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MOVING TOWARDS A ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK – STATUS UPDATE

The Environmental Services Committee recommends:

- 1. Receipt of the deputation from Catherine Grenier, Director, Rouge National Urban Park, Parks Canada, regarding the Rouge National Urban Park;**
- 2. Receipt of the presentation by Ian Buchanan, Manager, Natural Heritage and Forestry Services; and**
- 3. Adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report dated March 28, 2012, from the Commissioner of Environmental Services.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Council endorse the Federal government's Statement of Intent (Attachment 2) – towards cooperation and collaboration with Parks Canada in establishing a national urban park in the Rouge Valley subject to protection of Regional interests in growth management, assets, infrastructure and agriculture.
2. Regional Clerk circulate this report to Parks Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, the Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure, Town of Markham, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, Town of Richmond Hill, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, City of Toronto, City of Pickering, Region of Durham and the Rouge Park Alliance.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the Government of Canada Rouge National Urban Park establishment process and seek support of the Statement of Intent to enable working towards an agreement to establish a Federal Park which protects present and future Regional interests.

3. BACKGROUND

Rouge Park Alliance established in 1995 to guide creation of Rouge Park

In 1995 the Rouge Park Alliance was created to provide temporary leadership during the establishment of the new Rouge Park.

The Rouge Park Alliance includes twelve organizations:

- Government of Canada – MP
- Government of Ontario – MPP and Waterfront Regeneration Trust
- Regional Municipality of York
- Regional Municipality of Durham
- Town of Markham
- Town of Richmond Hill
- Save the Rouge Inc.
- Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
- City of Toronto
- City of Pickering
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority
- Toronto Zoo

In 2009, Rouge Park Alliance completed a governance review that proposed engagement of the Federal government to establish a new Rouge Park structure with stable financing

It was recognized that new governance was needed to establish clear functional relationships as well as stable funding. In 2009 the Rouge Park Alliance circulated a Governance Report with a request to support engagement of the Federal and Provincial governments to create a Federal Park. On April 22, 2010 in response to a report presenting the findings of the Governance Report, Council endorsed recommendations including:

- Council strongly support the submission to the Government of Canada seeking Federal Park status subject to a commitment which protects Regional interests.
- Council notify the Federal Government that the Regional interests in growth management, infrastructure and agriculture must be protected in any designation of Rouge Park as a Federal Park.

June 2011 Government of Canada Throne Speech committed to creation of a Rouge National Urban Park

In June 2011, a Federal Government Throne Speech committed to development of a Rouge National Urban Park. The Federal Government recognized that as this venture would be Canada's first national urban park, and as there was no federal conservation model that supports Rouge Parks requirements, they would need to develop a unique establishment process.

July 2011 Parks Canada identified a National Urban Park Establishment Process with stakeholder engagement and a Landholders Table

Parks Canada presented an establishment process which identified two separate but parallel paths, including public consultation and land owner engagement (*Attachment 1*). Stakeholder consultation will help define a concept, vision, guiding principles and priorities for the park. Since July 2011, Parks Canada has met with more than sixty organizations to seek input. Broad public consultation will continue through the summer of 2012.

A 'Landholders Table' was created by Parks Canada to bring existing public landholders and Rouge Park management together to discuss and come to agreement on the lands to be included in park.

The Landholders Table includes senior level representation from the following organizations (*see Attachment 2* for membership list):

- Parks Canada
- Ontario Ministry of Infrastructure
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- Regional Municipality of York
- Regional Municipality of Durham
- City of Toronto
- Town of Markham
- City of Pickering
- Rouge Park Alliance

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Parks Canada seeks ratification of a Statement of Intent to demonstrate support to participate in a process to formalize an agreement for establishing a Rouge National Urban Park

Parks Canada is seeking ratification by participants in the Landholders Table, of a Statement of Intent (*Attachment 2*) towards cooperation and collaboration in the establishment of a national urban park. The Statement of Intent also includes a 'Study Area map as Annex 1'. The purpose of this Statement of Intent is to express commitment to work towards an agreement on the park boundaries and land transfer arrangements to establish the park.

This agreement to work towards an agreement is consistent with Regional Council's earlier recommendations and direction to support the pursuit of Federal park status for Rouge Park (Council Report April 2010).

Scope of work captures cooperation on issues including defining boundaries and Regional priorities for growth management, infrastructure protection and supporting agriculture

The Statement of Intent - Scope of Work identifies that participants agree to work cooperatively to address issues of mutual interest, as outlined below and other related matters that may emerge through the park establishment process:

- Identification of lands recommended to be included in or excluded from Rouge National Urban Park
- Rouge National Urban Park Concept
- Recommend processes and conditions of any land transfer to Parks Canada subject to obtaining all necessary approvals
- Public communications
- Transition measures as identified further in Statement of Intent, Section 6
- Identification and mitigation of issues related to adjacent uses (including the Toronto Zoo and Beare Road Landfill) and agricultural uses
- Roles and recognition of the participants under the new governance model; and
- Infrastructure and its future management

Staff working with Parks Canada to define present and future infrastructure needs

Parks Canada has initiated a Geographic Information System (GIS) Subcommittee to help identify and map agencies' lands and assets. The Region must map existing and future infrastructure, buffers, land use agreements, easements, and other relevant legal instruments. Significant Regional assets within and adjacent to the Study Area include:

- Regional roads (e.g. 14th Avenue, 16th Avenue, 19th Avenue, York Durham Line etc), and associated Rights of Ways and structures
- Regional water and wastewater infrastructure (e.g. watermains, trunk sewers for existing and new Southeast Collector, Odour Control Facility etc.).

A challenge has been identified in how best to capture the Region's future interests in assets related to growth, which are not currently owned by the Region (e.g. Steeles Avenue, Reesor Road, Highway #7, CN Rail (future commuter interests)). Regional interests in terms of transit, emergency services, communications infrastructure and other utilities will also need to be identified.

Parks Canada has indicated that it is their intention to exclude, where possible, assets and lands not considered part of the national park. This planning process will allow the Region to protect its interests, including maintaining and otherwise having access to present and future infrastructure.

Province terminates agreement with Rouge Park Alliance and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to facilitate transition to a federal park

In January 2012, the Ministry of Natural Resources notified the Rouge Park Alliance and Toronto Region Conservation Authority of termination of the Memorandum of Agreement between all parties effective July 31, 2012. This notice effectively allows for transition of the Rouge Park administration to the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and will likely result in termination of the Rouge Park Alliance. The province sees this as an enabling step towards an orderly transition for transfer of parks operations to Parks Canada.

March 29th federal budget announcement committed to the creation of Canada's first near urban park in the Rouge Valley

On March 29th the federal budget included a commitment to preserving Canada's natural beauty through the creation of a Rouge National Urban Park. The announcement did not include any specific budget details associated with funding the National Park. It has been estimated that the combined annual capital (\$4,000,000) and operating (\$4,000,000) budget requirements of Rouge Park are \$8,000,000.

Link to Key Council-approved Plans

A viable Rouge National Urban Park, which balances environmental protection with the needs of the adjacent communities and critical infrastructure, supports the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan priority area to Deliver and Sustain Critical Infrastructure. This particular priority speaks to balance between infrastructure delivery and community services.

Many aspects of a sustainable Rouge National Urban Park are compatible with the Regional Official Plan policies to protect and restore a healthy natural environment and Greenlands System.

Vision 2051 (draft) goal of resilient natural environment and agriculture system is consistent with the core objectives of managing Canada's first National Urban Park. The park will support and demonstrate viable agriculture adjacent to a healthy connected and enhanced natural environment.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Region previously committed \$6.1 million in Rouge Park enhancement as part of the Southeast Collector project

At present Rouge Park receives Regional funding of approximately \$6,100,000 committed through the approval of the Southeast Collector - Individual Environmental Assessment. These funds have been key to advancing the development of Bob Hunter

Memorial Park and other Rouge Park master plan priorities (e.g. trails and restoration) as part of a community and environmental enhancement package. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) owns much of the Rouge Park lands and provides staff support to the Park. York Region contributes funds to the TRCA through the annual budget process.

A Rouge National Urban Park would be funded by the federal government

Current park funding levels (annual operating \$1,400,000, capital \$4,000,000) are inadequate. It has been projected that an annual operating budget of \$4,000,000 and a 10 year capital budget of \$40,000,000 would be required to manage the park. Under a Rouge National Urban Park the federal government would be responsible for the funding.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

A Rouge National Urban Park would be a significant amenity to York Region residents, and given its geographic location, it is of particular significance to the Town of Markham. The park may include up to 19% of Markham's land base, and has significant direct and indirect impacts on the communities and their residents. In November 2008, the Town of Markham Rouge Park Implementation Task Force Report was released, which documented four areas of interest including: Rouge Park boundaries, public use, infrastructure and governance.

The Town of Markham continues to identify issues including; boundaries, land interests, leasing of properties, interest in a recreational complex and financial stability. The Town of Markham is a member of the Landholders Table.

Although not key landowners in Rouge Park, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and the Town of Richmond Hill are recognized as key stakeholders in moving the Rouge National Urban Park forward. Parks Canada engages these municipalities directly as key stakeholders and through their representation on the Rouge Alliance.

7. CONCLUSION

Rouge Park includes many significant natural features which are integral to the Regional Greenlands System. It is important to recognize the role and importance of a Rouge National Urban Park to the Region's Sustainability Strategy. The Park's size and location has significant implications to the sustainability of the GTA and even Southern Ontario.

The Statement of Intent between partners enables a collaborative process to work towards a sustainable Rouge National Urban Park. The Region will continue to take every opportunity to ensure a commitment from the Federal government to protect Regional assets and interests, including growth management, critical infrastructure and agriculture.

For more information on this report, contact Laura McDowell Director, Environmental Protection and Promotion at (905) 830-4444 Ext. 5077, or Ian Buchanan, Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry at Ext. 5204.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The two attachments referred to in this clause are attached to this report.)



ROUGE NATIONAL URBAN PARK ESTABLISHMENT PROCESS

LAND COMPONENTS

LANDHOLDERS TABLE

(Creation in FALL 2011)

- Province of Ontario (Ministry of Infrastructure)
- Toronto Region Conservation Authority
- City of Toronto
- Town of Markham
- City of Pickering
- Regional Municipality of York
- Regional Municipality of Durham
- Rouge Park Alliance

ONGOING DIALOGUE

WINTER/SPRING 2012

OUTPUTS:

- Statement of Intent (SPRING 2012)
- Multi-Party Agreement on Land Transfer (FALL 2012)

CREATING A NATIONAL URBAN PARK

NOVEMBER 2011

Stakeholders Workshop

NOVEMBER 2011

Information Session with First Nations

OUTPUTS:

- Guiding Principles
- Key Elements of the Vision

Planning Process

OUTPUTS:

- Vision and Concepts
- Transition Measures
- Interim Management Guidelines

WINTER 2012

Information Session with Stakeholders

Information Session with First Nations

OUTPUT: National Urban Park Concept

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- National Urban Park Concept
- Park Establishment
- Interim Management Guidelines

SUMMER 2012

OUTPUT: Public Input Summary

FALL 2012

Recommendation to Government on Legislative Process and Final Steps

Statement of Intent

Towards Cooperation and Collaboration in the Establishment of a National Urban Park in the Rouge Valley

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this *Statement of Intent* is to express commitment by the Participants to work together towards a recommendation on the park boundaries and to take the necessary steps that would be required to establish Rouge National Urban Park, subject to the approvals process specific to each participant.

2. Participants

Government of Canada (represented by the Parks Canada Agency)
Province of Ontario (represented by the Ministry of Infrastructure)
City of Toronto
Town of Markham
City of Pickering
The Regional Municipality of York The
Regional Municipality of Durham
Toronto Region Conservation Authority

- 2.1. The Participants reached a shared understanding and wish to express their mutual commitment and intentions as presented in the following document.

3. Background

- 3.1. The federal, provincial and municipal governments involved and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority have supported Rouge Park and the Rouge Park Alliance since its inception in 1994 and have provided financial resources, in recognition of the important resources associated with the Rouge Valley, its unique ecosystem, its rich historic and cultural significance and the significant benefits it provides to the vitalities of communities and their residents.
- 3.2. The Rouge Park Alliance is a voluntary partnership of various levels of government and agencies whose mandate is to oversee and coordinate the implementation of the Rouge Park Management Plans and be an advocate for the protection, enhancement, and restoration of the Rouge River watershed.
- 3.3. In 2010, the Rouge Park Alliance recommended the Rouge Park be granted federal designation to contribute to better management of the park lands and resources and provide enhanced, accessible visitor experiences and learning opportunities to the more than seven million residents of the Greater Toronto Area, visitors to the region, as well as all Canadians. In 2010, each of the member organizations of the Rouge Park Alliance endorsed the recommendation to seek federal designation for Rouge Park.
- 3.4. The June 2011 Speech from the Throne set the direction for the Government of Canada to work with the provincial and municipal governments, Aboriginal partners, and community stakeholders towards establishing a national urban park in the Rouge Valley.

- 3.5. In January 2012, The Province of Ontario has expressed its desire to effect an orderly transition of the operations, administration and management of Rouge Park in recognition of the effort to establish Rouge National Urban Park.
- 3.6. Rouge Park is located in an urban setting and requires flexibility to be responsive and provide latitude to accommodate the relationship to adjacent urban land uses and population and infrastructure requirements.
- 3.7. Participants share an interest in advancing a Rouge National Urban Park and are committed to working together and with Aboriginal partners, and community stakeholders through a consultative and collaborative process to establish Rouge National Urban Park under the stewardship of Parks Canada.

4. Scope of Cooperation

- 4.1. Participants agree to work cooperatively to address issues of mutual interest, as outlined below, and other related matters that may emerge through the park establishment process:
- Identification of lands recommended to be included in or excluded from Rouge National Urban Park;
 - Rouge National Urban Park Concept;
 - Recommend processes and conditions of any land transfer to Parks Canada subject to obtaining all necessary approvals;
 - Public communications;
 - Transition measures as identified further in section 6;
 - Relationship to adjacent land uses (including the Toronto Zoo and Beare Road Landfill) and agricultural uses;
 - Roles and recognition of the Participants under the new governance model; and Infrastructure and its future management.

5. Preliminary park concept

- 5.1. A national urban park is a new concept, which requires an innovative conservation and management approach that is reflective of its near-urban context and provides the flexibility to manage a working landscape. This concept will be developed and guided by consultations with a broad range of partners and stakeholders, including the Participants.
- 5.2. Aligned with Parks Canada's mandate, the national urban park concept will include conservation of natural and cultural heritage resources, opportunities for reaching and increasing appreciation amongst an urban population, a wide range of visitor experience possibilities and the integration and promotion of sustainable agriculture.
- 5.3. Boundaries will be defined based on an agreement with the Participants. To guide the work and facilitate identification of considerations and issues by the Participants, Parks Canada has presented a map of the Study Area (*Annex1*) that is under consideration for a potential national urban park.

6. Establishment Process

- 6.1. A Landholders Table was created in Fall 2011 by Parks Canada to bring the Participants together to come to an agreement on park boundaries (lands to be included or excluded) and the strategies and processes for the transfer of lands to Parks Canada subject to obtaining the necessary approvals by each Participant.
- 6.2. In parallel to this process, Parks Canada is also engaging a broad group of partners and stakeholders, which includes the Participants, to consult on the vision and concept for the park. Agreements that will come out of the Landholders table will be shared for input as part of a broader public consultation process on the establishment of Rouge National Urban Park.
- 6.3. The Landholders Table will develop an approach to coordinate various due diligence processes and the Crown's duty of consultations, if any, and accommodation, if appropriate.
- 6.4. Transition measures will be developed to allow for interim governance of the park during the establishment process and until a permanent governance structure is created and the lands have been duly transferred to the managing authority. Interim Management Guidelines will also be developed to guide management until a Governing Framework is adopted. Roles of Participants as part of the transition process as well as part of the permanent governance model for the national urban park will be determined.

7. Timing

- 7.1. Participants intend to work towards a land transfer agreement following presentation by the Federal Government of a national urban park concept and confirmation of funding and proposed boundaries, to the satisfaction of the parties to the agreement.
- 7.2. Participants will work towards a target land transfer agreement in place by Fall 2012.

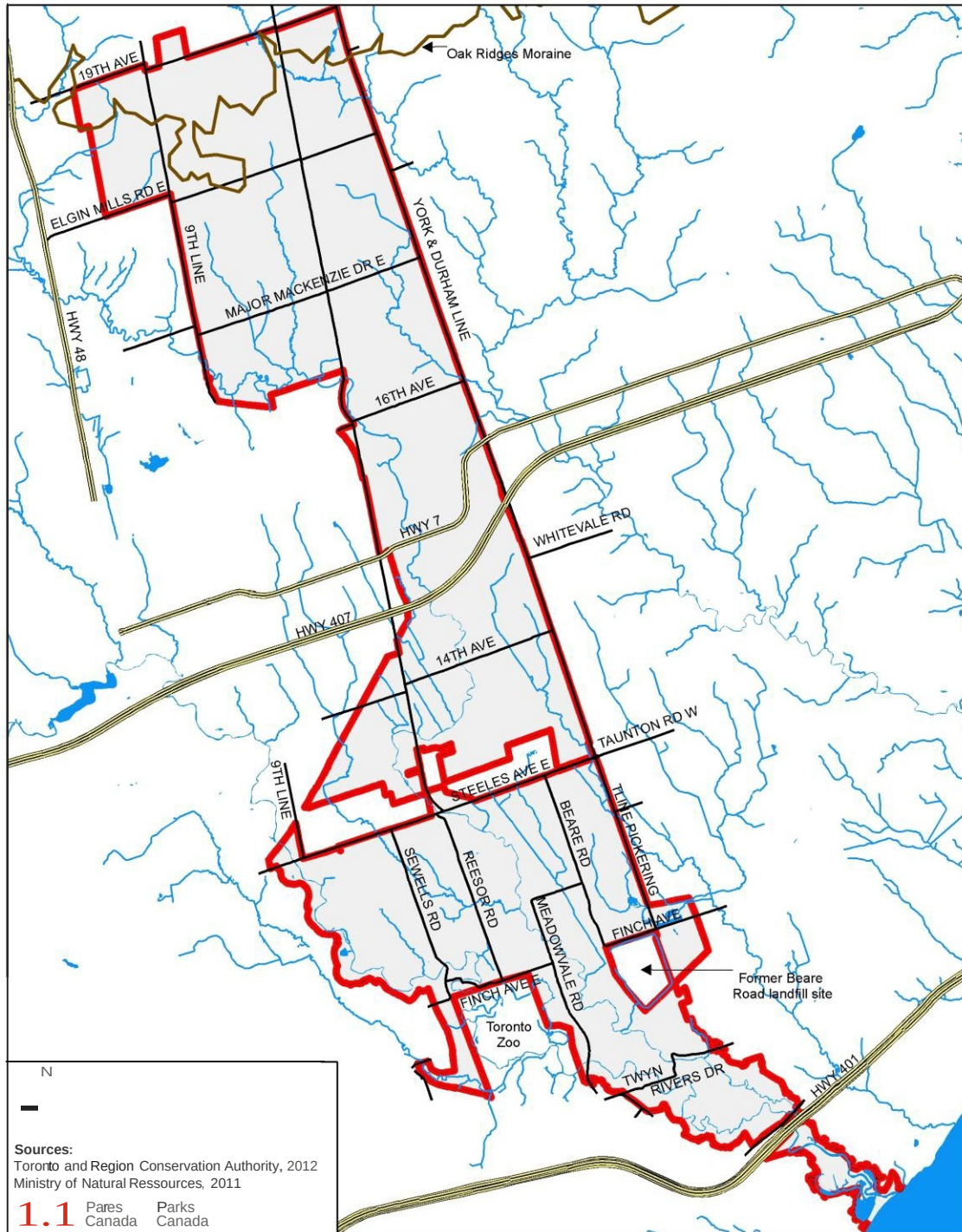
8. Legal Effect

This *Statement of Intent* is an expression of the mutual intentions of the Participants and is not legally binding on them.

9. Appendices

1. Map of the Study Area under consideration by Parks Canada
2. Members of the Landholders Table

Annex 1 - Study Area under consideration by Parks Canada



Note: This map is a Study Area only. The lands shown are currently under review for possible inclusions/exclusions to the national urban park. This map does not represent proposed park boundaries. All private lands are excluded from the study area.

Annex 2

Members of the Landholders Table

Organization	Representative	Title
Parks Canada	Andrew Campbell (Chair)	VP External Relations and Visitor Experience
Parks Canada	Catherine Grenier	Dir. Rouge National Urban Park Initiative
Parks Canada	Dianne Pralow (Secretary)	Sr. Realty Advisor
Province of Ontario (Ministry of Infrastructure)	Bruce Singbush	Director, Real Estate Policy
Province of Ontario (Ministry of Infrastructure)	Victoria Vidal-Ribas	Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Real Estate Asset Management Division
Toronto Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)	Brian Denney	Chief Administrative Officer
City of Toronto	John Livey	Deputy City Manager
City of Pickering	Thomas Melymuk	Director, Office of Sustainability
Town of Markham	Andy Taylor	Chief Administrative Officer
Region of York	Bruce Macgregor	Chief Administrative Officer
Region of Durham	Nester Chornobay	Dir. Strategic Planning
Rouge Park Alliance	Alan Wells	Chair