

Via email to: clerks@durham.ca

January 8, 2024

Re: Durham Region is becoming unaffordable to live in!

As a taxpayer, I am alarmed at the staggering user rate and budget guideline increases that have already been approved by Regional Council. I'm even more scared about the impact of adding 9000 more acres of land to our urban boundaries will have on my tax bills, as proposed in the Durham Region Official Plan.

While some of this year's increases are due to inflationary pressures, I am aware they are also due to past decisions by councils to recklessly sprawl our urban boundaries outward without considering the financial implications to taxpayers.

Taxpayers expect leadership in our region to be fiscally responsible. Given that the Region is already struggling to meet the costs of servicing existing communities within existing budgets and the new realities caused by Bills 23 and 134, and taxpayers are struggling to meet basic costs of living, why would Regional Council seek to lock in boundary expansions that would cost taxpayers more?

As Councillor Nicolson suggested at the December 6, 2023, Works Committee meeting, Regional Council should be directing staff to determine the servicing costs associated with sprawling outside our urban boundaries and whether taxpayers and the Region can afford these additional costs. Until these servicing costs are known and considered, the Region should ask the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for a pause in the approval process for the Official Plan concerning the Settlement Area Boundary Expansions (SABEs).

The 2024 budget process that is underway is clearly demonstrating how costly servicing is. Council needs to consider its residents and taxpayers on this ticket. As it is, many taxpayers will struggle to pay the increased water and sewage user rates and property taxes to service already approved urban areas. Taxpayers do not want to be burdened further with the costs of servicing beyond our present urban boundaries.

I ask that you recommend to Regional Council that it ask staff to conduct a financial analysis of the servicing costs for the land needs contained in the Durham Region Official Plan in order to understand how servicing the settlement area boundary expansions would impact regional property taxes and water/sewer user rates.

Sincerely,

Kathleen ffolliott



Whitby