

Township of
Langley



Est. 1873



CANADA 150

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 22, 2017

PROPOSAL TO PRESERVE TREES AND CREATE PASSIVE PARK AT TARA FARMS

Close to 33 acres of forested land on property known as Tara Farms will be purchased and preserved as a passive park by the Township of Langley, should an application to subdivide the property go through.

The entire 52.6-acre property at 21198 Smith Crescent in Willoughby is currently located in the Agricultural Land Reserve. An application has been made by the landowners to the Agricultural Land Commission to have it excluded from the ALR to allow for subdivision and future development.

Should that happen, the Township will purchase a treed, 32.83-acre parcel in the southeast portion of the property for \$4,920,000 and maintain it as a passive park that can be used by the entire community.

“A number of residents and members of Council expressed concern about this application, based on the forestation of the land, the natural habitat and wildlife it is home to, and its environmental significance,” said Township of Langley Mayor Jack Froese. “If the ALC allows the subdivision to take place, the Township will purchase a large portion of the land so it can be incorporated into the municipal Arbour Ribbon and enjoyed by everyone for generations to come.”

The Township’s Arbour Ribbon provides a natural buffer between urban development and agricultural land. As part of the ribbon, the proposed new park would maintain the mature forest, and trails would be created to give residents a chance to connect with nature and enjoy physical activity. The park would provide scenic views out over the Milner Valley, and the retained trees would act as screening, to provide a visual buffer between the agricultural and urban uses.

Creation of the park would also meet the objectives of the Willoughby Community Plan, which calls for a major park in this location.

For the Township to purchase the property and establish the park, it must first be subdivided from the remaining 19.75 acres, which will be used for roadways and urban development lands. Of them, 15.25 acres will be used for a future residential development and 4.5 acres will be used to create a proposed 212 Street Connector. A connection between 208 and 216 Streets has been included in the Township's transportation plans since the 1980s.

If the lands are developed, they would bring in \$1.5 to \$2.3 million in park Development Cost Charges to the municipality. The Township will use those DCCs to help offset the parkland's purchase price. The remainder will come from parkland acquisition and DCC reserves.

Township staff have been working with the landowners to arrange the purchase of the property at a cost verified by an independent and qualified appraiser, should the subdivision be approved by the Agricultural Land Commission.