

May 16, 2023

Regional Council Members

*Re: Durham Region's Draft Official Plan*

I feel like I'm in a Batman Movie and the Joker is winning with no hope in sight – and the joker here is the development industry and those who are so deep in their pockets that they cannot see the ruin that will be created if the Draft Durham Region Official Plan is approved as it is presented today.

With the last-minute hurling of the BILD Scenario 2A (a LNA scenario that was not designed by or vetted by the Envision Team, nor part of the public engagement process) into what was to be a transparent, public and democratic process there is no way to deny development Industry sabotage of our tax payer funded Municipal / Regional LNA process. Where is the democracy in that?

Rather than Durham Region being a model for Best Practice Urban planning, this plan as it is presented today will condemn roughly 14,000 acres of prime Class I farmland, and the Carruthers Creek Watershed to be destroyed forever – guaranteeing GHG spewing urban sprawl beyond our wildest belief – all at a time we need to hold the urban boundaries allowing us to achieve Net Zero GHG, protect the rare and nonrenewable Class I farmland that will feed generations ahead while also protecting the sensitive watershed that ensures clean water, protects us from flooding and supports biodiversity - all of which will help protect us from the harms of climate change.

Instead – if approved as presented today – you will be condemning yourself, your family and your constituents to the harsh impacts of Climate Change – wildfires, floods, tornadoes, heat domes, food insecurity and ever-increasing rate payer rates, property taxes and levies that will in turn lead to more homelessness, poor physical and mental health to just name a few.

Lobbyists for the building and development industry are at the front of the line asking for a HUGE SLICE OF CAKE, and their haste to secure it will disadvantage all of us. Durham Region can offer them the smallest possible slice first and then only offer more when the shared consequences are better understood, and builders can tangibly demonstrate the benefits of securing more “cake” to everyone, not just those at the VIP table.

As such I ask that you please vote against this draft and work to reduce the amount of land proposed for growth areas. Maximize the land that we already have allocated and allow inching outwards only when no other option remains. I urge you not to cave to pressure from the development industry. Put the needs of your constituents - present and future - first.

Helen Brenner

Pickering Resident