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<b>C 4</b>
<b>COMMUNICATION</b>
CW (PH) - <u>JUNE 17/14</u>
ITEM - _____

**Mayor and Members of Council**

City of Vaughan  
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive  
Vaughan, Ontario L6A 1T1

June 12, 2014

File 5303-2

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

**RE: Phase 2 – 4 Natural Heritage Network Study  
Woodbridge Park Ltd. (Steeles Avenue West and Gihon Spring Drive)**

Weston Consulting has been retained by Woodbridge Park Ltd. to provide planning services in support of a proposed mixed use development at the north east corner of Steeles Avenue West and Gihon Spring Drive in the City of Vaughan (the 'subject property') consisting of low rise residential and commercial uses.

The subject property is approximately 5.99 hectares (14.8 acres) in area and has been extensively modified through past activity including periodic ploughing and a layer of fill averaging approximately 7 metres in depth based on the boreholes drilled to investigate the geotechnical properties of the site. It is currently vacant and gradually slopes downwards towards the north east corner of the site with a depression near the northern boundary of the property. We understand that the depression was built in association with the CN Rail line to the north has been designed to convey storm water flows from the subject lands, CN Rail lands, and the adjacent property.

Based on our review of the 'Phase 2 – 4 Natural Heritage Network Report' (NHN Report), dated May 2014, the City of Vaughan is proposing to designate the entire property as 'Core Features' under the Natural Heritage Network. This appears to be based on the following:

1. The potential location of a Surface Water Feature on or near the subject property as illustrated on the proposed Schedule 2A attached to the NHN Report in the vicinity of the depression noted above; and
2. The designation of 'SWH Shrub/Early Successional Breeding Birds' in accordance with Schedule 2C.

With regard to the Surface Water Feature, a site walk with the TRCA was completed on April 29, 2014, where it was agreed that there is no regulated feature on the site. The TRCA confirmed the depression is a ditch and not a watercourse. Subsequent to this site walk and in consultation with the TRCA and the City, a Scoped EIS was prepared by Beacon Environmental. This EIS is being submitted to the City of Vaughan under separate cover in support of the proposed development on the subject property.

With regard to the designation of 'SWH Shrub/Early Successional Breeding Birds,' we note that the Scoped EIS (Beacon, June 2014) states the following:

*"The Phase 2-4 Natural Heritage Network Study for the City of Vaughan (North-South Environmental, 2014) identifies the entire subject property as Candidate Significant Wildlife Habitat for Shrub/Early Successional Breeding Birds. Based on the existing conditions at the subject property at the time of the field visits, this site does not meet the criteria provided under the Significant Wildlife Habitat Technical Guide. There are no Cultural Thicket (CUT) or Cultural Savannah (CUS) communities identified on the subject property. A small portion of Cultural Woodland was identified at the site however it was less than 0.01 ha in size. Both Cultural Thicket and Cultural Woodland were identified within 120 m of the subject property. The Cultural Meadow (CUM) and Cultural Woodland communities present on the site are much smaller than 10 ha in size, 1.6 ha and less than 0.01 ha respectively. And only one common species, Willow Flycatcher (Empidonax traillii) was observed during the first round of Breeding Bird Surveys. Given the size of the area, habitat conditions present, absence of indicator species in any meaningful abundance, we do not believe that this area qualifies as Significant Wildlife Habitat."*

Therefore, with respect to the NHN Report, the more detailed information contained in the Scoped EIS as it relates to the subject property should be incorporated into the final report. Based on this new information, we request that the subject property be removed from the Natural Heritage Network in its entirety.

Please add me to your consultation list on this matter and provide me with any notice of decision related to this matter. I can be reached at extension 232 if you have any further questions.

Yours truly,  
**Weston Consulting**  
 Per:



Tim Jessop, MES, MCIP, RPP  
 Senior Planner

- c. P. Smith, Woodbridge Park Ltd.
- C. Matson, Matson McConnell Ltd