



September 13, 2013

Planning Division, City of London
206 Dundas Street
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London, ON N6A 4L9

By Email: mjohnson@london.ca

Att: Mr. Mark Johnson

Re: **Urban Growth Boundary Inclusion Request - Green Valley Road, Highbury Avenue South, Dingman Drive, Owners: Greenvalley Estates Inc. and Greenvalley Estates II Inc. ('Greenvalley Estates').**

Thank you for your email dated August 30, 2013 and your invitation to attend your meeting to discuss our completed "Infrastructure Costs & DC Revenue Estimate Worksheet" which you provided as a discussion point in determining the suitability of our clients lands for inclusion into the urban boundary expansion. We understand that the information submitted will assist City Staff with the assessment of the existing infrastructure serving the subject lands, future infrastructure needs, estimated costs, and to determine potential development charge revenues that would be generated by the subject lands upon development. Our engineers report that there is no additional infrastructure cost to the municipality to develop the above referenced property ('subject property'). **We note that the City can expect nearly \$10,500,000.00 in development charge revenues alone as a result of this development.** You indicated that the submitted information will be used to conduct a high-level cost/benefit analysis of our proposal.

In addition to the attached information, this letter report identifies the lands, the surroundings, service potential and the manner in which the inclusion of the subject lands into the urban boundary complies with policy directions in the PPS, the London Official Plan and criteria provided in Section 6 of the "ReThink London – Land Needs Background Study" 2013. In addition we respectfully submit our professional opinion in support of the general expansion of the Urban Boundary to take advantage of the economic potential created by new employment areas supported by two major Provincial 400 series highways. More specifically, we respectfully submit our professional opinion concerning the tremendous opportunity before you to consider the subject lands for inclusion in an expanded urban boundary for residential development.

Location of the Subject Property

Green Valley Estates is the owner of the subject lands which is bounded on the north by Green Valley Road, the east by Highbury Avenue South and on the south by Dingman Drive. The subject lands are bounded on the west by the Urban Boundary line. Dingman Creek flows from east to west through the property and the property is buffered by a hydro easement from industrial/ commercial uses to the west (see aerial photo 1).

Aerial Photo 1



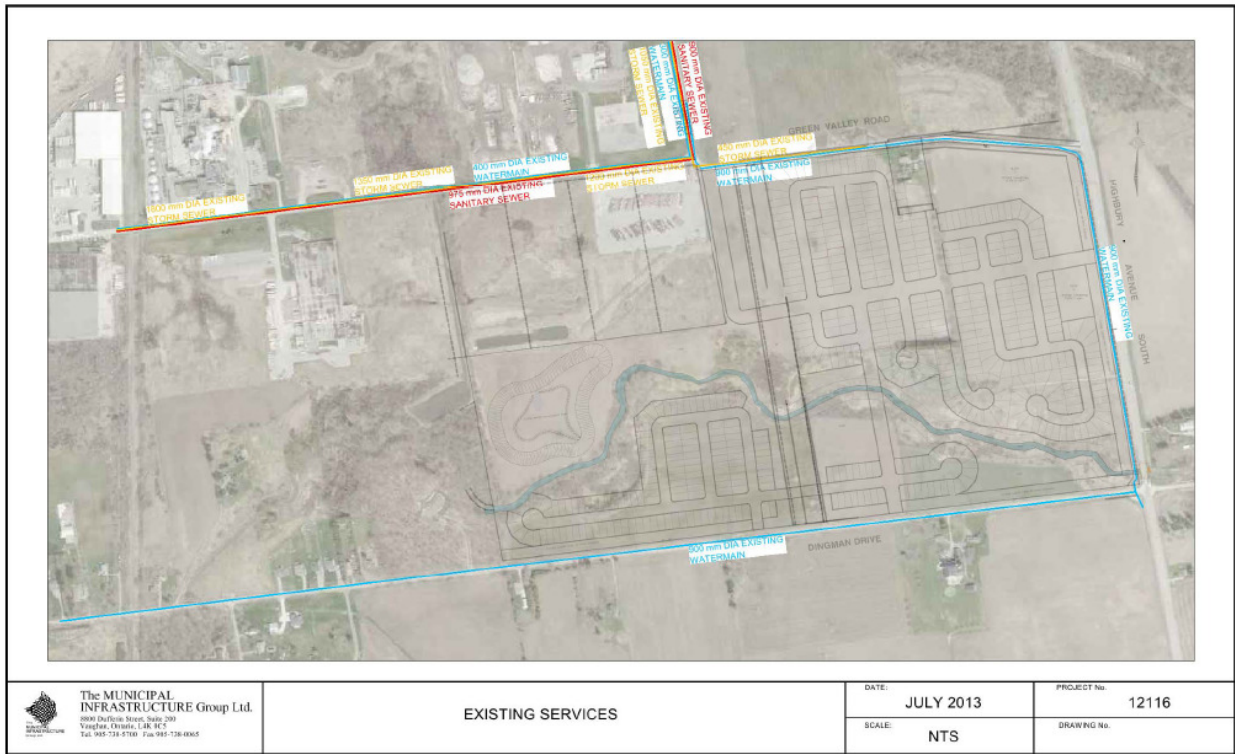
Surrounding Land Uses

The lands to the north-west and west are within the urban boundary and are primarily in low impact industrial and a large format regional scale commercial land use. Immediately north of Green Valley Road is a vacant 40 hectare parcel adjacent to but outside the Urban Boundary. This parcel has additional frontage on both Wilton Grove and Highbury Avenue. The lands immediately south of Dingman Drive are generally rural/ agricultural with a variety of residential uses, including a rural residential subdivision with approximately 20 homes serviced on municipal piped water. This residential subdivision is adjacent to the urban boundary and an existing rail line. Lands to the west of the subdivision are within the urban boundary and are designated as Urban Reserve Industrial Growth. In addition, the subject lands are located near existing elementary and secondary schools.

Municipal Services

Municipal water and storm water services are located along the frontages of the subject property and sewer services are available at the north-west corner (see aerial photo 2). A 900mm water service is located on all three frontages. A 400mm storm sewer is located on the Green Valley Road frontage and there is a 900mm sewer located at the north-west corner of the site on both Hubrey and Green Valley as shown on the attached mapping. Discussions with Municipal engineering staff and consultation with our project engineer appear to indicate that, as a result of efficiencies developed for the systems serving this portion of London, there would be capacity to develop the area of expansion indicated.

Aerial Photo 2



Planning Justification

The expansion of the Urban Boundary should reflect direction given by the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the current City of London Official Plan and other Provincial and Municipal policies that reflect the premise of sustainable planning and growth. It is our position that an expansion of the built urban boundary including the subject lands is consistent with the directions provided by the PPS and London Official Plan. Section 6 of the “Land Needs background Study” also provides a set of evaluation criteria relevant to the Urban Growth Boundary expansion. It is our professional planning opinion that the subject lands meet the directions as indicated in the evaluation criteria including the PPS and the London Official Plan and provide our comment as follows.

Provincial Policy Statement (PPS)

The directions in the PPS are based on the premise of building strong communities and promoting efficient land use and development patterns which sustain municipal financial well being. This includes promoting cost effective development standards that optimize the municipal investment in public service facilities. Section 1.1.3.2 a) of the PPS specifically indicates that development in Settlement Areas are to be based on densities and a mix of land uses which are “appropriate for, and efficiently use *the infrastructure and public service facilities which are planned or available and avoid the need for their unjustified and or uneconomical expansion*”.

The PPS promotes the efficient use of land and resources. In order to ensure that there is efficiency in land use patterns, the PPS promotes intensification and infill while recognizing that there is a need for designated Greenfield growth areas in order to provide sufficient opportunities for growth over a time horizon of up to 20 years.

In determining how much land is needed for London to grow, we respectfully submit that the PPS recognizes that Natural Heritage Areas and Hazardous Areas (wetlands, floodplains etc.) exist in Greenfield areas that will

reduce the area of land available for development or at the least could have a limiting effect on the use of land for development (s1.1.3.3 & s1.1.3.9). We believe that once natural heritage and hazardous areas including buffers are removed from the City's current inventory of Greenfield identified in the Land Needs Study, a shortfall of 25% less land for residential development will result and as such, the City should consider additional Greenfield area to address their growth expectation for the next 20 years (see aerial photo 3). This issue is further addressed in our discussion of the Re-Think London Land Needs Background Study.

Once natural heritage and hazardous lands are removed, net developable land available for residential development will be further reduced by land required for infrastructure, stormwater management quality and quantity ponds, schools, and neighbourhood commercial land uses to support these new communities. The lands identified in the London residential needs study should also consider the loss of designated land for public services including but not necessarily limited to parkland, storm water management works, sewage and water facilities such as pumping stations, utility easements, schools, and pedestrian trails/ linkages, and transportation right of ways. In our experience, **the removal of these non-residential land use areas could further reduce developable area by at least another 25%.**

Our engineers have determined that a significant amount of land currently identified by the city for expansion will be significantly reduced once natural heritage and hazardous lands are removed as required by government regulation (see aerial photo 3). As infrastructure, public service and neighbourhood commercial land use is considered, further reducing net developable land for residential purposes, **we believe it is appropriate that Council consider the inclusion of additional Greenfield areas beyond those considered in the ReThink Land Study to ensure that growth goals are achieved.** The priority for such consideration should be areas adjacent to the existing built area in which service infrastructure already exists or has been planned and will be a positive economic addition to the community.

We note that **the subject lands are especially suited for inclusion in the City's residential land needs inventory.** In conformity with the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), the subject property is located adjacent to the existing defined settlement area with the advantage of proximity to the existing sewer, water and storm water service network and therefore will result in no financial impact on the City to expand such services or result in an increase in development charges. Furthermore, we offer that there is sufficient capacity in existing sewer and water systems to accommodate the residential development of the subject lands. Finally, it is our professional opinion that the City of London needs a labour force that lives in close proximity to existing and future industrial lands. The City is reviewing the re-designation of lands along the Highway 401 and Highway 402 corridors for employment land use. Inclusion of the subject property by the city for residential development as a result of the current land needs exercise is consistent with the PPS and is good planning because locating where people live in closer proximity to employment areas will minimize negative impacts to air quality and climate change by reducing time spent in cars getting to work while promoting energy efficiency in accordance with policy 1.8 of the PPS.

London Official Plan

The London Official Plan implements the previously discussed Provincial Policy Statement direction as noted in policy contained in Section 2, the Planning Framework. This policy direction is to promote a compact urban form that is reflective of the character of the community. This can be achieved by promoting infill and intensification of land use; however, the Plan recognizes that in the City of London there must be an allowance for choice in the various forms of housing approved throughout the municipality including providing lands for lower density residential land use. Intensification and expansion should be sustainable and supported by directing growth efficiently in the City. This is done by ensuring lands are absorbed where existing water, sewer and gas services exist to allow growth without major cost to the City and its existing ratepayers. Reflective of the need for efficiency, policy in section 2.6.4.1 ii) of the City's Official Plan requires that... "the City will have regard for the optimization of existing infrastructure".

Although policies indicate that water and sewer services will not be extended beyond the area designated for growth (2.6.4.1.viii), there are services extended beyond the designated urban growth boundary in adjacent Greenfield areas. It would be appropriate to include water and sewer serviced lands within the urban growth boundary. This would not only recognize the existence of the service but also provide for optimization of those services consistent with policy 2.6.4.1.ix and the need to "focus growth in areas that have existing service capacity" (s2.6.5ii). **The City's municipal water and sewer lines are accessible and immediately adjacent**

to the subject property on existing municipal roads. As such, inclusion of the subject property in the city's urban boundary expansion is appropriate and consistent with policies in the City's Official Plan. The area adjacent to the Urban Boundary identified has the potential to meet Provincial Policy and City policy directions

Determining the amount of land required to accommodate growth is a basic principle of any Official Plan exercise. It involves population increase, dwelling unit occupancy, dwelling unit density and job creation. Although past and current calculations are provided in a format that is consistent with those used in many other such exercises, no forecast is completely reliable. They are better than a best guess, but cannot foresee the impacts of changing economic or policy circumstances. The current forecasts are based on past trends and can be dramatically altered by aggressive economic and growth policies and the application of those more aggressive policies at the micro land use level. The industrial land expansion study which promotes a better use of the Highway 401-402 corridor could have a significant economic impact on the growth potential of London. **Economic consideration associated with the location of existing and future employment areas including the designated large scale regional commercial lands near the subject site will generate residential housing demand in reasonable proximity to support these existing and future businesses.**

Re-Think London Land Needs Background Study ("Land Needs Study")

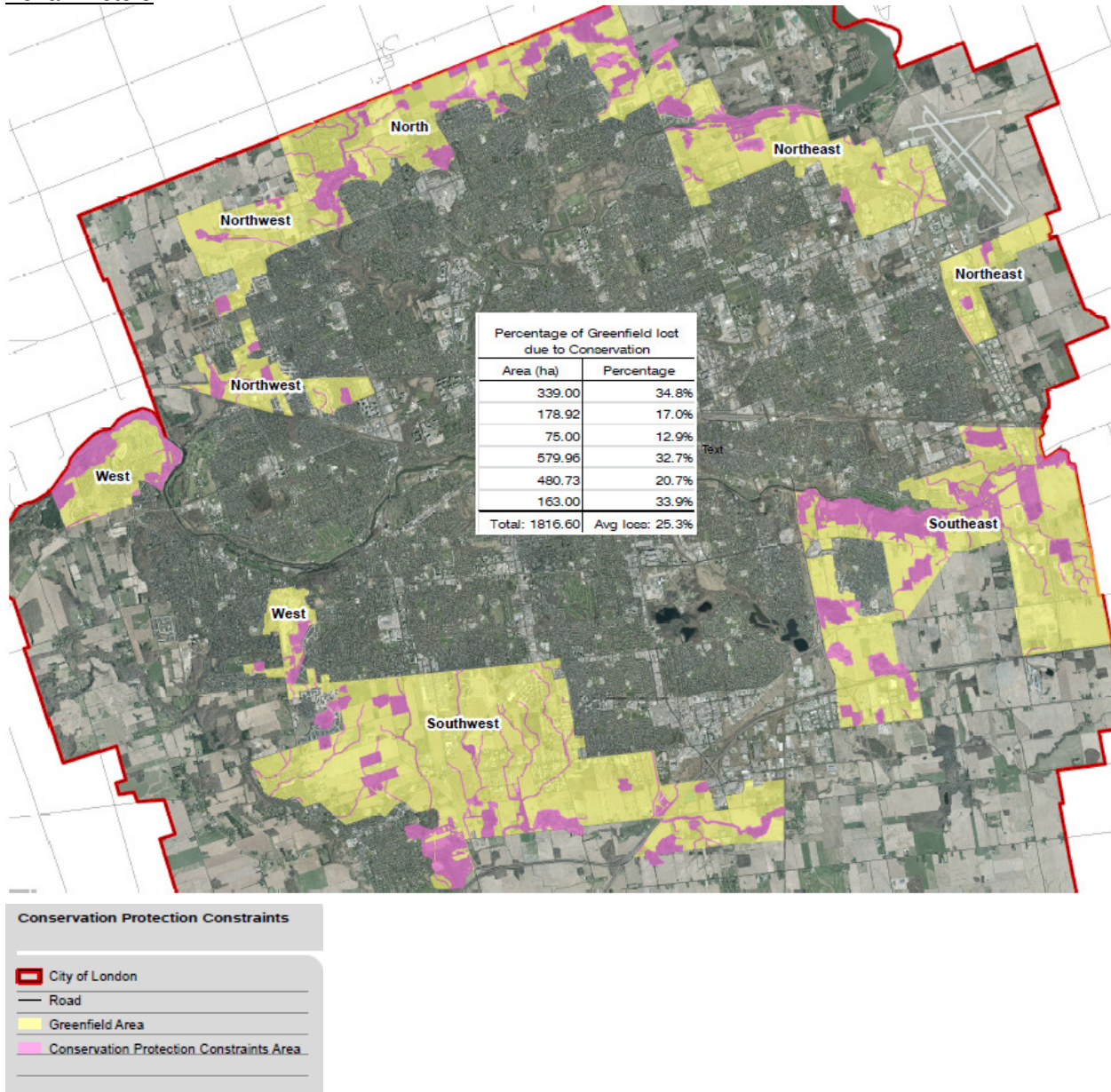
This report begins by indicating the portions of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and City Official Plan that "guide the comprehensive review of the City's land need analysis". The considerations reflect growth potential and the lands to accommodate those potentials, availability of services, and avoidance of prime agricultural lands. The Study also provides criteria for the evaluation of proposals to include lands in the proposed expansion of the Urban Growth Boundary.

Growth Potential

We reviewed the Land Needs Study including the discussion on the evaluation of growth potentials and the allocation of lands to accommodate the City's forecasted growth. We paid special attention to the discussion concerning the need for land to accommodate low density residential land use. We commented on the potential accuracy of the population forecasts, noting that they have been based on past trends and may not reflect potentials created by Council through the utilization of more aggressive land designation directions. We are concerned that the Land Needs Study does not clarify if the amount of land identified for expansion and the lands available for growth within the current urban boundary is a gross or net consideration of lands lost to non residential land use including the previously discussed environmental preservation concerns or infrastructure, municipal servicing (public services), parks, institutional and neighbourhood commercial support uses.

Our analysis and professional experience indicates that the net development potential for low density uses on lands within the urban boundary and in the Greenfield properties identified in the Land Needs Study could be reduced by 50% or more at the development application stage. This estimate in land required for non residential purposes considers that in addition to land removed for natural heritage preservation; land will be required for roads, parks, storm water management, and other non residential land use functions previously discussed. We have not found any reference to the inclusion of these factors in the land needs calculations. With the removal of this amount of land from the inventory, it is apparent that additional lands are needed outside the identified built urban boundary to accommodate growth in the municipality wherever it is needed given the potential influence of newly created or expanded employment areas. The inventory must be replaced in areas adjacent to municipal services outside the built urban boundary and specifically in locations that meet the basic planning sustainability criteria identified in Provincial policy and adopted in the Local Official Plan to ensure that the City's growth will be efficient and responsible by utilizing existing and planned services while avoiding "prime agricultural lands".

Aerial Photo 3



Prime Agricultural Land Preservation

The subject lands are currently designated 'Agricultural' with an 'Open Space' designation that includes Dingman Creek. The subject property is not considered suitable to provide for prime agricultural harvest including specialty crops but is currently utilized to grow soy beans. Any other positive quality for agricultural use has been significantly eroded by the encroachment of urban land use including proximity to existing residential and industrial land use adjacent to the subject property and the non-agricultural traffic generated by the surrounding lands. The proximity of the urban uses on adjacent lands and the urban context of greater London with proximity to major Provincial Highway interchanges has very much discounted the subject lands from being "protected in the long term for prime agricultural use" (PPS s 2.3). Based on the aforementioned, **the subject site and the surrounding urban landscape cannot be considered prime agricultural land** as contemplated for preservation by the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS). In considering compliance to the

PPS, Council endorsed policies in the London Official Plan that considered urban expansion in agricultural areas. Specifically, Council adopted a policy when contemplating urban expansion into agricultural areas to also consider "...the logical extension of local urban services and the city wide effect of service extensions from an economic, ecological and operational perspective". As is evident in the attached cost benefit analysis table, the inclusion of the subject lands within the Urban Boundary does not impact "prime agricultural lands" and should be considered for residential development. **Residential development of the subject lands will not add infrastructure cost and is expected to return \$10,500,000 in additional revenue** through development charges alone. In addition, property tax revenue by re-designation will provide additional revenue through development.

Availability of Services

As previously noted, this subject lands is adjacent to existing municipal sewer, water and storm water services, it has access to power, telecommunications and transportation, all of which are considered standard infrastructure services included in the urban context. The use of the existing services would promote cost effective development and a more sustainable use of those existing services. These service limits can be used as an effective means to define a new urban boundary.

Evaluation Criteria in the Land Needs Study

The evaluation criteria expands on the direction of the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the London Official Plan although the criteria does not, in our professional opinion, sufficiently reflect the need to create land use patterns that make the most efficient use of existing and planned services. Nor do the criteria take into account the impact of the private entrepreneurial structure of the development industry and market in determining growth potentials and therefore by consequence the orderly development of residential homes in locations close to employment area(s). The criteria should be simplified to limit the principles of expansion to the cost of services, expected revenue associated with redevelopment to support existing city infrastructure, the need for more land to accommodate growth, and the need to protect environmental lands and features while recognizing that agricultural lands should be protected for the long term in areas that would not unduly compromise production.

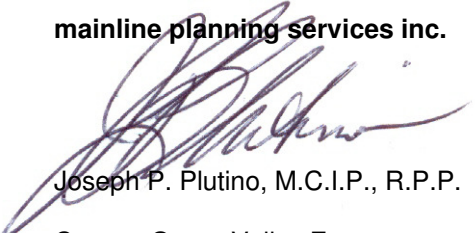
Conclusion

Green Valley Estates requests that the City Council consider the need to expand the Urban Boundary to include the subject lands. We have noted that the lands are currently served by municipal water sewer and storm sewer and that there appears to be capacity available for development. The lands are not considered prime agricultural lands and are ideally situated for the expansion of the urban lands for additional low density residential uses to reflect both limited directions contained in the Land Needs Background Study and the ability of Council to utilize more aggressive land use policies to promote economic growth in conjunction with existing and future employment lands along the Provincial Highway System. It is noted that the development of the subject lands will not result in cost to the City but is expected to generate \$10,500,000.00 in revenue.

I trust that our comments are well received and look forward to meeting you and staff on September 27th, 2013 to discuss our submissions and our interest in Council considering the inclusion of our property in this urban expansion exercise.

Sincerely,

mainline planning services inc.



Joseph P. Plutino, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.

Cc. Green Valley Estates
Mayor and Planning Committee