

September 6, 2017

VIA EMAIL: [regionalclerk@york.ca](mailto:regionalclerk@york.ca)

Chair Emerson and Members of Council  
Regional Municipality of York  
17250 Yonge Street  
Newmarket, Ontario  
L3Y 6Z1

MGP File: 15-2384

Dear Sirs and Madames,

**Re: Staff Report – COW, September 7, 2017: Draft Provincial Guidance on the Agricultural System**

Malone Given Parsons Ltd. are the planning consultants representing Shining Hill Estate Collection Inc. ("Shining Hill") owners of approximately 155 hectares (385 acres) of land straddling the municipal boundary of the Town of Newmarket and Town of Aurora. This letter is submitted on their behalf as portions of their landholdings (Attachment 1b of the staff report) have been identified in the Province's draft mapping as additional lands to be included in the Natural Heritage System (NHS).

It has been our understanding through discussions with Regional staff that the portion of land that is the subject of this letter has been wrongly identified as Whitebelt lands since they have an underlying urban designation at the local policy level. Through the Province's draft mapping, they now have been identified as NHS. We have been working with staff to try to rectify this issue.

While we recognize that there are lands in the Shining Hill landholdings that should be protected, it is our opinion that the policies at the local and regional level provide the protection required. Conversely, there are lands that have been included in the Province's NHS mapping that we believe should not be – specifically those that have an urban designation in the local Official Plan. We will be requesting that the province revise its mapping of these lands, but the same needs to occur at the YROP level.

#### **Request**

We have reviewed the staff report on the Provincial Guidance documents, and support its recommendations, specifically that the *"proposed Natural Heritage mapping should remain draft until finalized through municipal comprehensive reviews"*. We also support the Region's position where without additional rationale from the Province, it is recommended that the local municipalities be permitted to use the local municipal NHS mapping where it meets the intent of the Provincial NHS policies in the Growth Plan.

As the Province's response to Regional recommendations is undetermined, we respectfully request that Council give additional direction to staff to support the change in mapping for a portion of lands within the Shining Hill landholdings that are currently shown on Attachment 1b of the report as "Proposed Growth Plan Natural Heritage System" to "OP Settlement Designations".

This could occur as staff completes the review of the natural heritage system mapping through the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR). The requested direction would be inserted as an addition to the second bullet point in Recommendation #1 to the Staff Report, and reads:

- Support the mapping change of the Proposed Provincial Mapping of the NHS shown in Attachment 1b (Aurora/Newmarket) of the Staff Report to Figure 5 (of this MGP letter).

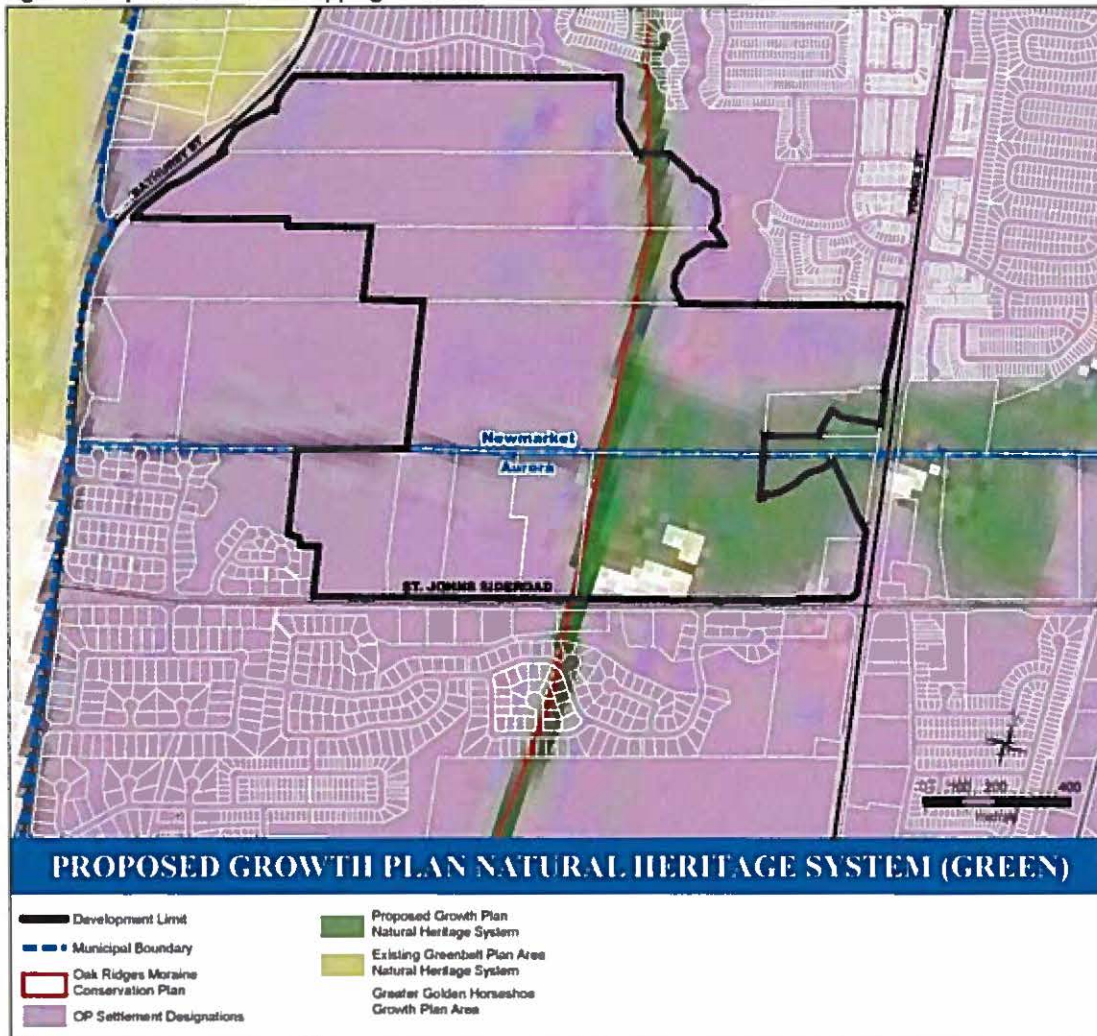
### **Background**

The remainder of this letter outlines the subject lands as identified in the Province's proposed NHS mapping and its policy framework established in the local Official Plan, YROP and Greenbelt Plan.

### ***Draft Provincial Guidance Documents***

The Province's draft mapping of the proposed Natural Heritage System as it relates to the Shining Hill landholdings is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Proposed Provincial Mapping of the NHS**



Source: Growth Plan Regional NHS Mapping Project – June 28, 2017;  
Contains information licenced under the Open Government Licence - Ontario

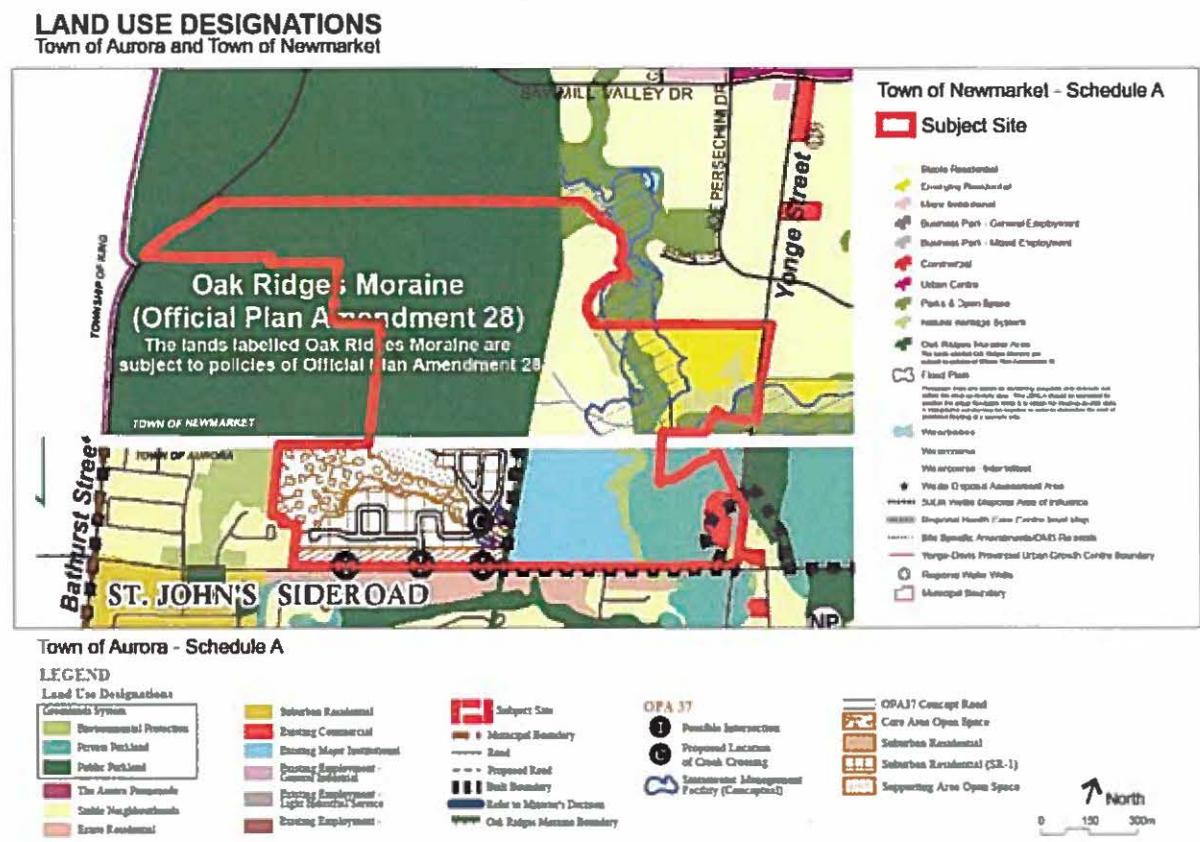
At the local development level, it is apparent that there is not enough edge detail to provide an accurate boundary of the NHS. At this level, the boundaries are pixelated and not conducive to determining development limits. Refinement of the NHS should occur at the local and Regional level through the MCR process.

Additionally, the majority of the lands that have been identified as potential NHS within the Shining Hill landholdings have an underlying urban designation at the local policy level.

**Local Policy Context**

As mentioned, the Shining Hill landholdings are located on both sides of the Town of Aurora and Town of Newmarket municipal boundary. Figure 2 below illustrates that much of the lands proposed to be NHS in the Province’s draft mapping are designated “Existing Major Institutional” in the Town of Aurora Official Plan and “Stable Neighbourhoods” in the Town of Newmarket Official Plan.

**Figure 2: Official Plan Land Use Designations of Shining Hill Landholdings**



Source: Aurora Official Plan (2010) Schedule A; Newmarket Official Plan (2014 Office Consolidation) Schedule A.  
 Prepared by: MGP Ltd.

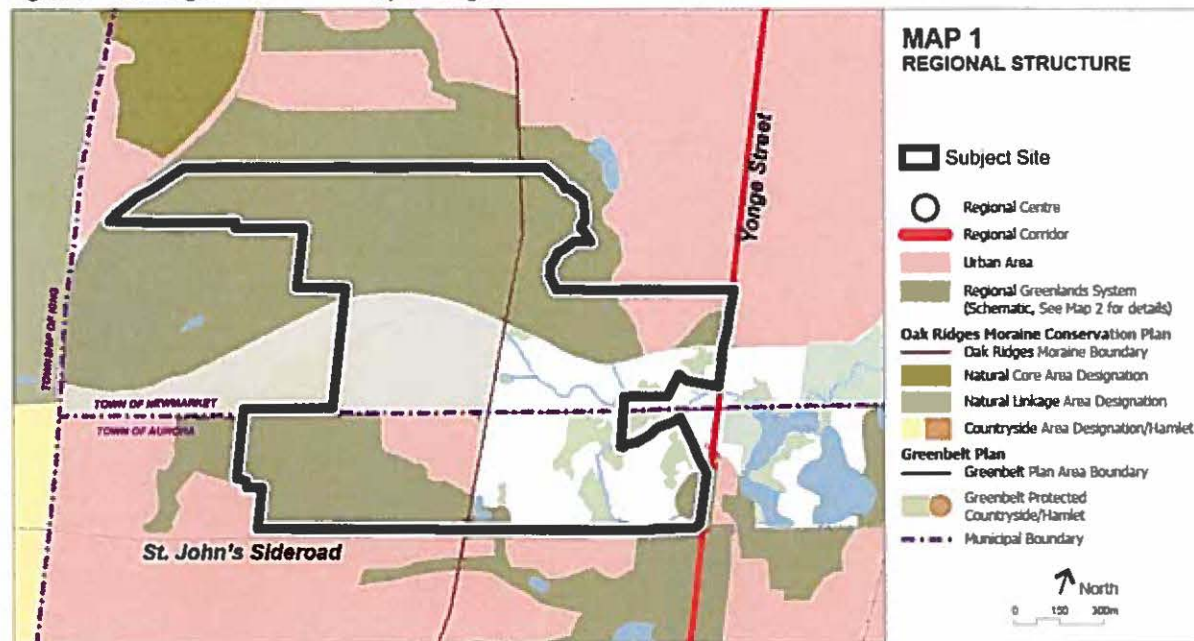
It is our understanding through discussions with Regional staff that the identification of these lands as “Whitebelt Lands” was a mapping error (as they have urban designations at the local level) and would be rectified during the Region’s Municipal Comprehensive Review.

### York Region Official Plan (2010)

The York Region Official Plan (2010) identifies the Shining Hill lands in *Map 1 – Regional Structure* as a combination of *Regional Greenlands System* (green), *Urban Area* (pink), and *ORM Settlement Area* (beige) with a portion of the Whitebelt Lands shown as white (see Figure 3).

To mirror the policy context at the local level, the Whitebelt Lands should be re-designated as a combination of *Urban Area* and *Regional Greenlands System*.

Figure 3 – York Region Official Plan Map 1 – Regional Structure



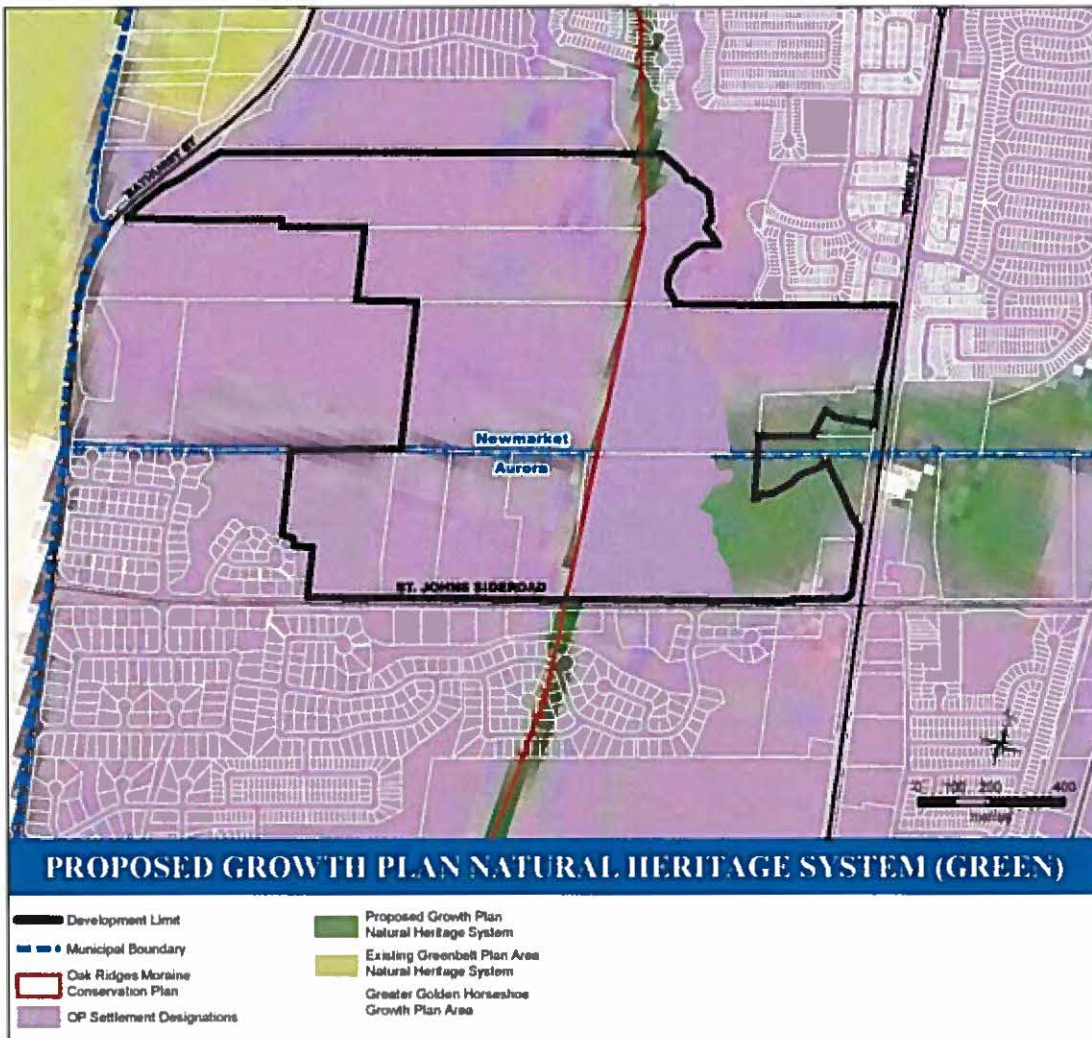
Source: York Region Official Plan (2010) – Map 1: Regional Structure  
Prepared by: MGP Ltd.

### MGP Proposed Preliminary NHS Mapping

As per page 3 of the staff report, “the Province is consulting on the development and mapping of the NHS for the entire Growth Plan area, excluding settlement areas. Within York Region, this means the new NHS applies to “whitebelt” lands only”. As discussed above, it has been our understanding that a portion of the Shining Hill landholdings have been incorrectly identified as whitebelt and should not have been included in the Province’s NHS analysis in the first place.

As such, it is our request that an appropriate response to the Province’s draft mapping should be the removal of lands within the Shining Hill landholdings that have an underlying urban designation from the proposed NHS designation (Figure 4).

Figure 4 – MGP Request for Provincial NHS Mapping



Source: Growth Plan Regional NHS Mapping Project – June 28, 2017;  
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### Summary

We support staff's recommendation that the proposed Natural Heritage mapping not to be finalized until the Region conducts the MCR process as recommended by regional staff; and that local municipalities should be permitted to use the local NHS mapping where it meets the policies of the Growth Plan.

The lands within the Shining Hill landholdings that have been identified as NHS in the Province's draft mapping should not have been included in the Province's NHS analysis as they have been incorrectly identified as "whitebelt". Moreover, these lands have an underlying urban designation at the local policy level. We are requesting that Council give direction to staff to support the change in mapping of these lands from "Proposed Growth Plan Natural Heritage System" to "OP Settlement Designation".

Our proposed addition to the set of recommendations in the subject staff report would give effect to this direction.

Yours very truly,  
**MALONE GIVEN PARSONS LTD.**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Don Given".

**Don Given, MCIP, RPP**  
[dgiven@mgp.ca](mailto:dgiven@mgp.ca)

cc. Sandra Malcic, Manager, Policy and Environment, York Region  
Valerie Shuttleworth, Chief Planner, York Region  
Shining Hill Estate Collection Inc.