

# THE TAYLOR MASSEY PROJECT

*Celebrating and Protecting Taylor Massey Creek*

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September 24, 2009

TRCA  
5 Shoreham Drive  
Downsview ON, M3N 1S4  
PDF via e-mail

Dear Chair O'Connor and Members

**Re: Don River Watershed Plan**

I am writing to express our concerns that the new Don River Watershed Plan has captured neither the strategic nor the specific suggestions offered by the Taylor Massey project for the remediation of Taylor Massey Creek. Key issues include:

Reach by Reach Implementation

On July 25, 2008, the Authority passed a motion in response to a presentation from the TMP that the Authority direct staff to seek “reach-by-reach funding from senior levels of government to support watershed plan implementation.”

At a meeting held February 24, 2009, TRCA staff stated that they did not wish to discuss *Reach by Reach*, our regeneration plan for the Creek, and that they would not look at the Authority motion until after the completion of the Don Plan.

Nonetheless, staff proceeded to comment negatively on our suggestion and the Authority’s motion. Instead of working with our suggestion of an approximate figure of \$1 Million to remediate each of about 20 degraded reaches in the Don, staff stated that the TMP was being foolish in seeking \$1.3 Billion to upgrade each and every kilometer of all streams in the TRCA’s jurisdiction.

Nothing could be further from the truth, and we await action on the motion of July 25, 2008.

TRCA – City of Toronto Cooperation

Also at the meeting of July 25, 2008, a member of the Authority who is a councillor for the City of Toronto suggested that the City should be able to find \$1 Million per year to begin to regenerate degraded reaches. However, when the TMP made a request to the City of Toronto in a presentation on January 6, 2009, to have the City designate a single point of contact for us to deal with regarding the regeneration of the Creek, a motion to appoint such a contact was ruled out of order as it was existing polity. On that day and in subsequent correspondence the City refused to respond to innumerable requests to identify such a contact for us.

Similarly, over the last year, the TRCA has managed a Technical Advisory Committee of municipal representatives, for which repeated requests to the TRCA to speak with this Committee went unanswered. Particular instances in which TRCA/City collaboration was

taking place but for which we received limited or late feedback or for which our concerns were excluded appear to include:

- Our position in *Reach by Reach* that a sub-watershed plan can only be developed based on a sub-watershed study – as was promised for Taylor Massey Creek in the 1992 *Forty Steps to a New Don* – did not receive any feedback until the late stages of the development of the Implementation Plan, at which time the TRCA indicated that they could not consider any work on the eroding banks in the Creek as the City was about to undertake a geo-morphological study of the Creek;
- Having identified the TMP's top four regeneration priorities for the Creek as a City responsibility, without allowing us access to the Technical Advisory Committee, the TRCA adopted our fifth priority, Warden Woods, as a regeneration site. However, after having agreed that the concept site should include Warden Woods Park, the TRCA revealed at a late date that the conditions in the Park itself could not be addressed as the City was going to undertake a detailed assessment of the Park;

This new study apparently is in addition to the Kamstra study commissioned on the basis of a TMP presentation to the City on October 6, 2005 and the release of the TMP's *Protecting Warden Woods* in March, 2008. As we understand it the City's new effort is a terrestrial study only, and will not address regenerating any of the wetlands in Warden Woods Park, certainly a key focus for an organization such as a conservation authority; and,

- In the absence of a response to repeated requests for the provision of the mechanism under which priority regeneration sites were determined, we see no rationale for the selection of priority sites in the Taylor Massey sub-watershed. More-over, there is no explanation of how difficult decisions will be made between resourcing TRCA priorities or City priorities, such as Wet Weather Flow, when it is probable that both sets of priorities will rely on the same pool of City taxes.

With respect to specific suggestions, these are too numerous to include in this letter. If desired, we can forward a chart of all of the recommendations in *Reach by Reach*, the nature of any responses received, and the status of the requested actions.

In conclusion, rather than a celebration of community engagement in the health of our watershed, the preparation of the Don Plan represents a perceived attempt by the TRCA and the City to cooperate behind closed doors without meaningful communication, transparent decision-making, and public accountability, key attributes of a successful plan.

While we are sure that the Authority will approve the new Don Plan at its upcoming meetings, we urge you to complement it with a renewed commitment to reach by reach regeneration, significantly improved ways of sharing information between the Authority, the City, and the residents of Toronto, and improved measures to ensure sound decision-making, transparency, and accountability.

Sincerely,

*Nancy Penny*  
Chair