

Joint Watercourse Naturalisation Study Black Creek at Humber River (York Humber)

(City Council on November 23, 24 and 25, 1999, adopted this Clause, without amendment.)

The Works Committee recommends:

- (1) the adoption of the following report (October 20, 1999) from the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services; and**
- (2) that the Terms of Reference for this project include an examination of pollution prevention and the impact from any pesticide application at the Lambton Golf Club.**

Purpose:

To authorise a joint feasibility study between the City of Toronto, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Lambton Golf Club and the Black Creek Project, of technical issues related to naturalisation and rehabilitation of the lower Black Creek channel and floodplain (between Jane Street and the Humber River).

Financial Implications and Impact Statement:

Existing funds in the Works and Emergency Services 1999 Capital Budget, District Stormwater Management, Project No. WP953-S25020, are sufficient to pay the City's portion (the lesser of \$35,000.00 or 50 percent) of the cost of the study.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- (1) subject to the receipt of a formal letter of request from the Lambton Golf Club, the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services, in consultation with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Lambton Golf Club and the Black Creek Project, be authorised to:**
 - (a) participate in the preparation of detailed Terms of Reference to define the technical feasibility of naturalisation options;**
 - (b) participate in the consultant selection and award process, as administered by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority; and**
 - (c) fund the City's contribution for the study from the Works and Emergency Services 1999 Capital Budget, District Stormwater Management, Project**

No. WP953-S25020, with such expenditures not to exceed the lesser of \$35,000.00 or 50 percent of the total study costs;

- (2) the Commissioner of Works and Emergency Services report to the Works Committee in approximately six months, with information on the results of the feasibility study and recommendations on the next steps; and
- (3) the appropriate City officials be authorised and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

Background:

Throughout the 1980's, local and international concern for Great Lakes water quality led to a series of studies which resulted in the International Joint Commission (IJC) designating the Toronto waterfront as one of 42 Areas of Concern within the Great Lakes drainage basin. The environmental impacts of local water taking and wastewater discharges (point sources), as well as stormwater runoff and watercourse discharges (non-point sources) are well documented for the Toronto area. A Remedial Action Plan (RAP) has been developed to identify and mitigate the impacts of these sources, to restore beneficial uses and, ultimately, to delist Toronto from the IJC designation.

Detailed studies of each watercourse that discharges to the Toronto waterfront have provided recommendations addressing both point and non-point sources. The RAP recommendations also identified that much of the watercourse lands are not in public ownership and that actions on private lands were to be encouraged through partnerships and the municipal approval process.

The Humber River discharge impacts the western portion of the waterfront. The Humber watershed, within the City, receives flow from the Black Creek sub-watershed. Black Creek has been identified as the most degraded sub-watershed within the Humber system. It is fully urbanised and has been channelised in concrete to accommodate storm flows. Remedial efforts to restore a natural channel meander, with aquatic habitat and improved water quality, have been hindered by lack of adequate valley width due to the proximity of private lands.

We are currently expecting to receive a letter of request formalising our discussions from the Lambton Golf Club, private owners of the lower Black Creek and floodplain, to consider a partnership to remediate the lower Black Creek by naturalising the existing concrete channel.

Comments:

This proactive offer by private owners to consider naturalising a degraded watercourse through partnership with the City and other agencies is an unexpected opportunity to improve local water quality, improve aquatic habitat and reduce the water quality impacts on the western waterfront. These benefits are all within the context of the RAP recommendations and assist in moving forward in the IJC delisting process.

Site specific consideration of base flow, peak storm flow, soil conditions, local elevations and grade issues, off-line wetland or pond opportunities, available land area and flooding potential

need to be addressed through a feasibility study. This study would be conducted within the context of the Environmental Assessment process and, ultimately, would recommend naturalisation options that maximise water quality improvement, provide adequate flood management, restore aquatic habitat and resolve ownership issues of maintenance, operation and liability.

The cost of this feasibility study is estimated to be between \$45,000.00 and \$65,000.00, and will take about six months to complete. The City's contribution would be limited to the lesser of \$35,000.00 or 50 percent of the total cost.

Conclusions:

This proposed study is necessary to clarify technical issues, define benefits and resolve long-term partnership issues in a manner that best benefits the public and the environment. This proposal has been discussed with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Lambton Golf Club and the Black Creek Project staff.

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