Date August 13, 2019        Report No. 2019-391
To Chair and Members Committee of the Whole, Operations and Administration
From Sandy Jackson General Manager Community Programs, Parks and Recreation

1.0 Type of Report

Consent Item [ ]
Item For Consideration [X]

2.0 Topic  Brant Waterways Foundation Trail Improvement & River Access Donation [Financial Impact - $250,000 revenue]

3.0 Recommendation

A. THAT Report 2019-391, Brant Waterways Foundation (BWF) Trail Improvement & River Access (TIRA) Donation, BE RECEIVED; and

B. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to recognize the BWF for their generous contribution to the City through the installation of signage acknowledging the TIRA donation in Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park in compliance with Corporate – 038 Sponsorship and Donation Policy; and

   i. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to include the following projects at a total cost of $250,000, funded by the BWF, in the 2020 Capital Budget:

   ii. Improvements to the Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park pavilion,
iii. Completion of ecological studies at Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park,

iv. River access improvements at D’Aubigny Creek; and

C. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to prepare a licence agreement, in consultation with the Legal and Real Estate Services Department which will permit the BWF to recognize TIRA donors at the pavilion within Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park; and THAT the General Manager Community Programs, Parks and Recreation BE DELEGATED authority to sign this licence agreement; and

D. THAT staff BE DIRECTED to prepare a donation agreement, in consultation with the Legal and Real Estate Services Department between the City and the Brant Waterways Foundation to reflect the $250,000 donation, and THAT the General Manager Community Programs Parks and Recreation BE DELEGATED authority to sign this donation agreement.

4.0 Purpose and Overview

To provide City Council with an overview of the Brant Waterways Foundation TIRA donation program for trail/environmental improvements and outline the City projects towards which the BWF have committed to provide funding over the next five years.

5.0 Background

The BWF new TIRA Program is a five year comprehensive plan to enhance trail systems and create new connections to the Grand River.

TIRA’s vision is ‘to inspire healthy communities through connections to world-class outdoor recreational opportunities that respect the natural ecosystems and promote their conservation for generations to come’.

The BWF will partner with other stakeholders to develop trail improvement and river access projects while protecting the natural resources of the Grand River watershed.

5.1 TIRA Values:
In order to implement the TIRA plan the BWF has developed seven criteria to support their vision of inspiring healthy community by accelerating the development of trail improvements and river access projects along the Grand River Watershed. The comprehensive TIRA values and priorities are attached as “Appendix A”. These include:

1) Connectivity: Projects will inspire physical, personal and spiritual connections to nature, places of interest and activities.

2) Quality of Life: Projects will improve health outcomes and local economy.

3) Sustainability: Projects will protect the natural resources and ensure the environment is not negatively impacted.

4) Knowledge: Projects will increase awareness of conservation, nature, culture, history, and river & trail etiquette.

5) Inclusivity: Projects will consider the needs of all demographics.

6) Synergy: Projects will have community support and align with local, regional, provincial, and national plans

7) Accountability: Projects will adhere to responsible financial management and reporting practices

5.2 TIRA Projects:

TIRA will provide funding assistance to a variety of projects that will enhance connections with the Grand River. Some of the initial projects that have been proposed throughout the watershed include:

- Support for trail improvements along the Grand Valley Trail;

- Establishment of the ‘Grand Trail’ initiative throughout Brant County;

- Revitalization of Mohawk Lake and/or trail improvements in the area;

- Environmental improvements at Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park;

- Creation of a parking lot and river access point on Newport Road;
• Mountain bike & hiking trail developments at ‘Barkers Bush’ in Paris.

6.0 Corporate Policy Context

Community Strategic Plan Goal #2: High Quality of Life & Caring for All Citizens by providing well-maintained cultural and heritage assets.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan Recommendation #79:

*Continue to lead and undertake the detailed planning, design and implementation of recommended trails and active transportation projects and initiatives, including those recommended in this Master Plan and the City’s other related plans and strategies, working with local and regional trails groups, the Grand River Conservation Authority, the County of Brant, other partners, stakeholders and residents, to provide and leverage the necessary resources and expertise in these areas including staff or contracted services and related local and regional resources and expertise.*

7.0 Input From Other Sources

Staff met with members of the BWF to develop an understanding of the TIRA program and discuss potential projects. The projects outlined in this report are supported by the BWF for TIRA funding.

Staff will also be working closely with the City’s Legal Department in drafting a licence agreement for recognition of the contributions from BWF and donors to the TIRA program as outlined in this report.

8.0 Analysis

8.1 Qualifying TIRA Projects

The Parks and Recreation Department has reviewed the ten year capital plan and the Waterfront Master Plan and have prioritized projects based upon available funding and immediate needs due to safety and ongoing state of good repair.

Trail projects including new construction and rehabilitation receive funding from various reserves including Federal Gas Tax, development charges and 5% cash in lieu. In addition to these City funds generous contributions from the Brant Waterways Foundation have been made over the years.
towards various trail and environmental initiatives. These contributions have allowed many projects to proceed more quickly through to completion that would otherwise not have been fully funded. A recent project that was funded through the Brant Waterways Foundation was the redesign and construction of the Hardy Road Trail parking lot.

The BWF are committed to supporting projects that reflect the values of the TIRA initiative as outlined in this report. The City has numerous trail projects that meet the criteria and staff has met with BWF representatives to discuss which projects best fit the TIRA mandate.

8.2 TIRA Projects

The BWF have committed to contributing $250,000 to the City over the next five years for the following TIRA projects;

- renovation and beautification of the pavilion at Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park, including donor recognition signage and associated landscaping;
- ecological studies at Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park which is not currently included in the capital plan, however is an important project outlined in the Waterfront Master Plan;
- improvements at the D'Aubigny Creek river access area on Ballantyne Drive.

9.0 Financial Implications

The $250,000 donation from the Brant Waterways Foundation will alleviate some of the financial burden for these capital projects. The scope of the projects including estimated costs are outlined below:

9.1 Waterworks Park Pavilion: $50,000

This project is comprised of two parts, the first including improvements to the pavilion and surrounding areas in order to better serve special events including trail walks and runs. The pavilion requires minor upgrades including painting and roof repairs. The installation of an electric service is also being considered as a provisional item.
The second phase of this project includes recognition of the Brant Waterways Foundation contribution in close proximity to the pavilion. The recognition feature will also identify supporters of the TIRA initiative from the Brantford area over time. This has yet to be designed but staff will work closely with BWF to ensure that acknowledgement expectations are met through design and implementation. Associated costs for this project will not exceed $50,000 and will be funded through the BWF donation.

9.2 Ecological Studies for Waterworks Park: $100,000

Ecological studies for Waterworks Park include detailed studies related to several areas of environmental interest noted in the Waterfront Masterplan (2010) as well as restoration initiatives as may be recommended as a result of these further investigations. While the full scope of the project is not known, this is expected to include, interpretive signage, footpaths and planting of additional prairie species to augment meadow habitats in various areas of the park and to introduce additional pollinator plants and habitat.

The scope for this project may also include restoration measures relating to tree inventory recommendations for Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park. This includes a possible pilot project for native tree and shrub plantings (and associated maintenance program) to begin to replace the many ash trees and other plantation trees currently in decline and gradually being removed. These funds will augment capital funding currently in place associated with the Emerald Ash Borer Strategy. The $100,000 is not expected to cover all restoration costs, but it is anticipated that funding will be sufficient for the environmental studies and some environmental enhancements. This project will be added to the capital plan in 2020.

9.3 D’Aubigny Creek River Access: $100,000

Although this project is listed in the ten year capital plan it is not scheduled to begin until 2026. This funding opportunity will allow this project to be moved forward in the ten year plan. Design improvements for this site have not yet been fully considered but staff is aware that demands for improved river access is growing and that the D’Aubigny location experiences a high volume of traffic by trail and river users. A formalized design allowing for safe and functional launching of small, non-powered boats as well as restricting river access to 4 x 4 motorized vehicles is
required. Consideration for significant annual flood events and protection of the cold water trout stream (D'Aubigny Creek) is also necessary.

Although a cost estimate has not yet been fully developed, staff anticipates that the full project budget will exceed the commitment from BWF of $100,000. The scope of work will involve an improved driveway entrance from Ballantyne Drive, formalized parking, improved connections to the adjoining trail system, garbage (Molok Style) containers for both trash and re-cycling, signage and temporary boat storage. Staff will consider phasing of the project components and other funding sources once a plan is developed.

10.0 Conclusion

The Brant Waterways Foundation has once again demonstrated environmental leadership through the development of the Trail Improvements & River Access program and the contribution to the City of $250,000. The funds will be utilized for the projects identified in this report which will protect and enhance the natural environment and improve river and trail access.

Staff recommends that the BWF be recognized for their generous support and ongoing commitment to the improvement of the City trails and the stewardship of the Grand River; and that a means of recognition be placed in conjunction with the TIRA donations at the Rotary Centennial Waterworks Park pavilion.

Staff further recommends that the projects identified in this report be included in future capital plans, recognized as priorities, and considered for implementation once funding has been confirmed.

Brian Hughes  
Director of Park Services

Sandy Jackson  
General Manager Community Programs, Parks and Recreation

Vicki Armitage  
Manager Park Services
Attachments

Appendix “A”: TIRA Values and Priorities

Copy to: Brant Waterways Foundation Chair Duncan Ross

In adopting this report, is a by-law or agreement required? If so, it should be referenced in the recommendation section.

By-law required [ ] yes [X] no

Agreement(s) or other documents to be signed by Mayor and/or City Clerk [ ] yes [x] no

Is the necessary by-law or agreement being sent concurrently to Council? [ ] yes [x] no