



THE TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**INDEX TO
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BOARD #3/04**

Friday, June 4, 2004

MINUTES	
Minutes of Meeting #2/04, held on April 2, 2004	38
PRESENTATIONS	
Bowerbank, Andrew, Supervisor, The Living City Programs, TRCA.	
re: Canada Green Building Council Partnership	39
re: Sustainable Communities Development Program.	39
Endress, Bill, Toronto Commons and Michael Labbe, President, Options for Homes	
re: Toronto Commons	38
OAK RIDGES MORAINÉ TRAIL ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN	39
CANADA GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP	47



THE TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

**MEETING OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BOARD #3/04
June 4, 2004**

The Sustainable Communities Board Meeting #3/04, was held in the South Theatre, Black Creek Pioneer Village, on Friday, June 4, 2004. The Chair Suzan Hall, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

PRESENT

Suzan Hall	Vice Chair
Colleen Jordan	Member
Glenn Mason	Member
Elaine Moore	Member
Dick O'Brien	Chair, Authority
Linda Pabst	Member
Andrew Schulz	Member

REGRETS

Maria Augimeri	Member
Glenn De Baeremaeker	Member
Michael Di Biase	Chair
David Gurin	Member
Gerri Lynn O'Connor	Member
John Sprovieri	Member

RES.#E16/04 - MINUTES

Moved by:	Elaine Moore
Seconded by:	Linda Pabst

THAT the Minutes of Meeting #2/04, held on April 2, 2004, be approved.

CARRIED

PRESENTATIONS

- (a)** A presentation by Bill Endress of Toronto Commons and Michel Labbe, President, Options for Homes on Toronto Commons.

- (b) A presentation by Andrew Bowerbank, Supervisor, The Living City Programs, TRCA, in regards to Sustainable Communities Development Program.
- (c) A presentation by Andrew Bowerbank, Supervisor, The Living City Programs, TRCA, in regards to item 7.2 - Canada Green Building Council Partnership.

RES.#E17/04 - PRESENTATIONS

Moved by: Andrew Schulz
 Seconded by: Dick O'Brien

THAT above-noted presentation (a) be heard and received.

CARRIED

RES.#E18/04 - PRESENTATIONS

Moved by: Glenn Mason
 Seconded by: Elaine Moore

THAT above-noted presentations (b) and (c) be heard and received.

CARRIED

SECTION I - ITEMS FOR AUTHORITY ACTION

RES.#E19/04 - OAK RIDGES MORaine TRAIL ASSOCIATION STRATEGIC PLAN
 Endorsement of A Strategic Plan for The Oak Ridges Trail prepared by the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA)

Moved by: Andrew Schulz
 Seconded by: Colleen Jordan

THE BOARD RECOMMENDS TO THE AUTHORITY THAT the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) endorse The Strategic Plan for The Oak Ridges Trail as completed by the ORTA as it supports the approved Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, and is consistent with an integrated watershed management approach and watershed public use initiatives of the TRCA;

THAT staff participate on the Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan Advisory Committee to develop trail implementation recommendations;

THAT staff work cooperatively with the Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan Advisory Committee to ensure appropriate trail design, development and management;

THAT staff report back to the TRCA on an annual basis regarding implementation of the plan;

AND FURTHER THAT the ORTA and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation be so advised.
CARRIED

BACKGROUND

The Oak Ridges Trail is a continuous footpath extending over 200 kilometres across the Oak Ridges moraine with a number of local side trails. The trail is managed and maintained by the ORTA, a volunteer organization inaugurated in May 1992. One of the ORTA main objectives is to develop and secure the Oak Ridges Trail for walking/hiking purposes, thereby promoting an appreciation and respect for the Moraine's ecological, cultural and scenic integrity, while retaining the trail corridor in its natural state. The present route of the Oak Ridges Trail is located entirely on lands owned by other agencies and individuals - federal, provincial, municipal governments, conservation authorities, and private land owners. At the present time ORTA has approximately 750 memberships, and has organized the group into nine chapters of volunteer members who act as trail workers to build and now maintain the trail for public use in all seasons. However, in a number of locations the trail does not follow the route preferred by the association nor does it satisfy the criteria of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

In 2003 the ORTA received funding from the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation to complete a Strategic Plan. The objective of the Strategic Plan was to provide direction to ORTA for the next five years (through 2008) on how to expand, secure, develop, manage and maintain the trail as a continuous recreational feature along the Moraine, and most importantly how to implement a number of recommendations contained in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

Preparation of the Plan

The strategic plan was prepared with the advice and direction from an ORTA Steering Committee which was comprised of representatives from the ORTA Executive, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation staff and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (OMNR) staff. Early in the planning process the Steering Committee agreed that the plan would cover a number of topics including:

- Optimum Trail Alignment;
- Principles of Environmental Protection;
- Connections with Other Trails;
- Improved and Disabled Access;
- Trail Securement;
- Financial Sustainability;
- Staffing Strategy; and
- Monitoring

The topics were addressed through a series of five focus group sessions that were held with ORTA Chapter members and other trail clubs and associations. Three additional meetings were held with staff from municipalities, conservation authorities, stewardship councils, and other trail clubs to obtain a greater range of information, suggestions and recommendations. TRCA staff attended two of the three additional meetings and provided input to the plan.

Optimum Trail Alignment

The optimum trail alignment is presented as a trail corridor approximately 1 kilometre wide extending in an east-west direction across the length of the moraine and located in Natural Core Areas and Natural Linkage Areas to the extent possible. The trail itself is proposed to be a minimum of 1 metre wide, eventually located within the trail corridor. The plan states that the trail alignment must conform to the provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and that the trail will support the requirements of Section 37 (1) of the Conservation Plan for low-intensity recreational uses. ORTA Chapter Chairs and members will be responsible for locating the optimum trail alignment within the trail corridor and they will utilize eight selection criteria including:

- Located off public roads and road allowances to the extent possible.
- Designed to minimize contact with roads and non-compatible trails.
- Designed to follow a safe route when crossing public highways and roads, steep slopes, streams and rivers and designed to avoid hazardous road intersections.
- Designed to provide access for all people including persons with special needs and disabilities.
- Designed to provide good opportunities for loop and side trails as well as connections with other hiking trails.
- Designed to maintain and where possible improve or restore the ecological integrity of the Oak Ridges Moraine Plan area.
- Designed to avoid sensitive cultural and ecological areas and minimize impact on the natural environment.
- Designed to minimize disturbance and interference with adjacent land uses.

The location of the trail corridor is identified on Map 1 at the end of Attachment 1.

Principles of Environmental Protection

The Plan also details special environmental protection measures that need to be addressed in the design, management and maintenance of the Oak Ridges Trail and associated minor recreational uses. ORTA will work towards protecting the Oak Ridges Moraine by:

- ensuring the location, design and maintenance of trails and associated features is carried out in a manner that avoids destruction, disruption or degradation of ecologically sensitive features and functions identified in the conservation plan;
- ensuring that construction and maintenance of the trail and related facilities, keep land disturbance to an absolute minimum;
- Incorporating appropriate warnings in signage and other educational materials advising trail users to stay on designated trails and not to pick or collect any plant or animal materials.

Adjoining Trails and Other Trail Users

There are presently many other recreational trails located across the Moraine. These trails are operated by a number of different land owners and trail managers e.g. municipalities, conservation authorities and other trail clubs. Some of these trail uses are compatible with the purposes of the Oak Ridges Trail and others are less compatible. The land owner ultimately decides which trail uses are permissible. ORTA will pursue strategic partnerships and working relationships with other trail clubs, municipalities and conservation authorities in order to support connections with adjacent compatible trails. The goal is to improve communications, build information and trail management links, coordinate efforts and address trail use conflicts.

Disabled Access

The strategic plan recognizes that it would be impractical to make the entire Oak Ridges Trail accessible for persons with special needs. The plan supports a target that ensures a reasonable portion of the trail, located in appropriate locations across the moraine, is made available. The plan recommends that trail access for people with special needs be developed by the following actions:

- Providing a minimum of 0.5 kilometres of trail for special needs persons for every 25 kilometres of existing or developed trail;
- Acknowledging the variety of special needs and designing the trail appropriately and safely to accommodate the need;
- Designated parking areas, not roadside parking areas will be provided allowing disabled access to the trail;
- Utilizing the Universal Trail Assessment Process (UTAP) to evaluate different sections of the trail to determine which sections could be designated to accommodate persons with special needs;
- Public agencies and NGOs will be encouraged to partner with ORTA in this regard;
- Referencing any available legislation, guidelines and standards to supplement the UTAP process.

Trail Securement

ORTA does not hold any lands nor does this plan recommend that ORTA purchase or expropriate property for trail purposes. The association intends to secure the Oak Ridges Trail by:

- Seeking to have the trail located on public lands;
- Considering the use of easements, which would be held by and administered by other bodies, and ORTA would take responsibility for constructing, managing and maintaining the trail;
- Continuing the Memorandum of Understanding with the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust (ORMLT), such that the ORMLT will obtain and hold lands for conservation purposes and ORTA will develop, manage and maintain the trail across these lands;
- Continuing to develop and maintain the trail on private lands through license agreements or informal agreements where the first two approaches are not feasible.

Trail Monitoring

The plan recommends that ORTA develop a monitoring framework to identify targets and performance measures discussed in the strategic plan, and report on the status of those targets to its membership and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. The monitoring would be undertaken on a regular basis including the preparation of an annual progress report and a detailed evaluation of the effectiveness of the plan in achieving its purpose and objectives every five years.

RATIONALE

The Oak Ridges Trail Strategic plan is a comprehensive document, outlining how the Oak Ridges Trail Association will continue work begun in 1992 to expand, secure, develop, manage and maintain the Oak Ridges Trail as a continuous recreational trail along the Oak Ridges Moraine, from the Niagara Escarpment to the Northumberland Forest. The plan provides strategic direction for the next five years and promotes appreciation and respect for the moraine's ecological, cultural and scenic integrity. The strategic plan was developed by a Steering Committee with representatives from the ORTA executive, OMNR and Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation staff. The Committee prepared the plan in consultation with staff from TRCA, other conservation authorities and municipalities. In addition input was received from stewardship councils and other trail clubs.

The strategic plan supports the implementation of Section 39 of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, which calls for the development and maintenance of a recreational trail system that provides continuous access and travel across the entire moraine accessible to all people including people with special needs. The plan contains detailed direction for items including location and design of the trail, improved access, trail securement, environmental protection, financial sustainability administration and monitoring. The strategies in the plan will guide the development of a trail system ensuring that it is:

- designed to maintain and where possible, improve or restore the ecological integrity of the moraine;
- located in the Natural Core and Natural Linkage Areas as much as possible; and
- located away from public roads and unopened road allowances to the extent possible.

The strategic plan will also be used to support project proposals and funding requests to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, the Trillium Foundation and other funding organizations. This potential funding will help ORTA with the securement, management and maintenance of the Oak Ridges Trail. The overall administration and management of the trail will be led by ORTA and in partnership with other trail clubs, municipalities, conservation authorities, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust. The partnership group, including a TRCA staff representative, will participate on a Strategic Plan Implementation Advisory Committee that will provide direction and input towards the implementation of the plan. In addition, the plan reflects the Authority's integrated watershed management approach and watershed public use initiatives for Authority land on the moraine. The plan also supports the existing License Agreement between ORTA and TRCA.

Finally, the strategic plan recognizes that the Oak Ridges Trail is a very important aspect of the moraine, particularly for the purpose of providing significant community appreciation, enjoyment and stewardship. As the plan is implemented there will be many opportunities for providing sustainable messages through education and improved management by ORTA.

DETAILS OF WORK TO BE DONE

TRCA staff will notify the Oak Ridges Trail Association, Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust of the TRCA endorsement of the strategic plan. Also, TRCA staff will participate on the Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan Advisory Committee and will provide the Authority Board with an annual implementation update report.

FINANCIAL DETAILS

Funds for TRCA staff involvement in trail planning have been budgeted and are available in Account No. 408 - 44.

Report prepared by: Mike Bender, extension 5287

For Information contact: Mike Bender, extension 5287

Date: May 19, 2004

Attachments: 2

Attachment 1

Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan Executive Summary

Purpose of the Strategic Plan

The Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan is a comprehensive document, outlining how the Oak Ridges Trail Association will continue work begun in 1992 to expand, secure, develop, manage and maintain the Oak Ridges Trail as a continuous recreational trail along the Niagara Escarpment to the Northumberland Forest. The plan will provide strategic direction for the next five years (through 2008) and promote appreciation and respect for the moraine's ecological, cultural and scenic integrity.

The strategic plan will support the implementation of Section 39 of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan which calls for the development and maintenance of a recreational trail system that will provide continuous access and travel across the entire moraine accessible to all people including persons with disabilities.

The strategy will guide the development of a trail system that is:

- designed to maintain and where possible, improve or restore the ecological integrity of the moraine,
- located in the Natural Core and Natural Linkage Areas as much as possible, and
- located away from public roads and un-opened road allowances to the extent possible.

The location of the trail must also recognize sensitive habitats and result in minimal impact on the natural environment.

The strategic plan will also be used to support project proposals and funding requests to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation, the Trillium Foundation and other funding organizations to obtain support for the securement, management and maintenance of the Oak Ridges Trail Association and for the operation of the Oak Ridges Trail Association. It is not the purpose of this plan to recommend the expropriation of land for trail purposes.

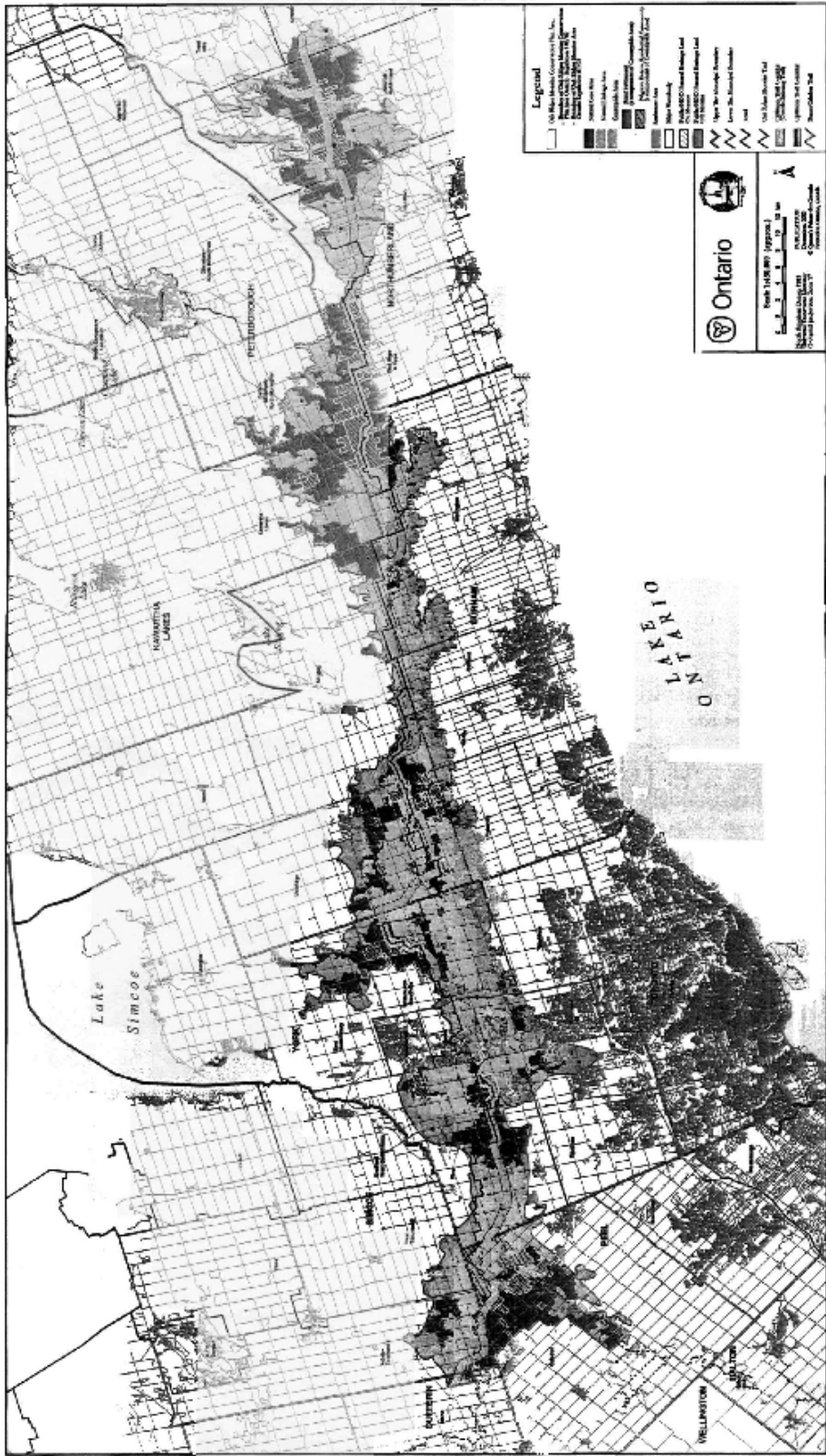
Administration of the Oak Ridges Trail

The overall administration and management of the Oak Ridges Trail will be led by the Oak Ridges Trail Association (ORTA), a volunteer group working in partnership with a number of other trail clubs, municipalities, conservation authorities, the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation and the Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust.

The Strategic Plan

The strategic plan contains a number of sections covering such topics as Location and Design of the Oak Ridges Trail, Improved Access to the Trail, Trail Securement Strategy, Financial Sustainability Strategy, Administration of the Oak Ridges Trail and Monitoring.

Optimum Trail Corridor Recommended Through Oak Ridges Trail Strategic Plan December 2003



RES.#E20/04 -

CANADA GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL PARTNERSHIP

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Toronto Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC) have agreed to partner on activities and projects supporting green building design across our regions.

Moved by: Colleen Jordan
Seconded by: Elaine Moore

THE BOARD RECOMMENDS TO THE AUTHORITY THAT staff proceed to further the use of green building design/technology within the Toronto region in support of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority's (TRCA) vision for The Living City through the development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Toronto Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC).

AND FURTHER THAT appropriate TRCA officials be authorized to execute the MOU.

CARRIED

As TRCA moves forward with efforts to transform markets under The Living City, it is crucial to help engage leaders and promote sustainable community development. TRCA and CaGBC have created a very supportive working relationship. The natural next step is to solidify this relationship into an effective partnership.

**Report prepared by: Andrew Bowerbank Extension 5343
For Information contact: Andrew Bowerbank Extension 5343
Date: May 26, 2004**

TERMINATION

ON MOTION, the meeting terminated at 12:01 a.m., on Friday, June 4, 2004.

Suzan Hall
Vice Chair

Brian Denney
Secretary-Treasurer

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