



Report
Staff Report
The Corporation of the City of Brampton
3/20/2024

Date: 2024-02-26

Subject: **Budget Amendment and Recommendation Report: Etobicoke Creek Wetland Enhancement Project: Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement – Ward 2**

Contact: Karley Cianchino, Environmental Project Specialist, Environment and Development Engineering Division
Pam Cooper, Manager, Environmental Planning, Environment and Development Engineering Division

Report number: Planning, Bld & Growth Mgt-2024-204

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the report from Karley Cianchino, Environmental Project Specialist, Environment and Development Engineering dated February 26th 2024, to the Committee of Council meeting of March 20th, 2024, re: Budget Amendment and Recommendation Report: Etobicoke Creek Wetland Enhancement Project: Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement – Ward 2 be received;
2. That a budget amendment be approved, and a new capital project be established in the amount of \$2,504,380.99 for the Etobicoke Creek wetland enhancement project, with funding from the Provincial Government, under the Province's Wetland Conservation Partnership Program.

OVERVIEW:

- **In 2021, Council endorsed the Lake Enhancement Strategy with a focus on improving four of Brampton's key lakes: Norton Place Park Lake, Donnelly Ponds, Loafer's Lake, and Professor's Lake.**
- **In October 2023, staff applied for a grant under the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Wetland Conservation Partner**

Program to support actions outlined in the Lake Enhancement Strategy, specifically targeting Loafers Lake.

- **Loafers Lake is an urban retreat for the Brampton community, providing a range of social and passive recreational opportunities amidst its natural heritage features, which include a thriving turtle population.**
- **On January 5, 2024, the City received confirmation of a grant totaling \$2,504,380.99 to enhance shoreline features at Loafers Lake and to improve wetland conditions at Loafers Lake Park and Conservation Drive Park, located within the Etobicoke Creek Watershed.**
- **On February 26, 2024, the City Treasurer executed the Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks.**
- **On March 4th, 2024, the Province of Ontario publicly announced its investment into Brampton's Etobicoke Creek Wetlands Enhancement Project. Minister Andrea Khanjin, representing the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks, together with Brampton North MPP Graham McGregor, announced the allocation of \$2.5 million in funding from the Province's Wetlands Conservation Partner Program (WCPP).**
- **This report recommends a budget amendment in the amount of \$2,504,380.99, with funding from Provincial Government, to support the City's Etobicoke Creek Wetland Enhancement Project.**

BACKGROUND:

In 2019, Council requested the development of the [Lake Enhancement Strategy](#), which was subsequently passed in 2021. This Strategy prioritized improvements for four key Brampton lakes: Norton Place Park, Donnelly Ponds, Loafer's Lake, and Professor's Lake. The recommendations and considerations outlined in the Strategy are based on the Council-approved [Eco Park Strategy](#), review of best practices, site evaluations, and consultation with internal and external stakeholders.

The Strategy outlines recommendations for Loafers Lake to create a blend of natural and urban elements, offering a serene urban retreat for Brampton residents. Historic issues such as water quality and algae growth have negatively impacted public perception, resulting in decreased community engagement. It is essential to preserve and enhance the lake's natural features to maintain its unique charm and continue providing benefits to park visitors and the broader community.

To facilitate the implementation of the Strategy, specifically to enhance and restore the shoreline at Loafers Lake, City staff applied for a grant through the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks [Wetland Conservation Partners Program](#) (WCPP). Through the WCPP, staff requested funds to enhance wetland function and improve connectivity within the Etobicoke Creek watershed – specifically Loafers Lake and wetlands within Loafers Lake Park and Conservation Drive Park. Proposed activities outlined in the grant application include invasive species management, shoreline habitat enhancement, trail realignments, installation of viewing platforms and habitat structures, as well planting aquatic and terrestrial species.

Adhering to the WCPP's deadline for project completion by December 2024, City staff have planned to ensure the timely implementation of all proposed activities outlined in the City's grant application.

CURRENT SITUATION:

On January 5, 2024, City staff received notification of the City's successful application for the grant totaling \$2,504,380.99 under the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks Wetland Conservation Partnership Program (WCPP). The awarded funds will finance the restoration of shorelines at Loafers Lake and support wetland improvement initiatives extending from Conservation Drive Park to Loafers Lake Park.

On February 26, 2024, the Treasurer executed the Transfer Payment Agreement (TPA), enabling the City to access the grant funds from the MECP. In accordance with the requirements outlined in Schedule E "Payment Plan" of the TPA, the funds will be disbursed to the City in three installments throughout 2024.

To adhere to the timelines stipulated by the Ministry for the use of these funds, a new capital project account dedicated to receiving and managing the grant funds is required to be set up.

On March 4th, 2024, the Province of Ontario made a significant announcement regarding the Etobicoke Creek Wetlands Enhancement Project. Minister Andrea Khanjin, representing the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks, together with Brampton North MPP Graham McGregor, announced the allocation of \$2.5 million in funding from the Province's Wetlands Conservation Partner Program (WCPP).

This crucial support underscores the Ontario governments commitment to environmental preservation and was celebrated at Loafers Lake, with the presence of members of Council and community groups.

Next Steps:

City staff will proceed with implementing the Etobicoke Creek Wetlands Enhancement Project with support from the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

Project activities will be complete by December 2024 with reporting due to the Ministry on March 27th, 2025.

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

That a budget amendment be approved and a new capital project be established in the amount of \$2,504,380.99 with funding from the Provincial Government, under the Province's Wetland Conservation Partnership Program.

Other Implications:

Communications Implications – formal announcement was made on March 4th, 2024 by the MECP of the project funding. The public will be informed about the project and planned improvements and timelines through various communications tactics, such as open houses, web content, digital and social media, media material and key messages.

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREA:

The Etobicoke Creek Wetland Enhancement Project will achieve the Term of Council Strategic Focus Areas of:

- **Health & Well-being:** Focusing on citizens' belonging, health, wellness, and safety.
- **Environmental Resilience & Sustainability:** Focusing on nurturing and protecting our environment for a sustainable future.

CONCLUSION:

With this funding, the City will be able to complete the Etobicoke Creek Wetland Enhancement Project by December 31st, 2024.

This project will implement the recommendations of the Council endorsed Lake Enhancement Strategy for Loafers Lake, leading to enhance and integrate social and recreational services offered at Loafers Lake while maintaining the natural heritage features and valuable ecosystem services the lake provides.

Authored by:

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Ontario Transfer Payment Agreement