

Cleaning Up Our Waterways: **The Don River and Central Waterfront Project**

Comments from the Taylor Massey Project

May 20, 2010

- a) Do you have any questions, comments or concerns about the process that was followed? (identifying alternatives, how they were evaluated)

The TMP notes that the WWF Implementation Advisory Committee had a short-lived, tightly-controlled, and under-valued tenure, and that the 3 Public Information Centres were held almost a year apart, with little information being made available before each meeting.

Both realities are a far cry from the budget figure of \$6 Million for public engagement in the original WWFMP, leaving us with a perception that the City has limited appetite for transparency and public accountability for this project and that, instead, the City is not really interested in informed public input.

Our comments about whether or not this fails to meet the requirements of the environmental assessment process are outlined in item b 3 below.

b) Do you have any questions, comments or concerns about what we are trying to accomplish in this Project?

1. The poster boards mentioned improvements to water quality as a desired outcome. This can only be demonstrated through water quality testing before and after WWF. Data from this testing could be a significant performance measure to help gauge expenditures to demonstrable water quality improvements.

Unfortunately, past TMP requests to the City and TRCA for a WQI – Water Quality Index - for Taylor Massey Creek were rebuffed, while our recommendation in *Reach by Reach* and other documents that the City transition the Storm Outfall Monitoring Program into a full-time surface water quality monitoring effort, with public access to data, have not been discussed with us in any meaningful forum with the City.

We believe WWF must be anchored in data, available to the public, and see no commitment from the City to provide water quality data as a performance measure.

2. The original version of WWF (See box overleaf) had policy and budgetary commitments for watercourse improvements, targeting the elimination of fish barriers and falling gabion baskets, as well as for ravine regeneration, including riparian plantings, action on bylaw infractions for encroachment and other property standard violations, and new trails and signage.

It is unclear if the new WWF addresses these items, but the use of the phrase “opportunistic habitat rehabilitation” does not seem to endorse a broad vision, and therefore does not instill much confidence.

As the City has endorsed the Don Plan and its policy to “take responsibility” for the Don, it should step up to the plate on watercourse improvements and ravine regeneration, including pollution prevention and property standard enforcement.

3. Without cost estimates, we are unsure if public consultation on the preferred alternatives meets the requirements of the current phase of the environmental assessment.

We are certain, however, that asking the public to make comments on a multi-year project that will probably exceed expenditures of \$1 Billion on the same evening they saw the information boards is totally inappropriate*.

* The TMP requested and obtained this digital version of the questions to allow us to submit our comments in a more deliberate manner.



Original VS Current WWF

((As described in correspondence from the City to Andrew McCammon dated May 3, 2010.))

“1. Original Direction of the WWFMP (2003)

The original WWFMP was based on about 40 million per for 25 Years and was composed of a balance of programs distributed among categories such as;

- Public Education and Outreach, including Stewardship and Plantings;
- Lot Level Controls;
- Conveyance Controls
- Stormwater Management (EOP controls)
- Basement Flooding
- Stream Erosion Control and Restoration including riparian zone and habitat restoration

2. New Directions

The extent and direction of basement flooding and stream restoration were redirected for the immediate future (next 10 – 15 years or so) by problems caused by the Aug 19th 2005 storm

Basement flooding remediation has resulted in it having a much larger significance financially and priority. A variety of EA studies have been initiated and / or completed, with a substantial cost increase from the 2003 estimated budget of ca an order of magnitude. As these studies are completed over the next few years, their full financial impact will be known

After the Aug 19th storm, 80 stream related sites were identified as needing attention. For stream projects, the immediate focus is on local scale erosion control around exposed infrastructure (underground infrastructure, trails) and opportunistic habitat rehabilitation in the immediate vicinity. Two sites were repaired in TM creek, immediately downstream of Warden and St Clair in 2006-2008. Present estimates are that it will require another 2 - 5 years to catch up the effects of the Aug 19th storm and subsequent erosion initiated by the storm.”



- c) Do you have any questions, comments or concerns about the preliminary preferred solution that is being proposed?

Our request for the scoring matrix that resulted in the sequence of priorities has not as of this date been provided. As Taylor Massey Creek provides 5% of the flow to the Don but 80% of its pollutants under some flow conditions – ie: e-coli from the extensive CSOs in the Creek - we believe Taylor Massey should have a higher priority but cannot provide an informed opinion without access to information.

- d) Do you have any questions, comments or concerns about specific sites? If so, please note which site your comments relate to.

Comments may be provided after the meeting of May 31.

- e) How should we consult with you during the remainder of this project?

- Identify and publicize the contact information for City personnel responsible for the technical, policy, and financial information relating to this project.
- Establish a WWF Public Liaison Committee with public and NGO organizational reps.
- Augment or replace the PICs with public meetings that include presentations and opportunities for Q&A, and/or hold technical meetings for key stakeholders before the Public Information Centres. ((Indeed, having the technical workshop after the 3 PICs in May, and in fact after the deadline for comments, under-lines our perception that the City really does not want public input.))
- Post detailed material on the City's website before all meetings.

- f) Additional comments?

As WWF evolves, we urge the City to:

- shift to a system of watershed management for surface water, ground water, and sewers, including pollution prevention, and property standard enforcement;
- ensure a unified implementation program that embraces stream restoration; and,
- seek a confluence between WWF and the TRCA's new Don Watershed Plan.

