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### NORTH PICKERING (SEATON) DEVELOPMENT PLANS

**The Planning and Economic Development Committee recommends the adoption of the recommendations contained in the following report, April 6, 2005, from the Commissioner of Planning and Development Services and the Commissioner of Transportation and Works:**

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

1. The Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Durham Region, the City of Pickering, the Town of Markham, and the City of Toronto for their consideration as preliminary comments on the plans for the development of North Pickering (Seaton).
2. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Durham Region be requested to initiate a combined and coordinated transportation infrastructure review that will consider the impacts of the new Seaton community and the GTAA's plans for the Pickering Airport on Durham and York Regions and the City of Toronto, specifically addressing the improvements identified in the York Region Staff Report, as well as any other necessary improvements.
3. The transportation review contain an implementation plan which addresses phasing and funding from the Province and/or a mechanism to enable York Region to construct and pay for the work required to accommodate the growth in Durham Region, including a commitment from the Province to expedite the Environmental Assessment review and approval process for the Markham By-pass Highway 407 – 401 Link.
4. Regional Staff be directed to meet with respective staff at Durham Region to discuss coordinated planning and infrastructure requirements.
5. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing be requested to initiate and participate in a coordinated sanitary sewer infrastructure review with other relevant Provincial Ministries (such as MOE), Durham Region, and York Region that will consider the impacts of the new Seaton community and other proposed and planned developments, specifically addressing the available options and improvements required.
6. The sanitary sewer infrastructure review contain an implementation plan which addresses phasing, funding, and implementation commitments from the Province, including a commitment from the relevant Ministries to produce timely approvals.

## 2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the status of the development plans for North Pickering (Seaton) and to recommend Regional comments for consideration by the Province, Durham Region, and the City of Pickering in the evaluation of the plans.

## 3. BACKGROUND

On February 4, 2002, the Council for the City of Pickering initiated a Growth Management Study (GMS) to identify Pickering's future urban growth options. The study area included the Seaton lands in the east, to the C.P. Rail line in the south, the York-Durham boundary on the west, and Highway 7 on the north (*Figure 1*).

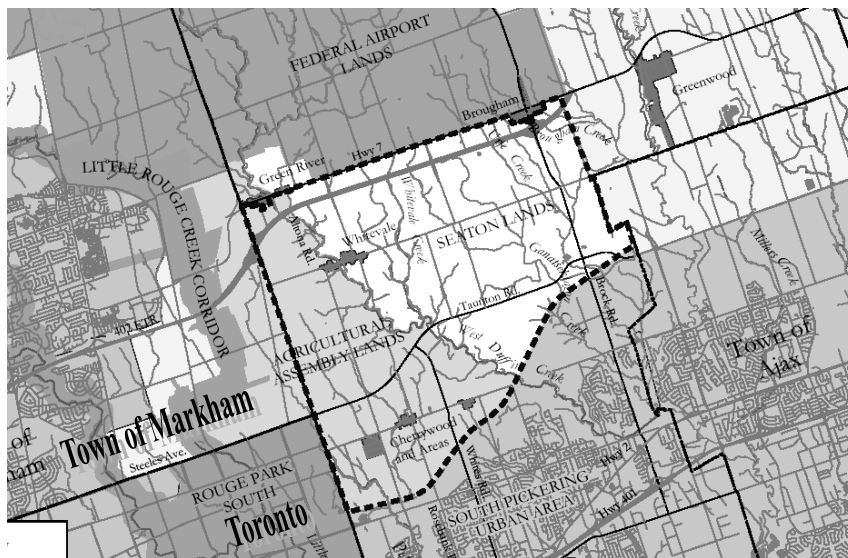


Figure 1

Source: Pickering Growth Management Study (Dillon et al, 2004)

In May of 2002, Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Chris Hodgson appointed the North Pickering Land Exchange Review Panel, chaired by David Crombie, to recommend a set of principles to guide the valuation, exchange and subsequent development of “the North Pickering Lands”.

The North Pickering lands, along with some adjacent lands in the Town of Markham, were assembled by the province in the early 1970s. The original intent was to develop a community of some 200,000 people in conjunction with the federal government's plans for a new international airport immediately to the north of the provincially owned lands. However, as part of the Government of Ontario's strategy to protect the Oak Ridges

Moraine, the province agreed to exchange the provincially owned lands in North Pickering for privately owned lands in Richmond Hill and Uxbridge (*Attachment 1*).

In May of 2004, the North Pickering Land Exchange Team (NPLET) of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing initiated its own planning process for a development plan for the North Pickering Lands (*Attachment 2*). As noted on the map, the boundaries for the NPLET development plan are almost identical to the City of Pickering's GMS.

The NPLET initiative is proceeding under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* and, if/when the Province's Development Plan for North Pickering is given final approval by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, it will override the City of Pickering's Growth Management efforts.

The following describes the background and current status of the two ongoing parallel projects.

### **3.1 The City of Pickering's Growth Management Study (GMS)**

In early 2003, the City of Pickering approved Dillon Consulting Limited as the lead consultant to undertake the Growth Management Study (GMS). In February of 2004, the Consulting Team recommended a Structure Plan for central Pickering which included the following highlights:

- The study area covers 4,860 ha (12,009 acres) of land and represents nearly one quarter of the total land in the City of Pickering.
- The GMS study area differs from other areas in the GTA because little site alteration has occurred over the last 30 years.
- 40% of the land within the study area will be for urban uses.
- Residential development to accommodate about 77,000 people.
- Employment lands to accommodate 33,000 jobs.
- Employment lands are proposed along the community's northern edge, to the north and south of Highway 407.
- The Structure Plan creates a buffer around the hamlet of Whitevale and protects this significant heritage resource.

In June of 2004, Pickering Council passed a resolution to endorse the Structure Plan prepared by the GMS Consulting Team as the basis for preparing official plan amendments. Over the summer, Pickering staff prepared a draft Official Plan Amendment (OPA) that incorporated the concepts from the Structure Plan. The OPA document included new land use polices and designations for the Seaton and Cherrywood communities.

On December 13, 2004, Pickering Council adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 13 (OPA 13), which implements the Council endorsed Structure Plan of the GMS Area (*Attachment 3*). The current status of the OPA is that it has been forwarded to the Region of Durham for approval. Durham Region has informed the City of Pickering that the

Region is unable to process OPA 13 as it relates to the Agricultural Preserve, due to the Greenbelt legislation.

### **3.2 Province's North Pickering Land Exchange Team Development Plan**

The provincial government is beginning the process of planning for a new community for the provincially owned Seaton lands and the protection of that portion of the Duffins Rouge Agricultural Preserve that falls within the City of Pickering. As noted above, the Plan will be developed under the authority of the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*. The proposed North Pickering Development Plan will be the first development plan prepared under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* (OPDA).

In many respects, a proposed Development Plan under the OPDA is similar to an official plan under the *Planning Act*. The primary differences are that the Province is the authority for both undertaking and approving the proposed Development Plan, and the legislative requirements for the preparation and approval of a Development Plan are unique to the OPDA. In particular, the approval of the Plan lies with the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Upon submission of the plan by the Minister, the Lieutenant Governor in Council may approve the plan in whole or in part or may approve it with such modifications as the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers desirable, and the development plan comes into effect on the day specified by the Lieutenant Governor in Council (there is no appeal process).

In June of 2004, the NPLET held a planning and design workshop at a public school in Pickering and then held a second workshop on October 6, 2004 at the Pickering Recreation Complex. However, unlike the City of Pickering's OPA 13, the NPLET's Development Plan for North Pickering is still in the early stages of development and, at the time of the writing of this report, has not been released.

Despite the fact that the Development Plan has not been released, preliminary estimates by the NPLET indicate that the new community will house approximately 52,000 people and 33,000 jobs. Of the original 3900 acres of land owned by the Province, approximately 1275 acres are to be transferred to developers in exchange for lands on the Oak Ridges Moraine.

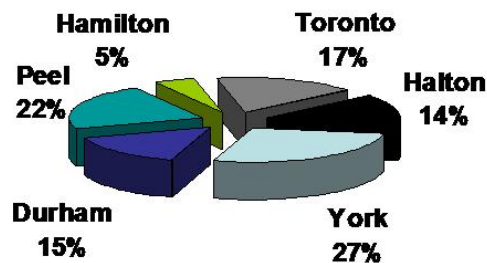
## **4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS**

There are two (2) separate and distinct planning processes occurring at the same time: 1) The City of Pickering's Official Plan Amendment No. 13; and 2) the Province's initiative under the Ontario Planning and Development Act. The City of Pickering's OPA 13 has been adopted and forwarded to the Region of Durham for approval and the Province's plan is still being prepared.

Although the Province's Development Plan has not been released, both the City of Pickering Plan and the NPLET plan will set the stage for the development of a large community, bordering a portion of the south-east corner of York Region.

In addition, as adopted by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the released Draft Growth Plan, the Province has recently revised growth forecasts for both York and Durham Regions. As noted in Figure 2, the revised forecasts indicate that the largest share of the population growth in the GTA is to occur in York Region, and when combined with Durham Region, the two Regions will accommodate 42% of the population growth.

**Figure 2**  
**Share of Population Growth in the GTA**  
**(Compact Scenario) 2001-2031**



Source: Statistics Canada and Henson Ltd. using Compact Scenario.

The following discusses some of the potential impacts that may result from the build-out of the Seaton community in light of the Province's revised growth forecasts.

#### **4.1 Pickering's Official Plan Amendment No. 13**

##### **4.1.1 Provincial Greenbelt Legislation**

The Provincial Greenbelt Plan has now been released in final form and a large portion of the subject lands fall within the area covered by the "Protected Countryside" designation of the Plan (*Attachment 4*). The Protected Countryside is made up of an Agricultural System and a Natural System, together with a series of settlement areas. The Agricultural System is made up of specialty crop, prime agricultural and rural areas. The Natural System identifies lands that support both natural heritage and hydrologic features and functions.

The City of Pickering adopted OPA 13 in December of 2004 and, as shown on *Attachment 3* to this report, there are lands proposed for urban uses (residential and mixed use areas) that are within the "Protected Countryside" designation of the Greenbelt

Plan. Therefore, the City's OPA 13 will have to be modified to comply with the Greenbelt Plan. This will most likely result in a reduction in the forecasted population and employment figures from the City of Pickering such that the figures are more in keeping with the Provincial estimates discussed in section 3.2 of this report.

#### **4.1.2 Land Use Compatibility**

As discussed above, the majority of the land abutting the border of York Region is a "Protected Countryside" designation within the Greenbelt Plan. The abutting lands in the Town of Markham are also designated "Protected Countryside" and therefore, when modified to comply with the Greenbelt Plan, there should be no land use incompatibilities created through OPA 13.

#### **4.1.3. Transportation**

Total road and transit traffic demand commuting to and from the North Pickering area and both Markham and the City of Toronto is undetermined at this point. In addition, the Greater Toronto Airport Authority (GTAA) has released plans for the development of the Pickering Airport lands to the north of the Seaton area. Similar to the Seaton Plan, neither plan contains a comprehensive analysis of transportation needs in terms of facilities, timing and funding of new road and transit infrastructure for York and Durham Regions.

Given the forecasted population and employment numbers, there are significant east/west transportation issues that must be resolved prior to the subject lands being designated for urban uses. It is estimated that at a minimum, the Seaton community alone will require the following road and transit improvements within York Region (also shown on *Attachment 5*):

- Completion of the Markham Bypass 407 – 401 link
- Widening of 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue from the York/Durham Line to the Markham Bypass Extension
- Widening of the York/Durham Line from Steeles Avenue to Highway 7
- Widening of Highway 7 from the York/Durham Line to Highway 48 (currently under MTO jurisdiction)
- Extension of the dedicated right-of-way rapid transit services being planned along Highway 7
- Extension of local transit routes in Markham
- In the longer term, the construction of the northern Markham Bypass-Highway 404 link identified in the York Transportation Master Plan which will connect Seaton to the 404 north area
- The long term construction of the Highway 407 Transitway

In addition, several road and transit system improvements are anticipated to be required in Toronto's jurisdiction:

- Widening of Steeles Avenue from the York/Durham Line to Tapscott Avenue

- Connection of the Markham Bypass Extension from Steeles Avenue to Morningside Avenue and south to Highway 401
- A new GO Rail line along the Havelock subdivision

Therefore, from York Region's standpoint there must be a combined transportation infrastructure review that will include the impacts of the new Seaton community and the GTAA's plans for the Pickering Airport on Durham Region and on the eastern areas of Markham and Toronto, specifically addressing the improvements identified above as well as any other necessary improvements. In addition, there must be an implementation plan which addresses phasing and funding from the Province and/or a mechanism (e.g. changes to the Development Charges Act) to enable York Region to construct and pay for the work required to accommodate the growth in Durham Region. Without these elements, the area will not be serviced with an appropriate level of transportation capacity to service the proposed population and employment.

#### **4.1.4. Infrastructure**

Wastewater servicing for the Seaton lands would be provided through the existing Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant (WPCP) located in Pickering and jointly owned and operated by Durham Region and York Region. The wastewater system is referred to as the York Durham Sewage System (YDSS) and consists of Durham Region infrastructure servicing the Pickering communities and York Region infrastructure currently servicing the communities of Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora and Newmarket. The sewage from York Region flows to the Duffin Creek WPCP through the South East Collector (SEC), which is located just south of the proposed Seaton development area.

The City of Pickering and the Province have indicated that the Seaton lands will not adversely impact the servicing capacity of the existing SEC system as an allocation was included in the design of the existing SEC system for the servicing of the Seaton Development area. However, there is a need to review the capacity of the YDSS system from the Seaton Development connection point southerly to the Duffin Creek Water Pollution Control Plant, including the treatment works at the plant.

It is noted that York Region is currently undertaking an Individual Environmental Assessment to twin the SEC from 9<sup>th</sup> line in York to the Valley Farm Road/Finch Ave location in Durham. In addition, given the forecasted growth in both Durham and York Regions, it is necessary to expand the WPCP. As per the York Region Master Plan for the YDSS, the expansion of the WPCP is to occur between 2006 and 2011. The capacity of the existing SEC, future twinning upgrades, and the WPCP expansion will provide servicing capacity for planned growth in both Durham and York Regions. However, to meet these timeframes, the Province must commit to an expeditious review of the EA and an equally expeditious notice of decision with respect to the EA.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing must initiate and participate in a coordinated sanitary sewer infrastructure review with other relevant Provincial Ministries

(MOE, MPIR, MNR, etc.), Durham Region, and York Region that will consider the impacts of the new Seaton community, specifically addressing the available options and improvements required. The sanitary review must contain an implementation plan which addresses phasing, a commitment from the relevant Ministries to produce timely approvals for infrastructure, and funding from the Province to enable York Region and Durham Region to construct and pay for the work required to accommodate the forecasted growth in Durham Region and in York Region.

## **4.2 The Province's Development Plan**

### **4.2.1 Land Use Compatibility**

Although a Development Plan has not been released to date, it is anticipated that the Plan will reflect the designations that are set out in the final approval of the Greenbelt Plan. As discussed earlier in this report, the approved designation on both sides of the border is "Protected Countryside". Therefore, there should be no land use incompatibilities with the Development Plan and the York Region (Town of Markham) lands.

### **4.2.2. Transportation**

Even though the Provincial plan has yet to be released, there are indications that it may be significantly different in the areas of concentration and development densities proposed in the Pickering plan. Nevertheless, the impacts on eastern York Region, western Durham Region and the City of Toronto will need to be assessed.

It is also important to continue to monitor the jobs-housing balance (currently predicted to be 1 job per 1.79 people living in the community), as the spatial mismatch between the locations of jobs and housing is considered a key part of the reason for longer commute trips and deteriorating traffic conditions. The Provincial plan must also ensure that a mismatch is not created between the types of jobs in the Seaton area and the types and costs of housing in Seaton.

### **4.2.3. Infrastructure**

The Province, through the Ontario Planning and Development Act, is preparing a development plan to designate certain lands for urban uses so that the land may be transferred to various developers. The Province has indicated that its proposed servicing route for the Seaton lands will connect into the existing YDSS at the very easterly limit of the SEC and as noted earlier, the capacity of the existing and future twin upgrades for the SEC combined and the WPCP expansion will provide servicing capacity for planned growth in both Durham and York Regions.

Regional Staff have not seen any detailed supporting servicing plans. Therefore, as previously discussed within Section 4.1.4 of this report, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing must initiate and participate in a coordinated sanitary sewer infrastructure review with other relevant Provincial Ministries, Durham Region, and York Region. The review must consider the impacts of the new Seaton community and specifically address the available options and improvements required and the approvals required to implement



the servicing scheme. The principles of this review are the same as discussed in Section 4.1.4 of this report.

In addition to the above, the Province should ensure that water and human services requirements will be available to accommodate the forecasted growth.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Province must take on a leadership role to ensure that funding is available and that there are expedited approvals for the infrastructure necessary to serve approved planned growth and forecasted growth in York and Durham Regions.

Most critical from a transportation standpoint is that the current Development Charges Act does not allow York Region to collect for Regional road and transit system improvements necessary within York due to developments that will occur outside the Region. Furthermore, it does not permit Durham Region to collect for the improvements needed in York Region. Therefore, there will be a significant funding gap for these improvements. Therefore, it is imperative that the Province provides funding and/or a mechanism (e.g. changes to the Development Charges Act) to enable York Region to construct and pay for the transportation infrastructure required to accommodate the growth in Durham Region.

## **6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT**

It is anticipated that both the City of Pickering's OPA 13 and the Province's North Pickering Development Plan will have substantial transportation impacts on the Town of Markham.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

The City of Pickering has adopted Official Plan Amendment No. 13, which is a growth management amendment to significantly increase the urban area. In addition to protecting the environmental lands, the Official Plan Amendment proposes substantial residential and employment development for the City of Pickering.

A parallel growth management study by the Province of Ontario, under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act*, is currently ongoing; however, a plan has yet to be released. This plan, once approved by the Lieutenant Governor in Council, will override the City of Pickering's Official Plan Amendment 13. The proposed development will require significant infrastructure and this must be provided for in the Plan.

It is anticipated that the development proposed for North Pickering, in combination with the revised Provincial forecasts for population and employment in York and Durham Regions, will have substantial impacts on traffic volumes through the Town of Markham. However, neither the City of Pickering's OPA 13, nor the Province's North Pickering Development Plan have included a review of traffic impacts external to the Region of Durham. In addition, it is essential that traffic generation from the GTAA's proposed Pickering Airport be included in an overall coordinated review.

With respect to wastewater systems, it is imperative that there be participation from the Province and Durham Region to ensure that a coordinated servicing plan is developed, with commitments for implementation, that will be capable of servicing the forecasted growth.

Therefore, it is recommended that the Regional Clerk forward this report to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Durham Region, the City of Pickering, the Town of Markham, and the City of Toronto for their consideration for their consideration as preliminary comments on the proposed growth management plans. In addition, it is recommended that Regional Staff be directed to meet with respective staff at Durham Region to discuss coordinated planning and infrastructure requirements.

It is also recommended that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Durham Region be requested to initiate a combined and coordinated transportation infrastructure review that will consider the impacts of the new Seaton community and the GTAA's plans for the Pickering Airport on Durham Region, York Region and the City of Toronto, specifically addressing the improvements identified in the York Region Staff Report, as well as any other necessary improvements and that the transportation review contain an implementation plan which addresses phasing and funding from the Province and/or a mechanism to enable York Region to construct and pay for the work required to accommodate the growth in Durham Region.

Lastly, as noted throughout this report, it is recommended that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing be requested to initiate and participate in a coordinated sanitary sewer infrastructure review with other relevant Provincial Ministries, Durham Region, and York Region. The review shall consider the impacts of the new Seaton community, in combination with the revised Provincial population and employment forecasts, specifically addressing the available options and improvements required. The sanitary review shall contain phasing, funding and implementation commitments from the Province, including a commitment from the relevant Ministries to produce timely approvals.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

*(The attachments referred to in this clause are included with this report.)*