

The vegetation communities on the Subject Property are a Mixed Forest (FOM) and Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple – Oak Deciduous Forest (FODM5-3)

The Mixed Forest (FOM) is the part of the forest that was planted with Red Pine prior to 1954 (see Figures 2A and 2B) and now consists of a mix of Red Pine and Norway Maple (a non-native tree species). The Dry-Fresh Sugar Maple–Oak Deciduous Forest (FODM5-3) is a natural remnant forest that consists of a mixture of Sugar Maple, Red Oak, White Pine with some Black Oak.

Also provided below is some preliminary policy context which will help with your discussion with the Community Housing committee.

The woodland is shown as an “Environmental Protection Area” on Schedule T-1 of the County's Official Plan



Dependent upon our discussions with the peer reviewer/county about the woodland on the Elm Street property the woodland represents either a “Significant Woodland” and/or an “Environmental Feature of Local Significance”. Regardless of the outcome of this discussion, both features form part of the “Environmental Protection Area” designation (see Policy 3.2.4.1 below).

3.2.4.1 Description and Criteria for Designation of Environmental Protection Areas

DESCRIPTION

The Environmental Protection Area designation applies to significant natural features and areas. Where these features are known, an Environmental Protection designation has been applied.

The location of existing Environmental Protection Areas is designated on the Land Use Schedules and on the Environmental Features Schedule C-1, with the exception of fish habitat.

Significant natural heritage features and areas designated Environmental Protection include:

- significant wetlands;
- significant habitat of endangered species or threatened species and other significant wildlife habitat;

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- fish habitat;
- significant valleylands;
- significant woodlands, and
- significant life science areas of natural and scientific interest.

Environmental features of local significance, that are known, have been designated as Environmental Protection Areas. These significant natural heritage features have been judged to demonstrate one or more of the following characteristics:

- Plant and/or animal associations which are unusual or of high quality on a County-wide basis or provincially or nationally;
- Habitats which have limited representation in the County, province or nation, based on faunal or floral species, or are small remnants of once larger areas which have virtually disappeared;
- The area functions as an important habitat for water birds and/or waterfowl for nesting and/or migratory stopover;
- The area contains an unusual diversity of habitat types, or plant and animal species within a single habitat type, due to a variety of geomorphological features, soils, water and microclimatic effects;
- Areas that are large and relatively undisturbed thereby having potential to provide suitable habitat to a greater variety of species and to those species intolerant of human disturbance;
- The site provides linkage within a system of larger habitable areas enabling the movement of wildlife among those areas; or
- Areas serving vital ecological functions such as significant groundwater discharge and recharge areas, and areas contributing to the maintenance of surface and ground water quality and quantity.

Schedule 3.2.4.1.1 of the OP lists permitted uses within Environmental Protection Areas, which does not include development.

Subject to the policies of Section 3.2.4.2, uses that may be permitted within the Environmental Protection Area designation corresponding to *significant natural heritage features and areas* will be limited to the following:

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- activities that create or maintain *infrastructure* authorized under an environmental assessment process;
- minor additions to existing buildings developed and located on existing cleared land in accordance with the Zoning By-Law;
- a building or structure that is intended for flood or erosion control or is normally associated with proper management of the natural environment as approved by the Area Municipality, the County of Oxford, the Conservation Authority, and the Ministry of Natural Resources;
- passive recreation, such as recreational walking trails approved by the Area Municipality and the County, in consultation with the Conservation Authority with jurisdiction;
- established agricultural activities on existing cleared areas, including cropping practices, livestock husbandry and existing buildings and structures associated with such farming activities. This includes the land application of nutrients in accordance with the prevailing nutrient management regulations or by-laws.
- lot creation in agricultural areas for farming purposes in accordance with the policies of Section 3.1.4.4 and 3.1.5.4 provided that the zoning by-law or other development controls prohibit the establishment of buildings or structures within the feature;
- facilities for the production of maple syrup and honey;
- harvest of timber in accordance with good forestry management practices and in conformity with the County Woodland Conservation By-Law;
- use of the area for an approved wildlife, *wetland* or fishery management project as approved by the Conservation Authority with jurisdiction and/or the Ministry of Natural Resources; or
- use of the area for passive environmental education and research.

As development is not listed as a permitted use within Section 3.2.4.1.1 the EIS will identify that the plan does not align with the environmental policies within the County Official Plan.

The EIS will also include measures to mitigate impacts to the parts of the woodland that is proposed to remain to the extent possible (e.g. timing windows, tree protection

measures, preparation and implementation of an edge management plan, etc.) and plantings to maintain tree canopy cover within the Town / County.

It may also be necessary to consult with the Ministry of the Environment Conservation and Parks who is responsible for implementing the Endangered Species Act regarding the woodland removal and provide them with the data obtained through the acoustic monitoring program that was completed to survey for Endangered bats.