

Chief
Administrative
Officer



November 14, 2012

Sent via email
bill.hughes@york.ca

Mr. Bill Hughes
Commissioner of Finance and Treasurer
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
P.O.Box 147
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

Dear Mr. Hughes:

Re: Toronto and Region Conservation Authority Budget – Priority Enhancements

As requested by Ms. Strueby in her letter of November 5th to myself, on behalf of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), I am submitting a request for funding that is additional to the operating and capital request included in the submissions to the York Region Finance and Administration Committee.

TRCA has worked with Regional staff to bring in a budget that respects the direction to keep increases from the 2011 base budget to no more than a 4.5% increase. This results in a total increase to TRCA's year over year budget of \$275,000. Detailed information on TRCA's core capital programs and projects has been submitted to Regional staff for review and discussion. TRCA's core capital programs provide for implementation of work critical to watershed management and support of TRCA's land and facilities. TRCA has been pleased to assist the Region in implementing some of its community enhancement projects which have increased our total funding by approximately \$1,700,000. However, this funding is wrapping up and TRCA requests the Region to consider keeping the total funding package the same going forward.

While we remain grateful for the support that the Region provides, there are a number of areas of unmet need that TRCA has presented to staff for their consideration and will be presenting to the Finance and Administration Committee on November 29th. The Authority at its meeting of October 26th, approved the preliminary estimates as submitted to the Region, including a request for funding of priority enhancements that are not within the budget guideline.

The four areas of enhancement this year, presented in order of importance, are:

1. Emerald Ash Borer Response (\$50,000)
2. Integrated Infrastructure Protection Works (\$500,000)
3. Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (\$100,000)
4. Boyd Water Play Facility (\$840,000)

Each is briefly summarized below. Business cases were provided to the Region with the detailed capital budget submission and are appended to this letter. Only the Boyd Water Play Facility is a short term project with funding needed for approximately two years. The remainder would be ongoing as long as need continues and projects can be identified that have Regional interest.

Priority Enhancements

1. Emerald Ash Borer Response (\$50,000)

This project addresses the threat posed by emerald ash borer (EAB) to the natural heritage system and users of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)-owned and managed lands within our watershed jurisdiction. Specifically, this project addresses the first four elements of TRCA's EAB Management Approach including:

- I. Detection and Risk Assessment
- II. Communications and Public Outreach
- III. Insecticide Treatment of key ash trees
- IV. EAB tree mortality abatement

As with our municipal partners, the responsibility to provide safe public spaces necessitates the inventory, management and removal of affected ash trees on TRCA-owned lands. If the project is delayed there could be the loss of all ash tree species as a component of the natural heritage system across the landscape. There would be a need to close significant sections of trails and programmed lands on TRCA properties due to liability associated with the dead trees. Key activities include:

- Complete ash tree surveys to document ash resources and distribution on 4,247 ha hectares of TRCA owned and managed lands in York Region.
- Identify high priority tree resources for protection by stem injection.
- Implement year two stem injection treatments on significant trees in York Region at high priority public access conservation areas and campgrounds including Boyd, Kortright, Lake St. George, Bruce's Mill and Oak Ridges Corridor Park.
- Develop budget estimates for 2014 abatement of ash trees killed by EAB.

Other resources could be redirected to this need but then replacement tree planting would not be able to keep pace with the reductions anticipated by the infestation by this beetle resulting in an overall reduction in tree cover in the Region.

2. Integrated Infrastructure Protection Works (\$500,000)

York Region has previously provided funding to allow TRCA to monitor existing erosion sites and control structures within York Region to expand TRCA's *Stream Erosion and Infrastructure Database*. This database identifies new erosion sites and the infrastructure potentially affected or being affected. Through this work to date TRCA has identified several erosion sites where regional infrastructure is vulnerable. The database allows us to develop an annual priority list for remedial and maintenance works. While a small capital amount is allocated to the repair of erosion sites, it is not sufficient to address the backlog of sites that are being identified. This enhancement ask will allow TRCA to carry out maintenance of protective works as required to maintain existing infrastructure; and conduct Class Environmental Assessments (Class EAs) for

priority erosion sites to develop a preferred remedial measure of erosion control, and initiate repairs in concert with other municipal departments to achieve efficient and effective solutions.

3. Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plans (SNAP) (\$100,000)

York Region has already funded the first Pilot SNAP at Lake Wilcox and is co-funding the launch of a second SNAP with the City of Markham. While there is funding allocated in the 2013 capital budget (\$85,000) it is insufficient to take advantage of the momentum built in the Lake Wilcox area. A recent launch of the Front Yard Makeover yielded a number of interested residents who would be willing to carry out modifications to their lots but need the expertise and incentives to do so.

SNAP's are carried out with the local and regional municipal staff with the goal to build a comprehensive plan to address a number of local issues including York's infiltration/inflow (I/I) reduction projects and Long Term Water Conservation Strategy. SNAPs can be the vehicle to identify priority sites in coordination with York's infrastructure remediation priorities and other local municipal capital works and watershed regeneration priorities.

The 2013 funding will be used: 1) to complete the Bayview Glen SNAP in Markham, including innovative retrofit designs and delivery that integrates sanitary sewer, drinking water, stormwater and groundwater system issues present at this site; 2) to continue implementing the recommendations of the Lake Wilcox SNAP and 3) to work with regional and local municipal staff to select future SNAPs locations.

4. Boyd Water Play Facility (\$840,000)

For 55 years Boyd Conservation Area has offered outdoor experiences to residents of York Region. With almost 50,000 visitors annually, Boyd has become a popular destination for picnics, day camps, cross country runs and nature enthusiasts alike. The number of young families has grown significantly within the City of Vaughan in recent years, resulting in the need for new and unique ways to enjoy time together in the outdoors.

The proposed Boyd Water Play Facility will be unique to the area and become a great addition to York Region. Not only will it increase visitation to Boyd Conservation Area and draw in residents from the GTA, it supports York Region's strategic fundamental principles, priority areas and objectives of healthy communities, financial sustainability, sustainable environment, improvement of social and health supports and delivery of infrastructure as outlined in the York Region Strategic Plan.

TRCA is dedicated to creating opportunities for active living, environmental education, and enjoying the outdoors, all components that will be met with the proposed water play facility. With York Region's contribution, jointly we can have much needed recreational facilities such as splash pools, a splash pad, new washrooms and a parking lot, up and running by 2014.

TRCA has constructed three aquatic facilities within the regions of Durham and Peel between 2008 and 2012. These facilities have been extremely well received by regional and local communities, leading to record attendance numbers, job creation and overall community satisfaction. The three existing facilities have proven to be a net financial contributor to their respective locations. It is anticipated that the Boyd Water Play Facility will generate approximately \$48,000 in net revenue in the first operating season, positioning Boyd as a financially sustainable conservation area.

At this time we have only identified funding from York Region but will be pursuing other sources of funding including from the City of Vaughan and other levels of government.

TRCA requests that these additional priority enhancements be presented to the Regional Finance and Administration Committee as part of the 2013 budget process. TRCA staff is available to provide additional information or clarification as may be required. Staff will be presenting TRCA's operating, capital and priority enhancements at the November 29th Committee meeting.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely



Brian Denney
Chief Administrative Officer

cc. Mayor David Barrow, Town of Richmond Hill
Regional Councilor Michael Di Biase, City of Vaughan
Regional Councilor Gino Rosati, City of Vaughan
Regional Councilor Deb Schulte, City of Vaughan
Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, City of Markham
Councilor Linda Pabst, Township of King
Deborah Martin-Downs, Director, Ecology, TRCA