



YORK REGION

FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

SERVING THE FARM COMMUNITY SINCE 1940

February 5, 2012

Mayor and Council
City of Markham
101 Town Centre I Blvd,
Markham, ON
L3R 9W3

Re: Response to Jim Robb and the Friends of the Rouge Watershed's presentation and associated submissions of January 22nd and 30th regarding the future of the Rouge National Urban Park

The York Region Federation of Agriculture (YRFA) would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak to you on behalf of its 750 farmer members in the Region including those farming in the proposed study area of the Rouge National Urban Park (RNUP).

In response to Mr. Jim Robb and the Friends of the Rouge Watersheds' (FRW) presentation and submissions on January 22nd and subsequent submission on January 30th we urge Council **not** to pass the same motion that was passed in Toronto as it supports the wishes of one NGO wishing to see "a large mixed-wood and Carolinian forest habitat system...", that would see the loss of large amounts of Class 1 Agricultural land to reforestation, not the balanced vision that the Rouge Park Alliance (RPA) and Parks Canada has been working towards.

Our submission will point out the inaccuracies of the FRW submissions and how the previous work of the RPA present a more balanced vision for the Park supporting the value in maintaining much of the Agricultural production in the new RNUP. Finally, we will also highlight the YRFA recommendations for the RNUP.

1. January 22, 2012 FRW Presentation to Development Services and Additional Information and January 30, 2013 FRW Submission

The slide presentation provided by the FRW for the agenda and included in the Minutes of the Meeting was not the presentation given during the meeting. It seems that despite discussion during the meeting surrounding securing a copy of the actual presentation given, the power point presentation was not saved. Mr. Rob submitted another version of the presentation on January 30th that has again been edited since he gave the presentation. We will provide feedback based upon these three documents and recollections from what was said during the presentation.



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January 22, 2013 FRW Presentation

a) Slide #10: **Science based, federal and provincial reports say:**

> 30% forest cover and 10% wetland cover are needed for a healthy biologically diverse watershed (“How much Habitat is Enough”, 2004)

- Markham has 5% forest cover and 1% wetland cover

- Rouge Watershed has 13% forest cover and 2% wetland

The numbers represented above by the FRW reflect studies done in 2007. The YFRA has verified with Rouge Park staff at the TRCA that the current numbers are found below:

For the Parks Canada study area:

26% forest or successional

2.4% wetland

Within the current Rouge Park (RPA boundary)

44% forest or successional

3.2% wetland

From the 2012 (draft) Rouge Watershed Report Card:

22.6% of the watershed has natural cover: forest – 12.1%, meadow – 8.5%, successional – 1.3%, and wetland – 0.7%

Note that staff reported that wetland cover is actually a very difficult number to determine accurately, and depends on what is defined as “wetland”.

These numbers also show that the work that needs to be done to improve forest cover in the Rouge Watershed now lies for the most part outside the Park boundaries in the rest of Markham.

b) Slide #13: **2008 Rouge Park “Greenbelt Ecological Corridor” Restoration Plan and Figure 7 Map**

This map is not the “2008 Rouge Park “Greenbelt Ecological Corridor” Restoration Plan”, it is the map showing the restoration plan north of Steeles Avenue for the Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008). This is one of the Plans that FRW has included in number 3.i. of the motion that was passed by Toronto Council and the motion FRW would like you to pass. However, this Restoration Plan was amended in 2010 and is not to be used anymore.

At the March 12th, 2010 meeting of the Rouge Park Alliance, a report was approved which deferred the planned restoration work on agricultural lands north of highway 7 and within the (original) Bob Hunter Memorial Park boundary east of Reesor Road. Restoration of these areas was deferred to allow for the



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preparation of an updated management plan for all Rouge Park lands north of Steeles, which would include recognition of the new agriculture objective, policy and guiding principles (also approved at the March 12th, 2010 meeting).

The “consolidated plan” for park lands north of Steeles has not been completed, and Parks Canada will now be responsible for developing a strategic plan for all lands within the future Rouge National Urban Park.

We have attached the Minutes of the March 12, 2010 RPA Meeting. Pages 2 – 17 (in particular pages 4, 7, 11, 12) provide in great detail the new agriculture objective, policy and guiding principles. Excerpts of the report such as the following highlight the new direction the Alliance was giving to the Park north of Steeles Ave.:

“The stated goals of the 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan are to conserve and restore natural heritage, to conserve cultural heritage, and to provide passive recreational opportunities. In the past, agriculture has been included as part of the cultural heritage features of Rouge Park, but has not been explicitly presented as an objective of the Park.”

And “Our review of the Rouge Park plans has resulted in a staff recommendation to include an agriculture objective as a fundamental component of the Rouge Park plans and to develop a policy framework jointly with stakeholders.”

And “In Markham, the agriculture community dominates Rouge Park and needs to be recognized as part of the primary mandate. Our plans should show agriculture as a mandated objective.”

And “Certain wildlife species co-exist and, in some cases, thrive near an agricultural landscape. This cultivated field/forest edge habitat is currently found throughout Rouge Park lands.”

And “The significant role and presence of agriculture as a Rouge Park objective makes it important that there be a clear policy with guiding principles regarding agriculture in the Park.

And “The Markham East Lands are presently included in the Markham/Pickering Agriculture Preserve. The area is roughly 70% agriculture and 30% natural features, as shown in map 3. Planning for the MEL is being done with the intent of maintaining agriculture as a primary function in this area as well as the ecological integrity of existing habitats and streams that run through the area. In addition to the MEL, plans for the LRC will be re-examined in order to evaluate the potential to maintain farmland in the area north of Highway 7.”

On March 12, 2010, Councillor De Baeremaeker attended the meeting representing the FRW and either made or seconded several of the Agriculture Policy motions and Jim Robb was also in attendance that day. Both of these members of the FRW are therefore well aware of the importance of this addition to RPA Policy and were again reminded of the importance of the policy in the letter dated January 18, 2012 that



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Alan Wells, Chair, RPA wrote to the FRW. The letter is found on pages 20 – 22 of the attached Heritage Committee of the RPA Minutes of January 25, 2012.

Therefore, any inclusion of the Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008) in any motion should also include the amended restoration plan and the new agriculture objective, policy and guiding principles.

c) Slide 25: **Unfortunately, most of this federal “Green Space Preserve” is not included in the current Rouge National Park Study area**

All of the Green Space Preserve is already protected by the Greenbelt, does it need to be included in the Park to be further protected?

d) Slide #27: **Adopt Existing Rouge Park Vision**

The approved 1994 and 2011 Rouge Park Management Plan Vision states:

The Rouge Park will be a special place of outstanding natural features and diverse cultural heritage in an urban-rural setting, protected and flourishing as an ecosystem in perpetuity. Human activities will exist in harmony with the natural values of the park. The park will be a sanctuary for nature and the human spirit. The primary focus of the vision centres on the protection and appreciation of the park ecosystem.”

There is no 2011 Rouge Park Management Plan and FRW have added “*The primary focus of the vision centres on the protection and appreciation of the park ecosystem*” to the 1994 Rouge Park Plan Vision. It was not part of the 1994 Plan Vision.

e) Slide 28: **Park Purpose and Priority**

FRW Recommendation: The Rouge National Park concept, legislation and strategic plan should give priority to the protection and restoration of a large mixed woodland plain and Carolinian forest system which protects and restores biological diversity, ecological health, water quality and stream flow and links Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine with natural environment parklands, public trails and healthy local food production plots.

As mentioned in b) above giving “priority to protection and restoration of a large mixed woodland plain and Carolinian forest ...” would not be consistent with the new RPA agriculture objective, policy and guiding principles. To create a large reforestation would require taking the Class 1 Agricultural Land out of food production to plant trees. Currently there is no Rouge Park Plan that recommends any large areas of reforestation in the Park north of Steeles outside the 600m Corridor or Bob Hunter Park.



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Also, the last portion of this slide is very concerning. How small are “healthy local food production plots”? Is this the vision of the FRW when Mr. Robb says he wants to balance the Natural Heritage and Agriculture in the Park?

January 22, 2013 FRW Additional Information Submitted

- f) December 13, 2012 letter to the Honourable Dalton McGuinty
- g) November 29, 2012 City of Toronto Motion
- h) October 10, 2012 Great Lakes United letter
- i) Draft Rouge National Park Concept Weaknesses
- j) Rouge Park - Existing Legislative, Policy, Scientific and Ecological Context
- k) FRW Request to the Federal Government
- l) January 30, 2013 FRW Power Point Submission to Council

The seven documents above for the most part raise the same issues that we have already discussed above.

Summary of FRW Presentation and Submissions

In summary of the presentation and submissions of the FRW, as they say, ‘the devil is in the detail’.

At first glance the recommendations and submissions sound fine, but once corrected for accuracy and compared against the direction of the RPA it is obvious that the FRW are trying to convince you to support their organizations views for the Park, not the balanced multi stakeholder views represented by the RPA or Parks Canada.

1. Using 5 year old data, FRW tried to make the case for greatly increased forest cover. Instead we see the current data has significantly increased forest cover and points out the deficiencies outside the Park boundaries.
2. Using the Natural Heritage Action Plan (2008) map of the restoration plan north of Steeles and not indicating that the Plan had been amended to defer all restoration work on agricultural lands north of highway 7 and within the (original) Bob Hunter Memorial Park boundary east of Reesor Road; and not including the new Agricultural objective, policy and guiding principles the FRW tried to ignore the RPA support for Agriculture in the Park and tried to portray the focus of the Park to be ecological with Natural Heritage Restoration. Currently there is no Rouge Park Plan that recommends any large areas of reforestation in the Park north of Steeles outside the 600m Corridor or Bob Hunter Park.

Therefore, if you feel the need to pass a motion similar to the City of Toronto Motion, these changes must be made:

- i. must include the amendments to the Natural Heritage Plan (2008) and the Agriculture objective, etc.
- iii. We recommend deleting this point all together as it is not supported by current Rouge Park Plans.
- iv. Agricultural representation should be included on the RNUP Advisory Board and Parks Canada has already indicated to us that there will be a position for Agriculture on that Board.



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2. York Federation of Agriculture Recommendations for the RNUP

a. No more reforestation of Class 1 Agricultural Land.

We have already lost over 1000 acres of Farmland to reforestation in the Park. That is more than enough. Only restoration projects on marginal land would be permitted.

b. Long term leases for farmers to allow sound financial and business planning as well as stewardship and infrastructure improvements to the farms.

c. An Agriculture position on the RNUP Advisory Board.

d. Resolve long standing issues including wildlife damage to crops; weed seed drifting from restoration areas onto Agricultural Land; improved tile drainage; trespassing onto crops by Park Visitors;

e. Continued consultation with the tenant farmers and the Agricultural industry while developing Park Plans.

f. An interpretive/educational farm (long term goal) to improve public awareness of modern farming practices and farm environmental stewardship practices go hand in hand.

I would like to thank you again for the opportunity to make comments to you about the future of the Rouge Park.

I would be happy to answer any questions you may have and I am also available to attend a future Council or Committee Meeting to clarify any comments you wish.

Sincerely

Kim Empringham
York Federation of Agriculture

January 18, 2012

Mr. Kevin O'Connor
President, Friends of the Rouge Watershed
2259 Meadowvale Road
Scarborough, ON M1X 1R2

Dear Mr. O'Connor:

Re: Correspondence to Rouge Park Alliance Members dated December 20, 2011

Firstly, I would like to extend my thanks to Friends of the Rouge Watershed (FRW) for the valuable assistance your group has provided to the ecological restoration efforts of Rouge Park. We are confident that the Rouge Park Alliance (RPA) funding provided to FRW for reforestation work has been an excellent investment in the future of the Park.

After reading your letter to RPA members dated December 20, 2011, I feel the need to clarify the policy directions and decision making process that preceded the staff report you refer to, presented at the December 9th RPA meeting. This report identified restoration areas that would be available for allocation to NGO planting groups in the near future, based on current plans approved by the Rouge Park Alliance.

The 2008 Rouge Park "Action Plan" referred to in your letter established priorities, goals and methods for implementing habitat restoration in zones prescribed by the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994), Little Rouge Corridor Management Plan (2007) and Bob Hunter Memorial Park Master Plan (2007). Subsequent to approval of the 2008 "Action Plan", the RPA requested that staff meet with each of the agricultural tenants who leased lands zoned for restoration to negotiate the precise timing of retirement of each parcel, in order to enable a fair transition for these farm businesses. The results of these negotiations were detailed in the *"Report on Discussions with the Farming Community in Rouge Park and Recommendations for Future Natural Habitat Restoration"* that went to the Rouge Park Policy and Administration Committee on September 15, 2009 (minutes brought to Rouge Park Alliance on September 18, 2009). In adopting these recommendations, the RPA approved an extension to the restoration timelines of the "Action Plan" beyond 2016, with restoration of most areas to be substantially complete by 2019. Contrary to statements made on page 1 of your letter, staff feels that the submitted report completely and accurately described the impact of these recommendations on park restoration. The recommendations dealt only with the timing of restoration work and did not have implications for the science or policy directions laid out in Rouge Park management plans. Finally, contrary to the claim made in your letter, the RPA did vote to approve these revisions to restoration timing (Res. #47/09), and an NGO representative is included on the Alliance membership specifically to represent the interests of NGOs including FRW.



Following approval of the restoration timelines negotiated with tenant farmers in 2009, the RPA made the decision to defer restoration on roughly 300 hectares of farmland north of Highway 7 and in Bob Hunter Memorial Park east of Reesor Road (approved at the March 12, 2010 meeting: Res. #16/10). As described in the staff report (attached), deferral of restoration on these areas was recommended so that a comprehensive plan could be developed for all lands north of Steeles Avenue, establishing appropriate links between these areas and a reasonable balance of restoration, agriculture and visitor use objectives. Accordingly, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was released in late 2010 for development of the "Rouge Park North Consolidated Plan". The conclusion of your letter correctly outlines the policy context on which this plan should be developed, which was also clearly stated in the RFP:

"Rouge Park now has the need to update and consolidate its management plans for all Park lands in Markham, which include the Little Rouge Corridor, Bob Hunter Memorial Park, and the Markham East Lands. This updated plan must comply with the Greenbelt Plan (2005) and Rouge North Management Plan (2001). As well, the plan should have regard for Rouge Park plans in the adjacent lands south of Steeles, and for all other Rouge Park and partner planning documents [as listed in RFP]."

The Rouge North Consolidated Plan has been identified as a priority item in the 2012 Rouge Park budget and work plan. Staff feels that it would be appropriate to commence this major planning process when Parks Canada is able to determine what role they will play in park planning in the coming year. A resolution is expected by late spring of 2012.

It should be noted that the December 9, 2011 staff report to the RPA only reflects restoration areas known to be available in the near future, based on the RPA decisions detailed above. Additional restoration area may become available due to future land acquisitions, management agreements (including for the Markham East Lands) and as plans are updated for the roughly 300 hectares of farmland where restoration was deferred. The plans described above may also change at such time as management of Rouge Park is transferred to a new entity, such as Parks Canada.

The Rouge Park supports the vision put forth in your letter of "the protection of a significant proportion of farmland in and around Rouge Park for sustainable, healthy food production which benefits local communities". For this reason, the Rouge Park Alliance developed an Agricultural Policy for Rouge Park (March 12, 2010, Res. #17/10 and Res. #17A/10), with the intent of encouraging agricultural uses in the Park "that complement the natural heritage objectives, cultural heritage objectives, interpretation and recreation objectives as stated in its management plans". In pursuit of these objectives, RPA staff has been engaging more closely with farm tenants to ensure that agriculture in the park is sustainable, ecologically-friendly and visitor-compatible.

Page 3
Mr. Kevin O'Connor
President, Friends of the Rouge Watershed

I trust this letter answers your concerns. The Rouge Park appreciates the involvement and input of NGOs such as Friends of the Rouge Watershed and looks forward to positive collaboration with your group.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Wells". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "A".

Alan Wells
Chair
Rouge Park Alliance
Cell: 416 460 6706
awells@rougepark.com

Attachment: RP Plans Update Report



ROUGE PARK ALLIANCE MINUTES - MEETING #2/10 - March 12, 2010

The Rouge Park Alliance met in the Main Boardroom of the Toronto Zoo. Alan Wells, Chair, welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

PRESENT

Members:

Alan Wells, Chair
Councillor David Cohen, Town of Richmond Hill
Glenn De Baeremaeker, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Region of York
Councillor Ron Moeser, City of Toronto
Gerri Lynn O'Connor, Toronto & Region C. A.

Alternates:

Brian Denney, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority
Ron Dewell, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority
Paul Harpley, Toronto Zoo
Councillor Logan Kanapathi, Town of Markham
Councillor Chin Lee, City of Toronto
Debbie Pella Keen, Province of Ontario
Jim Robb, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Carolyn Woodland, Toronto & Region C. A.

ABSENT

Members:

Councillor Paul Ainslie, City of Toronto
Hon. Pauline Browes, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corp.
Hon. Michael Chong, MP, Government of Canada
Peter Evans, Toronto Zoo
Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP, Province of Ontario
Regional Councillor Bonnie Littley, Region of Durham
Councillor Jennifer O'Connell, City of Pickering
Councillor Erin Shapero, Town of Markham
Councillor Clyde Smith, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Alternates:

Wayne Arthurs, MPP, Province of Ontario
Ian Buchanan, Region of York
Councillor Raymond Cho, City of Toronto
Nestor Chornobay, Region of Durham
Mayor Wayne Emmerson, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Adele Freeman, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority
Mark Graham, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.
Sue Gunton, Toronto Zoo
Keith Laushway, Waterfront Regeneration Trust Corp.
Tom Melymuk, City of Pickering
Tracey Steele, Town of Richmond Hill

Staff:

Bob Clay, Manager, Habitat Restoration
Barb Davies, Manager, Policy & Administration
Michelle Holmes, Manager, Visitor Experience
Doreen McCarty, Administrative Coordinator

Staff (Continued...)

Vicki MacDonald, Biologist
Maria Papoulias, Manager, Natural Heritage

Observers:

Cat Beattie, Public Participant
Tom Boudreault, City of Toronto Parks
Rodger Cummins, Ontario Farmland Trust
Jim Dillane, TRCA
David Harvey, Consultant

Observers (Continued...)

Sarah Henophy, Friends of the Rouge Watershed
John Kay, Resident
Sheila Lathe, Resident
Andy McKinnon, "Rouge Watch"
Colin O'Neill, Friends of the Rouge Watershed

MOTION: Moved by: Gerri Lynn O'Connor
Res. #15/10 Seconded by: David Cohen

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the presentation by Alan Wells on the Rouge Park Plans update.
..... **CARRIED**

ACTION - Staff to send copies of the presentation to Alliance members.

KEY ISSUE

During the past two years, the Rouge Park Alliance has been engaged in an extensive review and consultation process related to the Bob Hunter Memorial Park, Little Rouge Corridor Plans, and Markham East Lands to address partners and community concerns regarding the Rouge Park Plans.

MOTION: Moved by: Jack Heath
Res. #16/10 Seconded by: Logan Kanapathi

THAT THE Rouge Park Alliance receive the attached Rouge Park Plans Update;

AND FURTHER THAT the Rouge Park Alliance agree to proceed with the steps outlined in this report.

AMENDMENT: Moved by: Jack Heath
Res. #16A/10: Seconded by: David Cohen

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance continue consultations with stakeholders and Markham Council during the development of the plan;

AMENDMENT **CARRIED**
MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED **CARRIED**

ACTION

1. Rouge Park consultations to continue with stakeholders and municipal council during the development of the plan.
2. Deputy Mayor Jack Heath requested that issues dealing with Cedarena and Milne Park 2 be managed by Markham and that these issues be forwarded to Markham Council.

BACKGROUND

Please see attached report (Attachment 1).

Attachment 1:
ROUGE PARK PLANS UPDATE - February 26, 2010

Background:

The purpose of this report is to update the members of the Rouge Park Alliance on the many discussions that have occurred over the past two years as a result of our review of the Rouge Park plans, including ongoing discussions with the agricultural community and with Markham Council and staff as we develop Rouge Park in Markham.

Issues related to energy and food supply have been a subject of great discussion in the Greater Toronto Area. The importance of local food supply has become more prominent. Rouge Park staff has also recognized that farmland fulfills ecological functions and serves as habitat for a variety of wildlife species.

Our review of the Rouge Park plans has resulted in a staff recommendation to include an agriculture objective as a fundamental component of the Rouge Park plans and to develop a policy framework jointly with stakeholders. That report has been presented to the Rouge Park Alliance for consideration.

The agriculture community has also stressed the need for a better understanding of their economic needs, including long-term leases. We have worked with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) to develop a new lease strategy that will provide longer leases and assist the farm community.

Mandate:

The stated goals of the 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan are to conserve and restore natural heritage, to conserve cultural heritage, and to provide passive recreational opportunities. In the past, agriculture has been included as part of the cultural heritage features of Rouge Park, but has not been explicitly presented as an objective of the Park. In Markham, the agriculture community dominates Rouge Park and needs to be recognized as part of the primary mandate. Our plans should show agriculture as a mandated objective. This is now included in the Agricultural Policy Report.

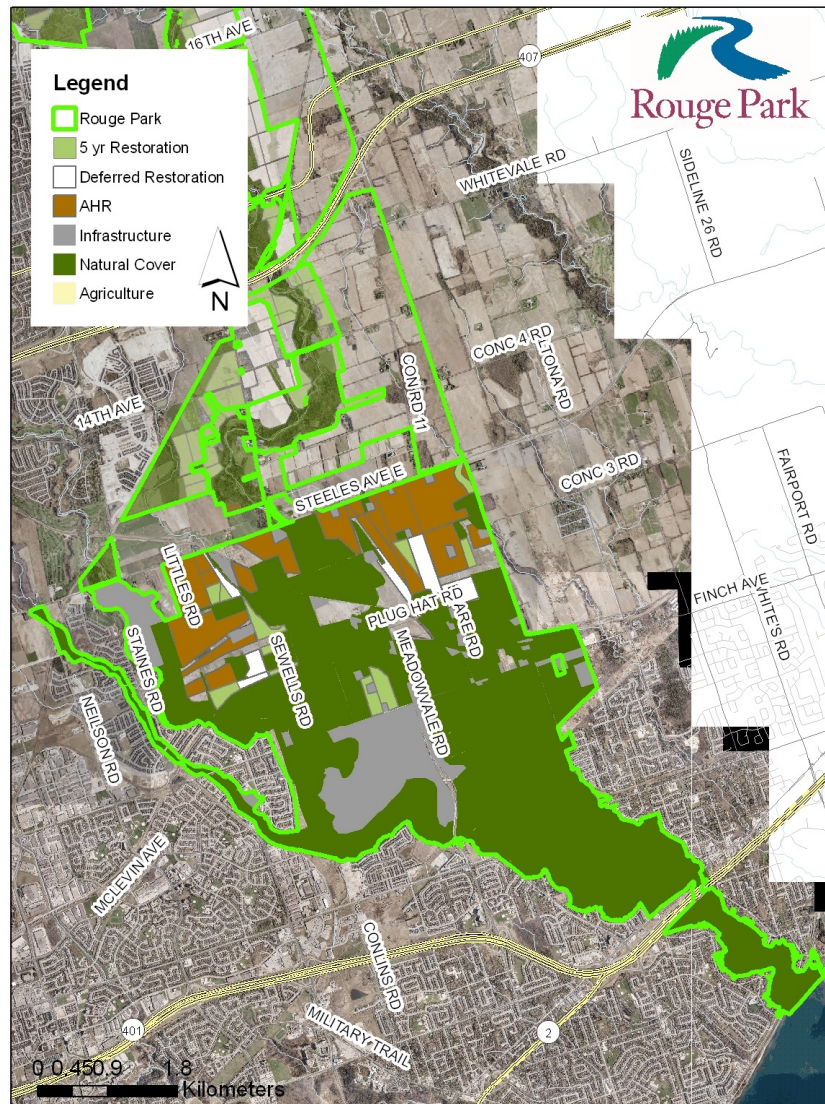
Plans:

Agricultural land is an important component of Rouge Park (Rouge Park Management Plan 1994). Agriculture currently comprises 1582 ha of the total Park area of 3482 ha excluding infrastructure (see Table 1 and Map 1).

Of the total existing agriculture area, the Agricultural Heritage Reserve in the Toronto portion of Rouge Park represents 276 ha of the total lands of 456 ha that are currently farmed in Toronto, see Map 1.

Table 1: Approximate Areas of Existing Land Use in Rouge Park (shown in ha)

	LRC-N	LRC-M	LRC-S	BHMP	MEL	Markham	Toronto	Total
Agri-culture	236	35	128	139	588	1126	456	1582
Natural Heritage	118	28	126	53	31	356	1544	1900
Infra-structure	9	1	22	10	34	76	383	459
Total	363	64	276	202	653	1558	2383	3941



Map 1: Location of the 276 ha of Agricultural Heritage Reserve Lands (shown in brown) located just south of Steeles Avenue in the Toronto portion of Rouge Park

It is equally important to recognize agriculture in the Markham area of Rouge Park. Currently, there are three separate planning areas in Markham - the Little Rouge Corridor (LRC), the Bob Hunter Memorial Park (BHMP), and the Markham East Lands (MEL). Each of these areas has a primary purpose.

The BHMP was created as an ecological park. In order to facilitate park programming, it is proposed that the part of BHMP west of Reesor Road be joined with that part of the LRC west of Reesor Road and north of Steeles Avenue to form a 500 acre combined Nature Park, called the BHMP, as illustrated by Map 2.



Map 2: Proposed area of Bob Hunter Memorial Park programming, west of Reesor Road, outlined in black. Note that areas shown as white will be planned as part of the Little Rouge Corridor plan.

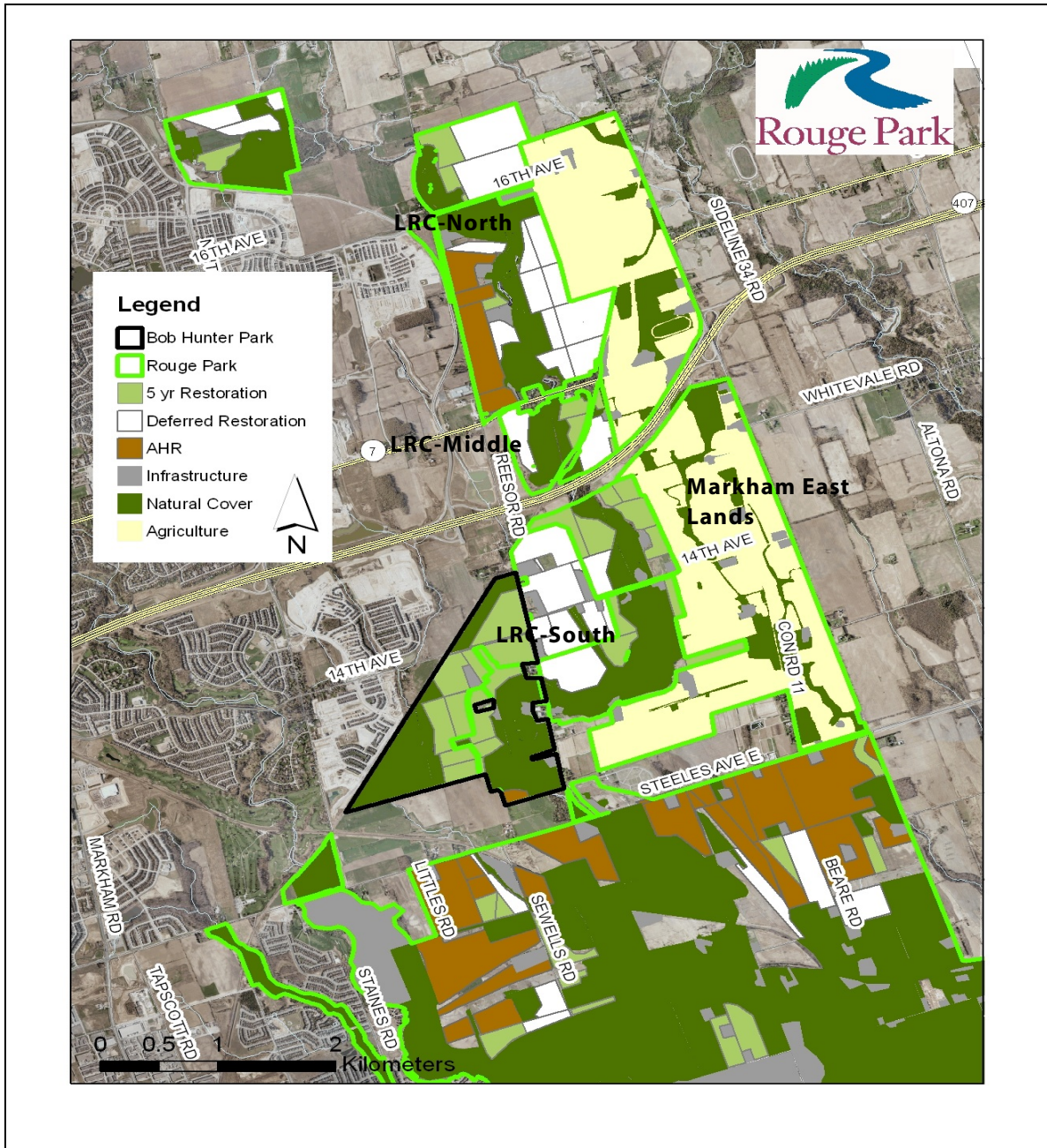
The part of BHMP east of Reesor Road, both north and south of 14th Avenue, should be included in the planning process for the LRC (see areas shown as white in map 2). This combined area includes the Hamlet of Cedar Grove. It includes several significant heritage buildings, such as a community centre and the famous Cedarena. Further discussions with the community, Markham Planning staff and the folks on the Markham East Lands Planning Steering Committee need to occur to determine how to include cultural protection and recreational opportunities in these lands, including community vegetable gardens or allotments.

The Little Rouge Corridor needs to be planned in several phases (see map 3). South of Highway 407, restoration of the 600-metre wide protection corridor is well underway, although there are two parcels where restoration has been delayed to accommodate the current farmers. The rest of the area is in the process of being restored.

Between Highways 407 and 7, the agricultural lands will be restored as other plans in Markham develop. The corridor will be widened and protected.

Areas north of Highway 7 comprise active farm land, including the largest homestead farm in Rouge Park that is a concession wide, almost a square block and makes up the majority of the LRC north of Highway 7. It is also part of both the LRC and MEL planning areas and therefore, further study should be carried out on these lands to ascertain how this farm could function in an ecologically compatible manner for Rouge Park, with a high level of natural heritage protection along with a trail route to achieve our vision of a continuous trail from Lake Ontario to the Oak Ridges Moraine. During this period of review, farming should continue.

The Markham East Lands are presently included in the Markham/Pickering Agriculture Preserve. The area is roughly 70% agriculture and 30% natural features, as shown in map 3. Planning for the MEL is being done with the intent of maintaining agriculture as a primary function in this area as well as the ecological integrity of existing habitats and streams that run through the area. In addition to the MEL, plans for the LRC will be re-examined in order to evaluate the potential to maintain farmland in the area north of Highway 7. The standard of planning will demand a high and robust level of protection for the natural heritage features of the Little Rouge, Duffins and Petticoat Creek watersheds. A trail system will also wind through East Markham to connect to trails near 14th Avenue. About two thirds of this area will remain in agriculture.



Map 3: Location of the North, Middle and South Sections of the Little Rouge Corridor, as well as the Markham East Lands. Markham East Lands agriculture shown in yellow and existing natural habitats in dark green.

Summary

It is proposed that the Markham East Lands planning process be expanded in order to create a consolidated plan for all of the lands in Markham, including the Little Rouge Corridor and Bob Hunter Memorial Park. The plan will include an agriculture preserve in the east, a forested protected corridor for the Little Rouge Creek and a nature park with a visitor experience area in Bob Hunter Memorial Park. A multi-use trail system is currently being planned for this entire area to connect with the trails in Toronto to the south and eventually north to the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Table 2 shows the land use mix that would be in place when planned natural heritage restorations have been completed. An addition of approximately 701 ha of Agricultural Heritage Reserve in Markham will be added to the 276 ha in Toronto for a total of approximately 1000 ha. In the Rouge Park areas of Markham, close to 50% of the total land use will remain agriculture (see table 2).

Table 2: Approximate land use mix in Rouge Park once planned habitat restorations have been completed (shown in ha). Note that the areas that will be used for recreation and visitor experience (trails, parking lots, visitor centres, etc.) have not yet been decided on and so areas of natural heritage or agriculture may change.

	LRC-N	LRC-M	LRC-S	BHMP	MEL	Markham	Toronto	Total
Agri-culture	236	0	61	0	404	701	276	977
Natural Heritage	118	63	193	192	215	781	1724	2505
Infra-structure	9	1	22	10	34	76	383	459
Total	363	64	276	202	653	1558	2383	3941

2. New Agriculture Objective, Policy and Guiding Principles

KEY ISSUE

Rouge Park has steadily increased in size over the past 6 years due to the addition of lands donated by the Province. With each new addition came active agricultural lands. Our existing plans provide limited policy direction on the management of agricultural lands in the Park.

MOTION:
Res. #17/10

Moved by: Gerri Lynn O'Connor
Seconded by: Glenn De Baeremaeker

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the attached Agriculture Policy report as amended;

AND THAT the Rouge Park Alliance accept the new Agriculture Objective, Agriculture Policy, Agriculture Guiding Principles, and Implementation in the attached report as amended;

AND THAT the Rouge Park Alliance direct staff to insert the operative section of the amended report into both the Rouge Park Management Plan and Rouge North Management Plan;

AND THAT the Rouge Park Alliance direct staff to commence with the advancement of the Guiding Principles and Implementation recommendations as amended;

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this amended report be circulated to the Province of Ontario, York Region, City of Toronto, Town of Markham, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, and York Region Federation of Agriculture.

AMENDMENT
Res. #17A/10

Moved by: Glenn De Baeremaeker
Seconded by: Gerri Lynn O’Connor

THAT the attached report, “Draft Agricultural Policy for Rouge Park”, be amended under the heading “Guiding Principles”, to add point #7, to read: “Ensure that farmers be required to have Environmental Farm Plans as a condition of leases, and that Rouge Park staff work with farmers to set standards approved and monitored by the Rouge Park General Manager.”

AMENDMENT CARRIED
MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED

ACTION

- Staff to take appropriate action.

BACKGROUND

At the December 5, 2008 Rouge Park Alliance meeting, a draft staff discussion paper relating to guiding principles for agriculture in Rouge Park was presented and recommended to the Alliance for further review and discussion. Some Alliance members had concerns regarding the recommendations and felt staff needed to prepare a more detailed report and bring it back to the Alliance. The motion to accept the recommendations as presented was deferred.

Since that time, an Agriculture Working Group has been established in which the membership includes York Region Federation of Agriculture as well as Rouge Park tenant farmers. This group has reviewed the draft Agriculture Policy for Rouge Park which is being presented today.

Report prepared by: Bob Clay, Manager, Ecological Restoration and, Barb Davies, Manager, Policy and Administration
For information contact: Bob Clay, Manager, Ecological Restoration, 905-713-6022; bob_clay@rougepark.com or, Barb Davies, 905-713-7426, bdavies@rougepark.com

Date: 2010.February.22
Attachment 1: Draft Agricultural Policy For Rouge Park

Attachment 1:

DRAFT AGRICULTURAL POLICY FOR ROUGE PARK

February 19, 2010

Background

Park Plans

“Rouge Park will be a special place of outstanding natural features and diverse cultural heritage in an urban-rural setting, protected and flourishing as an ecosystem in perpetuity. Human activities will exist in harmony with the natural values of the Park. The Park will be a “sanctuary for nature and the human spirit”.

That is the Vision statement as stated in both the Rouge Park Management Plan, 1994 and the Rouge North Plan Management Plan, 2001.

Although there is no specific agriculture objective in either plan, agriculture is considered within the cultural heritage objective of the Park. The Cultural Heritage objective reads as follows: *"To identify, protect and conserve the cultural heritage features of the Park for their inherent value and depiction of the long term human use and occupancy of the area"*. Additionally, both plans contain the zone designation: Agriculture Heritage Reserve (AHR), in which the following policy specific to agricultural practices applies - *"maintain agricultural operations and promote land management techniques which conserve soil, water, and ecological functions over the long term, (i.e. adequate set backs/buffers from streams, wetlands, and significant natural areas, and reduction in the use of chemicals)"*. It is now time to refine and expand on this policy, and create an Agricultural Objective for Rouge Park. The significant role and presence of agriculture as a Rouge Park objective makes it important that there be a clear policy with guiding principles regarding agriculture in the Park.

Park Design

Rouge Park lands in Markham are different from those in Toronto. In Toronto, the Park Agriculture Heritage Reserves are clearly separate from the valley lands and Nature Reserves. Whereas, in Markham, Rouge Park lands have been brought together in three phases: the Little Rouge Corridor lands, primarily preserved for a natural linkage; the Bob Hunter Memorial Park lands, as nature preserve; and the East Lands, in which the lands will primarily be agriculture. It is therefore appropriate to develop a more specific policy framework for the agriculture lands in Rouge Park, Markham.

Management

The Rouge Park Alliance (RPA) maintains a strong commitment to and support for a diverse agricultural community on Park lands designated for farming and those designated for ecological restoration which are currently active farmland. The RPA encourages farm practices that provide a diverse visual landscape, direct interactions with non-farm residents and wildlife habitats. The RPA is committed to the development of a set of guiding principles for the management of agricultural lands in Rouge Park.

Each of our plans designates ecological restoration on a portion of the lands that are recently farmed. Implementation of the ecological restoration component from these plans will occur over several years. In the mean time, the lands will continue to be farmed. A comprehensive set of guiding principles will help manage these lands during the transition period.

Planning

Rouge Park is subject to provincial and municipal land use policies and regulations. Decisions on how the Park lands are managed will be consistent with Ontario's Provincial Policy Statement and Greenbelt Plan, York's Regional Official Plan and Markham's and Toronto's Official Plans. In addition, York's Land Evaluation Area Review (LEAR) process and Markham's Agricultural Assessment Study and Environmental Policy Review and Consolidation Study should inform land use decisions in Rouge Park.

On September 19, 2008, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) passed Resolution A200/08 which approved a policy for agriculture on TRCA-owned lands and gave direction to TRCA staff to implement the policy. The resolution included an amendment that directed TRCA staff to develop a sustainable near-urban agriculture policy in conjunction with the Rouge Park Alliance. The RPA should have an agricultural policy and implementation framework that is consistent with TRCA policy. Rouge Park agricultural policy should also complement the agriculture policies of the Alliance Members and neighbouring communities.

Philosophical Basis

The 1994 Rouge Park Management Plan is clear in that the main priority for Rouge Park is the conservation and establishment of a natural ecosystem. Agriculture in Rouge Park will be undertaken within the priorities of both people and wildlife firmly in view and it must be recognized that farming activities in Rouge Park will maintain high standards. Farmers of Rouge Park lands and the RPA must interact in partnership to manage

the Park so that all can achieve the simultaneous goals of a healthy Park ecology and economically viable agriculture.

The reality of a local food base has become forefront in the minds of the local community and all levels of government. Rouge Park is in an ideal situation both geographically and from a planning perspective to support the concept of local food in the GTA.

Certain wildlife species co-exist and, in some cases, thrive near an agricultural landscape. This cultivated field/forest edge habitat is currently found throughout Rouge Park lands. This suggests that with the use of innovative approaches (sensitive to crop production) agriculture may assist in maintaining the current levels of biodiversity in the Park.

In summary, the agricultural landscape of Rouge Park should be one that is diverse. The diversity should include not only a visually appealing landscape that contains various crops and natural lands, but also a diversity of opportunities for the farm community and Park visitors to interact.

Agriculture Objective

Protect agriculture as a land use that is consistent with all other Park objectives.

Policy Statement

The Rouge Park Alliance will encourage and promote agriculture uses in the Park that complement the natural heritage objectives, cultural heritage objectives, interpretation and recreation objectives as stated in its management plans. Agriculture in Rouge Park will be a vibrant activity that helps promote and address the needs of the neighbouring municipalities.

Guiding Principles

The Rouge Park Alliance has developed a set of guiding principles that will help the farming community manage agricultural land use. These principles are a set of statements that encapsulate the values of the RPA as they relate to agriculture in Rouge Park. They are intended to create a context in which management of farmlands can be carried out in partnership between the farmers who have the agricultural knowledge and the RPA who are interested in good stewardship of the Park lands. -The Rouge Park Alliance will support viable agriculture in Rouge Park through the following guiding principles:

1. Proactively collaborate with local farmers, local farm groups and municipalities.
2. Support heritage farms and landscapes that contribute to the Rouge Park character and offer a diverse agricultural landscape that provides a rural landscape, diverse land uses and a diverse economic base.
3. Support local municipal and provincial policies on local food and therefore contribute directly to local food supplies for people in the urban communities adjacent to the Park. This will contribute to local economies as well as provide recreational or social benefits for Park visitors, including such uses as agro-tourism, farm markets and community gardens.
4. Ensure that: Park design and management allow for beneficial interactions between the farm community, Park visitors and wildlife; and, farm operations and residences are not inconvenienced by Park visitors.
5. Work with farmers to enable a fair transition from agriculture to natural habitats on lands that are designated for ecological restoration in approved Park plans.
6. Ensure that farmers will be able to operate the farm business, including such things as crop choice and

other agricultural practices, within the context of good agricultural practice, while protecting the natural features, such as trees, hedgerows, wetlands and woodlots.

Amendment - Point #7 (added):

- 7. Ensure that farmers be required to have Environmental Farm Plans as a condition of leases, and that Rouge Park staff work with farmers to set standards approved and monitored by the Rouge Park General Manager.**

Implementation

Implementation of this policy will require a strong partnership between farmers and the RPA. A strong partnership is developed through a shared vision, good communication, capitalizing on partner strengths and early dispute resolution. This will be accomplished with the following actions:

1. The Agricultural Working Group (AWG) that was established in early 2009 will continue to meet at least annually and more often as they arise.
2. Meetings with the Rouge Park's farm community will be held as frequently as the AWG feels appropriate. In addition, Rouge Park staff will remain in at least annual contact with each farmer that leases land in the Park. Communication between the individual farmer and the Park will be enhanced through the mutual development and review of Environmental Farm Plans for each farm in the Park. Farm plans should include encouragement of:
 - (a) long-term best agricultural management practices,
 - (b) soil, water, and ecological conservation.
3. The RPA will encourage viability of farms in the Park by providing:
 - a. Long-term leases that will provide stability and create reasonable conditions for farm crop and investment decisions,
 - b. Assistance with maintenance of agricultural infrastructure on agricultural lands in Rouge Park,
 - c. Continued communication and cooperation with farmers and the Park's farm community, and
 - d. Contribution to innovation in agriculture consistent with the RPA priorities and by provision of long-term land leases, as well as financial and policy support.

3. Rouge Park Lands Lease Framework

KEY ISSUE

The Ontario Conservation Authorities Act empowers the Conservation Authorities to enter into leases that are up to 5 years in length, but requires the Minister of Natural Resources approval for lease terms that extend beyond 5 years for a period up to 21 years. Long-term leases would be beneficial to the management of Rouge Park lands by providing tenants the ability to make capital investments in agricultural lands and heritage buildings.

MOTION:
Res. #18/10

Moved by: Gerri Lynn O'Connor
Seconded by: Glenn De Baeremaeker

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receives the attached Rouge Park Lease Framework report as prepared by Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA);

AND THAT the Rouge Park Alliance agrees with the categories of tenants and associated lease terms in the attached report, as presented by TRCA;

AND THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority be requested to pursue approval from the Minister of Natural Resources to enter into long term leases as outlined in the attached report;

AND FURTHER THAT the Rouge Park Alliance direct staff to coordinate with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Ministry of Natural Resources staff to put into practice the recommended lease terms once approval from the Minister of Natural Resources has been confirmed.

AMENDMENT 1: Moved by: Jack Heath
Res. #18A/10: Seconded by: Chin Lee

THAT the attached report be referred to as “Draft” report, and that in the first two paragraphs the words referring to the Toronto and Region Conservation (TRCA) be removed, to read as follows:

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receives the attached *Draft* Rouge Park Lease Framework report;

AND THAT the Rouge Park Alliance agrees with the categories of tenants and associated lease terms in the attached *draft* report;

AND THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority be requested to pursue approval from the Minister of Natural Resources to enter into long term leases as outlined in the attached *draft* report;

AND FURTHER THAT the Rouge Park Alliance direct staff to coordinate with Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and Ministry of Natural Resources staff to put into practice the recommended lease terms once approval from the Minister of Natural Resources has been confirmed.

AMENDMENT 2: Moved by: Glenn De Baeremaeker
Res. #18B/10: Seconded by: David Cohen

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance request that the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority include the following clause within all farm leases: “Must submit an Environmental Farm Plan to the satisfaction of the General Manager of Rouge Park which must be monitored on a regular basis.”

AMENDMENT 1 CARRIED
AMENDMENT 2 CARRIED
MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED CARRIED

Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath requested a recorded vote.

	YEA	NAY
Markham Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Region of York		X
Councillor Logan Kanapathi, Town of Markham	X	
Councillor David Cohen, Town of Richmond Hill	X	
Glenn De Baeremaeker, Save the Rouge Valley System Inc.	X	
Councillor Ron Moeser, City of Toronto	X	
Councillor Chin Lee, City of Toronto	X	
Paul Harpley, Toronto Zoo	X	
Gerri Lynn O’Connor, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority	<u>X</u>	<u> </u>
	7	1

7 YEAs, 1 NAY - **Motion Carried.**

BACKGROUND

When the first Provincial lands were transferred from the Province to Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) for Rouge Park purposes, it became very clear that investment in the properties by tenants would be limited with the current practice of short term leases.

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has the ability to enter into leases which are more than 5 years, and up to 21 years, subject to the approval of the Minister of Natural Resources.

More recently the agricultural tenants have longer term leases. Long-term leases would allow for longer term planning and capital investment in the lands such as tile drainage and associated farm buildings.

Entering into long-term leases must be considerate of our plans and proposed uses for these lands. At the same time, the need is great for improving the tenants' willingness to invest in the lands and associated buildings. Discussions between TRCA, Rouge Park, Toronto and Markham staff and the Agriculture Working Group have resulted in the preparation of the attached TRCA report that should satisfy both needs. The issue of even longer term leases can be reviewed after Rouge Park gains status as a National, Provincial or legal status Park.

Report prepared by: Bob Clay, Manager, Ecological Restoration and,
Barb Davies, Manager, Policy and Administration
For information contact: Bob Clay, 905-713-6022; bob_clay@rougepark.com or,
Barb Davies, 905-713-7426, bdavies@rougepark.com

Date: 2010.February.22

Attachment 1: Rouge Park Lease Framework

Attachment 1:

Draft Report:

January 21, 2010

ROUGE PARK LEASE FRAMEWORK

DISCUSSION

Currently most of the leases both commercial/agriculture and residential in Rouge Park are year to year. Categories of leases are as follows:

- commercial/agriculture land only lease
- commercial/agriculture farm unit lease - land, residential house and farm buildings
- commercial
- residential

Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) has the ability to enter into leases which are more than 5 years, subject to the approval of the Minister of Natural Resources.

Leases over 21 years require Planning Act approval (severance). It is TRCA's practice that long-term leases should be under 21 years to avoid the Planning approvals. Leases over 21 years are only considered when the prospective tenant can demonstrate that such longevity is required relative to the investment the tenant is proposing to make in the property.

Agricultural tenants have argued that, as a minimum, the term of their leases should coincide with their crop rotation cycles of 4-5 years and possibly be longer if they are to be encouraged to make capital improvements,

i.e. tile fields. Also, the landlord should not have the ability to terminate the lease except for cause/non compliance. However, landlord should retain the ability to retire marginal lands or use certain portions of the leased lands for park purposes (i.e. trails).

Another concern in Rouge Park is the condition of designated and listed historic homes. Currently, there are 5 vacant historic homes in poor condition. There are no funds for capital improvements while at the same time TRCA is carrying costs for security and minimum maintenance. Longer term leases may provide opportunities for tenants to invest in the required capital improvements in return for long-term lease/rental rate that recognizes a payback period on their investment. To avoid the requirements of the Ontario Residential Tenancies Act (former Landlord and Tenant Act), these leases should become commercial.

RECOMMENDATION

Where mutually advantageous terms and conditions for TRCA, the tenant, and Rouge Park can be achieved which meet the goals and objectives of Rouge Park:

IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT lease terms for the following categories of tenants should apply.

AGRICULTURE HERITAGE RESERVE AREAS

- **Commercial/agriculture land only lease**
 - o maximum term of 21 years less a day
 - o landlord does not have the right to terminate except for non-compliance
 - o landlord retains the ability to retire marginal lands or use certain portions within the leased area for park purposes
 - o assignment of lease requires approval of the landlord
 - o subject to Minister Approval

- **Commercial/agriculture farm unit**
 - o maximum term of 21 years less a day
 - o landlord does not have the right to terminate except for non-compliance
 - o landlord retains the ability to retire marginal lands or use certain portions within the leased area for park purposes
 - o assignment of lease requires approval of the landlord
 - o tenant will be responsible for the regular maintenance and upkeep of the house and farm buildings and structures at rental rates commensurate with the value of the work being done by the tenant
 - o landlord will be responsible for major maintenance, i.e. septic replacement, major structural, well replacement, as determined on a case by case basis
 - o subject to Minister Approval

AGRICULTURE/FARM UNIT LEASES OUTSIDE THE RESERVE AREAS

- o generally 5-year term or as required/defined by the Rouge Park restoration implementation plan
- o where it can be demonstrated that tiling fields is beneficial to yield and the improvements are consistent with Rouge Park objectives, the landlord may consider terms of up to 10 years
- o landlord retains the ability to retire marginal lands or use certain portions within the leased area for park purposes
- o assignment of lease requires approval of the landlord

COMMERCIAL

- Maximum term of 12 months, unless supporting business case merits term of up to 5 years

RESIDENTIAL

- Maximum term of 12 months

HISTORIC RESIDENTIAL

- Maximum term of 21 years less a day with supporting business case acceptable to TRCA and subject to Minister Approval

4. Correspondence

MOTION:
Res. #19/10

Moved by: David Cohen
Seconded by: Chin Lee

THAT the Rouge Park Alliance receive the following correspondence:

- 1. Email dated February 2, 2010 to Alan Wells, Chair, and Members of the Rouge Park Alliance, from Shelley Bourne, Co-Chair, and Bernard Szederzenki, Chairman, Boyington Heights Ratepayers Assoc. Inc., re: Milne Conservation Area.**
- 2. Letter dated February 19, 2010 to Alan Wells, Chair, Rouge Park Alliance, from Tom Friesen, President, Hike Ontario, re: Support for Rouge Park Trails Master Plan and the Guided Walks Program.**
- 3. Letter dated February 25, 2010 to Alan Wells, Chair, Rouge Park Alliance, from Deputy Mayor Jack Heath, Town of Markham, re: Support for Rouge Park Trails Master Plan and the Guided Walks Program.**

..... **CARRIED**

New Business

Deputy Mayor Jack Heath talked about the proposed guided walk on May 29, 2010 during Rouge Days Events.

Alan Wells, Chair, congratulated Paul Harpley on receiving the George R. Richardson Conservation Award of Honour from the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. This Award is presented to individuals and groups who have demonstrated a lifetime commitment to improving the environmental health of the Lake Simcoe watershed.

Mr. Wells also brought to attention the featured article of Jim Robb in the ON Nature magazine.

Glenn De Baeremaeker informed everyone of the Toronto Zoo upcoming events - the Shark and Stingray Bay Exhibit and the Seafood for Thought event on June 22, 2010.

TERMINATION

ON MOTION, the meeting terminated at 12:00 p.m., on March 12, 2010.

Alan Wells
Chair, Rouge Park Alliance and Acting General Manager, Rouge Park