

Proposed Central Pickering Development Plan – Plan Amendment 1

Green Durham Association

(Formerly Green Door Alliance/Durham Conservation Association)

April 2, 2012

Members of our organization have been involved with the issue of Seaton since the beginning and have been appointed to Provincial advisory bodies by all three provincial parties going back to the 1990's, during periods when these parties formed government.

In more recent years we have submitted many briefs and made many presentations from the inception of the Region's Growing Durham Study. We are currently a participant in the OMB's OPA 128 hearings, and have attended a number of the recent OMB Seaton hearings.

We have the following comment on the proposed CPDP amendment:

1. We are delighted the Minister's Amendment has clarified Seaton population and employment forecasts of 61,000 and 30,500 respectively for 2031. As our previous briefs have pointed out in some detail, the Region's low ball estimate of 16,500 jobs in Seaton for 2031 not only subverts the intention of the CPDP, this low estimate has formed the only real justification for expanding the urban area boundary in North Pickering – an expansion which we feel is completely unnecessary.

The Region appears to criticize Plan Amendment 1 because they feel it hampers the Region's ability to build complete communities. We assume this criticism is based largely on the inclusion in the CPDP of 30,500 jobs by 2031, not the 16,500 desired by the Region. We fail to understand why returning to a 16,500 number and using this to justifying a leapfrog expansion into North East Pickering enables the Region to plan more complete communities.

2. At 61,000 residents, Seaton comprises 25-30% of all new residential Greenfield growth planned in the southern municipalities to 2031. Since density in Seaton is projected to greatly exceed the overall Greenfield density target set by the Province of 50 persons/jobs per hectare, this enables the Region to plan densities outside Seaton in the neighborhood of 40 persons/jobs per hectare and still meet the overall provincial target of 50 when Seaton is added in.

In previous comments on OPA 128 we have urged the Province not to let the Region hide behind Seaton. Seaton surely isn't much of a model if its real impact in Durham Region outside Seaton will be to create many thousands of acres of Greenfield development that fall significantly below the Province's own Greenfield standard. To allow this to happen makes a mockery of the Provincial Growth Plan.

It is worth noting the Region's initial plan amendment proposed in advance of OPA 128 and replaced by it, did impose a variety of helpful density targets beneath the Regional level. However OPA 128 removed all of these key structural elements necessary to help ensure the structure was developed in a fashion that met Provincial Growth Plan objectives.

One of the purposes the Province articulates for CPDP Amendment 1 is "*to clarify the relationship between the Central Pickering Development Plan and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe 2006.*"

In order to better accomplish this we urge the Province to consider inserting a clause in the CPDP - perhaps on page 14, in point 2 where it references the Provincial Growth Plan - that indicates that in calculating the minimum greenfield density target of each upper or single tier municipality as specified in 2.2.7 2, page 19 of the Places to Grow Plan, that areas falling within the CPDP be excluded from that calculation. This would remove the ability to not even come close to meeting Provincial Greenfield density targets elsewhere in the Region outside Seaton but still just meet these targets when Seaton is included.

3. Before submitting our comments we would like to have had the opportunity to better confirm the City of Pickering's main concerns. However, as we understand it Pickering has indicated it can go along with most of the amendments the Minister has proposed but they have a major problem with the change proposed to 5.1.5.

After looking at these proposed changes we strongly support Pickering's concerns here. The amendment appears to effectively gut a clause that had previously required that the various financial agreements including front ending agreements, cost sharing agreements and/or development charges be implemented early in the development process *to ensure the development of the community does not cause a financial burden on either the City or the Region.* The clause shown in italics above has been removed from the amendment quite naturally raising municipal concerns about their financial exposure. And not only that but implementation of any financial agreements can under the proposed amendment be delayed until issuance of building permits – a very late stage in the process indeed.

Until now we had hoped that with the signing of the minutes of settlement by the Province, the City of Pickering and the Seaton landowners in February 2011 a basis for working together to plan and build Seaton in a fashion that met the needs of the various stakeholders including Pickering citizens and taxpayers was slowly being worked out.

This proposed amendment puts that emerging consensus in real jeopardy. We urge the Province to modify this section in a fashion that reaches out to meet the legitimate concerns expressed by municipal stakeholders.

4 Ever since the expropriations of the 1970s, members of our organization have been committed to the building a model community at Seaton. In pursuit of this objective we

have worked closely with Seaton residents particularly those living in [Whitevale](#). Many of these residents have been involved in our organization.

A number of the Plan amendment changes seem to compromise this development. In particular, the removal of almost the entire section dealing with the requirement to prepare neighborhood plans raises very significant concerns particularly among Whitevale residents about what the negative impact this might have on the community vision they had worked so hard to participate in developing.

The approach to planning and implementing transportation infrastructure which the Plan changes seem to cut back significantly on, raises real concerns about whether the hamlet will no longer be appropriately buffered from the massive increase in traffic that will occur.

Again we urge the Province to review those proposed changes which engender fear the Province is watering down its commitment to building a model community, and one in which Whitevale's character, a character that can enhance the entire new community, is protected.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and urge the Province to seriously consider the suggestions we have made.

Brian Buckles, for the Green Durham Association, (905 649 3331 buckles@zing-net.ca)