



Office of the Chief Planner
Corporate Services Department

MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council

From: Paul Freeman
Chief Planner

Date: January 26, 2021

Re: Submission from Michael Manett, MPlan Inc. on behalf of the Leslie
Stouffville Landowners Association

Consideration of the Protected Countryside area of the Greenbelt for redesignation to Settlement Area as requested by the Leslie Stouffville Landowners Association is not permitted by the Provincial Plans or policy

Mr. Manett on behalf of the Leslie Stouffville Landowners Association has requested that staff review Greenbelt Protected Countryside lands in the Gormley area for consideration of redesignation to settlement area. The Provincial Growth Plan sets out very limited circumstances under which the Region can expand a settlement area boundary into the Protected Countryside Area of the Greenbelt Plan (Attachment 1). There are no provisions within the Growth Plan, or any other Provincial Plan, to expand either the Hamlet of Gormley rural settlement area, or the City of Richmond Hill urban area into the Protected Countryside.

The Region's Official Plan must conform with Provincial Plans. In accordance with Provincial policy, as outlined in Attachment 1, the only opportunity to expand into the Protected Countryside through the MCR applies to existing Towns & Villages (i.e. not urban areas or Hamlets). In that instance, only a very limited expansion is permitted being up to 5% of the current land area of the Towns & Villages designated area to a maximum of 10 hectares. Attachment 2 identifies Towns & Villages, Hamlets, and the Urban Area within York Region.

These restrictions were the basis of the staff comments provided to Committee of the Whole on January 21.

The review of the Protected Countryside through the Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) recommended in Mr. Manett's letter could not result in redesignation of the Protected Countryside to Settlement Area through the MCR as only the Province can effect that change.

In October 2021 Council requested the Province for a process to be able to access site-specific strategically located employment lands along 400 series highways if deemed necessary through a Municipal Comprehensive Review

Town of East Gwillimbury, The Township of King, City of Richmond Hill and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville all have Council resolutions that reference removing lands adjacent to the Highway 400 or Highway 404 from the Greenbelt Plan for employment uses. In October 2020 Council reiterated its request to the Province to develop a process allowing municipalities to access site-specific strategically located employment lands if deemed necessary through the MCR.

Regional staff have completed an analysis of the mandatory Provincial Land Needs Assessment that has confirmed York Region can meet prescribed 2051 population and employment growth forecasts within the Region’s existing urban area and a portion of the Whitebelt lands outside of the Greenbelt. Additional information on the results of applying the Provincial Land Needs Assessment will be provided to Council in March.

The Province has indicated that they are not proposing to open up the Greenbelt and will protect it for future generations

In response to concerns expressed by residents, the Greenbelt Council and others, the Provincial government has reiterated its position that they “will protect the Greenbelt for future generations”. Within York Region, this has been demonstrated through Provincial approval of two Minister’s Zoning Orders (O.Reg 172/20 and O.Reg 610/20) in the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and City of Vaughan where the Minister explicitly restricted permitted urban uses to the Whitebelt portions of the subject lands and included protective zoning for the entirety of the Greenbelt/Oak Ridges Moraine portion.



Paul Freeman, MCIP, RPP
Chief Planner



Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments (2)
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