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GREENING LAND SECUREMENT PERRYMAN PROPERTY PARTNERSHIP ACQUISITION TOWN OF RICHMOND HILL

The Transportation and Works Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report, August 25 from the Commissioner of Transportation Services and the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services:

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Regional Council authorize the contribution of up to \$762,000 towards the 33 hectare (83 acre) Perryman Property located at 11751 and 11825 Leslie Street in the Town of Richmond Hill, subject to:
 - a. Successful fundraising by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority for the balance of the acquisition costs; and
 - b. Confirmation from the Town of Richmond Hill and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority that the Perryman property will be naturalized and uses will be restricted to passive recreation (trails).

2. PURPOSE

This report is to seek Council's authorization to contribute to the purchase of the Perryman property, subject to the condition outlined in this report.

3. BACKGROUND

In 2001, Regional Council adopted the Greening and Greenlands Property Securement Strategies. In support of these strategies, \$1.4M is allocated annually to allow for the delivery of a number of Greening Strategy programs (tree planting, education, data collection etc.) and to secure strategic environmental lands. Since 2001, a total of 23 properties (561 hectares) have been secured with a total value exceeding \$36M.

Properties can be secured using a number of means ranging from stewardship agreements and tree planting, donation, conservation easements, to fee simple acquisition by the Region or a partner. The Region continues to demonstrate leadership through our strategic land securement program and our investment in green infrastructure.

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

Opportunities provided by this strategic acquisition

The subject property is located immediately north of Phyllis Rawlinson Park owned by the Town of Richmond Hill. The 36 hectare (88 acre) Phyllis Rawlinson Park is located on the east side of Leslie Street, north of 19th Avenue in Richmond Hill (*Attachment 1*) and provides a significant node of natural habitat within the Town. The primary objectives of Phyllis Rawlinson Park are habitat creation (the lands are subject to ongoing naturalization and reforestation), passive recreation and education/interpretation. The Perryman property is proposed to be owned by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and managed by either the Town of Richmond Hill or the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Reforestation of the Perryman property will be a priority over the coming years.

The Town of Richmond Hill will be investing some capital funds into the expansion of the Phyllis Rawlinson Park trail system onto the Perryman property. Between the two properties, this expansion will provide a total of approximately 69 hectares (172 acres) of land for passive recreational use for Regional residents. Additionally, the Town has invested in interpretive facilities within Phyllis Rawlinson Park including educational facilities and interpretive signage. While the focus of the Perryman acquisition will be reforestation, it will provide an exceptional opportunity for public education and environmental interpretation with the facilities located immediately adjacent within the Town owned Phyllis Rawlinson Park.

Oak Ridges Moraine restoration and enhancement are not provided for through legislation

The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act and Plan protect this property from significant development and site alteration but do not provide for tree planting, reforesting the land and establishing natural functions. This property provides the opportunity to increase forest cover and improve natural corridors for the protection and movement of wildlife; both of which are objectives of the Region. Public acquisition of these lands will provide the means for these Regional priorities to be realized.

The Internal Evaluation Team recommends this property for acquisition

The Region's Internal Evaluation Team, a senior committee which includes staff from Planning, Legal, Finance and Transportation Services, has considered this property against the Regional Securement Criteria and deem it a high priority for Regional involvement in Securement (criteria checklist score of 76/100).

The most significant value of this acquisition relates to re-establishing forest cover on the Oak Ridges Moraine and creating a stronger Regional natural corridor. The main natural heritage values and ecological functions of this property include its:

- Contribution to the Regional Greenlands system on the Oak Ridges Moraine in the headwaters of a tributary of the Rouge River,
- Increasing forest cover as the Region works towards 25% forest cover,
- Passive recreation, and
- Natural heritage education.

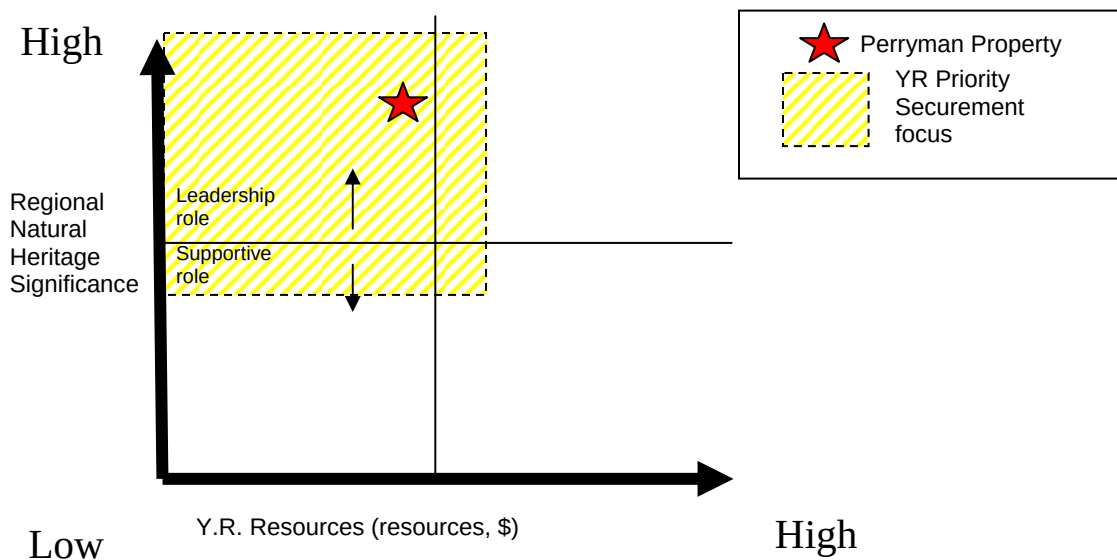
The Internal Evaluation Team has reviewed this proposal and finds the property to be a high priority for Regional acquisition

The Regional Securement Priority Matrix confirms this as a strategic acquisition opportunity

This 33 hectare (83 ac) property is of high natural heritage value to the Region when assessed against the Regional criteria. The Region targets expending resources on properties which have high Regional Natural Heritage significance (*Figure 1 following*).

The Perryman property has been plotted on the matrix to graphically demonstrate how this property is assessed against the Regional Securement Criteria and Priority Matrix. The natural heritage value of the Perryman property is high (76/100 on the Evaluation Criteria checklist), and the Regional contribution (\$9,180/acre) is moderate making it a priority for Regional involvement in securement.

Figure 1: Regional Priority Matrix



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

Sufficient funds are available in the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve for the Perryman property partnership acquisition

Mr. and Mrs. Perryman currently own the subject property within the Town of Richmond Hill (*Attachment 1*). Appraisals have been undertaken for the TRCA supporting the acquisition cost of \$2,286,000 (\$2,150,000 property costs and \$136,000 associated acquisition costs). These costs have been considered by IET members including York Region Realty Services staff, who find the purchase price acceptable. The funding partnership proposed by the TRCA is outlined in *Table 1*.

Table 1
Proposed Acquisition Funding

Partner	Contribution	Status
City of Toronto	\$762,000	Approved
York Region	\$762,000	Pending
Town of Richmond Hill	\$679,333	Approved
Oak Ridges Moraine Foundation	\$82,667	Approved
Total	\$2,286,000	

The approximate current balance of the Regional Greening Land Securement Reserve is \$5,000,000 (accounting for the June council approval of the Swan Lake and Wolske acquisitions). This contribution, at \$762,000 (\$9,180 per acre) will be funded from the Greenlands Property Securement Reserve. The property acquisition is expected to close in 2008, contingent on successful fundraising by the TRCA.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

Local municipalities are important partners in the implementation of the Securement Strategy. Town of Richmond Hill staff has been consulted as negotiations with the landowner progressed; Richmond Hill Council has approved a contribution of \$679,333 to this acquisition. As Greenlands are protected and enhanced through securement initiatives, local municipalities benefit from the multiple enhancements to both their communities and the natural environment.

7. CONCLUSION

The Perryman property is integral to advancing the objectives of the Greening and Greenland Property Securement Strategies, and is considered to be a key acquisition given the location on the Oak Ridges Moraine, opportunity for reforestation and adjacency to an existing publicly-owned natural area (Phyllis Rawlinson Park).

It is recommended that the request for funding for the TRCA acquisition of the Perryman property be supported conditional upon confirmation from the Town of Richmond Hill and the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority that the Perryman property will be naturalized and uses will be restricted to passive recreation (trails).

For more information on this report, contact Paul Jankowski, General Manager, Roads, at extension 5901 in the Transportation Services Department.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

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