

# **THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT**

## **Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek**

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October 17, 2007

Janette Harvey  
Natural Environment Specialist  
City of Toronto - Parks, Forestry & Recreation  
Natural Environment & Community Programs  
City Hall, 8th Floor, West Tower  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2  
PDF via email

RE: **Wetland Concept in the Taylor Creek Park**

Dear Ms Harvey,

Thank you for forwarding the material on the proposed wetland for Taylor Creek Park, just west of Victoria Park.

Members of the Board have reviewed the past correspondence on this matter, visited the site, and discussed the proposal.

We note that the provision of an increased flow of water to the existing cattail thicket has been suggested for years by a number of individuals and organizations, and we formally extend our appreciation to the City for commissioning the report entitled *Restoration Priorities for Taylor Creek Park*, which formalized the concept as a recommendation.

**Nonetheless, the TMP can only support the concept in principle, for the following reasons:**

1. We have seen no budget for the wetland, in spite of two requests. We are unaware as to whether this is a very inexpensive wetland, with clay bottom in place and earthen overflow structures, or an extremely expensive wetland requiring extensive excavation, the importing of clay, and concrete overflow structures. We cannot support moving forward without a reliable budget;

2. We are very concerned about the availability of water to keep the wetland functioning. Given the prospect of drops in local water tables due to a changing climate and the fact that many wetlands and indeed rivers in southern Ontario are too frequently running dry, we think it would be a shame to spend a lot of money and have what is now essentially a meadow become a wetland and then potentially revert to being a meadow in a few years. We therefore wish to be reassured that the preparation of the water budget by the TRCA includes calculations for a changed climate and lower water tables;
3. We think that public consultation on this proposal has been inadequate. The sign on the site does not include a drawing or a budget; there was no offer of a public site-walk to local organizations known to be interested in park and watershed management issues; there was no description of the proposal, as far as we can tell, in any communications from the local councilor, which could have also invited the public on a site-walk. Even at this late date, with construction intended to begin this fall, no budget, water budget, nor detailed plans appear to be available; and,
4. Technical issues of concern to the TMP, in addition to the budget and the water budget, include:
  - There is no indication of the size or surface of the proposed trail between the existing paved path and the proposed wetland. Will it be a narrow, dirt footpath, which we prefer, or a standardized, 3-metre, paved path; and,
  - The concept drawing shows the two ways water can leave the wetland, but does not show how the water will get under the existing trail to the Creek. Not knowing the volume of water leaving the pond, we are unsure if this will be a 15 centimetre culvert or more excavation and a \$20,000 bridge.

On a broader scale, please note that, as a small organization, the TMP is unable to monitor and contribute to all aspects of the City's work or proposed projects affecting the Taylor Massey watershed. As such, and while we support the wetland in principle, we remain unaware of the City's overall vision for the Creek, and its prioritization of proposed projects.

There are many other projects recommended in *Restoration Priorities for Taylor Creek Park*, and we are unaware which are proceeding.

In addition, we are unaware of the City's position on and/or have received no responses to some of our own recommendations. These include our proposal that the City establish a watershed management coordinator for the Creek; that the City expend significantly more efforts on water quality and the Wet Weather Flow Master Plan; that Warden Woods receive a natural heritage designation, for which we will be submitting our recommendations shortly; and that the City complete the Taylor Massey Trail, with pedestrian and cycling paths within the Warden Hydro Corridor.

Finally, we note that, when faced with issues such as the prospect of the re-development of 25 Heron with 98 townhomes, the local community is often told there is no money available, such as could be used to purchase the site and add it to the local inventory of green infrastructure.

As a result, and while we again applaud the efforts of the City to develop the wetland concept, we wonder who in the City has overall responsibility for the Creek, and who is prioritizing needs against risks and the City's budget allocated to the watershed.

In conclusion, we ask the City to hold a public meeting on the proposed wetland, or at least a site visit with detailed drawings, technical staff, and a budget.

We also ask the City to begin developing a watershed management approach to the Creek, which should be presented for extensive public input.

We stand ready to help on both issues. For the latter, we are prepared to participate in a Taylor Massey Summit, in conjunction with the four Taylor Massey Councillors, agency staff, and community organizations, in 2008, and will be presenting this for discussion with the four Taylor Massey councillors in November.

Sincerely,

Andrew McCammon  
Founding Chair

cc Mayor Miller  
Councillors Kelly, Thompson, Heaps, and Davis  
Selected senior management, City and TRCA  
Task Force to Bring Back the Don  
Don Watershed Regeneration Council  
TMP partner community organizations