



VISION 2016 – 2020

Conservation Ontario will be the leader in engaging Conservation Authorities in matters of common interest and in shaping effective policy related to Conservation Authorities

Conservation Ontario Council Report

From: Sameer Dhalla, Associate Director Engineering Services (TRCA)
Bonnie Fox, Manager Policy and Planning (CO)
Taylor Knapp, Policy and Planning Officer (CO)

Date: June 7, 2016

Subject: Approaches to Manage Regulatory Event Flow Increases Resulting From Urban Development

Summary

As a result of ongoing efforts to address increases in Regulatory flood flows arising from future urbanization; a report titled *Approaches to Manage Regulatory Event Flow Increases Resulting From Urban Development* has been prepared by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) in association with the Regional Control Committee. The intent of this document is to provide guidance on approaches to address increases in Regulatory flood risk as a result of ongoing and proposed urban development. This document is meant to inform all stakeholders of the obligations to address potential future increases in Regulatory flood flows resulting from new development, and present feasible alternatives to mitigate those increases in flood risk.

Recommendation

THAT the document titled "Approaches to Manage Regulatory Event Flow Increases Resulting From Urban Development" prepared by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Regional Control Committee dated June 2016 be received; and

THAT the document "Approaches to Manage Regulatory Event Flow Increases Resulting From Urban Development" be circulated to the Province, Municipalities and the land development industry, and they be encouraged to use the document to inform and guide their ongoing work, including updating the Province's technical guidance documents that are relevant to these issues.

Background

In April 2011, TRCA prepared a report for discussion on "Issue Exploration – Urbanization and Regulatory Flood Hazard". The issue of how to address increases in Regulatory flood flows arising from future urbanization had been raised at a number of provincial and CA tables. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF), as the provincial lead for natural hazards, has the responsibility to identify the

most appropriate mechanism through which this issue can be resolved. The Report, which was received by CO Council at the April 18, 2011 meeting, provided necessary detail and sufficient context to facilitate the ability of the MNRF to confirm and initiate appropriate next steps.

As reported in the September 2014 CO Council Report, and as previously directed by Council, CO staff sent a letter to the Director of the Biodiversity Branch and the Director of the Integrations Branch at MNRF on May 13, 2011 requesting that the Province provide specific direction on how to address the flood impacts which are occurring as a result of urbanization. An August 3, 2011 letter from the Director of Biodiversity at MNRF indicated an interest in further discussing this issue and possibly updating the technical guidance. On August 24, 2011 CO responded to MNRF conveying CO's interest in participating in an update to the MNRF technical guidance and outlining an interim approach, proposed by TRCA for addressing urban flooding impacts.

The Regional Control Committee met a number of times to discuss and advance the issue of how to address increases in Regulatory flood flows arising from future urbanization. The Committee was tasked with investigating the issue, assessing the extent of this concern, and providing a set of recommendations for managing increases to the Regulatory floodplain due to urbanization. The Committee identified multiple potential approaches to addressing future Regulatory flood flow increases, focusing on three amenable approaches in the draft "Guidelines for Management of Regulatory Storm Flood Flow Increases Resulting from Urban Development" prepared in April 2014 and circulated to the Committee members (including MNRF staff) for review and discussion.

Based on feedback from the review of the draft Report, it was decided that the guidelines would be revised to outline all of the potential options, rather than focusing on a few preferred alternatives to dealing with Regulatory storm flood flow increases. Outlining the benefits and drawbacks of all of the potential options would better serve CAs and municipalities allowing them to choose among approaches that might work best for the conditions in their watersheds.

Current Status

Since September 2014, the Regional Control Committee has met to discuss the draft report and revisions were made to the document. It was decided that instead of outlining all the options to deal with Regulatory flow increases, as noted in the September 29, 2014 CO Council Report, the revised document would focus on engineered solutions that mitigate flood risk rather than manage it through policy approaches. The document acknowledges policy approaches but does not expand on them, and as a result the term 'guidelines' has been removed from the Report as it implies a certain level of planning and policy integration.

On May 17th, 2016 CO staff circulated the second draft document for review to the CA Provincial Flood Forecast and Warning Contacts, with a carbon copy sent to the CAOs and Regional Control Committee (CA members only). Comments were received from seven CAs, including: Central Lake Ontario CA, Halton Region CA, Lake Simcoe Region CA, Nottawasaga Valley CA, Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, South Nation CA, and Upper Thames River CA.

The comments were consolidated by CO staff and then forwarded to TRCA for consideration and incorporation into the document. The majority of the comments received were minor in nature, such as recommended text edits or the addition of text to provide clarity, and have been incorporated into the document. TRCA staff have informed CO that some of the comments, although considered, were not incorporated because they thought it fell outside the scope of the document or the change did not provide a benefit.

Conclusion

The revised document provides largely technical approaches to address increases in Regulatory flood risk as a result of ongoing and proposed urban development. The document aims to inform both development proponents and municipalities of the obligation to address potential future increases in Regulatory flood flows resulting from new development, as well as to present feasible alternatives to mitigate those increases in flood risk. The document also represents a comprehensive technical discussion for the Province's consideration in updating provincial technical guidance affecting Regional storm issues.

At present time the Regional Control Committee considers their work to be complete. A version of the Committee may be reconvened in the future if warranted. When MNRF initiates updating their technical guidance documents, CO will actively look for opportunities to participate and be engaged in this process.

Additional Resources

[April 2011, CO Council Report – Addressing Urbanization and the Regulatory Flood Event](#)

[September 2014, CO Council Report – Regional Storm Control Project Update](#)