Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve

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February 22, 2021

To: Toronto and East York Community Council

From: Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve Committee by email teycc@toronto.ca

Re: Comments on the Report for Action Item TE 23.55 for consideration on February 24, 2021; 954, 956,958 Broadview Avenue and 72 Chester Hill road, OPA and ZBA Submission.

Dear Councillors and Staff,

Our stewardship group works in the natural area of Todmorden Mills Park. We have worked for many years removing invasive plants, planting native trees, shrubs and herbs with community and youth, conducting guided walks and enhancing existing wetlands on the site. It was named Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve by the late Charles Sauriol, a prominent conservationist and author who was a founding member of the Preserve. It is a small location - just under 10 hectares, a part of the Don Valley. It is designated on the Official Plan on Map 12 as Environmentally Significant Area # 80. One of the reasons for this designation that it "contributes appreciably to the healthy maintenance of a natural ecosystem beyond its boundaries, such as ...serving as a water storage or recharge area" (O.P. Chapter 3, 3.4, 13d) and "substantial seepage supports additional diversity and contributes to amphibian breeding areas." (Toronto ESA Study: Todmorden Mills, June 2012). The groundwater seepage throughout the site is of vital importance to the ecological integrity of the site and must flow unimpeded to the ravine to preserve the ESA. The stewardship work we do supports the principles and goals of the Ravine Strategy and the Biodiversity Strategy by improving the health of the ecosystem for plants and animals in this part of our ravine system which in turn benefits families and all who visit and enjoy the natural area.

We are very concerned about the impacts on the natural wetlands downhill from the proposed development because the Hydrogeological Report (outlined below) recommends taking the seepage water that presently sustains the wetland flora and fauna of the ravine, collecting it, and then pumping it into a sewer.

Requests:

1. We request that an investigation by TRCA be conducted that details the quantity of groundwater that will be removed as a result of the proposal to do dewatering for the construction of the third level of parking underground, taking into account a larger zone of influence than was used for the report.

2. Outline the impacts on the ecological function of the wetland areas of removing the seepage from the site,

3. Make recommendations for changes that could be made to mitigate or remove the problem?

We have the following comments on the Report for Action: TE 23.55 and the Supporting Documents/Reports from the Applicant:

1. O.P. Conformity: It is clear that O.P.A. 343 passed by Council would best protect the public amenity of the Todmorden Mills Wildflower Preserve ravine and natural area from negative impacts.

Investigations for this proposal had a 'zone of influence' too narrow to properly assess the impact of the proposal on the larger site, particularly regarding groundwater seepage and discharge and the habitats supported by this seepage.

2. The Hydrogeological Report shows that the 3rd underground parking level intercepts perched groundwater. It is proposed to first temporarily, then permanently dewater the area of this groundwater and pump it to a sewer. We strongly object to this because it is important to ensure that all current groundwater seepage downslope from the subject site be retained. The quantity and quality of the water flowing to the Preserve's wetland areas should not be altered as this natural seepage is vital to ecological functions of the wet areas downhill. The water seepage from the slope area runs into a small stream which flows into a larger water feature 'The Oxbow'. These wetland habitats are used by many species of birds such as great blue herons, great egrets, black crowned night herons and kingfishers. In the Oxbow are small fish, frogs and insects like dragonflies, and water skimmers. Many of the educational programs run by the museum for schools and visitors are based on the wetlands around the site. The visitors and schools pay fees to attend these programs so there could also be an impact economically if the wetland areas of the site are altered or diminished. It is the wetland features of this site that make it special and important to people and families in the local neighbourhood and larger community.

3. Built Form and Public Realm...

We request that in addition to the O.P. sections indicated in the report, that the following sections also be considered: Chapter 3, 3.4 Natural Environment - several relevant sections: 1.a) iii,v,vi, and b), and also the principles outlined in the Toronto Environmental Plan. The impacts of light on the natural area at night should also be considered . Chapter 3.1.1 The Public Realm, Policy 1.d, 3., and 3.2.3 Parks and Open Space 1,and 3 should be considered.

Full Bird Friendly Guidelines and the companion book Bird Friendly Guidelines - Glass should be required and implemented. It is not sufficient to apply decals as these have been shown not to work to prevent bird strikes.

4. Ravine Protection a. Our stewards over the years have endeavored to protect and improve this public ravine based on current ecological restoration practices. The site is small and already has 3 access points. There has been unsanctioned trail building from time to time on some parts of the slope which has been dismantled by city crews at our request. We agree with a design that shows a continuous fence with no new access point to public lands.

b. If there are any planned enhancements to the ravine such as plantings we request that we be consulted and involved in the selection of plant species, so that they are compatible with the forests within Todmorden.

5. Amenity Space - As the Pet-Friendly Guidelines indicate, there are increasing numbers of dogs as companions in our city. At this site there have been some conflicts with owners of dogs who let them off- leash in the natural area of the Preserve. To prevent overuse it is imperative that places on the applicant's property be provided to service the needs of the dogs, as is outlined in the Pet-Friendly Guidelines. This is another reason that for this ravine area there should be a continuous fence with no access point to public property in it. This impact is expected to increase and be cumulative as redevelopment proposals nearby are submitted.

6. All setbacks from the stable top-of slope should be at least 10 metres. With the history of fill behind these buildings on Broadview Avenue, slope failures in the 2013 rainstorm and the report about Slope and Stability in the Supporting Documentation showing the slope is only moderately stable, it is important not to reduce in any way the required setback.

According to the Official Plan Chapter 3.3.4, 8: " Development will be set back from the following locations by at least 10 metres **,** or more if warranted by the severity of existing or potential natural hazards...a) the top-of-bank of valleys, ravines and bluffs, and b) other locations where slope instability, erosion, flooding, or other physical conditions present a significant risk to life or property..."

Please see selected attachments that follow.

Regards,

Paula Davies, President
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Attachments

1. Excerpts from the Natural Heritage Impact Statement for the proposed development

6.1 Impact Assessment

One of the primary design principles adopted for this proposal was to protect and enhance the NHS features and functions in accordance with Provincial, TRCA and City goals, objectives and policies. As impact avoidance is generally the most effective means of reducing the risk of development impacts on the natural environment, it is recommended that development limits be established outside the boundaries of any significant natural heritage features and natural hazards, if present. As discussed in the preceding section, the existing constraints are the LTSTOS and the woodland dripline, and development is not proposed within any of these features, thereby avoiding any direct impacts.

The proposed development is confined entirely to the tableland portions of the site, which are already occupied by existing development (i.e., the Estonian House and parking lot area). The subject property is surrounded by urban residential developments to the north, east and south and the property is already actively used. Therefore, the proposed re-development is not expected to result in any significant new indirect impacts to the natural heritage features associated with the adjacent woodland and valley.

Furthermore, as the redevelopment plan does not represent a major shift in land use, it is expected that the impacts to the natural system will largely be avoided. However, there are several potential and relatively minor impacts that could occur (a) during construction and (b) following completion of construction, as listed and discussed below.

page 14 TMWP comment: Incorrect. There are three levels of underground parking. The third and deepest parking level will intercept a perched water table which is an indirect impact to an important natural heritage feature and could impact the ecological integrity of the Preserve.

7.1 Provincial Policy Statement

Within the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), natural heritage features listed include significant woodlands and significant valleylands. The wooded area on and adjacent to the subject property and the valleylands adjacent to he subject property are both part of the City's NHS and part of a larger City-designated ESA. They are therefore both considered significant in accordance with the PPS. No development is being proposed within either of these features, and the minor potential impacts to these features associated with the redevelopment of the subject property can be readily mitigated by implementing the recommendations in **Section 6.2**, including a naturalized buffer of 6 m to more than 10 m between the proposed development and the adjacent woodland dripline, as discussed with TRCA and the City.

page 18 TMWP comment: The wooded area and valleylands which are significant according to the PPS will be impacted because of the 3rd level of parking which appears to intercept the water table - this would not be a 'minor impact', and the mitigation suggested above in 7.1 would not address the loss of water seepage from the slope area and the impact it will have.

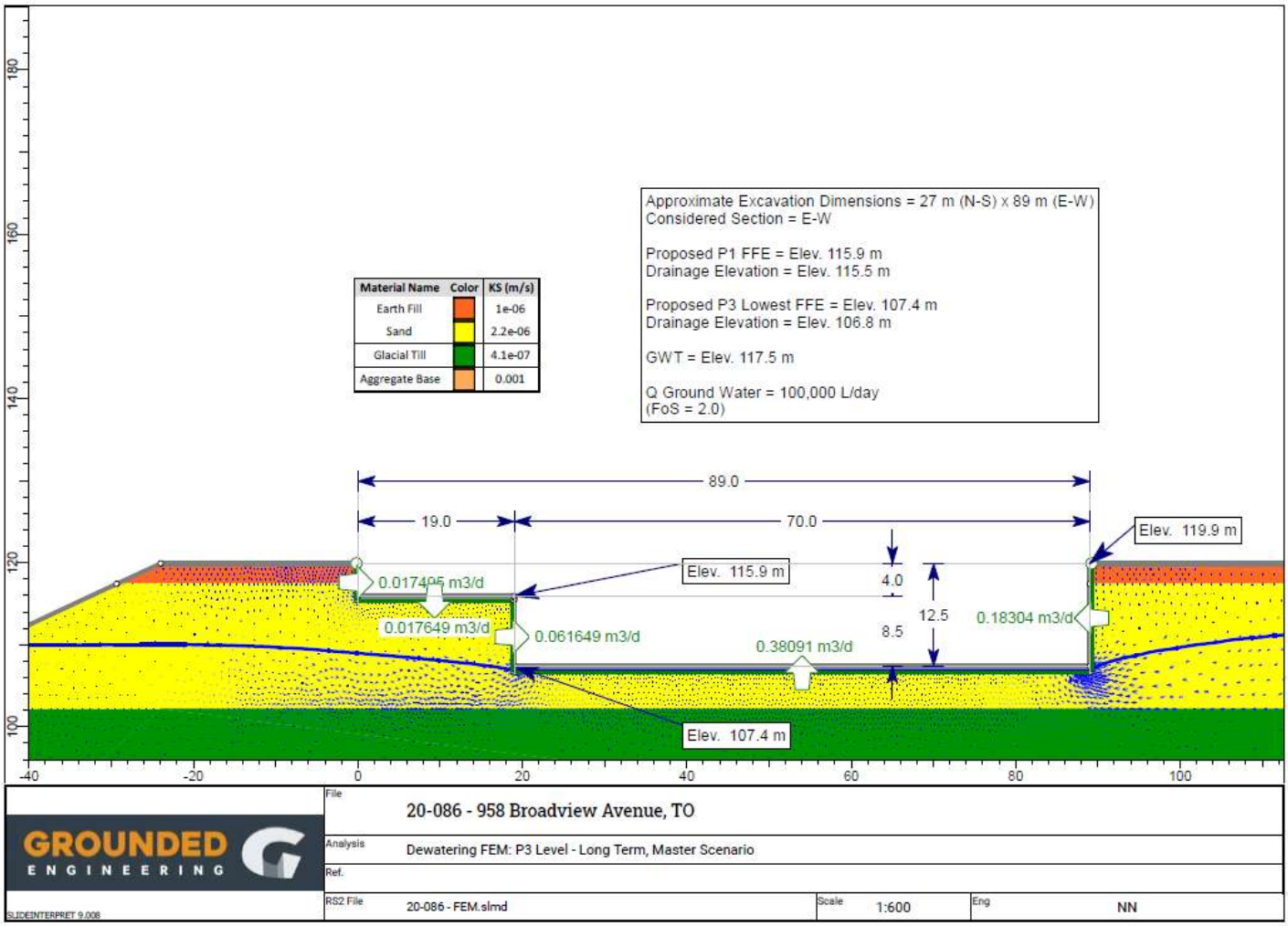
2. Excerpt from the Hydrogeological Report for the DK application:

11.4 Natural Environment

There are no natural waterbodies within the ZOI that will be caused by the proposed construction dewatering or permanent drainage. Any groundwater which will be taken from the site will be discharged (if required) into the City's sewer systems and not into any natural water body. As such, there will be no impact to the natural environment caused by the water takings at the site.

page 12 TMWP comment: There are several running water features on the site. We object to this conclusion as the third level of parking will intercept the perched groundwater. As this water is proposed to be directed to a sewer, the water seepage from the slope area will be lost, impacting the ecological integrity of the wetland areas of the site, including a recently restored wetland. The zone of influence was too limited in scope to capture the impacts on the wetlands.

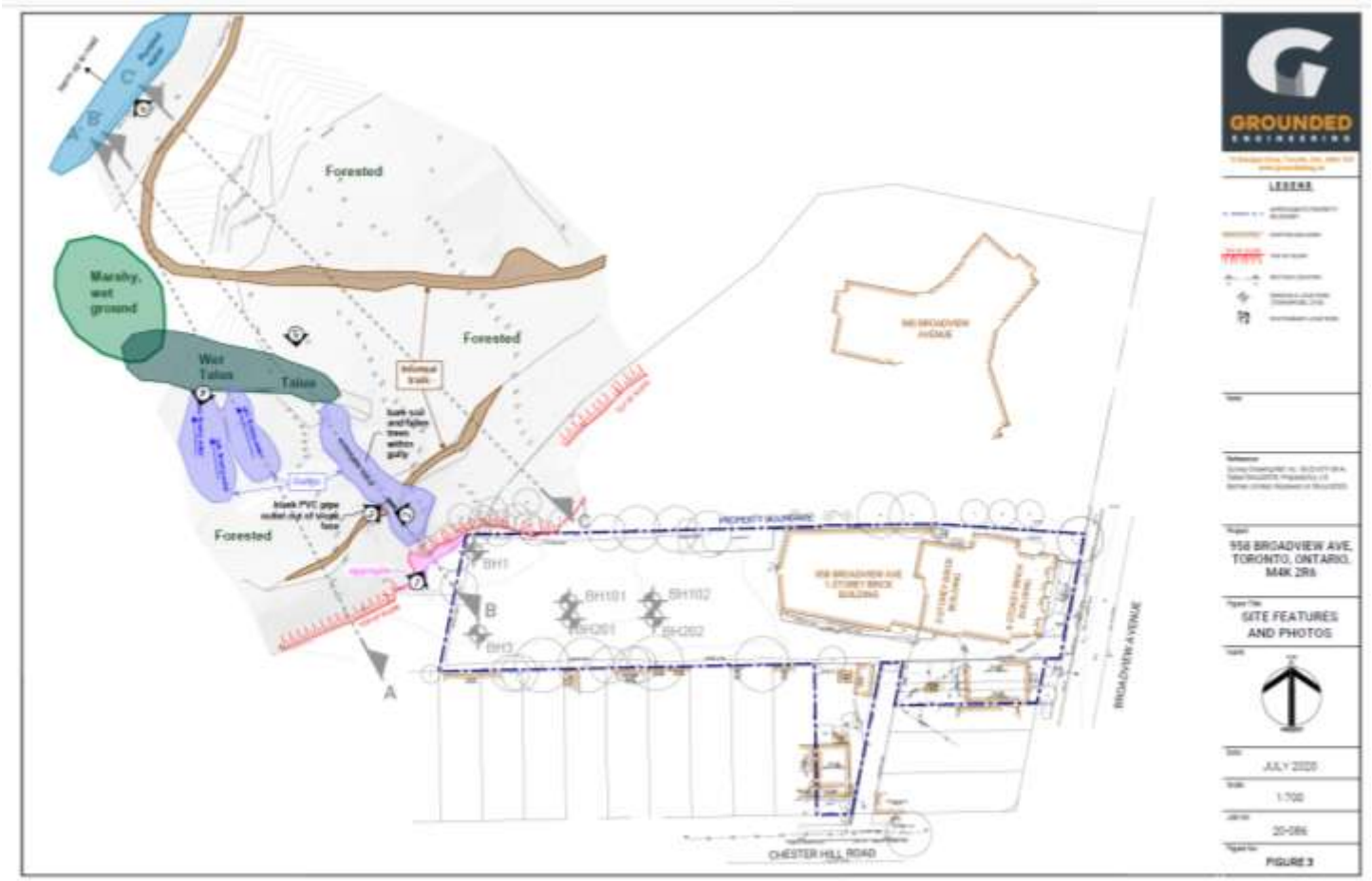
3. Diagrams from Hydrogeological Reports showing intercepted groundwater seepage:



Appendix E Hydrogeological Report for DK application This shows the depth of the construction for underground parking level 3 intercepting the groundwater (blue line)

page 12 Hydrogeological Report for DK application

4. Diagrams from the Slope Stability Report



Slope and Stability Report for DK application Site Features and Photos Note wet areas and marshy wet areas and ponded water (this ponded water is actually running water year round)

12. SLOPE SLIDE FEATURES (tension cracks, scarps, slumps, bulges, grabens, ridges, bent trees)

TOP

No slope slide features were observed.

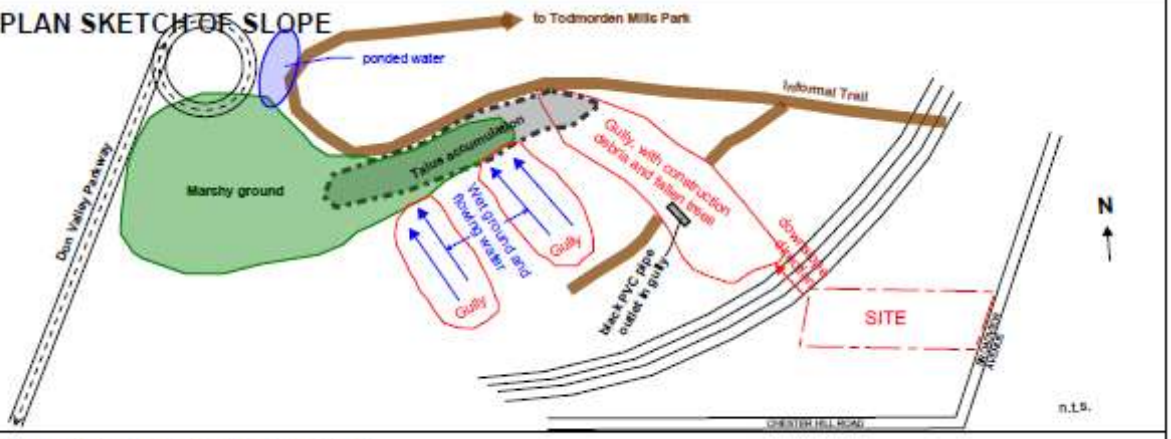
FACE

No slope slide features were observed.

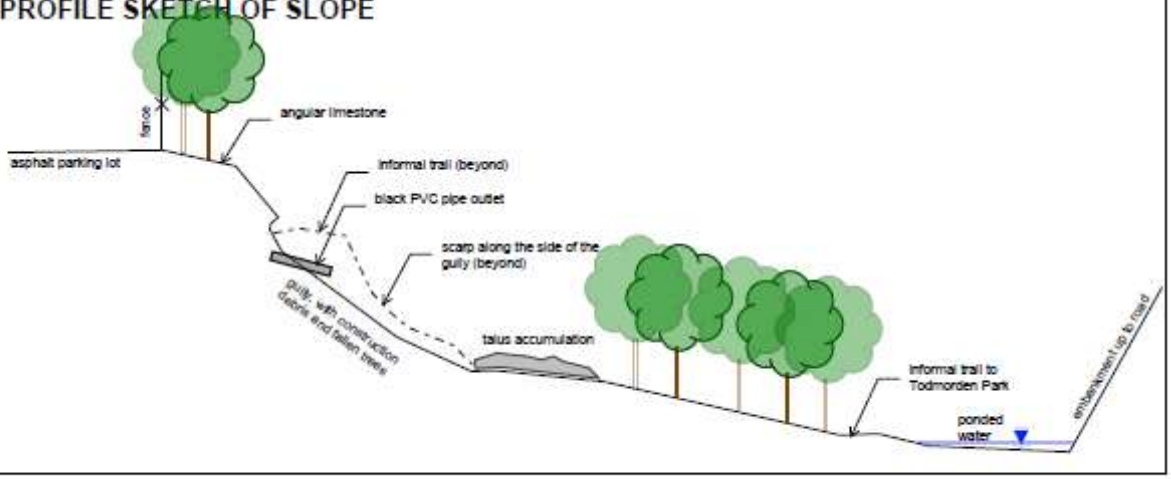
BOTTOM

No slope slide features were observed.

13. PLAN SKETCH OF SLOPE



14. PROFILE SKETCH OF SLOPE



page 4 slope inspection form (Slope and Stability Report) Note reference to wet ground and flowing water

Photograph Appendix

Photograph 4

Position:	Gully (smaller)
Direction/Object:	Looking up gully
Description:	To the south of the main gully there are two smaller gullys that are not actively eroding. The soil within these gullys is wet, and there water flowing down slope.

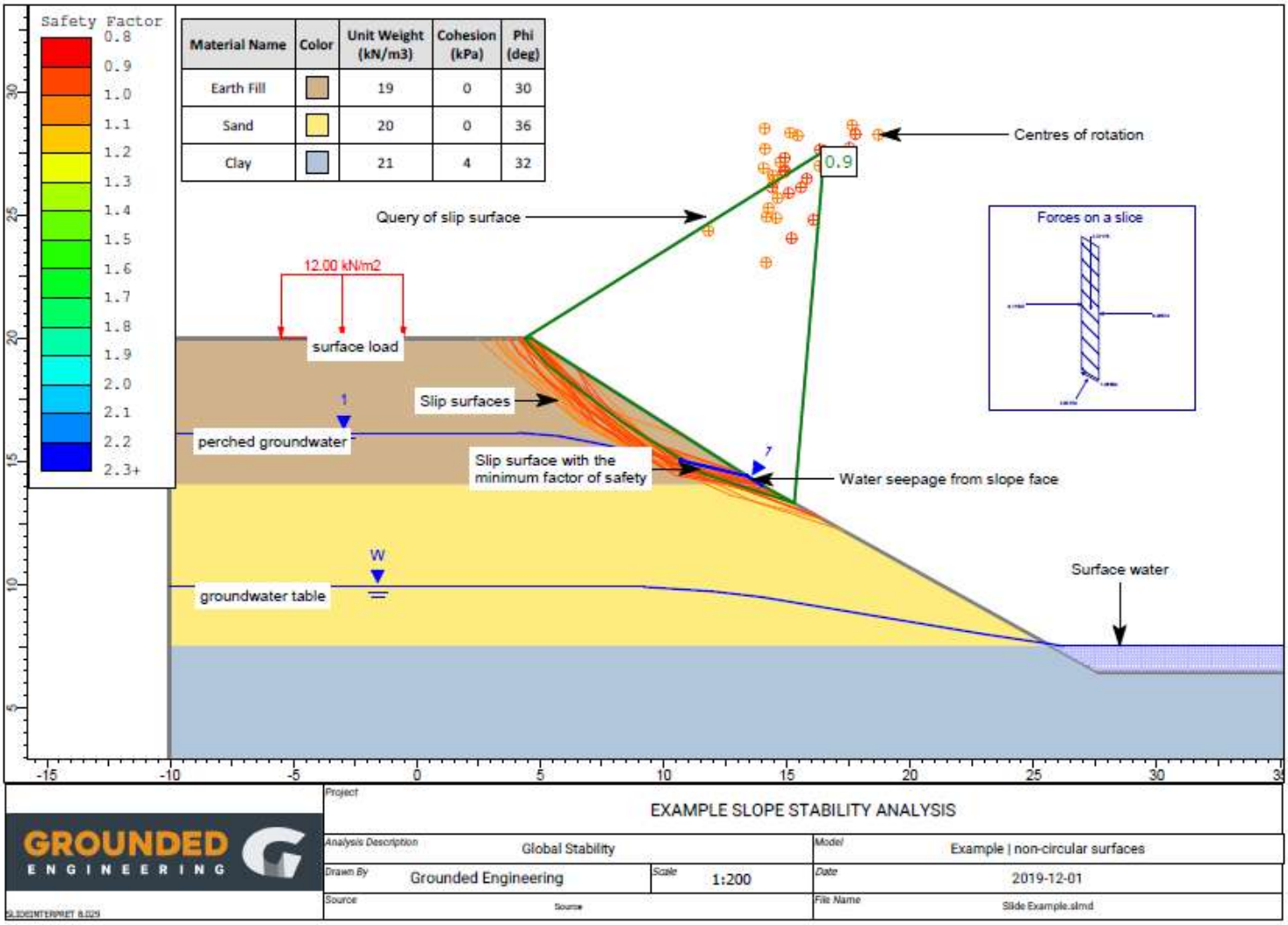
Photograph 5

Position:	Mid-slope, base of gullys
Direction/Object:	Upslope
Description:	At the base of the gullys there appears to be talus accumulation. There is wet loose soil at the base of the wet gullys.

Photograph 6

Position:	Toe of slope
Direction/Object:	West, towards road
Description:	Wet ponded water is present at the toe of slope.

Note wetland plants and seepage supporting them which runs year round and supports fauna as well as plants.



Note perched groundwater which seeps from the slope face and runs down to the wetland area supporting the ecological functions of the area.