

Z-8558 - 2001 and 2215 Sunningdale Road West Application

EEPAC Review of Planning Justification Report dated November 2015

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While there is a net benefit of increasing the tree cover, EEPAC notes that on the City's Official Plan Schedule B-1, there are Potential Naturalization Areas indicated for the areas between the Significant Woodlands at the north end of these properties. (Patches 15001, 15004, and 15005 noted on page 34 of the Report meet the City Woodland Guideline tests to be designated Significant Woodlands.) These patches are part of larger woodlands across the City / County boundary that have been identified in the Middlesex County Natural Heritage Study as Significant.

There would be a greater net benefit if the areas between the woodlands on the subject property were naturalized with natural species appropriate to conditions. In landscapes with relatively low forest cover overall, species diversity and survivorship increase where the remaining habitat patches are larger and more clumped or aggregated. The current literature also points to the higher effectiveness (i.e., levels of use) of natural or existing features versus purpose-created corridors, which supports the preservation and integration of remaining habitat fragments (wooded riparian areas, use of "stepping stone" woodlots, hedgerows, etc.) over the creation of new corridors, particularly to facilitate movement of forest-dwelling species.

Based on the Arborist's letter and the application, the 10 m wide strip of trees would have a lesser net environmental benefit than renaturalizing the areas at the back of the subject lands. If the proponents do not renaturalize these areas, but plant to the west, EEPAC would like to encourage the proponents to think about the intended purpose of this strip of vegetation. If the proponents would like to construct wildlife habitat to extend to Patch 15005 to the north, the strip would be more effective with a minimum width of 30 m. The determination of optimum corridor widths for wildlife movement is challenging, and the literature provides limited guidance with respect to appropriate minimum widths, lengths or width-to-length ratios. Wooded corridors 50 metres in width can facilitate movement for common generalist species.

Source: *How Much Habitat is Enough?* - 3rd edition, Environment Canada, 2013