



2017-2021 Terms of Reference: TRCA Regional Watershed Alliance

1.0 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. Over the past two decades, 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.

On June 23, 2017, at Authority Meeting #8/17, The Community Engagement Strategy along with a new citizen governance model was adopted. The new citizen governance model includes the Regional Watershed Alliance (RWA), and its subcommittees; Youth Council and Watershed/Waterfront 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 citizen advisory board of TRCA which will report to the Board of Directors on regular basis.

Authority Direction

Resolution #A178/17 from Authority Meeting #8/17, held on October 27, 2017.

2.0 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 Regional Watershed Alliance will be established as a subcommittee 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.

3.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Regional Watershed Alliance shall:

- 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;
- 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 provide a platform for collective action on cross-jurisdictional and cross-sectoral priorities;
- 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;
- 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;
- 5) Implement the recommendations of the Toronto and Region Remedial Action Plan as they pertain to the TRCA waterfront and watersheds;

- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 9) Work with TRCA and Toronto and Region Conservation Foundation to identify priorities, seek new partnerships, public sector investment and other sources of funding;
- 10) Where appropriate, and when requested, serve as a spokesperson for media and government relations on behalf of staff;
- 11) Establish subcommittees/working groups or standing committees as needed, the Watershed/Waterfront Working Groups and Youth Council, and collaborate with the Indigenous Liaison Committee as needed;
- 12) Seek political support at all levels of government;
- 13) Collaborate with other conservation authorities, municipalities, environmental non-government organizations (ENGO) and groups on opportunities that transcend TRCA jurisdictional boundaries;
- 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
- 15) Report to the Board of Directors on a regular basis.

4.0 STRUCTURE

Supported by TRCA staff, the Regional Watershed Alliance will have a Chair, Vice Chair, and will be comprised of approximately 45 voting members.

4.1 Membership

4.1.1 Voting Members

The Regional Watershed Alliance members will be 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, having 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. Non-voting senior staff liaison can also be appointed.
- **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 Regional Watershed Alliance. These experts could be former TRCA or other conservation authority (CA) staff and are not required to be a resident of TRCA's watersheds.

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 Regional Watershed Alliance will be elected from amongst its members for the term of the Alliance. The Board of Directors may appoint an interim Chair until such time as an election can take place. The voting procedures used will be that outlined in TRCA's Rules of Conduct.

The Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Regional Watershed Alliance meetings, setting the agenda and generally ensuring the effectiveness of meetings; and
- Recruiting new members to the Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Regional Watershed Alliance 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 is in the TRCA watersheds/waterfront will be invited to participate as Ex-officio members.

4.3 Term of Appointment

Regional Watershed Alliance will be established with a revolving term of up to four years. Members will be appointed for a two 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 TRCA's Roles of Conduct.

Notice of resignations and recommendations for new members will be presented to the Authority for approval on an 'as required' basis.

4.4 Meetings

Members are required to attend quarterly evening meetings of the Regional Watershed Alliance and one annual Watershed Forum. Meetings are expected to be approximately three hours in length, at the discretion of the Regional Watershed Alliance. An agenda will be circulated in advance of meetings.

The Chair will have the discretion to call additional meetings, if required. Additional meetings may be required to deal with specific issues from time to time. 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.

Light meals and refreshments will be provided at evening meetings.

4.5 Reporting

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

The Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Regional Watershed Alliance.

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 Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Volunteer Policy.

4.8 TRCA Staff Support

The Regional Watershed Alliance will be supported by a team of staff from Watershed Strategies Division including:

- Director, Watershed Strategies;
- watershed specialists;
- projects managers;
- administrative support staff.

Staff will provide the following support functions:

- Coordination of Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Regional Watershed Alliance 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 Regional Watershed Alliance 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.

5.0 COMPENSATION FOR REGIONAL WATERSHED ALLIANCE MEMBERS

At regular Regional Watershed Alliance meetings, as well as Watershed/Waterfront Working Groups, members will be eligible for travel expenses and any other expenses approved in advance by TRCA's Director, Watershed Strategies, according to TRCA policy, where these are not covered by their agency or other source. As per the Board of Directors Administrative By-law, Incidental childcare expenses as a result of attending Regional Watershed Alliance meetings or authorized business may be reimbursed where the Chair of the Alliance deems financial hardship would otherwise result, and such expenses shall be pre-approved by the Chair. The TRCA policy on volunteers is also applicable and can be accessed in the Policy area of TRCA's Open Data webpage at <http://trca.ca/about/open/>. Members shall not receive a per diem or honorarium for attendance at meetings and functions.

6.0 WATERSHED/WATERFRONT WORKING GROUPS

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

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

7.0 YOUTH COUNCIL

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

The mission, mandate and goals, along with the Terms of Reference for the working groups, Youth Council will be developed by TRCA and the Regional Watershed Alliance in consultation with relevant stakeholders.

8.0 INDIGENOUS LIASON 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.

Figure 1: TRCA Citizen Governance Model

