



May 28, 2024

Planning & Economic Development Committee
C/o Clerks
Regional Municipality of Durham
605 Rossland Road East
Whitby, Ontario L1N 6A3

Dear Chair Chapman, and Members of Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee

RE: Request Planning Committee to Consider a Public Process for Durham Region's Response to the May 6, 2024, MMAH Draft Modifications to Durham's New Official Plan

Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development, received a letter dated May 6th from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) containing a package of proposed/draft modifications to Durham's Adopted Official Plan, which was adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023.

At the May 7th Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting, Mr. Bridgeman indicated that the MMAH correspondence would be made available through the May 10th Council Information Package. He also stated that a report with staff recommendations would be prepared for the May 29, 2024, Regional Council Agenda. Furthermore, he mentioned that he and Colleen Goodchild would be meeting with the Clerk to discuss matters regarding public delegations, registration, and related issues [video link (see 54:05)].

Subsequently, it emerged that on May 15, 2024, an email message (see attached) was sent on behalf of Councillor Bob Chapman, Chair of the Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee, to Regional Chair Henry and Members of the Planning & Economic Development Committee *only*, i.e., the rest of Council was not copied. The email message indicated that Brian Bridgeman and staff would work with MMAH to resolve the proposed modifications and, as such, there would not be a staff report from Regional Planning staff for the May 29th Regional Council meeting as Brian Bridgeman stated Planning staff were prepared to do. A staff report with recommendations to

Council and opportunities for delegations and public input is standard operating procedure for issues of such importance to the Region.

Based on past practice, the process that Councillor Chapman's email contemplates appears to be a highly unusual approach to what should be a public process and with ALL Durham Region Councillors having the opportunity to consider the staff response and recommendations, which would be consistent with Brian Bridgemen's remarks as cited above during the May 7th Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting.

Further, the Envision Durham Official Plan process was designed to be a transparent, public process. Therefore, it is expected that a staff report outlining Durham Region's response to any proposed draft changes by the MMAH be made public. Failure to maintain transparency with the residents of Durham Region is highly problematic and undermines established democratic processes.

While some of the proposed MMAH modifications may be of a "housekeeping" nature, others necessitate that Council receive professional advice from staff to ensure both Council and the public can fully understand and evaluate the options. It is imperative that Council and the public are afforded the opportunity to participate in all processes concerning the Durham Region Official Plan, including those related to the modifications proposed by the MMAH in its May 6th letter.

Given Mayor Ashe's May 17, 2024, letter to Minister Calandra regarding North-East Pickering and the associated ERO Number 019-8707 with a comment deadline of July 6th, it is unlikely Durham's response to MMAH's proposed modifications could be finalized prior to that comment deadline as it relates to policies in the Durham Region Official Plan.

We therefore request that at your June 4th meeting, the Planning & Economic Development Committee pass a motion requesting that Planning staff prepare a report outlining their recommendations for a special council (or other) meeting to be held as soon as possible. This will provide an opportunity for Council to review and decide on Durham's response to the proposed MMAH Draft Modifications and any other related matters.

Without a report formally documenting Durham's response to the 77 items detailed in the MMAH Draft Modification letter, there would be no public record outlining Durham's Planning staff recommendations and Council's final position on these recommendations. This documentation is essential to conclude the Envision Durham process.

We urge Planning Committee to consider the foregoing and pass the requested motion on June 4th.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Helen Brenner, Co-Lead Stop Sprawl Durham
Abdullah Mir, Co-Lead Stop Sprawl Durham

Encl: May 15, 2024, Email Message from Councillor Bob Chapman, Chair
Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee

Cc: Chair Henry, Regional Chair and CEO - Region of Durham
Durham Regional Councillors
Elaine Baxter-Trahair, Durham CAO
Brian Bridgeman, Commissioner Planning & Economic Development
Minister Paul Calandra, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Laurie Miller@Ontario.ca

May 15, 2024 at 10:54

*The message below is being sent on behalf of Councillor Bob Chapman,
Chair, Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee:*

Good morning Regional Chair Henry and Members of Planning & Economic Development Committee:

On May 6, 2024, the Region's Commissioner of Planning and Economic Development received a letter from his counterpart at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing which contains a package of proposed/draft modifications to Durham's new Official Plan which was adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023.

At the May 7th Planning & Economic Development Committee meeting, Mr. Bridgeman indicated the MMAH correspondence would be made available through the May 10th Council Information Package (which it was), and that a report would come direct to the 29th Council meeting.

Brian and his staff have now been able to review the MMAH Draft Decision more closely and are of the view that they can work with MMAH to resolve the proposed modifications, staff-to-staff. There have already been productive discussions with MMAH staff and Regional planning staff are working to obtain approval of the ROP in a form that most closely reflects the document that was adopted by Regional Council on May 17, 2023.

Under the circumstances, given the ongoing discussions with MMAH staff, and given that the Council position is established, there will not be a staff report from Regional planning staff to the May 29th Council meeting.

Regards,

Bob Chapman, Chair
Regional Planning & Economic Development Committee