

Presentation to Committee of the Whole
on
Cultural Heritage Action Plan

By

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January 11 2021

RECOMMENDED PRIORITY ACTIONS IN CHAP

Name	Priority	Action	ID
Riverscapes	High	Prepare and implement riverside-property acquisition plan to complete River System Management Plan	CCHL-6
Niska Lands	High	Implement Cultural Heritage Landscape Designation as per Council motion of December 3 2015	CCHL-30

IMPORTANCE OF THE SPEED AND ERAMOSA RIVERSCAPES

- The beauty of Guelph's riverlands has been recognized as the City's premier attraction for over 140 years (see next slide).
- Beginning in 1879, with the establishment of Waterworks Park on the Eramosa River, the City has been acquiring riverside properties.
- Guelph's riverside parkland corridors are almost complete but key gaps remain to be filled by acquisition as opportunity arises.

DIRECTORY
OF THE
TOWN OF GUELPH
1873

The River Speed, by which Guelph is partly engirdled, is a most picturesque and winding stream, whose banks, redolent of scenes of quiet pastoral beauty, afford ample material for the tourists' sketch-book. - At the Dundas bridge it forms a junction with the Eramosa branch, itself a pretty stream. - At certain points of the Speed is to be had excellent trout-fishing. Both streams are much frequented by oarsmen, whose boat-houses form a compact mass on the commons near the Dundas bridge.

ACTION IS NEEDED TO COMPLETE RIVERLAND CORRIDOR

- In October 1993 City Council adopted the Management Master Plan for the River Systems of Guelph *“to be used as a guide for preparation of plans for future city activities in the river corridors”*.
- The Management Master Plan identified gaps in the riverland corridors that required protection of viewscales and acquisition of public access to complete the riverland corridors.
- Preparation and implementation of a riverlands acquisition plan is essential to ensure properties are acquired as they become available.

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IMPORTANCE OF THE NISKA LANDS TO THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA

- Open-Space Planning in Guelph has from its beginnings been built around the river corridors as the connective greenway that tie the system together
- Three large conservations areas formed the anchor properties for the Greenland system
- The Guelph Lake Conservation Area on the Speed River and the Arkell Conservation Area on the Eramosa River formed the upstream anchor destinations.
- The downstream anchor property was the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area with the Kortright Waterfowl Park as its hub.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- In 1965 City Council included the Kortright Waterfowl property in the land annexed from Puslinch to ensure control of this nature reserve.
- In 1968 the City requested, and received from the GRCA, a Preliminary Report on the Hanlon Creek basin that recommended acquisition of the entire length of the valleylands as a conservation area.
- In 1970 City Council adopted the plan to establish the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area and asked the GRCA to partner with the City.
- In 1970 the GRCA agreed this partnership and established the Guelph Valleylands project to acquire property. This project is still active.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- In 1973 City Council adopted a Open Space Master Plan built on the City's river corridors with the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area as the downstream anchor property.
- In 1975 City Council adopted an Official Plan that Designated all of the Kortright Waterfowl Park property (now known as the Niska Lands) as Open Space/Conservation as the downstream headquarters property for the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area.
- In 1975, the GRCA, at the request of the City, prepared an interim Planning Study for the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- The 1975 Study identified the functioning of the Kortright Waterfowl Park as “very important with regard to other activities planned for the watershed”. The variety of landscape and vegetation on the property, varying from cedar swamps to cultivated upland fields were observed to be ideal for future use and management as a “zoological park”.
- When the Ontario Waterfowl Research Foundation was unable to continue to maintain the Kortright Waterfowl Park the City of Guelph initiated a campaign to have the Niska Lands brought into public ownership as part of the Hanlon Creek Conservation Area.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- The City of Guelph approached the GRCA with a proposal to have the Niska Lands purchased under the Guelph Valleylands Project to allow the Waterfowl Park to transition to a zoological park as envisioned in the HCCA Planning Study. The GRCA agreed, subject to a competent leaseholder being available to manage the property.
- With City assistance through counterpart contributions to a capital fund and opportunity for annual grants the Niska Wildlife Foundation as incorporated.
- In 1977 the Niska Lands were purchased by the GRCA under the Guelph Valleylands project and were leased to the Niska Wildlife Foundation to begin the transition to a zoological park within the HCCA.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- In 1982 a revised Hanlon Creek Conservation Area Master Plan was approved by the City of Guelph and the GRCA and submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources for Provincial counterpart funding for implementation.
- The implementation of the HCCA Master Plan was resubmitted for Provincial funding several years as a priority project of the City of Guelph but these submissions were not successful in the competition for Provincial funding. The Province ended funding for implementation of Conservation Area Master Plans in 1990.

STAGES IN THE HANLON CREEK CONSERVATION AREA PROJECT

- In 1997 the City of Guelph confirmed the Designation of all of the Niska Lands as part of the City's permanent Open Space System by zoning all of the Niska Lands as P-1 Conservation.
- In 2015, as part of the Niska Road EA, the Niska Lands were assessed as a Cultural Heritage Landscape and found to meet the criteria for Designation. Heritage Guelph recommended by motion that the Niska Lands be designated as a Cultural Heritage Landscape.

Decision by City Council on Niska Lands CHL Designation

On December 3 2015 the following motion was approved by City Council

11. Moved by Councillor Piper

Seconded by Councillor Allt

1. That staff be directed to refer the Heritage Guelph recommendation to designate the Niska Road/Hanlon Creek Conservation precinct as a cultural heritage landscape to the IDE Committee for consideration of bringing forward a notice of intent to designate.

VOTING IN FAVOUR: Mayor Guthrie, Councillors Allt, Bell, Billings, Downer, Gibson, Gordon, Hofland, MacKinnon, Piper, Salisbury, Van Hellemond and Wettstein (13)

VOTING AGAINST: (0)

CARRIED