

May 14, 2023

Brian Bridgeman  
Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development  
Region of Durham  
605 Rossland Road East Whitby  
Ontario Canada L1N8Y9

Re: Envision Durham  
Whitebelt lands between Hwy 7, Sideline 16, Sideline 14 and Concession Rd 7

Dear Mr. Bridgeman

We, the undersigned, are owners of 13 out of the total of 15 privately owned properties located in the above block of land in Northeast Pickering, which is approximately 350 acres in area.

In their new draft official plan, the Durham Region has stated it wants to keep our lands in limbo "until such time that a final federal decision to build an airport is made". Since it's been 51 years already, it is possible it could be any arbitrary number of additional years or decades before the federal government finally decides one way or another. We cannot rebuild our homes, invest in our lands or do anything meaningful that requires planning. It is very unfair that the region has singled out our lands in such a capricious way. As per region's official plan in both the draft and current versions, the area that's officially supposed to stay in limbo for an airport is defined as "Special Study Area 1" (SSA1). Our lands are not located within the boundaries of this area. The airport lands proper start to the West of Brock Rd North of Hwy 7, and the gov-owned block of land between Brock Rd to the West and Sideline 16 to the East was meant as a buffer zone and thus designated as the SSA1. The SSA1's Eastern boundary is Sideline 16, though the region is treating it as though it's Sideline 14, thus unofficially lumping our lands into the SSA1. The SSA1 lands were expropriated to serve their purpose, but our lands weren't. If the federal government had thought our lands were of consequential significance to an airport, they would have expropriated them when they did all the other lands they needed.

In comparison, over 8000 acres of lands in the nearby area known as "Veraine" are slated to enter the urban boundary, a fair portion of it into employment. Our lands have just as much or better access to services as those and have better transportation access since those lands do not have direct ramps to Hwy 407 and ours do. We are also immediately accessible by a 6-way interchange of Hwys 1, 7 and 407. Furthermore, immediately South of Hwy 407, we are witnessing the building of residential homes right up to the edge of the highway. How is it that "sensitive uses" can be situated as close to the airport site as those, but even non-sensitive uses would not be allowed in our block, which is not much closer to the airport lands? The runways for a possible airport have changed direction paths several times with no certainty as of this moment in time.

Interestingly just in the last month, the Pickering City Council voted for the city not to be host for an airport and a private group of farm tenants, i.e. "Land over Landings" and several environmental groups continue

staunchly fighting the idea of an airport. Additionally, the federal minister of transportation recently stated the government has no plans to build a Pickering airport in the short term, and he added perhaps not even in the long term, while announcing another years-long study into aviation in Southern Ontario. With climate change now a central issue for the federal government, it is quite possible and very likely that the study will produce the same conclusion as previous studies which was essentially indeterminate resulting in no action. We feel unnecessarily sandwiched between the region interested in an airport and these opposing forces against an airport.

Most of the residents in this block are not engaging in growing crops or agriculture as defined by Agricorp which is under the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Our lands are in the whitebelt and not under control of the conservation authority. These lands also are more strategically situated, and closer to Toronto, with arguably better transportation access than all the other lands the region is bringing into the “employment” designation. Almost all whitebelt lands in Pickering are already in the urban boundary or slated to enter it in the new draft plan, except this block. We believe these lands as employment would be of much greater benefit to the rapidly growing population of the Seaton area, the larger Pickering area, users of the highways, and the entire GTA. Further, if an airport eventually does come, these uses would be compatible or easily convertible at that time. If the lands are supposed to sit in limbo, why can’t they sit in limbo with some uses that are actually more compatible with an airport than the current ones? At under 350 acres, this is not a very large area if the position of the region is that they have reached the allotted amount for inclusion into the urban boundary. With the very recent laws announced by the Ontario gov, it appears that the provincial gov now allows more power to municipal and regional governments for including land into the urban boundary. Given that these lands are in the whitebelt and close to Toronto, it would seem unlikely for Queens Park to object to inclusion of these lands for transportation-related uses. Currently, there are significant shortages of land for transportation-related uses in the GTA. Additionally, please note these lands were part of Pickering Council’s original Boundary Expansion Request (BER-12) and met the 6 eligibility criteria in that request. We have further met with Mayor Kevin Ashe, and our Regional Councillor, Mr. Pickles, who stated their support.

On May 17th, the Region’s Council is voting on the new draft plan. We herein state our strong objection to this draft new plan as it pertains to our lands. We intend to avail ourselves of all further procedural and legal options as we believe this matter has not been fairly handed. We request that these subject lands be brought into the urban boundary with the designation of employment.

Sincerely;

Electronically signed/approved by:

3725 Sideline 16; Michael Tillaart;

3735 Sideline 16; Michael Tillaart

3745 Sideline 16; Chris Chapman;

3785 Sideline 16; Marlin & Carol Anne Tillaart,

3805 Sideline 16; Frank & Daina Bigioni;

3835 Sideline 16; Karen & Paul Carson,

3875 Sideline 16; CJ Kumar,

3935 Sideline 16; Michel Levasseur and Louise Robichaud-Levasseur,

3965 Sideline 16; Steve Gao and Cuimei li,

3985 Sideline 16; Shahram Emami,

1945 Seventh Concession Rd, Shahram Emami,

2035 Seventh Concession Rd, 100 acres unaddressed on Sideline 14, Karen & Paul Carson,

3815 and 3865 Sideline 16; Paul Y.C. Siu