

May 19, 2015

Members of the Committee of the Whole

City of Vaughan
City Hall, Level 100
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan ON
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MGP File: 11-2206

Via email: clerks@vaughan.ca

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Item #	<u>5</u>
Report No.	<u>20 (CW)</u>
<u>Council - May 19/15</u>	

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua and Members of Council,

**RE: Committee of the Whole- May 19, 2015
Agenda Item #5, Recommendation Report 20 (CW)
Comments on the 2015 Co-ordinated Review of the Provincial Growth Plan, Oak
Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Greenbelt Plan and Niagara Escarpment Plan
Copper Creek Golf Course, City of Vaughan**

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Copper Creek Golf Club in the context of the Coordinated Provincial Policy Review of the Growth Plan, the Greenbelt Plan, the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

The Copper Creek Golf Course was built in 2002 and is situated between the East Humber River and Highway 27, north of the Village of Kleinburg within the City of Vaughan. The western half of the property is within the City's urban area. Copper Creek has a pending development application to amend Vaughan's Official Plan and the property is expected to be developed as a residential community with a density of 50 residents and jobs per hectare. Figure 1 shows that there are approximately 10.6 acres (4.3 hectares) of lands designated as Greenbelt above the valley feature and also that approximately two-thirds of the 40,000 square foot clubhouse building is within the Greenbelt. Copper Creek is seeking to have the highlighted lands shown on Figure 1 removed from the Greenbelt Area with final development limits to be determined through the planning process.

The purpose of this letter is to provide comments for the City of Vaughan's consideration in their recommendations and comments to the Province on the various provincial plans under review.

Specifically, we are asking the City of Vaughan to support the following requests when providing their comments to the Province:

1. **The Province should establish a defined process to permit adjustments to the Greenbelt Plan boundaries through OPA's adopted by local/regional councils; and that**
2. **The Province should expand the uses permitted within the Greenbelt Plan to include uses such as active public parks and public stormwater management facilities.**

Revisions to the Greenbelt Plan Policies:

Approximately 396,000 hectares of lands are identified by the Province as Protected Countryside within the Greenbelt Plan. It is logical to assume that in areas subject to future development, further analysis of the lands through site visits and detailed studies will provide more accurate limits than those determined through the Greenbelt Plan, which is a high level policy document covering a very large area.

Before any development is approved in 'Greenfield' or designated growth areas, site-specific and comprehensive science-based studies, such as Master Environmental Servicing Plans (MESPs) or Functional Servicing Studies (FSRs), are required. These studies include Conservation Authority and MNR staking of natural features, determination of appropriate environmental buffers or setbacks, hydrogeological, water balance and engineering reports, endangered species and vegetation surveys, environmental site assessments and studies, cultural and archaeological assessments. This work is then reviewed and commented on by the authorities responsible for implementing the goals and objectives of the provincial policies prior to their recommendation for development approval by council.

These studies generally take a minimum of one year to conduct and in many circumstances it is several years more before they are reviewed, revised and ultimately approved. With all this being said, there is insufficient time for these detailed studies to be done within the timeline of the Province's Coordinated Review process and to provide input into a municipal comprehensive justification or growth management study. As such, it is requested that local and upper tier municipalities be tasked with making adjustments to the boundaries. If the Province supports adjustments to the Greenbelt boundaries through detailed studies and approvals by the local and upper tier municipalities, it will be necessary to implement a consistent set of criteria.

It is our experience that environmental features and their buffers often exceed the Greenbelt or the official plan boundary. These lands, although they are within existing urban areas designated for growth, are protected from development and reduce the size of developable areas. Conversely, should there be lands adjacent to designated development areas within the Greenbelt Boundary that are not deemed to be environmental features or associated buffers, or that can no longer continue as an agricultural use, there should be a mechanism to allow for these lands to be added to the adjacent urban area land use.

These 'remnant' pieces are small in scale, but with development areas in the GTA planned for 50 or 70 jobs and persons per hectare, on a cumulative basis, these small pieces of land within an urban area represent the ability to accommodate growth in a more cost effective manner, as existing infrastructure such as transit, roads, social services and municipal services currently exist or are planned for within the area. The addition of these 'remnant' pieces to accommodate planned growth, will help to locate more strategic infrastructure investments leading to cost-effective growth within the GTA. However, if the Province, Region and City of Vaughan do not address these 'remnant' pieces within the Greenbelt designation, development will ultimately continue outwards.

The removal of the approximately 4 hectares on the Copper Creek lands from the Greenbelt lands:

- Would be a logical addition to development within an existing community and would utilize existing and pending municipal services, utilities and infrastructure;
- Would not have any adverse effects on the surrounding natural features, the limits of which would be established through study and the approval process;
- Will not compromise continued agricultural practices in the area; and,

- Will continue to locate growth south of the Greenbelt within the Settlement Area Boundary and will lessen the amount of expansion area required to accommodate growth.

We note that Attachment 2 'Comments and Recommendations . . .' to the May 15th staff report to Vaughan Council requests *'that the Province provide detailed guidance in the form of a clear and transparent review process to provide for the assessment of boundary change requests for the Greenbelt Plan area.'* We support the City's recommendation and ask that there be further discussions and recommendation to the Province to permit adjustments to the Greenbelt Area through a defined, fair and transparent process to be administered by the local and upper tier municipalities.

Expansion of Uses within the Greenbelt:

The Greenbelt Plan does not permit uses such as active parkland within the Greenbelt and it is unclear on where and when stormwater management ponds are permitted. Both uses support complete communities and are compatible with natural areas. Their location within the Greenbelt Area in lands abutting urban areas will support the principles of Smart Growth and building complete communities and will allow for more efficient developable urban lands.

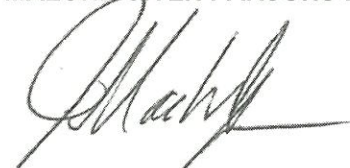
In summary, we respectfully request that the City of Vaughan recommend that the Province consider a process by which changes to the Greenbelt Plan boundaries can be made adjacent to designated development areas based on a set of criteria and the approval of the local and upper tier municipality.

In addition, we ask that the City of Vaughan also recommend that the Province consider broadening the permitted uses within the Greenbelt Plan to include additional uses such as active parks and stormwater management ponds.

We appreciate this opportunity to provide our comments to the City of Vaughan for consideration in their review of the provincial plans.

Yours very truly,

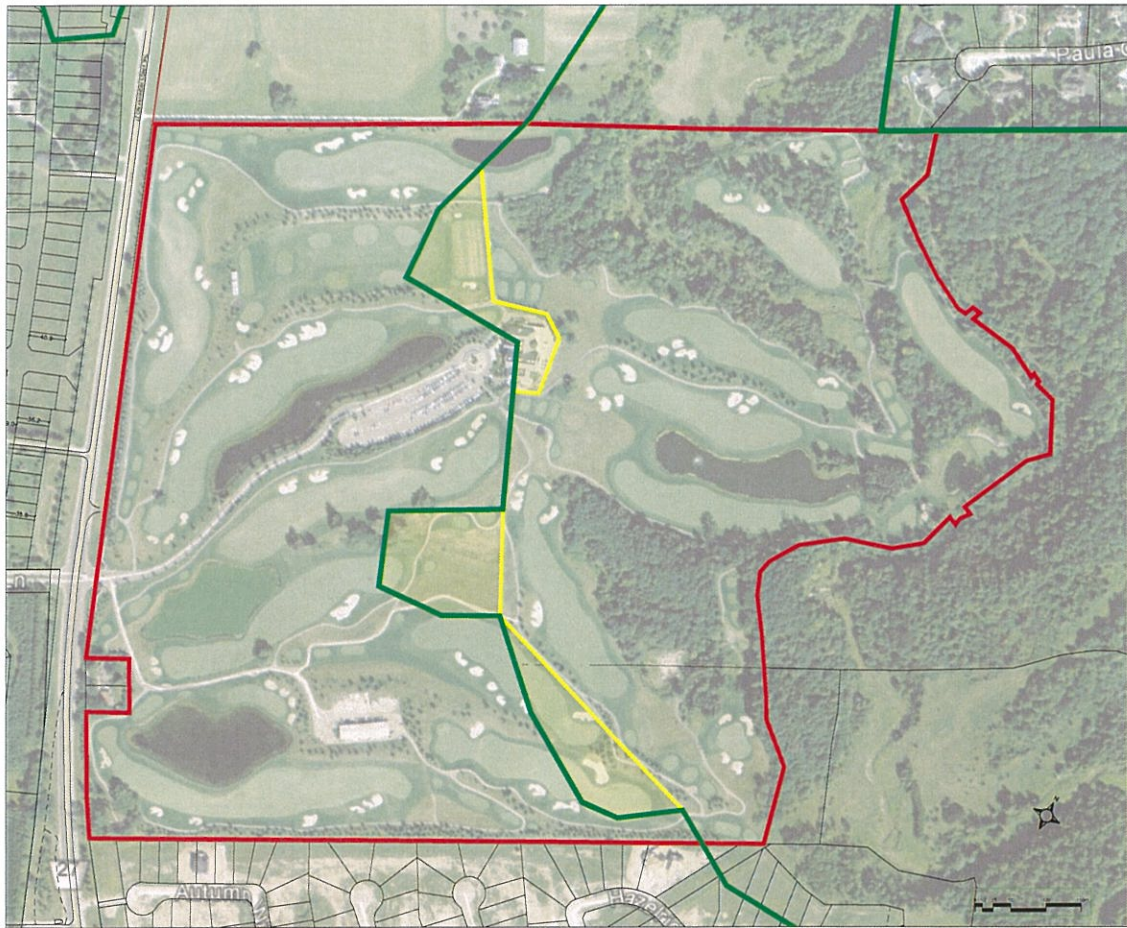
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cc: John Mackenzie, Commissioner of Planning, City of Vaughan
Steve Kanellakos, City Manager, City of Vaughan
Roy McQuillin, Acting Director of Policy Planning, City of Vaughan



**PROVINCIAL PLANNING
REVIEW, 2015**
Copper Creek
City of Vaughan

Legend

- ▬ Copper Creek Lands
- ▬ Greenbelt Boundary
- ▬ Lands proposed to be removed from the Greenbelt - 4.3 ha.

Date: May 8, 2015
Prepared by:

 MALONE GIVEN PARSONS LTD.