

2017-2021 Regional Watershed Alliance Terms of Reference

The Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA) is considered an advisory board of TRCA.

1. **Background**

Since the 1980s, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA, also known as the Authority) watershed and waterfront committees and task forces have been instrumental in supporting the development and implementation of TRCA's watershed management activities. The *Rouge Comprehensive Basin Management Strategy* (1988), was TRCA's first initiative supported by a citizen based "public committee." The 1989 *Greenspace Strategy* committed to a program of watershed strategy development for each of TRCA's watersheds in cooperation with a public advisory committee for each watershed. Between 1980s and 2010s, the Duffins-Carruthers Watershed Resource Group, Rouge Park Alliance, Don Watershed Regeneration Council, Humber Watershed Alliance and Etobicoke-Mimico Watersheds Coalition have played a significant role in building community stewardship capacity to help TRCA deliver on priorities of watersheds and waterfront. Watershed and waterfront residents and stakeholders are also engaged through Conservation Lands stewardship committees and integrated/multi- objective or sector-based programs such as Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plans (SNAP) and Partners in Project Green: A Pearson Eco-Business Zone (PPG).

TRCA's *2013-2022 Strategic Plan* highlights regional sustainability challenges of increasing scope and scale - such as preparing for the impacts of climate change, transitioning to a low carbon economy, managing urbanization and growth pressures. The Plan also calls for regional engagement of a broad cross-section of the population at both local and regional scales within TRCA's jurisdiction. As such, in 2015, upon the completion of the existing terms for the Don, Humber and Etobicoke-Mimico watershed committees, the Authority directed staff to update TRCA's community-focused engagement model in light of new trends and opportunities in civic engagement and to facilitate the implementation of the *Strategic Plan*.

At the June 23, 2017 Authority Meeting #5/17, Authority adopted the Community Engagement Strategy along with a new citizen governance model. The citizen governance model includes the Regional Watershed Alliance and its subcommittees: the Youth Council and RWA Working Groups. An Indigenous Liaison Committee to the Board of Directors has also been approved as part of the proposed governance model (Figure 1). The RWA is a formal advisory board of TRCA which reports to the Board of Directors on regular basis. Terms of Reference for the RWA were adopted at the October 27, 2017 Authority Meeting #8/17 (RES.#A178/17).

2. **Mission and Mandate**

Mission: Create healthy watersheds and waterfront that achieve The Living City Vision of sustainable communities, regional biodiversity and healthy rivers and shorelines through advocacy, knowledge sharing and collective action.

Mandate: Reporting to the Board of Directors (Figure 1) and working closely with Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation, the RWA is an advisory board to TRCA with the purpose of:

<i>Advocacy:</i>	Advocacy for awareness, policy innovation and action within members' sectors, communities and jurisdictions on regional and local environmental and sustainability issues.
<i>Advisory:</i>	Input on TRCA initiatives, act as a sounding board to TRCA staff, and advise the Board of Directors on matters of community interest.
<i>Collective Action:</i>	Priority setting and collective investment in key sustainability and environmental issues for cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral actions. Support and leadership to the development of platform and campaigns to bring actors and stakeholders together to drive solutions through collective action and resource sharing.
<i>Reporting:</i>	Reporting on collective outcomes on regional sustainability to the public, TRCA municipal partners and stakeholders. Reporting to the Board of Directors on its work.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

The Regional Watershed Alliance shall:

- 3.1. Adhere to the basic principles of sound ecosystem management and sustainability that recognizes the interrelationships between cultural heritage, physical characteristics, biological conditions and economic needs, and the integration of conservation, restoration, social and economic activities necessary for the health of the watersheds;
- 3.2. Forge partnerships and collaborations that build our collective capacity to advance the goals of TRCA's *Strategic Plan: Building The Living City 2013-2022* and TRCA *Strategic Plan – Five Year Update*, and provide a platform for collective action on cross- jurisdictional and cross-sectoral priorities;
- 3.3. Work with staff in setting regional and local priorities that help advance TRCA's and its municipal partners' objectives of sustainable communities, recommendations of TRCA's *2017 Community Engagement Strategy*, watershed plans, watershed report cards and *The Living City Report Card*;
- 3.4. Advocate on regional and local environmental policy issues through discussion papers, briefs and comments etc. and providing advice and comments to staff and the Board of Directors on relevant programs and policies impacting TRCA watersheds and communities. Examples include: TRCA's *Terrestrial Natural Heritage System Strategy*; *Sustainable Near-urban Agriculture Policy*; watershed plans; *TRCA Trails Strategy*; and *TRCA Greenspace Strategy*;

- 3.5. Implement the recommendations of the *Toronto and Region Remedial Action Plan* as they pertain to the TRCA waterfront and watersheds;
- 3.6. Work collaboratively with TRCA staff and partners to develop state of the watershed reports and *The Living City Report Card* which will address jurisdiction-wide sustainability issues;
- 3.7. Through watershed forums, events and on-line engagement, provide a forum for watershed communication by maintaining and enhancing contacts within the community. Mobilize and empower networks of local communities to build capacity and influence people's behavior;
- 3.8. Act as a resource to TRCA, TRCA's municipal partners and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation by providing advice on matters of community interest;
- 3.9. Work with TRCA and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation to identify priorities, seek new partnerships, public sector investment and other sources of funding;
- 3.10. Where appropriate, and when specifically requested, with input from staff, serve as a spokesperson for media and government relations on community-led initiatives related to the work of RWA members;
- 3.11. Establish subcommittees/working groups as needed, such as the Youth Council and other RWA Working Groups;
- 3.12. Seek political support at all levels of government;
- 3.13. Collaborate with other conservation authorities, municipalities, environmental non-government organizations (ENGO) and groups on opportunities that transcend TRCA jurisdictional boundaries;
- 3.14. Maximize the collective impact of TRCA and other environmental and sustainability champions in the region through resource and data sharing, measuring, and reporting on regional priorities; and
- 3.15. Report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

4. Structure

Supported by TRCA staff, the RWA has a Chair, Vice-Chair, and is comprised of approximately 45 voting members.

4.1 Membership

4.1.1 Voting Members

The RWA members are recruited based on a diverse skill set, sector and community specific expertise, network connections, demonstrated leadership, experience, and knowledge of the watersheds within TRCA's jurisdiction.

- **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority** (up to five voting representatives, Ex-

officio)

- Preferably one representative from each of TRCA's appointing member municipalities from the Board of Directors or interested members.
- **Watershed Residents** (up to 20 voting representatives)
 - Up to 20 watershed residents selected from across TRCA's nine watersheds and waterfront, aiming to have equal geographical and demographic representation.
- **Sector Experts and Organizations** (up to 10 voting representatives)
 - Up to 10 members from non-government, think-tanks, business and special interest groups, representing diverse sectors including youth and Indigenous groups.
- **Municipal Representatives** (up to eight voting representatives, Ex-officio)
 - Representatives of municipalities within TRCA's jurisdiction. These representatives could be political representatives representing the municipality or an Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC) representative.
- **Provincial Representative** (up to one voting representative, Ex-officio)
 - Up to one political representative or senior staff from the Province of Ontario.
- **Federal Representative** (up to one voting representative, Ex-officio)
 - Up to one local political representative or senior staff from the Government of Canada.

4.1.2 Non-Voting Experts

In addition to voting members, one to two non-voting experts with extensive experience in public sector or subject matter expertise can be invited to join to the RWA. These experts could be former TRCA or other conservation authority (CA) staff and are not required to be a resident of TRCA's watersheds. Senior municipal staff liaison may also be invited to join.

4.1.3 Guests

The Regional Watershed Alliance meetings are open to the public. Municipal or other agency staff may be invited as guests to offer presentations or participate in discussions on relevant issues. Guests will not have voting privileges nor be eligible for travel expenses to and from meetings.

4.1.4 Chair or Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the RWA will be elected from amongst its members for a two-year term, following TRCA Administrative By-law election procedure. It is a responsibility of a nominated Member to ensure their eligibility for the entire term.

The RWA Chair and Vice-Chair will provide leadership in building a shared vision and commitment for moving forward with the Regional Watershed Alliance's mission, mandate and responsibilities.

The Chair will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Presiding over RWA meetings, setting the agenda and generally ensuring the effectiveness of meetings; and
- Recruiting new members to the RWA when openings arise.

In the absence of the Chair, the Vice-Chair will perform the above functions.

4.2 Appointment Process

4.2.1 Board of Directors Representatives

Board Members will be appointed by the Board of Directors as Ex-officio voting representatives.

4.2.2 Watershed Residents

Applications from watershed residents will be solicited through direct recruitment, announcements in newsletters, local newspapers, web sites, volunteer networks, and through various social media platforms. A committee of TRCA staff and/or board members will select the RWA resident members through the application process using a set of criteria to ensure suitability and eligibility.

4.2.3 Sector Experts and Organizations

Select organizations and agencies will be requested by TRCA to appoint a representative.

4.2.4 Municipal Representatives

Formal request for appointment of municipal representatives will be made to municipal councils. These representatives will be Ex-officio members.

4.2.5 Provincial and Federal Representatives

Federal and provincial representatives (member of Parliament or staff) with specific interest in TRCA's work and jurisdiction may be invited to participate as Ex-officio members.

4.3 Term of Appointment

RWA Members will be appointed for a revolving two-year term with a possible extension of up to two more years. This will allow for a staggered replacement process maintaining a balance between new and experienced members. The membership will be reviewed on an annual basis. Members, excluding Ex-officio members, unable to fulfill their commitments may be replaced as per the Board of Directors Administrative By-law.

4.4 Meetings

Members are required to attend quarterly evening meetings of the Regional Watershed

Alliance and an annual Watershed Forum. An agenda will be circulated in advance of meetings.

The Chair will have the discretion to call additional meetings, if required. Some meetings may be held during regular work hours depending on the preference and availability of members and staff or via conference call or online meetings.

4.5 Reporting

The RWA is considered an advisory board of TRCA. The RWA will report to the Board of Directors on membership, projects and progress through their meeting minutes or seek Board of Directors approval as necessary on specific initiatives.

The RWA is not a formal commenting body regarding review and approval of planning applications or permits.

4.6 Quorum and Governance

A quorum will consist of voting members in numbers greater than or equal to one-third of the total number of voting members on the RWA.

Consensus-based decision making will be the preferred procedure. Formal decisions will be based on a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, the vote fails.

4.7 Rules of Conduct

The RWA will adhere to the Board of Directors Administrative By-law as adopted by Resolution #A141/18 & Resolution #A142/18 at Authority Meeting #7/18, held on September 28, 2018, and as amended periodically or superseded by any bylaws enacted as per the *Conservation Authorities Act*. Other policies and legislation may be applicable in regard to code of conduct, conflict of interest and policies on volunteers.

4.8 TRCA Staff Support

The RWA will be supported by a team of staff from Government and Community Relations Business Unit including:

- Government and Community Relationship Specialists;
- Projects Managers;
- Administrative Support Staff;
- Other TRCA Staff, including the Clerk's Office, as required.

Staff will provide the following support functions:

- Coordination of RWA meetings;
- Administrative and financial support;
- Strategic guidance on alignment of RWA work plan priorities with other strategic opportunities;
- Coordination of work with the Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation;
- Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation support for management of any funds collectively raised by the RWA or any of its subcommittees that support the

- implementation of their work plans; and
- TRCA technical expertise on projects and initiatives of the Regional Watershed Alliance and its subcommittees.

4.9 Funding

Funding will be available for projects and activities of the RWA based on approved work plans and available TRCA budget. Members are encouraged to assist in securing other resources and partnerships for Regional Watershed Alliance projects and activities, whenever possible through collective public investment opportunities. In-kind or other support for the projects and activities of the Alliance are welcome from businesses, industries, government agencies, private foundations, educational institutions and others in accordance with TRCA policies. In-kind or other support will be coordinated with the assistance of Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation, where appropriate.

5. *Compensation For Regional Watershed Alliance Members*

At official RWA meetings, as well as RWA Working Groups, members will be eligible for travel expenses, according to TRCA Administrative By-law, where these are not covered by their agency or other source. Members shall not receive a per diem or honorarium for attendance at meetings and functions.

6. *Regional Watershed Alliance Working Groups*

The RWA Working Groups are formed as deemed appropriate by the RWA. These working groups may solicit local community representatives or experts to participate as needed. Mandate of these working groups can be watershed-wide or specifically focused around projects such as watershed plans. The RWA Working Groups will report to the RWA. The supporting TRCA staff will coordinate regular reports to the RWA on the activities of these groups.

Items pertaining to the working groups will be a standing item on the agenda of RWA meetings.

7. *Youth Council*

The Youth Council will be comprised of community youth champions, existing youth group representatives and new recruits. The Youth Council reports to the Regional Watershed Alliance.

7.1 Mission: Build healthy communities through improved connection to greenspace and nature.

7.2 Mandate: Reporting to the Regional Watershed Alliance (Figure 1) and working closely with TRCA and the RWA, the Youth Council will establish as a subcommittee to the RWA with the purpose of:

- Building Capacity and Engaging Youth - provide youth across the Toronto region with learning opportunities;

- Building a Youth Network/Strengthening Existing Networks - create/enhance a broad network of youth in the region who are interested in environmental and sustainability issues;
- Identifying Youth Perspectives - develop an understanding of youth opinion around current environmental issues and understand/investigate how these might be incorporated in the work of TRCA and its partners; and
 - Creating fun opportunities for Youth - provide entertaining and engaging learning opportunities.

8. *Indigenous Liaison Committee*

The Indigenous Liaison Committee will be comprised of members and experts from different Indigenous communities in TRCA's jurisdiction. They will liaise on Indigenous interests and help build stronger relationships between TRCA and the larger Indigenous population in the jurisdiction. This Committee will advise the Board of Directors and staff on matters of community interest and liaise with the Regional Watershed Alliance on mission-driven collective projects. The Committee will not have a reporting relationship with the Regional Watershed Alliance or the Board of Directors.

The member(s) of this Committee may have membership on the Regional Watershed Alliance. This Committee will have opportunities to work with the Watershed/Waterfront Working Groups and Youth Council. TRCA staff and relevant stakeholders will collaborate on the development of a Terms of Reference for this Committee.

The formation of this Indigenous Liaison Committee will be put on hold until further recommendation from the province through updates to the *Conservation Authorities Act* as stated in RES.#002/17 at meeting #1/17 of the RWA on November 15, 2017.

Figure 1: TRCA Citizen Governance Model

