



Muncaster
Environmental
Planning Inc.

December 16, 2024

Mr. Curtis Melanson
Practice Area Lead, Land Development
Egis Group
115 Walgreen Road
Carp, ON
K0A 1L0

Dear Mr. Melanson:

RE: 145 Walgreen Road
Scoped Environmental Impact Study

I have completed a scoped Environmental Impact Study (EIS) for the proposed redevelopment of an existing truck yard at 145 Walgreen Road in the northwest portion of Stittsville in the rural/urban expansion area of the City of Ottawa. The site is on the south side of Walgreen Road, about 100 metres east of the south terminus of Westbrook Road. For the purposes of this report, Walgreen Road is considered to be in an east-west orientation.

Site Context and Proposed Development

The site is dominated by an existing truck compound, with scattered trees along the north and west sides (Figure 1). Land use in the vicinity of the site is dominated by commercial operations, with a large quarry to the west and remnant natural areas to the south and northwest. Urban residential communities are further to the southeast, with the Highway 417 and 7 corridors further to the north and west, respectively. A mixed forest to the south of the site is part of the City's Natural Heritage Features Overlay, as shown on the Schedule C11-A of the Official Plan. There are no Natural Heritage System Linkage or Core Areas in proximity to the site, with the closest core area to the west of Highway 7, approximately 1.15 kilometres to the northwest of the site. No environmental constraints are shown on Schedule C15 on or adjacent to the study area and no Provincially Significant Wetlands or Areas of Natural and Scientific Interest are in the general area of the site, with unevaluated wetlands mapped on the geoOttawa layer within the mixed forest to the south, beginning approximately 15 metres to the south of the site.

The redevelopment is for heavy equipment and vehicle sales, rental & servicing, with 80 truck parking spots. One-hundred and forty surface car parking spaces, a compressed natural gas unit in the southwest portion of the site, and a one-storey addition to the south side of the existing shop and office building are also proposed (Figure 2). The existing septic bed in the northeast portion of the site will be utilized, and the 12 metre easement along the south portion of the site will be used for stormwater management and landscaped. The existing west and east accesses off Walgreen Road will be enhanced and on-site snow storage will be in the southeast corner. The majority of the surface cover will be asphalt, with landscaped and gravel areas.

Methodology

As there are portions of the Natural Heritage System immediately to the south of the site, an EIS is required to determine if the proposed site redevelopment would have a negative impact on the significant natural features. Potential Species at Risk utilization, including Blanding's turtle which are known approximately 500 metres to the northeast of the site, watercourse features, and significant woodlands will also be assessed. This EIS was prepared following the City's EIS Guidelines, with guidance from the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (OMNR, 2010). The field survey and this report were completed by Bernie Muncaster, who has a Master's of Science in Biology and over thirty-six years of experience in completing natural environment assessments. Michelle Muncaster assisted with the field survey and components of this report.

The EIS will provide the methodology to mitigate as required negative impacts on significant features and functions. Potential Species at Risk in the general area were identified from Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry databases, the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas, Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas, and Species at Risk reported for the overall City of Ottawa.

The natural environment features of the site and adjacent lands were reviewed from 09:50 to 11:20 on August 13th, 2024, under sunny skies, a light breeze, and an air temperature of 23° C. The field review was completed by reviewing the trees, channels, and other natural environment features along the edges of the developed site and adjacent lands. The flora of the site and adjacent lands was described based on the vegetation component of the Ecological Land Classification for Southern Ontario.

Existing Conditions

The site is generally level, with a very gentle slope to the north. The site is dominated by compacted gravel (Photos 1 and 2). Ditches are mapped on the geoOttawa layer in the south portion of the site within the 12 metres easement. A roadside channel is mapped along the north side of Walgreen Road, with a north-south channel approximately 35 metres to the east of the site. These channels flow into the wetland to the southeast of the site. Standing water with limited flow was observed in these channels on August 13th. The channels may support intermittent direct fish habitat for forage fish extending north from the wetland marsh during higher flow periods, and the flows in the channels would indirectly contribute to the fish habitat in the downstream wetland marsh.

Pockets of standing water were noted among the common reed in the 12 metre easement along the south portion of the site. No flow was observed and the water depth was less than 5cm. Other than vegetation, no potential aquatic habitat features such as coarse substrate, woody debris, a defined low flow channel, or undercut banks were observed among the common reed and cattails and there was no defined channel connection to the north-south channel to the east. No potential fish habitat is considered present in the 12 metre easement along the south portion of the site.

Scattered ground vegetation is along the edges of the compacted gravel compound include wild carrot, June meadow grass, barnyard grass, common ragweed, common plantain, purple loosestrife, bird's-foot trefoil, and white-sweet clover. Regenerating white poplar, trembling aspen, and large-toothed aspen stems up to 10cm diameter at breast height (dbh) are also present in the southwest and southeast corners of the site.

Common reed (*Phragmites*) is dominant in the 12 metre easement along the south portion of the site (Photo 4). Purple loosestrife, reed canary grass, bugleweed, broad-leaved cattail, narrow-leaved goldenrod, and glossy buckthorn shrubs were also observed in the easement, along with regenerating white elm, poplar, and white elm stems.

A mixed hedgerow of trembling aspen, white birch, white spruce, red oak, and white cedar is along the west property line (Photos 2 and 4). The largest trees were in the 30 – 35cm dbh range. Some of the larger poplar and white cedar appeared to be in poorer condition, with many branches showing reduced leaf-out/needle coverage. Other larger poplars had broken trunks, likely from wind damage. Glossy buckthorn and round-leaved dogwood shrubs are among the hedgerow tree, along with regenerating stems of poplar, cedar, Norway maple, basswood, and white spruce.

Another mixed hedgerow is along the north portion of the site. This hedgerow is intermittent and contains generally smaller trees (Photo 1). Red oak, Scot's pine, white spruce, bur oak, trembling aspen, balsam poplar, white birch, green ash, and basswood are representative of the tree species in the north hedgerow, with the largest aspens up to 30cm dbh. Some of the poplars and the two white spruce in the east portion of the north hedgerow showed decreased leaf-out.

Ground cover in and adjacent to the hedgerows included Canada goldenrod, heart-leaved aster, red clover, purple loosestrife, common plantain, helleborine, crown vetch, wild carrot, field sow-thistle, poison ivy, colt's-foot, eastern bracken, and common tansy.

The majority of trees within 100 metres of the south site boundary have been removed by the adjacent owner. A width of approximately 35 metres of trees remains adjacent to the southeast corner of the site. The remaining outer trees are young trembling aspen, large-toothed aspen, white spruce, and balsam fir up to 20cm dbh. Larger trees are further south, with for example a 32cm dbh trembling aspen about eight metres south of the property line. Red oak and white cedar are also present in the upland mixed forest. Wind damage is extensive in the remnant forest (Photo 5). Regenerating poplar, white ash, white cedar, and balsam fir stems are in the understory, along with glossy buckthorn shrubs. Ground flora in the adjacent upland mixed forest included poison ivy, wild grape, thicket creeper, and Canada mayflower. No wetland habitat was observed within thirty metres to the south of the site.

Wildlife observed on and adjacent to the site included European starling, American crow, cedar waxwing, American goldfinch, black-capped chickadee, and red squirrel. No trees with potential wildlife cavities, evidence of raptor utilization, stone piles, or fissured bedrock were observed on the site. No evidence of pileated woodpecker use on the site were noted.



Photo 1 – Typical existing conditions of the site. This example is looking north towards the intermittent mixed hedgerow and Walgreen Road, from the south edge of the compound



Photo 2 – West portion of the site, looking northwest to the hedgerows along the site periphery



Photo 3 – Typical condition of the trees along the west hedgerow; view looking west



*Photo 4 – Common reed in the 12 metre easement along the south portion of the site.
View looking south to remaining trees to the south of the site*



Photo 5 – The remaining trees immediately to the southeast site boundary are generally young with windthrow extensive. View looking east

Significant Wildlife Habitat

The potential for significant wildlife habitat was assessed using the guidance in OMNR (2010) and MNRF (2015). No flora, fauna, or ecological conditions were observed in the field surveys on the site that would trigger a Significant Wildlife Habitat designation with respect to the ELC communities present. Potential significant wildlife habitat is to the south of the site within the remaining forests and more open wetlands that may be used by species of special concern such as eastern wood pewee and snapping turtle. The wetlands further to the south of the site do not appear to contain sufficient open water to provide waterfowl stopover and staging areas or colonial nesting bird breeding habitat. Other examples of seasonal concentration areas were not observed on the site or adjacent retained lands. No rare or specialized habitat including seeps or springs were noted. The remaining forests to the south of the site lack forest interior habitat and old growth forest is not present. Cavity trees greater than 25cm dbh that may support maternity colonies for bats are not present on or immediately adjacent to the site. No suitable habitat for shrub/early successional breeding birds was observed, nor were areas of broken and fissured rock or stone fences.

The linkage functions associated with the site would be greatly reduced by the industrial and commercial developments and further to the north and west, the corridors of Highways 417 and 7. Natural areas are more common further to the south of the site. It is anticipated that the redevelopment of an existing truck parking site will not have a detectable impact on the limited linkage functions of the area.

Significant Woodlands

Forests in the rural portion of Ottawa are assessed for significance by the criteria identified in Table 7.2 of OMNR (2010). The site is in the Ottawa West rural planning area, with 38 % forest cover. In terms of the woodland size criteria, with this extent of forest cover in the planning area a contiguous forest would need to be at least 50 hectares to meet the size criteria for significance. There are no forests on the site itself. The remaining forest to the south of the site has an overall size of approximately six hectares and thus would not be considered significant woodlands based on the woodland size criterion identified in OMNR (2010). No forest interior habitat remains to the south, though the marsh habitat further to the south of the site may be considered sensitive. However, the remaining forest would not meet the water protection criterion in Table 7.2 of OMNR (2010) as minimum forest area threshold is no longer met. Mitigation measures are provided below to ensure no impacts on the adjacent remaining forest.

Species at Risk

No butternut, black ash, or other Species at Risk were observed on or immediately adjacent to the site. The MNR's Make a Map: Natural Heritage Areas website was reviewed on August 4th, 2024. This site allows for a search of Threatened and Endangered species covered by the 2008 *Endangered Species Act*, as well as other species of interest. A search was conducted on the 1 km square including the site and adjacent lands (18VR21 – 43). Two Species at Risk, Blanding's turtle and butternut, were identified for the square. Blanding's turtle is also identified in the Ontario Reptile and Amphibian Atlas for the overall 10km square 18VR21 that includes the site and general area, and is known from the stormwater management feature approximately 500 metres to the northeast of the site, west of Carp Road and north of Westbrook Road. There are no on-site wetlands and the on-site gravel is too compacted to be used for turtle nesting. The marsh wetland beginning approximately 250 metres to the southeast of the site may provide suitable turtle habitat. At that distance no Category 3 Blanding's turtle habitat would extend onto the site. Mitigation measures are presented below to avoid potential impacts on any turtle activity in the general area.

The breeding birds listed in the Ontario Breeding Bird Atlas for the 10 km square 18VR21 identified eastern whip-poor-will, eastern meadowlark, and bobolink as Species at Risk in the overall 10 km square. Bobolink and eastern meadowlark utilize larger areas of grasslands, including hay fields. No meadow habitat is present on or adjacent to the site. Bank swallow is a colonial nester; burrowing in eroding silt or sand banks and sand pit walls; habitat not observed on or adjacent to the site. Eastern whip-poor-will utilize rock or sand barrens with scattered trees, savannahs, old burns, or other disturbed sites in a state of early to mid-forest succession, or open conifer plantations. The understories of the forest to the south of the site are too dense and disturbed for eastern whip-poor-will use and the forest will not be impacted.

The potential Species at Risk reported for the City of Ottawa were also reviewed, with an emphasis on the endangered and threatened species historically reported in the overall City, including butternut, black ash, American ginseng, eastern prairie fringed-orchid, wood turtle, spiny softshell, Blanding's turtle, musk turtle, bobolink, eastern meadowlark, bank swallow, Henslow's sparrow, loggerhead shrike, eastern whip-poor-will, bald eagle, cerulean warbler,

golden eagle, least bittern, little brown myotis, northern long-eared bat, olive hickorynut, eastern cougar, common gray fox, lake sturgeon, and American eel. The habitat requirements of these species along with those listed as special concern were reviewed. No suitable larger cavity trees were noted on or adjacent to the site. No wetland habitat is present on-site or immediately south of the site for black ash. Based on the site and adjacent habitat the potential Species at Risk most likely to occur on the site butternut. No butternuts were observed on or within 50 metres of the site.

Impact Analysis and Recommendations

No significant natural heritage feature, as identified in the Provincial Policy Statement and OMNR (2010), were observed on the site, with potential Species at Risk utilization (Blanding's turtle) approximately 250 metres to the south and fish habitat may be present in the roadside channel on the north side of Walgreen Road and a north-south channel about 35 metres to the east of the site. These features and the remaining forest to the south of the site, including the Natural Heritage Feature Overlay, will not be impacted provided the important mitigation measures identified below are properly implemented. The on-site woody vegetation includes mixed hedgerows along the west and north sides and no forests are on-site. The retention of the on-site trees is assessed in the Tree Conservation Report prepared by IFS Associates.

Potential impacts during re-development of the site includes impacts on local wildlife from vegetation removal, increased erosion and release of sediments and other potential contaminants from truck traffic and construction activity, harm to wildlife remaining in the work area during construction, and impacts associated with an increase in noise, dust and light. Following the Bird Safe Design Guidelines, considering should be given to using bird safe glass or some form of visual marker on any large windows which pose concern for potential bird strikes, a leading cause of bird mortality. The following mitigation measures are recommended to address these potential impacts during construction and operation of the industrial site:

1. The amount of tree removal for the re-development of the site is to be minimized as much as possible. Removed trees are to be replaced with plantings of native trees and shrubs of local stock as shown on the Landscape Plan;
2. Silt fencing is recommended around the perimeter of the work area to ensure the adjacent vegetation to be retained is not impacted by the construction, to isolate the work area from sensitive wildlife, and to filter any surface runoff from the work area. The silt fencing is to be installed, where possible, at the outer limits of the critical root zone (ten times trunk diameter) of the retained trees. The fencing is to be securely dug in before other site alterations begin, maintained during the construction period, and removed after the site is stabilized;
3. Woody vegetation removal is to occur before April 15th or after August 15th for the protection of breeding birds, unless a survey conducted by a qualified biologist within five days of the vegetation removal identifies no bird nesting activity;
4. Following the Bird Safe Design Guidelines, considering should be given to using bird safe glass or some form of visual marker on any large windows, which pose concern for potential bird strikes, a leading cause of bird mortality;

5. The work area should be searched for snakes and other sensitive wildlife at the beginning of each work day. Any turtles, snakes, or other sensitive wildlife observed in the vicinity of the work area or that may otherwise be in danger are to be safely relocated to the south. Animals should be moved only far enough to ensure their immediate safety and any handling of Species at Risk during construction for safe relocation purposes should be done by individuals who are properly trained to do so. See Appendix 1 and the links in Section 4 of City of Ottawa (2022) for suggestions on how to effectively relocate turtles and snakes and Section 2.5 for recommendations on construction site management;
6. Any landscaping is to use only locally appropriate native species, such as those native species listed in this report;
7. To discourage wildlife from entering the work area during construction, the site should be kept clear of food wastes and other garbage, and proper drainage provided to avoid accumulation of standing water, which could attract amphibians, birds, and other wildlife to the work area;
8. Municipal by-laws and provincial regulations for noise will be followed and utilities will be located as required in the vicinity of the site prior to construction. Waste will be managed in accordance with provincial regulations;
9. The contractor will have a spill kit on-hand at all times in case of spills or other accidents;
10. The extent of exposed soils is to be kept to a minimum at all times. Re-vegetation of exposed, non-developed areas is to be achieved as soon as possible; and,
11. Roof runoff should be directed to grassed areas or other permeable surfaces.

In addition, many helpful wildlife-oriented mitigation measures are detailed in the City's *Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction* (City of Ottawa, 2022). Contractors are to review in detail and understand the City's *Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction* prior to commencement of construction. The contractor is to be aware of the potential Species at Risk in the vicinity of the site including butternut and Blanding's turtle. Appendix 1 of City of Ottawa (2022) describes these species. Bernie Muncaster (613-748-3753) is the project biologist for this development. Any Species at Risk sightings are to be immediately reported to the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and work that may impact the species suspended immediately.

Conclusion

A proposed redevelopment of the existing site dominated by a truck compound and associated office and service area includes heavy equipment and vehicle sales, rental & servicing, with 80 truck parking spots. One-hundred and forty surface car parking spaces, a compressed natural gas unit in the southwest portion of the site, and a one-storey addition to the south side of the existing shop and office building are also proposed. No natural environment constraints were observed on the site itself with channels that may contain fish habitat to the north and east of the site. Much of the forest to the south of the site, which was identified as a Natural Heritage Feature Overlay, has been removed. Wetlands are further to the south of the site.

Construction and operation of the site re-development is not anticipated to impact the features and functions of the local natural environment features, including the Natural Heritage Features Overlay to the south, provided the important mitigation measures in this report are properly implemented.

This EIS concludes that it is the professional opinion of the author that the construction and operation of the heavy equipment and vehicle sales, rental & servicing will not have a negative impact, as defined in the Provincial Policy Statement, on the significant natural heritage features and functions of the overall area, including the Natural Heritage Features Overlay, providing the above recommended mitigation measures are properly implemented.

References

City of Ottawa. 2022. Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction. Revised December, 2022. 14 pp & Append.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2010. Natural Heritage Reference Manual for Natural Heritage Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005. 2nd Edition. March 2010. 233 pp.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. 2015. Significant Wildlife Habitat Criteria Schedules for Ecoregion 6E. January, 2015. 38 pp.

Please call if you have any questions on this scoped EIS.

Yours Sincerely,
MUNCASTER ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INC.



Bernie Muncaster, M.Sc.
Principal

\145 Walgreen Road EIS

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