

Date June 4, 2025

Project Cardinal Creek Village Core – Zoning By-Law Amendment

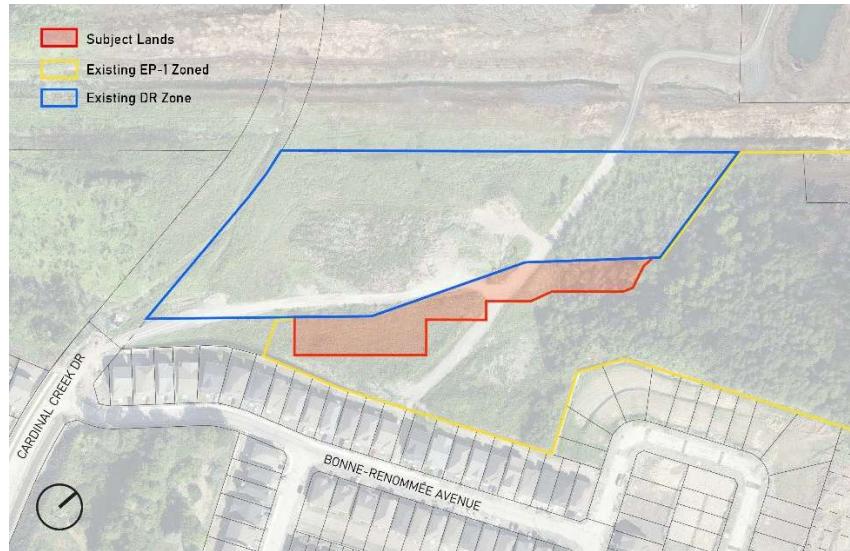
To Phil Castro, Planner III (T), Development Review – East, City of Ottawa

From Grant Mason, Associate, Urban Strategies Inc.
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Subject Technical Revision to EP-1 Boundary Adjacent to Cardinal Creek Village Core (1201 Old Montreal Road)

Taggart Developments is seeking a Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) for a 0.45ha portion of lands located north of Old Montreal Road and south-east of Cardinal Creek Village Core, identified as the Subject Lands in Figure 1. Portions of the Subject Lands are currently identified as “Natural Heritage Features” and are therefore zoned Environmental Protection (EP-1).

Figure 1: Subject Lands



Taggart Developments is seeking to rezone the lands to Development Reserve (DR) in order to:

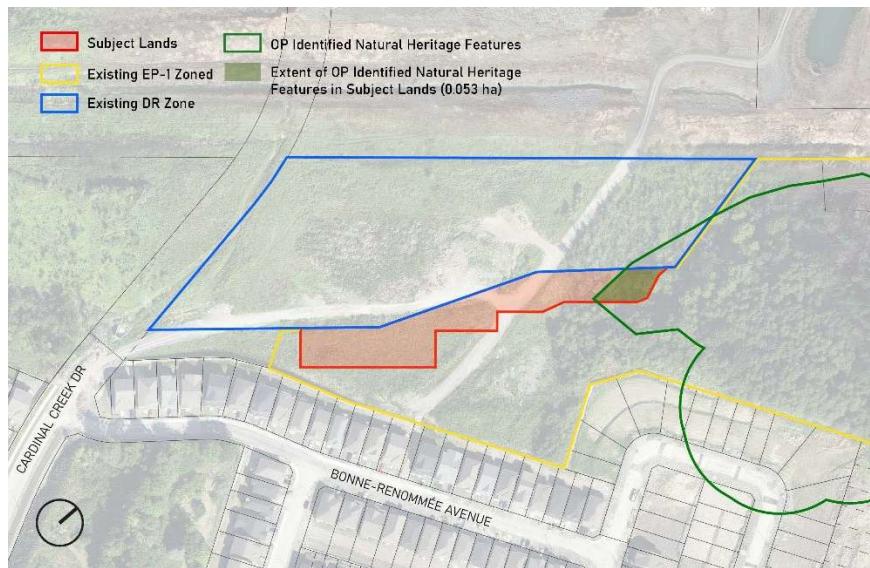
- align the planning permissions with the existing conditions;
- align the current zoning with the outcomes of previous discussions with Staff, as well as other planning decisions that have already been made in the site context; and
- prepare the Subject Lands for future development consistent with the vision of the Cardinal Creek Community Development Plan.

Along with the accompanying memo prepared by Kilgour & Associates Ltd. (Kilgour Memo), this memo demonstrates that a ZBA application is the appropriate mechanism to update the planning permissions for the Subject Lands, and to advance discussions regarding the appropriate scoping of the ZBA application requirements.

Planning Permissions across the Subject Lands

Within the 2021 Official Plan (OP), the Subject Lands partially overlap with the Natural Heritage Features Overlay on the Natural Heritage System Schedule (C11-C). As such, the Subject Lands are zoned EP-1, a zoning category used to protect lands that may potentially include areas constituting Natural Heritage Features. Figure 2 identifies the extent to which the current Natural Heritage Feature Overlay impacts the Subject Lands. (Note: as shown and confirmed in the accompanying Kilgour Memo, the extent of the EP-1 is neither a precise nor accurate reflection of the area identified by the Natural Heritage Features Overlay in the OP).

Figure 2: Natural Heritage Feature Overlay Impacts on the Subject Lands



The OP states that the City shall protect natural heritage features “for their natural character and ecosystem services” (Policy 5.6.4.1.3). Though a natural heritage feature is currently identified within the Subject Lands, section 1.4(e) of the OP states that “the boundaries along the natural heritage system and natural features shall be considered approximate except where they coincide with roads, railways, hydro transmission lines, former township lots and concession lines, major water courses or other well defined natural or physical features” (p.4). Further, section 5.6.4.1 of the OP summarizes the requirements for adjusting the boundaries of a natural heritage feature, stating that “site alteration in or adjacent to natural heritage features shall be supported by an environmental impact study” (Policy 5.6.4.1.4); and that “site alteration shall be consistent with the conclusions and recommendations of an approved environmental impact study” (Policy 5.6.4.1.5).

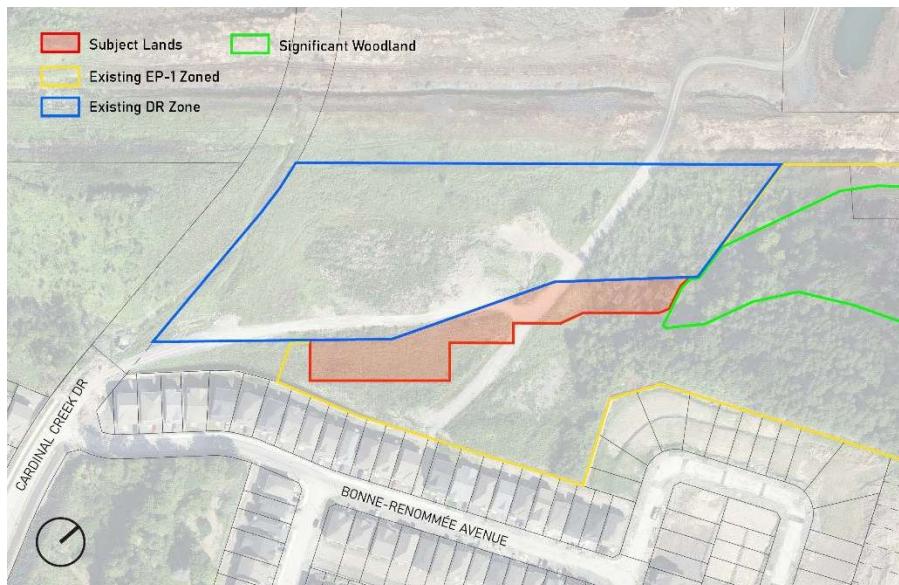
Reviewing these policies collectively, the Natural Heritage System Schedule identifies the Subject Lands as an area that may include a “natural character” or provide “ecosystem services” worthy of protection. Importantly, the Natural Heritage Feature Overlay as it impacts the Subject Lands does not coincide with any feature that clearly demarcates its extent (e.g. rail or road), making its boundaries “approximate.” The OP defers to the preparation of an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) as a mechanism to determine or refine the area deserving protection.

The Subject Lands are also designated *Greenspace* on the East Suburban Transect Schedule (B8) and *Open Space* on the Urban Greenspace Schedule (C12). The boundaries of these designations seem to be intentionally consistent with the Natural Heritage Features Overlay. As lot creation and development is generally not permitted within designated *Greenspace* (Policy 7.1.3), this additional layer of protection is presumed to be a mechanism to bolster the natural heritage protections prescribed by the OP (described above). This interpretation is reinforced by the introduction to Section 7 of the OP which states that the “Greenspace designation identifies a network of public parks, other spaces within the public realm and natural lands that collectively provide essential ecosystem services to Ottawa’s residents, support biodiversity, climate resilience, recreation and healthy living” (p.205). Therefore, to the extent that the *Greenspace* and *Open Space* designations are reflections of the Natural Heritage Features Overlay, it is understood that any refinements to the boundary of identified natural heritage features resulting from the preparation of the EIS would result in similar adjustments to the *Greenspace* and *Open Space* designation boundaries.

Assessment of Natural Heritage Feature within the Subject Lands

The accompanying Kilgour Memo indicates that a Significant Woodland is located adjacent to the Subject Lands (i.e. qualifying as a Natural Heritage Feature and therefore the protections described within the OP), but does not extend into the Subject Lands. See Figure 3, which identifies the Significant Woodland located adjacent to the Subject Lands.

Figure 3: Woodland Feature Adjacent to Subject Lands



The Kilgour Memo concludes that the Subject Lands contain no Natural Heritage Features that would qualify for protections under the OP. This will be verified through the scoped EIS to be submitted alongside the proposed ZBA application.

Analysis Summary and Mechanism for Updating the Official Plan / Zoning By-law

Portions of the Subject Lands are identified as containing a Natural Heritage Feature and designated Greenspace and Open Space in the OP. The OP states that these designations are intended to protect natural heritage features and natural lands for their ecosystem services and their contributions to biodiversity. However, the OP recognizes that the boundaries of these designations are being approximate, and defers to the preparation of an EIS to determine the boundaries of areas that qualify for natural heritage protection. Where an adjustment to the boundaries of these schedules is necessary, section 1.4(g) of the OP indicates that “unless otherwise stated in the policies, when the general intent of this Plan is maintained, minor adjustments to boundaries will not require amendment to this Plan” (p.5).

The Kilgour Memo concludes that no portion of the Subject Lands qualify as Natural Heritage Feature. Per the OP section 1.4(g), a ZBA to rezone the lands to DR is the appropriate mechanism to update all

planning instruments (OP schedules B8, C11C, and C12) so that they are consistent with the actual existing conditions.

Note: The use of a ZBA as a mechanism to make minor adjustments to OP schedules was previously discussed with City Staff, as documented in the “Cardinal Creek Village Approvals – Next Steps Memo” and accompanying attachments received by City Staff in November 2024.

Scoped Resubmission Process

Taggart Developments has long-term plans to develop the Cardinal Creek Village Core in a form consistent with the Council-approved Concept Plan: with higher-density residential and commercial uses focused in the area identified Arterial Mainstreet ‘A,’ and lower density, semi-detached residential forms in the areas identified as Residential and Mixed Use, south of the Hydro Corridor (see Figure 4).

Figure 4: Cardinal Creek Village Concept Plan



Due to current market forces impacting the feasibility of higher-density residential and commercial development at Cardinal Creek, Taggart Developments have put immediate development plans for the Village Core on hold.

The purpose of DR zoning is to identify lands appropriate for future development, while also limiting the available permissions so that a future rezoning application will be required to enable actual development. The proposal to rezone the Subject Lands to DR will more accurately align zoning permissions with the status and conditions of the lands today. There will be a subsequent ZBA and Plan of Subdivision Application once the lands are ready for development (continuing the process formally launched in 2021) that will detail the long-term development intentions for the Subject Lands, their integration with the Village Core, and how the detailed land uses correspond to the Natural Heritage Features outside the boundaries of the lands.

The future ZBA will be accompanied by a comprehensive Planning Rationale demonstrating that development is consistent with or conforms to Provincial and Ottawa Official Plan policy, as well as detailed technical studies. It will include a future EIS (or alternative study form) which assesses the future uses within the Village Core and their impact on the remaining portions of the Significant Woodland, and any other Natural Heritage Features.

As such, the current application and supporting studies should be scoped to the subject of the submission: a minor adjustment to the DR Zone boundary, which reflects the actual natural heritage value of the Subject Lands. The City of Ottawa's EIS Guidelines (2023) indicate that a minor impact study may be prepared for smaller projects, where staff consider the potential for impacts is low and more detailed and recent studies exist that can be leveraged. In instances where a minor impact study is recommended, a **Minor EIS Form** should be completed to document and address impacts.

Conclusion

Based on the extent of the adjustment to zoning boundaries being proposed, the conclusions of recently prepared studies (which were resubmitted as accompaniment to the *Cardinal Creek Scoped Submission Memo* submitted to City Staff in January 2025), and the need for a future comprehensive ZBA application for the broader Village Core lands – supported by technical studies – it is the opinion of Urban Strategies and Kilgour & Associates Ltd. that an application to amend the zoning for the Subject Lands should advance through a scoped submission, supported by **Minor EIS Form**.

We look forward to discussing this matter further with City Staff to confirm the direction prior to submission.