



Memorandum

Date: October 25, 2013
To: Joint Stewardship Board, Red Hill Valley
From: Sheri Longboat, Coordinator, Joint Stewardship Board
Subject: **Evaluation of Potential Sites for the Environmental Interpretive Centre (EIC)**

As directed by the Joint Stewardship Board at the October 17, 2103 meeting with Architects Tillmann Ruth Robinson, an evaluation of sites for the EIC has been completed. The potential identified by the JSB include:

1. Mud Road
2. Carmen's
3. Eramosa Karst
4. Blacksmith
5. King's Forest Golf Course
6. St. Christopher's School
7. Red Hill Bowl

On October 22nd, Andrew Grice and I visited and evaluated these sites using the architectural criteria provided by ATRR, and construction considerations from the City of Hamilton. There are two documents that show the results of the evaluation, and support the discussion and final recommendations that follow.

- **Environmental Interpretive Centre Potential Sites** is a presentation that shows site locations and photos.
- **Environmental Interpretive Centre Evaluation Matrix** is a Word document that provides a list of the criteria and results of the evaluation.

As shown in the matrix and site image presentation, a few overall findings emerged from the evaluation:

- When we consider all of the criteria, there are few sites available for EIC construction. For example, in terms of size criteria, the site adjacent to **Carmen's** is not large enough to accommodate the facility; furthermore it is not well-treed or a natural site. The Carmen's site is easily located from the LINC (Lincoln

Alexander Parkway) and RHVP (Red Hill Valley Parkway), but access to the valley trail system, requires crossing the LINC via a footbridge.

- The **Blacksmith** site can be excluded since there is limited available space, residential development appears to be increasing, and the immediate area is not well-treed. A forested area is some distance (few 100 meters) away from the Blacksmith site, however, the treed areas is designated NEC Escarpment Protection Area.
- The **Red Hill Bowl** is the most northern site, located below the escarpment, and in the core of the valley, it is surrounded by homes, city streets and directly adjacent to the RHVP. The site could accommodate the 1 to 2 acres of space required, but it currently houses three baseball diamonds and EIC construction must consider existing recreational programming. The Red Hill Bowl site has ample parking, is easily accessible, and is located close to the RHV trail and RHV creek. It is outside of the NEC plan and would not require a permit.
- The **King's Forest Golf Course** also below the escarpment, has ample space, parking and servicing, and is close to public transportation. However, it is not strategically located to access from the RHVP, and is designated an NEC Escarpment Protection Area which may require more stringent approvals. There is the potential for EIC construction to be lumped into planned clubhouse upgrades; however, the upgrade budget is not forecasted for construction. The Golf Course sits along the base of the escarpment, but the surrounding area consists of well-manicured golf course grasses and trees, and this could be a drawback for connecting people to a more natural landscape.
- **St. Christopher's School** is located adjacent to the Golf Course property and sits on a residential street. The location poses similar challenges for valley and parkway access. This site would require significant site restoration and preparation to demolish existing infrastructure. It also sits adjacent to Rosedale Pool that is currently under construction. The school is near the base of the escarpment, but few trees are located directly on the site.
- The **Eramosa Karst** location meets a number of criteria. It can accommodate the space required. It is a serviced, natural site with ample paid parking, and on-site are new washroom facilities and an amphitheater. The site is not ideally situated for access to the valley trails (~3km away) and valley access requires travel through a commercial zone. The Hamilton Regional Conservation Area owns this site and it is outside of the NEC Plan.
- The **Mud Street** site also meets a number of criteria. The site can accommodate 1+ acre required, it is a well-treed natural area, there is water, sewer, and hydro servicing within 100 m, and close access from both the LINC and RHV Parkway. This site has the added advantage of providing a view of the valley, and the facility may be visible from the RHV Parkway. There is ample parking. The site sits at a RHV trail access point, and while there are some steep areas along the

trail, there are less steep portions as well, and some of the trail is paved. The site is NEC Urban Area designated which may provide some advantages for permitting if returning the land to conservation type activities.

Recommendations:

Based on results from the matrix evaluation and site visits, **I recommended the Mud Street site as the location for the EIC facility**. It should be noted that the Eramosa Karst site is also a strong candidate, however the distance from the RHV valley trails may divert from the vision and intent of the EIC design. The Red Hill Bowl site is the third potential site that meets many criteria, but the existing recreational land use, and proximity to the busy urban area, may detract from the spirit of the EIC design.

Board Decision Required:

The above are the findings and recommendations found from my analysis. I ask Board members to review the materials and draw their own conclusions. I am also happy to gather or provide more information to support your decision-making.

To keep in-line with our timeline commitments with ATRR to move forward with the EIC design and costing, I ask that Board members submit their comments and top choice for EIC location. Please note that the location is by no means the final selection. It will provide a site for a more customized site design and cost.

Kindly submit your choice and comment by Thursday October 31, 2013 so that ATRR can proceed to the next step of the design.