

4

GREENLANDS PROPERTY SECUREMENT CALANDRA PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, March 31, 2004, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Works and Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Corporate Services:

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Commissioner of Corporate Services be authorized to complete the purchase of the Calandra Property for \$325,000.
2. Staff be directed to report back in the 2004 Greenlands Property Securement Achievements report on partnership funds that were generated to support this acquisition.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain Regional Council's approval to purchase 60± acres of land, described as being Part of Lot 23, Concession 7, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (*Attachment 1*), presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Calandra, for \$325,000.

3. BACKGROUND

On February 19, 2004, Regional Council directed the Director of Realty Services to commence negotiations on this 60± acre parcel of land for an amount not to exceed \$325,000. Staff has a signed offer from the Calandra's to sell this property to the Region for the sum of \$325,000.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

This property has been deemed a high priority for Regional acquisition. as elaborated in a report to the Transportation and Works Committee on February 4, 2004. The securement of this property in Regional ownership means that it will be accessible for active reforestation and community education, stewardship and public enjoyment as part of the York Regional Forest.

4.1 Securement Partners

The Oak Ridges Moraine Land Trust was instrumental in securing a Conservation Easement on this property in December 2003. This easement ensures its perpetual

protection and results in a depreciated purchase price to the Region. The Land Trust was also instrumental in providing the introduction to the Calandra's for the purpose of discussing public acquisition of their land.

An application has been submitted to the Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation (the Foundation) to provide financial assistance for the purchase and reforestation of this property. The Foundation generally requires their contribution be matched at a 2:1 ratio to other partner funds. As such, the Foundation has been requested to provide \$108,000. Based on discussions with the Foundation staff, this securement is recognized as an excellent opportunity.

4.2 Next Steps

The next step in the securement, protection and enhancement of this property is reforestation. The Region's Natural Heritage and Forestry Section will propose a partnership reforestation initiative in 2004. The Lake Simcoe Conservation Authority, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, and the Regional Forest Advisory Team (RFAT) are expected to be significant partners in assisting with the revegetation of this property and the use of Community Volunteers to foster local stewardship and education as the Regional Forest expands to include these lands.

The Oak Ridges Trail Association is also expected to be a visible partner as another section of the Oak Ridges Moraine Trail comes into public ownership with the acquisition of this property.

It is anticipated that a ceremony in celebration of the Calandra's for their significant donation of the Conservation Easement on these lands will occur in early May 2004. With respect to Regional acquisition of these lands, staff anticipates a ceremony, including the planting of the first tree, will occur in the fall celebrating the expansion of the York Regional Forest.

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.

The acquisition and reforestation of this property also provides a significant opportunity to strive towards the Region's Official Plan objective of increasing Regional forest cover to 25%.

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 (contributions were phased in over 2001 and 2002). This purchase, at \$325,000 (approximately \$5,500 per acre) will be funded from the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve. Staff will continue to seek the financial assistance of partners which may reduce the cost to the Region. There are sufficient funds in the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve for the Calandra purchase.

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. The York Regional Forest is a prominent feature on the Whitchurch-Stouffville landscape. This expansion of the Regional Forest will further enhance the Forest, and the natural environment, as a resource to residents across the Region.

7. CONCLUSION

The lands, which are the subject of this report, are integral to advancing the objectives of the Greening and Securement Strategies.

It is recommended that the acquisition of the Calandra property be completed.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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