

THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

**REPORT NO. 11 OF THE REGIONAL
TRANSPORTATION AND WORKS COMMITTEE
MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 4, 2006**

**For Consideration by
The Council of The Regional Municipality of York
on October 19, 2006**

**1
GREENLANDS PROPERTY SECUREMENT
BAYVIEW OAKRIDGES ESTATES
TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL**

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, October 3, 2006, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize the contribution of \$250,000 towards the acquisition of the Bayview Oakridges Estates property located within the Town of Richmond Hill, Community of Oak Ridges, conditional upon successful fund-raising by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority of the additional funds required (\$750,000).
2. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Chief Administrative Officer of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and the Clerk of the Town of Richmond Hill.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek approval to contribute \$250,000 towards the partnership acquisition request by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for the Bayview Oakridges Estates property as part of the Regional Greening and Securement Strategies.

3. BACKGROUND

In 2001, Regional Council approved the Greening and Greenlands Property Securement Strategies with an annual commitment of \$1,400,000 for their implementation. In addition to the successful delivery of a number of Greening Strategy programs and projects focusing on habitat protection and restoration, public education and promotion, information management and more, 235 hectares (580 acres) of land has been secured through donations, conservation easements, purchases and other opportunities.

The Bayview Oakridges Estates property is a parcel of land, approximately 10 hectares (25 acres), located on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Community of Oak Ridges, Town of Richmond Hill (*Attachment 1*). The property is located immediately west of the Jefferson Forest, a property jointly owned by the TRCA, York Region, and the Town of Richmond Hill. The TRCA has been negotiating the acquisition of this property for approximately one year.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The purchase price of this property is \$920,000. With additional administrative expenses, TRCA is seeking to obtain \$1,000,000 for the acquisition of this property. The acquisition budget and proposed funding scenario is set out in Table 1.

Table 1

Bayview Oakridges Estates Property Acquisition Budget and Proposed Funding

Total Securement Budget	Amount	Comments
Purchase Price	\$920,000	10 hectares (25 acres)
Associated Costs	\$80,000	Admin, Land Transfer Tax, stewardship etc.
TOTAL	\$1,000,000	
Partnership Funding	Amount	Comments
York Region	\$250,000	
Town of Richmond Hill	\$250,000	Staff level support
Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation	\$250,000	Staff level support

City of Toronto	\$250,000	Confirmed
TOTAL	\$1,000,000	

The purchase price is based on an Accredited Appraiser Canadian Institute accredited appraisal, and is consistent with comparable properties in the area.

4.1 Natural Heritage Protection and Enhancement

Regional Securement Criteria were adopted by Regional Council in 2005 to assess securement opportunities. An Internal Evaluation Team (IET) for securement opportunities has been created to review land securement opportunities and make recommendations to Committee and Council as necessary. This Team consists of staff from the Finance, Planning, Legal, Property Services and the Natural Heritage and Forestry Services section of Transportation and Works.

When assessed against the Regional Securement Criteria, this property scores in the intermediate range (49/100). The property is a priority of the TRCA and the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation. It is appropriate for the Region to play a supportive role in the acquisition, as the criteria places a significant amount of emphasis on properties that allow for reforestation to enhance existing features and provide for new connections. The acquisition of this forested property is a significant contribution to the ongoing assemblage of public land in this area, protecting an ecological corridor from the Oak Ridges Corridor Park through Oak Ridges Moraine core lands to the north east (*Attachment 1*). This, and adjacent properties, have been identified by the TRCA, who is leading this acquisition opportunity, as a priority for public acquisition. Publicly owned lands are currently contiguous from Bathurst Street to Bayview Avenue and from this property north to Bethesda Road and beyond. The securement of this property through a partnership with the TRCA and others is a significant step to joining these publicly owned natural corridors.

4.2 Land Ownership and Management

It is proposed that title to these lands be held by the TRCA. While the adjacent Jefferson Forest is jointly owned by the TRCA, York Region and the Town of Richmond Hill, the TRCA has been very successful in consolidating a number of properties in this area and is the logical owner of this property.

Also in the vicinity of this property is the Oak Ridges Moraine Corridor Park consisting of developer-owned lands soon to be conveyed to the Province as part of the Seaton Land Exchange. These lands will be managed by the TRCA.

In light of the proximity to the Oak Ridges Moraine Corridor Park, and the significant adjacent publicly owned lands, the TRCA is recommending that a Management Plan be prepared for this property along with the jointly-owned adjacent Jefferson Forest property and potentially some Town of Richmond Hill lands also in the area. York Region staff is

supportive of this approach and would be a member of the working committee overseeing the preparation of this Plan to set out the roles and responsibilities of the various partners.

The IET has reviewed this acquisition opportunity in light of Regional Natural Heritage objectives. It is recommended that the Region support the TRCA and the funding request. The IET also concurs with the recommendation that a management plan be carried out for the property and adjacent publicly-owned lands.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Region's Greening and Securement Strategies continue to support Vision 2026 and such key goal statements as:

“In 2026, York Region residents will continue to value and embrace the Region's unique natural heritage (land, air, water) and cultural heritage (sites and buildings important to our history, faiths and cultures).”

“In 2026, York Region will have grown at a pace that supports healthy communities, economic vitality, sustainable natural environment and effective human services.”

The Strategies strengthen the Region's commitment to focus on Vision 2026 action areas including:

- Protecting sensitive features such as forests, watersheds, the Oak Ridges Moraine and Lake Simcoe.
- Promoting a permanent linked Greenlands system.
- Continuing to develop and build strategies for a green Region, such as the York Regional Forest Management Plan, the Greening Strategy and the Greenlands Property Securement Strategy.
- Taking a leadership role in the development and implementation of environmental strategies and conservation activities.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

In April 2001, Council approved the Greenlands Property Securement Strategy – A Legacy for our Future. This approval included the establishment of the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve with annual contributions of \$1,400,000 from 2003 on, phased in over 2001 and 2002.

The proposed York Region contribution of \$250,000 is equal to \$10,000 per acre. The overall property cost is approximately \$40,000 per acre; an amount shared between four parties. The purchase price of \$920,000 for this 25 acre parcel is based on an accredited

(AACI) appraisal and is comparable with recent sales in the area. Vacant 2 to 3 acre lots immediately south of this property are currently selling for \$500,000 to \$600,000.

The Greenlands Property Securement Reserve currently contains approximately \$4,900,000. One million dollars of this has just been committed by Regional Council for the acquisition of the Slokker Canada property in the Township of King leaving a remaining balance of \$3,900,000. As such, there are sufficient funds in the reserve to participate in the Bayview Oakridges Estates property acquisition at the proposed funding level.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the implementation of the Securement Strategy. As greenlands are protected and enhanced through securement initiatives, local municipalities benefit from the multiple enhancements to both their communities and the natural environment. Town of Richmond Hill staff is supportive of the public acquisition of this property and the Town has been requested to commit \$250,000 towards its acquisition.

7. CONCLUSION

The Internal Evaluation Team (IET) for securement opportunities has considered this acquisition opportunity and concluded that Regional funding support should be a priority. The IET also concurs with the recommendation that a management plan be carried out for the property and adjacent publicly-owned lands. Staff recommends that the Region contribute \$250,000 towards the acquisition of the Bayview Oakridges Estates property.

For more information on this report, contact Sandra Malcic, Regional Greening Co-ordinator of the Transportation and Works Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

Respectfully submitted,

**October 4, 2006
Newmarket, Ontario**

**B. O'Donnell
Chair**

(Report No. 11 of the Transportation and Works Committee was adopted, without amendment, by Regional Council at its meeting held on October 19, 2006.)

Bayview Oakridges Estates

