



October 20, 2015

Via email to [mramunno@aurora.ca](mailto:mramunno@aurora.ca)

Mr. Marco Ramunno, MCIP, RPP  
Director of Planning and Development Services  
Town of Aurora  
100 John West Way  
Aurora, ON  
L4G 6J1

Dear Mr. Ramunno:

Re: Response to Submission of Oak Ridges Trail Association  
Regarding Highland Gate Redevelopment Proposal  
Town Files: SUB-2015-01; OPA-2015-01; ZBL-2015-02

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We are writing on behalf of Highland Gate Developments Inc. ("HGDI"), to respond to Mr. Corbett's October 15<sup>th</sup> submission regarding the above-noted development proposal.

At the outset, we would like to thank Mr. Corbett, together with Ms. Susan Shaw, for taking the time to meet with us on June 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the goals and objectives of the Oak Ridges Trail Association and the proposed development plan for HGDI's lands. Mr. Corbett previously provided comments on May 23<sup>rd</sup> addressed to the Town, a copy of which was provided to us on June 14<sup>th</sup>. We responded to these comments by correspondence dated June 23, 2015, addressed to Ms. Shaw, and copied to the Mayor and Members of Council (copy enclosed).

### **Continuous Green Corridor**

In approaching the design for the plan we were guided by the Town's Trails Master Plan which calls for an east-west trail system from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street, with connections to existing trails where they exist, including the existing Oak Ridges Trail, which is presently fully on-street along Seaton Drive, Murray Drive and Kennedy Street in this section of the Town.

Of the 101 acre site, almost 50 percent, or 49 acres is proposed to be preserved as open space – parks, trails and natural heritage areas.

We have endeavoured, with the advice and input of our landscape architect, Schollen & Company Inc., to maximize the extent of off-street trails. Of the 7.3 kilometres of trails traversing the proposed plan, 60 percent are off-street. Within this network, over 85%

of the proposed “Town-Wide Spine Trail”, which traverses 2.5 kilometres along the northern section of the plan, with a potential linkage through the Tannery Creek open space block, is off-street.

The Town’s Trails Master Plan (2011) seeks to see trails off-street wherever possible but does not require that all trails be off-road. Specifically, section 5.7.3 of the Trails Master Plan states:

*“One of the objectives of the Aurora Trails Master Plan is to develop a trail network that is off-road **where ever possible**, recognizing that in some cases an off-road alignment is not possible even in the long term.” (Emphasis added).*

Notwithstanding the above, subject to the Town’s consent, we would agree to providing an alternative surface treatment and widening the walkway to two metres for the stretch of walkway that is within the proposed right-of-way for proposed Street H. This segment forms part of the “Town-Wide Spine Trail” referenced above and would further enhance its character as a multi-purpose trail.

The HGDI site is an opportunity through infill development to create a lasting publicly-owned and accessible parks and trails system in the Highland Gate neighbourhood. However, as an infill site, the configuration of the lands and proximity of existing development presents constraints that do not generally exist in a greenfield situation and therefore affords less flexibility and latitude in integrating trail alignments with an efficient lot and street fabric. Notwithstanding these constraints, the proposed trails plan succeeds in delivering the majority of the trails within an off-street system.

East-to-west connectivity from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street is provided in the proposed trails plan. The trail system will result in a significant improvement from the current situation in the Highland Gate neighbourhood where the Oak Ridges Trail is presently only on-street, along Seaton Drive, Murray Drive and Kennedy Street.

All aspects of HGDI’s proposed trail system will improve, not detract from, the Town’s position as a trail hub. The proposed trails plan will enhance the position of the Town of Aurora as a “hub” of trails by providing a ***publicly owned and publicly accessible trail system***, where none presently exists, that extends from Yonge Street to Bathurst Street and links to the larger existing north-south and east-west trail system.

On the matter of house types, we confirm that it is our intent to offer a mix of one-storey bungalows and two-storey homes on lot sizes that are in keeping with the lot sizes found in the surrounding neighbourhood.

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Mr. Corbett and the Oak Ridges Trail Association are to be commended for their commitment to expanding and enhancing the Oak Ridges Trail system. We are confident that the parks and trails system proposed for the HGDI lands will do this. It will enhance the Town's existing public trails and open space system and the farther-reaching Oak Ridges Trail network, at no cost to the existing taxpayers, and, in so doing, make a very substantial contribution to the long term livability of the community for existing and future residents.

Subject to any approvals required by the Town, we support the Oak Ridges Trail Association's vision that the new trails contained within the HGDI plan be considered for inclusion within the Oak Ridges Trail system.

We look forward to working with Council and staff as the proposed parks and trails plan is refined with community input, following approval of the draft plan of subdivision by the Town and prior to final approval/registration of the plan of subdivision and construction of the associated parks and trails.

Yours very truly,

GERANIUM CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cheryl Shindruk". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Cheryl Shindruk, MCP, MCIP, RPP  
Executive Vice President, Land Development

Encl.

Copy by email:  
Mr. Bruce Corbett, Oak Ridges Trail Association  
Mr. Allan Downey, Director of Parks of Recreation Services  
Mr. Pat Moyle, Chief Administrative Officer