

BALANCING DEVELOPMENT WITH THE ENVIRONMENT

By Farrah Ward, Geranium

Ensuring a harmonious approach to preserving the natural environment while efficiently using a diminishing land supply is key to developing infill or greenfield lands, particularly as populations and the demand for new homes grow. The benefits of preserving and restoring natural features are numerous and contribute to vibrant communities. These benefits must be weighed against the design requirements of the new development. Achieving the right balance can result in neighbourhoods that are more compatible with and complimentary to the existing community.

Geranium has strived to design and build communities that are sensitive to the environment, whether it's enhancing, restoring, or preserving the existing natural features. Allegro in Aurora is the latest example of this. As an infill development of 159 detached homes set on a former golf course in a mature neighbourhood with approximately 400 adjacent homeowners, creating compatibility between the existing community and the future residents was a priority. This began by identifying natural features that were to be preserved, and those important to the community and working collaboratively through stakeholder consultation to preserve or enhance those features, where possible.

Significant wooded areas, tributaries and wetland habitat were identified through the Natural Heritage studies that were completed in support of the development applications. These



features together with their associated buffers and further adjacent developable areas were preserved to create a community park which will include over 7 kilometres of trails, restored and naturalized tributaries and wetlands, and protected wooded areas. In total, approximately half of the 101-acre site will be conveyed into public ownership.

In addition to the creation of the significant park and open space system, tree preservation on the remainder of the property was a community priority. Hundreds of meetings were held on site with various stakeholders including individual homeowners to review and refine the design of the developable lands. Through this extensive consultation and design process, additional trees were preserved. Where mature trees line the former fairways today, they will be enhanced by the individual planting plans that were prepared for adjoining homeowners by our landscape architect.

Allegro will far exceed the required compensation for the trees which

were removed through the planting of thousands of new trees. The completed Allegro neighbourhood will not only compliment but enhance the existing community and urban canopy.

As land developers, our goal is always to achieve a balance between preserving the natural features of each property and ensuring an efficient and best use of the land through a comprehensive consultation process and collaborative approach. Allegro will be an example of the benefits of achieving a balance, to be enjoyed by future homeowners, neighbouring properties and the community of Aurora.



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Celebrating 40 years in business Geranium has created master-planned communities including more than 8,000 homes in Ontario.

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