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Background

2.1 ROUGE PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN (1994)

The Rouge River watershed is approximately 340 square kilometres in size. (See Figure 2.2, 'The Study Area'). The headwaters of the Rouge River system is the Oak Ridges Moraine, which extends across the north limit of the study area within the Town of Richmond Hill and the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. The main branch of the Rouge River flows southeast through the Town of Markham and the City of Toronto, where it enters Lake Ontario at the Toronto-Pickering border. Other tributaries of the Rouge River flow southward through the municipalities of Markham and Whitchurch-Stouffville, including Little Rouge Creek, Berczy Creek, Bruce Creek, Robinson Creek and a number of other tributaries.

The Province of Ontario first announced its intention to establish a significant park along the Rouge River in 1990. In total, the park could ultimately constitute 4,695 hectares (11,600 acres) in size.

From 1990 through to 1994, a number of background studies were undertaken. In April of 1994, the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) was released. This document, The Rouge North Management Plan, is designed to guide the development of Rouge Park north of Steeles Avenue. The park vision, goals, objectives and principles set out for Rouge Park North in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) and established for the area south of Steeles Avenue are endorsed and expanded upon in the Rouge North Management Plan.

The Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) set out a number of criteria to define the park boundary for the area south of Steeles Avenue. These criteria, stated in Section 3.2 of the document are summarized below:

For all tributaries with the exception of Little Rouge Creek, the boundary has been defined as follows:

1. For undeveloped areas adjacent to a valley, the boundary is 30m from the stable top of bank, to the extent possible.
2. For developed areas, the boundary is the landowner's rear property line. If, however, the landowner owns a large valleyland component, the park boundary would be the stable top of bank.
3. For areas in which future redevelopment occurs (i.e. – change of land use or zoning), the boundary would be 30m from the stable top of bank, to the extent possible.

The Rouge North Management Plan recommends an approach for determining the park boundary that is different from that set out in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994). This unique approach was adopted in recognition of differences in form, patterns of land ownership and status of urban development between the existing park area south of Steeles Avenue and the proposed northern extension. This strategy is set out in Section 4 of this document and has been confirmed as a result of the technical investigations and consultations completed in the process of developing the plan.

For Little Rouge Creek, the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) document recommends a park corridor of 300m on either side of the watercourse, resulting in the creation of a 600m wide corridor through the lands owned by the Province of Ontario.

North of this, two different options for connecting Rouge Park to the Oak Ridges Moraine were proposed. The first option was proposed as a 100 to 200m wide corridor along Little Rouge Creek. The second option was proposed as a 600m wide corridor through to the northern limit of federal lands and a 100 to 200m wide corridor through the remaining private land holdings.

In May of 1999, the Province of Ontario designated the Little Rouge Creek corridor, which encompasses an area of provincially owned lands situated along Little Rouge Creek extending from Steeles Avenue to south of Major



MacKenzie Drive in Markham, as part of the Rouge Park. Refer to Figure 4.4. The configuration of the corridor is roughly based upon the Concept Plan recommended in the Draft Final Rouge Park North Management Plan (September 1997). The dedication of this corridor represents a significant commitment to the realization of the Rouge Park north of Steeles Avenue.

The park goals, objectives, and direction as set out in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) provided the basis for the Rouge North Management Plan. However, the Rouge North Management Plan applies a unique approach to defining the proposed park in recognition that the nature and composition of Rouge Park North are significantly different from those of the largely consolidated park south of Steeles Avenue in terms of the following:

- Form - Rouge Park North will be a system of linear park corridors extending along the Rouge River and its tributaries in combination with corridors linking eastward and westward between the tributary corridors and the adjacent watersheds.
- Context - The Rouge Park North study area traverses a range of land uses, including the urbanized areas of Markham, Unionville, Richmond Hill and Whitchurch-Stouffville.
- Connectivity - The Rouge Park North study area is dissected by a network of transportation and utility corridors.
- Land Ownership - Approximately 85% of the lands within the Rouge Park North study area are privately owned.
- Physiographic Setting - The Rouge Park North study area encompasses a combination of areas possessing distinct physiography. These include the Oak Ridges Moraine, the ill-defined tributaries of the headwater areas, the shallow stream corridors of the middle reaches and the defined valley corridors associated with the lower reaches of the main branch of the Rouge River, the Morningside Tributary and Little Rouge Creek.
- Social Context - In the urbanized areas within the Rouge Park North study area, the river and stream corridors and associated valleylands have become established as the cultural centre of the community (e.g. Toogood Pond) or as valued active or passive recreational amenities (e.g. Milne Lake, Bruce's Mill and the Markham Pathways system).

Consequently, the boundary criteria, concept, zoning, management policies, proposed park programs, facilities and structure of the park north of Steeles Avenue are unique, reflecting the nature and context of this portion of the park.

The northern section of Rouge Park will be more linear in nature than the southern section, focusing around the valley systems of the Rouge River and its tributaries. However, the overall concept, vision, goals and objectives, which have been adopted as part of the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994), have been used as the basis for generating the Rouge North Management Plan. Accordingly, Rouge Park's vision, goals and objectives, which are re-iterated here, form the philosophical basis for the Rouge North Management Plan.

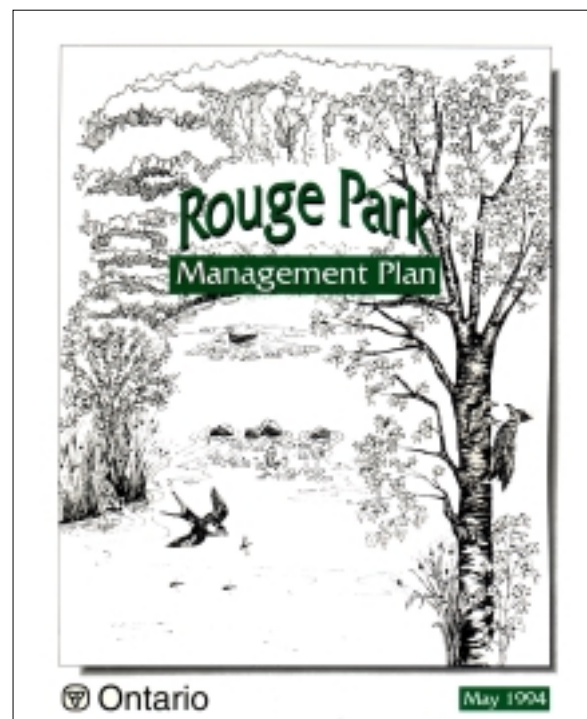


Figure 2.1 Rouge Park Management Plan (1994).

2.2 VISION, GOAL, OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING PRINCIPLES FOR ROUGE PARK NORTH

The Rouge Park Vision - Rouge Park Management Plan (1994)

The vision to be realized through the implementation and management of Rouge Park as set out in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) is described in the following statement:

Rouge Park will be a special place of outstanding natural features and diverse cultural heritage in an urban-rural setting, protected and flourishing as an ecosystem in perpetuity. Human activities will exist in harmony with the natural values of the park. The park will be a sanctuary for nature and the human spirit.

Park Goal and Objectives

To achieve this vision, a goal as well as a suite of objectives and planning principles are set out in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994). The goal for Rouge Park is stated as:

To protect, restore and enhance the natural, scenic and cultural values of the park in an ecosystem context, and to promote public responsibility, understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of this heritage.

The objectives for Rouge Park are:

- Natural Heritage Objective - To protect, restore and enhance the natural ecosystem of the park by ensuring the health and diversity of its native species, habitats, landscapes and ecological processes.
- Cultural Heritage Objective - To identify, protect and conserve the cultural heritage features of the park for their inherent value and depiction of the long-term human use and occupancy of the area.
- Land Use Objective - To ensure protection of the ecological integrity and cultural values of the park through innovative planning, management and land use in the park and its environs.
- Management Objective - To manage the park to ensure the achievement of all park objectives and to provide for ongoing public involvement in park planning and management.
- Interpretation Objective - To promote knowledge and understanding of the natural and cultural values of the park, their protection and management requirements, as well as their significance, sensitivities and interrelationships.
- Recreation Objective - To provide opportunities for appropriate recreational enjoyment consistent with all other park objectives.

The vision and objectives set out in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) were adopted for the Rouge North Management Plan to ensure that Rouge Park north of Steeles Avenue represents a contiguous and complementary extension of the existing Rouge Park. However, the Management Plan is fundamentally different in its approach and its recommendations for implementation since the context and the configuration of the valleylands of the Rouge River and its tributaries, which are the core feature of Rouge Park North, differ from those of Rouge Park.

In order to achieve the above noted objectives, the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) set out a suite of park planning principles related to Natural Heritage, Cultural Heritage, First Nations Involvement, Land Use, Interpretation and Education, Recreation and Management. These principles provided guidance in the course of generating the Rouge North Management Plan.

2.3 PHYSICAL CONTEXT

The proposed extension of Rouge Park north of Steeles Avenue is comprised largely of the valleylands along the various branches of the Rouge River.

The majority of the Rouge River valley system traverses the Central Till Plain. This physiographic unit is characteristically comprised of gently rolling topography that gradually slopes towards Lake Ontario south from the Oak Ridges Moraine. Above mean sea level, elevations across the watershed drop from 400m in the north to approximately 140m. The south slope of the Oak Ridges Moraine forms the source area for the headwaters of the Rouge River watershed.

The Rouge River watershed is a result of glacial lacustrine deposits associated with glacial Lake Iroquois. As a result, most soils are gently sloping textured tills. Clay and loam soils predominate on most tablelands with poorly drained bottomland soils, being found in most valleyland complexes (Markham Natural Features Study, pp. 3.1-3.7).

The Oak Ridges Moraine, which constitutes the potential northern terminus of the Rouge Park system, is a distinctively hummocky moraine that acts as the watershed divide, separating watercourses flowing north to Lake Simcoe and south to Lake Ontario. The moraine averages between 274 and 400m above sea level and consists of gravel, sand and other glacial deposits.

2.3.1 Rouge River Watershed

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA 1986) divides the Rouge River watershed, which encompasses approximately 340 km² of land area, into four distinct physiographic zones. Three of these zones - the headwaters, middle and lower reaches - are found within the Rouge Park North study area. The watershed encompasses land uses ranging from varying densities of urban development through the land use continuum to rural agricultural and remnant natural woodlots. Generally, the southern and western portions of the watershed are urbanized, while the northern 60% of the watershed is primarily agricultural in use. As noted in the Town of Markham Natural Features Study, only 13.7% of the Town of Markham, which encompasses the greatest portion of the Rouge Park North study area, is comprised of natural vegetation, of which only 5% is covered in woodland (TRCA 1986:3-29).



Figure 2.2: The Study Area.

Source: *The Rouge Park Management Plan (1994)*

Figure 2.3 illustrates the context of the Rouge River watershed at a regional scale. The following section provides an overview of each subwatershed of the Rouge River in relation to its physical context.

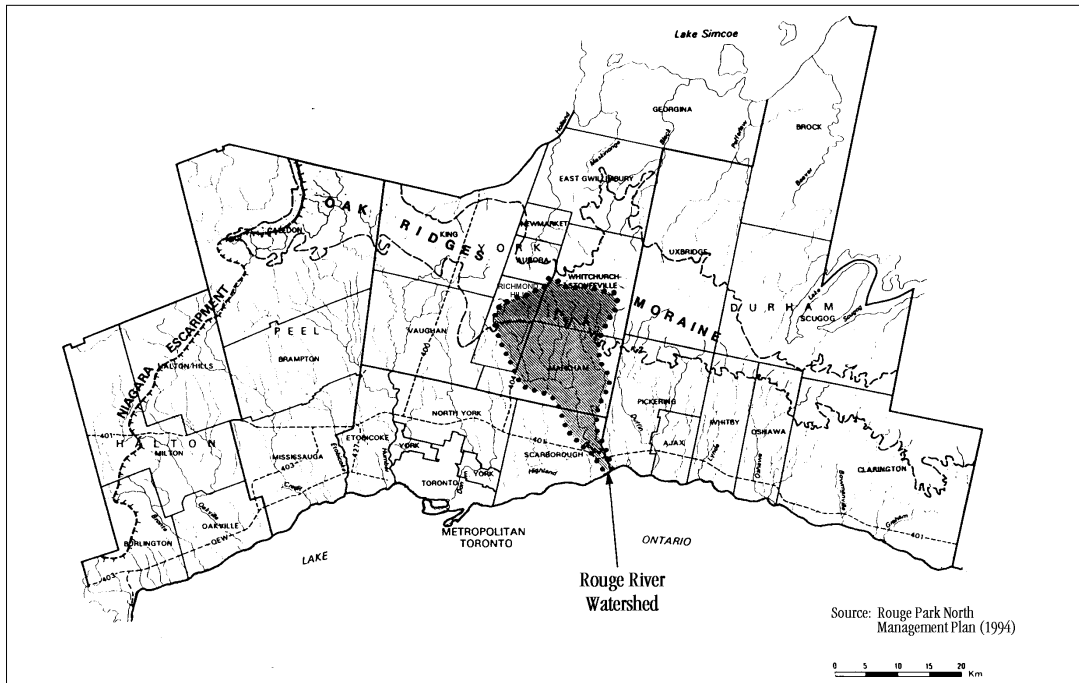


Figure 2.3 The Rouge River Watershed Context.

Little Rouge Creek Subwatershed

The Little Rouge Creek Valley, which constitutes the eastern portion of the Rouge River watershed, is comprised of a significant amount of forested and naturalized lands. This river valley remains the most natural of all the tributaries of the Rouge River system, primarily traversing predominantly agricultural land to its source at the headwaters just south of the Stouffville Sideroad, at the toe of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

Other than agricultural uses, land uses adjacent to the Little Rouge Creek system include the hamlets of Cedar Grove, Locust Hill and Dicksons Hill, the Markham Fairgrounds (18th Avenue and McCowan Road), golf courses, and the Markham Airport (Highway 48).

Morningside Tributary Subwatershed

The confluence of the Morningside Tributary and the main branch of the Rouge River is situated south of Steeles Avenue. North of Steeles Avenue, there is a distinct division between the tributary and the river, which are segregated by both topography and a lack of connected forest cover. The headwaters of the Morningside Tributary formerly extended westward from Highway 48. However, development has resulted in the burial or diversion of the drainageways and shallow channels that were tributary to the creek. Downstream of Highway 48, the Town of Markham, in partnership with the Province of Ontario and the developers who own the property, has constructed a stormwater management demonstration facility designed to improve water quality and manage flows, benefiting the downstream reaches of the tributary and the Rouge River as a whole.

In contrast to the soil conditions predominant throughout the study area, soils within the Morningside Tributary subwatershed are, for the most part, silts and fine sands. These soils are easily eroded, contributing to the sensitivity of this subwatershed to potential impacts from urbanization upstream. Although the valley corridor within which the Morningside Tributary flows is heavily wooded, the presence of these unstable soils has resulted in extreme bank and bed erosion, which in turn has resulted in loss of habitat and degradation of water quality. The Town of Markham, as part of a joint ecosystem-based study with the Ministry of the

Environment and Environment Canada, implemented a stormwater management project in the Morningside Creek watershed with the objective of minimizing erosion, improving water quality and enhancing baseflow.

Rouge River Subwatershed (Main Branch)

The Rouge River subwatershed, which includes Berczy Creek, Bruce Creek, Robinson Creek, Exhibition Creek and East Beaver Creek, encompasses the most urbanized lands within the study area, including the communities of Unionville, Markham Village and the Bayview Hill area of Richmond Hill.

The northern half of the watershed is comprised of primarily agricultural lands, but there are significant woodlots and natural areas associated with the headwater region of the creeks tributary to the Rouge River. Significant natural areas include the lands south of Lake Wilcox, Hayes Lake, Jefferson Forest, Simeon Forest Complex and Bloomington Wetlands in Richmond Hill, as well as the area associated with Bruce's Mill Conservation Area.

The southern portion of the watershed is urbanized, and has major transportation corridors traversing the river valleys. The most significant of these include Highway 407 and Highway 7, which impede the north-south connectivity of the main branch of the Rouge River and its tributaries. Highway 404, Leslie Street, Woodbine Avenue, Kennedy Road, McCowan Road and Markham Road also present limitations to the creation of a continuous park corridor.

The major open space areas associated with the southern portion of this subwatershed include Milne Lake Conservation Park, which is the largest consolidated open space in Markham, and Toogood Pond in Unionville.

In addition to the transportation network, several golf courses and other types of privately held lands within the subwatershed also present significant challenges to the establishment of a continuous park within this subwatershed.

2.4 ROUGE NORTH STUDY AREA

The Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) identified the limits of the planning area for Rouge Park north of Steeles Avenue (Section 10.2: p.88) illustrated in Figure 2.2. The planning area was designated to include the "valley systems of the Rouge River, Little Rouge Creek, Berczy Creek, Bruce Creek and Morningside Creek". The health and sustainability of the ecosystem of the Rouge River and Rouge Park are influenced by the health of the resources of all the tributaries throughout the system. In recognition of this fact, the inventory and background review not only encompassed the river and tributary corridors identified in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994), but also aimed at identifying opportunities to achieve park objectives by including additional stream corridors in the Rouge North area.

As a product of this process, three tributaries - Robinson Creek, Exhibition Creek and East Beaver Creek - were identified as possessing characteristics which would benefit both the Rouge Park North and the communities of which they are a part. A brief description of these tributaries, as well as the justification for their inclusion in the Rouge Park North study area, is provided in the following sections. The location of these tributaries within the study area is depicted in Figure 2.4.

2.4.1 Robinson Creek

A tributary to the main branch of the Rouge River, Robinson Creek flows southward from a headwater area north of Major MacKenzie Drive to its confluence with the Rouge River downstream of Milne Dam. The creek receives a significant amount of its baseflow from groundwater sources along its length and supports a viable and diverse cold water fishery. South of 16th Avenue, a large percentage of the creek corridor lies in public ownership. Within this reach, a length of the river corridor extending from Highway 7 northward to Robinson Street is privately owned. Upstream of 16th Avenue, the corridors along Robinson Creek are designated as open

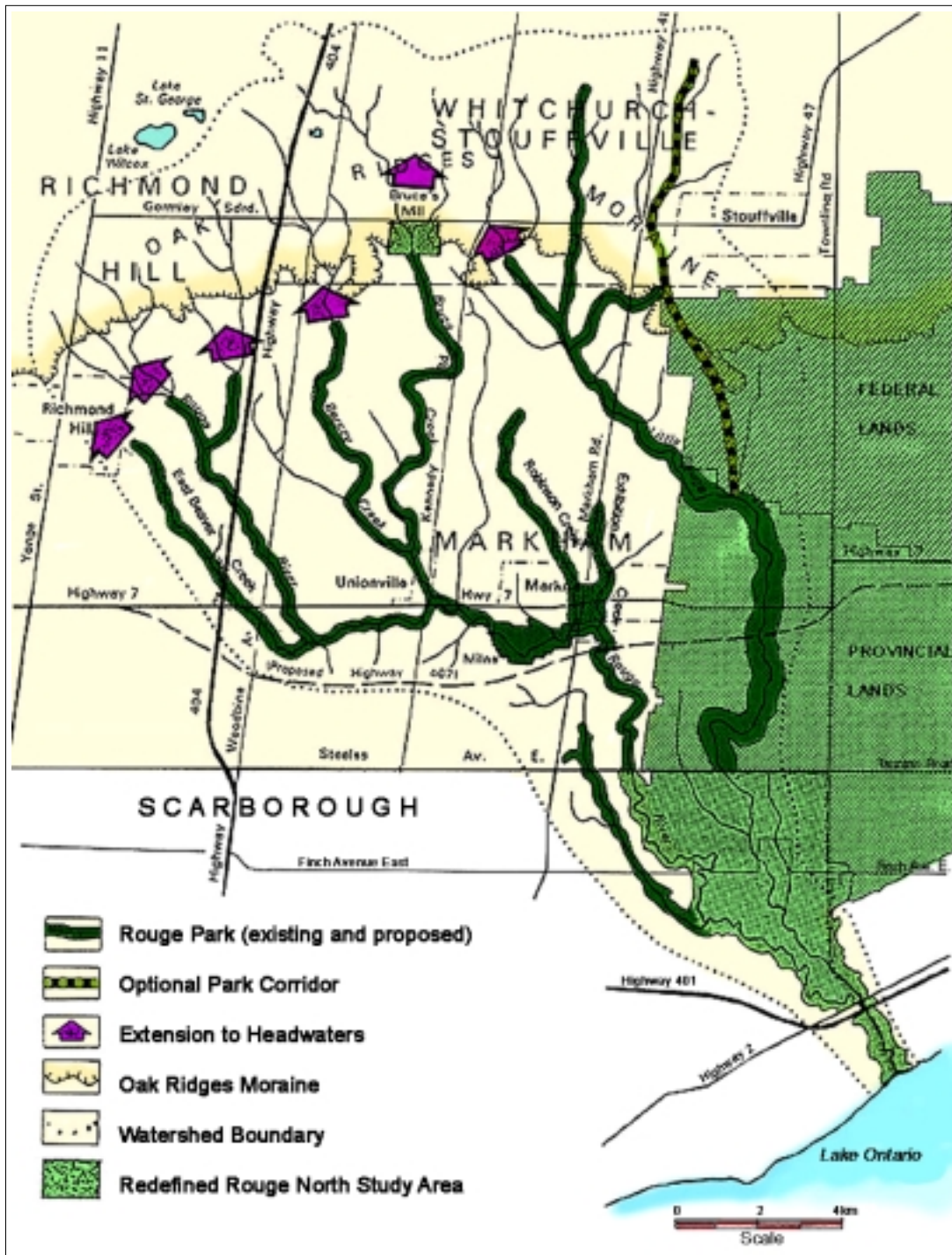


Figure 2.4 Redefined Rouge Park North Study Area.

space, providing a continuous link to Major Mackenzie Drive. North of Major MacKenzie Drive, the creek is held in private ownership.

Three significant community based stewardship programs have been initiated along the length of Robinson Creek, aimed at preserving and enhancing the health of the system. These include:

- The Robinson Creek Restoration Project - A fish habitat enhancement project being implemented along the reach extending south of Highway 7 to the confluence.
- Cedar Valley Park - A community and school based initiative aimed at reinstating natural forest cover within Cedar Valley Park, downstream of Raymerville Drive.

- Private Landowner Stewardship - L. Smith Property - Owning lands north of Major MacKenzie Drive on Robinson Creek, Mr. Lorne Smith has initiated a restoration project on his own property, aimed at increasing forest cover and enhancing the health of the Robinson Creek system.

The Markham Conservation Committee (MCC), Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) and the Robinson Creek Restoration Committee have been key participants in the orchestration and implementation of these projects, with an ongoing commitment to stewardship within the watershed. In addition, Rouge Park staff and Save the Rouge Valley System Inc. have undertaken a number of restoration and stewardship projects throughout the watershed.

These initiatives, combined with the importance of the creek in terms of aquatic resources and its situation within both the physical and the cultural context of Markham Village, position Robinson Creek as a significant asset within both the Rouge River system and the future Rouge Park North.

2.4.2 Exhibition Creek

Exhibition Creek, in contrast to Robinson Creek, is a highly disturbed system. The creek has been relocated or channelized along much of its length to accommodate land development, stormwater management and infrastructure initiatives. The creek extends northward from its outlet to the main branch of the Rouge River and remains in a relatively natural state until it intersects Highway 7. North of Highway 7, the creek has been manipulated in varying degrees, the most significant being its wholesale realignment north of Church Street, including the piping of the creek upstream of Fincham Drive and beneath Hare Court.

In spite of the degree of disturbance, Exhibition Creek provides a number of significant opportunities afforded by its alignment, ownership and situation within the community, including the following:

- Much of the Exhibition Creek corridor is presently held in public ownership, including the linear park system extending from Church Street to Dry Pond Park, north of Fincham Avenue. Mount Joy Lake exists as a popular landscape feature and recreational node within the system.
- The creek corridor is abutted by four schools, affording the opportunity to achieve educational and interpretive objectives along this river corridor.
- Although disturbed and degraded, the creek corridor is slowly evolving to become more natural. Further restoration initiatives could provide significant water quality and habitat benefits to Exhibition Creek and the Rouge River system as a whole.
- The alignment of Exhibition Creek parallels that of Robinson Creek. Situated in the east portion of Markham Village, already recreational in focus, the Exhibition Creek corridor is well positioned to achieve objectives related to recreation. This presents the opportunity to reduce the demand for recreational uses along the relatively pristine Robinson Creek, aiding in the long-term sustainability of the Robinson Creek system within Markham Village.

2.4.3 East Beaver Creek

East Beaver Creek flows in a southeasterly direction through Richmond Hill, crossing under Highway 404 and Highway 7 before intersecting with the main branch of the Rouge River east of Woodbine Avenue. Within the Town of Richmond Hill, the corridor along East Beaver Creek is primarily held in public ownership. These lands combine active and passive recreation facilities as well as natural regeneration areas, abutting both residential and commercial uses.

Downstream of the crossing of Highway 404, East Beaver Creek has been manipulated to accommodate development. East Beaver Creek traverses a number of prestige corporate properties through the Valleywood

Business Park. The feature stormwater management pond on the Allstate property is an on-line facility on East Beaver Creek.

Downstream of Highway 7, East Beaver Creek has been channelized, compromising its potential as both a viable aquatic resource and an aesthetic and recreational feature in the community. However, the Town of Markham's Greenlands Plan for Markham Centre identifies this reach of East Beaver Creek as both a scenic and recreational feature, positioning the creek corridor as a visual feature along the Highway 407 Transitway corridor and recommending the regeneration of the degraded creek system to establish it as a visual, recreational and environmental feature within the Markham Centre community.

Based upon the above justification, a recommendation was put forth to the Rouge Park Management Plan Committee (RNMPC) to include Robinson Creek, Exhibition Creek and East Beaver Creek within the Rouge Park North study area. The recommendation was subsequently endorsed by the committee, presenting the opportunity to further strengthen the integrity of the watershed and Rouge Park. The redefined Rouge North study area is illustrated in Figure 2.4.

2.4.4 All Other Tributaries

In addition to the Rouge River and the major tributaries described in the previous sections, a number of smaller tributaries and watercourses are located throughout the watershed outside the limits of the Study Area as defined in the Rouge Park Management Plan (1994) and redefined in the process of developing the Rouge North Management Plan. Many of these tributaries present opportunities to achieve ecological objectives or establish recreational linkages.

The health of the Rouge River and its major tributaries within the Rouge Park is sustained by the consistent supply of water of sufficient quality discharged by the tributaries which are situated outside of the study area. Therefore, it is important that the function of these watercourses be maintained and, where degradation has occurred over time, restored and enhanced to ensure that the ecological integrity of the Rouge Park is maintained over the long term. In recognition of the above, all Rouge watershed tributaries will be designated as 'Rouge Park Study Area' and will be subject to further studies using ecological criteria as they are developed, to determine the exact boundary location of the Rouge Park.

2.4.5 The Watershed Beyond the Limits of the Study Area

The Rouge North Management Plan was generated based upon an approach that recognized that the ecological health of the park is determined by the integrity of the resources of the Rouge River watershed. It must, however, be emphasized that the Management Plan is not a plan for the watershed as a whole, but rather for an area, defined by specific river corridors, which has been afforded special status. In this context, the Management Plan builds on the existing legislation, policies, principles and initiatives that have been implemented to facilitate the management and protection of the natural and cultural resources of the watershed. The protection of the tributary and stream corridors that are not encompassed by the redefined Rouge North study area as illustrated in Figure 2.4 is vital to the ecological sustainability of the park. Therefore, the implementation of the Management Plan reinforces the need to preserve and enhance these corridors.

To achieve these objectives it is recommended that the Rouge Park Alliance, its partners and the relevant regulatory agencies initiate a process aimed at reviewing existing policies and legislation as they relate to the management of natural heritage resources, including tributaries with a drainage-shed of less than 125 hectares throughout the Rouge watershed. This process should include an evaluation of existing policies and an examination of the cumulative benefits or impacts on the ecological health of the watershed. Where deficiencies are identified, the implementation of new policies and legislation developed with the goal of improving the ecological integrity of the Rouge Park and founded on ecological criteria should be undertaken.

The Rouge North Management Plan encourages the exploration of creative solutions to integrate tributaries and drainageways as amenities within the open space system of proposed developments while preserving and enhancing their ecological function. To ensure the continued protection of valley and stream corridors outside of the limits of the park, the Management Plan supports the stringent application of existing policies and legislation, under the administration of the Ministry of Natural Resources, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Region of York and the municipalities. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The Lakes and Rivers Improvement Act;
- The Fisheries Act, Federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans;
- The Region of York's Tree Preservation By-law;
- The TRCA's flood regulation and fill regulation policies;
- The TRCA's Valley and Stream Corridor Management Program;
- The MNR's Policies on Stream Development Setbacks (1995);
- Section 2 of the Planning Act.;
- Section 3 Provincial Policy Statement; and
- Town of Markham OPA-52 Natural Features Amendment.

2.5 LAND OWNERSHIP AND JURISDICTION

The overall ownership profile of lands associated with the Rouge River and its tributaries reflects a high proportion of private ownership. The following provides an overview of land ownership of each of the major tributaries from the main branch of the Rouge proceeding east to Little Rouge Creek.

The Rouge River, and parts of the river system leading up to and including the confluence at 16th Avenue, are predominantly under municipal or Conservation Authority ownership and jurisdiction (approximately 55%). Major portions of the Rouge River in Richmond Hill are either owned by the Town, or are subject to development, which in turn will place these lands in public ownership. Private ownership accounts for most of the remaining adjoining lands (approximately 35%). The remaining land holdings are listed as either institutional ownership (approximately 3%) or utility corridors (approximately 7%). A hydro utility corridor runs south of Highway 7, paralleling the Highway 407 corridor, while another follows a north-south alignment between Warden Avenue and Woodbine Avenue, extending northward from the Highway 407 corridor.

Milne Conservation Park, which is owned by the Conservation Authority but administered by the Town of Markham, constitutes the largest holding of public lands along the main branch of the Rouge River. Toogood Pond and the adjacent parklands are owned by the Town of Markham and are a key feature of the Village of Unionville.

Berczy Creek, north of 16th Avenue, is almost entirely under private ownership (approximately 90%). Three sections of this creek are owned by local government (approximately 10%). The section between 16th Avenue and the fork shared with Bruce Creek is under local government ownership and jurisdiction.

Bruce Creek is predominantly under private ownership (approximately 95%). The section between 16th Avenue and the confluence of Berczy Creek is owned by the municipality (approximately 5% of total). Bruce's Mill Conservation Area constitutes the largest public land holding on this tributary.

The reach of Little Rouge Creek, which extends northwestward from Ninth Line and Major MacKenzie Drive to the Oak Ridges Moraine, is held almost totally in private ownership. Downstream of Major MacKenzie Drive to Steeles Avenue, the province has designated a corridor of land along Little Rouge Creek as part of the Rouge Park. A segment of the Little Rouge Creek valleylands located north of Cornell is owned by the Government of Canada as part of the federal airport lands. These lands encompass approximately 5% of the total valleyland area along the length of Little Rouge Creek.

2.5.1 Summary

The pattern of land ownership within the Rouge River watershed can be characterized as large tracts of land in the northern half of the watershed being held in private ownership. In the existing urban areas, ownership is typically very fragmented, consisting of a combination of public, institutional and private land holdings. The high proportion of lands held in private ownership dictates the recommendation strategies by the Rouge North Management Plan to encourage private landowner participation to facilitate the successful implementation and long-term stewardship of Rouge Park North.

The recent creation of the Rouge Park along the Little Rouge Creek valley north of Steeles Avenue combined with the extent of federally owned land along the corridor affords the significant opportunity to develop the Rouge Park North as a functional terrestrial corridor in the public domain.