

## **COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE JUNE16, 2003**

### **MAPLE NATURE RESERVE MASTER PLAN**

#### **Recommendation**

The Commissioner of Community Services, in consultation with the Executive Director of Buildings, Facilities and Parks and the Director of Parks recommends:

1. That the Master Plan Report for the Maple Nature Reserve be approved; and
2. That staff be directed to continue community and agency consultation for the next stage of study; and
3. That staff be directed by Council to identify potential partnerships and report back to Council regarding same; and
4. That staff include the phasing and future budget requirements in the 5 year Capital Budget and the yearly Operating Budget for consideration by Council; and
5. That staff forward a letter to the Region of York requesting a terrestrial crossing of Dufferin Street at the Little Don River and a trail connection along the unopened road allowance of Teston Road allowance west of Dufferin Street.

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to provide the Committee and Council with the final Master Plan document for the Maple Nature Reserve and to obtain Council approval.

#### **Background - Analysis and Options**

In June of 2000 the City of Vaughan approved the Maple Valley Parks and Open Space Strategy known as the Maple Valley Plan. This plan integrated the Parks and Open Space planning for the entire Keele Valley area including the former MNR lands on the east side of Dufferin Street. The former MNR lands were acquired by the City for the purposes of conservation and recreation uses in 1997.

Included in the Maple Valley Plan were specific recommendations for the MNR lands and that the lands *'be retained as a natural area and designated as a passive park within the City's park system.'* The primary activities envisaged were those related to;

- Ecological Restoration and Educational Benefits
- Recreation Programming
- Civic Administration
- Land Stewardship and Resource Management
- Community Uses and Passive Park
- Trail Development

In 2001 the City retained the consulting firm of J.H. Stevens Planning and Development Consultants in concert with the EDA Collaborative and Gartner Lee Limited to prepare the Master Plan for the former MNR lands. This process included a review of the existing site conditions including the environmental features, and other site activities such as the administrative and summer camp uses. In the process of the study the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act & Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (Ontario Regulation 140/02) was enacted by the Province; as the Maple Nature Reserve is within the boundary of the ORM review and general compliance with the Act was incorporated into the study process.

### Study Consultation:

Community consultation was undertaken in the form of stakeholder meetings. The stakeholders included ratepayer representatives, environmental groups, conservation groups and other interested persons. Four meetings were held on May 22<sup>nd</sup>, July 9<sup>th</sup> and September 24<sup>th</sup> of 2002 and May 12, 2003. In addition agencies were consulted, including the TRCA and Don Council, York Region District School Board and the York Region Separate School Board.

The public meetings and agency consultation in 2002 outlined the existing site features and presented three preliminary concepts for input. Both the community stakeholders and the agencies consulted were very supportive of the primary objectives as outlined in the MVP and the masterplan process. Of note was the interest the York Region District School Board showed for partnering with the City to utilize the site for outdoor education. They estimate a maximum of 40 children would attend the site at one time.

Subsequently a Master Plan Concept was prepared and presented to Council and approved on December 16, 2002. Council approval included the following:

“That the former MNR lands be named the Maple Nature Reserve; and  
That the proposed Master Plan Concept for the development of the Maple Nature Reserve be received; and  
That staff proceed with community consultation on the proposed Master Plan; and  
That staff include the School Boards in the consultation process.  
That staff report back to a future Committee of the Whole on the final Master Plan, including cost estimates, phasing and timing.”

### Master Plan Consultation

The next steps in the process included the preparation of the Maple Nature Reserve Master Plan Report including a Background Report outlining the environmental, physical, planning context and analysis of the property. These documents were circulated to the stakeholders and agencies that attended the meetings such as the Laziali Club, The Columbus Trail Residents Association, The International Society of Arboriculture, The Ontario Forest Research Institute (MNR) and the TRCA Don Watershed Council. The circulation included the City's Planning Department to ensure the plan was in accordance with the Oak Ridges Moraine Act and the Guidelines provided to date by the Province of Ontario.

On May 12, 2003 the final public meeting was held to present the Master Plan and receive comments from the public. Approximately 30 people attended the meeting held at the Maple Community Centre. Those attending strongly supported the proposed plan and endorsed the principle of conservation and enhancement of the natural features for the Reserve.

On May 15, 2003 the Master Plan was presented to the Don Watershed Council at their monthly meeting. As a result resolution #F43/03 was passed:

“THAT the Don Watershed Regeneration Council prepare a letter of support to the City of Vaughan with specific commendation for their work on the Maple Nature Reserve, and general support for all their preservation and regeneration endeavors.”

The City's Planning Department has advised of the ORM policies and current guidelines that apply to the Maple Nature Reserve and have included clauses specific to the Maple Nature Reserve in the City's draft ORM conformity zoning by-law. They also confirm they will advise the Parks Department of any modifications to the ORM Conformity OP and Zoning Amendments which may arise out of the review and approval by the Province, and that it appears the MNR Master Plan is in conformity with the proposed ORM conformity amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning by-law.

Comments received at the public meeting and subsequently have been incorporated into the final report provided to Council.

#### Master Plan Description, Cost Estimates, Phasing and Timing:

The final Master Plan for the Maple Nature Reserve reflects the results of community consultation, the environmental characteristics of the site, analysis of the opportunities and constraints for proposed uses, the policies of the Oak Ridges Moraine Act and partnership opportunities. The plan proposes the following elements:

- Day Camp and Education Facility;
- Nature Appreciation Centre;
- Multi-use trail system with connections to the south, north and Block 12;
- City/Corporate Uses;
- Management of the former MNR plantations;
- Woodlot management, regeneration and conservation;
- Protection and preservation of ANSI lands and ESA lands on the west side of Dufferin Street;
- Teston Road Trail Head – Small parking area, gazebo, washrooms and family picnic area.

The report includes a detailed implementation programme for the Maple Nature Reserve, which establishes a phased approach to development. By phasing the development over several years appropriate budgeting can be achieved and implementation can proceed in a logical framework. The three stage programme is summarized as follows:

##### Short Term 1- 5 years:

- Dufferin Street tablelands – access, signage and landscape improvements
- Slopes and Valley Floor – improvements to the roadway, bridge, Day Camp/ Education Centre, municipal services, woodlot management and trail improvements.
- Northern Plateau – plantation/woodlot management and trail development
- Estimated Cost: \$1,826,169.54

##### Medium Term 3-5 years:

- Slopes and Valley Floor – removal of old driveway to Block 12 and replacement with a trail, woodlot management.
- Northern Plateau – access road, parking off Teston Road, Trail Head, picnic area, trails and plantation management.
- Estimated Cost: \$725,933.48

##### Long Term 5 years+

- Dufferin Street tablelands – parking improvements
- Slopes and Valley Floor – valley trail system, municipal services, woodlot management and Nature Appreciation Centre.
- Northern Plateau – Trail system and plantation/woodlot management.
- Estimated Cost: \$598,638.25

#### **Conclusion**

The Maple Nature Reserve is an important component of the Maple Valley Plan. This unique and important natural heritage resource represents a significant opportunity for the City of Vaughan to preserve and enhance the natural open space system in east Vaughan. As an extended part of the Maple Valley Plan it provides important links to the community and the overall trail system. In addition, it provides an excellent opportunity to evolve into a significant environmental day use center.

Implementation will be dependant on available City capital and operating funds as well as identification of potential partners for forest management, ecological monitoring and stewardship. The stages noted above include the feasibility and ecological studies required prior to proceeding with any implementation. Through out the process any proposed works will require vetting against the current policies and guidelines as set out for the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Approval by Council will allow staff to commence the feasibility and ecological studies for various components of the Master Plan with current funding.

**Attachments**

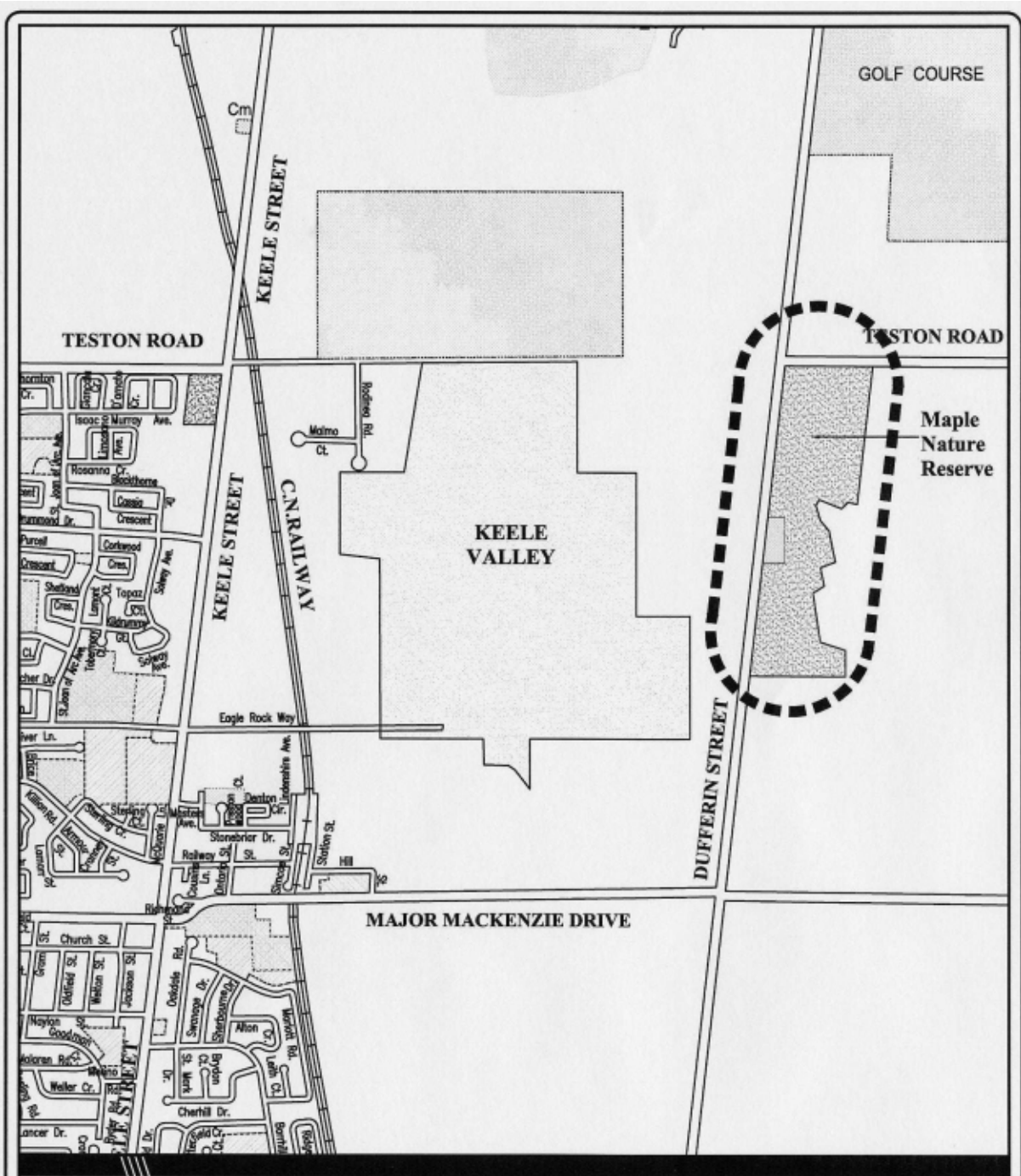
1. Location Map
2. Maple Nature Reserve Master Plan
3. Maple Nature Reserve Master Plan Report (Mayor and Members of Council only)

**Report prepared by:**

Linda Laflamme, landscape Architect  
Paul Gardner, Manager, Parks Development

Respectfully submitted,

G. Doris Haas  
Commissioner of Community Services



**City of Vaughan**  
*The City Above Toronto*

**MAPLE NATURE RESERVE  
 LOCATION MAP**

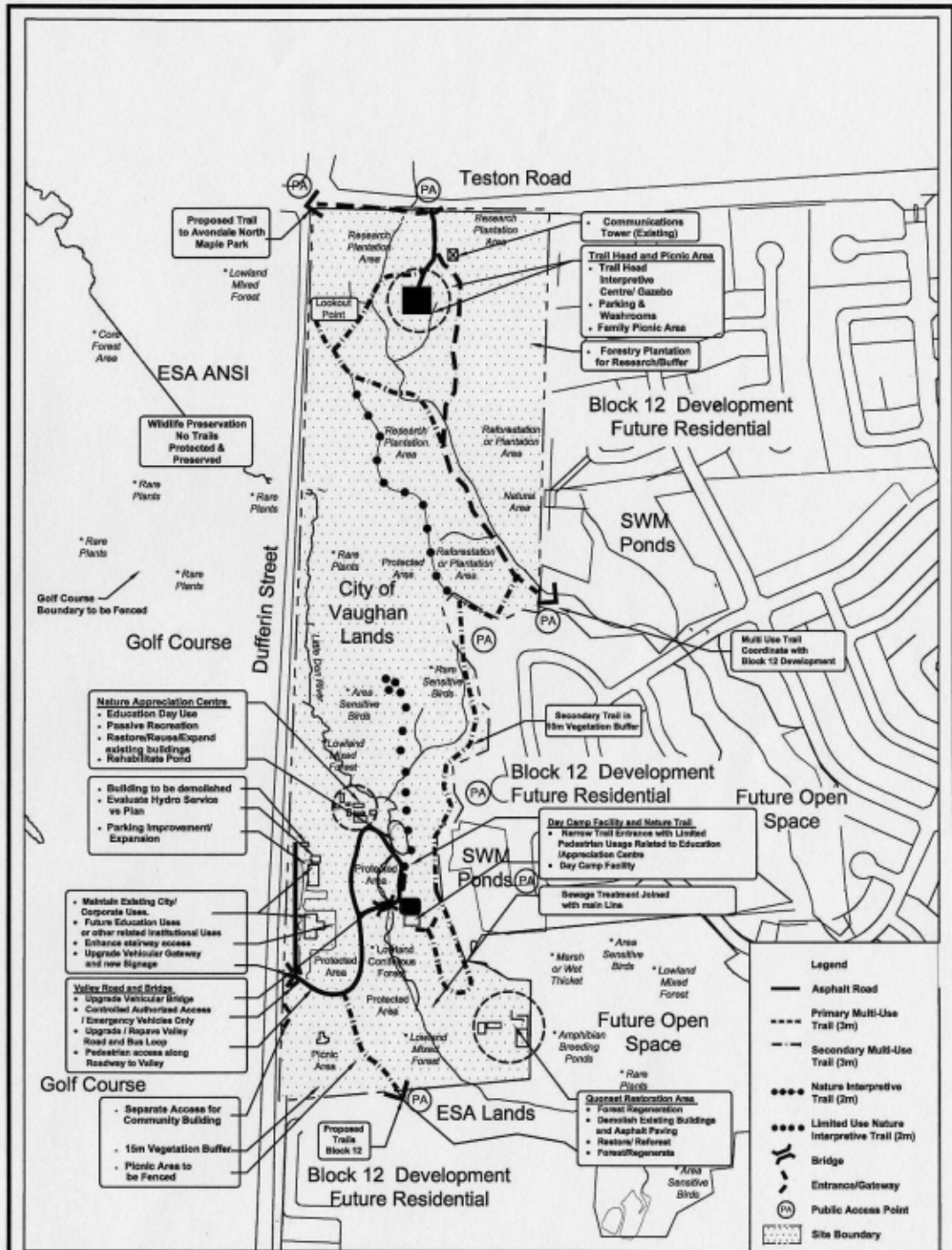


DRAWN: M.M.T APPROVED: L.F.  
 SCALE: N.A. DATE: 02/06/03

**ATTACHMENT #1**

Parks Development Division  
 —DEPARTMENT OF PARKS—





J.H. Services  
 Planning & Development Consultants



**DRAFT**  
 May, 2003



**Map 4: MASTER PLAN**  
 City of Vaughan  
 Maple Nature Reserve Master Plan Programme

**ATTACHMENT #2**

