



November 12, 2025

To: Members of the Durham Region Committee of the Whole
c/o Regional Clerk, Region of Durham
605 Rossland Road East, Whitby ON

Re: *Agenda Item 7.2 – Report 2025-COW-36: Authorization to Undertake a Comprehensive Review of the Options for Including the Northeast Pickering Lands in the Region’s Development Charge By-laws*

Dear Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am writing on behalf of **Stop Sprawl Durham**, a grassroots coalition advocating for sustainable, fiscally responsible growth across our region. We are expressing our **strong objection** to advancing any step toward including the **Northeast Pickering lands** in Durham’s Development Charge (DC) by-laws at this time.

This action is **premature and unacceptable**, as the **Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan remains incomplete and significantly deficient**.

1. Incomplete Planning Framework

Key technical studies—including those related to servicing, transportation, fiscal impact, and watershed management—remain incomplete or unavailable for public review. Equally concerning, the **Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN)** have stated in writing that they have **not been meaningfully consulted**, contrary to claims by the City of Pickering. This failure to uphold the duty to consult contravenes the **Planning Act**, the **Provincial Planning Statement (2024)**, and **Section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982**.

Until these legal and policy obligations are fulfilled, **no Regional action**—including a Development Charges review—should proceed. To do so would effectively endorse a planning process that is non-compliant and fiscally unsound.

2. Infrastructure Costs and Fiscal Risk

Servicing the Northeast Pickering lands will require extensive new infrastructure—roads, water, wastewater, stormwater systems, emergency services, and transit—on unserviced rural land. Experience across Ontario shows that **development charges**

rarely recover full infrastructure costs, especially when climate-resilient design, maintenance, and long-term operations are considered. The result is an **ongoing financial liability for regional taxpayers**.

3. Taxpayer Exposure and Financial Accountability

Even where development charges apply, the **gap between growth costs and revenues** often leaves municipalities carrying significant unfunded obligations. Durham's experience with other large-scale growth areas demonstrates how quickly capital costs escalate once full infrastructure, emergency services, and climate-resilience measures are accounted for.

Before any inclusion of Northeast Pickering in the Region's DC by-laws proceeds, taxpayers deserve **clear answers on total lifecycle costs, phasing, and funding responsibilities** associated with this development.

4. Impact on Housing Delivery and Affordability

Premature expansion into unserviced lands will **divert labour, materials, and servicing capacity** from existing urban areas such as Seaton, the City Centre, and the Kingston Road corridor—all of which have ample development potential and existing infrastructure. This fragmentation will **delay near-term housing delivery and increase construction costs**, ultimately undermining the Region's housing affordability objectives.

5. Requests to Committee

We respectfully ask that the Committee recommend that:

1. The Region **defer** any decision to include the Northeast Pickering lands in the DC by-laws until the **Secondary Plan process is complete**, all technical and fiscal studies are finalized, and **meaningful consultation with MSIFN** has occurred;
2. The forthcoming review include an **independent fiscal and servicing analysis** to fully account for lifecycle costs, phasing, and taxpayer exposure; and
3. Regional Council reaffirm its commitment to **prioritizing growth within existing serviced urban areas** before extending DC coverage to costly, unserviced lands.

Moving forward with this review before the underlying plan meets basic legal, technical, and consultation standards would not only be fiscally reckless but would undermine public trust. We urge the Committee to demonstrate leadership by ensuring that **responsible planning, fiscal accountability, and reconciliation obligations** guide all future decisions.

Thank you for your attention and your continued service to Durham residents.

Sincerely,

Helen Brenner
Abdullah Mir
On behalf of **Stop Sprawl Durham**
StopSprawlDurham@gmail.com

CC: Mayor Ashe and Members of Council (via Pickering City Clerk)