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Murray Chown
Senior Project Manager
Novatech Engineers, Planners and Landscape Architects
240 Michael Cowpland Drive, Suite 200
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Mr. Chown

Re: Status of Woodlots S20 and S12 in the Kanata North Urban Expansion Study Area

As you are aware, the City of Ottawa and Novatech (on behalf of its clients) have been in discussions since 2014 regarding the application of the Provincial criteria for *significant woodlands* to woodlots S20 and S12 in the Kanata North urban expansion study area. Under the City's policies for urban expansion study areas (Section 3.11 of the Official Plan), any natural heritage feature identified in an urban expansion area must be conveyed to the City of Ottawa for \$1 as part of the Financial Implementation Plan for the development.

Woodlot S20

The City of Ottawa and Novatech have applied the Provincial criteria for significant woodlands, as outlined in the Natural Heritage Reference Manual 2010 (NHRM 2010), to woodlot S20. The only outstanding criteria under which S20 might have qualified as significant were as habitat of an endangered or threatened species and/or a sensitive headwater feature. Both of these criteria were dependent upon the woodlot providing habitat for Blanding's turtle, as determined by the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR).

City staff has reviewed the recent **correspondence from the MNR** that you submitted regarding the question of whether or not Woodlot S20 provides or lies adjacent to habitat of Blanding's turtle. We understand the MNR letter to state that the Province

does not consider the vegetation communities within and adjacent to Woodlot S20 to provide such habitat.

Having established that woodlot S20 does not meet any of the NHRM 2010 criteria for significant woodlands, the City does not consider the woodlot to be a natural heritage system feature. The City is still asking for completion of a headwater assessment to establish management recommendations for the watercourses within and adjacent to woodlot S20. We will also seek protection of trees through the Tree Conservation Report, as part of the normal planning process and requirements. However, we will not seek conveyance of the full woodlot to the City under the policies of Section 3.11 of the Official Plan.

Woodlot S12

We appreciate and thank you for the submission of an Environmental Impact Statement for woodlot S12. Given the policies of Section 3.11 of the Official Plan with respect to the natural heritage system, the City regards the purpose of an EIS in that context to be the determination of whether or not a feature is a part of the system and, consequently, whether or not it must be conveyed to the City. It is not to determine whether or not development would have a negative impact on that feature.

Nonetheless, in reviewing the description of woodlot S12 against the criteria for significant woodlands in the NHRM 2010, staff noted that Section 7.3.2 of the manual provides direction on the delineation of significant woodlands. One of the considerations in delineating woodlands is “minimum patch width”, which provides guidance on the average width that a treed area should have to be included in a significant woodland. Essentially, the minimum patch width, “is intended to exclude relatively narrow, linear treed areas such as hedgerows.”

In applying this criterion to woodlot S12, staff concluded that it is questionable if the treed area connected to the larger woodland by the hedgerow along the south boundary of the development area should have been included within the significant woodland. Consequently, we are asking that only the portion of S12 on the west side of the urban expansion study area – a small overlap of woodlot S12 into the development area – be conveyed to the City as part of the natural heritage system.

Staff has discussed the request by Novatech that this remaining section of S12 within the development area be protected in a conservation easement on residential lots, rather than conveyed to the City as a separate parcel. In the City’s experience, such easements have a poor record of success. Furthermore, the City is unwilling to establish a precedent which might then be applied to other urban expansion areas and features. Consequently, we are still requiring that the portion of S12 within the urban expansion area be conveyed to the City as *per* the Official Plan policies.

Conclusion

In summary, the City staff does not consider woodlot S20 to be a part of the natural heritage system within the Kanata North urban expansion study area. Consequently,

the City will not require conveyance of woodlot S20 to the City under the policies of Section 3.11 of the Official Plan.

City staff still considers woodlot S12 to meet the Provincial criteria for significance under the NHRM 2010. However, City staff does not believe that the treed area along the south boundary of the urban expansion study area meets the minimum patch width necessary for inclusion within the woodlot. In contrast, the treed area on the west side of the urban expansion area appears contiguous with, and forms part of the larger woodlot. The City will only require conveyance of the western treed area under the policies of Section 3.11 of the Official Plan.

If you have any questions regarding this letter and the City's conclusions, please do not hesitate to contact me at 613-58-2424 ext. 13000 or at nick.stow@ottawa.ca.

Sincerely,



Nick Stow

cc: Wendy Tse, Dana Collings, Martha Copestake, John Smit, Marica Clarke, Lee Ann Snedden