

DEPUTATIONS IN WRITING

REGIONAL COUNCIL

OCTOBER 22, 2020

Subject: Item G.1. (October 8, 2020 Committee of the Whole Item H.2.2. - Potential for Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways Report – Submitted by 60 Individuals

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

Dear Mayors and Regional Councillors,

I am shocked that after all of this time York Regional Council is considering asking the province to remove farmland and natural areas from the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Area, and to extend build water and sewer pipes from Lake Ontario to facilitate sprawl in the Greenbelt.

As a result I am requesting that you vote against items 1 and 2 on your agenda.

Item 1. Council reiterate its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access strategically located employment lands inside the Greenbelt Plan area, if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.

A 2017 York Region report identified 2,588 ha of vacant employment lands available for development. As the annual uptake of employment land is 7 ha to 19 ha annually there is no shortage of employment lands for the next several decades.

As identified in the report, Planning for future employment land needs is changing. Today, more jobs are located in urban areas than ever before and locating employment lands within our towns and cities encourages more people to walk, take transit or cycle to work rather than drive, reducing gridlock, emissions and improving quality of life. In the City of Toronto the highest concentration of employment is in areas where people have easy access to transit and alternative ways of getting to work.

Climate change requires us to make planning decisions that reduce our dependence on automobile use. Integrating employment with transit and active transportation helps us build communities where we can work, live and play.

Item 2. Council reiterate its request to the Province to permit the extension of Great Lake based servicing as an option to service settlement areas within the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Plan areas.

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I respectfully request that Council vote not to make this request. Expanding Great Lake based water and sewer services undermines the permanent protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt and facilitates costly sprawl into the countryside, it is also unnecessary. A 2016 York Region Housing Supply report indicated that the region had a 21 to 23 year supply of land designated for housing and further that 91% of ground- related units within registered, or draft, approved applications have been provided with servicing. During the MCR process the Region should look to complete developments within existing urban land before extending the water and sewage pipes to service new land for housing in existing farm and natural areas.

The Greenbelt, Oak Ridges Moraine and Growth Plans were put in place to limit urban expansion into the countryside, protect the ecological function of groundwater on the moraine and encourage complete compact communities. The Plans identify where development should not occur to direct growth to our existing urban areas. In York Region, our population growth rate is slowing, our households are getting smaller and our existing urban areas are not yet fully occupied or built out. There is more than enough land to build the housing we need to 2031 and it will last to 2041 if we build the smaller, more affordable housing units to support accessible, age-friendly communities. Major growth centres in York Region are moving forward with transit supportive development. I urge the Region to proceed with the MCR process by directing the majority of growth to the serviced urban growth centres with existing higher order transit rather than expanding the YDSS into the Greenbelt.

In 2000, Members of York Region Council fought the battle against the “big pipes” plan to encourage costly sprawl. At that time, we learned big pipes not only create huge debt for the Region but they facilitate sprawling growth that leads to gridlock. Twenty years ago we challenged sprawl, today we are also battling climate change. It is more important than ever to protect forests, farmland and groundwater sources for our future prosperity. Studies identified in the Environmental Commissioner’s 2019 report indicate a strong negative relationship between sprawling urban areas with per capita transport energy use. With the current provincial prioritization of housing over environmental concerns, like climate change, extending Great Lakes based servicing into the protected countryside may serve to increase climate related emissions from transportation.

I urge Council to support efficient growth by building up in our existing urban areas, utilize efficient sewer servicing and stop putting our farmland and natural areas at risk.

I urge Members of Council to vote no to both of these items.

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The above formed letter was submitted by the following individuals:

Alyssa Soda	Rick Wardell
Brent Kopperson	Bogdan Radu
Natalie Helferty	Bob and Peggy Belcher
Ian Hilley	Cathy Oppedisano
Rosemary Maggio	Kirill Skorupsky
Carrie Tai	Dr. Maret Aun
Jim and Sharon Bradley	Dave Hamilton
Bendt Jorgensen	Ron Wortel
Helen Stauffer	Graham Burkitt
Andre Willi	Liisa Luoma-Reddy
Bruce Milner	Joanne Nonnekes
Flo McLellan	Nancy Zalman
Deniz Hvizdos	Robin Gray
Lindsey Tulk	Liz Kerr
Mintzy Clement	Joe McNabb
B. Gordon	Karen Uus
Aleisha Pannozza	Michael Winberg
Toktam Jahandideh	A. Cottrell
Jackie Quan	Wendy Kenyon
Rod & Marie Adams	Rosanne Speckert
Bill Sedgwick	Vicky McGrath
Debbie Fletcher-Queen	Laurence Shepard
Anne Lacey	Rolf Ehrat
N. Sivarama	Shiva Amiri
Brooke Mckay	Edward Tait
Jenny Smith	Rita Briganti
Karen Hazlett	Derek Sawyer
Adam Braithwaite	Gloria Boxen
Brian Earley	Olaf Mueller
Additional Deputations in Writing Received after Original Agenda Distribution	
Judith Mann	Heather Morris

* Regional Clerk's Office received additional submissions similar to the above where the full name of the individual was not shared.