



**Joint Report of the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Commissioner of Public Works
Greening Strategy – Environmental Land Protection and Preservation
Acquisition of Land, 4302 Baseline Road, Town of Georgina**

1. Recommendations

1. Council approve acquisition of a portion of land at 4302 Baseline Road in the Town of Georgina, as described in Appendix A.
2. Commissioner of Corporate Services be authorized to execute agreement of purchase and sale and all necessary documents to complete the transaction.
3. Council approve the increase in the 2024 gross capital expenditure and Capital Spending Authority for Forestry Capital program 72610 York Greening Initiative Land Securement and associated funding sources, as described in Private Attachment 1.

2. Purpose

This report seeks Council approval to acquire 17 hectares of land at 4302 Baseline Road in Town of Georgina through the Region's [Greening Strategy](#) to expand the York Regional Forest. The property location is identified in Appendix A.

Private Attachment 1 to this report will be considered in private session pursuant to section 239(2)(c) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*, as it relates to acquisition of land by the Region.

Key Points:

- York Regional Forest consists of 26 properties totalling over 2,600 hectares of publicly accessible greenspace
- Since adopting Greening Strategy in 2001, the Region and its partners have protected over 1,600 hectares by securing land
- Evaluated against Council-approved securement criteria, this property was deemed a high priority for acquisition when considering natural heritage significance, reforestation potential, cost and contribution to recreation opportunities
- Property includes 13 hectares of significant woodland and four hectares of land to be reforested
- Acquisition will complete York Region's Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund (DMAF) deliverable to secure 100 hectares of land to be reforested

3. Background

Greening Strategy is the Region's blueprint for on-the-ground environmental stewardship and investment

The [Greening Strategy](#) supports Regional Council's Vision area of focus for a sustainable natural environment. As outlined in the [2023 Regional Greening Strategies Achievements report](#), funds are allocated annually (\$2.4 million in 2024) for delivery of programs, including environmental land protection and preservation.

Environmental Land Protection and Preservation Program is an important means to protect the natural environment and build sustainable communities. Over 1,600 hectares of environmentally significant lands have been protected since Greening Strategy was adopted in 2001. Lands are protected by the Region or by providing financial support to conservation partners.

York Region was successful in obtaining Infrastructure Canada funding for natural infrastructure through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund

In May 2019, Infrastructure Canada approved the Region's application for a natural infrastructure project. Valued at \$25 million, this project seeks to mitigate impacts of extreme heat and flooding through planting over 400,000 trees in urban and rural areas, including acquisition and reforestation of 100 hectares of land. Through the [Federal Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund](#) (DMAF), Infrastructure Canada will provide \$10 million in funding over eight years to the project and the Region has committed \$15 million. This will be the third and final property acquisition in support of meeting DMAF deliverables.

4. Analysis

Acquisition of 17 hectares of land completes Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund deliverable to secure 100 hectares for reforestation

Subject property is a 17-hectare portion of a 40-hectare rural property abutting the existing York Regional Forest Metro Road Tract in Georgina. It is primarily forested, with approximately four hectares of open space suitable for restoration. Purchase of this property will contribute to the Region's DMAF project deliverable to acquire and reforest 100 hectares. Combined with the Region's previous purchases of land suitable for planting (approximately 96 hectares), this acquisition completes the Region's deliverable of 100 hectares to be reforested.

This acquisition supports the Region's Strategic Plan performance measure to increase the area of environmental lands secured for protection and contributes towards the Greening Strategy goal to expand the York Regional Forest for public use. Acquiring this land also supports [Official Plan](#) targets to increase woodland cover to 25 percent by 2051 by creating new woodland cover and protecting existing woodland cover.

Over 70 percent of the land is forested, readily increasing public access to greenspace

This 17-hectare property is located within the Natural Heritage System of the Greenbelt Plan, designated as Protected Countryside and is part of the Regional Greenlands System.

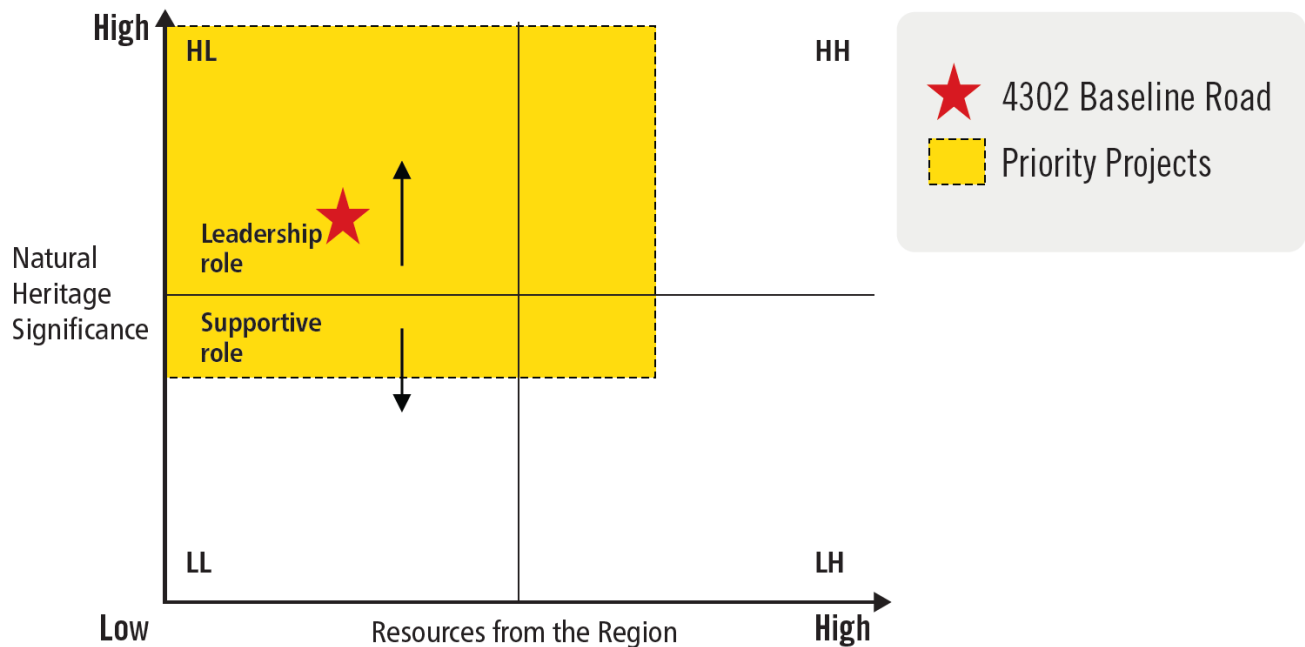
The property is designated as rural area in the Regional Official Plan. Current agricultural use will be phased out as lands are restored. Acquisition of this property will allow the Region to increase public access to greenspace, expand existing trail systems, and enhance opportunities for residents to connect with nature. The Region will identify a preferred trail network over the next two to three years. The Region has established an Agricultural Sector and Natural Heritage and Forestry working group to collaborate with the agricultural community on implementing the Greening Strategy.

The Land Securement Internal Evaluation Team recommends the acquisition

The Region's Internal Land Securement Evaluation Team reviews and evaluates conservation property opportunities. This team comprises senior staff from Planning, Legal, Finance, Property Services and Public Works. The team reviewed and evaluated the property against Regional Securement Criteria and deemed it a high priority for acquisition (Figure 1). Given its reasonable cost, high natural heritage significance and restoration opportunities, the Region took a leadership role in acquiring the property.

Figure 1

Priority Matrix for Environmental Land Securement Opportunities



Key characteristics of the property that make it ideal for securement include:

- Opportunity to create four hectares of new woodland through reforestation
- Approximately 13 hectares of significant woodlands and existing habitat to be protected in public ownership
- Low resource requirement for acquisition and developing as York Regional Forest Tract expansion
- Suitable for passive recreation (i.e. trails) and environmental education, increasing accessible public greenspace as part of the Metro Road Tract

Greening Strategy land acquisition supports Sustainable Environment Area of Focus in the Vision

This acquisition will contribute to protecting and sustaining the natural environment by conserving existing woodlands and wetlands and establishing woodland cover. Further, this addition to the York Regional Forest will support maintaining the Region’s Vision community indicator of greenspace per 100,000 population. Providing residents with access to greenspace is vital to achieving the Region’s vision of a sustainable environment.

This acquisition will support the objective in the Regional Official Plan to identify, protect, restore and enhance the Regional Greenlands System and its features and functions to ensure a healthy system rich in biodiversity.

Negotiations have been successfully completed

Staff successfully negotiated the purchase price with the owner. In accordance with the Region's Corporate Land Acquisition Policy, one appraisal is required for property valued at less than \$1 million. The owner accepted the Region's offer based on the appraised value provided to the Region by an independent appraiser.

Environmental due diligence is underway

Environmental due diligence is currently underway. Results will be reviewed by staff, including consultation with Legal Services. If environmental impacts are identified, Staff will take necessary steps to minimize the Region's exposure to environmental risk and liability and may report to Council with recommendations depending on the nature and extent of impacts.

5. Financial Considerations

The proposed increase to the 2024 gross capital expenditure and Capital Spending Authority for Forestry capital program 72610 York Greening Initiative Land Securement to acquire this property will be funded entirely through the existing Land Securement Reserve. This reserve was established in 2001 as part of the Greening Strategy to fund programs including land conservation. Tree planting costs will be funded 40% through the Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund.

Funding for other capital improvements, such as trails, will be requested through the budget approval process. Costs associated with operation of the property will be funded through existing Forestry operating budgets.

6. Local Impact

Town of Georgina staff were consulted on this acquisition and support the Region in acquiring this property as part of the York Regional Forest. This purchase will grow the York Regional Forest, protect environmentally sensitive land, and provide additional recreation opportunities for residents.

7. Conclusion

The owner offered the property for sale to the Region, and staff determined the property was a high priority for acquisition. The four hectares available for reforestation contribute to the Region's DMAF project deliverables.

This purchase combined with other recent acquisitions constitutes all the land securement commitments required for the DMAF natural infrastructure project. Protecting existing natural areas helps the Region mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change including reducing the risk of flooding and protecting source water. This acquisition will provide a growing population with additional publicly accessible greenspace.

For more information on this report, please contact Michael Shatil, Director, Property Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 71684 or Lindsay Milne, Director, Waste Management & Forestry Operations at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 74714. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.



Recommended by:

Dino Basso
Commissioner of Corporate Services



Laura McDowell, P.Eng.
Commissioner of Public Works



Approved for Submission: **Erin Mahoney**
Chief Administrative Officer

April 23, 2024
#15960455

Appendix A – Property Schedule and Location Map
Private Attachment 1 – Proposed Compensation (#15960476)

Property Schedule
Greening Strategy – Environmental Land Protection and Preservation
Acquisition of Land
4302 Baseline Road
Town of Georgina

No.	Owner	Municipal Address	Legal Description	Interest Required
1.	Kenneth Raymond Avann and Lisa Victoria Avann	4302 Baseline Road Georgina	Part 1, Plan 65R-40909	Fee Simple (16.690 ha.)

LOCATION MAP

