



Urban Natural Features Strategy

Presentation to the Planning Committee.
Policy Development and Urban Design
September 10, 2013

Key Points

The City's urban greenspace network is largely complete

- 15,000 ha of greenspace
- More than 1600 ha of urban natural areas (93% of original target)
- 99% of households within 400 m of greenspace

The City owns or protects all or portions of 10 of the 16 high priority urban natural areas (UNA) targeted for acquisition

- Staff recommend three UNAs for purchase
- Staff recommends conservation of as much as possible of the remaining high priority UNAs through planning mechanism and tools other than purchase

UNAs in new communities must be conveyed to the City

- OP Policy, as approved by the OMB

Urban Natural Area	Status
87 – Innes Park Woods	Acquired.
57 – Cambrian Road Woods	Acquired.
22 – Bridlewood Core Woods	Acquired.
98 – Riverside South Woods	Acquired.
97 – Navan and Page Road Woods	Acquired in part.
94 – Cardinal Creek Valley	Acquired or otherwise protected.
27 – Poole Creek Corridor	Acquired or otherwise protected.
132 – Fernbank Wetland	86% in City ownership.
13 – Whalen Park	64% in City ownership. 36% Catholic School Board.
96 – Notre Dame des Champs Woods	44% in City ownership.
100 – Armstrong Road Woods	Recommended for purchase.
193 – Shea Road Woods	Recommended for purchase.
95 – Nantes Woods (Rock Knoll)	Recommended for purchase.
63 – Jockvale Road Woods	Not protected.
50 – Highway 416 Woods	Not protected.
99 – Spratt Road Woods	Not protected. The City has relinquished its interest.

UNA versus UNF

An Urban Natural Area (UNA) is any natural feature evaluated in the 2006 Urban Natural Area Environmental Evaluation Study

- These may be publically owned or privately-owned.
- They do not necessarily have protection, although most do.

An Urban Natural Features (UNF) is any UNA that has been designated on Schedule B of the Official Plan

- Urban Natural Features are normally zoned “environmental protection”.
- There is an absolute prohibition on development.
- The City may have an obligation to purchase UNF’s, “at the request of the landowner.”

Status of high priority UNFs

Acquired

- Six features

Agreement with Riverside South Development Corporation

- Council agreement in principle to acquire UNA 100 – Armstrong Road Woods, or to remove UNF designation
- Council agreement in principle to remove the UNF designation from UNA 99 – Spratt Road Woods

Unresolved

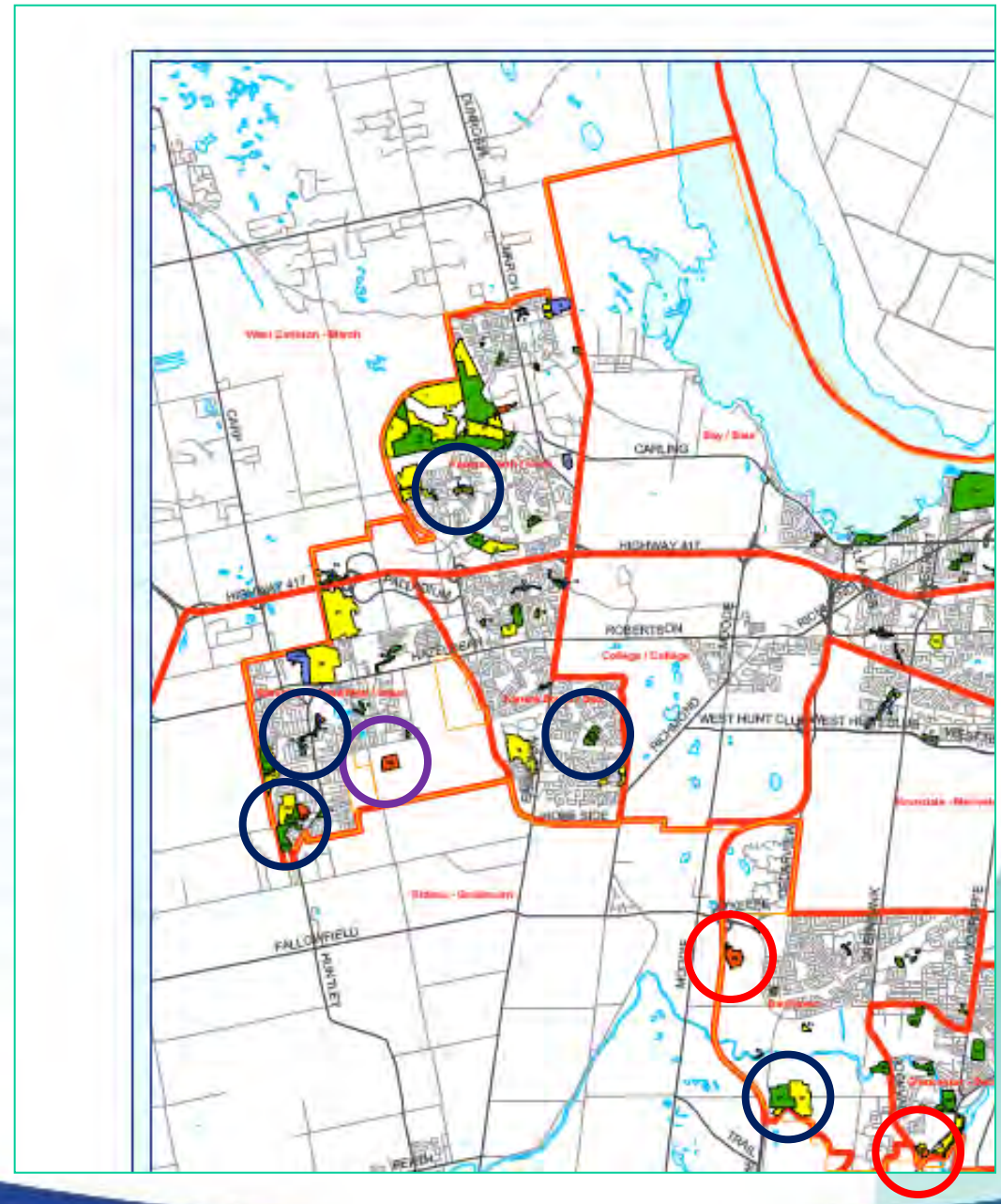
- UNA 193 – Shea Road Woods: recommended for purchase
- UNA 95 – Nantes Woods: recommended for purchase

Status of High Priority Areas (west)

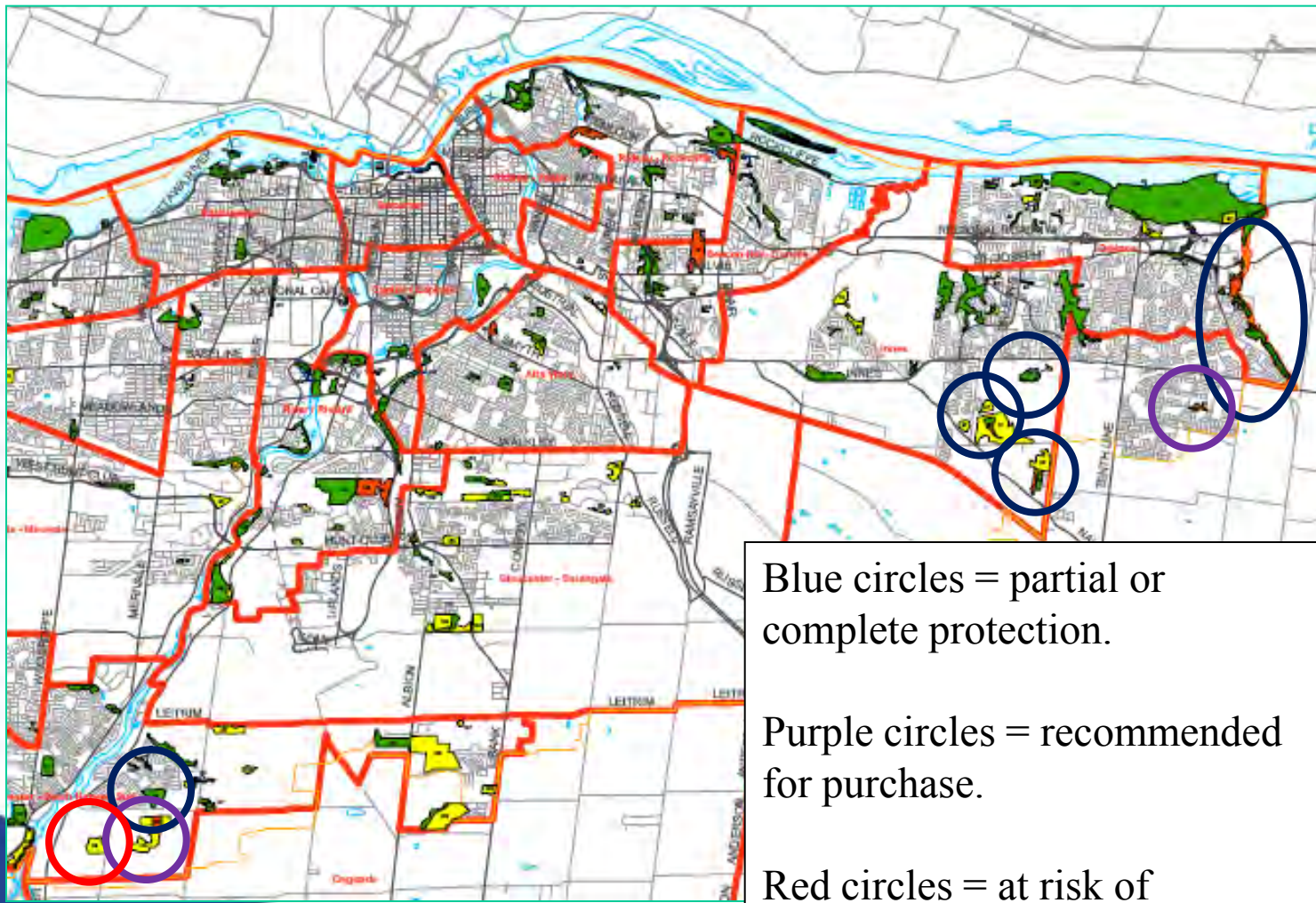
Blue circles = partial or complete protection.

Purple circles = recommended for purchase.

Red circles = at risk of development.



Status of High Priority Areas(east)



Blue circles = partial or complete protection.

Purple circles = recommended for purchase.

Red circles = at risk of development.

Affordability?

Actual costs have been higher than original projections.

- \$21 million to acquire 123 acres (50 ha);
- \$170,000 per acre actual versus \$100,000 per acre projected.

Next Steps?

In new suburban areas

- Natural areas will be conveyed to the City.
- No need to acquire

In the rural area

- Official Plan policies have strengthened protection of existing natural heritage features and sensitive environmental areas
- The City will continue to apply the policies for acquisition of properties in Natural Environment Areas, as budgets allow.
- Staff propose to bring forward a stewardship framework for the rural natural heritage system for consideration by the next Council.

Environmentally Sensitive Land Stewardship Framework

Landcover mapping program: in place.

Environmentally Sensitive Land Inventory: in progress.

Monitoring and reporting: in progress

Targeted Stewardship Fund: requires Council approval

- Support for stewardship of private land;
- Support for stewardship of City land;
- Purchase of conservation easements;
- Acquisition of critical properties;
- Ability to leverage other funds: Nature Conservancy, Ducks Unlimited, Land Trusts, Development Industry.
- Affordable and effective.