



Muncaster  
Environmental  
Planning Inc.

November 10, 2017

Blacksheep Development  
c/o Holzman Consulting Inc.  
1076 Castle Hill Crescent  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K2C 2A8

Dear Mr. Holzman

**RE: 2159 Mer Bleue Road**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

I have completed an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a proposed commercial development at 2159 Mer Bleue Road. The site is within the City's urban area, on the east side of Mer Bleue Road, approximately 400 metres north of Brian Coburn Boulevard and 650 metres south of Innes Road in the south-central portion of Orleans, City of Ottawa (Figure 1). The site is described as Lot 2, Concession 11, Cumberland Geographic Township of the City of Ottawa.

***Site Context***

The site and most of the adjacent lands are designated *Employment Area* on Schedule B of the Official Plan and the site is zoned General Industrial. Lands to the south are a combination of *Mixed Use Centre* and *General Urban Area*. There are no identified Natural Areas in proximity to the site. Mer Bleue is the closest Provincially Significant Wetland and Area of Natural and Scientific Interest, beginning approximately three kilometres south of the site. The Navan Road/Page Road Woods are the closest Natural Area, as identified by Brownell and Blaney (1997), about two kilometers south of the site. The closest portion of the City's Natural Heritage System, as mapped on the Schedule L1 Overlay of the Official Plan, and Urban Natural Area (Muncaster and Brunton, 2005) is the moderately rated Innes Park Woods approximately 600 metres to the west of the site. There are no constraints shown for the site or adjacent lands on Schedule K of the Official Plan.

For the purposes of this report Mer Bleue Road is considered in a north-south orientation.

***Methodology***

This EIS was prepared in accordance with Section 4.7.8 of the City of Ottawa Official Plan following the EIS Guidelines, found at <http://ottawa.ca/en/development-application-review-process-0/environmental-impact-statement-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

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in Biology and over twenty-nine years of experience in completing natural environment assessments.

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

The natural environment features of the site and adjacent lands were reviewed on October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2017 under partly cloudy skies, a moderate breeze, and an air temperature of 6° C.

### ***Existing Conditions***

The site was in agricultural use until the 1990s, then left vacant. Woody vegetation has regenerated in the past couple of decades and as shown on Figure 1, the site is a combination of cultural meadow, thicket and woodland habitats. A twin-tower hydro corridor is immediately to the south of the site, with a golf driving range adjacent to the site to the north. No channels with aquatic habitat potential were observed on the site or are mapped for the site or adjacent lands. The site is virtually flat, with no discernable slope. The elevations of the hydro corridor and Mer Bleue Road have been raised, leaving no drainage outlet from the site. The soils are mapped as poorly-drained silty clays (Schut and Wilson, 1987), which is consistent with field observations.

#### Cultural Meadows

Canada goldenrod and reed canary grass were dominant in the cultural meadow habitats (Photos 1 and 2). Common strawberry, wild carrot, Canada thistle, purple loosestrife, wool grass, white cover, red clover, wild parsnip, narrow-leaved goldenrod, New England aster, small white aster, bedstraw, common mugwort, cow vetch, path rush, broad-leaved cattail, curled dock, brome grass, meadow grass, orchard grass, and wild grape were also present. Hawthorn, slender willow, red-osier dogwood, and narrow-leaved meadowsweet shrubs were common in the meadow habitat along with regenerating stems of basswood, amur maple, ash, and poplar. White elms up to 25cm dbh were scattered along the meadow edges.

Some of the meadows had been historically ploughed and after heavy rains the previous day standing water was common on October 31<sup>st</sup> in the furrows.

#### Cultural Thickets

Where the woody vegetation was greater than 25 percent cover, the vegetation community is labelled as a cultural thicket on Figure 1 (Photo 3). Common buckthorn, glossy buckthorn, red-osier dogwood, Bebb's willow, hawthorn, slender willow, and narrow-leaved meadowsweet shrubs were common, along with regenerating ash and poplar stems. White ash and white elm trees were up to 20m dbh, with smaller trembling aspen and amur maple. Trunk and bark damages were extensive on many of the trees. Ground vegetation in the cultural thicket included

common strawberry, Canada goldenrod, New England aster, small white aster, wild parsnip, wild carrot, reed canary grass, meadow grass, cow vetch, purple loosestrife, and broad-leaved cattail.

#### Cultural Woodlands

Trembling aspen was dominant in the small, about 0.25 ha, cultural woodland area in the southwest corner of the site (Photo 4). The largest aspens were up to 40cm dbh. White elm was very common, with a representation of Manitoba maple up to 24cm dbh. Many of the elms were likely dead with severely damaged bark. Tartarian honeysuckle, staghorn sumac, red raspberry, red-osier dogwood, slender willow, and glossy buckthorn shrubs and regenerating poplar stems were in the understory of the cultural woodland. Canada goldenrod was dominant in the ground flora, along with narrow-leaved goldenrod, brome grass, meadow grass, reed canary grass, wild grape, bittersweet nightshade, and small white aster.

A few trees are immediately to the north of the site, in the southwest corner of the driving range. The largest were coppice crack willows, with individual stems up to 35cm dbh and trembling aspen and white elm in the 30 – 36cm dbh range (Photo 5). Smaller white ash were also present. The crack willow trunks were about six metres to the north of the site, so their critical root zones would not extend onto the site. The ash, elm and aspen were closer to the site boundary and their critical root zones would extend up to 2.5 metres onto the site.

Wildlife observations included Canada goose, American crow, ring-billed gull, black-capped chickadee, dark-eyed junco, song sparrow, and white-tailed deer tracks. No evidence of raptor nesting or wildlife cavity trees were observed on or adjacent to the site.



*Photo 1 – Cultural meadow habitat in the east portion of the site.  
View looking west to the cultural thicket*



*Photo 2 - Cultural meadow habitat in the central portion of the site.  
View looking west to Mer Bleue Road*





*Photo 3 – Cultural thicket habitat in the east portion of the site. View looking west*



*Photo 4 – Cultural woodland in the southwest portion of the site*



*Photo 5 – Crack willow and other deciduous trees immediately to the north of the site in the southwest corner of the golf driving range. View north from the northwest portion of the site*

#### 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 identified in the background review or field survey that would trigger a Significant Wildlife Habitat designation with respect to the ELC communities observed on the site. For example, in the cultural habitats no tree cavities were noted that may support maternity colonies for bats or other potential wildlife denning and no stick nests were observed. Stone fences for potential use by snakes and other wildlife were not observed. No forest interior habitat or old growth forest is present. No evidence of colonial nesting bird breeding habitat or other examples of seasonal concentration areas were observed. No rare vegetation communities or rare or specialized habitat, including seeps or springs, were noted.

There are no significant linkage functions in this portion of Orleans due to the lack of natural areas and expanding commercial and residential urban developments from the north and agricultural activity to the south.

#### Significant Woodlands

Significant Woodlands are defined using the criteria in Table 7-2 of the Natural Heritage Reference Manual (OMNR, 2010). There are no on site or adjacent forests that would qualify as Significant Woodlands.



### Species at Risk

No Species at Risk were observed during the field survey. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNRF)'s Make a Map: Natural Heritage Areas website was reviewed on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017

([www.giscoeapp.lrc.gov.on.ca/web/MNR/NHLUPS/NaturalHeritage/Viewer/Viewer.html](http://www.giscoeapp.lrc.gov.on.ca/web/MNR/NHLUPS/NaturalHeritage/Viewer/Viewer.html)). 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 squares including the site and adjacent lands (18VR63-03 and -13). Two threatened Species at Risk were identified for these squares, eastern meadowlark, and bobolink. These grassland birds utilize larger open areas such as hayfields. The General Habitat Description produced by MNRF for these species identifies a minimum hayfield size of 5 hectares for successful breeding. The size of the larger meadow habitat in the central and west portions of the site is 3.3 hectares, smaller than the minimum required size. In addition, the meadow has not been utilized as a hayfield and the extent of woody vegetation is greater than that found in a suitable nesting grassland for eastern meadowlark or bobolink. The adjacent driving range and thickets along the hydro corridor are not suitable nesting habitats for eastern meadowlark or bobolink

Species at Risk reported in the Breeding Bird Atlas for the 10 km square 18VR63 that includes the site and adjacent portions of Orléans are bobolink, eastern meadowlark, barn swallow, bank swallow, and chimney swift. Chimney swift nests predominantly in open chimneys and historically in tree hollows. No structures are on the site and no suitable open chimneys were observed adjacent to the site. Barn swallow nests on structures with open rafters such as barns, larger agricultural sheds, and bridges, while bank swallow is a colonial nester; burrowing in eroding silt or sand banks and sand pit walls. No suitable nesting structures for these birds were observed on or adjacent to the site.

An information request was submitted to the Kemptville District MNRF office on October 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017. 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, American ginseng, eastern prairie fringed-orchid, wood turtle, spiny softshell, Blanding's turtle, musk turtle, bobolink, eastern meadowlark, barn swallow, bank swallow, Henslow's sparrow, loggerhead shrike, eastern whip-poor-will, bald eagle, cerulean warbler, golden eagle, least bittern, little brown bat, eastern small-footed myotis, northern long-eared bat, olive hickorynut, eastern cougar, lake sturgeon, and American eel. The habitat requirements of these species along with those listed as special concern were reviewed.

Based on the site and adjacent habitat, the potential Species at Risk most likely to occur in the study area is butternut, which is found in a variety of habitats in eastern Ontario. No butternuts were observed on or within 50 metres of the proposed development area.

### *Impact Analysis and Recommendations*

No natural heritage features, as identified in the Provincial Policy Statement and OMNR (2010), were found on or adjacent to the site. No specimen trees or forests are on or adjacent to the site and other than butternut. there is no potential for Species at Risk utilization on the site. No butternut was observed on or adjacent to the site. The only trees adjacent to the site are in the southwest corner of the driving range to the north of the west edge of the site.

The following mitigation measures are recommended:

1. The amount of tree removal should be minimized as much as feasible, although the features and function of the existing on-site trees can be replaced over time with plantings of native trees and shrubs. In terms of planting sensitivities, tree and shrub species that have a high water demand are not recommended for the site due to the clay soils. These species include willows, poplars, and elm. It is important that native trees from a local seed stock be used whenever possible. Recommended species for planting include a mix of coniferous and deciduous trees such as sugar maple, red maple, basswood, bur oak, red oak, tamarack, and white spruce, along with nannyberry, elderberry, and dogwood shrubs;
2. Woody vegetation removal is to occur before April 15<sup>th</sup> or after August 15<sup>th</sup> for the protection of breeding birds, unless a survey conducted within five days of the vegetation removal identifies no bird nesting activity;
3. To protect the trees in the vicinity of the west edge of the north property line, if work is to occur within ten metres of the property line in this location, the adjacent trees to be retained are to be protected with sturdy construction fencing at least 1.3 metres in height 2.5 metres inside the property line to protect the critical root zones of these trees. Signs, notices, or posters are not to be attached to any tree. No grading, heavy machinery traffic, stockpiling of material, machine maintenance and refueling, or other activities that may cause soil compaction are to occur inside of the protection fencing. The root system, trunk, and branches of the trees to be retained are to be protected from damage. If roots of retained trees are exposed during site alterations, the roots shall be immediately reburied with soil or covered with filter cloth, burlap, or woodchips and kept moist until the roots can be buried permanently. A covering of plastic should be used to retain moisture during an extended period when watering may not be possible. Any roots that must be cut are to be cut cleanly to facilitate healing and as far from the tree as possible. Exhaust fumes from all equipment during construction will not be directed towards the canopy of adjacent retained trees. All of the supports and bracing for the protective fencing should be placed outside of the protected area and should be installed in such a way as to minimize root damage. Also, since the desired effect of the barrier is to prevent construction traffic from entering the retained tree's critical root zone, the barrier should be kept in place until all site servicing and construction has been completed;
4. As recommended in City of Ottawa (2015) prior to beginning work each day, the work area is to be checked for wildlife by conducting a thorough visual inspection of the work space and immediate surroundings. See Section 2.5 of the City's Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction (City of Ottawa, 2015) for additional recommendations on construction site management. Any turtles or snake observed in the vicinity of the work



areas or that may otherwise be in danger are to be safely relocated to the east. Animals should be moved only far enough to ensure their immediate safety. See Appendix 1 and the links in Section 4 of City of Ottawa (2015) for suggestions on how to effectively relocate turtles and snakes;

5. 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;
6. The contractor will have a spill kit on-hand at all times in case of spills or other accidents;
7. 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.

In addition, many helpful wildlife oriented mitigation measures are detailed in the City's Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction (City of Ottawa, 2015). The contractor is 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. Appendix 1 of City of Ottawa (2015) describes these species. Appendix 1 should be modified for this project to include the contact information of the project biologist, as applicable. Any Species at Risk sightings are to be immediately reported to the Ministry of the Natural Resources and Forestry and work that may impact the species suspended immediately.

### ***Conclusion***

A commercial development is proposed for 2159 Mer Bleue Road. The site is within the City's urban area, on the east side of Mer Bleue Road, approximately 400 metres north of Brian Coburn Boulevard. The site was previously used for agriculture and contains some regenerating woody vegetation in cultural habitats. No significant natural heritage features were found on or adjacent to the site. This EIS concludes that it is the professional opinion of the author that the construction and operation of the proposed development is not anticipated to impact the limited features and functions of the natural environment in this portion of the City's urban area provided the mitigation measures recommended above are properly implemented.

### ***References***

Brownell, V.R. and C.S. Blaney. 1997. Natural Area Data and Evaluation Record prepared for the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, Planning and Property Department.

City of Ottawa. 2015. Protocol for Wildlife Protection during Construction. August, 2015. 14 pp & Append.

Muncaster, B.W. and D.F. Brunton. 2005. Urban Natural Areas Environmental Evaluation Study. Prepared for the City of Ottawa.

Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources. 2010. Natural Heritage Reference Manual for Natural Heritage Policies of the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005. Second 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.

Schut, L.W. and E.A. Wilson. 1987. The soils of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton (excluding the Ottawa Urban Fringe). Report No. 58 of the Ontario Institute of Pedology.

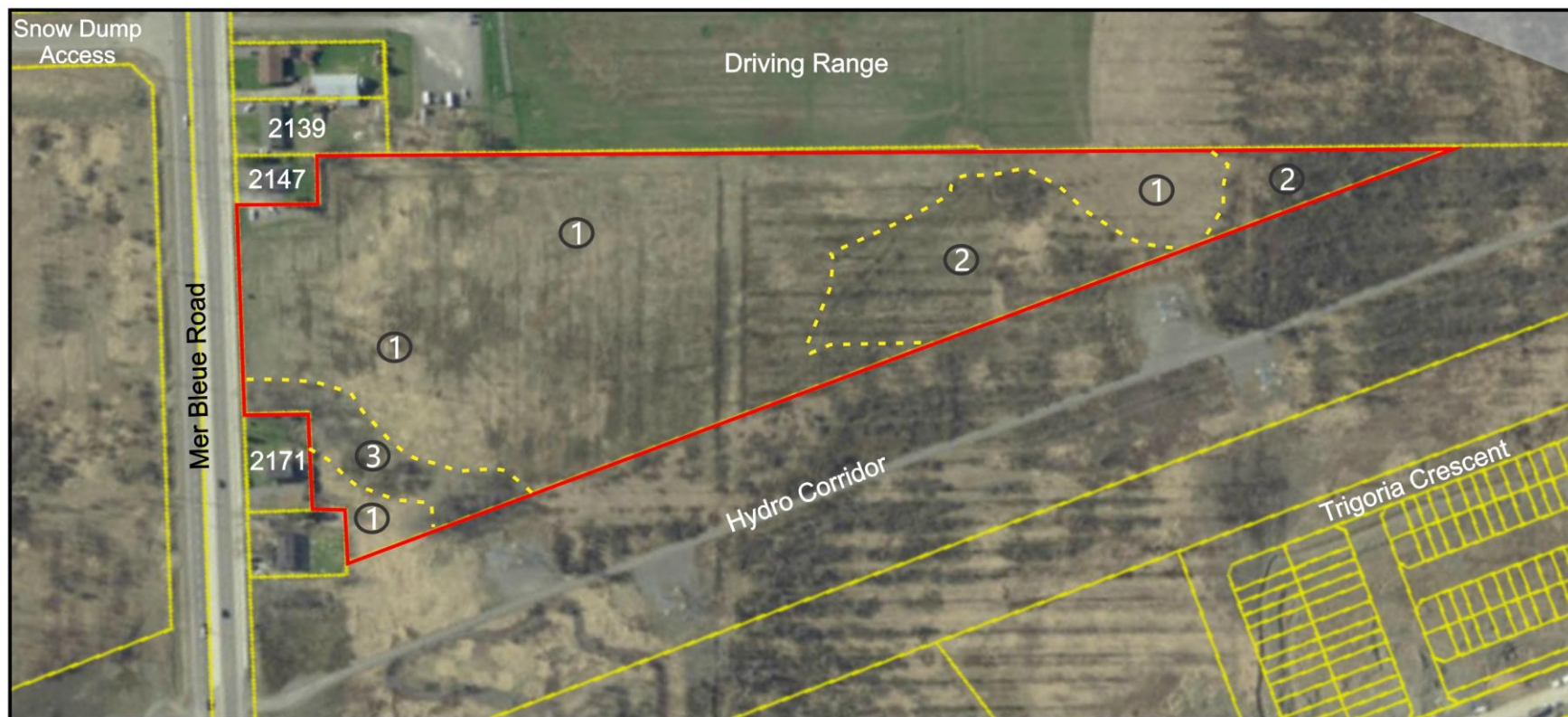
Please call if you have any questions on this EIS.

Yours Sincerely,  
**MUNCASTER ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING INC.**



Bernie Muncaster, M.Sc.  
Principal

2159 Mer Bleue Road



### Legend



Overall Site

Vegetation Communities

### Vegetation Communities

- ① Cultural meadow
- ② Cultural thicket
- ③ Cultural woodland

Approx. Scale 1:3,100



**Figure 1**

FILE: 17-10

October 31, 2017

Prepared for: **Blacksheep Development**

Prepared by:



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Environmental  
Planning Inc.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

2159 Mer Bleue Road,  
Orleans, City of Ottawa

FIGURE 2 – SITE PLAN



