



YORK REGION

FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

SERVING THE FARM COMMUNITY SINCE 1940

November 23, 2021

Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Attention: Chair Emmerson and Regional Council

Dear Sirs/Madams:

On behalf of the York Region Federation of Agriculture and our 630 Registered Farm Business Members we respectfully request that Council direct staff to retain a qualified consultant to complete the essential and Provincially required Land Base Refinement for the Greenbelt fingers that were not evaluated in the report entitled Region of York Addendum Report Regional Agricultural Land Base Refinements – Vaughan and Markham in August 2019. This analysis to determine the appropriate designation of these lands needs to be completed prior to the release of the final Draft Official Plan.

As background, in 2009, the Region retained a qualified consultant to complete the initial Regional Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR). This original LEAR identified the lands in the Greenbelt fingers as Prime Agricultural Area. In May 2019, to implement the Agricultural System as part of the MCR, 19 sites throughout the Region were re-evaluated by the qualified consultant in the report entitled Region of York Agricultural Land Base Refinements.

Land Base Refinement which evaluates each study area individually to determine the appropriate designation, either Prime Agricultural Area or Rural within the Greenbelt, is required by Provincial policy when updating Agriculture mapping.

In August 2019, the Greenbelt fingers in the community expansion areas of the current Official Plan were evaluated again by the consultant, through the report entitled Region of York Addendum Report Regional Agricultural Land Base Refinements – Vaughan and Markham, to determine whether Prime Agriculture Area or Rural would be the appropriate designation once these areas were surrounded by urban uses. The results of this evaluation recommended that the appropriate designation for the lands within Greenbelt fingers of the following Blocks are:

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- Prime Agriculture for most of the finger in Blocks 41 and 34, and all of the finger in Block 35;
- Rural for the fingers in Block 27, the Berczy Glen and Victoria Glen Blocks because they are narrow strips;
- Rural for the finger in the Angus Glen Block because the current use is golf course which is not an agricultural use.

There are approximately 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) of agricultural land within other Greenbelt fingers in Markham, Richmond Hill, and Vaughan that have not been professionally evaluated but are proposed to be changed from Prime Agriculture to Rural through the Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Again, Provincial Policy requires the completion of the Land Base Refinement analysis prior to any redesignation of Prime Agricultural Lands within the Greenbelt. The Region must either retain a qualified consultant and complete this work or, alternatively, maintain the Prime Agriculture designation until the next Municipal Comprehensive Review.

Yours truly,

Kim Empringham,
Secretary/Treasurer/Director
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cc: Wayne Emmerson, Chair, Regional Municipality of York
Paul Freeman, Chief Planner, Planning & Economic Development, York Region
The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
The Honourable Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

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