conservation Authorities Act* provides conservation authorities with the power to develop their own suite of programs and services tailored to the interests, capacity and expertise of each individual authority and the local needs they serve. This flexibility allows conservation authorities, and the municipalities that direct them, to focus their efforts on areas of greatest need to the local population. It also results in considerable variability in the scale and range of programs and services delivered by any individual conservation authority.

Some conservation authorities offer a basic program primarily focused on natural hazards management, stewardship, and conservation land acquisition and management. Other conservation authorities may offer a wider range of programs and services that can include, for example: recreation, education, monitoring, science and research, drinking water source protection planning under the *Clean Water Act*, the development of Remedial Action Plans in Great Lakes Areas of Concern, the conservation of cultural heritage resources, the development of natural heritage strategies, and extensive watershed and water management planning initiatives. Some conservation authorities also invest in resource development initiatives such as hydroelectric power generation, the operation of historical and cultural heritage sites, and income generating projects such as marina operations, facility rentals and product sales.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper indicated a high-degree of multi-sector support for clarifying and confirming conservation authorities' mandate, and a desire to see greater consistency in programs and services offered by conservation authorities including some degree of standardization in program and policy design and implementation – particularly among neighboring authorities.

While responses to the Ministry's discussion paper indicated a high-degree of support for increasing clarity and consistency, they also acknowledged the importance of maintaining the flexibility given to conservation authorities to tailor programs and services to reflect local needs and priorities.

Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities is not intended to remove the flexibility given to conservation authorities to develop local, or regional-scale, programs and services designed to further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources. Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities is intended to provide all parties with greater certainty in the roles and responsibilities conservation authorities are expected to carry out on behalf of the province and partner municipalities and, where appropriate, promote greater consistency in the delivery of these programs and services.

Actions taken by the Ministry to increase clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities and associated processes and requirements could include, but are not limited to:

- Clearly delineating between the provincially mandatory programs and services that all conservation authorities are expected to deliver on behalf of the province and local communities and any optional programs and services which may be carried out by conservation authorities on behalf of the board in consultation with and under the approval of their participating municipalities.
- Establishing a Provincial Policy Directive that provides clear policy direction on the roles and responsibilities conservation authorities are expected to carry out on behalf of the province, defines the roles and responsibilities of provincial ministries in the development, delivery and oversight of these roles and responsibilities, and provides the basis for developing an integrated policy framework across the province.
- Providing clarity and consistency in the application of the *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses* regulations for all parties, by consolidating and codifying regulatory requirements, defining undefined terms, and enhancing the authority of the Minister to establish, monitor and ensure compliance with provincial policy direction and legislative requirements.
- Ensuring sufficient tools are in place to ensure compliance with the *Development, Interference with Wetlands and Alterations to Shorelines and Watercourses* regulations by providing conservation authorities with modern compliance tools and mechanisms and by ensuring penalties for contravention of the act provide sufficient deterrents against contravention and are aligned with penalties in place under similar pieces of legislation.
- Streamlining planning and permitting requirements and associated processes by exploring opportunities to improve application, review and approval processes through the reduction of burdens, improved service standards, enhanced flexibility in approval requirements and the adoption of a risk-based approach to the issuance of approvals.



PRIORITY #3:

Improving Collaboration and Engagement



Each conservation authority is an individual local public sector organization that operates under a common provincial legislative, regulatory and policy framework and is governed by a municipally-appointed board of directors. Conservation authority operations also involve a broader set of relationships and interactions with stakeholders and clients, interest groups and members of the public.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper indicated a high degree of support for improving coordination among all parties involved in establishing, directing and overseeing conservation authority programs and services and strengthening relationships between conservation authorities and local residents and stakeholder groups through increased engagement around conservation authority operations, programs and services.

Greater collaboration and sharing of expertise among conservation authorities was also identified by several sectors as being critical to improving the consistency,

efficiency and effectiveness of conservation authority programs and services, reducing the potential for conflict between conservation authorities and local stakeholder groups, and reducing the perceived duplication of effort between conservation authorities and other agencies.

As the complexity of resource conservation and management decisions increases so does the need to bring a wide range of perspectives and expertise to the table to help inform and implement decisions. In addition, there are many situations where the natural resource management issues being addressed by conservation authorities cross watershed and political boundaries.

By improving collaboration and engagement, the province aims to support conservation authorities in their efforts to coordinate programs and services among themselves and with the province and to, where appropriate, formalize best management practices for engaging with Indigenous Peoples, stakeholders and members of the public.

Actions taken by the Ministry to improve collaboration and engagement could include, but are not limited to:

- Establishing a provincial one-window, led by MNRF, for establishing, coordinating and reviewing programs and services undertaken at the watershed planning scale by conservation authorities and promoting multi-ministry coordination of provincially delegated programs and services and the collection and sharing of science and information among ministries, municipalities, conservation authorities and others.
- Developing an enhanced business relationship with Conservation Ontario and individual conservation authorities to promote greater communication and coordination in the development and implementation of policies, programs and services, the collection and sharing of science and information and the joint development of capacity-building projects and initiatives.
- Enhancing Indigenous Peoples' participation in the development and delivery of stewardship, science and knowledge, and educational initiatives, and by clarifying the process for Indigenous Peoples to join or establish a conservation authority.
- Ensuring board decisions are informed by an appropriate diversity of views and perspectives reflective of local interests, including providing Indigenous Peoples, local residents and stakeholder groups opportunities to participate in the identification of local needs and priorities and conservation authority decision-making processes.
- Supporting efforts currently being made by conservation authorities to promote efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of programs and services through the development of common policies and procedures, service specializations, and sharing of operational, administrative and technical resources on a regional or landscape basis.



PRIORITY #4: Modernizing Funding Mechanisms



The *Conservation Authorities Act* establishes a number of mechanisms which conservation authorities can use to fund their operations, programs and services. The act enables the Ministry to provide conservation authorities with funding to support Ministry-approved programs such as public safety and natural hazard management programs.

As a corporate body, conservation authorities may also receive or apply for funding from the province to deliver programs on the province's behalf. Local resource management programs and services can be funded through municipal levies or contracts and conservation authorities can self-generate revenue through service and user fees, resource development and fundraising.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper indicated that some conservation authorities, particularly in rural areas with low population and fewer revenue generating opportunities may not have sufficient revenue to adequately support the programs and services that larger authorities are able to offer.

Respondents generally agreed that mechanisms should be in place to help address disparities in resources and capabilities among conservation authorities with large

and small population bases. In addition, several sectors requested that the province provide clarity on the use of municipal levies including the types of costs that can and cannot be included within the levy in addition to introducing new measures to improve transparency, consistency and accountability around fees.

While several sectors requested increased provincial funding for conservation authority operations, programs and services, others acknowledged that current fiscal realities make this a challenge. This government has made a firm commitment to holding the line on program spending, and is evaluating every program and service it delivers to ensure its sustainability.

Prior to considering any changes to current funding levels the province needs to ensure that existing funding mechanisms are as effective and efficient as possible and that conservation authorities are operating at appropriate economies of scale. As a result, the province is proposing to update funding mechanisms contained within the act with a view to enhancing their efficiency and effectiveness and ensuring that appropriate measures are in place to ensure fiscal accountability.

Actions to be taken by the Ministry to update funding mechanisms contained within the act could include, but are not limited to:

- Enhancing clarity, consistency and accountability in the development and use of municipal levies by defining eligibility criteria, reviewing apportionment, and defining the process by which conservation authorities are to work with participating municipalities to monitor and report on the use of public funds.
- Promoting clarity, consistency and accountability in the development and use of fees and generated revenue with the aim of ensuring fees are established in an open and transparent manner, are consistent with provincial direction on the use of fees, and adequately support the effective delivery of conservation authority operations, programs and services.
- Improving fiscal oversight and transparency by clarifying the role of municipalities in overseeing conservation authority budget development and spending, and where appropriate, standardizing budget development, tracking and reporting processes, and ensuring information on revenue sources and expenditures is made publicly available.
- Improving clarity in the use of provincial funding processes by providing conservation authorities with greater clarity in eligibility criteria, reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of provincial funding processes, and updating requirements for reporting back on the use of provincial funds.



PRIORITY #5: Enhancing Flexibility for the Province



The framework and conditions for resource conservation and management in Ontario have changed significantly since the establishment of the *Conservation Authorities Act*, and the way conservation authorities operate within that framework has changed along with it. Resource conservation and management has become increasingly complex due to increases in Ontario's population numbers and density. There are also new challenges such as climate change, which further complicate resource management decisions. In addition, conservation authorities have been evolving as organizations. They are growing their funding sources, and accepting and being assigned additional roles that extend their responsibilities into additional areas.

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper recognized the changing nature of resource conservation and management in Ontario and the need for the Ministry to be responsive to both current and future pressures. Several sectors acknowledged that the role of conservation authorities in the delivery of provincial priorities could, and should, change over time in response to emerging issues and changing priorities, and that greater flexibility should be built into the act to periodically update the regulatory and policy framework to enable such changes. Others recognized there are gaps in the delivery of provincial programs in areas

outside of a conservation authority's jurisdiction and that other public sector bodies (including other provincial ministries and municipalities) may be best positioned to help fill these gaps.

The role of conservation authorities in resource conservation and management in Ontario will undoubtedly continue to change over time. Conservation authorities will continue to evolve as organizations, growing their expertise and networks and positioning themselves to take on additional roles in additional areas. At the same time, other public sector bodies, including provincial ministries, municipalities and other groups, will similarly grow in their own expertise and become increasingly attractive partners for the development and delivery of programs and services – particularly in areas outside of the jurisdiction of a conservation authority.

In order to better prepare for these changes in the future, the Ministry is proposing to build greater flexibility within the act to formally delegate the delivery of programs and services to conservation authorities, or other groups, in the future. By enabling greater flexibility for the future, the province will be in a better position to periodically provide additional clarity, consistency and accountability in the delivery of programs and services in the future.

Actions taken by the Ministry to enable flexibility for the future could include, but are not limited to:

- Giving the Minister the authority to use the act to develop additional natural resource conservation and management programs and services in the future, throughout the province.
- Giving the Minister the authority to formally delegate the delivery of current and additional natural resource conservation and management programs and services to conservation authorities in the future.
- Giving the Minister the authority to formally delegate the delivery of current and additional natural resource conservation and management programs and services to other public bodies, not-for-profit organizations, municipalities and other Ministries.
- Giving the Minister the authority to deliver additional natural resource conservation and management programs and services throughout the province.



3

OTHER ACTIONS BEING CONSIDERED

Feedback provided in response to the Ministry's discussion paper also identified a number of areas where general 'housekeeping' amendments could be made, or supporting actions that could be taken, to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of conservation authority operations, programs and services.

In response to the feedback provided, the province is considering:

- **Reducing administrative burdens** associated with appointing and replacing board members and obtaining approval of board per diems.
- **Aligning board terms** with the municipal elections cycle.
- **Developing an orientation and training program** for board members.
- **Developing a coordinated communications plan** outlining any changes to conservation authority operations, programs and services resulting from the review in partnership with municipalities and conservation authorities.



4

FEEDBACK REQUESTED

The Ministry has established five priorities for updating the *Conservation Authorities Act* and the supporting regulatory and policy framework:

- 1 Strengthening oversight and accountability in decision-making.
- 2 Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes and requirements.
- 3 Improving collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management.
- 4 Modernizing funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operations.
- 5 Enhancing flexibility for the province to update the *Conservation Authorities Act* framework in the future.

The following questions are intended to help the Ministry obtain feedback on these five priorities and actions currently being considered by the Ministry in support of achieving these priorities. The questions below are general in nature and are not intended to discourage readers from raising their own questions or providing comments in other areas. Where possible, please provide specific examples and/or links to supporting information:

- **What do you think of these priorities? Which are the most important and/or least important to you?**
Are there other priorities that should be considered?
- **What actions would you recommend the province take to help achieve these priorities?**
- **What do you see as some of the key challenges in achieving improvements under any or all of these priority areas?**



5

HOW TO PROVIDE FEEDBACK

We want to hear from you. If you have comments or suggestions that should be considered in updating the *Conservation Authorities Act* to achieve the priorities outlined within this consultation document please take advantage of this opportunity to provide them to us. All comments received in response to this consultation document will be read and considered in moving forward.

Written comments can be provided by:

Responding to the Environmental Registry posting by searching the EBR Registry number 012-7583 on the following website: www.ontario.ca/EBR

Or

Emailing us at:

mnrwaterpolicy@ontario.ca

**The deadline for providing comments is
September 9, 2016.**

Comments collected in response to this consultation document will be used by the Ministry to inform the development of specific changes to the existing legislative, regulatory and policy framework. Any specific changes to the existing legislative, regulatory or policy framework proposed as a result of the review will be subject to further public consultation as appropriate, for example, through subsequent Environmental Registry postings.

The review of individual conservation authorities, the specific programs and services they deliver, and site-specific permit applications and permitting decisions are not within scope of the Ministry's review.



EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015

Item 29, Report No. 35, of the Committee of the Whole, which was adopted without amendment by the Council of the City of Vaughan on October 20, 2015.

29

**CITY OF VAUGHAN COUNCIL INPUT INTO
THE PROVINCIAL CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT REVIEW**

The Committee of the Whole recommends:

- 1) That the recommendation contained in the following report of the City Manager, dated October 7, 2015, be approved; and
- 2) That staff be directed to review the VOP 2010 in relation to the roles and responsibilities at the TRCA with the view to create efficiencies, reduce duplication and provide far more accountability, and report back in the first quarter of 2016.

Recommendation

The City Manager recommends:

1. That the City Manager and staff be instructed to complete their consultations with Council and based on input received, prepare and submit a letter of response to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry on an expedited basis.

Contribution to Sustainability

N/A

Economic Impact

There are no economic impacts associated with the preparation and receipt of this report as recommended.

Communications Plan

N/A

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to identify the opportunity for Council Members to provide input on the Conservation Authorities Act review in response to the request by the Province for input prior to October 19, 2015.

Background - Analysis and Options**Synopsis**

The Province is conducting a review of the Conservation Authorities Act and has released a discussion document containing questions identifying issues for consideration. The review has an October 19 2015 deadline for comment. City staff has received input from Councillors regarding their concerns with respect to the questions raised in the discussion document. A brief summary of comments and concerns is included in this report. Staff is seeking direction to complete consultations and to provide a letter to the Ministry which will set out the resulting comments. A response for Council's consideration by way of a communication will be provided at its next scheduled meeting on October 20, 2015.

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015

Item 29, CW Report No. 35 – Page 2

Background

In August of 2015 the Province announced a time limited consultation on the Conservation Authority Act with a deadline for submitting comments of October 19, 2015. The consultation request includes a Discussion Paper which is attached to this report and can be found at: http://apps.mnr.gov.on.ca/public/files/er/Discussion_Paper_2015.pdf.

The objective of this review is to identify opportunities to improve the legislative, regulatory and policy framework that currently governs the creation, operation and activities of Conservation Authorities that may be required in the face of a constantly changing environment. The purpose of this discussion paper is to seek feedback on the following three areas:

1. *Governance* – the processes, structures, and accountability frameworks within the Act which direct conservation authority decision-making and operations;
2. *Funding Mechanisms* – the mechanisms put in place by the Act to fund conservation authorities; and
3. *Roles and Responsibilities* – the roles and associated responsibilities that the Act enables conservation authorities to undertake.

In Vaughan the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) plays a valuable role in working with City staff on studies and projects. The TRCA is actively involved in subwatershed planning with stakeholders in the planning for New Communities Areas including Blocks 41 and 27. The TRCA also plays a major role in reviewing development applications throughout the City. TRCA is involved as a party to several OMB proceedings including the Vaughan Official Plan 2010 appeals. In addition, the TRCA is involved in emergency management including staff training, exercises, and hazard management surrounding management of the Don and Humber watersheds. The TRCA is a major landowner and property manager for lands and facilities across the City of Vaughan most notably the Kortright Centre with thousands of acres of holdings within the Don and Humber Valley systems. Many City trails cross TRCA lands and comprise part of the open space system enjoyed by citizens in the City.

Initial Input Received to Date from Council Members

Councillors have expressed the need for more clarity around the role(s) of the TRCA through the CAA Review process. Presently, Section 20 and 21 of the Conservation Authorities Act allows for CA's to take on a broader role and many stakeholders have raised concerns about the TRCA's mandate and scope of reviews expanding beyond land management, permitting and development review matters described in other sections of the Act and the specific TRCA regulations applying to watersheds in Vaughan. There is an interest in ensuring that the TRCA maintains its focus on key roles related to flood protection and watershed management.

Councillors have expressed concerns with the availability of resources and staff necessary to ensure timely TRCA reviews of development applications. Some Councillors have suggested that additional resources be made available to support resolution of development issues within the TRCA's regulated areas.

Councillors see an opportunity for improved data sharing and working relationships between the City and TRCA to support their role as a commenting agency and to ensure the provision of the most accurate up to date information to inform projects and reviews.

Stakeholder Input

Stakeholders in projects in Vaughan have also expressed concerns over the role of the TRCA in the development review process. While Section 20 and 21 of the Conservation Authorities Act

CITY OF VAUGHAN

EXTRACT FROM COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES OF OCTOBER 20, 2015

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allows for CA's to take on a broader role many stakeholders have raised concerns about the TRCA mandate and scope of reviews expanding beyond land management, permitting and development review matters described in other sections of the Act and the specific TRCA regulations applying to watersheds in Vaughan. Stakeholders are also interested in ensuring that the TRCA maintains focus on key roles related to flood protection and watershed management.

Stakeholders have also expressed concerns with the timing of the TRCA's review of studies and other information submitted in support of development applications and have requested that additional resources be made available to facilitate resolution of such development issues within the TRCA's regulated areas.

Stakeholders have also identified concerns with the fee structure but some have indicated a willingness to pay additional fees if they are dedicated to accelerating the timing of reviews and enhancing service delivery.

Staff and stakeholders see an opportunity for continued improvement to data sharing to support the CA role as a commenting agency and to ensure the provision of the most accurate and up to date hydrological information to inform projects and reviews. The review should include consideration of how to ensure the most up to date information on natural heritage systems (wetlands, thermal regime, flow regimes of riparian systems, waterbodies, drainage features) is provided to staff to inform reviews.

Relationship to Vaughan Vision 2020/Strategic Plan

The TRCA has been involved in several environmental initiatives and has been working with the City to implement Green Directions Vaughan.

Regional Implications

The Region of York is responding to the review. A report proceeded to the Regional Committee of the Whole on October 1, 2015. The Region's position will be ratified at its October 15, 2015 Council meeting.

Conclusion

Members of Council are interested in ensuring an improved working relationship with the TRCA and are suggesting additional clarification of roles and responsibilities along with additional capacity and focus on the development review process as part of the CA Act Review. Staff is currently preparing a draft letter which will identify targeted responses to issues of significance to the City. The letter will reflect Council responses and any additional input received which responds to the questions posed in the Provincial Discussion Paper.

Attachments

1. Appendix 1 – Specific Questions Provided By The Province
2. Provincial Discussion Paper Conservations Authorities Act

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Kanellakos
City Manager

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing have been forwarded to each Member of Council and a copy thereof is also on file in the office of the City Clerk.)

**BRIEF TO THE MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND FORESTRY
PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSERVATION AUTHORITIES ACT –
“CONSERVING OUR FUTURE: PROPOSED PRIORITIES FOR RENEWAL”**

1. What do you think of these priorities? Which are the most important and/or least important to you? Are there other priorities that should be considered?

The five priorities identified by the Ministry as a result of the consultation in Phase 1 of this review, incorporate many of the comments the City of Vaughan (City) has in regards to the much needed improvements to the Conservation Authorities Act (the “Act”). The City does not have a most important or least important priority, but all should be treated equally during the review as one priority may impact the outcome of another priority.

Priority No. 1, Stronger oversight and accountability in decision making, is important because the City is looking for improvements in the governance structure of the Conservation Authorities Board (Board). The Board needs to be accountable for decision making that impacts municipality’s authority and public interest. The restructuring of the Board would facilitate the identification of board members’ key roles and responsibilities as decision makers but also provide an avenue to clarify the role of Conservation Authorities (“CAs”) which leads to *Priority No. 2, Increasing clarity and consistency in roles and responsibilities, processes and requirements*. Clarifying the CA’s roles as an advisory and/or regulatory agency is important because it will clarify final approval decision making. Further clarification is also needed in the CA’s role in asset management (i.e. cultural heritage, trails and woodlands as a result of land conveyance during the development review process and land donations). It is recommended that this matter be further explored in *Priority No. 2*.

Without finding innovative ways to implement *Priority 3, Improved collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management*, the Province would not be able to achieve the other priorities. Improved collaboration and engagement among all parties involved in resource management is also an important priority. Without proper dialogue between different stakeholders, there will be no positive solutions to the comments and concerns presented in this review. We believe that continued collaboration among all parties is needed to overcome barriers especially where there are conflicting interests.

The City supports *Priority No. 5, Enhancing Flexibility for the Province to update Conservation Authority Act in the Future*, but would rather see that the Province direct its attention to delegating the delivery of programs and services to the CAs in a comprehensive and justifiable manner. For instance, the Invasive Species Act has been established to manage invasive species in Ontario. If this portfolio is downloaded to the CAs, there needs to be a plan and resources to support the CAs on this delegated additional responsibility. The Province needs to provide implementation tools to assist CAs in the delivery of information to their local municipalities.

Effectively managing priority 1, 2 and 5, will result in further opportunities to assist with the delivery of *Priority No. 4, Modern funding mechanisms to support conservation authority operation*. Improved collaboration between agencies will result in opportunities for further funding mechanisms to support the CAs which would ultimately support projects in our municipality.

2. What actions would you recommend the province take to help achieve these priorities?

The City provides the following recommendations to help the Province achieve these priorities.

1. It is recommended that the Province engage the individual CAs to discuss how they have been working with partner municipalities on land management, permitting and development

review matters, especially if their roles and responsibilities have changed throughout the years. An evaluation of specific local programs and services is required to address immediate concerns on specific program delivery and services. These comments reference the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), as the CA responsible for Vaughan's watersheds. These comments may also be more broadly applicable to other CAs as well.

2. It is recommended that the Province update the Act to reflect the current initiatives the TRCA has taken in watershed management outside of the permitting process (i.e. trail development, asset management, land securement, low impact development programs, urban agriculture initiatives). These initiatives should be identified as technical advisory projects that support municipal environmental initiatives.
 3. It is recommended that the Province support a coordinated approach to planning through the development of working agreements between CAs and municipalities to deal with land management and services provided. The creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (agreement) will provide both legal and scope of work direction on land conveyance, cultural heritage resources, trail management and development, easements, erosion improvements and service delivery in the planning approvals process.
 4. It is recommended that the Province request CAs to provide municipalities with reporting on how compensation funds obtained through regulated wetland impacts and other negotiations with applicants during the planning approvals process. It will be important to ensure the CA direct the funds to projects within the municipality that the impact was created. This would improve transparency in decision-making when allocating funds to projects. The Act requires an annual audit (see S. 38), but perhaps this should be expanded to describe an Annual Report, including a summary of Board motions and decisions.
 5. It is recommended that the Province continue to support the professional development of CA and municipal staff. The City heavily relies on the technical expertise of TRCA staff and welcome the technical support provided by TRCA staff during the development review process, restoration initiatives and training opportunities created for municipal staff.
 6. It is recommended that the Province provide their CAs with funding or support the update of fee schedules to support the hiring of additional technical staff. The City is a high growth municipality and the volume of development applications is quite high. With additional resources, the TRCA would be able to review technical documents in a timely manner and avoid delays to the development review process.
 7. It is recommended that the Province direct their CAs to develop in collaboration with their municipalities a consistent and effective data sharing agreements/protocols. In particular, the Province should direct staff to share up to date data between public agencies to ensure efficient service delivery.
3. **What do you see as some of the key challenges in achieving improvements under any or all of these priority areas?**

The key challenges the City foresees in achieving improvements include the following:

1. More attention should be directed toward resolving or further stipulating roles to address challenges between the PPS (2014) directing municipalities to be responsible for natural heritage system planning and the broad scope in the CA Act to "further the conservation, restoration, development and management of natural resources". This should result in an effective conservation partnership between the municipality and the CA. However, stakeholders frequently focus on the CA's more limited role to provide permits in areas defined by the Regulatory Area, rather than the broader role available to the CA through sections 20 and 21 of the CA Act. It should be recognized that natural heritage planning is the responsibility of not only municipalities and their CA's, but also other external agencies and

stakeholders. The Province needs to address how it will manage these different agencies and stakeholder interests in order to meet watershed objectives, as well as stakeholder interests, as there has been reluctance from stakeholders to broaden TRCAs mandate.

2. The establishment of a one-window approach to streamline agency processes and requirements for all CAs in the review of development applications in an efficient manner. The coordination of multiple agencies review and approval process to be a challenge. The Province should coordinate the CAs approvals process with other agencies such as the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry and Department of Fisheries and Oceans. The coordination of agency requirements and potential conflicting policies and standards needs to be managed in a transparent manner.
3. The TRCA is acquiring valley lands, built heritage buildings and trails through the development review process. More accountability on how these assets are being managed within our jurisdiction would be beneficial to the Municipality. There needs to be clarification via Memorandum of Understandings/Agreements between the City and the TRCA to manage, maintain and protect these assets.
4. The TRCA developed the Humber River and Don River Watershed Plans to help identify key indicators and recommend management strategies to improve the state of the environment. Since the initiation of these plans, there has been little engagement with the City to implement these recommended strategies. It is recommended that a more collaborative approach among agencies be taken to discuss opportunities for watershed initiatives and projects, in particular, projects taking place within local municipal jurisdiction. Municipalities need to understand how we can work together to implement the recommendations of these plans.
5. Lack of funding mechanisms from the Federal and Provincial governments to support the CAs will inhibit the number of partnerships between CA, municipalities and NGO's to preserve, protect and enhance the natural environment and implement Climate Change action plan. A funding strategy should be put in place to clarify how these policies will be implemented.

The City appreciates the opportunity to provide comments and would welcome further discussion or clarification on the comments presented above.