

Public Works

10 Peel Centre Dr.
Suite B
Brampton, ON
L6T 4B9
tel: 905-791-7800

peelregion.ca

August 26, 2024

Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks
5th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Re: Expanding Protected Areas in Ontario – Sites Proposed to be Regulated under the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006* ERO 019-8618

Peel Region is thankful to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) for the opportunity to comment on the proposed expansion of protected areas in Ontario under a proposed amendment to the *Provincial Parks and Conservation Reserves Act, 2006*. This response focusses exclusively on the proposed expansion to Forks of the Credit Provincial Park.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Peel Region is generally supportive of this proposed park expansion, however, there are concerns surrounding anticipated additional pressure to the surrounding Regional road network. Broadly, the existing provincial park and surrounding natural features attract many visitors to the area – particularly during the fall season when leaf colours begin to change. Leading into this area, the road network is heavily congested during peak seasonal tourist periods. The Regional road network in particular is often overrun with illegal parking and stopping activity due to the lack of suitable parking provision for tourists, and there is little room to accommodate through-movement vehicles, parked vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists simultaneously. Any proposed expansion of the provincial park system in the area will add additional pressure.

SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Peel Region requests that the MECP commission a comprehensive Transportation Impact Assessment (TIA) to quantify the impacts of the existing provincial park system in the area and the proposed expansion prior to proceeding with this specific Provincial Park expansion. This study, at a minimum, should be scoped to include the following:

- An assessment of existing and projected visitor (vehicular and pedestrian) and parking demand for the Forks of the Credit Provincial Park and impacts to surrounding hamlets such as Brimstone, Belfountain and Terra Cotta
- An investigation of possible overflow of the Provincial Park's existing parking supply that may lead to visitors desiring street parking along surrounding Regional roads (e.g., Forks of the Credit Road)
- An investigation of overall parking needs in the study area, including on-road and off-road facilities to support any influx of visitors in the surrounding hamlets of Brimstone, Belfountain and Terra Cotta

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- An investigation into speeding along the study area municipal and Regional road network and any warranted traffic calming opportunities above and beyond existing measures in place
- An assessment of existing and projected demand for pedestrian traffic including trail walking, biking, fishing and horseback riding
- Identification of existing and needed wayfinding to and from the Provincial Park (existing and expansion area) in order to prevent park users with truck-and-trailers or vehicles with trailers from utilizing segments of Forks of the Credit Road where passing is too difficult or impossible for these types of vehicle combinations to maneuver the hairpin turn located near the former Orangeville-Brampton railway corridor alignment west of Dominion Street
- A review and identification of any roadway geometric challenges and changes that would be required to the surrounding Regional road network – namely Forks of the Credit Road and Charleston Sideroad (both intersections and midblock segments)
- An investigation into need for washroom facilities at strategic locations within the overall study area; and
- An investigation into need for new trails with an at-grade and/or grade-separation with road/river crossings and viewing platforms.

CONCLUSION

Peel Region supports the expanded protection of natural areas within its boundaries. However, it is important to ensure that the surrounding areas are well-equipped to handle existing and future visitors to Forks of the Credit Provincial Park through a well-scoped mobility study. Should you have any questions or require more information, please contact me at sean.nix@peelregion.ca.

Sincerely,



Sean Nix, Manager of Transportation Operations