

Ashbridges Bay Erosion and Sediment Control Environmental Assessment (EA) Community Liaison Committee (CLC) Meeting #3: November 28, 2013

Ashbridges Bay Yacht Club – 30 Ashbridges Bay Park Road
6:30 – 8:30 pm

MEETING REPORT

This report was written by Alex Heath and Suzannah Kinsella of Swerhun Facilitation. It reflects the key points raised and is not intended to serve as a verbatim transcript. This draft report is subject to the review of the participants at the meeting. If you have any questions, comments or suggested edits, please contact Lisa Turnbull lturnbull@trca.on.ca by Friday January 10, 2014 after which point the record will be finalized.

Meeting Overview: This was the third meeting of the Community Liaison Committee (CLC). The purpose of this meeting was to present an update on the work done by the project team since the second CLC meeting, including an overview of the water quality modeling results, baseline environmental inventory and the preliminary evaluation of the three alternatives.

KEY FEEDBACK FROM CLC MEMBERS

- 1. The project rationale should be explicit that navigation is to be made safer for all types of watercraft that use the Bay** (small, non-motorized sail boats, large sailboats, canoes/kayaks/paddle boards and motor boats) and that each of these types of watercraft have different needs in terms of safe navigation.
- 2. It is important to consider how the decommissioning of the seawall gate and storm sewer outfalls would affect the evaluation of alternatives.** The change in water quality resulting from a decommission would present a very different scenario which would significantly change the evaluation of the alternatives. Under this future scenario, **Alternative 1 would become preferred rather than Alternative 3.**
- 3. To aid people in quickly assessing which alternative is preferred and how it differs from the other two,** create a list that shows which criteria Alternative 3 came out ahead of Alternatives 1 and 2, and which criteria Alternatives 1 and 2 came ahead of Alternative 3.

I. Welcome & Agenda Review

Suzannah Kinsella opened the meeting by reviewing the proposed agenda and reviewing her role as well as the purpose of the meeting. Lisa Turnbull, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) Project Manager then asked for comments on the second CLC meeting summary. There were no issues raised, and the attendees agreed it accurately reflected the content of the second meeting.

II. Overview of Water Quality Modeling Results

Bill Snodgrass, Senior Engineer, Stormwater Management at the City of Toronto provided an overview of the water quality modeling. This overview included highlights of the modeling methodology and a comparison of total phosphorus and E. coli results. These results were measured at four points in and around Ashbridges Bay (i.e. the Gap, the Marina Entrance, the Inner Marina, and Coatsworth Cut) and compared across four different configurations (i.e. the existing configuration of Ashbridges Bay and the three proposed alternative solutions). Following this presentation, CLC members were asked if they had any questions and/or feedback on the Water Quality Modeling Results.

Questions and Feedback on the Water Quality Modeling Results:

- **Comment:** On slide 7, it appears that Coatsworth Cut is mislabeled – what is shown as Coatsworth cut is actually Ashbridges Bay.
Yes, the ‘monitoring locations’ names used by the modeler will be changed to reflect this.
- **Question:** Are you focusing on total phosphorous and E. coli because they’re reflective of other elements like copper?
The results of the Water Quality Modeling show that phosphorous, E. coli, copper and total suspended solids all exhibit similar trends. We’ve decided to focus the presentation on phosphorus and E. coli as the former is a good indicator of aquatic health and the latter determines how safe it is for people to swim.
- **Question:** What does PWQO mean and what does the dotted red line on slide 11 represent?
PWQO stands for Provincial Water Quality Objective. A PWQO is a Provincial target, which in the case of E.coli, is set for swimming at beaches. This target is based on whole body immersion in water (i.e. immersion beyond just jumping in and jumping out). The red line represents the level of this target.
- **Question:** I was expecting to see water quality in the back of the bay to become worse because of a lack of circulation. There isn’t significant flow through those culverts all the time, so what’s happening when there isn’t any flushing going on?
The water quality modeling results present a season-long average – there could be some spikes at certain times. What these results indicate is that there is not a significant change in overall conditions in the back of the bay.
- **Question:** We know that the back of the bay currently does get flushed out – we can see the currents flowing out of the bay. When the CSOs are diverted to the treatment wetland will we still get the same flushing action?
Yes, with the implementation of the treatment wetland there will still be the same flushing action and water quality will also significantly improve. . We have done an analysis that shows this but have decided not to focus on it here because it is not directly tied to this project.
- **Question:** I understand that you’re saying that water quality is improved by the diversion of the storm sewer outflow, but it seems like this diversion of outflow would eliminate any flushing action from the Bay.
There will still be a flushing action from currents moving through the gap, into the Bay and back out through the gap. Water quality is improved because there won’t be outflows from the combined storm sewers with E. coli flowing into the Bay.

- **Question:** I'm very surprised that there's such a significant difference in water quality between Alternative 3 and the other two alternatives. Why is this the case?
Alternative 3 separates one of the major sources of poor water quality by diverting the sea wall gate outflow away from the Bay.

III. Baseline Environmental Inventory

Following the Overview of Water Quality Modeling Results, Lisa Turnbull provided an overview of the Baseline Environmental Inventory that had been distributed to CLC members ahead of the meeting. She then asked CLC members if they had any questions of clarification and/or feedback on the Baseline Environmental Inventory.

Questions and Feedback on the Baseline Environmental Inventory:

- **Question:** On page 16 of the Inventory, section 1.5 states that the rationale for undertaking this project is to remove sedimentation to make navigation safer. We should expand our thinking on who we are making navigation safer for to include all types of watercraft that use the Bay, including: small, non-motorized sail boats, large sailboats, canoes/kayaks/paddle boards and motor boats. Each of these types of watercraft have different needs in terms of safe navigation. By looking at the gap only as a passage way, we're not thinking fully about the safety of all of these different types of craft. With a narrower gap, paddlers are put back into the mix with large boats when trying to cross through the gap. It will also force watercraft to turn quite sharply to get around the 'island' (i.e. very large sand bar) at Coatsworth Cut. I would suggest the dredging of that 'island'. Safe passage should be for all types of users, paddle craft and small, non-motorized sailboats included.
You're right that we haven't properly captured the variety of recreational boating uses in the rationale as currently stated. We will provide more detail in the rationale to reflect the variety of crafts and their differing needs. We have identified in previous meetings that once a solution is implemented for the erosion and sediment control issue we will look at the dredging needs within the Coatsworth Cut navigation channel. It is expected that we will seek funds to expand the current navigation channel to provide for safe navigation for the variety of users in the Bay.
- **Comment:** The channel in the Bay should be maintained. The dredging that is done right now to maintain the channel barely keeps it at Federal minimums.
- **Question:** The first paragraph on page 10 of the Inventory states that this EA is being undertaken in the context of a number of planning initiatives. Is there a list of these planning initiatives anywhere in the Inventory? There are three listed on page 100, but is that the entirety of the projects that are being taken into consideration?
Section 2.2 lists the planning initiatives and studies being considered. There are three approved Environmental Assessments that we need to integrate with and not interfere with – Ashbridges Bay Treatment Plant Individual EA; Coatsworth Cut CSO and Stormwater Outfalls Control Class EA; Don River and Central Waterfront Class EA . Some of the other planning initiatives include the Tommy Thompson Park Master Plan and the Lake Ontario Park Master Plan (see page 19).

- **Question:** How is access to Tommy Thompson Park being accommodated in this plan?
We would not design something that would preclude access to Tommy Thompson Park being explored by others in the future.
- **Question:** The premise of this entire undertaking is remedial action. In the first CLC meeting I made a point that if the amount of sediment coming into the Bay is anticipated to decrease, such an extensive remedial action as is being considered wouldn't be required. I haven't seen any information how erosion prevention measures being undertaken east of Bluffers Park would impact the total amount of sediment coming into the Bay. If there's no more silt coming in to the Bay from the area around Bluffers Park, is this EA still necessary?
The sediment modeling we've done is based on a reduced supply from current conditions (i.e. it takes into account erosion control measures around Bluffers Park). The supply of silt will never go to zero. Even if it were to go to zero, there is so much sand around Ashbridges Bay that it will continue to circle in even if it's dredged.
- **Comment:** It seems like that at significantly lower cost (through other projects), it would be possible to reduce sedimentation. It seems like sand coming from the east has declined greatly, and will continue to decline. It seems like this is being done to accommodate future projects in the area around Ashbridges Bay rather than to control sediment within Ashbridges Bay.
- **Question:** How is access to Tommy Thompson Park being "not prevented" by this project?
Waterfront Toronto is on our Steering Committee for this project and we are working with them to ensure that this project does not interfere with potential future plans they have to explore access to Tommy Thompson Park.
- **Question:** It seems like a lot turns on the flows coming out of Coatsworth Cut. What fraction of that relates to the seawall gates? They're supposed to be decommissioned at some point. I would like to know how much is coming out of the other outflows that are not going to be decommissioned. How much are issues pertinent to one outflow versus another?
The discharges that immediately affect this area are the bypass at the sea wall, the four storm sewers, other storm sewers further east and others still around the inner harbour. Because a precise timeline on the decommissioning of the sea wall gates has not been established, we're trying to get erosion control structures put in place that accommodates the sea wall gates continuing to discharge for the foreseeable future.
- **Question:** Isn't the purpose of the wetlands to take outflow from the storm sewers? What's the point of showing wetlands if we're assuming that outfalls will continue to exist?
That is the purpose of the wetlands, however we do not have a precise timeline for the construction of all of the infrastructure required to make the wetlands fully functional, and that is why we have to plan erosion control structures that accommodates the storm sewer outfalls continuing to discharge into Ashbridges Bay for the foreseeable future.

IV. Evaluation of Alternatives

Prior to discussing the preliminary evaluation of the three alternatives, Lisa Turnbull presented the updated alternatives to CLC members, highlighting that the node for a potential lookout had been removed and that the three alternatives had been updated to more clearly define the components of this Class EA and the already approved City of Toronto facilities. Both of these refinements were suggested by CLC members at the previous meeting.

Lisa then provided an overview of the evaluation process and results of the preliminary evaluation of the three alternatives grouped by the five categories of criteria (i.e. physical, natural/biological, socio-economic, feasibility/cost, and technical). Following a brief period for questions of clarification/overall comments, CLC members were asked to split into two groups to discuss the results of the preliminary evaluation and provide feedback on suggested refinements. CLC members were also asked to provide additional suggested refinements to the preliminary evaluation by email following the meeting. Notes from the group discussions and additional feedback sent in by CLC members can be found in attachment 1.

Overall Comments on the Evaluation of Alternatives:

- **Comment:** It's great that you've updated the alternatives to make a clearer distinction between the components of this EA and already approved facilities – this makes it easier to compare them. However, it is difficult to compare them under the evaluation framework when there are so many criteria. How do you know what the overall ranking of the alternatives are? Simply counting the numbers of green (preferred), yellow (intermediate preferred) and red (not preferred) doesn't take into account different levels of difference within a given criterion, nor does it take into account the weighting of criteria. I would suggest a simple list that says Alternative 3 came out ahead of Alternatives 1 and 2 on these criteria, and Alternatives 1 and 2 came ahead of Alternative 3 on these criteria. This would be very helpful in providing a quick comparison of the different alternatives.
- **Comment:** It seems like the evaluation criteria have been significantly influenced by the results of the water quality modeling – which was based on the assumption that all outflows would continue. Once those stop coming into the Bay, there's a very different scenario which would significantly change the evaluation of the alternatives. Under this future scenario, Alternative 1 would become preferred rather than Alternative 3.
- **Comment:** It seems like some criteria could be further disaggregated and then a ranking could be provided on these sub-criteria.

V. Next Steps

Lisa Turnbull provided an overview of the project timeline following this meeting, including Public Information Centre #2 proposed for January 2014, the submission of the Environmental Study Report (ESR) to City Council in March 2014, the submission of the ESR to the Ministry of Environment for a 30 day public review in May/June 2014, and the completion of the EA process in June/July 2014.

Lisa also provided an overview of the post-EA timeline, including the commencement of detailed design in July 2014, and CLC/PIC meetings for the detailed design anticipated in September/October 2014.

Suzannah Kinsella wrapped up the meeting by thanking CLC members for their feedback. **She reminded members that they could send in additional feedback on the preliminary evaluation of the alternatives to lturnbull@trca.on.ca by December 12th, 2013.** She let members know that a draft summary of the meeting would be distributed to them for review prior to being finalized.

List of Attendees

CLC Members

Ron Anderson, Navy League of Canada
Don Bland, Toronto Hydroplane & Sailing Club
Beverly Edwards, Toronto Ornithological Club
John Edwards, Toronto Hydroplane & Sailing Club
Robert Hedley, Ashbridges Bay Yacht Club
Bob Kortright, Toronto Field Naturalists
Rachel Lewis, Navy League of Canada
Susan Stuart, Balmy Beach Canoe Club

Observers

Michael Rosenberg

TRCA

Laura Stephenson
Lisa Turnbull
Maria Zintchenko

City of Toronto - Toronto Water

Philip Cheung
Bill Snodgrass

Shoreplan Engineering

Milo Sturm

Swerhun | Facilitation & Decision Support

Alex Heath
Suzannah Kinsella