

Date:	May 15, 2024
Project:	Bahá'í National Centre & Temple
MGP File:	17-2649
Subject:	Response to April 9, 2024 Thornhill Subcommittee Meeting Deputations & Questions

The following document provides a comprehensive response to all the compilation of the deputations and questions received at the April 9, 2024, Thornhill Subcommittee Meeting regarding the applications on the properties owned by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada (“NSA Bahá'ís”).

The responses in this document have been prepared through a combined effort of the expert professionals listed at the end of the document and were based on the extensive studies that were prepared by these consultants and submitted with the application, including:

Table 1: List of Studies submitted in support of Applications for Official Plan Amendment and Zoning Bylaw Amendment for 7015, 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street (PLAN 22 262723)

1. Planning Opinion Report	Malone Given Parsons	February 2024
2. Design Brief and Conceptual Site Plan and Drawings	Hariri Pontarini Architects	January 2024
3. Leslie Street Redesign Conceptual Plan	Schollen & Company	January 2024
4. Environmental Impact Study	GEI Consultants Ltd.	February 2024
5. Woodland Compensation Plan (Landscape Restoration and Enhancement Strategy)	Schollen & Company	January 2024
6. Tree Inventory and Assessment Report Preservation Plan (Arborist Report)	Schollen & Company	January 2024
7. Functional Servicing and Stormwater Management Report (“FSR”)	SCS Consulting Ltd.	January 2024
8. Urban Transportation Consideration Report (“Transportation Impact Study”)	BA Consulting Ltd.	February 2024
9. Geotechnical and Slope Stability Assessment	Terraprobe Inc.	February 2024
10. Hydrogeological Report	Terraprobe Inc.	November 2022
11. Phase 1 and 2 Environmental Site Assessment	Terraprobe Inc.	September 2022
12. Site Survey including TRCA Staking Approval Letter	ERTLM Surveyors	September 2022

The submission materials and studies can be found at: [Site of the Bahá'í Temple of Canada – Bahá'ís of Canada \(bahai.ca\)](https://www.bahai.ca) and are also available through the City of Markham [MappIT - Development Applications Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.markham.ca/mappit). Alternatively, requests for documents and studies can be made to City of Markham Planning staff noted on the project file or directly to the National Centre, where staff would be more than happy to provide copies of the submission documents.

The following deputations and questions were received at the April 9, 2024 Thornhill Subcommittee Meeting. Responses are numbered and provided in *blue italic* font following.

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team***1.0 Wendy Sun Deputation**

My name is Wendy Sun, a local resident and ratepayer in the City of Markham. Last May, I appeared before you to express my serious concerns with Bahá'ís application to build a large national temple, a new admin building, and a hotel/event centre all at the dead end of Leslie Street. The new complex would have a significant negative impact on the environment and the well being of the community. The Applicant has submitted a slightly revised plan. After studying the modifications, my view is that the fundamental issues are still not addressed. In addition, there are now new issues created with the revised plan. The site is still the wrong location for the project as proposed.

***RESPONSE 1:** 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street have been home to the Bahá'í National Centre for over 50 years. The properties were acquired in 1968, as an endowment to be safeguarded for the eventual construction of a House of Worship open to peoples of all faiths, and those with none. At that time, the log house at 7290 Leslie Street served as a Bahá'í National Centre until 1974 when the construction of the current Bahá'í National Centre was completed.*

*Both properties are zoned entirely “**Special Residential 3 Zone (SR3)**” under Zoning Bylaw 1767. “Churches and Religious Institutions” are permitted uses in the SR3 zone (hence the legally existing current Bahá'í National Centre).*

We all know that we have been facing a global climate change crisis, and we know that trees are critically important in fighting this crisis. Since we stood in front of this City Council last May to advocate for saving trees, in the summer of 2023, Canada suffered the worst wildfires in its history. According to Global News, 18.5 million hectares of Canadian forestland was burned. More than 5% of the entire forest area of Canada was lost. We need to urgently take a pause from unnecessary removal of trees to give the planet a chance to recover. All trees in Canada need to be protected whether being native or not. The previous Bahá'í application called for the felling of hundreds of large, mature trees. With the revised proposal to raise and widen Leslie street, even MORE trees would be removed! This is a sign from Toronto Wildlife Center: Mature trees are biodiversity powerhouses. Many wild animals rely on the cracked limbs and holes created by tree decay for food, nesting, and shelter.

***RESPONSE 2:** Extensive tree inventories and assessments have been undertaken to understand the impact of the proposal on existing trees and the site's ecology. The location proposed for the Temple is dominated by invasive tree species that pose a significant risk to the core forest. Given the degraded and limited biodiversity of the composition of the tree and shrub cover in the proposed temple location, it provides limited ecological functionality for wildlife. Based on the ecological surveys completed, this cultural woodland community facilitates movement and general foraging for common species (i.e., White-tailed Deer, Eastern Cottontail, etc.). No species of interest were determined to be using this area, and the ecological functionality is low.*

Approximately 0.5 hectares of the edge of this cultural woodland will be impacted and over 4.0 hectares of land are proposed to be restored and / or enhanced. Additionally, the area around the Temple will be planted with new native species that provide a better transition and protection of the adjacent core woodland feature. Overall, the proposed development will help to preserve the core feature within the valleylands in the long term.

Effort was made through the resubmission to greatly reduce and minimize the number of trees that would need to be removed to accommodate the Temple. The proposed location for the Temple will impact a total of 361 trees (of which 231 are Invasive Trees, 105 Non-invasive trees and 25 Dead trees). Of the

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361 trees to be removed only 110 are of a size and health that would require a removal permit in accordance with Markham Tree Preservation Bylaw.

At 7200 Leslie Street the new National Centre will necessitate the removal of 125 trees (24 are Invasive Trees, 82 Non-invasive trees and 19 Dead trees). Of the 125 trees that are proposed to be removed, only 56 require a removal permit in accordance with Markham Tree Preservation Bylaw such that they are of a mature size and health.

Approximately 2450 new trees will be planted on the property in accordance with the City and TRCA's compensation requirements for tree removals that require a permit (258 trees are required in accordance with the City's policy).

The issue of climate change, wildlife fires and municipal tree removals are complex issues that are difficult to summarize like they have been in the original question. First, to speak to climate change and the increase of forest fires, there are two main causes. The first is the variability and increased drought conditions that comes with climate change increasing the weather patterns that support wildfires. The second is the suppression of natural wildfires (i.e., like past prairie ecosystems that were once common along the southern Ontario landscape), that allow dead wood and other 'fuel' to build up and facilitate wildlife fires. With these two aspects considered, the conversation gets bigger and the conversation about the benefits and possible dangers of dead wood, snags and other features that are both wildlife habitat and possible fuel sources. Therefore, the issue regarding wildfires and climate change, is not something that can be reasonably answered through this application.

However, the tree decimation is just one of many serious issues this development proposal presents. One of the other issues is traffic and parking congestion caused by anticipated large crowds, restricting access by emergency vehicles, posing risks to public safety. The Applicant may have understated the number of annual significant days in the Bahai calendar. On these days very large crowds are expected to arrive at the proposed National Temple complex. I looked on Bahai's own official website where it lists over 30 significant days, including 15 holy days in a year. Here is a significant day & holy day calendar in the Bahai year of 181 (2024/2025).

RESPONSE 3: *There is a great misunderstanding regarding the nature and practices of the Bahá'í faith. The Bahá'í Community is founded on a decentralized pattern of gathering involving study circles, children's classes, youth programs, devotional gatherings, and home-based informal conversations. These decentralized programs or meet ups do not occur at the Temple but rather in one's community and homes.*

There are no clergy in the Bahá'í Faith, and no congregational patterns of community life that bring people together on a regular and specified day of the week. In a Bahá'í House of Worship, although there can be organized programs of prayers and readings from the world's sacred scriptures, there are no ceremonies, talks or sermons, and no instrumental music.

There are 11 Bahá'í Holy Days as well as a rhythm of community consultation every 19 days, called the 19 Day Feast. While an organized program of prayers and readings may be held in the Temple on Holy Days, the 19 Day Feasts are all celebrated in one's local community (not at the Temple or National Centre), often in one's own neighbourhood or neighbour's home and the celebration of Holy Days also takes place in one's local community. While a slight increase in visitors to the Temple would be expected

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on the 9 Bahá'í Holy Days on which work and school are suspended, the 19-Day-Feasts are, by their nature, small grassroots gatherings.

The purpose of the Temple is to provide a place of worship and contemplation that, coupled with the Bahá'í Community's commitment to service, strengthen the moral and spiritual foundations of the life of a unified and diverse community. There will be no ceremonies and no sermons within the Temple. Only the sacred scriptures of the world's religions are permitted to be read aloud in this space.

The Temple will be freely open throughout the day to members of the Bahá'í community and public to quietly worship and reflect in at their own time and leisure. The Temple will not be used for the 19 Day Feasts. Furthermore, there will be no commercial offerings or gains within the Temple. No sales of food and beverage, tours, or souvenirs will be offered. The Temple or National Centre will not be rented out as a commercial facility. There is no collection plate. The temple is truly intended to be a gift to Canada.

When studying the patterns of usage of other Bahá'í Temples from around the world (it should be noted that all examples studied were of the Continental scale as the Canadian Temple will only be the third Temple in the world of a national scale), the greatest increase in Temple visitors tended to occur on Public Holidays (i.e. Statutory Holidays), rather than Bahá'í Holy Days, when the general public came to enjoy the grounds and trails surrounding those Temples.

The increase in the number of visitors on Bahá'í Holy Days or on public holidays is considered in BA Group's Transportation Study, where it was determined that the peak parking demand at a single point in time is estimated to be 100 parking spaces for the entire site. The on-site supply available at the Bahá'í National Centre, in addition to the additional parking to be made available at the Bahá'í-owned lot at 7015 Leslie Street, will be sufficient to meet the parking demands generated by visits to the site.

All other places of worship in Markham are located on arterial roads; why is this dead-end street location being considered for a national religious complex?

RESPONSE 4: *see RESPONSE 1 . These properties have long been contemplated and permitted for Place of Worship ("Churches and Religious Institutions") Uses. The Transportation Study illustrates that Leslie Street can accommodate the proposed redevelopment.*

No other religious organizations have hotels/lodging; why would this one be permitted?

RESPONSE 5: *A hotel is NOT proposed as part of this project. This is a great misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the proposal. The existing permitted uses at both 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street include "**Churches and Religious Institutions**" in accordance with Zoning By-law 1767 for the **Special Residential Three Zone (SR3)** which applies to 7200 Leslie Street. The Proposal includes "Lodging Rooms" as part of the institute function, as an accessory use for those participating in educational, consultative and retreat activities as part of the institute's functions.*

The lodging rooms will function more like dormitories and will NOT be rented out to the public like a commercial hotel operation. The lodging rooms provide an opportunity to host members of the Bahá'í Community from all over Canada at the National Centre and make the programming, seminars, educational and community service events more accessible to all members of the Bahá'í Faith no matter their socio-economic background.

As you have heard and will hear from many other community members, there are numerous serious issues with the proposed development at this location, hence we encourage the Applicant to consider another location, or to drastically reduce the scale of the temple and remove the hotel building from the plan. While I have some time left, I'd like to ask a few more questions:

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1. What is the exact number of additional trees to be removed by raising and widening Leslie Street?

RESPONSE 6: *Based upon the preliminary grading plan prepared by SCS Consulting Group, the detailed topographic survey prepared by the OLS, and field reconnaissance completed by Schollen & Company Inc., approximately 127 trees will be required to be removed to facilitate construction. It is anticipated that 18 trees may be affected by encroachments of grading into their designated tree protection zones. Most of the trees that will be required to be removed or injured are Manitoba maples, European buckthorns, and Willows.*

It should be noted that a detailed tree inventory for Leslie Street has not yet been completed. As a result, we don't have specific information on the size / species / condition of these trees. Pruning that was done recently to clear the hydro lines has resulted in the removal of large limbs from the trees that are located nearest to the existing road. Since we have not confirmed the size ranges of the trees, we are not able to apply Markham's compensation formula to determine compensation requirements.

2. Has the City done a tree audit on various pieces of properties here in question to ensure no trees have been cut beyond permits in the past two years? Can you share with the public the number of trees removed?

RESPONSE 7: *Forty-three trees have fallen or have been removed in the previous two-year period (12 at 7200 Leslie Street and 31 at 7290 Leslie Street). The removal of trees was required to facilitate access for geotechnical and hydrogeological investigations. Recently several trees fell as a result of the heavy windstorms experienced in the late winter/early spring 2024 in the GTA.*

3. I submitted a Freedom Of Information request in June, 2023 to inquire about the tree inventory, but I have not received a straight answer yet.

RESPONSE 8: *The 2022 and 2023 Tree Inventory and Assessment by Schollen & Company Inc. has been available on the project website: [Site of the Bahá'í Temple of Canada – Bahá'ís of Canada \(bahai.ca\)](https://www.bahai.ca). The updated submissions material, including an updated Tree Inventory and Assessment, was recently added to the website and is always available at the City of Markham [MappIT - Development Applications Viewer \(arcgis.com\)](https://www.arcgis.com). Alternatively, requests for documents and studies can be made to City of Markham Planning staff noted on the project file or directly to the National Centre, where staff would be more than happy to provide copies of the submission documents.*

4. The City of Markham has strict Tree Preservation by-laws. Are these by-laws being enforced?

RESPONSE 9: *The applicant has submitted a Tree Inventory and Assessment which has calculated the estimated compensation requirements for the tree removals in accordance with the City of Markham Tree Preservation By-law 2023-164. In addition, the 0.5 hectares of cultural woodland impacts are proposed to be compensated for under the TRCA's compensation guidelines, which require a 5:1 compensation ratio is to be used resulting in 2.6 hectares of land to be restored to a young successional woodland community. In addition to the Tree Presentation By-law Compensation requirements, over 4.0 hectares of land is proposed to be restored and / or enhanced as part of this proposal.*

5. Currently there is a building in Bahai's LOT 4, 7015 Leslie Street. It houses the Don Valley Education Center, used by organizations facilitating events for youths and children. According to the City, this building and the adjacent parking lot are in the flood zone. This is the only road from the parking lot to the building. This is the very road on April 3 after the rain. You can see the gushing torrents had cut off any access the building had to dry land. It certainly IS in a flood zone. Do the organizations

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using the building know that it is in the flood zone and not flood-proofed? Do the parents know their children are being put at risk?

RESPONSE 10: *First it should be clarified that redevelopment of the existing building and facilities at 7015 Leslie Street (aka Don Valley Educational Centre) is NOT proposed. Removal of some of the existing tennis courts and significant environmental restoration is proposed at 7015 Leslie Street as part of the proposal.*

The existing building at 7015 Leslie Street is NOT located within the floodplain but the parking lot at 7015 Leslie Street is within the floodplain. Access to this building maybe be restricted during a flood event. Like all homes and buildings located at the north end of Leslie Street, safe access may not be available during a Regional Storm event due to the flooding of Leslie Street.

The Bahá'í community uses 7015 Leslie Street for various programs such as seminars, events, youth programs and day camps. The property was formerly leased and used by the Adventure Valley Day Camp (not associated with the Association for Bahá'í Studies) for more children's day camps. This camp halted operations of its own accord in 2019.

Primary access to the building and recreation facilities is provided via a pedestrian bridge which is higher than the flood levels. Secondary and vehicular service access is provided by a second bridge. During a flood event, the pedestrian bridge is not impeded but the secondary could be. In the event of anticipated flooding, events and programs at the Don Valley Educational Centre would be cancelled or postponed. Access to the building at 7015 Leslie Street could be impacted during a Regional Storm event and as such, the facility will not be used during such storm events.

The proposed improvements to the parking lot will be designed in consultation with the TRCA. Access will be controlled and property signage regarding possible flooding will be installed.

6. Whose responsibility is it to ensure safety in the building, the City or Bahai? If it is the City's responsibility, what will the City do to protect these children?

RESPONSE 11: *As with any publicly accessible building and buildings of a commercial or institutional function, the fire suppression systems are regularly inspected by the Fire Department. In the event of a flood event, the Bahá'í Community will not hold events or functions at the Don Valley Educational Centre.*

2.0 Mark Newton Deputation

We appreciate the Applicant's making some changes to their proposal since the DSC meeting last May, however, fundamental gaps remain. In addition, new issues are created by the revised plan. The TRCA issued its report on the Applicant's revised plan on March 27, 2024 in which it also identified several significant issues related to flooding and hazards.

The application does not address any other of the concerns of the residents, as outlined in my submissions to the DSC on May 23, 2023:

The temple remains a massive and imposing structure, 82' high

RESPONSE 12: *The proposed maximum temple height has been revised from 30 metres to 25 metres to ensure that the Temple is lower than the height of the existing mature trees at this location and will essentially not be visible from any vantage point. The closest home is approximately 95 metres away*

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from the proposed Temple. Additional landscaping and plantings will further screen the visibility of the Temple from public vantage points.

The expansive hotel / banquet facility / event centre remains aggressively placed directly across from residents on Waterloo Court, right against the property line.

RESPONSE 13: *A hotel, banquet facility and event centre is NOT proposed. See **RESPONSE 5**.*

The proposed Zoning Amendment proposes a minimum exterior sideyard setback along Waterloo Court of 4.5 metres. The typical zoning standard for exterior sideyards in the City of Markham is 2.4 metres. The proposed minimum sideyard along Waterloo Court has been confirmed by Arborists as sufficient for protection of the existing healthy shrubs and trees along this exterior sideyard. As part of the proposal, additional plantings will be provided to enhance the current landscape screening and visibility of the new National Centre from Waterloo Court.

The purpose of the zoning bylaw amendments is to permit a building that can sit low on the landscape and follow the topography down the hill as well as preserve large, mature trees adjacent to the core woodland area. In contrast, a new National Center building of similar size that were to utilize the existing zoning standards would have to employ the full maximum height permission of 7.6 metres (25 feet) across the site to provide for the needed building space (whereas a building height of 5.4 metres is proposed).

The tree canopy on the property will be totally destroyed.

RESPONSE 14: *This is incorrect, See **RESPONSE 2**. At 7290 Leslie Street, approximately 0.5 hectares of the 7.3 hectares of total land will be impacted. To ensure all impacts have been appropriately considered, both the Tree Inventory and the Compensation Ratio (determined through the Basal Area per the TRCA compensation guidelines) have calculated the impact of the temple and new national centre on existing trees.*

The parking spaces cannot accommodate a project of this size.

RESPONSE 15: *To confirm the parking requirements for the Temple and new National Centre the City of Markham Transportation Department requested the Transportation Study by BA Group complete a parking demand analysis based on a “first principles” approach. This study included the review and analysis of the capacity and use of comparable Bahá’í Temples.*

*There are a total of thirteen (13) existing Bahá’í Temples around the world. With the completion of the Bahá’í Temple of South America in Chile, there are now “mother temples” in each continent that are scaled to represent entire continents and serve the people of an entire continent. The scale of continental temples is significantly greater than local and national temples. The Bahá’í Temple of Canada will be only the **third (3rd)** national scaled Bahá’í Temple in the world and as such, it is difficult to find accurate precedent examples. The anticipated capacity of the Canadian National Temple is 300 – 400 people.*

The Bahá’í Temple of South America in Chile, the Bahá’í Temple of Asia in New Delhi, India, and the Bahá’í Temple of North America in Chicago are not appropriate examples for comparison of the anticipated scale and usage of the Canadian National Temple.

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Continental Temples or Mother Temples:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. The Bahá'í Temple of North America, Chicago, Illinois (1953) | cap: 1200 |
| 2. The Bahá'í Temple of Africa, Uganda (1961) | cap: 400 |
| 3. The Bahá'í Temple of Australia, Sydney, Australia (1961) | cap: 600 |
| 4. The Bahá'í Temple of Europe, Langenhain, Germany (1964) | cap: 600 |
| 5. The Bahá'í Temple of Latin America, Panama (1972) | cap: 550 |
| 6. The Bahá'í Temple of Samoa, Apia, Samoa (1984) | cap: 700 |
| 7. The Bahá'í Temple of Asia, New Delhi, India (1986) | cap: 1300 |
| 8. The Bahá'í Temple of South America, Santiago, Chile (2016) | cap: 600 |

Local Temples:

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 9. The Bahá'í House of Worship in Battambang, Cambodia (2017) | cap: 250 |
| 10. The Bahá'í House of Worship in Villa Rica, Cauca, Colombia (2018) | cap: 250 |
| 11. The Bahá'í House of Worship in Matunda Soy, Kenya (2019) | cap: 250 |
| 12. The Bahá'í House of Worship in Tanna, Vanuatu (2021) | cap: 250 |

National Temples:

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 13. The Bahá'í Temple of DR Congo, Kinshasa, (2023) | cap: ~500 |
| 14. The Bahá'í Temple of Papua New Guinea, Port Moresby (TBD) | cap: 350 |

Nonetheless, the parking analysis applied the visitor rates from the Continental Temples in Australia and Germany, which have capacities the closest to and greater than that anticipated for the Canadian temple. These two temples have similar locational characteristics and similar cultural patterns. The temple in Germany is located near extensive and popular hiking trails and visitors to the temple peaked during public holiday, when the weather was good and large hiking groups came out to enjoy the adjacent hiking trails. The temple in Australia is located within a suburban context with minimal access to higher-order transit.

The Bahá'í Temple of Australia, Sydney, Australia (1961)	Capacity 600
Yearly 2022 Visitors: 10,000	
Average Number of Daily Weekday Visitors:	25
Average Number of Daily Weekend Visitors:	35
Average Peak Public Holiday Visitors:	77
Average Peak Bahá'í Holy Day Visitors:	37

The Bahá'í Temple of Europe, Langenhain, Germany	Capacity 600
Yearly 2022 Visitors: 25,000	
Average Number of Daily Weekday Visitors:	35
Average Number of Daily Weekend Visitors:	145
Average Peak Public Holiday Visitors:	361
Average Peak Bahá'í Holy Day Visitors:	141

It is assumed that the Canadian Temple would have a similar visitor range of 10,000 to 25,000 annual visitors (or 27 to 70 daily visitors on average). A conservative rate of 25,000 annual visitors was used for determining parking requirements. Parking requirements were assessed based on a typical weekday need vs a typical weekend vs. a Peak Weekend or Holiday need.

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The parking demand for these Temples during a typical day-to-day is estimated between 10 – 35 vehicles with an occasional peak demand of ~100 vehicles estimated for peak weekend visits or busy statutory holidays.

Location	Typical Weekday	Typical Weekend	Peak Weekend / Holiday
Visitor Range ¹	10,000 to 25,000 annually		
Annual Attendance Used to Develop Parking Estimate	25,000 visits (conservative estimate based on comparable German temple)		
Basis for Establishing Daily Visitor Profile	Average Weekday Attendance: ~35 persons per day	Average Weekend Attendance: ~145 persons per day	95 th percentile attendance: ~400 persons per day
Assumed Daily Attendance for Parking Estimate	~35 persons per weekday	~145 persons per weekend day	~400 persons per holiday day
Assumed Percentage of Attendees at Peak Time of Day ²	25%	25%	25%
Estimated Temple Peak Parking Demand	10 vehicles	35 vehicles	100 vehicles

Notes:

1. Range reflects annual attendance at Australian temple (10,000) and German temple (25,000)
2. Given that Bahai temples generally don't have recurring services at specified hours and the temple will be open for visits approximately 12 hours a day, activity will be spread out throughout the day. As a result, it is estimated that approximately one-quarter of daily visitors will be present at the peak time of day. Remainder of parkers will be

It is important to note that the daily attendance rates are not anticipated to happen at the same time as Bahá'í temples do not have set times for daily or weekly services or programs, rather the anticipated usage will happen throughout the day from opening hours (~9am) to close (~6pm) and thus the demand is represented as 25% at one time.

Regarding the National Centre, the administrative function is anticipated to be approximately the same as current operations, with an estimated daily employee count of 10-25 persons. In addition, the new National Centre will host occasional Bahá'í events and programs throughout the year with variable occupancies; with the largest being the 3-day National Convention of 200 delegates from across Canada. This convention currently includes approximately 35% of attendees coming from local locations that can travel to the convention via car. The parking analysis assumes a conservative parking demand assumption of up to 40% of attendees travelling by car and requiring parking. It is reasonable to estimate many attendees will be arriving at the convention via taxi/rideshare, carpooling, and bus or shuttle which will be offered. **As such, it was determined that the peak demand for parking at the largest event (which occurs once a year over 3 days) was estimated to be 105 vehicles (25 for employees plus 80 convention attendees). It is noted that the true number of attendees requiring parking likely falls below the 40% assumption.**

Based on the Transportation parking analysis, it is assumed that the reasonable recurring daily demand for parking will be approximately 25 spaces at the National Centre and 10-35 spaces at the Temple. Both the Temple and National Centre will have occasional peak demand needs up to 100 spaces but not at the same time. The 110 parking spaces proposed exceed the anticipated occasional peak demand time periods. During a rare occurrence that additional parking is required above the peak demand estimate of 100 spaces, there is additional “overflow” parking available at 7015 Leslie Street.

The temple in Chicago has approximately 55 parking spaces on site and another 50 overflow spaces available off site. It is approximately 500 metres from higher order transit. The Canadian Temple will eventually be around 600 – 750 metres from higher order transit on Steeles. The temple in Germany has parking for about 40-45 cars and no transit service. The temple in Australia has parking for approximately 50 cars for visitors, 18 for staff and a few buses.

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Any realistic estimate of traffic flow cannot possibly be accommodated without significant risk of accidents.

RESPONSE 16: *BA Group undertook an analysis to derive a moderately conservative traffic scenario (i.e. 85th percentile peak hour trip generation) to represent where the BNC is operating under somewhat “busier” conditions such as those associated with the various larger events during the year. The traffic modelled estimated 130 and 165 new net two-way vehicular trips during the weekday morning and afternoon peak hour, respectively and confirmed that the anticipated new traffic volumes for these occasional larger events can be appropriately accommodated at the signalized intersection at Steeles Avenue and Leslie Street. Meaning that the intersection has sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipate traffic during a moderately busy event and no modifications to the signal timing are required and the condition of certain movements operating near or at capacity will not change regardless of the redevelopment. Furthermore, the proposed improvements to Leslie Street, including the separate pedestrian and cyclist path will improve the safety conditions of users along Leslie Street and help to mitigate the illegal U-turn movements at Steeles.*

Residents’ privacy will be infringed and invaded.

RESPONSE 17: *The National Centre has been designed to preserve the existing vegetation along Waterloo Court and additional trees and plantings are proposed to screen the view to and from Waterloo Court. The design of the National Centre strategically orientates windows towards the internal lawn in a similar manner and spirit as the existing building does. The building is proposed to step down with the topography and appear no more than two storeys in height. These design measures will ensure that the privacy of the front yards of the homes along Waterloo Court is not negatively impacted.*

Residents will be subjected to unsightly garbage and refuse and foul odors from the garbage disposal and from the banquet hall.

RESPONSE 18: *A banquet hall is **NOT** proposed. See **RESPONSE 5** and **RESPONSE 13** for details on the nature of the uses proposed. The City’s existing zoning by-law requires loading and servicing facilities. The buildings will be designed with adequate garage and refuse facilities. The Bahá’í Community has a proven track record of being exceptional landowners and stewards of the land and will continue to ensure that garbage and refuse is property addressed.*

A dead-end street cannot possibly accommodate a national temple, a national administration centre, a hotel, banquet hall and visitor centre, plus the regular needs of those visiting the park

RESPONSE 19: *As clarified in **Response 13**, a hotel and banquet hall are NOT part of the proposal. As confirmed in the Transportation Study by BA Group and restated above in **Response 16**, Leslie Street has capacity to safely accommodate the anticipated visitors. The proposed improvements to Leslie Street will help to improve some of the existing issues along Leslie Street that currently experience conflicts between travel modes and no defined on-street parking areas resulting in haphazard parking.*

The raising of Leslie Street, which was not advocated by any of the Ratepayer Associations, creates many other unique issues.

RESPONSE 20: *The raising of Leslie Street to provide safe access to the properties and homes at the end of Leslie Street was proposed as an alternative to the concerns raised by the public about the impacts to the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat by the proposal to use the existing trail to John Street as an emergency access route. This proposal **did not** contemplate a new road or an extension of Leslie*

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Street but rather an accessible path in the extremely rare event Leslie Street was flooding and emergency vehicles needed to reach the properties and homes at the north end of Leslie Street.

Additionally, the public identified existing safety concerns and haphazard parking along Leslie Street, particularly because of the increased popularity of the Lake-to-Lake Trail. The proposal to raise Leslie Street was identified as the only other feasible alternative to provide safe access and further provided the opportunity to address the existing safety issues on along Leslie Street and provide designated parking.

It appears that the Bahá'í seek to dominate the area, by imposing its massive temple at the height of land, directly adjacent to residential neighbourhoods. The domination of surrounding geography seems to be the pattern of the Bahá'í wherever it builds its temples. This form of domination is the antithesis of respect, humility, subtlety, graciousness, goodwill, kindness, neighbourliness and community spirit. The residents from all directions do not want to be dominated by such an imposing structure. This does not belong in a residential neighbourhood.

RESPONSE 21: *The past 50 plus years that the Bahá'í National Centre has been located at 7200 Leslie Street has demonstrated the Bahá'í's commitment to environmental stewardship, community, and neighborliness. The doors of the Bahá'í National Centre have always been open to neighbours and the general public for discussion, consultation and enlightenment. This model of openness and understanding will continue through the redevelopment of the National Centre and Temple. See **Response 12** regarding the proposed building height.*

The hotel building should be removed from the project; it is downright offensive to the adjacent residents, is inappropriate and would dominate the street. A private unregulated hotel would pose security risks for residents.

RESPONSE 22: *As clarified in **RESPONSE 5** and **Response 13**, a hotel is NOT part of the proposal.*

The hotel, banquet hall and event centre might cross a red line re the tax-exempt status of the Bahá'í, federally, provincially and municipally.

RESPONSE 23: *As clarified in **RESPONSE 5** and **Response 13**, a hotel, banquet hall and event centre is NOT part of the proposal. These facilities will not be for commercial purposes. The Bahá'í National Centre is NOT exempt from property taxes and pays taxes at a residential rate.*

The temple should be reduced in height to the average height of residential homes in the surrounding area, to be compliant with residential zoning, and not to dominate the area. The temple should also be reduced in size, given that the Bahá'í do not hold services and that the temple will be used only for contemplation.

RESPONSE 24: *See **Response 12** regarding the proposed building height.*

Questions for the City and for the Applicant:

1. When can we expect to see the City staff report on the TRCA findings? We request the City to make its staff report publicly available.

RESPONSE 25: *As is the legislative requirements under the Planning Act, the City of Markham will make their recommendation report to Development Service Committee. This report will be available through the City of Markham's Meeting Agenda website or directly through the Clerk.*

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2. What is the rush with this application? There needs to be meaningful consultation with the community and all stakeholders.

RESPONSE 26: *The original applications was submitted to the City of Markham in October 2022. The applications were deemed complete at the end of November 2022 by the City of Markham. Comments from the City of Markham, Region of York, TRCA and other review agencies were provided to the applicant in March 2023. The Statutory Public Meeting was held May 23, 2023. The first Thornhill Subcommittee Meeting was held in January 2024. The applicant responded to comments with a resubmission of the applications in February 2024. The second Thornhill Subcommittee meeting was held April 2024.*

Timelines for review of applications are prescribed under the Ontario Planning Act. The 120-day appeal phase for no decision on the application became effective at the end of March 2023. The applicant has had the right to appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal for no decision on the application since this time but has approached the concerns expressed by the public with an open ear and a consultative mindset. Significant and resource extensive changes have been made to the application to address comments and concerns received.

3. As noted at the outset, the TRCA, in its report to the City dated March 27, 2024, noted several serious issues with the proposed development.

RESPONSE 27: *The applicant is working with the TRCA and City of Markham to address outstanding comments raised and requests by the TRCA. The nature of these comments are generally technical in nature, in that the TRCA has requested additional technical analysis, primarily related to the raising of Leslie Street, before it can conclude its review.*

4. Will the Bahá'í remove the hotel building from the project?

RESPONSE 28: *See Response 5, a hotel is NOT proposed.*

5. Will the Bahá'í redesign the temple to limit the height to the average height of homes in the surrounding residential neighbourhoods, and reduce the footprint or square footage of the temple?

RESPONSE 29: *See Response 12, the Temple maximum has been reduced through the resubmission.*

6. What measures will the Bahá'í implement to protect against water damage to homes on Waterloo Court, resulting from the construction of underground parking and the diversion of water away from its site?

RESPONSE 30: *The proposal has removed the 3rd level of underground parking given the height of the water table. However, it should be noted that there are engineering methods to deal with appropriate dewatering of underground parking. These are employed all over the GTA. Stormwater management measures will be in place to control the storm flows to less than or equal to the existing condition.*

7. Will all the buildings and facilities on the Bahá'í properties be exempt from municipal taxes?

RESPONSE 31: *The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) is the legislative body who determines both tax classification and current value assessment (CVA) of all new and existing properties in Ontario. The 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street are currently subject to municipal taxes assessed as residential property with a portion defined and taxed as managed forest. The new Bahá'í National Centre*

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will be subject to the same tax assessment as it currently is under a residential classification. It is our understanding that the temple could qualify for tax exemption.

8. What plans do the Bahá'í have for its \$2.9 million purchase of #4 Waterloo Court (originally listed for \$3.99 million)? The purchase of this home by the Bahá'í detracts from the community. Will Bahá'í apply to have #4 Waterloo Court exempt from property tax as well?

RESPONSE 32: *The property at 4 Waterloo Court is residential property and will be used by the NSA for residential purposes to support visiting offsite staff, volunteers, and NSA members. No tax exemption from residential taxes has been, nor will, be sought.*

9. Will the site be powered by alternative energy, i.e., solar, geothermal, etc.?

RESPONSE 33: *The Bahá'í Community's commitment to environmental stewardship and sustainability is evident in their commitment to building design standards which have in the past utilized a 400-year life cycle (as compared to a typical 50-year industry standard). We anticipate that these new Bahá'í buildings will employ similar standards and exceptional requirements for energy and water efficiencies that exceed typical LEED guidelines.*

One of the main objectives of reconstructing the existing Bahá'í National Centre is to modernize dated building measures and energy consumptive mechanics. Alternative energy powered will be a high priority for the new building as well as several other energy and water conservative design measures to improve the buildings performance. The Bahá'í Community have requested a CAGBC Zero Carbon project for both the National Centre and the Temple Site.

10. Will there be bathroom facilities at the temple site? I was advised that there would not be. This poses a hazard for the elderly and disabled, especially during the winter and during inclement weather.

RESPONSE 34: *Bathroom facilities as well as other necessary amenities and service facilities will most definitely be provided at the Temple.*

11. What measures will be taken to avoid the building of new structures and the addition of parking places on hazardous lands on 7290 Leslie Street?

RESPONSE 35: *All hazardous lands on 7290 Leslie Street have been identified in accordance with the Provincial Policy Statement regarding natural hazards. There are no flood hazards or creek erosion hazards that impact 7290 or 7200 Leslie Street. The Temple is proposed beyond the defined Long Term Stable Slope plus the required 10-metre access allowance. The Long-Term Stable Slope was surveyed on the property with the TRCA and verified by the Geotechnical Study by Terraprobe. Furthermore, the Geotechnical Study confirmed the parking area is not within an erosion hazard of the toe of slope (Section 7.3).*

12. What will be the duration of the construction, including the raising of Leslie Street and the building of the temple? (The construction of the temple in Santiago lasted 6 years.)

RESPONSE 36: *It is anticipated that it will take approximately 2.5 years to construct the Temple and reconstruction of Leslie Street could be completed in phases over the course of 3-6 months.*

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13. Will the Bahá'í and the City conduct a study to ensure that the project, with all of the proposed hardscape, will have net zero runoff

RESPONSE 37: *Stormwater management (storm runoff) is a detailed design requirement typical of Site Plan Approval. Nonetheless, given the nature of this proposal, more detailed conceptual stormwater management design work has been completed as part of the Functional Servicing Report (FSR). The FSR calculated that approximately 5.37 ha of the existing site drains easterly via overland flows into the German Mills Creek. The Stormwater Management section (Section 3) of the FSR illustrates that the current rate of stormwater runoff (existing condition) from the site will be maintained through conventional and / or a combination of Low Impact Development measures in accordance with stormwater runoff control criteria established by the City of Markham, TRCA and the MECP Stormwater Management Planning and Design Manual (2003). This criterion applies to quantity and quality control, retention/volume control, erosion control and water budget. The design will be further refined and developed through the detailed design stage, however the reporting provided to date has concluded that the stormwater management criteria to ensure no additional runoff will be conveyed to German Mills Creek can be achieved.*

14. What development charges will be payable by the Bahá'í and will such charges be subject to rebates?

RESPONSE 38: *The proposed development is not subject to rebates for development charges (DC). DC credits are applicable and only calculated based on the existing building floor area. DC are collected by the Region and the City of Markham and are calculated based on the final building(s) floor area. The 2023 estimated payable development charges for the proposed Temple and new National Centre was calculated over \$2 million discounting applicable credits. Final DC charges will be calculated based on the current rates at the time of building permit.*

15. What plans do the Bahá'í have for 7015 Leslie Street in the floodplain, currently the Don Valley Education Centre? Will the facility at 7015 Leslie Street be flood-proofed?

RESPONSE 39: *The existing building at 7015 Leslie Street is NOT located within the floodplain. See RESPONSE 10.*

16. With the raising of Leslie Street by four feet, the parking lot at 7015 Leslie Street will become a bathtub in the event of a flood. What measures will be taken to mitigate this obvious hazard?

RESPONSE 40: *The parking lot at 7015 Leslie Street is currently within the floodplain. The proposed improvements to the parking lot will be designed in consultation with the TRCA. Access will be controlled and restricted overnight, and property signage regarding possible flooding will be installed. The stormwater runoff from Leslie Street will be in conformance with the relevant criteria agreed upon between the City of Markham and the TRCA.*

17. Access to the building at 7015 Leslie Street is currently cut off in the event of storms. What measures will be taken to mitigate this hazard?

RESPONSE 41: *See RESPONSE 10.*

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18. Which parties – the City, York Region, or Bahá'í - will be paying for the changes to Leslie Street and in what proportions?

RESPONSE 42: *Leslie Street is under the jurisdiction of City of Markham. The applicant will be responsible for paying development charges in accordance with the City of Markham Development Charges Bylaw and furthermore has offered to contribute towards the funding needed to raise Leslie Street.*

19. Will Leslie Street north of Steeles Avenue be built to the standard of an urban road, including curbs, sidewalk, gutters and drainage?

RESPONSE 43: *The preliminary design proposal includes a separated 3 metre multi-use pathway on the east side of the road right-of-way and employs the current City standards for the road regarding curbs and stormwater management.*

20. Will the power lines on Leslie Street north of Steeles Avenue be buried as part of the raising, widening and resurfacing of the road?

RESPONSE 44: *Through consultation with the City of Markham and Alectra the feasibility of this option can be considered.*

21. Will the raising of Leslie Street be buttressed by retaining walls on both sides?

RESPONSE 45: *No, the proposal to raise Leslie Street has been designed with 3:1 slopes to pick up the additional grade. This requires more horizontal space which is why almost 10 metres of property takings from 7015 Leslie Street will be required to accommodate the raising of Leslie Street. The owners of 7015 Leslie Street, Association for Bahá'í Studies, will convey this land as well as the additional land needed to fit the separate multi-use path to the City free of charge.*

22. What measures will be taken to prevent run-off from the east side of Leslie Street into the river system?

RESPONSE 46: *Currently run off from Leslie Street is controlled by the ditches and discharges directly into the German Mills Creek. Consideration can be given in the redesign of Leslie Street for Low Impact Development measures to control the quantity and improve the water quality. To fully control stormwater runoff from the roadway, curbing would have to be installed. This can be discussed and considered in consultation with the City of Markham and TRCA. The stormwater runoff from Leslie Street will be in conformance with the relevant criteria agreed upon between the City of Markham and the TRCA.*

23. Will there be a multi-use pathway along the entire length of Leslie Street north of Steeles Avenue?

RESPONSE 47: *Yes, the proposal to improve Leslie Street includes a separated 3-metre-wide multi-use path from the northeast corner of Steeles and Leslie north to the Lake-to-Lake trail entrance and then terminates at the Temple site.*

24. Will traffic-calming measures be implemented on Leslie Street, such as the use of speed humps?

RESPONSE 48: *The proposed improvements to Leslie Street will reduce the pavement width and add formalized space for on street parallel parking. These design measures will inherently calm traffic and speeding. Additional measures to calm speed can be considered during the detailed design phase.*

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team***3.0 Theresa Moore**

Thank you for this opportunity to speak. My name is Theresa Moore. I am a local resident, park user and advocate, and honorary SPRA member. For the past 23 years I have also led nature walks in Settlers Park as a volunteer Walk Leader with the Toronto Field Naturalists. In fact, I am leading a public Earth Day nature walk and litter pick-up on April 20th. And lastly, I am a founding member of the Toronto Field Naturalists Wildlife Protection Committee. There are many pressures on wildlife, with habitat loss leading the list. And I'm pleased that the developers have responded to community feedback by altering plans for the emergency access road and abandoning plans to replace the meadow habitat on Lot 3 with forest. However, I remain concerned about planned trails and parking and about the need to protect habitat and wildlife on Leslie Street. A forest trail to the temple has been proposed to give visitors an immersive experience in nature. However, if we look at this from the perspective of nature, what this means is habitat fragmentation and wildlife disturbance. This could be avoided if the trail was on the existing east-west driveway. Despite our benign intent, or adoring gaze, wildlife see us, and our pets, as predators. One of the main types of wildlife disturbance is getting too close. The distance varies by season and species, however disturbance has many adverse effects. For example, studies have shown that many nesting birds—songbirds, raptors, and shorebirds—are harmed by presence within 100 meters of their nests. These harms include:

- inadequately constructed or repaired nests
- abandonment of nests and territory
- prolonged adult absences, which leave eggs and young vulnerable to hypothermia, heat stress, loss of moisture, and predation
- disrupted foraging and feeding; and
- premature fledging before the young are able to fly and care for themselves.

Maintaining a distance of 100 meters from potential nesting sites can reduce these harms. This needs to be reflected in the plans for trails and parking lots. There is abundant research on the adverse effects of human disturbance on nesting birds. However, other birds and animals are also harmed by disturbance. These harms include: Causing stress, Disrupting hormones, which is physiologically costly, Increasing the risk for human-wildlife conflict, Threatening den sites of small mammals; and Disrupting feeding, sleep, and wildlife movements. To protect habitat and minimize wildlife disturbance, I recommend:

- No trail construction in the Lot 3 meadow
- No east-west trail through the Lot 2 forest
- Relocation of proposed parking from Lot 2 to Lot 1 to protect wildlife corridors and bat foraging habitat and maintain more distance between visitors and wildlife.

RESPONSE 49: *It is true that human (and pet) disturbances are some of the largest impacts to natural areas, this includes the existing surrounding community and trails / paths through the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat. However, the cost / benefit between the protection of natural areas and human interaction with nature is a larger conversation / issue than can be reasonably addressed through this application. This is particularly true when considering the trail network already facilitating human interaction within the German Mills valleyland including the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat (both paved and informal trails through the meadow).*

In a highly urbanized area like the City of Markham, much of the existing wildlife are already tolerant to the human interactions and are anticipated to only be temporarily disturbed during the active

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construction period. However, there are several mitigative measures can help to protect wildlife from as much disturbance as possible, such as:

- *Construction windows that avoid key wildlife active windows (specifically birds and bats).*
- *Directional lighting (away from natural features), no lighting of natural trails, and bird friendly designs.*
- *Educational signage to improve human understanding and protection of the landscape.*

The recommendations proposed have been considered and responded to below:

- *No grassland 'Species At Risk' (SAR) were observed nesting within Lot 3 or anywhere on the Bahá'í properties. Nonetheless, as part of the long-term stewardship of the land, signage will be installed as part of the project to assist with educating the public on how to appropriately use the green space and interact with the natural features and wildlife.*
- *The 'staircase' has been removed from the proposed plan, and no east-west connection is proposed through the woodland.*
- *The proposed parking within Lot 2 will aim to enhance the habitat for the species known to utilize the area (aerial insectivores like birds and bats as well as a variety of insects including pollinators). Under existing conditions, this space is characterized by a mowed non-native grass with invasive and non-native species encroaching into the woodland edges. The proposal will provide an opportunity to enhance this area.*

It is also important to acknowledge the Bahá'í Community's long-term and continued stewardship of the land will be one of the largest benefits to the maintenance and protection of the proposed restoration within the German Mills valley. Typical restoration efforts only include approximately 5 years of monitoring and adaptive management efforts, the ongoing efforts and care for this natural area is a unique opportunity offered by the Bahá'ís.

Other issues of concern relate to Leslie Street Habitat and Wildlife. The current road plan certainly increases safety for pedestrians, cyclists, and motorists. However, the vegetation lining Leslie Street is also important habitat, providing food and nest sites. In recent years, there have been cavity nests of Northern Flickers, Downy Woodpeckers, Chickadees, and Starlings immediately adjacent to the road and there are active nests there now. And birds forage in the vegetation along the roadside year-round. As of March, we have yet to see: A description of the vegetation that will be removed, the measures that will be taken to protect active nests and the roots of trees, including dead trees, along the BCC fence-line; and the restoration plan.

RESPONSE 50: *It is acknowledged that the trees lining Leslie Street provide suitable nesting habitat for bird species, including those listed above. No active nests will be removed as part of this proposed development, most breeding bird species are protected under the Migratory Bird Convention Act, except for non-native species such as the Starling. Therefore, vegetation removals will aim to be completed outside of the nesting window to avoid any potential impacts to nesting birds.*

Additionally, the proposed restoration and enhancement lands will also overlap with habitats suitable for the species as listed:

- *Northern Flickers: Known to inhabit woodlands, woodland edges, and more open communities with scattered trees. To mitigate tree removals, diverse plant lists will target insect species and successional tree species, such as trembling aspen, will be considered within the restoration design.*

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- *Downy Woodpeckers: Known to inhabit more open woodlands associated with watercourses, also seen in created habitats like parks and even suburbs or open areas. To mitigate tree removals, early successional tree species will be considered to target possible snag trees for this species.*
- *Chickadees: Known to inhabit woodlands, open woodlands, thickets, and disturbed areas, and are considered a general species. This species is also known to have an affinity for cottonwoods; therefore, poplars will be included in the restoration design.*
- *Starlings: Known to be an urban dweller and considered to be a non-native species. No targeted habitat will be created with this species in mind; however, suitable habitat overlaps with the tree species discussed above.*

And lastly, there is the issue of wildlife road mortality. While many species cross Leslie Street, frogs, turtles, snakes, muskrat, and mink are of special concern because they are frequently moving between the Golf Course pond and German Mills Creek. This includes Snapping Turtles, which are a species of special concern. With a wider roadway and increased traffic, there will be increased wildlife mortality.

RESPONSE 51: *The vehicular pavement along Leslie Street is proposed to get narrower which will help to reduce traffic speed. The suitability and feasibility of eco-passage across the Leslie Street will be explored at detailed design.*

However, research has shown that eco-passages can provide an alternate route for animals and reduce roadkill. This specially designed fencing funnels animals to culverts that pass under the road. These should be created to reduce roadkill.

RESPONSE 52: *The suitability and feasibility of eco-passage across the Leslie Street will be explored at detailed design.*

4.0 Edith Kangas Deputation

Greetings. My name is Edith Kangas, and I am the President of Settlers Park Residents Association who adopted German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat, April 30, 2013. During this presentation, I will be sharing photos I have personally taken in the park. We appreciate that the emergency access road through the Meadow is off the table. Yet, we still have not addressed the destruction of wildlife habitat in the Greenway due to construction and how it will affect the surrounding area.

RESPONSE 53: *All ecological impacts from this proposal and the associated required compensation, along with the plan for the broader valleyland, have been accounted for in the Environmental Impact Study by GEI Consultants. A net ecological gain has been demonstrated by provided additional compensation, restoration and enhancement beyond the minimum required by TRCA Guidelines (see Table 7 below). The total required minimum compensation is 3.04 ha, and over 4.0 ha of targeted reforestation, revegetation of the valley and its function as a natural corridor are proposed. All restoration and enhancement efforts beyond the 3.04 ha required, are considered a net gain to the ecological function of the broader valleyland.*

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team**Table of Area of Impact and Required Compensation*

Ecological Community Classification	Total Area of Impact (ha)	Minimum Compensation Ratio	Required Compensation (ha)
Cultural Woodland	0.52	5:1	2.60
Significant Woodland	0.03	5:1	0.15
Total Woodland	0.55	5:1	2.75
Significant Valleyland	0.22	1:1	0.22
Total Valleyland	0.22	1:1	0.22
Significant Woodland Buffer Encroachment	0.04	1:1	0.04
LTSTOS Buffer Encroachment	0.03	1:1	0.03
Total Buffer	0.07	1:1	0.07
Total	0.84		3.04

German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat covers 65 acres of land which is unique in Markham, with one of the largest bird migration populations. German Mills Park is increasingly important as a sanctuary for wildlife due to habitat loss in a rapidly developing urban environment. This land has been allowed to flourish and grow with minimal human interference. Bahai's land development is an enormous project with the added expectations of hundreds of visitors which will have a significant impact on our wildlife and their Habitats. Also, the community will be facing high traffic, crowds, and noise in our neighbourhood. My sweetest moments in the woods are deer encounters. I am so worried this will be just a memory due to habitat destruction.

RESPONSE 54: *The proposal by the Bahá'ís has incorrectly been characterized as an extremely large scaled project with significant environmental impact. The proposed Temple will in fact only impact approximately 0.5 hectares (~1.0 acre) of land at the edge of the woodland feature and in the far southwest corner of the 7.3-hectare (18 acre) property privately owned by the Bahá'í Community (7290 Leslie Street). The restoration and enhancement proposed include improvements to the environmental health of over 4.0 hectares of land. This will result in significant improvements to the natural system and habitats beyond the smaller edge location associated with the Temple construction.*

*As noted above in **RESPONSE 15** there is not anticipated to a significant number of daily users of the Temple. The current users of the German Mills Natural Habitat and Meadow pose an existing and greater impact to the wildlife in this area. Refer to **RESPONSE 49** for further details on this.*

When evaluating the significance of wildlife habitat, it is necessary to consider not only the habitat it provides today but historic land uses and potential future habitat it may provide (e.g., restoration efforts focused on reforestation and targeted wildlife habitat etc.). For a local comparison, the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat was once used as a landfill and has now been established into a meadow community that has created habitat that now supports a variety of wildlife including species at risk. Similarly, the areas within the Bahá'í owned lands proposed for restoration or enhancement are all identified as areas of low ecological function, dominated by invasive species, imperviable paving and open mowed lawn that do not provide high quality habitat. The new successional habitat that will be created through the proposed application will benefit a wide variety of wildlife and focus on the species currently using the natural areas in the valley.

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SPRA has worked tirelessly to ensure the Habitat and Meadow are protected to allow threatened birds such as the Eastern Meadowlark, Bobolink and recently Barn Swallows to breed. Their habitat is protected under the Endangered Species Act. I have witnessed Lot 3 has been an area where the Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink nest as it is adjacent to the German Mills Meadow.

***RESPONSE 55:** Despite targeted survey efforts, no Species at Risk (SAR) breeding was observed in Lot 3, though it is understood that the adjacent German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat does support this breeding habitat. Additional information would be beneficial on these observations, as not all observations of Eastern Meadowlark and Bobolink indicate active nesting behaviour and a male singing from the fence line does not denote nesting habitat in all cases. In the interest of addressing public concerns, another year of breeding bird survey efforts will be completed to ensure adequate characterization of the meadow community within Lot 3.*

German Mills Park is listed as being in the top 10 hot spots for bird sightings in all of York Region, with 173 species identified. Many other different species of birds including some endangered species are often sighted in the Meadow, which are rarely sighted elsewhere in Markham. I have seen Pileated woodpeckers, Canada warblers, Chimney Swifts, Olive-sided flycatchers, and dozens of others. Deer, foxes, and coyotes are common in the Meadow and Woodland, as are birds of prey such as different species of hawks, owls; end raptors. Making it so important to save the trees and natural woodlands. So many different species of animals call German Mill Park their home including endangered turtles. Rivers and the land along them provide natural corridors for the migration of plants and wildlife. Also, many insects which are so crucial to the ecosystem. Such as our recently classified Endangered Monarch Butterfly and Bumble Bees.

***RESPONSE 56:** eBird is a citizen science application that has recorded 173 species within the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat / Settlers Park. Per information on eBird, German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat is not within the top 10 areas in York Region. Based on the number of species identified, it would fall into the mid-40's for hotspots in the York Region. However, it is acknowledged that this area does support key habitat for many species and is a popular location for local bird watchers and species observation submissions. Based on data from eBird, this usage follows the patterns observed along other natural features (i.e., ecological corridors associated with the Don River watershed) within York Region and is one of the more active birding areas within the immediate area.*

Of the species mentioned, Pileated Woodpeckers were picked up in the background review of the EIS, but none were observed during the targeted survey efforts conducted within the lands owned by the Bahá'í Community. Canada Warbler was also not observed during targeted surveys, but this is not unexpected as their habitat is more closely aligned with the riparian habitats along the German Mills Creek. Chimney Swifts are likely nesting in a near by structure and foraging within the meadow. No suitable features or observations made within the Subject Lands. Lastly, Olive-sided Flycatchers nest primarily in open / edge habitats and were not observed nesting within the lands owned by the Bahá'ís. Of the species dependant on the meadow for nesting purposes, invasive species (like Dog-strangling vine and Common Buckthorn) pose a significant danger to the grassland bird species currently utilizing the meadow. Not interfering or actively controlling invasive species could negatively impact the future of the German Mills Meadow and its ability to support the wildlife it does currently. This project provides an opportunity to significantly improve the natural areas within the broader valley corridor.

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All the species identified will continue to have both habitat and a home within the valley through this proposal. The habitat enhancement proposed along the German Mills corridor; linkage connections are anticipated to be enhanced.

No endangered turtle species were identified through the background review, though Snapping Turtles are known to the area and understood to move between the pond located on the Bayview Golf and Country Club and the German Mills Creek.

Lastly, pollinators (like Monarchs, our native bee species, etc.) are often a target for seeding and ground cover and will be targeted with the proposed restoration. The presence of these species is acknowledged, and their habitats will be considered as part of the detailed restoration design work.

German Mills Meadow & Natural Habitat and 7015, 7200 & 7290 Leslie St. occupy the same Greenway which is the corridor for wildlife to pass through and live. We are concerned that due to this massive development in the area animals will have a harder time negotiating safe passages. Losing the peace, serenity, and safety of the area because of traffic and crowds on a dead-end road, will limit where the animals can rest, eat, and live.

RESPONSE 57: *The German Mills Valleyland Corridor will be benefited by the extensive improvements proposed to restore native and diverse vegetation communities, particularly on the east side of the German Mills Creek, that will only help to better wildlife passage. Wildlife passage along Leslie Street is a reasonable concern, with conflicts that exists today. The proposed redesign of Leslie Street provides an opportunity to redesign Leslie Street with this in mind and consider eco-passages and other measures to mitigate and minimize wildlife conflicts along Leslie Street.*

We are against the rezoning proposal that will remove the enormous number of trees located in the Greenway.

RESPONSE 58: *See RESPONSE 2 regarding the proposed number of trees to be removed.*

Since the City of Markham has done an exemplary job of preserving and maintaining the meadow, we would like to propose Lot 3 be given to the city and incorporated with German Mills Natural Habitat and Meadow to protect the endangered species for future generations.

RESPONSE 59: *The proposal includes the long-term protection of Lot 3 through the redesignation of it from Residential Land Use to Greenway as well as the removal of invasive species that currently threaten the German Mills Natural Habitat and Meadow and the restoration of these lands as quality meadow habitat.*

German Mills Meadow is a success story for the City of Markham, and something to be proud of and cherished. This huge development will without doubt compromise the habitat of the wildlife who call it home.

5.0 Kimberly Seymour Deputation

Good evening everyone, my name is Kimberly Seymour, I am the VP of Settler's Park Residents Association I am speaking not just as an individual but a representative of SPRA and its membership. We appreciate that the developer has incorporated some environmental improvements into his plan.

RESPONSE 60: *Please note that the Bahá'í Community is NOT a developer. There are over 35,000 registered members of the Bahá'í Faith in Canada of which approximately 3,000 registered members*

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reside in the GTA. The Bahá'í Community has retained experts in the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, ecology, traffic, and engineering to identify the site's ecological features, constraints, hazards and determine the best location for the proposed temple and additional space needs for the National Centre.

I must however, stress that the fundamental problem has not been addressed. That is, the site is too small and too environmentally sensitive to host a National Temple.

RESPONSE 61: *The studies submitted in support of the applications have illustrated that the properties are of appropriate size to “fit” the intended programs and proposed buildings and that any impacts to the natural environment can be offset and a significant net ecological benefit will result through the extensive restoration and enhancement proposed. See **RESPONSE 49** and other previous responses regarding impact mitigation.*

The site totally lacks the level of necessary infrastructure, particularly transportation, to support the volume of visitors a National Temple would attract. Significant down-sizing in buildings and proposed usage is necessary to make the Plan feasible, or a more suitable site should be sought.

RESPONSE 62: *The Functional Servicing Report by SCS Consulting has demonstrated that the proposal can be properly serviced with the needed infrastructure to support the development in accordance with industry standards. The Transportation Study by BA Group has illustrated that sufficient parking is proposed to meet the anticipated demand and that the anticipated traffic can be accommodated within the existing roads. Nonetheless, as part of finding an solution for safe access, addition community benefits are proposed along Leslie Street to address existing safety issues with the mixed travel modes but provided a separated pedestrian connection along the east side of the street. See **RESPONSE 15**, **RESPONSE 16**, and **RESPONSE 20** for more details regarding the provision of adequate parking and transportation infrastructure.*

In the few minutes that I have, I will list areas where the Plan could be made more compatible with the site. These modifications would save hundreds of trees and protect vital wildlife habitat. The Site Layout Needs Substantial Changes

- The Reception and Welcome Center should be moved out of the Greenway. The National Temple should be moved out of the Greenway or to the edge of the forest and it should not exceed a height of two stories, like the surrounding neighbourhood, to protect against bird collisions and reduce light pollution, that will spill over into German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat.

RESPONSE 63: *The proposed Temple and associated welcome building is proposed on the edge of the core woodland feature.*

- The parking and Visitor center should not be near the log home TRCA Development within the Valley is against TRCA Living City Policies.

RESPONSE 64: *See **RESPONSE 27***

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- It is vital to remove the trail networks through sensitive woodlands: TRCA does not support this trail and states, It will cause significant and permanent ecological impacts associated with increased access and encroachment.

RESPONSE 65: *A trail is NOT proposed through the significant woodland feature. A conceptual trail is proposed through areas which are dominated by invasive species. The final location of the trail is to be determined in consultation with TRCA during site plan approval.*

- The full capacity of the development needs to be reduced including the footprint of the temple, and eliminating the conference area and hotel.

RESPONSE 66: *As previously noted in **RESPONSE 5** and **RESPONSE 13** a hotel and conference centre are NOT proposed as part of this project. As described in the January and April presentations to the Thornhill Subcommittee, the footprint and height of the temple have been reduced from the original submission. See **RESPONSE 12**.*

- In the EIS report for Net Ecological Gain. 1.45ha was added as new meadowland. This is meadowland that already exists over the former landfill, just changing the designation to Greenway.

RESPONSE 67: *Though a cultural meadow is currently present, it is dominated by invasive or non-native species and does not provide quality habitat. The cultural meadow in Lot 3 is characterized with species such as Kentucky Bluegrass– Category 2 Invasive, Reed-canary Grass – Non-native, and Dog-strangling Vine – Category 1 Invasive, along with a mix of other non-native or more common meadow species.*

The creation of new meadow habitat is specified with a focus on invasive species management and the replanted with native and diverse species to benefit and protect the remaining NHS long term. Part of maintaining important wildlife habitat (like grassland Species at Risk habitat) is assisting with maintaining the ecological function of the community to continue to provide the conditions required by the targeted species, such as invasive species like DSV.

- Clear cutting a forest in the middle of a Greenway 1 zone will never add up to a Net Ecological gain in the next many decades and it would be a huge tragic loss for Markham's Parks.

RESPONSE 68: *See **RESPONSE 53**. The net ecological net gain has considered the 'lag-time' associated with woodland removals, there by requiring a 5:1 compensation ratio per the basal area of the entire woodland. Therefore, any additional restoration/enhancement measures would qualify as a net gain.*

- Why was a negative number not added to the Net Ecological Loss for the trail encroachment?

RESPONSE 69: *See **RESPONSE 53**.*

- An Environmental Impact study (EIS) is needed on Lot 3.

RESPONSE 70: *The EIS by GEI included the entirety of Lot 3 in its surveys and impact assessment. See **RESPONSE 55**.*

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- Two endangered birds nest here and are protected by provincial and federal law. The developer needs to work with the Ministry of the Environment due to the large number of at endangered and at-risk species in this Greenway and abide by the Endangered Species Act. noting the habitats are to be protected and states site alternation is prohibited. The City must enforce this developer to abide as this grassland and woodlot has SAR birds.

RESPONSE 71: *It is understood that two threatened birds' nest in the German Mills Meadow. The proposed Temple development does not encroach into this known habitat. The proposal not only maintains the existing habitat but proposes to enhance and improve the area with suitable and native meadow species.*

As the project moves into detailed design, an Information Gathering Form will be submitted to the MECP for any activities that may affect species or habitat protected under the Endangered Species Act. This includes a submission to the MECP based on the proximity of the trail placement to species at risk which will provide MECP the opportunity to review the proposal and comment on the mitigation and overall enhancement being provided. The Bahá'í Community (through GEI) will ensure compliance with the Endangered Species Act and MECP on the proposed trail placement through this process.

- Lot 4 needs an EIS as well as a tree inventory

RESPONSE 72: *Development is not proposed on Lot 4 and as such a full Environmental Impact Assessment is not necessary. However, the EIS does provide a full characterization and ecological classification as part of the EIS. The zoning bylaw amendment only seeks to rezone a portion of 7015 Leslie Street from an Open Space zone to the Greenway Zone.*

*A tree inventory will be completed as part of the detailed design and site planning for the Leslie Street improvements. See **RESPONSE 6** for more information.*

- Two Eco-passages are needed on Leslie for animals to cross under the road unhindered Bioswales should be used in all parking lots.

RESPONSE 73: *See **RESPONSE 52***

In Conclusion, currently stake holders, Residence Associations and the Community are strongly opposed to this development as it stands. The current plan will cause permanent detrimental impacts for wildlife, unnecessary tree loss, noise, people traffic, light pollution and cause much disruption for residents. There will be direct negative impacts to significant wildlife habitat and tremendous encroachment.

RESPONSE 74: *See **RESPONSE 53**. As demonstrated in the EIS and Restoration Plan, the proposal will result in a net ecological benefit.*

The project is physically large and expensive. It will have direct environmental and social impacts for decades into the future. It is crucial that such a proposal not be rushed, but that its impacts on both wildlife and existing resident population be fully understood. Such studies are by no means complete and it is essential that a final decision not be made until the impacts are appreciated.

RESPONSE 75: *The methodologies and protocols used in the Environmental Impact Study by GEI Consultants follow applicable the provincial guidelines and standards and reviewed by qualified experts at the City of Markham, York Region and TRCA. Furthermore, the City of Markham has retained an independent consultant to Peer Review the studies to ensure accuracy.*

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The Bahá'í community needs to reassess its requirements. They need to appreciate the site cannot accommodate the number and size of the proposed buildings. Can they meet their design requirements with a smaller footprint on the site?

RESPONSE 76: See **RESPONSE 61**.

It is not in the resident's interests that an unsuitable development is constructed. However, nor is it in the Bahá'í community interests to build a facility which entails environmental damage and is unable to meet its design goals. There is no evidence the currently proposed Plan will ultimately be in the interests of either the local community or the Bahá'í community. The site and the Plan are incompatible. Thank you!

RESPONSE 77: *The responses shared in this document related to the preservation and enhancement of the environment have satisfied the National Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada (NSA) that the proposal as designed meets their interest and needs and is in keeping with the teachings of the Bahá'í faith.*

Thornhill Sub-committee meeting April 9, 2024 Questions submitted by Kimberly Seymour on behalf of SPRA:

1. This environmentally sensitive area is designated Greenway 1 Zone with natural heritage network with significant woodlot and meadowland in the ravine valley system with German Mills Creek with precious wildlife corridor and exists identified endangered, at risk, and species of concern. GWY1 Zone only permits conservation uses and public uses. Buildings or structures are not permitted. This area needs to protect for the thousands of animals that depend on this habitat. The developer needs to respect the low rise, quiet community that currently exists and protect the forests from the visitors. I look forward to hearing your answers from the City Staff and or Bahá'í developer.

RESPONSE 78: *The lands owned by the NSA are NOT zoned "Greenway 1". Lot 1 and 2 are zoned under Zoning Bylaw 1767 as "Special Residential 3 Zone (SR3)" and Lot 3 is zoned "Rural Residential (RR)" under Zoning By-law 304-87. Lot 4, 7015 Leslie Street, is zoned "Open Space (O1) and Open Space (Holding) (HO1)" under Zoning By-law 2612, as amended and "Open Space One (O1)" under Zoning By-law 304-87, as amended.*

The Environmental Impact Study by GEI has detailed the location of significant features and habitats as well as documented anticipated impacts to the environment. The possible impacts are proposed to be offset by a significant amount of ecological restoration, more than would be required as calculated by the TRCA ecological offsetting requirements. Great care has been taken to, thoughtfully and sensitively, design the proposed Temple and new National Centre and in a manner that respects the surrounding environment and community.

2. I believe the developer is severely downplaying the number of visitors that will attend this massive tourist site. Will Markham insist on asking the developer to provides his own estimate of the number of annual visitors, and have him compare this estimate with the number who actually visit other National Temple sites?

RESPONSE 79: *The proposal is for a modest Temple to serve the people of Canada and not a massive tourist destination. See **RESPONSE 3** and **RESPONSE 15** for more information.*

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3. Has Bahá'í contacted the Ministry of Environment in regards to the at-risk species identified in on Bahá'í lands and the adjacent German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat?

RESPONSE 80: See **RESPONSE 71**.

4. Is the developer following the Endangered Species Act as well as the Migratory Convention Act?

RESPONSE 81: Yes, see **RESPONSE 75**.

5. Does the developer plan to follow recommendations from TRCA and remove the trail through the woodlot and meadow as well as the parking and visitor center in the valley land?

RESPONSE 82: See **RESPONSE 27**.

6. Is the developer following Markham's Green-print Sustainability Plan?

RESPONSE 83: *Markham's Greenprint was approved by Markham Council in 2011. The Greenprint, Markham's Sustainability Plan is a 50- to 100-year plan to achieve an environmentally, economically, socially and culturally vibrant community, containing a vision, priorities, a governance framework and a funding framework to create a healthy, vibrant and sustainable community. The plan includes dynamic strategies to involve community members and collaborate with partners, other levels of government and others. The proposal supports the Greenprint by enhancing an existing cultural facility, supporting more active transportation modes through improved street design along Leslie Street, employment of Building Science, Site Design, and Construction methods that will have a 400-year life cycle objective and achieve the highest standards for green building design, and enhancing and increasing areas of natural cover and improved biodiversity, removal of existing impervious areas, and increasing the urban tree canopy.*

7. When will the EIS audits be completed for Lots 3 and 4?

RESPONSE 84: See **RESPONSE 70** and **RESPONSE 72**. *The submitted EIS is being peer reviewed on behalf of the City of Markham. Markham staff can advise on its status and anticipated completion date.*

8. When will the tree inventory be completed at Lot 4?

RESPONSE 85: See **RESPONSE 72**.

9. When will be able to access the City's report in response to the TRCA report which outline numerous concerns with this project?

RESPONSE 86: *City of Markham to advise, however this is typically available as part of their recommendation report to DSC.*

10. What happens if the impacts on the environment are greater than predicted? Will the trail be closed?

RESPONSE 87: *A monitoring program will be implemented with the objective of identifying potential impacts from trail use. Since the trails will be located on property that is under private ownership more immediate actions can be taken to limit access to trails during sensitive seasonal conditions, restrict access by dogs, or closed trails entirely for specific periods. Educational signage will be installed to raise public awareness of the sensitivity of the ecology of the site and to encourage appropriate behaviour.*

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11. Will the trail be closed during bird breeding and migration seasons?

RESPONSE 88: *This can be considered as part of the private operations of the Bahá'í property. It is our understanding that that trails through the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat as well as German Mills Settlers Park are open throughout the year.*

12. How will you avoid salting the trails during the winter?

RESPONSE 89: *Only those pathways and trails that are required to be accessible will be maintained during the winter. Sand and other alternatives to salt will be employed.*

13. Will there be steps, boardwalks, ramps, or bridges, retaining walls planned for the trail due to the steep slopes?

RESPONSE 90: *This is a detail that will be designed during site plan in consultation with the City of Markham and TRCA. However, we can advise that every effort will be made to avoid retaining walls and ensure the trail is designed based on the principle of minimizing impacts. It should be noted that there is a site-specific policy proposed in the OPA that was drafted with input from the TRCA that reads:*

“Notwithstanding Policy 3.1.1.9, trails are permitted within the Greenway System provided that design satisfies geotechnical engineering requirements to the satisfaction of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and minimizes the impacts on the ecological integrity of the Greenway System to the satisfaction of the City of Markham.”

14. How will this trail be made to be accessible? Will that significantly widen the trail?

RESPONSE 91: *See RESPONSE 90.*

15. How will erosion be mitigated?

RESPONSE 92: *Erosion is mitigated through appropriate and satisfactory Stormwater Management practices. An Erosion and Sediment Control Plan will be required at the detailed design stage and prior to construction to protect features increased erosion and soil mobility. The ESC Plan will be developed following the TRCA's Erosion and Sediment Control Guide for Urban Construction (2019a) and will be regularly inspected and maintained in good working order throughout the construction period. This has been noted in the functional studies.*

16. Do you agree there should be no lighting on the trail, to protect habitat?

RESPONSE 93: *There are currently informal trails through Lot 3 that are not lit. It is the intention that the future trail through Lot 3 would not be lit and would be an informal trail like exists today.*

17. Will you ensure harmful pesticides and herbicides are not used in the forest or meadow area?

RESPONSE 94: *Pesticides will not be used. Herbicides are an effective tool to manage aggressive invasive plants including dog-strangling vine (which is present within the site). The safe application of herbicides is regulated by the province. Only licenced personnel are authorized to apply approved herbicides in the province of Ontario. If used, herbicides will be applied in a targeted manner, with spot application being the preferred method.*

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18. Is it true the Bahá'í plans to extend a path from the Lake-to-Lake trail on Leslie leading up to the temple? Where would this be proposed? Would this mean more trees would need be cut down?

RESPONSE 95: *The current proposal to provide safe access by raising Leslie Street is also considering the opportunity this work could offer to provide to separate travel modes with a separate multi-use path on the east side of the roadway. This path is proposed to extend to the end of Leslie Street and connect to a private path. There would be tree impacts along Leslie Street to support the raising of Leslie Street.*

19. Will you ensure tree removal does not occur during bird breeding season April 1- Sept. 1? Or bird migration season?

RESPONSE 96: *All vegetation removals will be targeted outside of the active breeding bird window. Tree removal is not permitted during the active bat window (April 1 to September 30) and the migratory bird window (April 1 to August 25) without adequate survey efforts to confirm presences of wildlife (i.e. nest sweeps (birds) and exit surveys (bats)).*

20. Do you agree to leave fallen and dead trees as they are important to animal habitats and would be much more Canadian?

RESPONSE 97: *Fallen and dead trees within the core features will not be removed unless they pose a hazard to public safety. During the detailed design stage, trees which have to be removed will be considered as possible habitat additions within the areas identified for restoration, as may be appropriate.*

21. What is the height of the average tree where the proposed temple site is located?

RESPONSE 98: *As advised in both presentations to the Thornhill Subcommittee and our submission to the City of Markham, the average height of trees around the temple site are approximately 30 metres.*

22. How long will it take for the trees to grow back to become a mature community?

RESPONSE 99: *The time that it takes for a tree to reach maturity is species dependent. Pioneer species such as poplar can reach maturity in 15 to 20 years. Longer-lived species can take several decades to reach maturity.*

23. Will the vital meadow land on Lot 3 be protected as is, without encroachment of trails and formal manicured gardens?

RESPONSE 100: *As identified in the Environmental Impact Study, a cultural meadow community is currently present on part of Lot 3. This cultural meadow is primarily composed of invasive and non-native species. The proposed restoration includes management of the invasive species currently present and the creation of a more diverse and native meadow community through the planting of native species. No formal manicured gardens are proposed on Lot 3. There are currently several footpaths or informal trails through Lots 2 and 3. These will be removed and replace with a singular trail to be located and design in consultation with TRCA and the City during site plan approval.*

24. How does Bahá'í plan to eradicate the Dog Strangling Vine in Lot 3, on their side of the fence in the meadow without completely tarping the meadow and destroying the whole thing or using harmful herbicides that would affect other animals? This area in Lot 3 is too sensitive to use either technique due to bird breeding season. Is a mechanical method, prior to bird breeding season planned?

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RESPONSE 101: *Schollen & Company Inc. was retained by The Rouge Park Alliance to research the effectiveness of methods to control DSV and other highly aggressive invasive plants. This pioneering research studied the effectiveness of various methods of control over a 3-year period. The research concluded that tarping and the use of herbicides were the only effective methods of control. Since this research was done, the City of Toronto has employed herbicide application as the primary means to control DSV. The application of herbicides is regulated by the province. Applicators are licenced and the timing of application is staged to avoid species sensitive windows. Targeted application is most effective to mitigate impacts on desirable species that may be present in the DSV dominated plant community.*

25. What is the capacity of each of the temple, banquet hall, conference area, meeting rooms, restaurant, hotel, day camp? What is the total capacity when every space is full?

RESPONSE 102: *See **RESPONSE 3**, **RESPONSE 5** and **RESPONSE 12** as previously mentioned a hotel, restaurant and banquet facility are NOT proposed. The temple will be design for a capacity of 300-400 people and the National Centre meeting spaces will be designed to accommodate the largest event which is the once yearly National Convention of approximately 200 delegates. It should be noted however that the design capacity of a space does not reflect the anticipated number of daily visitors. These spaces will never be at capacity at the same time. It is anticipated that the daily weekday visitor average will be approximately 35 people and weekends may reach up to 100-145 daily visitors.*

26. How does Bahá'í plan to manage people and traffic if over capacity for special events? Will they use a ticket system?

RESPONSE 103: *The Leslie Street improvements which propose the construction of a multi-use path, additional parking spaces at 7015 Leslie Street as well as on-street parking should ensure that there is more than sufficient parking to support the anticipated events and programs outlined in **RESPONSE 3** and **RESPONSE 15**. Furthermore, a Traffic Demand Management plan will be provided at a later stage.*

27. How will you regulate large crowds that will walk in the adjacent German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat to protect this area?

RESPONSE 104: *This is public land owned by the City of Markham with By-law in place regarding the use of public space. It is not the responsibility of adjacent private property owners to regulate and manage usage of public lands. The Bahá'í Community will, however, provide education regarding the use of natural lands to all visitors. Their programming does not include organized tours into the adjacent German Mills.*

28. How many meters is the current proposed temple away from the driveway to the admin?

RESPONSE 105: *Approximately 60 metres.*

29. What other locations were considered for the temple that would be less environmentally destructive?

RESPONSE 106: *Lot 3 was considered for the Temple as it designated residential and currently permits place of worships. Most of Lot 3 is outside the Greenway designation of the Official Plan and is not constrained by significant natural features that require protection under provincial regulations or regional and local policies.*

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30. Is it true that the proposed temple will have: Nine entrances with nine paths and nine associated manicured gardens? This would be extremely disruptive to the natural environment. Could they respond to how their design compares? Are there any proposed water features?

RESPONSE 107: *The detailed design work for the Temple has yet to be commissioned, however, all Bahá'í Temples are nine-sided structures. The nature of the landscaping immediately surrounding the Temple will be part of the design of the Temple, with a transition from planned and maintained garden to the core woodland feature, which as noted elsewhere will not be touched. The gardens are intended to showcase native species that are indigenous to the Carolinian forest region. The planting strategy will include planting native understorey species along the interface with the proposed Temple site and the existing woodland. Water features may be considered as part of the design. That will be determined during detail site planning and landscape design as part of site plan approval.*

31. What are the hours of operation?

RESPONSE 108: *This has yet to be determined but typical open hours for other temples are between 9 am -10 am to 5 to 6:30pm. Some temples open as early as 6am and other stay open till 7 or 8pm. Most are closed one day a week.*

- Australia: 10am-4pm
- Cambodia: 9am-7pm
- Chile: 9am-5pm (closed from 12-2:30)
- Colombia: 8am-7pm (closed 12-2pm).
- Congo: 6am-8pm
- Germany: 9am-8pm
- India: 8:30am-6pm (closed on Monday)
- Kenya: 9am-5pm
- Uganda: 8am-5pm (closed on Monday)
- USA: 6am-8pm
- Vanuatu: 9am-?

32. Do they use LEED guidelines?

RESPONSE 109: *See RESPONSE 33. LEED guidelines are US commercial standard. Markham, Vaughan, and Richmond Hill have developed their own set of Sustainability Metrics for green building construction. These guidelines will be used for the Bahá'í Temple and new National Centre. Additionally, it should be noted that the latest Bahá'í temples have been constructed based on a 400-year life cycle mandates. We anticipate that these new Bahá'í buildings will employ similar standards and exceptional requirements for energy and water efficiencies that exceed typical LEED guidelines.*

33. Do they follow Night Sky Compliant recommendations?

RESPONSE 110: *Yes, this is a standard requirement for all new buildings and developments*

34. Are they using Bird friendly glass to Canadian standards?

RESPONSE 111: *Yes, this is a standard requirement for all new buildings.*

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35. Will there be noise restrictions?

RESPONSE 112: *As they are today, the National Centre and Temple will be subject to the City of Markham's Noise Bylaw 2017-74. However, it is not anticipated that the redevelopment of the National Centre nor the Temple will generate significant noise. The Temple as previously mentioned in **RESPONSE 3** quiet contemplation and the National Centre will on a daily basis function as it does today. See **RESPONSE 15**.*

36. Who owns the fence along Leslie beside the golf course? Is it Markham's fence or does the Golf course own the fence? Will you work with the golf course and consider changing this metal fence to be more animal friendly with a small space under the fence for migration and low enough for young deer to jump over? Green fencing is best.

RESPONSE 113: *It is our understanding that the Bayview Golf and Country Club own the fence in reference. We assume for security and liability purposes a fence will need to remain in that location, but as part of the Leslie Street Solution, we can consult with Bayview Golf about alternative fence designs as requested.*

37. Who owns the boundary fences on the North and East sides. I believe that is Markham's fence as Markham removed the barbed wire. Can you make that fence eco-friendly to allow easier migration for small mammals and deer?

RESPONSE 114: *It is our understanding that this fence is owned by the Bahá'í Community. Similar to the Golf course, a fence will need to remain for security and liability purposes, however, we can review with our ecologists and landscape architect if there are feasible alternatives as requested.*

38. Have the cars that currently park on Leslie for GTA park users and Lake to Lake trail users been calculated into the parking formulas? That section is already fully used now.

RESPONSE 115: *There are currently NO parking spaces along Leslie Street. The proposed Leslie Street solution has identified the opportunity to formally define 10-20 parking spaces along Leslie Street. It is not the responsibility of private property owners to provide parking for public space users.*

39. Will you protect and enforce no overnight parking at Lot 4 due to safety and flood risks in the hazard zone?

RESPONSE 116: *Yes, overnight parking will not be permitted at the existing parking lot on Lot 4.*

40. What is the plan if the parking lot is full and additional vehicles show up?

RESPONSE 117: *During the few larger Bahá'í events, such as the National Convention, Transportation Demand Management plans will be in place to help minimize the need for individual car travel to and from the National Centre. Furthermore, the Lodging Rooms will help to mitigate the need for attendees to travel back and forth to the National Centre during multi-day seminars and events.*

41. Will Police be hired to control traffic at the Leslie and Steeles intersection during big events

RESPONSE 118: *With the proper Transportation Demand Management Plans, police will not be necessary to control the Leslie & Steeles intersection. However, if necessary, as part of the Transportation Demand*

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Management Plans, traffic control persons will be strategically placed along Leslie Street to help direct traffic flow.

42. How do 200+ cars and tour buses turn around?

RESPONSE 119: *As stated above, events held by at the National Centre by the Bahá'í Community are not anticipated to generate 200+ cars. The estimated peak parking demand expected to occur on public holidays when the public is accessing the adjacent trails and parks is approximately 100 vehicles.*

The improved parking lot at 7015 Leslie Street will have dedicated bus pull over and turn around. However, the events proposed by the Bahá'í community are not anticipating the use of tour buses. School buses to help transport children to and from the day camps and youth programs might be employed to help improve the accessibility of these programs to all children and youth. During larger Bahá'í events, such as the National Convention, personnel will be located along Leslie Street to ensure that cars and buses will use the appropriate turnaround loops in the 7015 Leslie parking lot.

43. Will parking on one side of the street be enforced on Leslie near the park entrance for Emergency vehicle access and well as on Bahá'ís private driveway?

RESPONSE 120: *The City of Markham and York Regional Police are responsible for parking enforcement along public roads in accordance with the City of Markham Parking Control By-law 2005-168. The redesign of Leslie Street will ensure that the pavement is sized to support the passage of emergency vehicles, as is done for all public streets, in accordance with City, Regional and Industry standards. Parking is not proposed along the private driveway to the Bahá'í National Centre and temple.*

44. Will No Parking along Waterloo Gate be enforced?

RESPONSE 121: *City of Markham Parking Control By-law 2005-168. Parking is permitted on the right hand side of public streets except for between 2:30 AM-6:00AM (overnight parking not permitted) or other prohibited by "no parking" signage and listed on Schedule C. Furthermore, By-law 2005-168 prohibits parking 9m from intersections, 3m from a fire hydrant, from obstructing private driveways, sidewalks, and cross walks. It is our understanding that parking is currently permitted along Waterloo Court in accordance with By-law 2005-168. Nonetheless, attendees to programs and events at the National Centre will be advised on the availability of onsite parking.*

45. Can you ensure there will be: No camping? No campfires? No fireworks? No Drones? No loud noise? These guidelines exist at GMMNH

RESPONSE 122: *Camping, campfires, firework, noise, and drones are regulated throughout the City of Markham in accordance with applicable City bylaws or Federal Aviation Laws (drones). Camping is not a permitted use, nor a use requested by this application.*

46. What are the construction days and hours?

RESPONSE 123: *This is a detail that hasn't yet been determined and will be finalized as part of the Site Plan Agreement/Building Permit stage; however, typically construction happens during the week (not on weekends) and between 8AM – 4PM in accordance with municipal by-laws.*

47. Could the Bahá'í staff provide more accurate To-scale drawings of the temple and associated buildings with their proposed locations, as currently the drawings are not to scale? The drawings show the temple below tree height. Are you able to provide the average tree height on the drawing

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and display the temple to scale with that height? People in the drawings appear to be really tall can they be more realistic?

RESPONSE 124: *The drawings of the Temple and associated buildings are drawn accurately and to scale. The Temple is proposed to be lower than the tree height. The trees are approximately 30 metres tall in and around the Temple location.*

The National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada have retained a well-regarded and experienced group of professional architects, landscape architects, planners, engineers, ecologists, and arborists to provide advice and guidance on the construction of the temple and national centre and to accurately prepare the preliminary site plan and illustrative drawings.

48. Could more realistic renderings be provided of the temple, showing the temple and buildings after construction with the associated forest removed, new landscaping with gardens, pathways and plantings? Current drawings are showing the mature forest immediately around the temple which would not be the case.

RESPONSE 125: *The renderings prepared show the ultimate proposed condition in which the temple would be situated and are drawn accurately and to scale. The proposal will keep as many possible mature, native, and healthy trees around the temple as possible. New natural landscaping as well as gardens and pathways will be designed around the temple. Native trees, shrubs and ground flora will be utilized throughout the planting plan. The current renderings are placeholders to reflect the size and scale of the temple however the temple design is not finalized and will be comply to the final approved Zoning By-law.*

49. Could the developer include a current aerial photograph of the site when comparing the photos from other historical aerials photos when giving presentations?

RESPONSE 126: *Current air photos of the subject properties have been included in the submission and in every presentation made regarding this project. Furthermore, current air photos are available on the Temple website at temple.bahai.ca.*

50. Will Bahá'í be willing to join and be an active member on a committee to work with stakeholders and the City to mitigate encroachment and protection of GMMNH and establish a site control plan and work collaboratively to protect and enhance the park?

RESPONSE 127: *A representative of the Bahá'í National Centre currently participates and attends meetings as part of the committee for the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat and are committed to the protection and enhancement of the park.*

51. Will Bahá'í be willing to financially support Markham to put in place efforts for meadow protections and improvements?

RESPONSE 128: *The proposal includes significant financial investment in the restoration and enhancement of over 5.0 hectares of land in the German Mills Valley Corridor including over 4.5 hectares of woodland and meadow vegetation restoration and enhancement (including invasive species management), the removal of almost 1.0 hectares of impervious cover, and over 100 metres of watercourse rehabilitation plus tree compensation requirements of which is estimated near \$2 million dollars. Furthermore, the Bahá'í community will continue to monitor, manage, and maintain their almost 20 hectares of lands within the German Mills corridor.*

Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team

52. Will you consider the protection of the forests from the guests? Climate change is real. 1200 species are on the At-risk list in Canada. We need to preserve biodiversity by protecting habitats.

RESPONSE 129: *See previous responses. Existing habitats will be protected and enhanced, and new habitats will be created through the implementation of the restoration strategy for the lands.*

53. Does Bahá'í plan to respect the privacy and security for residence on the quiet residential street on Waterloo Court?

RESPONSE 130: *See RESPONSE 1, RESPONSE 3, RESPONSE 17, and RESPONSE 19.*

54. How will the retirement home at Gibson's Long Care at Steeles and Leslie be protected from noise from construction?

RESPONSE 131: *This long-term care home is on the south side of Steeles and over 600 metres away from the subject properties. It is not anticipated to be impacted by construction noise given its distance from the site.*

55. Will Markham ensure within two years after the development is completed that they will revisit the site to compare the predicted number of visitors and vehicles with the actual number of visitors and vehicles and step in to set limits on the developer if the numbers are way higher than claimed?

RESPONSE 132: *City of Markham to respond.*

5.1 Unknown Written Submission

Re: Item 4.3 7200 Leslie Street – Bahai Development Application, Thornhill Subcommittee, Tuesday, April 9, 2024

Although I am very pleased that the proposed emergency access road has been removed from the plan, I am still extremely concerned about the impacts of this project to the ecological German Mills Creek wildlife corridor and to the health of the public who reap the numerous physical and mental health benefits on their daily visits to this natural oasis.

At a time of climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, the alarming decline in bird/wildlife and insect populations, and the collapse of global ecosystems, I still find this application unsupportable. This project aims to cram buildings, paved parking areas and excessive lighting into a significant wildlife corridor. It does not take into consideration the global and local environmental consequences. The sensitive German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat, the mature forest and the wildlife corridor along the German Mills Creek are all at risk. The plan will harm the rare meadow habitat for birds such as the Meadowlark and Bobolink which are classified as “threatened” and will likely become endangered if steps are not taken to address factors threatening them.

RESPONSE 133: *See RESPONSE 2, RESPONSE 71 as well as other previous responses.*

It is contrary to Section 215 of Markham’s Greenprint Sustainability strategy which emphasizes the need to “Implement an interconnected Natural Heritage Network, working towards connectivity between existing green spaces and ensure they are of sufficient quality and size to support wildlife”. The German Mills ecological corridor is already achieving this and will be damaged by this development.

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team***RESPONSE 134:** *See RESPONSE 83*

Raising Leslie Street will make it more difficult for wildlife, especially turtles, to cross the road, and seek refuge through the corridor. Road ecology measures, to provide wildlife with safe passage, should be installed if the road does get reconstructed.

RESPONSE 135: *See RESPONSE 52*

The destruction of hundreds of mature trees will displace wildlife, reduce carbon sequestration, production of oxygen, cooling, stormwater mitigation and other natural capital services on which we humans rely for our own survival, health and wellbeing. Small, newly planted saplings will take years to be able to produce the equivalent level of carbon sequestration and natural benefits that the mature trees are currently providing. The existing mature trees offer shelter and habitat for birds such as owls and other wildlife. They support a robust and vibrant ecosystem. We can't get back those large mature trees in our lifetime!

RESPONSE 136: *See RESPONSE 2 and RESPONSE 71*

I understand that the applicant would be required to comply with Markham's Bird Friendly Guidelines if the development is approved, but would request that the up-to-date Canadian Standards Association Bird Safe Standards be used as well. Resident and migratory birds deserve optimal protection from being injured/killed from collisions from the glass windows.

RESPONSE 137: *See RESPONSE 109 and RESPONSE 111*

Regardless of whether the applicant adheres to night-sky measures to mitigate light pollution, there will be a great deal of light generated from this site. It is very concerning because artificial lighting disrupts the natural circadian rhythms of humans, animals, insects and plants. Light pollution affects the health of humans by inhibiting the production of melatonin, which can cause cancer. Light pollution is obliterating our view of the night sky and wonders of the universe.

RESPONSE 138: *Night Sky complainant lighting will be utilized. These measures have been part of the design process recommendations since the initial submission.*

In conclusion I recommend that the applicant find a more suitable location or scale down their project rather than forcing it into a sensitive ecological wildlife corridor. The Greenway should remain as a Greenway. Leave it alone.

RESPONSE 139: *The application has been resubmitted with a scaled down proposal for the Temple. See RESPONSE 53 regarding wildlife impacts.*

"The rapid loss of biodiversity that we are witnessing is about much more than nature. The collapse of ecosystems will threaten the wellbeing and livelihoods of everyone on the planet." – Linda Krueger, Director of Biodiversity and Infrastructure Policy of Nature Conservancy. Feb 2, 2022

5.2 Sue Mason Deputation

Dear Members of the City Council,

Having been a long time resident of Thornhill for 47 years, I've witnessed the preservation and development of numerous green spaces that are vital to our community. For example: The Beamish Construction Site on Royal Orchard Blvd became a parkland/playground. Oakbank Pond on Centre St. was protected as a nature reserve. The greenspace at Pomona Mills Park is now Summer Lane Entrance instead of townhomes. The preservation and restoration of Settler's Park created a picturesque landscape. The wildlife and seasonally changing meadow is a joy to behold.

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The proposed development of the Bahá'í National Centre and Temple Project in a location where little greenspace remains in a well established community will greatly impact an area that is already experiencing the effects of urban sprawl. Paul Zammit clearly outlined at the Town Hall Meeting on May 18th future community projects which will inevitably create more congestion.

I don't want to reiterate the numerous objections for the proposed development which were presented at the Town Hall meeting last May, but I would like to reinforce that construction in a long existing green space in a residential location that is already experiencing exponential growth is not at all conducive to the well being of its residents and biodiverse wildlife.

RESPONSE 140: *The Temple and new National Centre is not proposed within public green space. It is proposed on private land owned by the Bahá'ís and adjacent to a golf course.*

One of the lessons we learned from the COVID Pandemic is the necessity of outdoor recreational areas for our mental and physical health. I've seen wild turkeys, foxes, coyotes, hawks, deer, numerous species of birds and various insects that inhabit and grow in the forest corridor of the proposed development. The photo of the resting deer was taken February 2024. The deer are located on the perimeter of Lot 3 and German Mills Settlers Park. There are two videos of deer (not great quality) taken March 24th 2024. The shorter video (47 secs) shows Lot 2 and a deer located where the Temple is going to be constructed. You can see the marked trees for removal. The second video (1 min 30 secs) is of four deer located behind the existing log cabin where the proposed programs, washrooms and reception area will be constructed. I'm also including a photo of one of the numerous coyote dens located in Lot 3 and a photo of a coyote standing where the Temple would be built on Lot 2.

RESPONSE 141: *Wildlife impacts have been considered for all species as applicable (see **RESPONSE 53**). It should be clarified that urban dwelling mammals (wildlife) are not provided protection measures in the same way as significant wildlife habitat as identified by the province. These species are well adapted to urban conditions and have healthy population numbers. Where species like White-tailed Deer are protected through identified deer wintering areas, which are provincially tracked and mapped. The German Mills Valley corridor in this location, particularly the lands owned by the Bahá'ís are not identified and mapped by the Province as deer wintering areas. Nonetheless, the linkage and general movement of these species through the German Mills valley corridor will be maintained and enhanced, particularly along the east side of the German Mills Creek.*

What was the point of saving the meadowland if part of the forest that allows for the flow of the natural ecosystem is going to be destroyed? The implications are devastating and what exists there now will be lost.

RESPONSE 142: *The linkage connection between the meadow and the remaining significant and native woodlands will be maintained.*

The proposed development is not in alignment with Greenprint Markham's Sustainability Plan and we must not compromise what little greenspace remains in order to prevent environmental deterioration.

RESPONSE 143: *See **RESPONSE 83***

Zoning bylaws are in place for good reason.

RESPONSE 144: *Only minor modifications to the development standards are proposed to the existing zoning bylaw. See **RESPONSE 1**, **RESPONSE 5**, **RESPONSE 13**, and **RESPONSE 78**.*

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The Temple Project is very impressive and would be of great benefit to its worshippers but situated in a central, easily accessible, and close to amenities location.

RESPONSE 145: See RESPONSE 1

In our world of climate change and environmental decline we must do our utmost to preserve and protect what little precious greenspace remains.

Sincerely,

Sue Mason

5.3 Eileen Carter Deputation

Re: NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS C/O MALONE GIVEN PARSONS LTD.,
APPLICATION FOR OFFICIAL PLAN AMENDMENT AND ZONING BY-LAW AMENDMENT

My husband and I moved onto German Mills 30 years ago. We wanted an area that was close to the TTC for getting to my job and to highways for my husband's job and family visiting, but not feel like it's in the city. Our realtor chose well when he brought us to German Mills. One of the things that really impressed me about the area was the feeling that multiculturalism was embraced. Besides Christian churches, at Don Mills and Steeles was a large synagogue, on Bayview there was a synagogue and Islamic centre beside each other and a Buddhist Temple. Since then, the Taoist temple and the large Coptic cathedral have been built close by on Steeles.

After we moved in, I found the Bahá'í National Centre was on the other side of German Mills Creek. I didn't know much about the Bahá'í faith, but had heard it was a religion that was peaceful and supported the ecology of nature, so I was surprised and delighted they had chosen this neighbourhood for their national centre. Over the past 30 years I still have the same impression of the Bahá'í faith and have read local news articles about their forest stewardship.

Almost a year ago I heard about the proposed development by seeing flyers and signs done by a group opposed to the development. I couldn't figure out why they said the German Mills Meadow needed saving since the development was only on Bahá'í owned property and an emergency access road along the meadow's road allowance wouldn't increase vehicles travelling through it any more than they already were. My concern at the time was if they succeeded in stopping the development and the Bahá'í had to sell and build elsewhere, not only would that be unfair to a peaceful nature loving group that was here before the area's subdivisions were built, but the property would be developed into housing. Although I agree there is a great need for affordable housing, I think in areas such as ours, housing needs to be built on underused parking lots and malls, not natural spaces. Since the current National Assembly building is only 750 meters from Steeles & Leslie (source: Google maps) and the TTC #53 bus runs along Steeles almost as frequently as the subway runs, the federal government's new requirements for the Permanent Transit Fund means high-density housing could be built on the lot.

Since then, I have read all the documents and attended meetings about the development made publicly available, including the many documents that the 'Save the Meadow' group posted on their Facebook site (e.g., Engineering and Urban Design folders). Owing to the fact that in university I studied most of the topics they covered, including doing tree inventories and mapping flood plains, I found the documents very interesting and informative. I agree there will be a significant net gain to the ecology of the site and the surrounding area.

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The 'Save the Meadow' group continues to spread baseless assumptions and erroneous information about the development to win people over to their way of thinking and stop the development. I listened to speakers opposed to the development at the May, 2023 public meeting, have spoken to and asked questions of many in the group against the development, and I still can't find any valid reason why they are against it. A year ago, I was afraid they would cause all the forest and open space on the property to be destroyed for housing. Although that is still a concern, I now see that through their efforts to 'Save the Meadow', they are doing the opposite of saving by stopping changes that would have a positive effect on the German Mills Meadow and the ravine ecology. My example is, the emergency road through the meadow has been cancelled. Although I wholeheartedly back the new plans for Leslie St because I fear for my life sometimes when walking along it and I was a Valleywood Club member when the flood took out its parking lot and part of the road, for the sake of the ground nesting birds and other small ground dwelling wildlife I hope Markham staff considers putting in a gravel path from the paved north part to the gravel at the south end. The German Mills Meadow and Ravine is a popular destination on weekends and the mud and bare ground erosion on the path are causing pedestrians to walk around it and make the path wider than an emergency road would have needed.

It's human nature to not like change. It's common for people to voice their complaints about change and common to be quiet when they are fine with changes. This is why it's important to me that you have my reasons for endorsing this development because if I think this way I'm sure there are many others who do too who are remaining quiet.

5.4 Gail and John Lavery Deposition

The Chair and Members of the Thornhill Sub-Committee,

I write to express my continued deep concern over the Bahá'í National Centre Development Plans. These plans, if approved, will cause devastating, and far reaching effects to this natural environment, which I now outline below.

RESPONSE 146: *See RESPONSE 53.*

Temple

Towering 82 Ft tall, (roughly nine stories high), this temple will dominate the area and landscape.

RESPONSE 147: *See RESPONSE 12*

The forest area will be virtually clear-cut to accommodate this structure. Planting saplings/young trees cannot compensate for mature trees. The detrimental effects will be immediate on many bird species, as well as a myriad of other wildlife.

RESPONSE 148: *It is correct that younger saplings are proposed to compensate for the mature trees proposed for removal, this is the standard practice for restoration efforts. It's also important to recognize that young successional communities provide different but equally important habitat types for a variety of wildlife species.*

When determining the size of compensation trees to be planted, the larger sized saplings have a much lower survival rate than smaller saplings, which are far more tolerant to disturbance that comes with the initial planting efforts. The restoration proposed aims to include a variety of sizes of compensation trees to emulate a natural woodland as matures rather than saplings that are all the same size and age.

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*Regarding the concern around accurate replacement efforts, the TRCA's Guideline for Determining Ecosystem Compensation (2018) accounts for the 'lag-time' that comes with the replacement of woodlands through 'basal areas'. Basal area is a forestry term that provides a replacement ratio appropriate to older and higher functioning treed ecosystems. To demonstrate, the 0.52 ha of cultural woodland proposed to be removed in support of the Temple requires a 5:1 compensation area of 2.60 ha to account for a community that is more mature has a longer period of time to establish than others (e.g., meadow habitat). The proposed restoration takes 'lag-time' into account and provides additional enhancement to continue the overall net benefit to the German Mills Creek valley. See **RESPONSE 2**, **RESPONSE 14**, and **RESPONSE 99** for more details.*

Lodging/Hotel

This will accommodate around 100 people. It is unclear why lodging is necessary for a religious institution.

RESPONSE 149: See **RESPONSE 5**, **RESPONSE 13** and **RESPONSE 15**

Conference Centre, Banquet Hall, Large Administrative Building

There has been no information released on the capacity of any of the above structures.

RESPONSE 150: See previous responses, particularly **RESPONSE 15** and **RESPONSE 16**

Increased Traffic

All other places of worship in the City of Markham are on main arterial roads. This is proposed on a dead-end country road. There WILL be hundreds of cars navigating through this single lane cul-de-sac. Common sense and life experience would tell us that it is not a question of IF an accident will happen, but WHEN.

RESPONSE 151: See previous responses.

So to summarize, the proposal includes a Temple with capacity for 400 people, a hotel/lodging facility for close to 100 people, plus a conference centre banquet hall and a large administration building. All of this, on a small forested area on a dead end street. The size and scope of this development is out of proportion with the area. It will have devastating effects on the wildlife, the tree canopy and the peace of this beautiful area. This destruction will be permanent; there will be no going back if this development gets approved.

German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat is beloved by our community and beyond, for a multitude of reasons; the wildlife, the large and varied bird population (some of which are endangered) and the peaceful walks it offers in this ever-increasingly busy world. Many people in our community have worked for over a decade to preserve and enhance this gift of nature.

This sanctuary should be cherished and protected as much by the City, as it is by our community and beyond.

The Meadow, together with 7015, 7200 and 7290 Leslie Street, occupy the same Greenway – which is an essential corridor for wildlife to use. This huge development will make it more difficult for animals to navigate safe passage through this area. Deer will not be able to travel north along the river, and will be forced to cross Leslie Street while moving to and from the Golf Course area. Adding to their challenge, is the huge chain link fence around the golf course, which prevents deer from crossing this area safely. Last year, sadly, we saw how this ended for one young deer that was hit and killed by a car at Leslie/Steeles. This should not be allowed to happen again. This proposed development abuts German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat/German Mills Settlers Park, and shares the same Greenway. As such,

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it will without doubt cause devastating effects to our park and the wildlife that live therein. It is unconscionable for this to proceed.

RESPONSE 152: *See previous responses.*

At the Statutory Public Meeting on May 23, 2023, a comment was passed by a City Official (to allay concerns presumably), that “Not one inch of the Meadow will be touched by this development.” As demonstrated by the evidence above, that argument simply will not be true. There is no way for this development to proceed and for the Meadow to remain untouched. It would be akin to a doctor

telling a patient “We won’t hurt you, we’re just going to turn off your oxygen.” In other words, the resulting end damage will be the same. Proceeding with this development is inextricably linked to the destruction of the Meadow.

RESPONSE 153: *Correct, the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat on public land will not be touched, the cultural meadow lands within the Bahá’í owned land on Lot 3 will be maintained and enhanced. To continue with the medical analogy, this is more akin to a Doctor recommending a treatment that will benefit the overall health of the meadow for years to come.*

Please, I implore you, let common sense prevail; do not approve this development as currently proposed. It is too vast, too devastating and too costly to our wildlife, environment and community.

5.5 Brian Frank Deposition

I am an outdoors person and a photographer. I have been walking, cycling or running, through the German Mills Meadow and connected park systems almost every day for well over 40 years.

First, I would like to applaud all the volunteers and members of the Settlers Park Residents Association and the German Mills South Ratepayers Association for the hundreds of volunteer hours and marathon efforts that they put into making the German Mills Meadow a sanctuary for all to visit. If the resident wildlife could speak, I know that they would be thanking each and every one of you for your tireless and devoted commitments.

That being said, there are some serious ecological and environmental issues to consider as the proposed Bahai construction to the roadway and buildings will change the landscape of this greenspace.

1. The Leslie corridor between Steeles St North and the entrance to the German Mills Meadow is a sensitive eco-system area that hosts much wildlife. Besides the trees and plants, it has a diverse mix of birds, animals, fish, amphibians and insects. Changes to this corridor will affect the immediate meadow to the north. German Mills Meadow and the Duncan Woods Creek is a migratory destination for over a 170 different species of birds. This in itself is remarkable and very rare with very few other green spaces in Ontario that can boast having a designated birding “Hotspot” by the National Audubon Society in Markham’s very own backyard. Markham should be very proud and be promoting this!

RESPONSE 154: *See RESPONSE 56*

2. Road development, building construction, construction pollution will create a loss of this natural green space and will affect all the wildlife that use these green spaces on Leslie Street and in The German Mills Meadow.

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RESPONSE 155: *As discussed in **RESPONSE 53** and **RESPONSE 54**, an overall addition of natural area will be added to the valley corridor. Though it is true that green space is better than an impervious surface, not all green spaces are equal in their ecological value, which is the case for the restoration and enhancement areas identified as part of this application, where the lands will be restored to healthy communities and species native to Ontario.*

3. The Leslie St N. roadway between Steeles Ave. and the entrance to the German Mills Meadow has over 40 different species of birds that use the trees as habitat for feeding and breeding. I went through my photo library of 2023 - 2024 to identify the number of birds that typically roost or use the trees on either side of Leslie. The short list is 39 birds.

RESPONSE 156: *See **RESPONSE 56***

4. General disruption from road construction, chemical pollution from asphalt oil runoff into the water table will affect fish, amphibians (turtles and snakes), resident and migratory birds. This will poison the wildlife and plant life in the immediate area and downstream to where the Duncan Woods Creek converges with German Mills Creek and then continues south into the Don River and multiple interconnected park systems all the way into Lake Ontario.

RESPONSE 157: *See **RESPONSE 37** and **RESPONSE 50***

5. Birdlife in general is very precarious and studies produced by Cornell University Lab of Ornithology show that grassland birds has been diminishing at a reported rate of more than 50% plus. For example, the very common Red-winged Blackbird population has dropped by 100 million. This is the same for Song Sparrows, Juncos and many others. Having a long term construction zone adjacent to the German Mills meadow will be detrimental to the environment and ecosystem that makes up the meadow lands and the surrounding parklands. We all recognize that birds are important. They provide pollination. They are beautiful to look at and to listen to. They bring joy into our lives. The important question is. Since birds are irreplaceable, what will the City of Markham and the Ministry of the Environment do to protect “their” wildlife residents and migratory birds from the pollution, deforestation and construction from the Bahai plan?

RESPONSE 158: *The species list provided below is appreciated and will be considered at detailed design when creating the specific plant lists and habitat creation efforts completed at detailed design. See **RESPONSE 49** and **RESPONSE 50** for further information.*

For reference: Cornell University: <https://www.birds.cornell.edu/home/bring-birds-back/>

My Leslie Street bird short list.

- Blue Heron	- Golden Kinglets	- House Sparrow
- Northern Flickers	- European Starlings	- Savannah Sparrow
- Northern Harriers	- Kildeer	- Black Capped Chickadee
- Redtail Hawks	- Mourning Dove	- Hooded Merganser
- Cooper Hawks	- Robins	- Belted Kingfishers
- Broad Tailed Hawks	- Blue Jays	- Nuthatch
- Merlin	- Winter Wren	- Savannah Sparrows
- Red Bellied Woodpeckers	- Canada Geese	- Cardinals
- Downy Woodpeckers	- Mallard	- Red Wing Black birds
- Pileated Woodpeckers	- Turkey Vultures	- Indigo Buntings
- Hairy Woodpecker	- Baltimore Orioles	- Eastern Bluebirds
- American Crow	- White Crowned Sparrows	- Brown Creeper
- Song Sparrow	- House Sparrows	

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team***5.6 Jack Heath – April 9, 2024**

There's an opportunity which presents itself with the Bahá'í application. The residents have made excellent arguments about the proposal as it stands, not being suitable. But Bahá'í showed in January its willingness to modify its first proposal. I don't know if it will be enough, but I am sure the questions will be answered in due course. I am pleased Councillor Irish will be hosting a community meeting to further the discussion. The opportunity I want to raise with you is unique to this location. Bahá'í is a major property owner in the area. What I am proposing doesn't depend on application approval, but their involvement in a community environmental project could be most beneficial. I suggest the creation of a German Mills Ecological Corridor. Starting north of John, it encompasses the green areas south to Steeles and includes Settler's Park and the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat. It would then connect to a similar area on the south side of Steeles.

***RESPONSE 159:** The term 'Ecological Corridor' is a descriptive term that doesn't offer a particular protection or designation under provincial policies; however, as the majority of natural corridors remaining within urban areas are linkages (or "ecological corridors") that facilitate the movement of wildlife across the landscape, we have no issue with this. We defer this suggestion to the City of Markham as it will require their efforts to coordinate and manage.*

I have been involved in this area for 20 years. That is, since I learned about methane leakage from the covered landfill on the west side of the creek, land slumping problems that threaten homes, and the extraordinary natural area which has grown-up over the landfill. It attracts rare birds. A decade ago, Councillor Shore recommended the landfill area be called the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat with a committee of residents and staff to oversee it. I was privileged to sit on that committee. I recommend that Markham initiate a study of turning the greenway into an environmental corridor. It would include all properties in the greenway including hazardous areas, and lands within TRCA restricted areas and the flood plain.

It would also include York's Water and Sewage Station, some of Bahá'ís property including the woodlot north of Waterloo and the hazard lands, and their land in the valley closer to Steeles where the summer day camp was once located, and a sliver of Bayview Golf and Country Club in the TRCA restriction zone on the west side of Leslie. In most cases ownership would remain the same.

RESPONSE 160:** See **RESPONSE 159.

This is the type of location which attracts deer and other wildlife, amphibians, and turtles. Three weeks ago, I went for a walk on Leslie north of Steeles. I was appalled by what I saw in the way of environmental standards. Way out of date.

Raising the road by 4 feet, which the applicant proposes to do to take it out of the flood zone and meet emergency safety requirements, will mean almost vertical sidewalls of 5 to 7 feet down to road ditches. Getting into the ditch, wildlife may not be able to get out.

***RESPONSE 161:** This is incorrect. As the preliminary design drawings have illustrated the grading and raising of Leslie Street anticipate the expropriation of additional land to the east (owned by the Bahá'ís of Canada) to accommodate a standard ditch grade that is no steeper than 3:1.*

12 feet to the west is the golf club. It has an 8-foot wire-mesh fence down to the ground. And a large pond in the TRCA flood plain 20 feet beyond that. This should be opened to turtles and other wildlife.

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RESPONSE 162: *See previous responses on eco-passages and fencing.*

The parking lot to the east which Bahá'í plans to use for larger events, has not been paved in decades. Rough. We would not permit it today. It has flooded many times; it needs pervious pavement and bioswales.

RESPONSE 163: *As detailed in the plans and documents submitted by the Bahá'í, the proposal would include improvements to the existing parking lot at 7015 Leslie Street to improve its ecological function.*

There is no proposed road ecology plan. There are no tunnels under the road for safe animal crossings; two are needed.

RESPONSE 164: *See previous responses on eco-passages and fencing.*

There is no sidewalk.

RESPONSE 165: *This is not true. The proposal to raise Leslie Street has been preliminary designed to include a separated Multi-use Path on the east side of the roadway.*

The proposal includes straightening a curve near Leslie. Destroying many trees and allowing cars to go faster to the detriment of cyclists, pedestrians, and wildlife. Not needed. Bahá'í can save some money!

RESPONSE 166: *This is not true. The curvature of the road will remain like its alignment today.*

The Lake-to-Lake trail is on the road. It should go under Steeles on the east side of the creek. Markham's Rouge Valley Trail does that elsewhere.

RESPONSE 167: *Steeles Avenue is owned by the City of Toronto and the suggested works under Steeles would have to be initiated by the City of Toronto.*

We should be asking the applicant to:

1. transfer to Markham the woodlots it owns in the valley close to Steeles,

RESPONSE 168: *The Bahá'í Community has been stewards of their land for over 50 years and ~ 10 years for the property at Steeles. It is their intention to maintain ownership of the natural lands and as part of this project restore the ecological function and provide for its long-term maintenance and protection.*

2. participate in the study of the German Mills Ecological Corridor and the oversight committee,

RESPONSE 169: *This request is deferred to the City of Markham to determine if such a study will be undertaken. If the City decides to undertake such a study, the Bahá'í Community will gladly participate.*

3. financially support the work of the committee following its establishment,

RESPONSE 170: *See RESPONSE 128.*

4. transfer environmental oversight for, and remove the fences from most of their lot #3, the hazard lands, although maintaining ownership, and

RESPONSE 171: *Removal of the fence along Lot 3 is not recommended as it will result in security and liability issues related to private property ownership (public land is subject to different indemnification and liability releases than private property). Furthermore, removal of such fence will impact the*

Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team

ecological benefits afforded by controlling access to this area that will be the recipient of significant restoration and enhancement efforts.

5. facilitate the municipality having access to a small amount of their land to allow the Lake-to-Lake trail to go up the east side of German Mills Creek.

RESPONSE 172: *Until such time that the City of Toronto makes improvements to the creek crossing under Steeles Avenue to provide sufficient underpass and continuation of the trail system on the south side of Steeles, such alignment and continuation of the Lake-to-Lake trail is not feasible.*

We all know that visitors to Bahá'í will be major users of the greenway. Bahá'ís proposal for trails on their own land demonstrates that they understand this point too. These improvements would benefit Bahá'í too.

RESPONSE 173: *Based on our research and understanding of the users at the precedent temples in Australia and Germany, in fact the opposite is true, users of the German Mills Meadow and Natural Habitat as well as the Lake-to-Lake trail will benefit from and be major users of the Bahá'í Temple and associated trail.*

The applicant is well known for its commitment to wildlife and the environment, and I am sure they will have little difficulty with the points I have raised.

Thank you.

Abdul Baha, one of the central figures in Bahá'í, had this to say a century ago: "It is not only their fellow human beings that the beloved of God must treat with mercy and compassion, rather must they show forth the utmost loving-kindness to every living creature.... The feelings are one and the same, whether ye inflict pain on man or on beast."

LIST OF PROJECT CONSULTANTS WHO AUTHORED THE ABOVE RESPONSES:

PROJECT ARCHITECT: Hariri Pontarini Architects, <https://hariripontarini.com/>

Siamak Hariri, Founding Partner, BES (Hons), M.Arch, OAA, AAA, AIBC, FRAIC, RCA, Intl. Assoc. AIA

Siamak Hariri is a founding partner of Hariri Pontarini Architects, a 150-person practice in Toronto that enters its fourth decade in 2024. His portfolio comprises cultural, academic, healthcare, spiritual, and residential projects throughout Canada and abroad. The practice has won more than 100 awards, including four Governor General's Medals in Architecture and the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada's (RAIC) Architectural Firm Award and Innovation in Architecture Award.

To each creative project, Hariri brings a profound interest in light, form, site, material, and craft, through which he has delivered admired and transformative architectural design. Among his many notable works are the Bahá'í Temple of South America in Santiago, Chile; the Tom Patterson Theatre at the Stratford Festival; Casey House and the BARLO MS Centre in Toronto; and offices of McKinsey & Company, the youngest building to be recognized with City of Toronto Heritage designation. He has served as a lecturer and guest critic, sat on design juries and was a member of the Toronto Community Foundation and Waterfront Toronto's Design Review Panel.

Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team

Nazia Aftab, Associate Partner, M.Arch, OAA, LEED AP

With over 15 years of experience in design and construction in Prague, New York, London, and Toronto, Nazia has a proven track record as a licensed Architect and project manager. As Associate Partner, Nazia lead many of the firm's institutional projects. Responsible for coordinating with various stakeholders, consultants and design teams, Nazia oversees projects in all design phases through to construction. Nazia's specific expertise includes the production of contract documents, coordination with consultants, obtaining authorities with jurisdiction approvals, and acting as the primary contact for clients and contractors.

PLANNERS: Malone Given Parsons Ltd. <https://www.mgp.ca/>

Donald Given, Founder, BA, MCIP, RPP, PLE

Don has varied and extensive experience in the fields of land use planning, municipal development controls and master planning. Mr. Given started his career in 1971 and established Malone Given Parsons Ltd. in 1979. He professional role is most frequently as the lead planner and coordinator of large-scale community plans. His leadership and broad range of experience with all aspects of development, growth management issues and development approval processes are coupled with his knowledge of development economics and financing which provide an ability to knit together a mix of planning, environmental and political objectives into the fabric of sustainable and attractive neighbourhoods.

Allyssa Hrynyk, Associate, BES Planning (Hons), MUDS, MCIP, RPP, AICP

With over 15 years of experience, Allyssa has a keen focus on creating great places. She has extensive experience with policy analysis, master planning, secondary plan development, multi-disciplinary teams, growth management strategies, land needs assessments, scenario planning, urban design studies and guidelines, development applications, plans of subdivision, site analysis and design, public consultation, and graphic presentation. She brings a unique perspective to projects from her tenures in Austin, Texas as a Research Fellow in the School of Architecture's Centre for Sustainable Development (The University of Texas at Austin) and as the Manager of Planning and Urban Design for the Downtown Austin Alliance.

ENVIRONMENTAL / ECOLOGY CONSULTANT: GEI Consultants <https://canada.geiconsultants.com/>

Laura Williamson, Ecologist, H. BES., CERPit

Laura is a terrestrial ecologist, project manager and ecological restoration practitioner with over 8 years of experience working across Southern Ontario. Her work includes the identification and assessment of impacts (as per provincial, regional and municipal policies), along with the subsequent mitigation and restoration efforts employed and created to achieve ecological goals and net gains. She has worked on a variety of sizes of projects, that range from the restoration of a single feature to the longer-term planning associated with the protection and enhancement of natural linkages and corridors. Laura is well established in both the technical fieldwork and data collection as well as the final characterization of natural heritage features. She specializes in both Significant Wildlife Habitat (SWH) and Species at Risk (SAR) habitats, with projects working across various wildlife types (i.e., reptiles, birds, insects etc.).

*Response to Comments and Questions from April 9th Thornhill Subcommittee by Consulting Team***LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT / ARBORISTS:** Schollen & Company Inc. <https://schollenandcompany.com>

Mark Schollen, Principal, B.L.A., OALA., FCSLA

Mark Schollen is a landscape architect with over 35 years of professional consulting experience. Mark's career has been focused on sustainable design and the restoration and enhancement of natural heritage systems. Mark has worked on projects that have been aimed at restoring watercourses, valley corridors and ecosystems, including large-scale watershed restoration projects in Canada, Saudi Arabia, and China. Mark's career has been focused on exploring innovative solutions to achieve sustainable development objectives and his firm is regarded as one of the leaders in Low Impact Development (LID) design and sustainable stormwater management. Mark was the principal author of the Green Streets Technical Guideline for the City of Toronto and has developed restoration strategies for woodlands, wetlands, and greenway systems, including the vegetation restoration strategy for Rouge Park.

TRANSPORTATION ENGINEER: BA GROUP www.bagroup.com

Mark Jamieson, Principal & CEO, MBA, P.Eng.

Mark Jamieson is a Principal and current CEO of BA Group, a specialist Transportation Planning and Engineering Consulting Firm now in its 50th year. In his 20+ years of experience Mark has undertaken and supervised countless different Transportation Studies for various land uses in different urban contexts. Mark is a member of the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) and is a past president of the ITE Toronto Section executive committee.

ENGINEERING: SCS Consulting Group www.scsconsultinggroup.com

Sarah Kurtz, Senior Engineer, P. Eng.

Sarah Kurtz has been in the industry for 28 years and has a wealth of knowledge and experience in stormwater management and land development engineering. Sarah has been responsible for the management and technical execution of a wide variety of engineering projects that include: environmental master drainage plans, stormwater management plans, floodplain management, erosion and flood control, and master servicing and preliminary engineering feasibility studies. Sarah leads an SCS team that is responsible for the preliminary and detailed design of servicing systems and stormwater management facilities for many residential subdivisions and site plans and commercial and office developments throughout the GTA, as well as providing engineering services to several large land developer groups.

GEOTECHNICAL & HYDROGEOTECHNICAL: Terraprobe Inc. <https://www.englbecorp.com/en-ca/>

Terraprobe (now EnGlobe Corp.) prepared the Geotechnical Investigation and Slope Stability Assessment, the Hydrogeological Study, and the Phase 1 & 2 Environmental Site Assessments and assisted with any responses related to these disciplines.