

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**  
For Lease of Agricultural Land, House and  
Barn at the Black Creek Pioneer Village Urban Farm, City of Toronto

Property owned by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

January, 2012



## **Introduction**

Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) is interested in leasing eight acres of TRCA-owned land for sustainable urban agriculture at Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV), 4929 Jane Street, City of Toronto, Ontario M3N 2K8 (Figure 1).

Toronto and Region Conservation recognizes that agricultural land is a vital resource which must be conserved, and that progressive environmental stewardship in the farming/agricultural sector will be a requirement for TRCA to collectively realize *The Living City* vision. *The Living City* is a vision for a healthy, attractive, sustainable urban region extending into the 22nd century, based on a foundation of [Healthy Rivers and Shorelines](#), [Regional Biodiversity](#), [Sustainable Communities](#) and [Business Excellence](#). Toronto and Region Conservation's vision for sustainable urban agriculture on its lands includes the use of diverse crops, innovative and sustainable agricultural production methods, sustainable technologies and new partner relationships. Farming operations on this eight acre parcel must complement other TRCA objectives such as protecting and enhancing the terrestrial natural heritage system and heritage preservation.

Toronto and Region Conservation is soliciting proposals from individuals and community organizations that are interested in establishing a farming operation on TRCA land for the 2012 farm season. Toronto and Region Conservation is particularly interested in proposals that will make fresh local food available for sale to the local Jane and Finch community and TRCA's Food Services who provide over 20,000 meals annually at Black Creek Pioneer Village (BCPV). Toronto and Region Conservation is also particularly interested in proposals that will include involvement of local residents through training, education and employment opportunities.

Farmers who are interested in assisting with the delivery of educational programming around sustainable local food production in conjunction with TRCA stewardship staff is also an asset. Currently, education programming offered through TRCA programs is connected to the Ontario school curriculum around themes of local food and urban agriculture.

## **Background**

### **Farmland**

The property has eight acres of tillable clay loam land located at the southeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue, City of Toronto. It is within the general boundaries of BCPV but the public does not have access to the farm property. The property is fenced and well concealed by trees and shrubs around the boundary. From 2004 to 2011, the property was farmed by the City of Toronto as part of their Community Gardens Program. It provided youth and adult training in organic food production. Some produce was sold to TRCA Food Services. An irrigation system connected to municipal water also exists. A site location map of the farm property can be found in Figure 1.

### **Buildings**

#### **1. Braeburn House**

Braeburn House is one of Weston's outstanding examples of built heritage. Built in 1853 by John Grubb, a pioneer in the Weston area, the house was moved to BCPV in 1962 stone by stone when threatened by demolition. Braeburn House is located in the northwest corner of the farm property. It can be used as a farm residence, a training facility, office space and as storage space to support farm programs. Braeburn House is approximately 1,500 square feet in size with three bedrooms on the second level. The house has been updated with a new roof, private septic system and porch, and is serviced by municipal water supply. These updates have allowed for continued use of the house, while maintaining its architectural heritage value. A photograph of Braeburn House can be found in Figure 3.

Since Braeburn House is a heritage building, the exterior architectural features such as the doors, windows, veranda and cedar shingle roof need to be retained.

## **2. Barn**

The barn is suitable for storage, a workspace or perhaps educational activities. It has no electrical, heat or water service. A photograph of the barn and fields can be found in Figure 4.

### **Black Creek Pioneer Village**

Black Creek Pioneer Village is a Living History Museum and has over 35 attractive and well maintained historic buildings including a working mill, blacksmith shop and a small farmstead. The Village also includes a modern Visitors' Centre with a Gift Shop, Exhibition Gallery and several rooms and facilities for social or business functions, catering facilities and washrooms. Many of the historic buildings are staffed by interpreters in period costume making a visitor's experience more authentic by demonstrating crafts, trades and domestic activities of the 1800s. Black Creek Pioneer Village attracts approximately 140,000 visitors annually. There is no direct physical connection between the farmland and associated buildings, and BCPV. Black Creek Pioneer Village may also serve as a potential site for a farmers' market.

### **Black Creek Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP)**

The Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan (SNAP) is an innovative pilot program led by TRCA in collaboration with regional, municipal and community partners. In partnership with local stakeholders including residents, businesses, local groups and institutions, the project seeks to develop action plans to improve the local environment on the neighbourhood scale and build resiliency against climate change by greening local infrastructure and encouraging positive behavioral changes among residents, while also addressing key community interests.

Located in one of Toronto's Priority Neighbourhoods, the Black Creek SNAP area has an active network of community organizations working to improve conditions for the area's 25,000 residents. Working with community leaders, this SNAP will be pursuing options for strengthening food security, managing rainwater, increasing tree cover, enhancing the Black Creek valley and other sustainable actions to develop an environmental action plan. To fit the needs of this community, the actions will be looked at in the broader context of economic and social considerations that are prominent in the minds of residents and businesses in the area.

A community-wide urban agriculture program will form a central component of the Black Creek SNAP. We anticipate the farm will be an integral part of this overall program, in terms of potential opportunities it may offer for contributing to the achievement of food production targets and providing training and demonstration venues and local employment. The successful applicant will be invited to provide input to the development of the SNAP.

### **TRCA Agriculture Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives for sustainable urban agriculture on TRCA lands are as follows:

- Establish a permanent urban and near urban agricultural base to ensure a local food source for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).
- Provide opportunities for community economic development by creating jobs and meaningful work for the local community.
- Reduce the volume of agricultural imports by providing locally grown, raised and sold food, thus reducing food miles and greenhouse gas emissions related to food transportation thus helping to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Provide a space for celebrating the cultural diversity of communities by growing a diverse range of crops.
- Promote social equity and food security in communities by providing opportunities for increased accessibility to fresh, healthy foods.

- Partner with organizations to pilot and implement, on TRCA lands, sustainable agricultural practices and programs which include Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) and Ecological Goods and Services (EG&S).
- Partner with individuals and organizations to develop innovative educational programming focused on themes of sustainable urban agriculture including agricultural BMPs, sustainable farming practices, food security, food sources and food costs.
- Communicate and market local food for sustainable communities.

### **General Terms and Conditions for the Lease Agreement**

The following are only general terms and conditions that apply to all farm leases on TRCA land. Please note, additional conditions will be added to suit this particular undertaking. These conditions will be discussed with the tenant as part of finalizing the lease agreement.

- Leases up to five years will be permitted. Longer term leases are negotiable and are subject to approval by the Province of Ontario.
- The lands and buildings are leased “as is” without any representations or warranties by TRCA as to use or condition.
- General liability insurance and property damage insurance and provisions for rebuilding in the event of damage and destruction are required. Contents insurance will also be required if leasing the Braeburn House.
- Tenant is to pay market rental rates for the buildings and land.
- Beneficial Management Practices, as determined through the farm’s Canada-Ontario Environmental Farm Plan (EFP), (to be developed) must be followed by the tenant.
- Toronto and Region Conservation reserves the right to review and approve all property uses to ensure they are in keeping with TRCA’s objectives and they do not negatively impact TRCA’s adjacent holdings, building standards, facilities and programs.
- All proposed land uses are to be in accordance with the approved management plans applicable to BCPV. All agricultural use is subject to the provisions of the Conservation Authorities Act, R.S.O. 1990, as amended, and the Planning Act, R.S.O. 1990, and any other applicable federal, provincial and municipal policy or legislation.

### **General Tenant Responsibilities**

The following infrastructure, land use investments and requirements to support urban agriculture are the responsibility of the tenant. Please note, additional conditions will be added to suit this particular undertaking. These conditions will be discussed with the tenant as part of finalizing the lease agreement.

- All certification desired by the tenant (i.e., organic, Local Food Plus, etc.).
- All required soil testing and analysis.
- Application of soil amendments, pest and weed control products in accordance with generally accepted practices (i.e., TRCA’s Pest Management Policy).
- Obtaining and maintaining water supplies and distribution systems.
- Ensuring infrastructure and land use investments are in compliance with Official Plans, policies, municipal zoning and bylaws, and all applicable TRCA Land Management Plans, programs and policies including the Property’s EFP.
- Responsible for any and all costs associated with property improvements to facilitate agricultural use including any municipal or other government authority fees such as building permits, that may be required prior to any improvements or building construction on the property.
- Arrangements for the approvals by TRCA of all structures and improvements to be constructed on the premises, including future improvements and the timing of all such improvements. The tenant will be required to submit a detailed report at the conclusion of each year that summarizes issues, challenges and

accomplishments such as yields, number of visitors and education programs. A template outlining the information that is required will be provided by TRCA to the tenant to assist in completing the report.

## **Evaluation Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated by TRCA staff based on the following criteria:

### **Environmental**

- Help to reduce the ecological footprint within TRCA's jurisdiction by providing locally grown, raised and sold food to reduce food miles and greenhouse gas emissions related to food transportation, and by doing so, help to reduce the impacts of climate change.
- Implement innovative and sustainable environmental practices/technologies and agricultural production methods (i.e., rainwater harvesting, energy efficient greenhouses), EG&S and BMPs.
- Provide a positive influence on adjacent natural areas.

### **Social**

- Promote social equity, health and food security in the Jane and Finch community by providing opportunities for increased accessibility to fresh, healthy and affordable foods.
- Provide opportunities for celebrating the cultural diversity of communities by growing a diverse range of crops.
- Provide jobs, training and skill development.
- Engage and provide educational and training opportunities for the residents in the community with the assistance of or in partnership with TRCA.
- Provide opportunities to work cooperatively and collaboratively with other stakeholders.
- Help TRCA meet its local food procurement targets by providing fresh produce to BCPV and other TRCA food services.
- Be consistent with one of the following near-urban agriculture models, but is not limited to:
  - Conventional Farming
  - Community Gardens
  - Community Supported Agriculture
  - Farmers' Markets
  - Pick-Your-Own
  - On-Farm Shops
  - Cooperative Food Stores
  - Agri-tourism

### **Economic**

- Increase the amount of available locally grown food.
- Provide opportunities for community economic development by helping to reduce the volume of imported food and by creating jobs and meaningful work for the local community. Provide revenue to the farmer and TRCA.
- Create opportunities for skill development, training and leadership for the Jane and Finch community.

## **Proposals**

Proposals are due by **Friday, January 27<sup>st</sup>, 2012, no later than 4 p.m.**

Preference will be given to proposals that are complete, and clearly address the following list of items. Proponents are welcome to include other information they feel will assist in the success of their proposal. List any limitations that you feel must be addressed prior to the execution of the lease.

- (a) Legal name of farm business or organization.

- (b) Name and contact information (including email addresses) of primary and secondary contacts.
- (c) Farm Business Registration Number (FBRN) (if you do not have a FBRN, please indicate why or provide the anticipated date of registration).
- (d) Farm/organizational profile and partnerships.
- (e) Length of lease agreement required (five years minimum).
- (f) General description of proposed farm type (i.e., types of crops, production and distribution methods, livestock, certification etc.).
- (g) General project description of the overall objective of the proposed business plan. Include relevant project experience, and expected benefits and highlights (e.g. innovative technologies, BMPs, community engagement). Discuss how the proposal/business plan will complement TRCA's goals and objectives stated above and address the key environmental, social and economic benefits.
- (h) Include a section on how the project will be measured and reported to communicate how the project is meeting the goals and objectives of TRCA.
- (i) Note any provisions with regards to assignment, subletting or mortgaging of the leasehold interest.
- (j) Indicate any expected improvements on the lease land, the ownership of these improvements, and conditions of the premises at the end of the lease term.
- (k) Provide a detailed budget outlining the project schedule, costs and financial projections for the next three years. If applicable, indicate contributions to the farm by partner/funding agencies. Specify contributions by agency and program, listing their name in full.
- (l) Provide a preliminary communications and marketing plan.
- (m) Include two references familiar with your past farming/project experience.

### **Administrative Details and Selection Process**

A briefing meeting and site tour of the farm property and buildings will be held to familiarize proponents with available background information on **Saturday, January 21<sup>st</sup> 2012, 10:00 a.m.** at 4929 Jane Street. Interested individuals are to convene at the front gate of the farm prior to the meeting. This is the first driveway south of Steeles Avenue on the east side of Jane Street (Figure 1). Please confirm your attendance by calling Sonia Dhir at 416-661-6600, ext. 5291.

Proposals should be delivered by **Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup> 2012, no later than 4:00 p.m.** Faxed or emailed proposals are not acceptable. Please note: the length of the proposals should not exceed 10 pages single-spaced.

Ten copies of the proposal, including one copy unbound and one digital, in a sealed envelope, should be directed to:

Sonia Dhir  
 Project Manager, Watershed Management  
 Toronto and Region Conservation  
 5 Shoreham Drive  
 Downsview, ON  
 M3N 1S4

Following the receipt of proposals, TRCA staff will review the submissions and may contact proponents for more information. Staff recommendations on the proposals will be forwarded to the TRCA Board on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2012 for a resolution.

Following approval of the preferred proposal by the TRCA Board, lease negotiations between the proponent and TRCA will take place. It is the desire of TRCA to have the farm operating in 2012.

Only proponents selected for consideration will be contacted.

## **Inquires**

All inquiries relating to this Request for Proposals must be directed to Gary Wilkins at 416-661-6600, ext. 5211 or [gwilkins@trca.on.ca](mailto:gwilkins@trca.on.ca) or Sonia Dhir at 416-661-6600, ext. 5291 or [sdhir@trca.on.ca](mailto:sdhir@trca.on.ca).

For more information on TRCA's sustainable near urban agriculture initiatives, please visit: [www.trca.on.ca/urbanagriculture](http://www.trca.on.ca/urbanagriculture)

For more information on Black Creek Pioneer Village, please visit: <http://www.blackcreek.ca/>

For more information on TRCA and *The Living City* vision, please visit: [www.trca.on.ca](http://www.trca.on.ca)

For more information on SNAP Projects please visit: <http://sustainableneighbourhoods.ca>

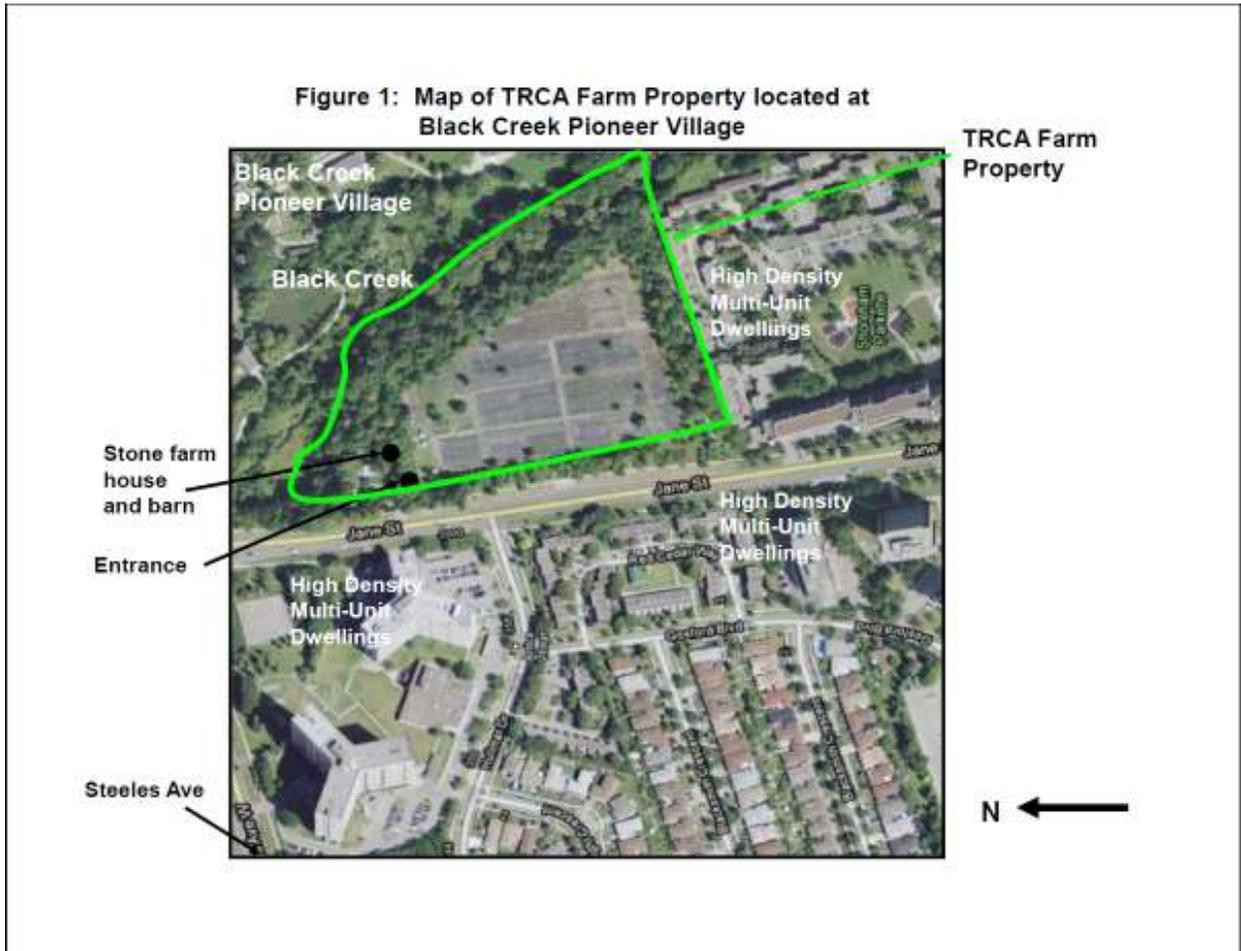
### ***Please Note:***

Nothing herein shall be construed so as to oblige TRCA to select any proposal and TRCA reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that TRCA, in its absolute discretion, considers it advisable to reject.

The information contained herein is offered for assistance, however, the TRCA assumes no responsibility for the accuracy or completeness of same and nothing herein shall be construed as a representation, warranty or guarantee by TRCA.

All information contained in this document and submitted to the TRCA as part of this Request for Proposal is collected by authority of the Conservation Authorities Act and will be considered public information for the purposes of the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

Figure 1



**Figure 2: Farmland**



**Figure 3: Braeburn House**



**Figure 4: Barn**

