

**East Don Trail Project  
Environmental Assessment**

**Community Liaison Committee Meeting #1  
Notes**

Flemingdon Health Centre  
Community Room  
April 22nd, 2013  
6:30pm – 8:30pm

Meeting Chair: Adele Freeman

Note Taker: Erica Dewell

<b>ATTENDANCE</b>	
<b>Name</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Lisa Turnbull	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Natalie Seniuk	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Violetta Tkazcuk	Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
Daniel Eagan	City of Toronto
Jennifer Hyland	City of Toronto
Wendy Strickland	City of Toronto
Munjeera Jefford	Action for Neighbourhood Change/Hub, Victoria Village
Ronald Kluger	Bike 25
Terry West	Don Mills Residents Inc.
Andy Wickens	Don Watershed Regeneration Council
Louis Fliss	Flemingdon Health Centre
Chris Winsor	Resident Ward 29
Paula Davies	Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve
Charles Chaffey	Toronto Field Naturalists
Anne Marie Leger	Toronto Ornithological Club
Mike Jones	Walk Toronto
Brendan Flanagan	Wynford Concorde Residents Group
Regrets: John Taranu (Cycle Toronto), John Routh (Friends of the Don East), Nancy Smith Lea (Toronto Centre for Active Transportation), George Bizios (Victoria Village Community Association), Jon Riddell (Woodbine Gardens Homeowners Association)	
Observer: Abid Hussain (Resident Ward 26)	

## **WELCOME AND OPENING COMMENTS**

The Chair, Adele Freeman (AF or The Chair) - Director of Watershed Management at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) - welcomed everyone to Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting #1 and thanked the group for volunteering to participate on the CLC. She informed the group that notes would be taken throughout the meeting so that the comments and questions may be recorded and a summary of the meeting in the form of notes will be available for CLC members.

The Chair introduced herself and described her role in the meeting, which is to allow the Project Team to provide information while ensuring that the CLC members have an opportunity to share information and provide opinions as well.

The Chair then provided an opportunity for Daniel Egan (DE) - Manager of Cycling, Infrastructure and programs with the City of Toronto - to welcome the members of the CLC and provided a brief introduction to the project.

## **INTRODUCTION OF CLC MEMBERS**

The Chair asked that CLC meeting participants introduce themselves and to say something about whom they are and which community group or organization they represent.

## **INTRODUCTION OF PROJECT TEAM**

The Project Team consisted of staff from both the City of Toronto (the City) and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), each of whom introduced themselves and their role in the project.

## **FORMAT OF THE MEETING**

Natalie Seniuk (NS) - Project Coordinator with TRCA – provided the administrative background for the CLC indicating that the format of each CLC meeting would vary depending on the content, but in general, the meetings will begin with a presentation followed by a facilitated roundtable discussion. For the first meeting, there would be a presentation with facilitated discussion throughout the evening, to encourage flexible and timely dialogue. NS also indicated that each CLC Member had been provided with a Project Binder (one per household or organization) to maintain a record of information provided during the duration of the East Don Trail Environmental Assessment (East Don Trail EA). The members of the CLC should note that the information provided at the CLC meetings is meant to be shared with the respective organizations or households, but not be used for public circulation.

NS explained that there are four CLC Meetings and two Public Information Centres planned as part of the Environmental Assessment process for the East Don Trail.

NS then outlined the ground rules, as found in the CLC Terms of Reference (ToR).

The Chair asked the team if everyone agreed with the meeting location, time, format and ground rules of the CLC. No one voiced any objections.

Charles Chaffey – with Toronto Field Naturalists - had been asked to report to his organization, and for information to appear in their newsletter which gets widely distributed. Mr. Chaffey inquired about the possibility of the project team providing information for this purpose

AF/NS: said they would consider providing information that may be distributed.

### **PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CLC (TERMS OF REFERENCE)**

NS briefly reviewed the CLC Terms of Reference (ToR) and outlined the purpose and objectives of the CLC.

NS encouraged the CLC members to review the ToR on their own, though the presentation would address the main components of the document. It was also asked that each member of the CLC read, sign and provide a copy of the Members Agreement form located on the last page of the ToR, to a member of the Project Team before leaving.

The Chair asked if anyone had any questions regarding the purpose and objectives of the CLC, the ToR and the Member's Agreement. The members were also asked if there was anyone else who may be interested in joining the CLC, or if there were any Conflicts of Interest that they may have regarding the East Don Trail EA (as outlined in the ToR).

NS explained that the purpose of CLC Meeting # 1 was to:

1. Introduce the CLC to The East Don Trail EA Study;
2. Provide an overview of the EA process that the study would follow;
3. Provide an overview of the Public Consultation that will take place through the EA process;
4. Provide an overview of the study area, including some of the existing challenges; and most importantly,
5. To seek CLC input and comments

### **INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT**

The Chair turned the meeting over to NS to provide an introduction to the East Don Trail Study. NS gave a presentation on the following five items (PowerPoint Slides 12-27):

- (1) Background of the East Don Trail Study including and overview of the Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan and Feasibility Study;
- (2) The East Don Trail Environmental Assessment process
- (3) The opportunity statement and objectives for the East Don Trail Environmental Assessment;
- (4) An overview of the EA planning and design process and the proposed timeline; and
- (5) the public consultation plan.

#### Questions related to the Project Introduction:

##### **CLC Question:**

Ronald Klugar – Member of Bike 25 - asked NS to further explain the Project "Study Area". What is meant by the "50 meter (m)buffer".

**Project Team Response:**

Violetta Tkaczuk (VT) – Project Manager with TRCA - explained that the Local Study Area had been identified as the potential location through which a trail may be created. Generally, it was determined that any area that is within 50 m from the East Don River would be a suitable spot to support a trail. The 50 m buffer is flexible, and wherever there is not a suitable site within 50 m of the river to lay a trail, the Local Study Area would be adjusted accordingly.

**Project Team Question:**

DE asked VT to explain the purpose of the Regional and Local Study Areas.

**Project Team Explanation:**

VT stated that both a Regional and Local Study Area are required in the Environmental Assessment process. The Regional Study Area is created to determine broader effects on environment including the social, cultural, biological, physical, and economic.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr. Kluger expressed concern over the naming of the most northerly connection area, believing this will cause confusion with the existing trail name.

**Project Team Decision:**

The Chair parked the discussion until the end of the meeting.

Questions related to the Opportunity Statement and Project Objectives Section:

**CLC Question:**

Terry West of Don Mills Residents Inc. stated that that the discussion to date had been primarily about bicycles, and if the trail was being built mainly for that purpose?

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that the trail is meant to be multi-use, so although it hopes to support cyclists, it is by no means only meant for that purpose. Walking and other uses are meant to be equally supported as well; no one use is going to be given priority.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Chaffey asked if off-leash dogs would be allowed in area, or if an area would be identified through the process?

**Project Team Response:**

VT clarified that it is not a part of this Environmental Assessment process, and that it is up to responsible dog owners to keep their pets on leashes. Off-leash dogs are not currently permitted in the area as per the City of Toronto by-laws.

**CLC Question:**

Brendan Flanagan with Wynford Concorde Liaison Committee, asked if there was a plan to have a dog off-leash area?

**Project Team Response:**

Wendy Strickland (WS) – Natural Environment Specialist with City of Toronto’s Parks Forestry and Recreation clarified that creating a dog off-leash area is a separate process and is not covered by this Environmental Assessment, but is not aware of any process currently underway to create an off-leash area at or near the site.

**CLC Question:**

Paula Davies with Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve asked if there is a way to prevent an off leash dog park through this process.

**Project Team Response:**

VT said there is not; it is not within the power of this Environmental Assessment to do so. DE mentioned that again, it is a completely different process. The Chair clarified for the CLC that dog off leash areas are not within the scope and are not dealt with in this Environmental Assessment.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr.West said that off-leash areas are probably something to be dealt within the communities.

**CLC Question:**

Mr.Flanagan asked about the opportunity to improve or remediate the area?

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that the natural and physical environments are both assessed during the Environmental Assessment process. Remediation works would be recommended during the process. In the event the proposed trail location would affect the environment recommendations would be made to mitigate these, for example if trees are removed than the recommendation would be to replace those trees.

**CLC Question:**

Chris Winsor, Ward 29 Resident, asked if trail would preclude remediation.

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that is not the intent of the process.

**CLC Comment:**

Ms.Davies said that there are some degraded areas that the trail could go through, that way the trail would not damage or negatively impact more sensitive areas.

**Project Team Response:**

VT agreed with that comment, and said it is something they will consider during the detailed design stage.

The Chair clarified that remediation does not need to be completed through an Environmental Assessment process; and although it is not necessarily within scope, the trail may be a catalyst for remediation to occur.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr.Klugar said that he is not worried about the opportunity for remediation because there are other ways to achieve remediation, and other proponents to do so, such as local community groups.

**CLC Question:**

Ms.Davies asked about the difference between “commuter route” and “recreational use”? And what does “commuter route” mean?

CLC member noted that it would not be a true commuter route because there will not be winter maintenance or lighting.

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that there is a need to provide a safe off-road option for people who commute to school or work by walking, biking, or rollerblading. The connection would allow for a safe commute. DE and JH noted that all trails are multi-use and there is no designation of commuter or recreational routes.

**CLC Question:**

Ms.Davies asked if anyone had a problem with leaving the word “commuting” out of the Objectives. She believes it brings a negative connotation.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr.Kluger said that he does not have an issue including the words because it is one of the many uses.

Mr.West said that this brings up a broader issue of cyclists driving too fast on trails, and the idea of sharing the trails or multi-use trails.

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair agreed with Mr. West that this is more of a citywide issue, which would be parked for now, and that this issue may not be able to be addressed through this project alone.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr. John Routh of Friends of the Don East (comment submitted in writing after CLC Meeting) wanted the record to show that while the bylaws state that dogs are not allowed off-leash in the valley system, this is a common practice that is not enforced. Mr. Routh suggested that the trail design be modified to account for this in areas where there is sensitive habitat. Ideas included post and paddle fencing (lined with meshed wire) that will prevent dogs from running off the trail and disturbing areas that should be protected.

Questions related to the Overview of EA Process Section:

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Flanagan asked if a meeting would be held in July and/or August?

**Project Team Response:**

NS said that there may potentially be a meeting at the end of August but no date had been set.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. West asked when the next meeting would be taking place.

**Project Team Response:**

NS said that the next meeting would likely take place at the end of May.

**CLC Question:**

Ms. Davies asked about the meeting with Flemingdon Golf Course. Ms. Davies emphasized how critical their cooperation would be in the trail connection.

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that Flemingdon Golf Course had been engaged throughout this process but that discussions related to their property were being undertaken confidentially by TRCA's Property Department. So although the project team is working with them, no details regarding the meetings could be shared.

The Chair confirmed VT's explanation.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Kluger asked about archaeology, is it apart of this process?

**Project Team Response:**

VT confirmed that archaeological assessments are a part of this Environmental Assessment. VT briefed the CLC members about the process; Stage 1 Evaluation of Archaeological Potential is currently being undertaken, and if artifacts are found then a Stage 2 Property Assessment will take place.

Questions related to the Public Consultation Section:

**CLC Question:**

Mr. West asked how the project team is advertising the Public Information Centres (PIC)?

**Project Team Response:**

VT said that it was advertised in the local papers and flyers were delivered to each home and apartment/condo building.

NS said that is good question. This was one of the discussion points for the evening, and the project team was hoping to get the CLCs input on how we can better distribute the information.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr. West said that he knows the people in Don Mills neighbourhood get the newspapers, does not know about Flemingdon. However, high-rise condos do not receive flyers, the Mirror and other local newspapers.

Ms. Davies suggested advertising in “The High-Rise”.

**EXISTING CONDITIONS PRESENTATION**

NS then turned the meeting over to the VT to provide a presentation on the existing conditions within the Regional and Local Study Areas. VT discussed the existing issues and challenges of the project on a physical, natural and socio-economic level (PowerPoint Slides 28-38).

During the presentation the following questions and comments were provided:

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Flanagan asked the difference between a steep slope versus a slope stability issue?

**Project Team Response:**

VT explained that the difference is in the erosive forces. When the bank has been eroded it causes more of a safety issue than just a steep drop that is not (currently) likely to allow the top to give way.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr. Kluger brought up the safety issue of the railway going through the valley, and mentioned that it is one of the few passenger rail lines that exist in such precarious conditions.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Chaffey asked if the Toronto Water Access Route will become the trail?

**Project Team Response:**

VT said that it will be a consideration during the evaluation process, since the footprint is already there and that it “makes sense” to use, but the Environmental Assessment process must still be followed to confirm.

**CLC Question:**

Mike Jones with Walk Toronto asked for clarification of where the Meadowlark are found.

**Project Team Response:**

VT showed Mr. Jones on the map (the bottom half of the Regional Study Area).

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Winsor asked who designated Species of Concern (since the Ministry of Natural Resources does the Species At Risk).

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair said that TRCA decides that.

**CLC Comment:**

Ms. Davies mentioned that there are some remnant forests in the Regional Study Area, and although the steep areas are dangerous, they are also beautiful. Ms. Davies believes these are some things to consider when preserving the natural area.

Ms. Davies asked about the landfill near the City of Toronto Public Works yard – believes that it has been capped, but there was a road that was put in and leachate collection was an issue. Will there be potential for disturbance in these areas?

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair and JH said that we have been checking in with the other City departments to determine any potential issues, such as the one Ms. Davies mentioned.

**CLC Comment:**

Ms. Davies praised the design of the map. She believes it was made very clear.

Mr. Kluger mentioned that he has some personal connection to the area. He said that there should be a history provided of the historical perspective of the area (i.e. when the rail was put in, flood levels, salmon in the river). Believes it's an important cultural area. Mr. Kluger mentioned using Charles Sauriol's books, and work by Jane Pitfield. He had some other resources as well if needed.

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair agreed with Mr. Kluger.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Winsor asked whose jurisdiction it is for signage and interpretation, as they believe it would benefit the trail.

**Project Team Response:**

DE said that it is to be discussed.

**CLC Comment:**

The Observer pointed out the mountain biking trails in the park and wanted to know if boardwalks could be considered besides asphalt or cutting down trees?

**Project Team Response:** Generally, asphalt will be for the proposed trail as it is the standard surface for multi-use trails. Other materials may be considered in some areas however, the ability for a broad spectrum of users to access and use the trail will need to be considered.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Flanagan said that he had sat in on a discussion for a city project where the trails that were mapped were incorrect. He voiced concern about data for maps.

**Project Team Response:**

WS mentioned that it has been updated. Not all has been mapped, but a good portion.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Jones asked about future access points, where are they going to be?

**Project Team Response:**

VT mentioned that it will be considered later in the Environmental Assessment process.

**CLC Question:**

Mr. Jones asked if they have already noted where public access is for the local communities?

**Project Team Response:**

VT said that they have mapped the informal access points. This information was requested of participants at PIC#1 which took place in February, 2013.

**CLC Question:**

Anne Marie Leger with Toronto Ornithological Club, asked if there is an opportunity to walk the area for those who are not familiar with it, like a field trip?

There was a lot of interest shown for field trip.

**Project Team Response:**

NS said she would plan one prior to CLC Meeting #2 as was generally the agreed to timing by the CLC.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr. Kluger mentioned that a "Mr. Apple" has uploaded a thorough picture view of the trail, shown on Google Earth and suggested sharing these with the group.

Mr. Kluger also suggested that the CLC members share email addresses so they are able to connect with each other outside of meetings.

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair mentioned that written permission would be required from the group to share emails and names between CLC members

NS agreed to send out permission requests so that the group could chat amongst themselves.

**CLC Comment:**

Mr.Kluger mentioned that there are some dangerous areas that we might not be able to get to when a site walk is undertaken.

**Project Team Response:**

The Chair said that there will be some stipulations and some areas to avoid.

A closing discussion was undertaken where Lisa Turnbull - Project Manager with TRCA – provided the group with the key discussion points that were heard during the meeting. Some discussion regarding the project opportunity statement and objectives was also undertaken.

Key points that were recorded by LT during the meeting included:

- The physical environment – the existing rail line will present a great challenge, and the explanation of erosion areas versus steep slopes should be clarified.
- The Natural environment – photos of some of the species at risk/concern should be provided at the next meeting, and the existence of remnant forests located on tops of many slopes should be identified
- Cultural environment – there is an opportunity for the Trail to provide historical story of the area and there is interpretive value in this project as there is an interesting history here that many may not be aware of.
- General comment – there is illegal dumping occurring by the City’s public works yard at Northline Road. (out of scope for this project but was noted for the City’s project team)

Key decisions made by the CLC regarding the opportunity statement and objectives were as follows:

- The opportunity statement needed to be modified to address some of the naming issues for the trail connection. It was agreed that the statement should be changed to read “between Existing East Don Trail (East of Wynford Heights Crescent), Gattineau Trail (at approximately Bermondsey Road), and the Don Trail System.
- It was requested that the wording around “commuter route” be reviewed and possibly be replaced with “multi-use”. DE and JH agreed to look at this internally and provide some direction from the City.
- Mr. John Taranu of Cycle Toronto provided two points in response to the opportunity statement and project objectives (submitted in writing after CLC meeting):
  - A point should be added under Transportation for multi-modal transportation – including access to transit (including the planned Eglinton-Crosstown LRT)
  - A point should be added regarding Accessibility and accommodating a variety of trail users of different abilities

## **NEXT STEPS AND CLOSING**

VT identified the next steps in the meeting (PowerPoint Slide 39):

- (1) Background Environmental Inventory including a Geomorphical Evaluation and Geotechnical Assessment done by the Consultant;
- (2) CLC Meeting # 2 tentatively scheduled for May 29, 2013, where the existing conditions will be reviewed and Options Evaluated, including the “do nothing” approach.

VT thanked everyone for attending and reminded meeting participants to provide their contact information so that project information could be relayed to CLC members accordingly.

Meeting Adjourned 8:30pm

### **Note regarding additional submissions:**

It should be noted that written submissions were received by two organizations prior to CLC Meeting #1 and will be addressed in the process at the appropriate time. A formal response form the project team is also appended:

1. Briefing Paper received from the Wynford Concorde Residents Group in cooperation with Don Mills Residents Inc. on April 18, 2013 via email
2. Written submission from Victoria Village Community Association on April 22, 2013

## **Proposals for the East Don Trail Environmental Assessment on behalf of the Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc.**

The following are three initial proposals for consideration as part of the East Don Trail Environmental Assessment. The Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc. trust that these proposals will be addressed at the appropriate time in the course of the assessment and as the project is implemented.

### **Winter Opening**

We would like the City to ensure that the development of new East Don trail will be accompanied by the winter opening of trails north of the Forks to the Milne Hollow area to benefit residents who may be walkers and other trail users. We propose that the trail and right of way as well as access routes into the valley be designed with this in mind. In the meantime, we would like to see attention paid to prompt opening of gates to parking areas at Milne Hollow and other parts of the East Don when weather permits, as soon as the parking areas and trails are clear of snow. (This year the Milne Hollow trail has been open earlier than the gate from Lawrence Avenue East at Milne Hollow and this, we understand, has led to congestion problems for vehicles at the gate).

### **Etiquette**

We propose that the City take additional steps to ensure trails in our area are safe for our residents to use. Many residents of the Wynford Concorde area and Don Mills generally are seniors with, in some cases, brittle bones. The City appears to rely on a policy of promoting etiquette on trails they manage with suggestions about e.g.: travelling on the right and a speed limit for bicycles. Our residents need to know that these rules of etiquette are followed now and will be reinforced when the new trail connects our local area to the rest of the Don valley trail system and many more users have access to the Wynford Concorde and Milne Hollow area of the valley. If our residents do not feel safe on these trails they will not welcome this project now and will plan to abandon them and the valley to other users when it is completed.

We understand a four meter wide asphalt trail is planned like the one in the Milne Hollow/Wynford Concorde area and that the City expects everyone to get along as on other trails they manage. For example, we understand that speed bumps or rough surfaces will not be installed on the trail to deter speeding cyclists, since this could be a safety concern for cyclists. Nor will a pebble walkway be installed alongside the paved trail which would be dedicated to pedestrians, even though this is done in some areas such as just north of Pottery Road. We think these matters should be reconsidered.

This is not just an issue for the City. We as residents groups can help residents and users to be fully aware of the etiquette rules and enable them to join the trails aware of these rules and in a position to help general adherence to them. The Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc. have access to the local community through newsletters and bulletin boards to broadcast rules of etiquette.

### **Natural Environment Focus**

We encourage the City to focus on restoring and enhancing the natural environment in the valley where this trail is being installed, and in the adjacent Wynford Concorde area. In the proposed master plan for the Lower Don Valley, particularly at the waterfront end of the valley, there is talk of establishing venues for cultural events to encourage more people to use the valley and the trails, and having a program of installing art works of various kinds throughout the valley. Milne Hollow has a few modest but appropriate examples of these art works. There is a proposal solicited from a Toronto area artist to illuminate the Bloor Street Viaduct and a consultant to the City has suggested installing a giant beachball on one lip of the Lower Don valley as a cultural artifact.

The tree and plant life and animal habitat in the valley has been depleted over many years, since the railways came in fact, and there are invasive plant species that overrun native plants and impoverish the habitat for animals. We propose that the scope of the planned environmental baseline study include assessment of the impacts of previous developments such as the railways and the DVP, as well as the proposed trail on the natural environment and animal habitat. We also propose that the scope of this assessment be designed as a platform for future natural environment restoration programs whether as part of the East Don Trail project or otherwise. In addition, we propose that implementation of the development plan for the East Don Trail include enhancing the natural environment and be undertaken as a priority over arts and cultural initiatives. We believe our residents in Wynford Concorde and Don Mills want to enjoy the natural environment of the valley and its animal and bird life when they visit, as a priority over going to concerts or art shows.

The City made rehabilitating the natural environment of Milne Hollow a blue ribbon (million dollar?) project before opening the area to trails. Our local residents have since taken part in many plantings in this area to supplement the City's work. They have established a stewardship group for Milne Hollow under the Forestry Department's stewardship program where they take part in removing invasive species and helping the natural development of the area.

We hope that, on behalf of our residents, the City can focus efforts on conserving and enhancing the natural environment in the valley where the new trail is to be installed and the adjacent Wynford Concorde area that remains unremediated.

The City is giving attention to providing access to the valley for construction equipment and for residents as part of the new trail project. This improved access gives the City an opportunity to undertake significant natural restoration in the area. This is a unique opportunity to rehabilitate an area of the Don valley that is the major natural feature of our district.

April 18, 2013

July 19, 2013

Brendan Flanagan  
Wynford Concorde Residents Group

**Re: East Don Trail Project – Response to Submission from Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc.**

Dear Mr. Flanagan,

Thank you for your submission on April 18, 2013 on behalf of the Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc. We have reviewed your initial proposals regarding winter opening, trail etiquette, and the natural environment focus. Responses from the project team are provided below.

#### Winter Opening

Regarding winter opening of the trail, Parks, Forestry and Recreation does not maintain multi-use trails within City of Toronto ravines during the winter months and therefore, the Study will not recommend winter maintenance of the trail. This suggestion was discussed and assessed by City staff. However, due to the cost, the potential topography of the trail, and potential impacts on the adjacent natural area (e.g., impacts of salts on vegetation and waterways) it was determined that it is not feasible to provide winter maintenance at this time. This does not preclude the future maintenance of any trails within the City of Toronto as policies are amended.

#### Etiquette

Regarding trail etiquette, this has been noted as an important issue by the project team. As I am sure you are aware, efforts such as public education campaigns and increased by-law enforcement are beyond the scope of this project. However, members of the public will be informed that reporting bylaw infractions is done by contacting 311, as is standard City process.

We appreciate the enthusiasm and interest that communities and residents groups have in proactively participating in the implementation and monitoring of trails. At this time, City of Toronto does not have a formal avenue for this to occur for the East Don Trail. We encourage you to keep your residents informed of the project, bylaws and etiquette related to ravines and trails by using the resources available through the following links:

[www.toronto.ca/trees/ravines.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/trees/ravines.htm)

[www.toronto.ca/parks/engagement/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/parks/engagement/index.htm)

## Natural Environment Focus

Regarding the natural environment focus, the location of the preferred trail alignment will consider the impacts on the natural environment and, as required through the Environmental Assessment process, will also consider the physical, social-economic, and cultural environments. The recommended location will also meet the study objectives for providing safe access to the valley lands, a safe off-road option for cyclists and other users, as well as providing a simple focused route while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts.

As you are aware, the East Don valley lands currently have an extensive network of informal trails (trails and footpaths that have developed over time from people using the area) all of which have an impact on the natural environment through increased fragmentation of habitat and increased opportunities for interaction between wildlife and people/pets. Through the implementation of a single-focused trail, the project team is aiming to encourage users of the valley system to stay on a single route and reduce the impacts of informal use. An added benefit of formalizing the trail will be increased access for future restoration and maintenance of areas that are currently in a deteriorated state.

As you outlined, the natural environment of the East Don Valley is in a deteriorated state and would benefit from restoration. Many of the tree species within the Don Valley are non-native including Manitoba Maples, an invasive species to Southern Ontario. Though stewardship and restoration projects fall outside of the scope of the Environmental Assessment process, an opportunity to plant native species in the valley lands is available as part of a tree replacement program that will be developed through the detailed design and permitting process for the East Don Trail Project. The tree replacement program, in accordance with requirements of Toronto's Ravine and Natural Feature Protection by-law, will outline the replacement of trees as a result of the design and construction of the East Don Trail. Please note that all efforts will be made to limit the number of large native trees removed to minimize disturbance, and that all removals will be subject to approvals under the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection by-law. In instances when tree removal is unavoidable the tree replacement program will provide an opportunity to replace these invasive species with native tree species when removed.

For the benefit of all community members at large, a Frequently Asked Questions document has been created and posted on the project website [www.toronto.ca/eastdontrail](http://www.toronto.ca/eastdontrail). Please share this information with your residents as it may help to answer some of the commonly asked questions for the East Don Trail Project. We will be updating this document as the process continues in an effort to capture the information that may be of interest to the community.

Once again, on behalf of the project team, I would like to thank Wynford Concorde Residents Group and Don Mills Residents Inc. for providing proposals to consider as part of this project. We will be discussing some of these considerations at our upcoming CLC Meetings, as we reach the appropriate point in the process. I encourage you to also voice some of these considerations in person at the meetings so that the other CLC members have the opportunity to participate in a discussion with the project team, as this is often when the solutions are developed.

I hope that I have provided you with adequate responses. If you have any additional comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Sincerely,



Natalie Seniuk  
Public Consultation Coordinator, East Don Trail Project  
Project Management Office  
Restoration Services

Attach.          Original submission dated April 18, 2013.

cc:     Terry West, Don Mills Residents Inc.  
         Jennifer Hyland, City of Toronto  
         Maogosha Pyjor, City of Toronto  
         Violetta Tkaczuk, TRCA

Victoria Village Community Association  
East Don Trail EA Community Liaison Committee (CLC).

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

Natalie Seniuk, MCIP  
Project Coordinator, Project Management Office  
Restoration Services  
Toronto and Region Conservation Authority – Boyd Office  
9755 Canada Company Avenue  
Woodbridge, ON L4L 1A7

Dear Natalie:

As the representative of the VVCA and avid user of the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area, I would discuss some of the issues surrounding the proposal to connect various aspects of this ravine through the use of a multi-use network. The City of Toronto has done an excellent job in many instances to provide key connections through the implementation of a multi-trail system. As having spoken to the many voices of those who live in the Victoria Village area, there is a concern that a section of the natural trail within the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area may be impacted through the multi-use network and would like to see it preserved as a natural trail.

To provide some context, this trail's entry begins from within the Anewan Park eventually leading into the conservation area. This trail runs parallel to Sweeney Drive eventually meandering down and connecting to the trail at the foot of the Don River.

Transforming this portion of the trail into a transportation corridor for cyclists may have certain implications that we would like to discuss further with the Committee. I will briefly outline some of them in point form for discussions purposes:

- The potential asphaltting of this portion of the trail will require the widening of the existing trail, perhaps having an impact on existing trees adjacent to the immediate path of travel.
- This portion of the trail is elevated significantly from the Don River and consideration would have to be given to creating some guard rail to protect cyclists.
- Due to the elevation and grading along the existing trail, asphaltting this part of the trail will have to consider water run off along any hardscape trail. This run off would have to consider the grading and potential for erosion.
- The impact to the local wildlife should be considered as the volume of users using the trail will increase. Bringing bicycles to this portion of the trail has the potential to impact migration patterns of some of the wildlife within the ravine.

Potential solutions in incorporating this multi-use trail without compromising some of the beauty of the natural trails:

- Locating any proposed multi-use trail lower near the river (still taking into account potential for the flooding season).
- There appears to be an opportunity to connect from this lower area back into the Anewan Park. I believe there may have been a link made for emergency vehicles to get down near the river area. Can confirm this with the other CLC members and City.

One more consideration we would like to bring forth would be the potential for the City to invest in a tree planting initiative within the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area. Native caliber bare root trees along with wips to be considered planted over a certain period of time (i.e. over 5 years). This could go hand-in-hand with the removal of invasive tree species.

As residents of Victoria Village we are fortunate to have the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area within our community. We would like to see other residents of Toronto enjoy the beauty and majesty that this area has to offer. We also want to make sure that we can do this in a responsible manner that takes into consideration some of the points mentioned.

As the VVCA I look forward in representing the interests of the local community. I am also committed to working closely with all CLC members in a manner that is respectful and constructive during the planning stages of this project.

I thank you in advance.

Regards,

George Bizios  
Architect, OAA, MRAIC, AIA Intl. Assoc.

c. Michael Dosman

July 19, 2013

George Bizios  
Victoria Village Community Association  
c/o Dosman  
161 Sweeney Drive  
Toronto, ON M4A 1V1

**Re: East Don Trail Project – Response to Submission from Victoria Village Community Association**

Dear Mr. Bizios,

Thank you for your submission on April 22, 2013 on behalf of the Victoria Village Community Association.

The project team is currently working on determining a number of potential options for the main trail alignment that would provide a connection between the existing East Don Trail (East of Wynford Heights Crescent), the Gatineau Corridor Trail (at approximately Bermondsey Drive), and the Don Trail System. The proposed trail is being designed as a multi-use trail and will support a broad spectrum of users. In order for the trail to be considered multi-use it will be surfaced with asphalt and a minimum width of 3.5 metres (m). In regards to the potential community access points to the main trail, the location and type of access will be assessed after the selection of the preferred alignment for the main trail. These trail connections will not be implemented as part of the Environmental Assessment process for the East Don Trail.

Anewen Charles Sauriol Conservation Area Anewen Park Community Access Point

We have recorded your comments regarding the creation of a multi-use trail access in Anewen the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area within the Anewen Park area, and appreciate that this area may have its own considerations regarding the type of access that is appropriate.

We would like to let you know that no decision has been made concerning the type of trail that will be provided at each of the potential community access points (i.e., whether they will adhere to the multi-use trail design standards). If this access point were to be paved as asphalt, this would be for a number of reasons including: it is a firm stable surface, does not erode, and has lower maintenance costs than other materials (e.g. Limestone screenings, natural surface). Asphalt is also a durable surface that is able to support higher volumes of foot traffic, and a variety of users and abilities (i.e., children, users with mobility issues, and elderly users) In addition, as has been mentioned at our CLC meetings the existing formal trails that exist within this area will be reviewed for management opportunities as part of the Natural

Environment Trail Strategy program, as Anewen Park is considered a high priority area for management. A copy of the Natural Environment Trail Strategy can be accessed at:

<http://www.toronto.ca/parks/engagement/trails/index.htm>

Regarding tree removal as a result of formalizing a trail in the area: If removal of any trees as a result of formalizing a trail is required, all efforts will be made to limit the number of large, native trees removed and to minimize disturbance to natural areas, particularly those of higher quality natural cover. Once the preferred alignment has been selected, an experienced ecological field technician will be undertaking a detailed survey of the trees that may be affected to determine the tree type, health and age. The information collected in this detailed survey will assist the project team in refining the exact alignment of the trail so that where possible, healthy native trees will be avoided. In instances when tree removal is unavoidable, all proposed removals will be reviewed under the Ravine and Natural Feature By-law and a tree replacement program will be developed, in accordance with requirements under that by-law. Many of the tree species within the Don Valley are non-native including Manitoba Maples, an invasive species to Southern Ontario. The tree replacement program will provide an opportunity to replace these invasive species with native tree species when removed.

Regarding the consideration for guard rails in areas where the trail may be elevated, I would like to refer back to the project objectives. The safety of all trail users is a key project objective, and the consideration of safety features, such as guard rails and grading/slope of the trail, will be assessed in greater detail during the detailed design stage, and all efforts will be made to ensure public safety for all trail network users.

#### Potential Solutions to Incorporating the Multi-Use Trail

We have recorded your comments and suggestions regarding placement of the multi-use within the valley system while respecting the existing natural areas and their aesthetic value to users.

Regarding the placement of the trail close to the Lower Don River, a study of the geomorphic processes of the Lower East Don River is currently being undertaken including flooding, erosion impacts, and movement of the riverbed. This study will assist with the locating of the trail, and help determine a suitable placement of the trail in relationship to the river channel. Some of the outcomes of this study were presented at CLC Meeting #2 and will be further discussed as the process moves forward. The alternative trail alignments are currently being created and assessed by the project team, the alignments will be presented at CLC Meeting #3 and the evaluation and assessment of the alignments will be presented at CLC Meeting #4. Many factors will be assessed to determine the most suitable trail location including physical, natural, social-economic, and cultural environments. The final preferred location will meet the study objectives for providing safe access to the valley lands, a safe off-road option for cyclists and other users, as well as providing a simple focused route while avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts.

Regarding the existing gravel path within the Charles Sauriol Conservation Area at Anewen Park, there is currently a gravel trail that was constructed by Toronto Water as an access route to their infrastructure within the valley. The use of this existing access route as a potential community access point, the location and type of access will be assessed after the selection of the preferred alignment for the main trail. These trail connections will not be implemented as part of the Environmental Assessment process for the East Don Trail.

### Tree planting initiatives

We have received comments and interest from CLC Members regarding the investment in the tree planting initiatives in the East Don Valley Corridor. Unfortunately, this falls outside of the scope of the Environmental Assessment process however; the interest in this initiative has been shared with the City of Toronto. There may be an opportunity for community led volunteer initiatives in the future. As mentioned previously, the removal of any trees as part of this project will result in the planting of native trees and shrubs in accordance with the requirements for replacement under the Ravine and Natural Feature Protection by-law (<http://www.toronto.ca/trees/ravines.htm>).

Once again, on behalf of the project team, I would like to thank Victoria Village Community Association for providing us with comments and considerations for this project. We will be discussing some of these considerations at our upcoming CLC Meetings, as we reach the appropriate point in the process. I encourage you to also voice some of these considerations in person at the meetings so that the other CLC members have the opportunity to participate in a discussion with the project team, as this is often when the solutions are developed.

I hope that I have provided you with adequate responses to your questions and comments. If you have any additional comments, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

Sincerely,



Natalie Seniuk  
Public Consultation Coordinator, East Don Trail Project  
Project Management Office  
Restoration Services

Attach. Original submission dated April 22, 2013.

cc: Michael Dosman, Victoria Village Community Association  
Shaun Chisholm, Victoria Village Community Association  
Jennifer Hyland, City of Toronto  
Maogosha Pyjor, City of Toronto  
Violetta Tkaczuk, TRCA