



Corporate Report

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DATE: August 23, 2013

TO: Chair and Members of General Committee
Meeting Date: September 11, 2013

FROM: Paul A. Mitcham, P. Eng., MBA
Commissioner of Community Services

SUBJECT: **Credit River Parks Strategy and Implementation Plans**

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the "Credit River Parks Strategy", provided under separate cover to the Corporate Report dated August 23, 2013, from the Commissioner of Community Services, be endorsed in principle.
2. That the implementation plans identified in section 1.4, 1.5 and 1.6 of the "Credit River Parks Strategy", provided under separate cover to the Corporate Report dated August 23, 2013, from the Commissioner of Community Services, be referred to the annual business planning and budget process for review and prioritization.

**REPORT
HIGHLIGHTS:**

- The Credit River Valley is the largest and most diverse continuous natural area within the City of Mississauga;
- The study area contains 37 parks, comprising 650 ha (1,600 ac.) of City-owned or managed parkland and natural areas;
- The Credit River Parks Strategy envisions a continuous trail system with diverse experiences and opportunities;
- The Strategy recommends a series of enhancements to create a connected park system;
- The Strategy will guide the programming, management and restoration of this important landscape over the next 25 years;

- Three key messages emerged through extensive consultation:
 - Preserve and enhance the City's natural heritage features;
 - The Credit River Valley should be positioned as the City's most important natural asset; and,
 - Improve valley corridor access for active recreation and transportation for cycling, walking, hiking, canoeing and kayaking.
- The Credit River Parks Strategy implementation plan includes:
 - a master plan for the entire corridor divided into 16 reaches including 7 feature sites;
 - a continuous trail system from Port Credit to Mississauga's northern border;
 - new connections and bridges to neighbourhoods and destinations (University of Toronto - Mississauga campus, the Erindale GO Station, Streetsville and Meadowvale Village);
 - habitat restoration, horticulture, urban agriculture and education;
 - enhanced picnic and festival opportunities;
 - water-based recreation with new opportunities for kayaking, canoeing and fishing; and,
 - provision of initiatives from highest to lowest priority and estimated costs.

BACKGROUND:

The Credit River flows approximately 90 km (56 miles) from its headwaters near Orangeville to Lake Ontario at Port Credit. The final 27 km (17 miles) passes through a quarter of the City's total parkland and natural areas.

The Credit River Parks Strategy has as its goal, to develop a *sustainable, innovative and environmentally responsible master plan to guide the planning, development, conservation and management of a contiguous system of publicly owned and publically accessible parkland and natural areas along the Credit River.*

In order to assist in the achievement of this ambitious goal over the next 25 years, the following project objectives were established at the outset:

- Engage a broad range of stakeholders;
- Examine the alignment of existing and proposed policy initiatives as they relate to the public lands adjacent the Credit River;
- Review and update of the Riverwood master plan and establish an approach to transform it into the City's 'Central Park';
- Create design concepts, detailed recommendations and budget estimates for feature sites to reflect the City's recreational future in the face of the culturally and demographically diverse population;
- Accommodating changing mobility and accessibility needs; and,
- Provide guiding principles, phasing and budgeting recommendations for the planning, development, construction, programming and maintenance of parks and natural areas to achieve a contiguous system adjacent the Credit River during the next 25 years.

See Appendix 1, Executive Summary - Credit River Parks Strategy for more information regarding the approach.

Study Area

The Study Area was restricted to the Credit River, exclusive of tributaries. See Appendix 2 for the extent of the Study Area. In addition, 7 feature sites were identified as distinct destinations within the park system.

- Sanford Farm: Lands in Private Ownership north of Highway #401;
- P-505: Not Yet Named (former Harris Lands);
- P-122: Credit Meadows;
- P-114: Streetsville Memorial Park;
- P-462: Not Yet Named (former Pinchin Lands);
- P-331: Riverwood; and,
- P-60: Erindale Park.

Stakeholder Engagement

In excess of 60 opportunities for community and stakeholder feedback were provided through the development of the Strategy. The public consultation included:

- 10 "Places and Spaces" random interviews/feedback sessions;
- 6 community sessions (including a backyard meeting);
- 3 web surveys/internet feedback opportunities; and,
- 1 bus tour of the feature sites.

Those involved in the process included:

- 28 community organizations including the Credit River Anglers Association, Ecosource, MIRANET, the Mississaugas of the New Credit, Mississauga Bassmasters, The Riverwood Conservancy, Sierra Club of Peel, and Visual Arts Mississauga;
- 14 corporate landowners including University of Toronto – Mississauga, the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board, Bell Canada, Canadian National Railway, Hydro One, Enbridge, Sun Canada, Mississauga Golf and Country Club, and the Credit Valley Golf & Country Club; and,
- 7 Government Agencies including Region of Peel, Credit Valley Conservation, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Transportation, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

A critical component of the project was the involvement of site partners such as Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) which own 7 of the parks, in whole or in part, within the study area. The CVC was crucial to the completion of the Strategy through the provision of detailed natural heritage data and detailed review of the proposed features and actions to ensure coordination with their existing policies and promote long-term success of the project.

On March 8, 2013, the Strategy was received and endorsed in principle by the Board of Directors of Credit Valley Conservation (CVC). The Resolution stipulated:

THAT the City of Mississauga be commended for completing the CRPS which provides for increased protection, restoration and appreciation of the natural heritage of the Credit River valley as well as for important recreational opportunities for watershed residents; and

THAT CVC strongly encourages an integrated environmental monitoring program in collaboration with CVC to demonstrate and measure success of CRPS protection and restoration objectives; and further

THAT CVC staff be directed to work with the City of Mississauga as the CRPS recommendations are implemented in future years, and to return to the Board of Directors with recommendations for required permits and approvals as necessary.

COMMENTS:**Key Stakeholder Messages**

Approximately 1 000 residents and stakeholders provided feedback throughout the process. Three key themes emerged throughout the engagement sessions as follows:

- Preservation and enhancement of natural heritage features and functions is of paramount concern to the residents of the City of Mississauga;
- the Credit River valley should be positioned as the City's most important natural asset; and,
- connection /access to the valley is necessary for the health and recreation of residents and for passive recreational uses such as cycling, walking, hiking, canoeing and kayaking.

Overview of Guiding Principles

The key stakeholder messages, along with an extensive technical review, lead to the establishment of overall guiding principles to direct the development of the Master Plan and concepts for the 7 feature sites. These are summarized as follows:

Natural Heritage: Re-establish a viable, self-sustaining, natural ecosystem through the protection, maintenance and enhancement of natural features, and functions within the Credit River Parks System.

Cultural Heritage: Recognize and promote the protection, enhancement, restoration and celebration of cultural heritage, inclusive of archaeological resources.

Identity: Enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors alike through the creation of diverse, vibrant, and appropriate places for socialization, recreation and education in consideration of ecological sensitivity.

Sustainability: Leverage partnerships and alternative funding opportunities. Establish a connected system of trails that link to the

transit network and promote cycling and walking within the parks system. In addition, incorporate low impact development and sustainable construction techniques in the implementation of new and retrofitted park facilities.

Policy and Regulation: Be consistent with existing policies and regulations across all jurisdictions and levels of government.

Recreation and Tourism: Encourage recreation and tourism opportunities that are compatible with the natural and cultural heritage of the river such as hiking, cycling, canoeing, kayaking, bird watching, and angling.

Overview of the Master Plan

The following are proposed to promote improvement to the natural and cultural heritage features of the valley, while providing increased connections to surrounding neighbourhoods. The Study Area is organized into 18 segments or “reaches” for the purposes of prioritization and budgeting. See Appendix 3 for the Simplified Master Plan.

The Heritage Route: The proposed trail system includes the existing Culham and Samuelson trails as well as 21 km (13 miles) of new multi-use trails to complete a continuous system extending from Mississauga’s northern border to Port Credit. The defining feature of the Heritage Route is the inclusion of the Credit River as a “water trail” for the exploration of the park system via kayak or canoe.

Ultimately, the route can be extended through neighbouring municipalities to the headwaters of the Credit near Orangeville.

Continuous Natural Corridor: Existing natural heritage features are linked through future restoration and reforestation initiatives. These lands will support hiking; nature preservation; cycling; cross-country skiing; informal picnicking; and, nature based education and interpretation.

Transitional Beltlands: The lands are identified as a buffer to protect the more sensitive “Natural Corridor” from the potential negative impacts of the surrounding urban area. The Beltlands are comprised of both public and privately-owned lands and will require municipal

policy and civic education to support the natural area protection objectives. The lands will support all the activities noted as acceptable for the continuous natural corridor, as well as low impact development parking areas; storm water management facilities; urban agriculture; community gardens; and formal picnicking.

Overview of the Feature Sites

Within the reaches framework, 7 “Feature Sites” are identified as distinct destinations with individual themes established upon the natural and cultural heritage of the specific site and any association with its physical and historical context within the Credit River valley. Pursuant to stakeholder feedback, the concept plans for each of the feature sites are developed to recognize the unique opportunities for recreation, interpretation and education while preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural heritage associated with each site. A general description of each feature site is as follows:

Sanford Farm - Lands in Private Ownership: These privately owned lands, traversed by both the Credit River and Levis Creek, are located immediately north of Highway #401 and extend to Old Derry Road. They are currently operated as a working farm, and contain two heritage designated dwellings, several agricultural outbuildings, and the remnant mill race from the Simpson Saw Mill. In the event that the valley lands are acquired by the City within the 25-year planning horizon of the Strategy, the site provides many desirable opportunities for public access and programming. See Appendix 4 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Develop a native plant nursery and promote canoeing and kayaking opportunities.

Intent: The City will require native plants for restoration work within the continuous natural corridor, and the “1 Million Tree” initiative. Also, recognize the recreational opportunities of the Credit River through the establishment of a competition canoe/kayak course.

Features: Trails (Heritage Route, connection to Credit Valley Conservation lands and the Meadowvale Village Heritage Conservation District); provision of a competition canoeing/kayaking course; formalized hiking opportunities;

informal picnic opportunities; restored mill race as a cultural feature and fish habitat.

Park #505 - Not Yet Named Park (former Harris Lands): This unnamed park, acquired by the City in 2009, is best able to showcase the agricultural heritage of Mississauga and serve as the home for an organization(s) that promote environmental stewardship, particularly in the area of urban agriculture. The former farm house, a designated heritage building, could be adapted to accommodate the administrative needs of an agency that can oversee the operation of the urban farm and deliver educational programs. See Appendix 5 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Commemorate the agricultural heritage of Mississauga and demonstrate environmental sustainability through urban agriculture.

Intent: Office and demonstration site for organization(s) that promote urban agriculture.

Features: Trails (Heritage Route, bridge); promotion of canoeing/kayaking opportunities; potential adaptive reuse of an existing heritage building as for the purposes of a sustainability office; informal picnic opportunities; alternative energy demonstration; farm market; sugar bush; and the adaptive reuse of the farm silo as an overlook tower.

Park #122 - Credit Meadows: Credit Meadows is situated predominantly within the floodplain and includes an Environmentally Significant Area. At present, the park includes a modest picnic area, small parking lot and a network of informal trails. On-going management of the meadow landscape will support a diversity of habitats, including areas for several species at risk, including Barn Swallow, Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink and Snapping Turtle. Provincially rare Butternut trees, as well as a variety of herbaceous plants known to be species at risk have also been identified within the feature site. See Appendix 6 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Encourage passive recreation and promote new neighbourhood trail connections.

Intent: Improve passive opportunities including increased bird watching and hiking; and protect species at risk within the park.

Features: Trails (Heritage Route, improved connections to neighbourhoods); promotion of canoeing/kayaking opportunities; provision of bird nesting boxes as public art; improved parking; and, formalized angling opportunities.

Park #114 - Streetsville Memorial Park: Streetsville Memorial Park is located adjacent to Vic Johnson Arena, Pool and Community Centre and is home to a number of festivals and events including the annual Bread and Honey Festival. Facilities within the site include a picnic area, playgrounds, sports fields and parking for approximately 90 cars.

The park is to remain largely unaltered and continue to be the focus for recreation and festivals within the Streetsville community. Proposed modifications are dedicated to initiatives that support the site as a key component of the continuous natural corridor such as restoration and naturalization along the River's edge.

The decommissioning of the former waste treatment facility is recommended in the long term in favour of additional festival parking and further restoration opportunities. Additional pedestrian bridges are proposed to better connect the park to the neighbourhoods on the east side of the river and to facilitate the future "Heritage Route" through the mill properties to the south.

New interpretive signage and the provision of a direct connection to the Hyde Mill ruins, and the Streetsville Village Square will enhance the cultural heritage experience for visitors and further strengthen the connection of the Credit River valley to the founding of Streetsville. See Appendix 7 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Promote cultural heritage, festivals and events; strengthen the park's historical connection to Streetsville and foster new connections to surrounding neighbourhoods.

Intent: Maintain and improve the site as a festival park; support the park's association to the identity of Streetsville; and, address conflicting uses within floodplain, parking demands

and seasonal ice damage.

Features: Trails (Heritage Route; bridges for connection to mill properties and adjacent neighbourhoods); riparian restoration; canoeing/kayaking; and, long-term demolition of the former treatment plant for additional parking.

Park #462 - Not Yet Named Park (former Pinchin Lands): The property was managed as the Riviere Fruit Farm until 2004 and the existing heritage orchard offers a unique identity providing opportunities for a community/cooperative fruit gardens provided that only organic practices are utilized (meaning no pesticide use). The remnant foundation of the heritage cider mill offers an opportunity for site interpretation in an outdoor classroom. A pedestrian bridge is proposed to connect the David J. Culham trail to Hewick Meadows on the east bank of the Credit River. The existing Leslie Log House will serve as an integral component of the site, with the surrounding gardens continuing to be enhanced through the stewardship of the Streetsville Horticultural Society. See Appendix 8 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Commemorate the early settlement of the Credit Valley, promote organic fruit production and recognize the site as parkland in transition.

Intent: The trees of the former orchard, have/or will soon exceed their life expectancy and the decline must be managed while respecting the importance of the orchard to local identity; and, the provision of connections to support Riverwood as the City's "Central Park".

Features: Trails connections to cycling trail system and Hewick Meadows; potential for a community cooperative fruit gardens (partnership or revenue generation); repurposing of the cider barn foundation as an outdoor classroom; educational opportunities in cooperation with City departments and community organizations associated with the Leslie Log House.

Park #331 – Riverwood: Riverwood’s combination of natural, cultural heritage and art will continue to be reinforced through the concept developed through the Strategy. The 60 ha (150 ac.) site is located within 6 km (3.5 mi) of the City’s downtown, and is easily accessible by bicycle and transit including the adjacent Erindale GO Station.

Riverwood is home to the Riverwood Conservancy (TRC) and Visual Arts Mississauga (VAM), with both organizations offering programs supporting horticulture and the arts. The MacEwan Terrace Garden is a major attraction. In 2002, a master plan was prepared for Riverwood, with a series of amendments to the plan. The Credit River Parks Strategy builds upon the previous master plan for this site.

A visitor’s centre is proposed as a key component of the Concept Plan for this site. It will advance the objective of the Strategic Plan to establish Riverwood as a “Central Park” for the downtown.

Partnership opportunities will continue to be pursued to further develop the wide range of programming and educational offerings at Riverwood, with VAM, TRC, school boards and post-secondary institutions. Other opportunities to enhance the visitor experience include garden expansion to showcase emerging trends in horticulture, art installations, a looped nature trail, a suspension bridge over the MacEwan Creek, vegetative restoration, improvements to the existing storm water management pond, and, the potential to create an experiential children’s play area. See Appendix 9 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Promote Riverwood as a centre for environmental education and the arts.

Intent: Support of Strategic Plan to further the property as the “Central Park” for the City’s core; increased integration of art and gardens; and, continued cooperation with site partners.

Features: Trails (relocated/improved); provision of a signalized intersection across Burnhamthorpe Road West for increased safety; promotion of connection to Erindale GO station and

City Hall; gateway art gardens; visitor centre; suspension bridge; and, formalized angling opportunities.

Park #60 - Erindale Park: Erindale Park is the largest park in Mississauga encompassing almost 90 ha (222 ac.) and includes facilities to accommodate picnicking, passive and informal active recreation and access for angling. This park is a popular venue for cultural festivals and civic events, providing parking and assembly for approximately 1,000 visitors.

Existing amenities include five picnic areas with barbeques; playgrounds; washroom facilities; parking for 400 vehicles; a toboggan hill; and wedding photography sites.

Erindale Park is a key destination for anglers, and the concept plan provides additional opportunities for anglers to access the river as well as enhanced riparian areas to improve aquatic habitat within the river. The seasonal salmon run is a popular attraction, enticing visitors to come to the river to witness the large numbers of salmon migrating upstream to spawn. An additional picnic shelter is proposed and improved connections to trail network accessing the University of Toronto – Mississauga campus. See Appendix 10 for the proposed concept plan.

Theme: Promote recreation and cultural events and foster new trail connections to surrounding neighbourhoods.

Intent: Maintain and improve the site as the City's principal picnic park; provide additional shade and seating opportunities; address access from adjacent neighbourhoods; promote connection to Riverwood as City's "Central Park".

Features: Trails (formalize connection to UTM, provide connections to adjacent neighbourhoods, remove section of trail damaged annually due to ice); provision of an additional picnic shelter (60 seats); and, formalize angling access.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Reference to the Credit River is central to the Strategic Plan, and is reflected in the Vision for the Future, *“Mississauga will inspire the world as a dynamic and beautiful global city for creativity and innovation, with vibrant, safe and connected communities; where we celebrate the rich diversity of our cultures, our historic villages, Lake Ontario and the Credit River Valley. A place where people choose to be.”*

The Credit River Parks Strategy was developed to support this vision and to address specific actions within the “Connect - completing our neighbourhoods”, and the “Green – living green”, pillars for change.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: The Strategy identifies cost estimates and phasing plans to guide the sequencing for capital expenditures during the 25 year duration of the project.

The implementation, exclusive of potential land acquisition costs is estimated to be \$79 million (2013 dollars). Approximately \$57 million has been previously identified but are presently unfunded through related City initiatives associated with the Cycling Master Plan, the Riverwood Master Plan, and the Credit River Adaptive Management Study.

Approximately \$22 million represents new features within the parks system and all proposed initiatives are subject to the City’s Business Plan and Budget Process to ensure ongoing alignment with City-wide priorities.

The additional land anticipated for acquisition as part of the Credit River Parks Strategy is approximately 291 ha (720 ac.). The majority of these lands are proposed to be naturalized. Operating costs for naturalized lands are lower in comparison to active parkland.

Based on current figures the annual anticipated operating costs for these additional lands is \$380,000 annually.

Opportunities for future partnerships and external funding are intended to form part of the funding strategy.

CONCLUSION:

The Credit River Parks Strategy is a long term plan to enhance the recreational opportunities along the Credit River, improving accessibility and connectivity while preserving and enhancing the valley's natural and cultural heritage. It recommends appropriate opportunities for tourism, recreation, socialization and education, and guides the planning, development, conservation and management of a continuous trail system within Mississauga's Credit River Valley.

The Strategy was developed through extensive stakeholder consultation and has appropriately addressed the comments of residents, staff and public agencies. The Strategy should be reviewed and updated every 10 years to reflect the ongoing studies by the City and its partners, and the changing dynamics within the Credit River Parks context. Funding required to implement the plan will be considered through the City's Business Plan and Budget Process.

ATTACHMENTS:

- Appendix 1: Executive Summary - Credit River Parks Strategy
- Appendix 2: Study Area
- Appendix 3: Simplified Master Plan
- Appendix 4: Concept Plan for Sanford Farm - Lands in Private Ownership
- Appendix 5: Concept Plan for Park #505 - (former Harris Lands)
- Appendix 6: Concept Plan for Park #122 - Credit Meadows
- Appendix 7: Concept Plan for Park #114 - Streetsville Memorial Park
- Appendix 8: Concept Plan for Park #462 - (former Pinchin Lands)
- Appendix 9: Concept Plan for Park #331 - Riverwood
- Appendix 10: Concept Plan for Park #60 - Erindale Park



Paul A. Mitcham, P.Eng., MBA
Commissioner of Community Services



Executive Summary

The Credit River valley is the largest and most diverse contiguous natural area within the City of Mississauga. The parklands that are situated along the valley corridor offer a range of passive and active recreational opportunities and experiences that contribute to the health, well-being and quality of life of residents of the City. The Credit River Parks Strategy (CRPS) has been developed to guide the programming, management and restoration of this important landscape over the next two and a half decades.

The Study Area

The study area encompasses a 27km (16.75 mile) segment of the Credit River valley comprising 650ha (1600 acres). Seven “Feature Sites” are situated along the valley corridor. The “Feature Sites” are integral components of the study area that warrant special consideration in the process of generating the CRPS. The seven “Feature Sites” consist of:

- Sanford Farm: Lands in Private Ownership north of Highway #401
- P-505: Not Yet Named (former Harris Lands);
- P-122: Credit Meadows;
- P-114: Streetsville Memorial Park;
- P-462: Not Yet Named (former Pinchin Lands);
- P-331: Riverwood; and,
- P-60: Erindale Park.

Prior to initiation of the study, the seven “Feature Sites” were selected as a result of their size, location along the river corridor, relation to surrounding neighbourhoods, proximity to known cultural and natural features, and potential to accommodate unique programs and amenities that would strengthen the diversity of the park system. Some of the “Feature Sites” are long-established parks that support existing activities and programs (Riverwood, Streetsville Memorial Park and Erindale Park) whereas others are largely undeveloped (the former Harris and Pinchin properties and Credit Meadows Park). The “Feature Sites” hold the potential to become important destinations along the valley corridor, offering opportunities for access to the river and an experience of the natural and cultural attributes of the study area.

Goal

The goal of the study is to develop a sustainable, innovative and environmentally responsible Master Plan to guide the planning, development, conservation and management of a contiguous system of publicly-owned and publicly accessible parkland and natural areas along the Credit River.

Process

The process of generating the CRPS comprises three component phases:

- Phase 1 – Inventory and Assessment;
- Phase 2 – Master Plan and Concept Development; and,
- Phase 3 – Finalization of the CRPS and Implementation Plan.

Each phase of the process was supported by community engagement and consultation. The community engagement program included public meetings as well as outreach initiatives, including a bus tour, random interviews at 10 sites throughout the City and a web-based survey. The consultation process involved user groups, stakeholders, landowners, residents, City and Credit Valley Conservation (CVC) staff and First Nations representatives. In total, the Strategy reached out to approximately 35,000 residents with over 1000 people being directly engaged in this

process. Their contributions assisted in defining the vision, principles and objectives for the CRPS and informed the development of the Master Plan and Concept Plans for the seven “Feature Sites”.

Key messages arising from the consultation process included:

- Preservation and enhancement of natural heritage features and functions is of paramount concern to the residents for the City of Mississauga;
- The Credit River Valley should be positioned as the City’s most important natural asset; and,
- Connection /access to the valley is necessary for the health and recreation of residents and should be primarily for passive uses such as cycling, walking, hiking, canoeing and kayaking.

The process of inventory, analysis, consultation and synthesis revealed a series of issues to be addressed and opportunities to be capitalized upon in the process of generating the Strategy. Key issues identified as a product of the process included:

- Requirements for conformity with policies and regulations;
- Private land ownership;
- Ecological sensitivity within many parts of the parks system;
- Natural hazards – floodplain, slope stability, ice, potential impacts on natural and cultural heritage resources from uses, geomorphic change;
- Barriers to connectivity – railways and roads, topography and environmental sensitivity;
- Integration with existing facilities – University of Toronto Mississauga Campus (UTM), Riverwood and Erindale Park;
- Public safety; and,
- Requirements for accessibility.

Opportunities afforded by the site and its context are numerous and relate primarily to the diversity of the landscape, cultural context of the site within the City, and richness of its cultural and natural heritage resources. In addition, the valley corridor is largely intact and well-connected, both along its length and to the communities beyond. The seven “Feature Sites” each have unique attributes and hold the potential to complement one another and the valley corridor as a whole in terms of ecological function, programming and diversity of user experience. The river itself holds great potential as a regional attraction for anglers and offers opportunities for water-based recreation including canoeing and kayaking.

The river is relatively healthy but there is the potential to enhance water quality and habitat through the implementation of technical solutions both within the park system and within the community beyond the limits of the valley.

Several precedents exist as models to guide tourism development and each of these provided inspiration to direct the generation of a strategy to optimize the recreational and tourism potential of the Credit River Park system within Mississauga.

Vision

The vision defined through the public consultation process is stated as:



"The Credit River Parks System is envisioned as the natural centerpiece of Mississauga's parks and open space network. It will support a diverse, self sustaining ecosystem and will afford appropriate opportunities for recreation, socialization and education while protecting, enhancing and celebrating the natural and cultural heritage of the Credit River."

The set of principles established to guide the development of the CRPS related to:

- Natural Heritage;
- Cultural Heritage;
- Community;
- Sustainability; and,
- Regulation.

Alignment with the Strategic Plan

The City's Strategic Plan sets out a vision and recommendations to guide the transformation of Mississauga into a more sustainable, healthy and vibrant community. The Strategic Plan sets out five Strategic Pillars for Change:



Move



Belong



Connect



Prosper



Green

The CRPS supports the recommendations of the Strategic Plan by contributing to the following:



Connect

- Capitalizing on the Credit River to Foster All-Season Activities
- Positioning Riverwood, the former Pinchin Lands and Erindale Park as a "Central Park"
- Celebrating the heritage of the Credit River
- Creating More Bike Friendly Facilities



Green

- Planting One Million Trees
- Acquiring/Enhancing Land for Recreational and Ecological Value

The Structure of the Strategy

The CRPS is comprised of three components:

- A Master Plan for the valley corridor;
- Concept Plans for each of the seven “Feature Sites”; and,
- An Implementation Plan.

The Master Plan recommends the establishment of a continuous ‘Natural Corridor’ that is comprised of a mosaic of woodlands, wetlands and diverse habitats that stretches the length of the corridor, enhancing connectivity and ecological function. The ‘Natural Corridor’ is supported by the ‘Transitional Beltlands’ which are proposed to buffer the ‘Natural Corridor’ from the effects of the adjacent urban matrix and make it more resilient and sustainable over time. The Master Plan promotes the establishment of the ‘Credit River Heritage Route’ as a connected trail that encompasses segments of existing trails, including the David J. Culham trail and the Samuelson trail, along with proposed new trail segments to create a unified multi-use trail that connects the waterfront to the north limit of the City and links the communities along the length of the river together.

The river itself is envisioned as a key element within the Master Plan, affording ecological benefits while at the same time providing opportunities for recreation, education, tourism and economic development.

The “Feature Sites” are positioned as destinations along the valley corridor, each characterised by a unique theme and offering a different range of experiences. Riverwood is envisioned as the centrepiece of the Master Plan, serving as the centre of visitor experience and orientation and, in combination with Erindale Park and the former Pinchin Lands, creating a “Central Park” in close proximity to Mississauga’s downtown core.

The Implementation Plan sets out directions to guide the realization of the Master Plan and Concept Plans for the “Feature Sites”. The Implementation Plan sets out a process to facilitate the development of detailed designs for the various elements proposed. Requirements for technical investigations, public and First Nations consultation and the securement of the necessary permits and approvals from various regulatory agencies are addressed within this component of the overall Strategy.

The Implementation Plan also addresses recommendations related to land ownership, requirements for business and operations plans, funding and partnership-building.

Maintaining Momentum

The process of generating the CRPS served to elevate the prominence of the Credit River as an important environmental, recreational, social and educational asset within the City of Mississauga, inspiring genuine interest in the implementation of the Strategy. This interest will catalyze the momentum necessary to propel the Strategy forward to implementation, assisting the City to realize the “Pillars of Change” in its Strategic Plan.

















