



The Weston Golf and Country Club, Limited

Established 1915

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Weston Golf and Country Club – Mid-Humber Gap Presentation

October 23, 2025

Good afternoon, Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is Robert Ackermann; I'm the General Manager and Golf Course Superintendent at Weston Golf and Country Club and have worked next to the Humber River for the past 24 years.

The pivotal event that shaped the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's mandate was Hurricane Hazel. This devastating storm claimed 81 lives in the Toronto area and caused catastrophic flooding, particularly along the Humber River. It revealed the dangers of uncontrolled development in floodplains and led directly to the formation of the TRCA — an organization whose core mandate is to prevent floodplain development and protect people, property, and the environment.

It's for that reason that we at Weston Golf and Country Club feel so strongly that this project, as currently proposed, contradicts the TRCA's own founding principles.

Together with the City of Toronto, the TRCA is proposing to build permanent structures within the Humber River floodplain, below the 100-year flood line. Yet in 2008, when Weston sought approval to construct a small pump station in the same valley to comply with new provincial water-taking requirements, we were told by TRCA that we could not build below that same 100-year flood line. At significant expense, we relocated our pump station to meet those standards.

The TRCA's policies and guidelines are clear, and we have followed them, so I ask - why are there two sets of rules?

In the spirit of collaboration, Weston has not simply opposed the Mid-Humber Gap trail project. We support the goals of this initiative and have developed a fully engineered and costed east-bank alternative at our own expense. Unfortunately, this alternative was not thoroughly explored during the City's initial route evaluations, which dismissed the east bank as unstable, yet every single day for the past 24 years, I have watched multiple GO and freight trains pass safely along that same east bank.

In addition, the west bank alternative is inconsistent with TRCA's policies related to the construction of structures within the floodplain and other TRCA guidelines. The west bank option as proposed does not conform with the TRCA's Valley and Stream Corridor Crossing Guidelines (2015) and all of the technical studies that are required to ensure conformity with these guidelines have not been completed, including a meander belt delineation and the

determination of the 100-year erosion limit, information which the TRCA deems essential to evaluate the siting and design of proposed bridges and watercourse crossings.

Our analysis shows that this east-bank alignment would be over \$4 million less expensive to construct than the current west-bank proposal and that figure **excludes** the expropriation costs, the required mitigation work to our course and irrigation infrastructure, and the operational impacts to our business. Surprisingly, to date, no one has asked us to provide those additional cost estimates, which seems unusual given their relevance to understanding the project's true cost and the short and long-term financial impacts on Weston Golf and Country Club and all taxpayers.

Beyond economics, the east-bank option offers clear advantages in safety and construction feasibility:

- It could be built more efficiently during the summer months,
- It constitutes a shorter route that takes advantage of existing city-owned lands,
- It will not require the construction of any bridges across the Humber River or structures within the floodplain that will affect flood elevations and could obstruct flows within the river valley,
- It would be safer for users, providing clear egress routes in the event of flooding or emergencies,
- It would be cheaper to maintain long-term as it would not be subject to repeated flooding and ice damage,
- And it would offer spectacular views of the Humber River Valley and the golf course, enhancing the user experience, not diminishing it.

By contrast, the west-bank alignment would position users directly over the river, with no safe exit in a flood or emergency, and would involve more complex, costly, and time-consuming construction and repeated maintenance after every storm or ice flow event.

To help illustrate these points, I'd like to share a few visuals that clarify our concern that TRCA and the City of Toronto are trying to build a path where it simply shouldn't be built.

In closing, Weston Golf and Country Club respectfully asks that the Committee ensure equal application of TRCA's standards, and that the east-bank alternative — which is safer, more affordable, and more consistent with the conservation principles that emerged from Hurricane Hazel and the policies of the TRCA— be properly and fairly considered before any expropriation proceeds.

Thank you.

Robert Ackermann
General Manager & Golf Course Superintendent
Weston Golf and Country Club

Hurricane Hazel | October 16, 1954

Current Proposed Trail Alignment

