

August 9, 2024

Re: Resolution Supporting FRW’s Application to Canadian Federation of Municipalities

Dear Markham Mayor and Councillors:

Thank you for supporting the community-based ecological restoration work of Friends of the Rouge Watershed (FRW) over the last three decades. In a past letter of support, Markham Mayor Frank Scarpitti noted:

“FRW has an excellent record of harnessing government, school, community and corporate support to achieve remarkable ecological restoration results.”

Since 1993, with the help of Markham and many other partners, FRW has:

- Involved 73,258 school and community volunteers in ecological restoration work.
- Coordinated the planting and care of 799,118 native trees, shrubs, and flowers.
- Restored 3.6 square kilometres of forest, wetland, meadow, and stream buffer habitat.

This ecological restoration work yields public dividends of \$10+ Million every year, based on the 2009 Ontario Report "*Estimating Ecosystem Services in Southern Ontario*", and in terms of:

- Absorbing and storing carbon to combat extreme climate change and weather.
- Reducing flooding and erosion costs, through precipitation storage and recycling.
- Protecting human health by filtering-out air and water pollutants and producing oxygen.
- Enhancing urban green spaces for healthy outdoor recreation and relaxation.
- Improving ecosystem health, biodiversity, and habitat for species at risk.

To continue our forest and wetland restoration work in Markham, FRW is applying to the Canadian Federation of Municipalities (CFM) for \$90,000/year from 2025 to 2027 to help us:

- Educate and coordinate 6,000+ school, community, and corporate volunteers.
- Purchase, plant, water, protect and maintain 36,000+ native trees, shrubs & flowers.
- Restore 10+ hectares of diverse forest habitat on approved City of Markham greenspaces.

FRW respectfully requests a Markham Council motion to support our CFM application. We appreciate that Markham staff support FRW’s application and have prepared a motion for your consideration in the format requested by CFM.

As climate change gathers steam, communities and infrastructure are increasingly vulnerable to costly damage from urban runoff and flash floods. In both 2013 and 2024, the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) suffered \$1+ Billion in damages from flooding.

FRW Patrons

Lois James, "Save the Rouge" founding member and Order of Canada Recipient

Joyce Trimmer, former Mayor of Scarborough, posthumous

Hon. Raymond Cho, MPP Scarborough North

Hon. Gerry Phillips, former MPP Scarborough Agincourt

Hon. Alvin Curling, former MPP Scarborough Rouge River

Hon. David Peterson, former Ontario Premier

Derek Lee, former MP Scarborough Rouge River

Rathika Sitsabaiesan, former MP Scarborough Rouge River

Paul Harpley, "Save the Rouge" founding member.

Bobbi Hunter, founding member of Greenpeace Executive

In 2018, the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation at the University of Waterloo, and Canada's Insurance Bureau, released the report "Combatting Canada's Rising Flood Costs" which notes:

- Economic losses quadrupled in Canada in nine years due to flooding and extreme weather.
- Forest & wetland restoration are among the most cost-effective ways to reduce flooding.
- Restoration projects are not being made at the scale and rate necessary.

After decades of scientific research and political debate, the United Nations (UN) declared 2021 to 2030 as the "*Decade of Ecosystem Restoration*". To reduce climate change, ecosystem decline and associated human suffering and economic losses, the UN has challenged everyone to help by planting one trillion trees worldwide in ten years.

On page 3, this letter contains quotes about FRW from community leaders and partners. Please also find attached before and after photographs of restoration sites in Markham.

In 2016, FRW received the J.R. Dymond Award from Ontario Nature for exceptional public service and environmental achievement. The award ceremony noted FRW's:

"Tireless and inspirational role in the creation of Rouge National Park" and

"Exceptional work on the ground with stewardship and restoration projects."

Thank you to Markham and your staff for three decades of support for FRW's community-based ecological restoration projects. We look forward to our continued partnership.

Please feel free to contact FRW, if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

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Supportive Quotes about Friends of the Rouge Watershed (FRW)

Frank Scarpitti, Markham Mayor, Excerpt from Past Letter of Support

“FRW has an excellent record of harnessing government, school, community and corporate support to achieve remarkable ecological restoration results.”

Jack Heath, Retired Markham Deputy Mayor, Excerpt from Past Letter of Support

“FRW partners with Markham schools to involve students in tree plantings and to educate and inspire students to protect and improve the health and beauty of Markham and the Rouge River ecosystem.”

Nory Takata, Markham Parks Planner, 2024 Letter of Support Excerpt

“FRW has demonstrated expertise and success in forest and wetland protection and restoration and youth and community involvement in environmental awareness and action. FRW trains volunteers and youth conservation workers to help water and mulch their plantings to obtain high survival and growth rates. Past FRW restoration sites are growing into biologically diverse young forests, which improve watershed, ecosystem, and community health.”

Hillside Outdoor Education School, 2024 Letter of Support Excerpt

“When students plant with FRW, they learn about, and take tangible steps to address significant environmental challenges such as climate change, Great Lakes health and biodiversity. These direct, hands-on outdoor experiences deepen the student’s connections to nature and enhance their health and well-being.”

Hon. Gary Anandasangaree, Member of Parliament, 2024 Letter of Support Excerpt

“FRW projects bring thousands of Canadians together, from some of our most culturally diverse communities, to engage in environmental education and tangible actions which will combat climate change impacts and improve watershed and community health for centuries to come.”

Hon. Raymond Cho, Member of Provincial Parliament, 2024 Letter of Support Excerpt

“FRW utilizes its ecological restoration projects, nature walks and educational presentations to foster school and community environmental awareness and actions to combat climate change and improve ecosystem, and community health.”

“Independent audits of FRW plantings have documented average tree survival rates of approximately 80%, due to good planting design, quality control and follow-up watering, mulching and maintenance.”

FRW & Markham Trees for Tomorrow Reforest Bob Hunter Memorial Park

School Planting October 2008



Same Site July 2016



FRW Reforestation of Bob Hunter Memorial Park / Rouge Park

Helping to Create a Beautiful and Biodiverse 7,500 ha Rouge National Park

School Planting April 2011



Same Site October 2022



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FRW & Markham Trees for Tomorrow Reforest Bob Hunter Memorial Park

School Planting May 2009



Same Site October 2022



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