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**GREENLANDS PROPERTY SECUREMENT
DIRECTIONS REPORT - NEWMARKET WOODLOT**

(Regional Council at its meeting on March 25, 2004, amended the following Clause as follows:

to defer the matter to the June 16, 2004 Transportation and Works Committee meeting, pending submission of a report from the Town of Newmarket.)

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends:

- 1. The following report, February 19, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and Commissioner of Planning and Development Services, be deferred to the April 7, 2004 Transportation and Works Committee meeting; and**
- 2. Staff be requested to provide the Town of Newmarket with details of the ratings and methodology used for the internal evaluation securement assessment process.**

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. Funding assistance for the purchase of the 4.57 hectare (11.3 acre) woodlot in northwest Newmarket not be provided as the property was assessed as a low priority for Regional involvement in securement when assessed against the Regional Securement Criteria.
2. York Region staff continue to offer technical support to assist the Town of Newmarket in pursuing other securement options with the landowner, including stewardship arrangements, the donation of a conservation easement, land donation, or other innovative partnership.
3. The Regional Clerk forward a copy of this report to the Clerk of the Town of Newmarket.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline the status of a request from the Town of Newmarket, and seek Council approval of the staff recommendations with respect to a requested financial contribution for the acquisition of the 4.57 hectare woodlot in the northwest quadrant (*Attachment 1*) of the Town of Newmarket. This report documents

the review of the subject property when assessed against the Regional Securement Criteria.

3. BACKGROUND

On January 22, 2004, Regional Council adopted the Regional Criteria for Greenlands Property Securement. The intent of the criteria is to ensure that Regional Securement initiatives are directed in such a manner as to optimize the benefits to the Regional natural heritage system and its value to Regional residents. These criteria have received substantial support from other stakeholders including area municipalities, conservation organizations, and the public.

As prescribed in the Regional Securement Strategy, an Internal Evaluation Team (IET) has been established to review, assess and evaluate potential securement opportunities in accordance with the Regional Securement Criteria and make recommendations to Senior Management. This group includes Regional representation from Legal, Property and Financial Services, as well as the Planning Department and Natural Heritage and Forestry Section of the Transportation and Works Department.

In March 2003, the Town of Newmarket Council adopted a recommendation requesting “that the Town immediately apply to York Region for funding under their Environmental Securement Policies to assist in financing the securement of a 4.57 hectare (11.3 acre) woodlot east of the Core Natural Heritage Area in the Northwest Quadrant”. Through a second resolution in September, the Town asked “that the Region consider partnering with the Town of Newmarket to purchase the woodlot with a financial contribution not to exceed 50% of the purchase price”.

The purchase price is based on the appraised value not to exceed \$180,000 per acre as committed to by an agreement between the Town of Newmarket and the developer. As identified in the attached resolution from the Town of Newmarket Council (*Attachment 2*), the Regional contribution was not to exceed \$1,017,000 based on a maximum of 50% of \$180,000 per acre. The Internal Evaluation Team (IET) for securement initiatives has reviewed and assessed the acquisition opportunity against the Region’s Securement Criteria.

This matter was further dealt with at Town of Newmarket Council on October 14, 2003. Council endorsed the following the recommendation of Committee of the Whole relevant to the North West Newmarket woodlot:

THAT staff be authorized to proceed with the acquisition of the 11.3 +/- acre woodlot at the upset limit of \$180,000 per acre inclusive of GST

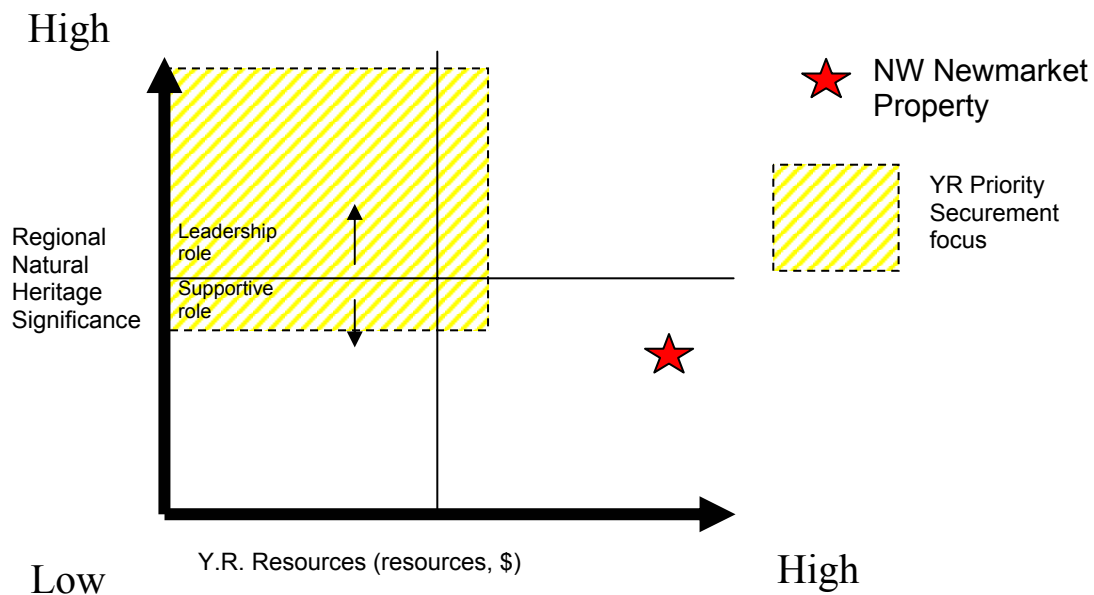
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4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

4.1 Regional Priority Matrix

In order to assist the Region in making recommendations on which properties are a priority for Regional involvement in securement, and the extent of that involvement, the following Regional Decision Matrix was introduced in the Securement Criteria policy. The Region should seek to focus resources on properties that fall within the top left quadrant of the matrix (Figure 1). These properties would be of high natural heritage value to the Region when assessed against the Regional criteria.

Figure 1
Regional Priority Matrix



The northwest Newmarket property has been plotted on the matrix to graphically demonstrate how this property is assessed against the Regional Criteria for securement and the level of resources requested. For comparison purposes, *Attachment 3* plots a number of other properties secured through either conservation easement donation or acquisition on the Regional Priority Matrix.

4.2 Internal Evaluation Team (IET) Securement Assessment

The subject property is a 4.57 hectare tableland woodlot owned by a developer and is approved for development by an approved secondary plan. The subject property forms part of the Regional Greenlands system and functions to enhance an existing green node. The property does not, however, provide an opportunity to improve linkage function or increase forest massing. As a result of the aforementioned, and in light of some of the other opportunities and constraints on the property, this securement opportunity was assessed as a low priority for Regional involvement.

The Newmarket property has locally significant natural heritage values. However, the lands are not integral to protecting or enhancing the Regional Greenlands System. The system that these lands are associated with (Holland River north-south corridor) terminates just south of the subject site and is not part of the critical continuous connected Regional system (*Attachment 4*).

It is recognized that the subject lands will be accessible from local trails and the adjacent residential subdivision. This feature would not be readily available to all Regional residents and will function primarily as a local amenity. This is unlike the Regional Forest properties, and some of the other Regional corridors which have parking facilities and/or are accessible from Regional Roads and trail systems.

The IET has reviewed this request and found the property to be of a low priority for Regional involvement in acquisition. Their recommendations for the property are as follows:

- The Town of Newmarket be advised the Region is not prepared to be a funding partner for the securement of this property, as it is not a Regional priority for securement when reviewed using the Region's Securement Criteria.
- York Region staff continues to offer technical support to assist the Town in pursuing other securement options with the landowner, including stewardship arrangements, the donation of a conservation easement, land donation, or other innovative partnership.

It is staffs understanding from the following Town of Newmarket resolution, that the Town has committed to proceed with the acquisition of this woodlot.

THAT staff be authorised to proceed with the acquisition of the 11.3 +/- acre woodlot at the upset limit of \$180,000 per acre inclusive of GST

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Regional staff from the Planning and Development Services and Transportation and Works Departments are prepared to assist the Town in pursuing other fund raising, or securement opportunities.

4.3 Relationship to Vision 2026

The Greenlands Property Securement Strategy continues 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 strategy strengthens 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 Greenlands Property Securement Reserve currently has approximately \$2,200,000. The maximum requested amount from the Town of Newmarket for assistance with the purchase of this 11.3 acre woodlot is \$1,017,000, approximately half of the reserve balance.

There are no financial implications to the Region arising from the recommendations.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the implementation of the Securement Strategy. As Greenlands are protected and enhanced through both local and Regional securement initiatives, local municipalities benefit from the multiple enhancements to both their communities and the natural environment. Ensuring that Regional resources are appropriately and strategically allocated in the interest of protecting a healthy natural heritage Regional system for future generations is to the benefit of all York local municipalities.

Regional staff has had significant consultation with Town of Newmarket staff throughout this review. The Town is recognized for its ongoing commitment to protect this feature. The Town of Newmarket has demonstrated their dedication to the natural environment

through the completion of a Natural Heritage Strategy and their recent initiative to advance a Tree By-law.

7. CONCLUSION

The IET for Securement Initiatives has reviewed and assessed this opportunity for the acquisition of greenspace. Staff is recommending that funds not be allocated for the securement of the northwest Newmarket property as it is a low priority for Regional involvement in securement when assessed against the securement criteria and the Regional Priority Matrix.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(A copy of the attachments referred to in the foregoing is included with this report and is also on file in the Office of the Regional Clerk.)