

Development Services Committee – April 12, 2021

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Consultation on Growing the Size of the Greenbelt (ERO 019-3136) (File: B-1100-0038)

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That the Development Services Committee recommend to City Council:

Whereas, on February 17, 2021, under the lead of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (“M.M.A.H.”), the Province of Ontario released a posting on the Environmental Registry of Ontario (Posting Number ERO 019-3136) entitled “Consultation on growing the size of the Greenbelt” (the “Posting”) for comment, with comments due by April 19, 2021; and,

Whereas, staff are seeking authority to submit City comments on the Posting in advance of Council’s endorsement of the comments in order to meet the April 19, 2021 deadline; and,

Whereas, staff provided a copy of the Posting to the Oshawa Environmental Advisory Committee and advised members to submit their individual comments directly to the Province by the April 19, 2021 deadline; and,

Whereas, the intent of the Posting is to obtain comments on a Study Area focused on the Paris Galt Moraine (which is not applicable to the City of Oshawa) as well as existing Urban River Valleys, including Urban River Valleys beyond the 21 Urban River Valleys already included in the Greenbelt Plan (of which three are located in Oshawa, comprising the Farewell/Harmony Creeks and the Oshawa Creek); and,

Whereas, the Urban River Valley designation in the Greenbelt Plan applies to lands in Watercourse Valleylands traversing urban areas connecting the Greenbelt to the Great Lakes and inland lakes and applies only to publicly-owned main corridors of river valleys and has no effect on the environmental impact of privately-owned lands; and,

Whereas, on March 23, 2021 staff received Report 5731-21 dated March 16, 2021 prepared by the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority (“C.L.O.C.A.”) concerning the Provincial consultation on the Greenbelt expansion, which recommended that the existing Urban River Valley designated areas in Oshawa be expanded to include the following two areas (together referred to as the “Proposed Expansion Areas”), as shown in red on Attachment 1:

- The coastal wetland area at the mouth of Montgomery Creek and the valleyland system associated with Montgomery Creek between the creek mouth and Bloor Street East; and,
- A connection from the Second Marsh and McLaughlin Bay areas and the associated valleyland systems to Darlington Provincial Park (located in the Municipality of Clarington) to the east; and,

Whereas, the Proposed Expansion Areas closely align with the limits of the associated lands designated for Open Space and Recreation purposes on Schedule 'A', Land Use, of the O.O.P. as well as the limits of the City's existing Natural Heritage System ("N.H.S.") and Natural Heritage and/or Hydrologic Features outside of the N.H.S. as designated on Schedule 'D-1', Environmental Management, of the O.O.P., with the exception of a few minor areas where the Proposed Expansion Areas go beyond the limits of the areas designated as Open Space and Recreation, N.H.S. and/or Natural Heritage and/or Hydrologic Features outside of the N.H.S. (see Attachment 1); and,

Whereas, in addition to the Proposed Expansion Areas, C.L.O.C.A.'s Report 5731-21 noted the importance of the following regionally significant corridors for wildlife habitat and movement (together referred to as the "Corridor Areas"), as shown in purple on Attachment 1:

- The east-west wildlife corridor through the Oak Ridges Moraine and existing Greenbelt area ("Corridor 1");
- The east-west wildlife corridor along the former Lake Iroquois shoreline ("Corridor 2"); and,
- The east-west wildlife corridor along the Lake Ontario shoreline ("Corridor 3"); and,

Whereas, staff have reviewed C.L.O.C.A.'s Report 5731-21 including the Proposed Expansion Areas and Corridor Areas; and,

Whereas, staff note that Corridor 1 is already incorporated within and supported by the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan which both contain strong environmental management policies, which are further reinforced through reciprocal policies in the Oshawa Official Plan (the "O.O.P.") including Policy 5.1.9 which recognizes that the Oak Ridges Moraine, Lake Iroquois Beach and Lake Ontario shoreline are important landscape features, acting as large-scale wildlife corridors that support east-west movement and connect with the north-south movement corridors in each of the City's watersheds; and,

Whereas, staff support the addition of Corridor 2 along the Lake Iroquois Beach for wildlife habitat and movement under the umbrella of an Urban River Valley designation in order to, where possible, enhance the connectivity and function of key natural heritage features, key hydrologic features and key hydrologic areas across those portions of the Lake Iroquois Beach, particularly given that Policy 5.1.9 of the O.O.P. already recognizes the Lake Iroquois Beach as an important east-west corridor for the movement of wildlife; and,

Whereas, staff support the addition of Corridor 3 for wildlife habitat and movement under the umbrella of an Urban River Valley designation, as there are several areas of natural wildlife habitat along the Lake Ontario shoreline that would benefit from the Urban River Valley designation protections in the Greenbelt Plan including, but not limited to, the Oshawa Pumphouse Wetlands and associated open space as well as the Oshawa Lakeview Park and connections across the publicly-owned waterfront, and that

pursuant to Policy 5.7.2.6 of the O.O.P., lands within one (1) kilometre of the Lake Ontario shoreline are currently identified in the O.O.P. as important ecological areas containing environmental features and functions such as wildlife habitat and a regional wildlife movement corridor offering unique habitat and movement opportunities; and,

Whereas, expanding the existing Urban River Valley designated areas in the Greenbelt Plan to include the Proposed Expansion Areas, Corridor 2 and Corridor 3 where they coincide with the limits of the areas designated as Open Space and Recreation, N.H.S. and Natural Heritage and/or Hydrologic Features outside of the N.H.S. supports the intent of the environmental management policies contained in the O.O.P., and does not alter the effect of the O.O.P. policies specifically relating to the Greenbelt Natural Heritage System; and,

Therefore be it resolved:

1. That the City of Oshawa supports expanding the existing Urban River Valley designated areas in the Greenbelt Plan to include the Proposed Expansion Areas, as generally outlined in Attachment 1, to the extent that they coincide with associated lands designated as Open Space and Recreation on Schedule 'A', Land Use, of the Oshawa Official Plan and as Natural Heritage System and Natural Heritage and/or Hydrologic Features outside of the Natural Heritage System on Schedule "D-1", Environmental Management, of the Oshawa Official Plan;
2. That the City of Oshawa supports expanding the existing Urban River Valley designated areas in the Greenbelt Plan to include Corridors 2 and 3 as generally outlined in Attachment 1, given that Corridor 2 is subject to Policy 5.1.9 of the Oshawa Official Plan which, among other matters, supports the maintenance and restoration of a continuous corridor function within the Lake Iroquois Beach area, and given that Corridor 3 coincides with lands already subject to Policy 5.7.2.6 of the Oshawa Official Plan which, among other matters, explicitly recognizes the importance of lands within one (1) kilometre of the Lake Ontario shoreline as wildlife habitat and a regional wildlife movement corridor;
3. That the Province of Ontario be requested to provide implementing land acquisition funding to acquire new public Greenbelt Urban River Valley connection lands including Lake Ontario Waterfront lands;
4. That staff be authorized to forward Item DS-21-72 and any related resolution of the Development Services Committee to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and to provide subsequent follow-up once Council has considered this matter; and,
5. That a copy of Item DS-21-72 and the related Council resolution be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in response to the posting on the Environmental Registry of Ontario entitled "Consultation on growing the size of the Greenbelt" (Posting Number ERO 019-3136), with copies also provided to the Region of Durham, Durham area municipalities, Durham area M.P.P.s, the Central Lake Ontario Conservation Authority, and the City's Building Industry Liaison Team

which includes the Durham Chapter of the Durham Region Home Builders' Association.

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