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January 8, 2019

Ken Petersen
Provincial Planning Policy Branch
Ministry of Municipal Affairs
777 Bay Street, 13th floor
Toronto ON M5G 2E5

**RE: Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018* (ERO 013-4293)
Proposed Open-for-business Planning Tool (ERO 013-4125)
New Regulation under the *Planning Act* for Open-for-business Planning Tool (ERO 013-4239)**

Dear Mr. Petersen,

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is pleased to submit the following comments with respect to Bill 66, *Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, 2018* (ERO 013-4293) and the related planning tool and new regulation under the *Planning Act*. Please note that our comments relate solely to the proposed amendments to the *Planning Act* in Schedule 10 of Bill 66.

In general, the Town supports the proposed amendments to the *Planning Act*, especially the establishment of open-for-business planning by-law, which will allow local municipalities to respond quickly to businesses and provide them with the most desirable location for development.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is well positioned geographically with approximately 16.5 km of direct exposure to Highway 404 and five highway interchanges. The lands along the Highway 404 Corridor are highly marketable and attractive for employment growth. The Town is proactively looking to promote its economic development objectives and investment readiness by requesting the Province to designate additional highway lands for employment growth surrounding in Gormley. In this regard, the proposed changes to the *Planning Act* in Bill 66 are very timely for the Town.

The current Provincial planning framework does not provide sufficient flexibility to designate additional strategic employment lands within the Town, and Provincial intervention is required to realize these economic objectives in a timely and streamlined manner. Under the current planning framework, the only opportunity for the Town to expand a settlement boundary to accommodate additional employment lands is through the Region of York's Municipal Comprehensive Review process, which is further constrained by the restrictive policies of the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and the Greenbelt Plan and will take years to complete.

If Bill 66 is enacted, the Town will continue to consider the intent of relevant Provincial plans, such as the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, 2017*, and *Greenbelt Plan, 2017*, in the processing of open-for-business planning by-laws to protect the ecological and hydrological integrity of our natural heritage systems and water resources. Development proposals in these areas will still be required to undertake rigorous environmental studies to determine if they can be allowed and to ensure proper mitigation measures are in place so that they will pose no threat to the environment.

The proposed Bill 66 regulations under the *Planning Act* for utilizing the open-for-business planning tool are somewhat uncertain as to whether the tool is intended to be applied on a site-specific basis, or whether it may be applied to a broader geographic area. The Town is supportive of applying the tool to a broader geographic area to facilitate the expansion of the existing Gormley Employment Area in order to realize the economic development potential associated with the Highway 404 Corridor.

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Council has expressed strong support for designating appropriate lands along major goods movement corridors for employment growth. On December 11, 2018, Town Council carried a resolution indicating that:

“... the Province of Ontario be requested to consider designating appropriate lands abutting a 400-series highway in the GTHA “Provincially Significant Employment Areas; and

That the Province of Ontario be requested to amend all its applicable land use plans to permit and encourage clean industrial development on the lands designated “countryside area” or “protected countryside” generally abutting a 400-series highway, and

That the Province of Ontario be further requested to direct all affected municipalities to give high priority to servicing these lands.”

Furthermore, Town Council has directed staff to report back with a detailed proposal for the Gormley lands along Highway 404 for Council consideration and Provincial approval. A copy of the December 11, 2018, Council Resolution is attached for your information.

Sincerely,



Haiqing Xu, MCIP RPP
Director, Development Services
Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

Attachment – Town Council Resolution, December 11, 2018

cc: Mayor Lovatt and Members of Council, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Wayne Emmerson, York Region Chairman and CEO
Paul Calandra, MPP
Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, Planning and Economic Development, York Region
Roman Martiuk, CAO, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Meaghan Craven, Manager, Policy Planning, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
Randall Roth, Senior Policy Planner, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville
David Tuley, Economic Development Officer, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

13. Resolutions from Council

1. Resolution from Councillor Kroon, re: Employment Growth Along Highway 404

Moved by Councillor Kroon
Seconded by Councillor Bartley

Whereas the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville continues to vigorously support the intent and application of both the Greenbelt Act (2005) and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act (2001); and

Whereas the “countryside area” or “protected countryside” designations in the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan (2017) and Greenbelt Plan (2017) respectively are not sensitive environmental areas; and

Whereas all lands along the 400-series highways are very attractive to industrial development due to their ease of access to the highway network; and

Whereas not all industrial developments are a threat to the environment; and

Whereas permitting clean industrial development will not only help create jobs, but also recoup cost of the investment in and recapture the value of the 400-series highways; and

Whereas the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville has a significant amount of land along Highway 404, that are highly attractive for employment growth; and

Whereas the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is in desperate need for employment growth.

Therefore be it resolved, that the Province of Ontario be requested to consider designating appropriate lands abutting a 400-series highway in the GTHA “Provincially Significant Employment Areas”; and

That the Province of Ontario be requested to amend all its applicable land use plans to permit and encourage clean industrial development on the lands designated “countryside area” or “protected countryside” generally abutting a 400-series highway, and

That the Province of Ontario be further requested to direct all affected municipalities to give high priority to servicing these lands; and

That staff be directed to report back with a detailed proposal for the Gormley lands along Highway 404 within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville for Council consideration and Provincial approval.

Carried

14. By-laws

Moved by Councillor Upton
Seconded by Councillor Smith

That Council read the following by-laws a first, second, third time and passed:

2018-160-AP being a by-law to appoint an Alternate Member of Regional Council for the 2018-2022 Term of Council.

2018-161-AP being a by-law to appoint a Member of Council to the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority Board of Directors for the 2018-2022 Term of Council, and to repeal By-law 2014-133-AP.

2018-162-AP being a by-law to appoint Deputy Mayors and Vice-Deputy Mayors and to repeal By-law 2015-105-AP.

2018-163-TX being a by-law to levy an Interim Rate for 2019 upon the taxable properties of The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and to repeal By-Law 2018-094-TX.

2018-164-FI being a by-law to to establish fees or charges for services or activities provided by the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (General Fees and Charges) and to repeal By-law 2018-001-FI.

2018-165-FI being a by-law to establish development charges for The Corporation of the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville and repeal By-law 2018-142-FI.

Carried