

Clause No.6 in Report No. 10 of Committee of the Whole was adopted, without amendment, by the Council of The Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held on May 15, 2014.

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FOREST CONSERVATION BYLAW – SPECIAL PERMIT – MAPLE DOWNS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, CITY OF VAUGHAN

Committee of the Whole recommends adoption of the following recommendation contained in the report dated April 23, 2014 from the Commissioner of Environmental Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Maple Downs Golf and Country Club Special Permit application under the Forest Conservation Bylaw for the removal of 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) of woodland and 31 individual trees, for the purposes of improving turf grass conditions, be approved by Council.

2. PURPOSE

In accordance with York Region’s Forest Conservation Bylaw, this report seeks Council approval regarding a Special Permit application to remove 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) of woodland and 31 individual trees. A condition of the permit will be the planting of trees and shrubs on site to create a net increase of forest cover of 0.98 hectares (2.42 acres) in the City of Vaughan.

3. BACKGROUND

Forest Conservation Bylaw Special Permit applications proposing large scale tree removal from woodlands require Council approval

York Region’s Forest Conservation Bylaw (No. 2013-68) regulates the destruction or injury of trees in woodlands on private property. Council may approve or deny Special Permits for large scale tree removal (removal of 0.2 hectares or greater). The intent of the Bylaw is to protect forests and advance the Region’s Official Plan goal of achieving 25 per cent forest cover by the year 2031, while promoting good forestry practices.

Proposal includes the removal of 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) of woodland and additional removal of 31 trees as part of a golf course renovation and maintenance project

Maple Downs Golf and Country Club applied for a Special Permit for 11101 Dufferin Street, City of Vaughan (*Attachment 1*). The 82 hectares (200 acres) site is situated on the Oak Ridges Moraine. The area of forest under the jurisdiction of the Forest Conservation Bylaw is estimated to be approximately 25.4 hectares (63 acres) or 35 per cent of the property. The proposal includes removal of 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) of woodland and selective removal of 31 trees.

Review balances the interests of sustainable golf course management and maintenance, with the protection of the natural environment

Maple Downs Golf and Country Club was established in the 1950s on primarily agricultural lands. Over the past 60 years the majority of trees and vegetation along fairways were planted or allowed to become naturally established to enhance the golfing experience.

The purpose of this proposed tree removal is to improve turf grass health and course conditions. The tree removal increases air circulation and reduces shading of turf grass on the greens and tees. In addition to tree removal activities, this golf course renovation includes alterations in grading, drainage and course layout. The applicant has worked with the Region, City of Vaughan and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in a pre-consultation process which began in 2011. The application has been reviewed giving consideration to the Bylaw screening process, Regional Official Plan policies, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act (ORMCA) 2001, and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan) 2001.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Property includes areas designated under the Oak Ridges Moraine legislation and Regional Official Plan, and includes significant natural features which will not be impacted by the project

The subject lands include Regional Official Plan (ROP) designations: Natural Core Area, Natural Linkage Area, and Countryside Area on the Oak Ridges Moraine, and is within the Don River watershed. Two woodland areas on the property are identified as Key Natural Heritage Features – Significant Woodlands. The site includes the McGill Area Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and the Maple Uplands and Kettle Area of Natural and Scientific Interest (Life Science ANSI). These environmental areas will not be negatively impacted by the project.

Pre-consultation and review of the proposal, studies and documents, including Environmental Impact Study have identified the scope of work

The applicant engaged SJM Arboriculture Consulting Ltd. to assess how trees affect the shade and air flow impacting turf grass for the tees, fairways and greens. The analysis directs the removal of only those trees with the greatest negative impact on turf quality. From an aesthetic perspective, it is in the golf course's best interest to retain as many trees as possible and remove only those trees which negatively impact the course. Periodic tree removal is considered a maintenance component of golf course operations.

The application includes an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) (Savanta Inc.), Hydrological Evaluation (R.J. Burnside & Associates Ltd.), Oak Ridges Moraine Conformity Review (Groundswell Urban Planners Inc.), Arborist Inspection Report (SJM Arboriculture Consulting Ltd), Proposed Compensation Report (SJM Arboriculture Consulting Ltd), and a Golf Course Master Plan Renovation (Ian Andrews Golf Design Inc.).

Tree removal is proposed in three areas under the Region's jurisdiction (R1, R2 and R3 – *Attachment 2*). The application proposes the removal of 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) of forest from 2 locations (R1 and R2). Forest communities at R1 and R2 are dominated by non-native Scots Pine and Locust trees with some Poplar trees. In addition, the application includes the selective removal of 31 individual trees from area R3. The trees to be removed from R3 are 25 tall non-native Locust trees and 6 native Poplar trees. The removals include trees 12 to 21 meters tall, which are approximately 60 years old. The forest area R3 is identified as a Key Natural Heritage Feature - Significant Woodland. The proposed selective tree removals do not reduce the forest area or significantly impact the functions, and are not in conflict with the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan.

Maple Downs Golf and Country Club proposes a net environmental benefit by tree planting to increase forest cover on site at a ratio of 2.5:1

To offset the 0.58 hectares (1.43 acres) loss of forest cover, proposed compensation includes planting of 1.56 hectares (3.85 acres) of new forest area. This compensation will result in a net gain of 0.98 hectares (2.42 acres) of forest. Tree planting compensation is proposed at nine locations to increase the size of existing forests (*Attachment 2 - Proposed Compensation Areas*). A total of 2,689 trees and 600 shrubs will be planted in the spring of 2015 and will include a variety of native species ranging in size from 0.5 to 2.0 metres. An additional 65 trees are to be planted within existing woodlands to improve the biodiversity and forest conditions.

The plantings will compensate for the loss of woodland area at an approximate ratio of 2.5:1 and help achieve a net gain of forest cover. Conditions of the Region's permit will

ensure commitment to reforestation, include a multi-year monitoring plan and specify a requirement to replant trees that do not survive initial planting.

Environmental Impact Study identifies minimal impact and proposes adequate mitigation and compensation measures

The Environmental Impact Study includes a natural heritage evaluation, screening under the Endangered Species Act (2007), identifies the scope of potential impacts and proposes mitigation measures. Environmental impacts will be minimal as large areas of forest are avoided and the majority of tree removal is non-native Scots pine. Conditions of permit will prescribe mitigation requirements, including forest protection and sediment control fencing, a timing restriction to protect breeding birds, and compensation (tree planting) for loss of forest cover.

A hydrological/hydrogeological evaluation of the proposed works by R.J. Burnside and Associates concluded that the project will not impact groundwater recharge or have any effect on groundwater quality.

City of Vaughan, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority have been consulted

City of Vaughan, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority have participated in meetings or discussions on this project since 2011. The application was circulated for comments, and feedback was taken into consideration as part of this review. Comments included:

- City of Vaughan – project is consistent with the Official Plan (OPA #604).
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority - project is outside of the Regulation area and a permit is not required. Comments supported timing restrictions and protection of adjacent environmental areas.
- Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources – editorial comments on studies and supporting documents

It should be noted that the Maple Downs Golf and Country Club members have reviewed the project and are in support of the proposal.

Link to key Council-approved plans

This application aligns with the Sustainable Environment fundamental principle within the 2011 to 2015 Strategic Plan. Sustainable management of natural features on the subject property supports the Vision 2026 goal for an Enhanced Environment and helps to secure a green York Region.

Recommendations of this report are consistent with the objectives of the Regional Official Plan environmental policies, including the target of achieving 25 per cent forest cover by 2031.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

City of Vaughan staff have been involved in pre-consultation meetings and discussions with Maple Downs Golf and Country Club since 2011. City staff are satisfied that the proposal is consistent with Official Plan policies. In addition to the impacts on the woodland areas under Regional Bylaw jurisdiction, the project also includes the removal of 118 additional individual trees outside of Regional jurisdiction. The City of Vaughan Trees Bylaw (No.185-2007) contains an exception for golf courses.

The proposed works contribute to the sustainable management of the Maple Downs Golf and Country Club. Approval of this permit includes a commitment to mitigation and compensation measures and will increase the forest cover in the City of Vaughan by 0.98 hectares (2.42 acres).

7. CONCLUSION

Proposal is reasonable and allows appropriate management for existing golf course while meeting the environmental objectives of the Bylaw and Regional Official Plan

The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed partial woodland and individual tree removal are required for turf grass improvements and is integral to the golf club's management and maintenance needs. Impacts to forests are balanced with appropriate mitigation and compensation measures, including a net gain of forest cover (0.98 hectares or 2.42 acres). The project proposal meets the requirements of the Forest Conservation Bylaw and is consistent with policies of the Regional Official Plan and provisions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. As such, Council approval of the application is recommended.

For more information on this report, please contact Ian Buchanan, Manager of Natural Heritage and Forestry at 905 830-4444 Ext. 75204 or Laura McDowell, Director, Environmental Promotion and Protection at 905 830-4444 Ext. 75077.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

Attachment (2)



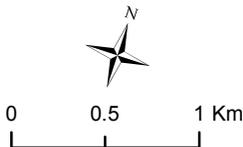
Path: G:\Policy\IP10 - By-Laws - Region\Forestry\Forest Conservation By-Law\FCBL Special Permits\2011\Maple Downs Golf Club\Maple Downs Attach1 - May 2014 Council.mxd

**LOCATION OF MAPLE DOWNS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB,
11101 DUFFERIN STREET, CITY OF VAUGHAN**

FOREST CONSERVATION BYLAW SPECIAL PERMIT
MAPLE DOWNS GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB, CITY OF VAUGHAN,
MAY 8, 2014



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Legend

- Arterial Road
- - - - - Municipal Boundary
-  Maple Downs Golf and Country Club

Location Map

Forest Conservation By-law Special Permit Application
 Maple Downs Golf and Country Club, 11101 Dufferin Street, City of Vaughan



Location	Area	Number of Trees
R1	0.53 ha	—
R2	0.05 ha	—
R3	—	31 trees
Compensation Areas	1.56 ha	2854 trees and 600 shrubs

Legend

- Proposed Woodland Removal (R1 and R2) and Single Tree Removal in a Woodland Area (R3)
- Proposed Compensation Areas
- Property Boundary

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 Environmental Services Department
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