



MUNICIPAL CLASS ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT SCHEDULE B

The Mid Humber Gap Multi-use Trail Project
City of Toronto

FINAL REPORT
OCTOBER 20, 2022



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Acknowledgments

The City of Toronto and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority gratefully acknowledges the efforts and contributions of the following people participating in the planning and design phases of the Mid Humber Gap Municipal Class Environmental Assessment:

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 Weston Golf and Country Club
 Weston Roadrunners
 Weston Village Residents' Association

Executive Summary

Purpose and Study Area (Chapter 1)

The purpose of the Mid Humber Gap Multi-use Trail Municipal Class Environmental Assessment Schedule B (MCEA) is to identify a preferred route that will close the remaining 800 metre (m) gap in the Humber River Trail (HRT) to provide for a complete connection between Mallaby Park and Crawford-Jones Memorial Park.

The MCEA Local Study Area (LSA) is generally located south of Highway 401 and west of Weston Road along a section of the Humber River, in the City of Toronto. The Mid Humber Gap project area is located between two completed sections of the HRT just south of Mallaby Park and west of St. Phillips Road, and the southern entrance to Crawford-Jones Memorial Park off Cardell Avenue (Figure 1-1).

The Mid Humber Gap was one of 26 multi-use trail projects identified in the *Bikeway Trails Implementation Plan* adopted by the Toronto City Council in 2012 and identified as a near-term priority in the 2019 and 2021 Cycling Network Plan Updates. The project is defined as an 800 m gap in the HRT near Weston Road and St. Phillips Road, in the City of Toronto (City). The Mid Humber Gap constitutes a significant barrier to a continuous trail system from Toronto's north-west boundary to Lake Ontario and is a discontinuity in the future Loop Trail, a 65 km off-road, multi-use ring that will connect multiple ravines, neighbourhoods, and trail systems throughout Toronto.

Environmental Assessment Process and Section 16(6) Order (Chapter 2)

The Mid Humber Gap MCEA was conducted and prepared in accordance with the requirements of the MCEA process, as amended in 2015.

As per the MCEA 2015 requirements, the Final Report has been prepared to include the project activities, correspondence, consultation, planning, and decision-making processes up to and including Phase 2 of the MCEA process. Members of the public, Indigenous communities, stakeholders, and government agencies were provided with an opportunity to review, examine, and provide feedback on the project findings at each phase of the process.

The MCEA Final Report will be made available to the public, Indigenous communities, stakeholders, and government agencies for a 30-day review period in which written comments and/or questions pertaining to the proposed project can be provided digitally or in writing to the City of Toronto. A public notice, termed the Notice of Completion, will be released to announce the commencement of the review period. Following the review period, the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) requirements will be deemed satisfied subject to the appropriate resolution of any objections received. If no objections are received within the 30-

day review period, The City of Toronto may proceed with detailed design and construction as outlined in this MCEA.

Please address comments and/or questions related to this project to the contact information provided below and title your correspondence as “The Mid Humber Gap MCEA – Comment on Final Report”.

| | |
|---|---|
| Contact: Maogosha Pyjor Senior Public Consultation Coordinator City of Toronto | Address: Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto ON M5V 3C6 Phone: 416-338-2850 Email: Maogosha.Pyjor@toronto.ca |
|---|---|

A Section 16(6) Order (formally known as Part II Order) request may be made to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks for an order requiring a higher level of study, or that conditions be imposed, only on the grounds that the requested order may prevent, mitigate or remedy adverse impacts on constitutionally protected Aboriginal and treaty rights.

Requests on other grounds will not be considered.

Consultation (Chapter 3)

The public consultation program for the Mid Humber Gap MCEA was carried out in accordance with the consultation requirements as defined by the MCEA process and included members of the public, affected and/or interested stakeholders, local interest groups, non-government organizations, government agencies, and Indigenous communities.

A comprehensive consultation program was undertaken in support of the MCEA, which included two public information meetings, two technical advisory committee meetings, two stakeholder advisory group meetings, and numerous touchpoints with private landowners, government agencies, and Indigenous communities. Through this program, valuable feedback was received and incorporated where appropriate at each major phase of the MCEA process. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the consultation, with complete documentation of the entire consultation program provided in Appendix B.

Problem and Opportunity Statement (Chapter 4)

The Mid Humber Gap constitutes a significant barrier to a continuous multi-use trail system along the HRT and is a discontinuity in the future Loop Trail. The Loop Trail is a 65 km off-road, multi-use trail that will connect multiple ravines, neighbourhoods, and trail systems

throughout the city. Existing routes pose safety concerns to users forced to detour along busy local roads that lack designated cycling infrastructure and are not fully accessible. This project is a critical component of Toronto's Cycling Network Plan, Ravine Strategy and TRCA's Trail Strategy. The MCEA aims to establish a preferred route to provide a complete connection between Mallaby Park and Crawford-Jones Memorial Park in the City.

Existing Conditions (Chapter 5)

An assessment of existing conditions provides context for the proposed multi-use trail, as well as the necessary information to understand and evaluate which environmental components (physical, social, cultural, and economic) may be positively or negatively impacted.

Areas of focus within the assessment of the existing conditions include:

- Transportation and existing trails;
- Biological environment;
- Physical environment;
- Cultural environment; and,
- Socio-economic environment.

Evaluation of Trail Alignment Concepts (Chapter 6)

During the early stages of this MCEA, a total of six preliminary trail concepts were considered. These included trail routes within the Humber River valley, along Weston Road, and hybrid routes which included portions of the trail in the valley and along the road. A "Do Nothing" option was also considered.

The six concepts and "Do Nothing" option were subject to a high-level evaluation to eliminate concepts that were less preferred based on natural, socio-cultural, financial, technical, and public safety factors. Concepts selected to be brought forward through this screening process would undergo a more rigorous technical analysis, which forms the basis of Chapter 7.

For a full overview of the preferred trail alignments and the evaluation process, please refer to Chapter 6.

Alternative Design Concepts for Preferred Trail Alignment (Chapter 7)

Upon completion of the high-level screening described in Chapter 6, Concept 1A, Concept 2A, and Concept 3A were identified as the preliminary preferred trail alignment concepts to be carried forward for further study and evaluation. Each concept was refined and developed in further detail based on new information collected through technical studies, as well as consultation carried out during the MCEA.

A brief description of the three preliminary preferred trail alignment concepts is described below.

Concept 1A (Modified In-Valley Alignment): From Crawford-Jones Memorial Park, trail users will cross the Humber River via a new pedestrian-cycle bridge. Users then follow a trail along the west bank of the Humber River through Weston Golf and Country Club (WGCC) property, similar to preliminary Concept 1 full in valley alignment (for more information on preliminary concept alignments, please see Chapter 6.0. In this concept, the second pedestrian-cycle bridge will be located upstream of the bend in the Humber River near the irrigation pond to a connection point on land owned by a private land trust on the east bank. A new trail through the land trust property will connect to the existing HRT at Mallaby Park.

Concept 2A (Modified Hybrid In-Valley/On-Road Alignment): A modified version of Concept 2 hybrid in-valley/on-road alignment (for more information on preliminary concept alignments, please see Chapter 6.0, where south of the rail bridge trail users will continue along the Weston Road sidewalk beyond Humberview Crescent to the existing path in the upper portion of Mallaby Park. The staircase in Mallaby Park will be replaced with a switchback ramp that connects trail users to the lower valley and existing HRT.

Concept 3A (Modified On-Road Alignment): Trail users exit Crawford-Jones Memorial Park at Cardell Avenue using the road or the new sidewalk to be constructed via the Watermain Replacement, Road Resurfacing & Sidewalk Construction on Cardell Avenue and Fairglen Crescent project. Pedestrians would utilize the existing sidewalk, while cyclists would follow a new two-way cycle track constructed on the west side of Weston Road. This would require modifications to the existing lane configuration on Weston Road. Operations throughout the cycle track will need to be managed to address vehicle-cyclist conflicting movements and related safety needs. Due to constraints of the Metrolinx rail bridge structure and right of way, the two-way cycle track would end at the rail bridge. The existing sidewalk would be converted to a shared multi-use path, for pedestrians and cyclists, south to St. Philips Road. Improved safety features, such as a robust guard rail, would be installed to separate users from adjacent vehicular traffic. The existing staircase in Mallaby Park will be replaced with a switchback ramp that connects trail users to the lower valley and the existing HRT.

Each concept was evaluated and ranked using a scale from least to most preferred based on its potential impact or ability to meet the problem and opportunity statement. A detailed evaluation is provided in Appendix G, with a summary of key advantages and disadvantages for each concept presented in Chapter 7.0.

Through the detailed comparative analysis of the three preliminary preferred trail alignments, Concept 1A was identified as the most preferred as it best met the evaluation criteria and problem and opportunity statement, while receiving significant public support.

Description of Preferred Trail Alignment Concept (Chapter 8)

General Route

Beginning at the existing paved trail in Crawford-Jones Memorial Park, the preferred trail alignment crosses the Humber River via a new pedestrian-cycle bridge and routes along the west bank of the Humber River through property owned by the WGCC. Just north of the Metrolinx rail bridge, the paved at-grade trail transitions into an elevated boardwalk that connects to a second pedestrian-cycle bridge that takes users to the east bank of the Humber River. A paved at-grade trail connects users to the existing HRT in Mallaby Park, just south of the existing staircase.

Trail Design

The trail will be designed as a primary trail configuration, 4 m in width and a paved asphalt surface, as per City of Toronto Multi-use Trail Guidelines. The project area is characterized by relatively flat topography, with at-grade segments of the trail remaining below a 5% grade.

Boardwalk and Pedestrian-Cycle Crossings

The preferred trail alignment will include an elevated boardwalk structure (183 m), proposed on WGCC lands and running along the west side of the Humber River from just north of the rail bridge to the south pedestrian-cycle bridge. The boardwalk will include a covered structure along its entire length to protect trail users from golf balls and debris from the overhead rail bridge. A protective screen will also be installed on the west facing side of the structure.

Two pedestrian-cycle crossings are proposed as part of the preferred alignment. A summary of each crossing, including an analysis of water course impacts and bridge design and construction considerations, is provided in sections 8.3 to 8.5 of Chapter 8.0. Through detailed design and subsequent permitting and approvals, should the structures or their locations change significantly from the preferred alignment, the need for a formal MCEA addendum will be assessed (see Chapter 12.0).

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation (Chapter 9)

Construction of a multi-use trail has the potential to result in impacts to the natural, socio-economic, and cultural environments. Chapter 9 provides a summary of the potential impacts and recommended approaches to managing and mitigating them. Specific areas of focus include:

- Natural environment, including terrestrial and aquatic vegetation and wildlife, erosion and water quality, flood risk, invasive species, and species of concern;
- Socio-economic effects, such as air quality and noise, impacts on existing trails, and safety;
- Cultural resources, including archaeological resources; and,

- Technical considerations, such as property impacts and requirements, construction access and traffic, and existing infrastructure and utilities.

Permits and Approvals (Chapter 10)

The City and TRCA, in coordination with the consultants and contractors responsible for trail implementation, will secure necessary permits and approvals for the implementation of the multi-use trail.

Future Work (Chapter 11)

Following completion of the 30-day review period and provided there have been no Section 16(6) Order requests, the project will proceed to the detailed design phase. During detailed design, the preferred alignment (as outlined in Chapter 8) will be refined and finalized to address site-specific conditions as identified in this MCEA.

The detailed design phase involves the development of detailed drawings for the preferred alignment and construction standards and specifications, including a Construction Management Plan, Monitoring Plan and the Operations and Maintenance Plan.

Specifically, the detailed design phase will include, at a minimum:

- Plan and profile drawings;
- Typical sections and details;
- Material specifications;
- Construction access route location;
- Tree protection, removal and restoration plans; and
- Erosion and sediment control plan.

Other activities that will be undertaken during the detailed design phase include:

- Additional hydrology, hydraulics and fluvial geomorphology assessments to guide bridge placement and design;
- Stage 2 archaeological assessment;
- Geotechnical investigation;
- Confirmation of utilities; and
- Finalize and receive all necessary permits and approvals (inclusive of private land requirements)
- Negotiation for the acquisition of property rights for private land requirements
- Continued discussions with local stakeholders throughout the detailed design process and construction in agreement with City Council motion on July 19, 2022.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ANSI | Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest |
| AODA | Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act |
| CEAA | Canadian Environmental Assessment Act |
| CHRS | Canadian Heritage Rivers System |
| City | City of Toronto |
| EA | Environmental Assessment |
| EAA | Ontario Environmental Assessment Act |
| ESA | Environmentally Significant Area |
| ESR | Environmental Study Report |
| GTA | Greater Toronto Area |
| ha | Hectare |
| HRT | Humber River Trail |
| HWY 401 | McDonald Cartier Freeway |
| LCP | Living City Polices |
| LiDAR | Light detection and ranging |
| LSA | Local Study Area |
| m | Metre |
| Km | Kilometre |
| mASL | Metres above sea level |
| MECP | Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks |
| MCEA | Schedule B Municipal Class Environmental Assessment |
| MHSTCI | Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Cultural Industries |
| MLS | Multiple Listing System |
| MP | Members of Parliament |
| MPP | Members of Provincial Parliament |
| Mid Humber Gap | Mid Humber Gap Multi-use Trail Project |
| NIA | Neighbourhood Improvement Area |
| PIC | Public Information Centre |
| PSW | Provincially Significant Wetland |
| SAG | Stakeholder Advisory Group |
| SAR | Species at Risk |
| TAC | Technical Advisory Committee |
| TREB | Toronto Real Estate Board |
| TTC | Toronto Transit Commission |
| TRCA | Toronto and Region Conservation Authority |
| TSNS | Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy |
| WGCC | Weston Golf and Country Club |