



# Community Information Meeting

Bahá'í National Centre Official Plan & Zoning  
By-law Amendment Applications for 7015, 7200  
and 7290 Leslie Street

Hosted by: Ward 1 Councillor Keith Irish

May 2, 2024



# Agenda

Time	Topic	Responsibility
6:30 – 7:00	Open House	
7:00 – 7:30	<b>Presentations</b>	
7:00 – 7:10	Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks	Councillor Keith Irish
7:10 – 7:30	Environmental Peer Review	Dr. Deb Martin-Downs
	<b>Question &amp; Answer Segments</b>	
7:30 – 8:10	Planning & Infrastructure	Moderated by Councillor Irish
8:10 – 8:50	Environment & Green Space	Moderated by Councillor Irish
8:50 – 9:00	<b>Break</b>	
9:00 – 9:40	Leslie Street / Traffic / Parking	Moderated by Councillor Irish
9:40 – 9:50	Next Steps & Adjournment	Councillor Keith Irish



# The Application

The Provincial Planning Act permits owners of land to entertain any changes, regardless of current zoning, by submitting an amendment to the Official Plan and/or a Zoning By-law amendment application.

All municipalities, by law, must consider them.



# Decisionmakers & Influencers

Decision to say Yes or No rests with:

- 13 members of Markham Council

Council is influenced by:

- Markham residents
- City of Markham Planning Staff and other experts
- Data, reports, studies (some from the applicant)



## 4 Potential Scenarios

Markham Council supports or denies the application.

The applicant appeals their application (or Council's decision) to the Ontario Land Tribunal and the final decision then rests with them.

The applicant abandons their plan and sells the land to a developer.

We all work together toward achieving an agreeable solution.



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# Dr. Deb Martin-Downs

- An environmental professional with a **Degree in Environmental Studies** from the University of Waterloo, a **Masters of Zoology/Environmental Studies** from the University of Toronto, and a **PhD** from Lakehead University.
- Was an **environmental consultant** for 16 years specializing in aquatic ecology leading teams to carry out impact assessments including development, landfills, restoration projects, water supply and sanitary servicing, pipelines and road/highway projects.
- 8 years as a director at the **Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA)** leading a team of ecologists, engineers, geoscientists and watershed specialists responsible for flood management, watershed planning/monitoring, storm water management, development and environmental assessment review and source protection.
- **Chief Administrative Officer from 2013-2021 of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority** leading a staff of over 200 environmental specialists to address, protect and restore the Credit River Watershed.
- Has held provincial appointments to the **Walkerton Clean Water Centre Board** and the **Green Belt Council**.
- Volunteered for 12 years on the **Don Watershed Regeneration Council**, a committee of TRCA charged with developing and implementing a watershed plan to restore the Don River in Toronto.
- A Thornhill resident of 35-plus years.



# Environmental Peer Review

Bahá'í National Centre &  
Canadian National Temple



Deborah Martin-Downs, B.E.S., M.Sc., PhD

May 2, 2024





# About the Peer Review

## ▶ **What is a peer review?**

- ▶ Independent review of the submission, agency and public comments
- ▶ Advise the City of Markham and Project team on findings, issues, solutions
- ▶ Will prepare a report


## ▶ **Scope**

- ▶ Environmental
  - ▶ natural environment conditions (terrestrial, aquatic, vegetation, wildlife, habitat, surface water, ground water)
  - ▶ Features, functions and linkages
  - ▶ Development concept, servicing/infrastructure
  - ▶ Policy and regulatory framework - provincial, regional, local and conservation authority

# Scope

- OPA and ZBA are for Lots 1, 2 and 3
- Focus of review
- Works on Leslie and in Lots 3 and 4 are related to mitigation or compensation but are not part of the application
- Focusing on Lot 2 in this presentation





# About the Peer Review

## What do I look for?

- ▶ Has the background work:
  - ▶ Used accepted inventory protocols (methods, timing)
  - ▶ Been interpreted correctly (used science, policy, guidance)
  - ▶ Used an appropriate level of detail for this stage of planning
  - ▶ Considered potential impacts
  - ▶ Considered appropriate mitigation hierarchy



# Mitigation Hierarchy

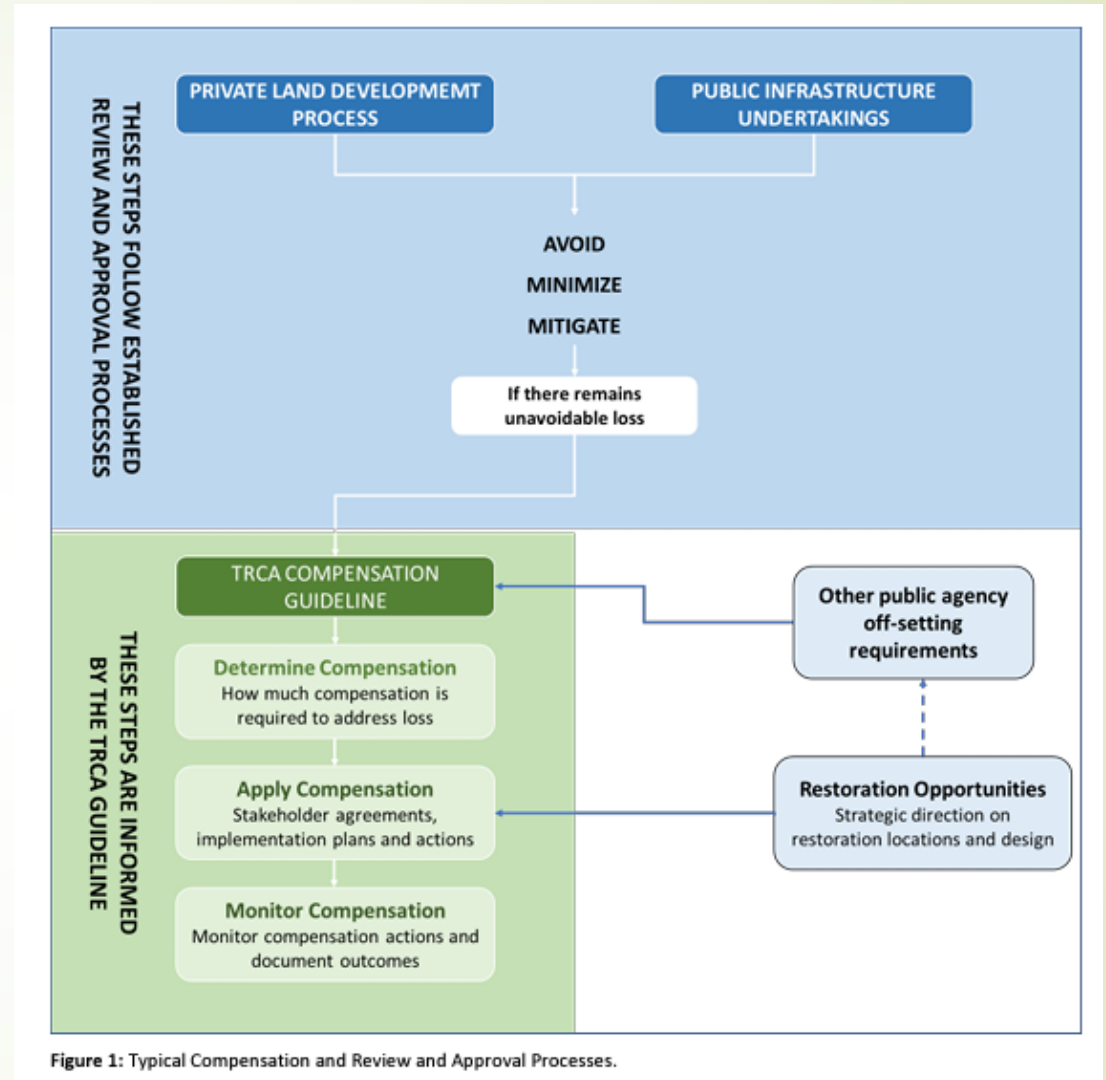
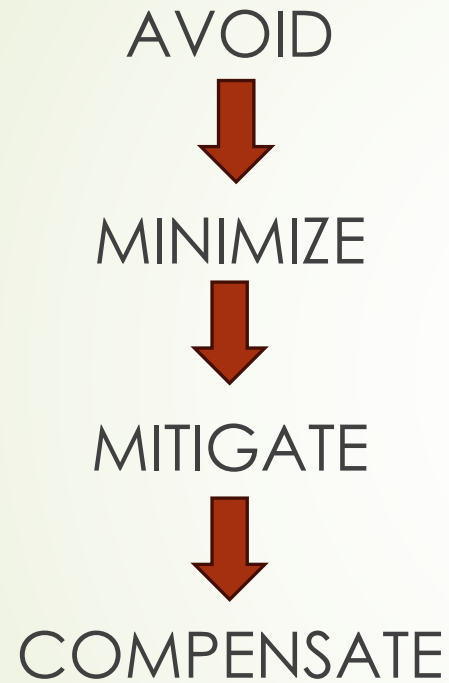


Figure 1: Typical Compensation and Review and Approval Processes.


# Compensation

- Features and functions to be replaced (e.g. forest for forest)
- Basal area of tree cover lost
- Area of land to be replaced
- Location of replacement lands
  - On site
  - Off site

- Compensation outcomes should strive to **fully replace** the same level of lost ecosystem structure and function **in proximity** to where the loss occurs and, where possible, achieve an overall gain.
- Compensation should be directed to **on-the-ground ecosystem restoration** and be informed by strategic watershed and restoration planning

TRCA





# About the Peer Review

## What do I look for?

- ▶ What are the applicable policies or legislation, and can they be met?
- ▶ Is there an expected loss of features or functions?
- ▶ Is there mitigation that can be applied?
- ▶ Should compensation be applied?
- ▶ Is there sufficient area and appropriate locations for compensation?
- ▶ Are there opportunities identified?



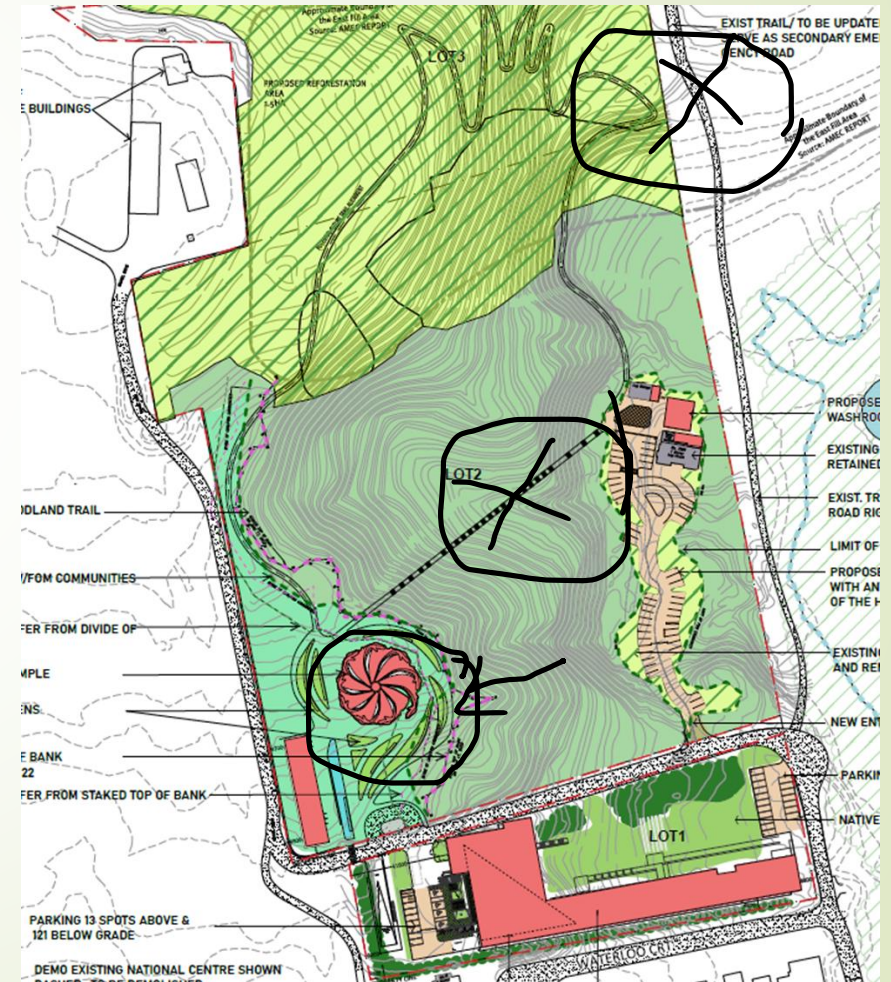
HERE

Planning approval process



# How has the development proposal has changed since first public meeting?

- No service road to the north through the meadow
  - Raise Leslie Street out of the floodplain
- No staircase up the slope
  - Incorporate pathway along the driveway to the temple and admin centre.
- Reduce size of temple to allow buffer from the slope





# Review Questions

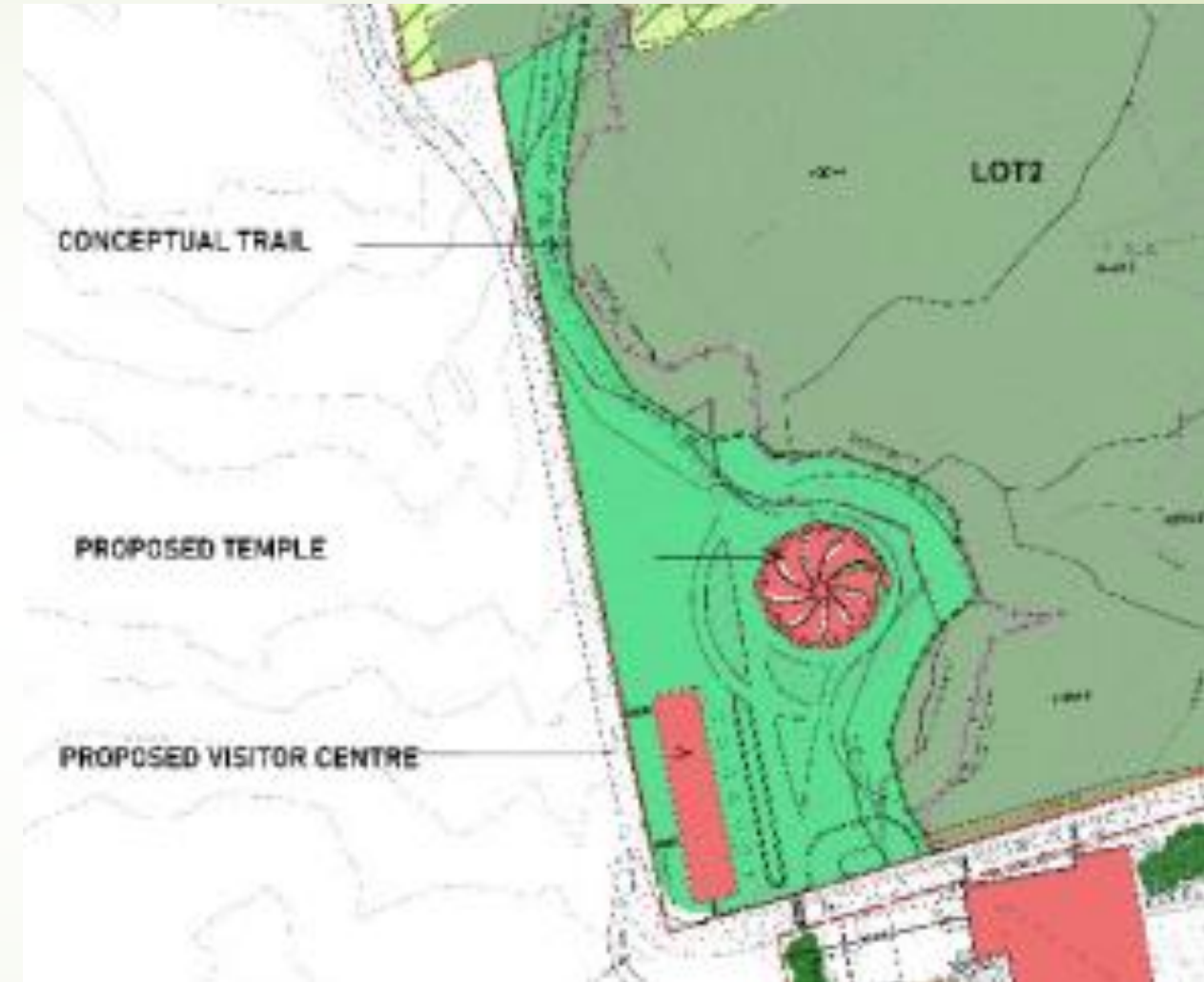
Can the greenway lands be redesignated, and will there be effects on the environment from the intended uses that are not permitted under policy or legislation?



# Is the Cultural Woodland Greenway?

Issues to be addressed:

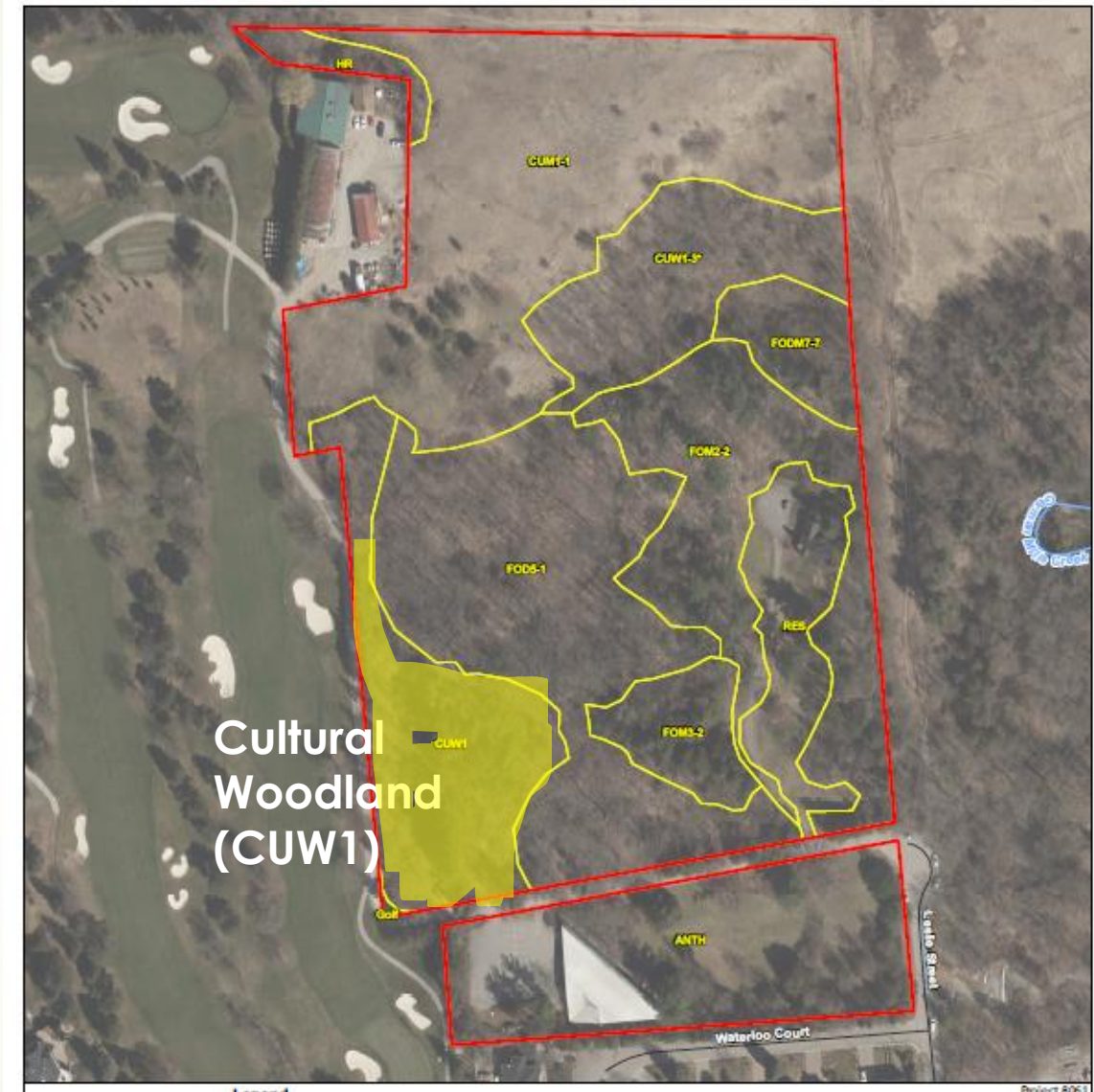
- Significance of woodland
- Wildlife Habitat
- Tree losses
- Greenway Policy
- Regulated Area





# Cultural Woodland - what was found?

- Mid aged tableland woodland (orchard/red pine plantation with White Spruce, Cedar and Black Walnut); invasive species (buckthorn) understory
- contiguous with adjacent woodlands; exposed south and west edges
- All trees inventoried 493 of which 231 are Invasive; 262 non- invasive trees of which 105 will be removed



# Cultural Woodland – Review Conclusions

## ► Science

- Sufficient inventory to characterize the area using accepted practices

## ► Policy

- Not significant woodland; not significant wildlife habitat; development is not prohibited
- 0.52 ha removal acceptable for compensation. Proposed changes to Greenway System conform to the City's Official Plan
- Top of Slope Hazard Regulated by TRCA; Vegetation Protection Zone

## ► Mitigation /Compensation

- Temple reduced in size and location adjusted to minimize effects on adjacent woodland
- 105 trees to be compensated for
- Sufficient and suitable area exists within lands owned by the applicant to compensate for losses of area and tree cover
- Small encroachment (0.03 ha/300m<sup>2</sup>) into vegetation buffer and forested area. Review opportunities to reduce encroachment with detailed grading and site plans;
- Provide detailed SWM plans to reduce erosion and maintain water balance

## ► Opportunities

- Remove and manage invasive species to reduce influence on other woodlands
- Vegetation enhancements within vegetation protection zone



# Will there be impacts to the woodlands?

Issues to be addressed here

- Significance of Woodland
- Significance of Habitat
- Mitigation of Direct and indirect effects



# Woodland – what was found?

- Mid aged to mature forest with sugar maple, beech, white pine, Hemlock, Black Cherry, White Birch, and Red Oak; native understory with some invasive Garlic Mustard
- contiguous with adjacent woodlands; exposed south and east edges; residential use bisects FOM2-2
- Supports Eastern Wood Pewee (species of special concern); candidate bat maternity significant wildlife habitat; not SAR habitat







# Woodland – Review Conclusions

## ► **Science**

- Sufficient inventory to characterize the area using accepted practices
- Bats (not Species at Risk) and Eastern Wood Pewee (special concern) present

## ► **Policy**

- Meets significant woodland definitions of Province, York and Markham
- changes to Greenway System conform to the City's Official Plan
- Within TRCA Regulation area/ stable slope/valley wall

## ► **Mitigation /Compensation**

- Maintain bat foraging area
- Limit disturbance of trail development
- Education and enforcement of trail users

## ► **Opportunities**

- Manage for invasive species
- Enhancement plantings within vegetation protection zone

# Will there be impact to the meadow?

Issues to be addressed:

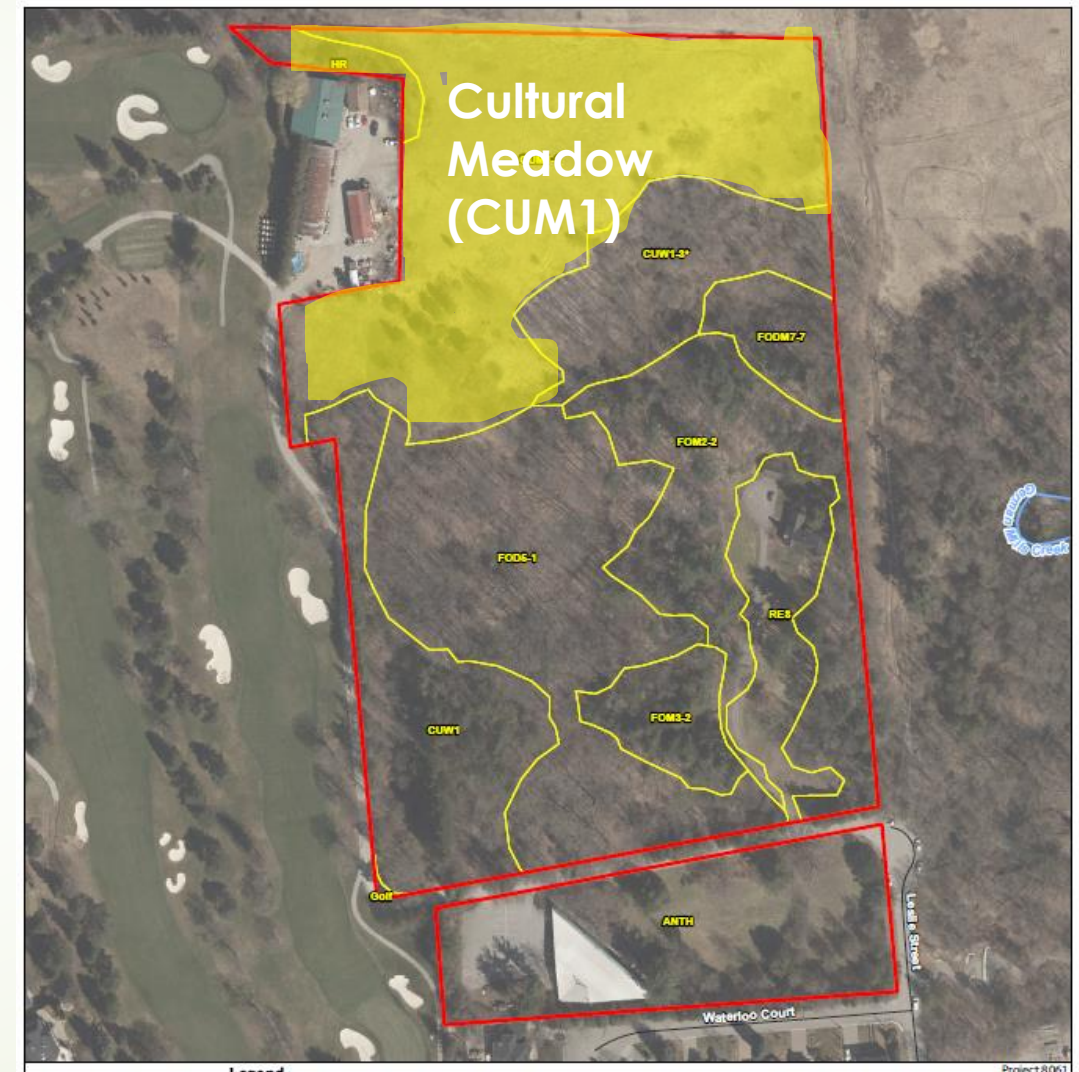
- Significance of Habitat
- Trail location





# Meadow - what was found?

- Cultural meadow over historic landfill
- Non-native grasses including Reed canary grass, Kentucky Blue Grass and Smooth Brome grass
- Scattered trees (Black Locust)
- no grassland birds found in meadow (breeding or other)





# Meadow – Review Conclusions

## ► **Science**

- Sufficient inventory to characterize the area using accepted practices; no grassland birds present or breeding
- Efforts should be continued to look for breeding activity in the meadow in advance of restoration activities

## ► **Policy**

- Not significant wildlife habitat; no species at risk
- Trail partially within TRCA regulated area

## ► **Mitigation /Compensation**

- Trail to provide access through the area and control visitors to designated points
- Design and sighting of trail to minimize slope impact, grading and erosion

## ► **Opportunities**

- Remove invasive species and woody vegetation; create better quality grassland for birds and other wildlife
- Education of visitors; birdwatching

# Can parking be provided at the Cabin?

Issues to be addressed:

- Habitat use
- Greenway
- Regulated area
- Green parking lot design





## Cabin Area – what was found?

- Visible on Air Photos 1954 with little change; used previously for Bahá'í Faith purposes and currently rented
- Mostly grassed and paved driveway
- Mature trees on the lot; forest edge at bottom of slope;
- TRCA Regulated area but outside key hazards of floodplain, erosion hazard and toe of slope



# Cabin Parking - Review Conclusions

## ► Science

- Sufficient inventory to characterize the area
- Appears to be used by foraging bats; important function and linkage to be protected

## ► Policy

- Proposed changes to Greenway System conform to the City's Official Plan
- Within regulated area but outside specific hazard limits (erosion, slope, flooding); continuing and comparable use; TRCA policy silent on this condition
- Parking outside toe of slope and drip line into vegetation buffer and forested area

## ► Mitigation /Compensation

- Parking design can be 'greened' to reduce salt use, encourage filtration and infiltration, limit disturbance (e.g. lighting), maintain mature trees.
- Additional information needed on grading and low impact design of facility. Maintenance of water balance to adjacent wooded areas and look for opportunities to reduce grading during site plan.

## ► Opportunities

- planting of this area with native trees and shrubs to enhance the edge condition at the interface between the existing forest and parking area



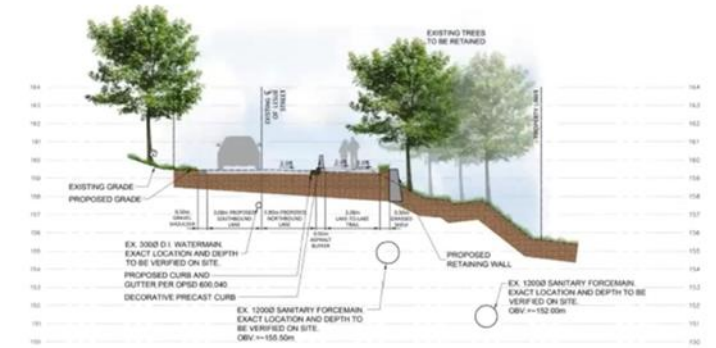
Can safe access be provided without significant impact?

Issues to be addressed:

- Floodplain alterations
- Loss of vegetation
- Road and trail design
- Wildlife corridor and passage



## CONTINUOUS TRAIL CONNECTION



## PROVIDE A SEPARATED TRAIL



Direct Lake-to-Lake Trail Connection

# Can compensation be provided?

Community	Area of Impact (ha)	Compensation Ratio	Required Compensation (ha)
<b>Woodland Removal and Compensation</b>			
CUW1	0.52	5:1	2.60
Significant Woodland	0.03	5:1	0.15
<b>Woodland Total</b>	<b>0.55</b>	<b>5:1</b>	<b>2.75</b>
<b>Valleyland Encroachment and Compensation</b>			
Significant Valleyland	0.22	1:1	0.22
<b>Valleyland Total</b>	<b>0.22</b>	<b>1:1</b>	<b>0.22</b>
<b>VPZ Encroachments and Compensation</b>			
Significant Woodland VPZ	0.04	1:1	0.04
LTSTOS VPZ	0.03	1:1	0.03
<b>VPZ Total</b>	<b>0.07</b>	<b>1:1</b>	<b>0.07</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.84</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>3.04</b>


# Can compensation be achieved in a meaningful way and in sufficient quantity?

Restoration Area	Area of Vegetation Restoration (m <sup>2</sup> ) (Woodland + Meadow)	Area of Vegetation Enhancement (m <sup>2</sup> )	Length of Watercourse Rehabilitation (m)	Area of Hard Surface/ Impervious Area Removed from Valley Corridor (m <sup>2</sup> )
1a	15940			
1b	4270			
2	1000			
3a	6365			
3b		2330		
4	9265			7570
5	2500		110	650
6a	800			
6b	1485			
6c	2960			
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44585</b>	<b>2330</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>8220</b>

Table 6.1 – Restoration Outcomes







# Are there opportunities to make this area better?

- **Protect what is healthy** (e.g. buffers, storm water management, water balance, design, native plants )
- **Regenerate what is degraded** (invasives management, depave, stream channel improvements, flood mitigation, linkages)
- **Take responsibility for the Don**

Forty Steps to New Don 1994



# Next Steps

- ▶ Issues to be confirmed or addressed through following stages of planning and design
  - ▶ Refine proposal through detailed design to reduce encroachments and vegetation removals where possible
  - ▶ Trail siting and design
  - ▶ Develop specific storm water management plans for quality, quantity and water balance
  - ▶ Green design – lighting, bird friendly
  - ▶ Initiate invasive species management
  - ▶ Multi-stakeholder committee for Leslie Street improvements (flooding, trail, parking, traffic, wildlife corridor/passage)
  - ▶ Monitoring plan to confirm mitigation and compensation are working as designed



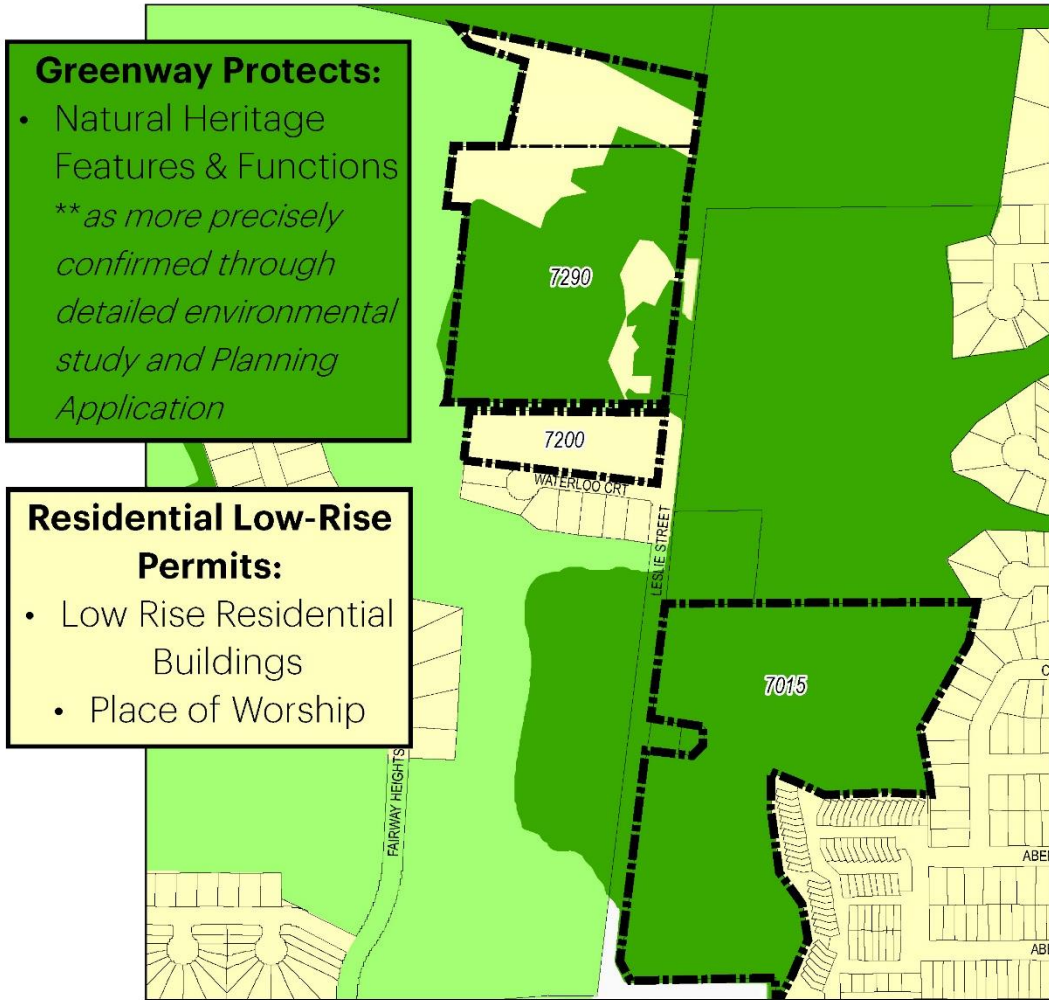
# Thank you

Deborah Martin-Downs  
martin\_downs@sympatico.ca

# CURRENT OP AND ZONING

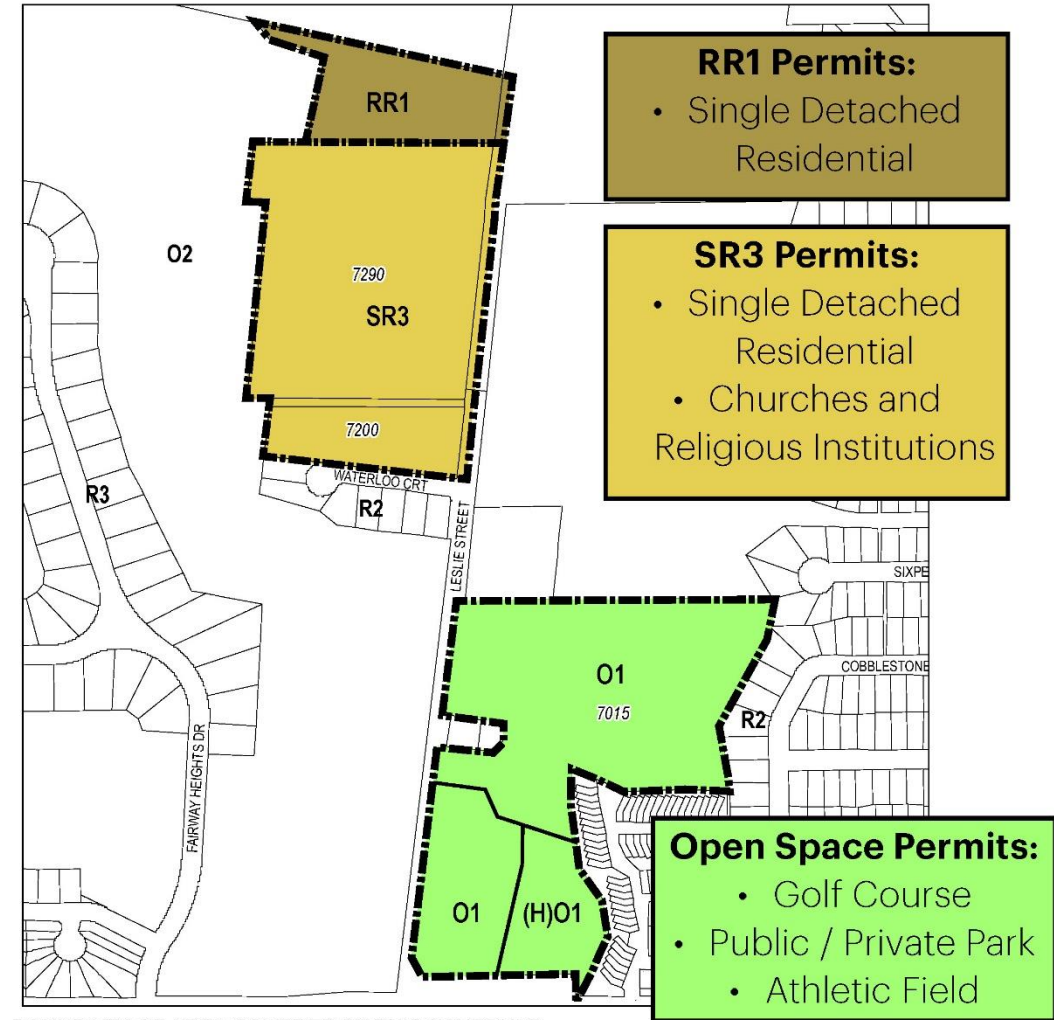
## EXISTING OFFICIAL PLAN DESIGNATIONS

MAP 3: LAND USE CITY OF MARKHAM OFFICIAL PLAN 2014



## EXISTING ZONING

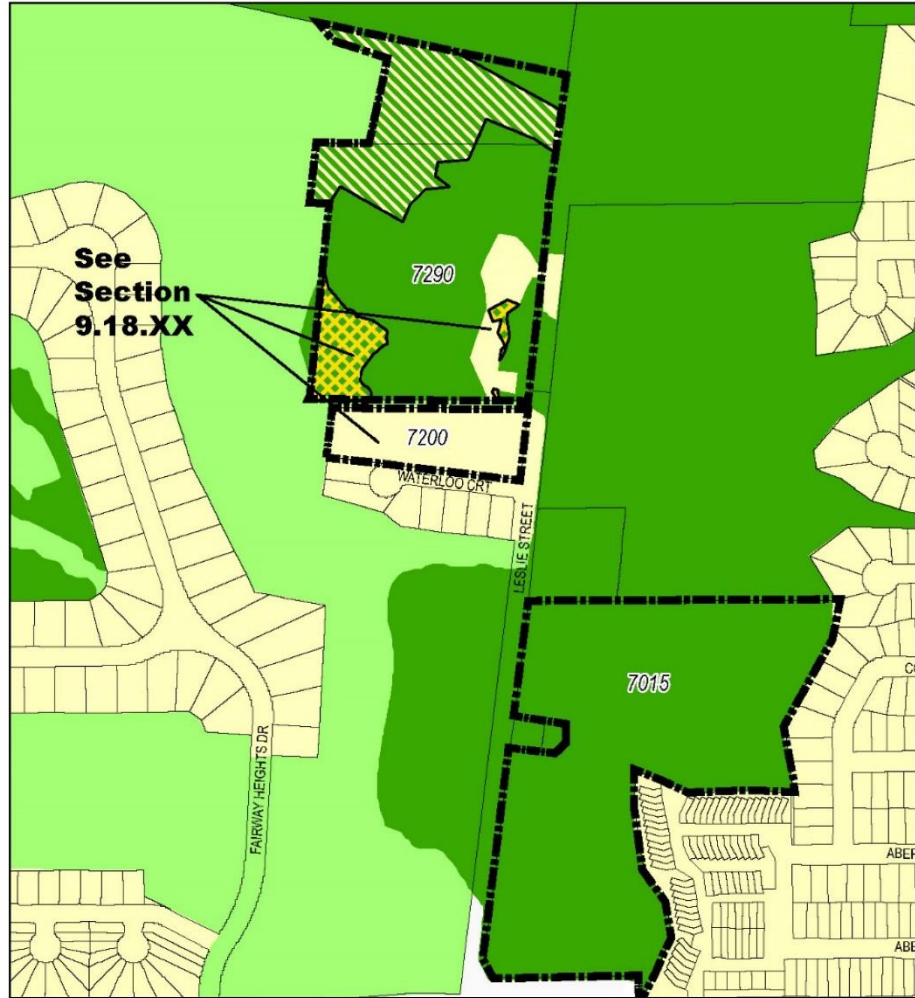
ZONING BY-LAW 1767, 304-87, & 2612, as amended



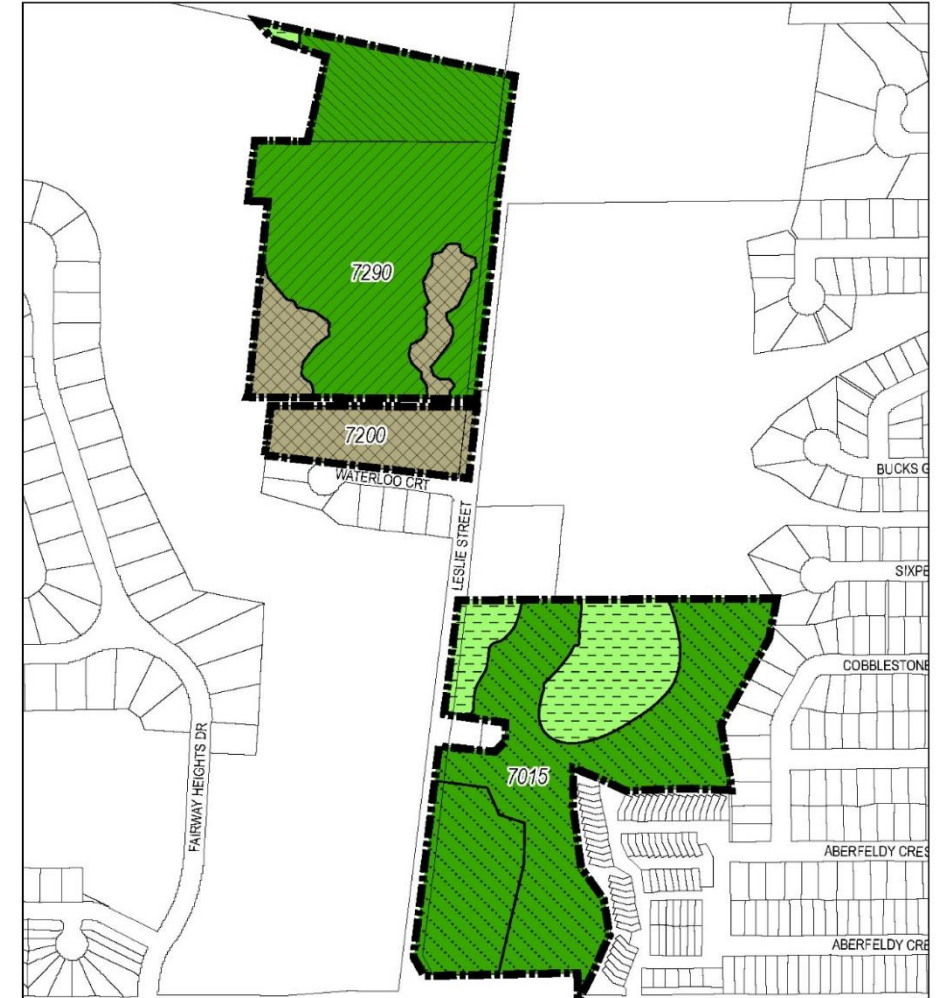


# EXPANDED GREENWAY LANDS

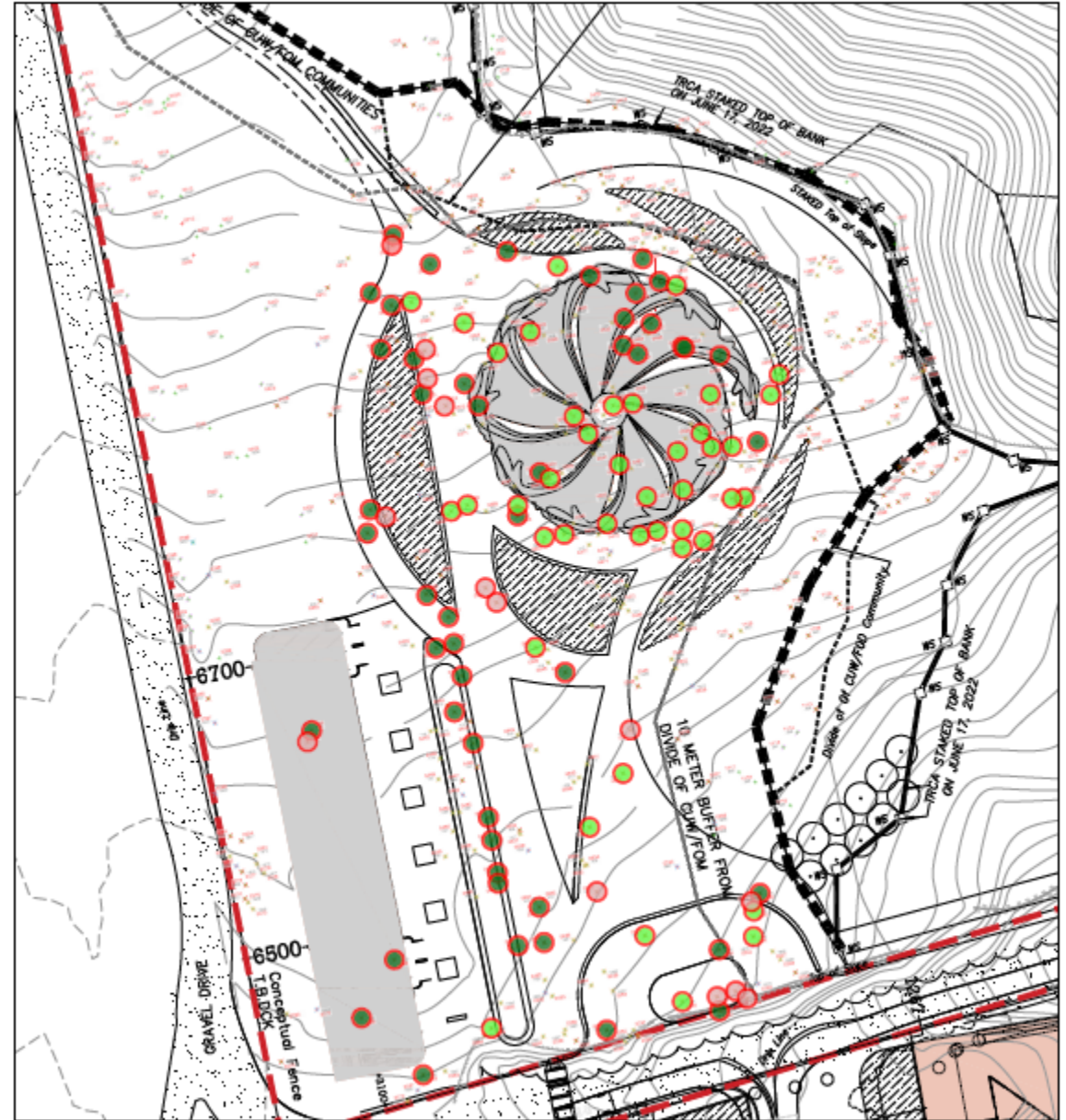
## PROPOSED LAND USE DESIGNATIONS TO MAP 3: LAND USE - CITY OF MARKHAM OFFICIAL PLAN 2014




## PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT ZONING BY-LAW 1767, 304-87, & 2612, as amended



# TREE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT



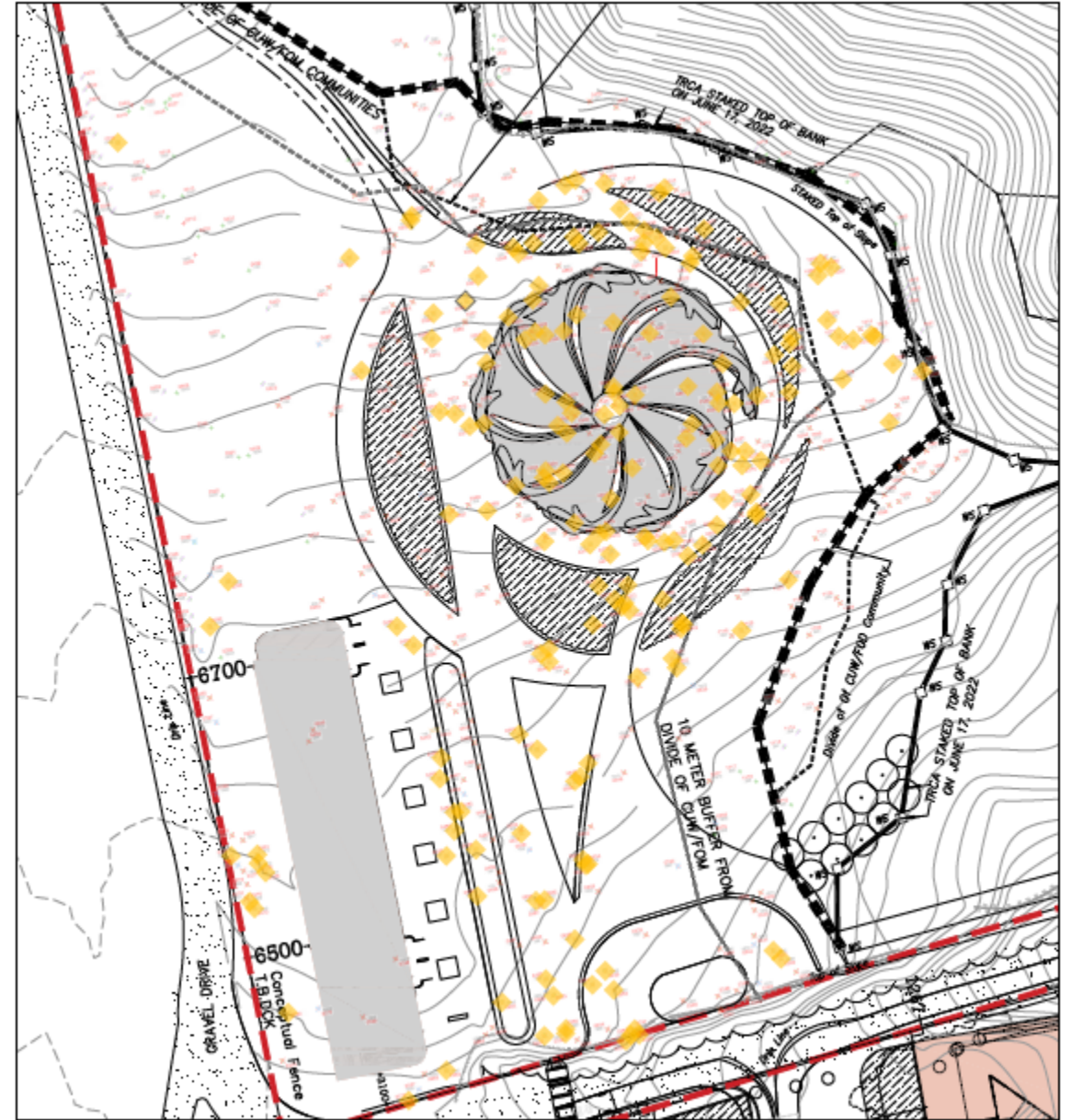
 105 OF 262 NON-INVASIVE TREES TO BE REMOVED DUE TO CONSTRUCTION AND GRADING





# TREE INVENTORY AND ASSESSMENT

**231 INVASIVE SPECIES TO BE REMOVED**





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## Next Steps

Second Statutory Public Meeting: May 28, 2024 at 7:00 p.m.

Planning Staff Report for consideration by Markham Council's  
Development Services Committee

- The report will address issues raised at the various public meetings and from the various commenting agencies and stakeholders

Final Decision by Markham Council: Date TBD

# Thank you!

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