LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

1. Green the Toronto region’s economy
2. Manage our regional water resources for current and future generations
3. Rethink greenspace to maximize its value
4. Create complete communities that integrate nature and the built environment
5. Foster sustainable citizenship
6. Tell the story of the Toronto region

ENABLING STRATEGIES

7. Build partnerships and new business models
8. Gather and share the best urban sustainability knowledge
9. Measure performance
10. Accelerate innovation
11. Invest in our staff
12. Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

TRCA has drafted 12 strategies that will guide our activities over the 10 year period 2013-2022. The strategies are presented in two categories: Leadership Strategies, that move us toward The Living City vision; and, Enabling Strategies, that build our collective capacity to make significant, positive impact.
With Ontario’s economy in transition, the time is right to transition the Toronto region to a green economy. A green economy is fundamentally sustainable and is driven by investments that reduce carbon emissions and pollution, enhance energy and resource efficiency, and prevent the loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services. It also recognizes that traditional measures of economic performance, such as GDP, ignore the contribution of natural assets to wealth, cultural and community values, and human well-being.

Performance in a green economy may be measured by both the quantity of output and the quality of that economic activity. Through economic development that supports the creation of a truly green economy within The Living City, we can improve global competitiveness and attract innovative people, businesses and investment, while increasing the region’s resilience to global energy pressures.

We will expand our training and transitioning programs that prepare workers and job seekers for new opportunities in green sectors.

In 2050, around 9 billion people live well, and within the limits of the planet.

This vision statement lies at the core of Vision 2050: The New Agenda for Business issued by the World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD) – comprised of 29 global companies representing 14 industries.

The report addresses three questions: What does a sustainable world look like? How can we realize it? What roles can businesses play in ensuring more rapid progress toward that world? In addressing these questions, WBCSD contends that sustainability needs to become a key strategic driver of business. TRCA will work to move this strategic driver to the forefront of the business economy in the Toronto region.
LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

2. Manage our regional water resources for current and future generations

Water has emerged as a leading environmental concern of the 21st century. In the Toronto region we are blessed with an abundance of fresh water, but we take it for granted. We are among the most wasteful users of water in the world, and the effects of urban development have severely impacted our rivers, streams and waterfront. If current trends continue, we risk losing community access to clean, sustainable drinking water, recreational opportunities and healthy aquatic ecosystems for generations to come.

Sustainable water management respects water as a life sustaining resource and a powerful force that shapes our landscape. It recognizes that water problems are complex and cannot be solved with quick technical solutions alone. A science-based approach integrates social, economic and environmental concerns to minimize the impacts of development on the natural water cycle.

As a leading urban area of the Great Lakes, the Toronto region has the opportunity to demonstrate to the world how to develop and retrofit an urban region while sustaining this resource.

Fulfilling our potential as a Great Lakes city region

The Great Lakes basin is a unique freshwater ecosystem like no other on the planet. However, as the home for 33 million people, development and industrial activity have severely impacted water quality and ecosystems in parts of the Great Lakes – especially near urban centres like the Toronto region. The province of Ontario has committed to addressing this issue with strong legislation, presenting an opportunity to accelerate the cleanup of our watersheds and the Lake Ontario waterfront. The Toronto region can lead by example by restoring the Great Lakes system and realizing the full benefits of living on the shores of the world’s greatest lakes.
3. Rethink greenspace to maximize its value

Urban greenspace in all its forms – from large natural areas and agricultural land to neighbourhood parks, street trees and green roofs – is vital to healthy and resilient communities. Greenspace can purify our air and water, support wildlife, provide food, increase our physical and mental health, add beauty to our communities, and bring people together.

Faced with declining quality of much of the greenspace in the region and increased demands for this essential resource by a rapidly growing urban population, now is the opportune time to rethink greenspace as an integrated system. Through thoughtful planning and action we will help develop a network of greenspace for the Toronto region that maximizes community well-being and protection of our local ecosystems. This will include helping people become healthier and happier by promoting appropriate access to existing nature and by creating new green infrastructure in urban areas. To ensure that future generations also benefit from greenspace, we will also create awareness of the need to invest in its long-term management and renewal.

We will deliver experiences and programs that encourage life-long engagement and stewardship of urban nature among a more diverse range of people.

Investing in green Infrastructure for community well-being

Green infrastructure is natural vegetation, cultivated vegetation and vegetative technologies that collectively provide communities with a broad array of products and services for healthy living. The many benefits, or ecosystem services, provided by green infrastructure are critical in cities where large populations share limited greenspace. These services include the provision of food and clean water, flood and disease control, cultural benefits, and recreational opportunities. The Green Infrastructure Ontario Coalition, of which TRCA is a founding member, is working together with other leaders in this field to advocate for government policies that acknowledge the importance of green infrastructure and ensure that it is funded and protected.
Create complete communities that integrate nature and the built environment

Traditional patterns of urbanization in the Toronto region have challenged our capacity to build a sustainable city region. However, urban intensification and redevelopment provide opportunities to build stronger, more functional communities.

We will consider the natural and built realms as integrated and focus beyond natural areas to the strategic location of urban parks and green infrastructure, the integration of the urban forest, and the creation or retrofit of green buildings.

We can build on our watershed planning experience to assist our partner municipalities, residents and other stakeholders in planning for and creating communities that are sustainable and meet all of their residents’ needs.

New development and redevelopment that achieves a more sustainable balance and integration of natural and built elements.

The seven generation perspective

Seven generation sustainability is a concept that originated from the Iroquois Confederacy. It requires that we consider the impacts of decisions made today on our descendants seven generations into the future.

Modern definitions of sustainability incorporate this value through the concept of intergenerational equity – the belief that we must act in ways that protect the rights of future generations to meet their basic needs and seek fulfillment. It acknowledges a moral obligation to all future generations, recognizing that we cannot exploit our natural resources or degrade our environment at the expense of those who are not yet born. Accordingly, each generation is both a trustee for the planet with obligations to care for it, and also a beneficiary with rights to use it.
5. Foster sustainable citizenship

Education and citizen participation are fundamental to the development of The Living City. We must increase awareness and give people both the tools and the opportunities to make choices that support sustainable community building. Involving a broad cross-section of the population will encourage ongoing input to sustainable community building and empower all residents to create a healthy and sustainable city region.

We will establish new approaches that improve civic engagement and participation in decision making related to watershed, program, facility and greenspace planning.
LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

Tell the story of the Toronto region

An appreciation of our cultural heritage gives meaning and context to our path toward the future. When citizens have a strong sense of place, they are more likely to become champions for their communities and stewards of their environment.

Our city region is characterized by a rich cultural heritage, woven by indigenous Aboriginal peoples, European settlers and immigrants from all parts of the world. By understanding this heritage, residents can feel more deeply rooted in their communities and can identify the unique buildings, features, landscapes, traditions and stories that make their communities special. Gaining knowledge of our history as community builders will also help us to make more informed and insightful decisions about our natural and cultural resources for the benefit of generations to come.

A stronger sense of place based on the cultural heritage of our region, from Aboriginal nations to European settlers to new Canadians.

6. Tell the story of the Toronto region

OBJECTIVES
1 A stronger sense of place based on the cultural heritage of our region, from Aboriginal nations to European settlers to new Canadians.
2 Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Huron-Wendat and Métis narratives of community life and their relationship with the land are integrated into TRCA programs and activities.
3 Greater engagement of the diverse cultural communities that make up the Toronto region in TRCA programs.
4 Adaptive reuse of our historic buildings and assets that preserves their natural and cultural heritage value.

ACTIONS
1 We will build on the success of Black Creek Pioneer Village to present exhibits, events and educational programs associated with our archaeological sites, collections, heritage objects, buildings and cultural landscapes.
2 We will continue to engage cultural and ethnic groups to tell the stories of diverse communities and their contributions to the building of the Toronto region. Through new and existing events and programs, we will bring these stories to life and help create a sense of belonging for all residents of the Toronto region.
3 We will grow stronger relationships with new residents of the Toronto region through accessible language and programs, translation of our communication materials and collaboration with multi-cultural media organizations.
4 We will establish an Aboriginal advisory committee to draw on indigenous knowledge and traditions to inform our policies and programs, such as education programs and cultural exhibits. We will create opportunities for staff to learn the traditional ecological knowledge of Aboriginal peoples and its relevance to sustainable community building in our region.
5 We will find uses for our historic buildings and properties, including Bolton Camp, Swan Lake, Bruce’s Mill and the Black Creek North property, that provide opportunities to preserve and showcase their cultural heritage characteristics.
Sustainable city building cannot be funded by government alone. Nor does any single organization have the mandate, expertise or capacity to fully realize, on its own, a vision for a sustainable Toronto region. Partnership and entrepreneurship are essential, as resources are scarce, complexity is great, and a capacity to undertake a diverse range of programs is needed.

To be successful, we must work collaboratively with our partners, both new and existing, toward a shared vision for The Living City. By building and diversifying our partnerships, exploring new business models and improving efficiency, we can enhance our regional capacity to reach sustainability goals, include more organizations in sustainable community building, and build TRCA’s own resilience in the face of inevitable and unpredictable changes.

We will pursue creative multi-partner collaborations that include the private sector, non-governmental organizations and government agencies to expand our capacity.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. More diverse and stronger partnerships to create opportunities, remove funding barriers and support new directions established in this Strategic Plan.
2. Maximum impact from use of funds and resources through efficiencies and partnerships.
3. Increased financial resilience for TRCA through stable and diversified funding.

**ACTIONS**

1. We will pursue creative multi-partner collaborations that include the private sector, non-governmental organizations and government agencies to expand our capacity.
2. We will broaden the scope of our existing Continuous Sustainable Improvement review process to maximize organizational value to our partners, funders and the community-at-large.
3. In partnership with The Living City Foundation, we will leverage our experience as a service delivery provider to extend our reach and support the development of sustainable communities at a provincial and national level.
4. We will establish a capital fund to support the financial development of self-sustaining social entrepreneurship ventures that contribute to regional sustainability.
5. We will pilot social financing projects such as, community bonds, crowd funding.
6. In collaboration with third party providers, we will make use of park and education facilities, staff and programs to provide better value to the community and generate incremental revenue.
7. Where appropriate, we will work with our municipal, provincial and federal partners to assign the management of public lands in order to make more efficient and effective use of our combined resources.
8. Gather and share the best urban sustainability knowledge

Understanding the complex systems at work in a city region improves our ability to address issues related to sustainability and city building. Currently, development in the Toronto region is outpacing our ability to adapt and respond to the implications of past planning decisions, as well as to effectively integrate new and emerging knowledge into the practice of sustainable city building.

TRCA is uniquely positioned to address these challenges by taking a leadership role in acquiring and sharing knowledge related to urban sustainability. We will also identify innovative technologies, evaluate their effectiveness and facilitate their implementation.

We will make pertinent TRCA data and knowledge more readily available for internal staff and create opportunities to openly share data and knowledge for public use.

OBJECTIVES
1. Deeper understanding of the complex climate, ecological, social and economic systems within our city region and how to respond to them.
2. Improved and timely access to relevant leading edge sustainable city building knowledge for the Toronto region planning community, development industry and others.
3. Optimal use and application of the data we collect.
4. Improved application of leading edge sustainability city building knowledge to the planning, design and retrofit of urban communities.

ACTIONS
1. We will continue to develop The Living City Campus at Kortright as a regional centre of expertise for sustainable city building. Expanding on the current technology focus at the Campus, we will work with academic institutions and public and private sector experts to create a leading edge research and learning centre for the planning, design and governance of sustainable communities.
2. We will share leading edge research on urban sustainability with our municipal partners, the development industry and private business. We will work with our partners to accelerate monitoring and reporting of outcomes to improve future planning decisions.
3. We will create new ways to coordinate the engagement of academics, researchers, the building industry and municipal experts to more effectively infuse new science, an understanding of complex systems, innovation and on-the-ground experience into urban planning, design and governance in the Toronto region.
4. We will continue to utilize our regional watershed and waterfront monitoring programs to inform watershed and management plans and activities, and lead or support research and applied science.
5. We will make pertinent TRCA data and knowledge more readily available for internal staff and create opportunities to openly share data and knowledge for public use.
6. We will continue to work with academic partners, the insurance industry and governments to facilitate regionally specific climate research and data analyses that will enable effective policy and investment responses to climate change and extreme weather risk.
9. Measure performance

Achieving The Living City vision relies on our ability to measure our performance – accurately and on a consistent basis – in order to adjust policies and priorities, fine-tune programs and reallocate resources as necessary. Building on the success of The Living City Report Card, issued in 2011, we will use advanced measurement and reporting tools to inform current and future sustainability decision making that improves not only the built and natural environments, but human and social outcomes as well.

Our internal measurement and reporting systems will allow for greater accountability and transparency to our funders, partners and stakeholders while strengthening our ability to build and adapt our work plans.

In collaboration with our partners, we will report on a wide range of city building indicators, while tracking genuine progress towards the creation of The Living City.

The Living City Report Card - An assessment of the environmental health of the Greater Toronto Area

In 2011, CivicAction’s Greening Greater Toronto and TRCA collaborated with organizations and environmental leaders across the region to produce The Living City Report Card. The Report Card uses a regional framework for measuring environmental indicators vital to the sustainability of the greater Toronto region. Building on the expertise of our municipal partners in measuring community health and progress, TRCA will use The Living City Report Card as a catalyst for building and tracking our region’s progress toward sustainability.

We will continue to work with CivicAction, building on The Living City Report Card, in order to track and report on regional sustainability progress.

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We will continue to work with CivicAction, building on The Living City Report Card, in order to track and report on regional sustainability progress.
Innovation starts with the recognition that there is always a better way to achieve goals. Innovators have the ability to reframe problems, explore alternative approaches, make good decisions by weighing potential risks and rewards, and champion new solutions.

In a complex environment where natural systems, the economy and technologies are rapidly changing, responding to change has never been more challenging. Management approaches must now evolve to address increasingly complex systems. In order to meet its goals for The Living City, TRCA is committed to continuous innovation, with an emphasis on removing roadblocks and embracing good ideas, new approaches, knowledge and technology to solve our region’s social, economic and environmental problems in a dynamic world.

**OBJECTIVES**

1. The Toronto region is a global leader in innovation related to sustainability.

2. More innovative approaches implemented by TRCA to achieve The Living City vision.

3. Stronger culture of innovation within TRCA to stimulate forward thinking and idea generation.

**ACTIONS**

1. We will develop structures, processes and criteria that support innovation across the organization by providing sufficient time and space to investigate, evaluate and implement innovative solutions.

2. We will give staff access to networked digital technologies that support innovation.

3. We will improve TRCA staff connections with the outside world, through market research, social media, conferences and partnerships, to keep up-to-date with emerging trends, programs and relevant organizations.

4. We will create a Centre for Innovation in Conservation at Swan Lake. The Centre will be a place for collaboration among regional organizations and individuals with a shared interest in conservation and innovation.

5. We will establish a special capital fund to support innovation.

**Accelerate innovation**

We will create a place for collaboration among regional organizations and individuals with a shared interest in conservation and innovation.
OBJECTIVES 1 TRCA is an organization that values, encourages and acts on good ideas.
2 Every employee has the information and tools needed to do their job well.
3 Every employee attains a healthy work/life balance.

ACTIONS 1 We will create cross-divisional teams to strengthen staff relations, encourage information exchange and generate new ideas.
2 We will increase opportunities for communication between the TRCA Board, management and front-line staff to allow all staff to contribute to TRCA’s direction and operational effectiveness.
3 We will acknowledge and celebrate the contributions of staff, recognizing noteworthy cross-divisional successes and personal accomplishments.
4 We will establish a network of healthy and inspiring offices and work environments that encourage effective employee performance and enable flexible work arrangements.
5 We will formalize and support each staff member’s professional development and job training through their employee development plans.
6 We will manage workload, productivity and expectations to help staff achieve a healthy work/life balance.
7 We will strengthen our health and safety programs to emphasize the importance of mental and physical wellness.

As an organization, we are committed to being a global and national leader in demonstrating excellence as an employer and a community builder. Our efforts will be focused on supporting our diverse staff as they balance a high level of workplace performance with fulfilling home and community lives. This will be accomplished by providing professional training and development programs, facilitating leadership and volunteer opportunities, and empowering staff to become contributing members of The Living City.

TRCA’s efforts toward creating The Living City rely on the strengths of our staff and our volunteers. At work or in the community, every person at TRCA is an ambassador for The Living City vision and an integral part of our capacity to succeed in an increasingly challenging and demanding environment.

We will establish a network of healthy and inspiring work environments that encourage effective employee performance and enable flexible work arrangements.
12. Facilitate a region-wide approach to sustainability

Municipalities, institutions and businesses across the Toronto region are laying the foundation needed to create a sustainable future. However, current efforts are limited by a lack of integration. To maintain momentum and ensure the effectiveness of ongoing programs and approaches, greater coordination is required among all stakeholders. Regional sustainability requires that we understand and balance the local and global connections between the natural environment, the built environment, the economy, and human health and well-being. TRCA’s regional perspective and ongoing collaboration with public, private and non-profit sectors, enables us to coordinate these efforts for the benefit of all.

Alignment of sustainable community building programs among stakeholders within the Toronto region.

OBJECTIVES

1. Alignment of sustainable community building programs among stakeholders within the Toronto region.
2. Integration of TRCA programs with a regional sustainability approach.
3. Acceleration of development, redevelopment or retrofit of communities that put The Living City sustainability priorities into action.

ACTIONS

1. We will bring partners together to develop a common vision and strategy for sustainability in the Toronto region – The Living City Regional Sustainability Plan. We will initiate the strategic alliance of municipalities, private industry, institutions, provincial and federal governments and their agencies, community groups and non-governmental organizations that will develop this plan. TRCA will facilitate the development of the plan, connect to world-leading expertise, and provide watershed and ecosystem management perspectives.
2. We will facilitate complete planning for at least one new community development or redevelopment that incorporates best practices in all aspects of sustainable design, as well as regional sustainability goals, with a view to completing construction within 10 years. TRCA will bring together municipalities, developers and other private industry, landowners and provincial government agencies to achieve this new community.
3. We will expand the scope of our community and market transformation programs (e.g., Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plans, Partners in Project Green, The Living City Campus programs, Professional Access and Integration Enhancement) to advance a broader suite of ecological, social, cultural and economic objectives that define The Living City vision.
4. We will report on progress toward regional sustainability in future versions of The Living City Report Card, and work with other reporting initiatives (e.g., Toronto Vital Signs) to include indicators associated with The Living City Regional Sustainability Plan. We will work with municipalities, businesses and civic organizations (e.g., CivicAction) to develop a regional framework of sustainability indicators to track our progress.
5. We will advocate for the incorporation of watershed management into a broader framework for sustainable community development and land use planning by participating in a new provincial dialogue on integrated watershed management, as proposed by Conservation Ontario.