

Update on Implementation of Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan

Date:	April 17, 2007
To:	Parks and Environment Committee
From:	Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Executive Director, Policy, Planning, Finance and Administration
Wards:	All
Reference Number:	pe070038 P:\2007\ClusterB\PPFA\TEO\PE07003

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the implementation of the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* (November, 2001).

In 2001, Toronto City Council successfully advocated for protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine. Its recommendations to the Province influenced the form and content *Bill 122, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* and the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*. At the time, Toronto City Council also recommended that the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan address the strategic management of how and where growth occurs in the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding region. This recommendation and Toronto's study entitled *City and Regional Strategies for Growth that Protect Countryside and Air Quality* influenced the Province's subsequent *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan*.

Efforts are well underway to protect the Oak Ridges Moraine. The City has and continues to contribute directly to these efforts through funding of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. The City also contributes indirectly through its leadership actions in protection and enhancement of the natural heritage system and implementation of the Green Development Standard.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact as a result of this report.

DECISION HISTORY

A report on information on the status of the Oak Ridges Moraine Implementation Strategy was requested at the January 23, 2007 meeting of the Parks and Environment Committee.
<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2007/pe/decisions/2007-01-23-pe01-dd.pdf>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Concern over unchecked development in the Moraine led the Province to introduce legislation to protect the Moraine in November 2001. Toronto City Council's interest in the long term protection of the Moraine stemmed from two main concerns:

- i) protection of the water quality and quantity and associated riparian and terrestrial habitats of the Humber, Don and Rouge Rivers; and
- ii) ensuring growth be directed such that valuable countryside and open spaces are preserved, and negative impacts of sprawl such as air pollution and infrastructure are reduced.

To support Toronto's participation in the development of the legislation Council initiated the Oak Ridges Moraine Steering Committee, which held a public meeting on October 3, 2001 to hear deputations on the Province's draft strategy *Share your Vision of the Oak Ridges Moraine*.

In November 2001, Toronto City Council advocated for long term protection of the Moraine through its comments to the Province on the draft legislation. Council's recommendations to the Province influenced the form and content *Bill 122, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* and the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*. In its recommendations, Toronto City Council also advocated that the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan address the strategic management of how and where growth should occur in the Greater Toronto Area and surrounding region. This recommendation and Toronto's study entitled *City and Regional Strategies for Growth that Protect Countryside and Air Quality* influenced the Province's subsequent *Greenbelt Plan* and *Growth Plan*.

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/2001/agendas/council/cc011106/agenda.pdf>.

COMMENTS

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan provides ecologically based guidance and direction for the management of 190,000 hectares of land and water within the Moraine. Since its adoption, the municipalities located on the Moraine have been, as required, working to bring their official plans into conformity with the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan and with the watershed plans which were prepared under the Plan.

While the City of Toronto is not located in the area to which the Plan applies, as a downstream municipality the City benefits both directly and indirectly from conservation of the Moraine. The City of Toronto provides funding to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), which is working to implement the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* through preparation of watershed plans for watersheds whose headwaters are located within the area to which the Plan applies. The TRCA is also part of the Conservation Authorities Moraine Coalition, which is active in developing stewardship initiatives and in securing valuable natural heritage properties on the Moraine. The Coalition reports annually on its accomplishments in protecting the Moraine and these reports are available on the web site: http://www.trca.on.ca/corporate_info/conservation_authorities/.

The City, along with other funding partners, has contributed to the purchase of sixty-nine hectares of land in the Township of King which contains part of the Black Duck Wetland Complex and tributaries of the Humber River.

In addition, the City of Toronto is providing leadership in natural heritage conservation and green development through the identification of a natural heritage system and policies in the Official Plan and through the implementation of the Green Development Standard for new construction. While these efforts do not impact directly on the Moraine they provide a progressive model for municipalities located on the moraine and elsewhere.

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