

Concerned Citizens of King Township

www.cckt.ca

October 6, 2020

To: Members of York Region Council

Re: **Item H 2.2.** Potential for Employment Lands Along 400 Series Highways Report

Dear Mayors and Regional Councillors,

I am writing on behalf of Concerned Citizens of King Township (CCKT) a longstanding citizens group in King Township advocating for the conservation of the natural environment and rural landscape in King and across the Oak Ridges Moraine. Representing approximately 140 households/families, CCKT also actively supports long term sustainable planning based on the principles and policies in the provincial Greenbelt Plan and Places to Grow Act.

CCKT requests that York Region Council retain and preserve all Greenbelt lands in their current designations and not remove any Greenbelt land for employment purposes as proposed in Item 1. CCKT requests that Council amend the recommendation in Report H 2.2. and insert the words (*outside the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine area*) in Item 1 of your request to the province and remove Item 2 entirely.

Item 1. *Council reiterate its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access strategically located employment lands (**outside of the Greenbelt Plan and Oak Ridges Moraine Area**), if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review.*

A 2017 York Region report identified more than 2,500 ha of vacant employment lands. 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 generations.

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. In addition, the rapid loss of natural heritage lands in southern Ontario and globally is very significant. We need to reverse this loss beginning now, and plan for well-being and a more healthy future.

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.

CCKT also respectfully requests that Council remove Item 2 in this report. Expanding Great Lake based servicing undermines the permanent protection of the Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt and facilitates costly sprawl into the countryside. Adequate lands for the long term housing supply in York Region have been identified and servicing allocated. There is no need to compromise the long term preservation of the Greenbelt by extending servicing infrastructure into the Greenbelt. The focus of the provincial Greenbelt Plan is to bring appropriate intensification and efficiencies to lands already serviced by water and sewer.

Planning wisdom is needed to meet the key goal of limiting further urban expansion into the Oak Ridges Moraine and the Greenbelt and truly conserving these lands into the long term future. We urge York Region to continue directing the vast majority of growth anticipated into the fully serviced urban areas without opening up lands protected by the two provincial Conservation Plans and the Growth Plan. This supports transit-supportive development, affordable housing, and accessible, age-friendly communities.

In addressing climate change, planning which continues to encourage more compact communities with transit and a wide range of amenities helps significantly in reducing greenhouse gas emissions through transportation. It is more important than ever to protect forests, farmland and groundwater sources for a healthy future and the well-being of future generations.

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

CCKT requests that Members of Council vote in favour of removing Item 2 from this report and amend item 1 as noted above.

In addition to the above comments, CCKT endorses the position expressed in the attached press release which includes signatories – Ontario Nature, Environmental Defence, York Region Environmental Alliance, Save the Oak Ridges Moraine and Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition.

Thank you for your attention and consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

James Bruce Craig, Chair for Concerned Citizens of King Township

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