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### **Address to Pickering Council**

Comments on: The Pickering Developers — Growth Management Study

Council Chambers: June 29, 2004

Mayor Ryan and Members of Council

The Growth Management Study was driven and financed by speculators who also financed the election of supportive politicians. The result—a study without merit, a massive costly exercise in advocacy planning that discredits this Council.

Thank God that we can trust the wisdom of the Province of Ontario. It is significant that both Liberal and Conservative governments oppose urban development of the Agriculture Preserve. I will attempt to explain why the Province must refuse removal of the conservation easements.

A *conservation easement* removes development potential from the owner of the land on which it is registered. A conservation easement is a partial taking of an owners interest in his land. Let me explain: I own an 85 acre farm at Claremont, now known as the Claremont Nature Reserve. Because I wanted this property and the 65,000 trees I planted on it, conserved in perpetuity, I donated a *conservation easement* to Ontario Nature (FON). These 85 acres can never be developed— no houses, no separations, no golf course.

The easement removes the development rights. Revenue Canada recognize this *partial giving* to be a charitable donation because the market value has been reduced. I am trying to explain that an easement has a dollar value.

When the Agriculture Preserve tenants bought, because of the easements registered on title, they did not pay full *fee simple* market value—they were not sold development rights. They or new owners can not speculate on an asset they did not own(the development potential)

The government of Ontario be it Liberal, Conservative or NDP can not walk away from this obligation and allow speculators to reap vast profits at the public's expense. Giving away the publics interest in these lands would be as scandalous as the federal Sponsorship Program.

(OVER)

The GMS proposal to urbanize the Agriculture Preserve won't fly. The City of Pickering is custodian and steward of the easements and has no reasonable right to give away an asset owned by the people of Ontario. Council and their developer friends are flogging a dead horse.

#### Recommendations

- Table the GMS and resolve to work with the province in the planning of Seaton.
- Ask your patriotic developer friends, who fund your elections and lobby so effectively to apply their vast financial resources, technical and management skills to a study of smart growth opportunities.

We need to know:

- How much vacant, and underutilized building opportunities exist within present urban boundaries?
- How many new residents at what densities could be sheltered?
- How many taxpayers dollars could be saved by not having to build new infrastructure?

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