

October 28, 2008

**Sent via email**  
**councillor\_debaeremaeker@toronto.ca**

Mr. Glenn De Baeremaeker  
Chair, Public Works and Infrastructure Committee  
City of Toronto  
100 Queen Street West  
Suite B31  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Dear Councillor De Baeremaeker:

At Authority Meeting #8/08, of Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), held on October 24, 2008, Resolution #A236/08, in regard to Growing Durham was approved as follows:

*THAT the Regional Municipality of Durham and their consultants be credited for reducing the 2031 projected urban footprint by over 1,000 hectares by meeting the intensification targets of the provincial Places to Grow Growth Plan;*

*THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) supports the recommended policy directions to encourage and demonstrate sustainable community design practices;*

*THAT an environmental monitoring component be added to the proposed "Five Year Growth Management Reviews" to ensure development also proceeds in an environmentally sustainable manner;*

*THAT TRCA does not support the incorporation of lands in the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek watershed into the Durham Region 2031 urban boundary until such time as the following issues have been satisfactorily addressed:*

- completion of an update to A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek to assess the environmental carrying capacity of the watershed, define a sustainable natural heritage system, and address potential flooding and erosion impacts to downstream residents and infrastructure,*
- an analysis to show when the subject lands would be needed within the ten-year local urban boundary,*
- a comparison of the agricultural viability of the Carruthers lands to other whitebelt lands currently being excluded from the urban boundary, and*
- the completion of Durham's Master Water and Wastewater Servicing Study;*

*AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Region of Durham, the four other conservation authorities within Durham Region, the Town of Ajax, the City of Pickering, the Municipality of Clarington, the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Natural Resources, and Energy and Infrastructure and to the City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure, and Parks and Environment committees.*

Enclosed for your information and any action deemed necessary is the report as presented to the Authority. If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the undersigned at 416-661-6600 extension 5264 (kstranks@trca.on.ca) or David Burnett at extension 5361.

Sincerely

Kathy Stranks  
Manager, Chair and CAO's Office

cc. David Burnett, Manager, Provincial and Regional Policy, TRCA

/Encl.

**DISTRIBUTION LIST**

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**TO:** Chair and Members of the Authority  
Meeting #8/08, October 24, 2008

**FROM:** Carolyn Woodland, Director, Planning and Development

**RE:** **GROWING DURHAM**

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**KEY ISSUE**

Draft recommended growth scenario and policy directions.

**RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the Regional Municipality of Durham and their consultants be credited for reducing the 2031 projected urban footprint by over 1,000 hectares by meeting the intensification targets of the provincial Places to Grow Growth Plan;**

**THAT Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) supports the recommended policy directions to encourage and demonstrate sustainable community design practices;**

**THAT an environmental monitoring component be added to the proposed “Five Year Growth Management Reviews” to ensure development also proceeds in an environmentally sustainable manner;**

**THAT TRCA does not support the incorporation of lands in the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek watershed into the Durham Region 2031 urban boundary until such time as the following issues have been satisfactorily addressed:**

- **completion of an update to A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek to assess the environmental carrying capacity of the watershed, define a sustainable natural heritage system, and address potential flooding and erosion impacts to downstream residents and infrastructure,**
- **an analysis to show when the subject lands would be needed within the ten-year local urban boundary,**
- **a comparison of the agricultural viability of the Carruthers lands to other whitebelt lands currently being excluded from the urban boundary, and**
- **the completion of Durham’s Master Water and Wastewater Servicing Study;**

**AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Region of Durham, the four other conservation authorities within Durham Region, the Town of Ajax, the City of Pickering, the Municipality of Clarington, the ministries of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Natural Resources, and Energy and Infrastructure and to the City of Toronto Public Works and Infrastructure, and Parks and Environment committees.**

## **BACKGROUND**

Staff last reported on the Growing Durham initiative (phase 3 and 4) at Authority Meeting #6/08, held on July 25, 2008. The Growing Durham initiative is the planning process of the Regional Municipality of Durham to amend their official plan to be in conformity with the provincial Places to Grow Act and Plan. Several issues of concern in the report to the Authority were identified including:

- the entire remaining headwaters of the Carruthers Creek watershed would be placed in an urban designation;
- no previous watershed studies had taken place in the headwaters portion of the watershed;
- previous watershed studies that assessed flooding and erosion hazards in the lower reaches of the watershed were done on the basis that the headwaters would remain in a natural or agricultural state.

One of staff's recommendations in the report was:

*THAT should the Region of Durham decide to consider future urban growth in the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek, an update to the watershed plan for the Carruthers Creek be completed prior to the approval of the local official plan amendment to redesignate these lands for urban uses;*

Authority members felt this recommendation was not strong enough and amended it to request that the update to the watershed plan be completed prior to the approval of the regional and local official plan amendment to redesignate the lands for urban uses. A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek was published in August 2003.

### **Growing Durham - Draft Recommended Growth Scenario and Policy Directions**

This new document dated September 23, 2008 refines the population numbers and recommended preferred growth scenario from the previous Phase 3 and 4 document. Some of the changes and policy recommendations contained in the document include:

- the provincial density targets for new greenfield developments (50 residents and jobs combined per hectare) and residential intensification targets for existing urban areas (40% annually by 2015) now appear to be being met, resulting in over 1,000 ha less land needed for urban development to 2031;
- a recommendation to encourage sustainable community design practices and require a demonstration of how development will address issues such as permeability, water quality and conservation, energy conservation, air quality protection, increased (transportation) modal splits and walkable communities, and green buildings and infrastructure;
- a recommendation for "Five-year Growth Management Reviews" to ensure growth proceeds in a logical and orderly manner, meets provincial intensification and density targets, and appropriately phases development over the next five year period;
- a specific recognition of the Carruthers Creek watershed headwaters as a sensitive area and a general recommendation for natural heritage studies and watershed plans to be required as part of the secondary plan process (as opposed to being required at the regional official plan amendment stage, as per the Authority amended resolution);
- a recommendation to use holding provisions on lands designated urban until natural heritage system and watershed planning studies have determined the appropriate development limits;

- a recommendation to limit expansion into greenfield lands until such time as intensification targets are being met and to require 75% build-out of approved secondary plans prior to the approval of sequential secondary plans;
- a recommendation to encourage the continuation of agricultural uses on lands designated for urban uses within the regional official plan but which are not yet designated for development in the local official plan; and
- a recommendation to direct local municipalities to provide within their urban boundary sufficient lands to accommodate a ten-year supply of land for housing and employment needs and to ensure logical and sequential development patterns with each phase.

### **Discussion**

At Authority Meeting #5/03, held on June 27, 2003, *A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek* was approved. The key issue for Authority members based on discussions at the July 25 Authority meeting was that “an update to A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek be completed prior to the approval of the regional and local official plan amendment to redesignate these lands for urban uses;”. This resolution (#A177/08) was based on taking “a precautionary approach to the upper Carruthers Creek watershed in order to protect and enhance the remaining environmental attributes and to prevent potentially expensive infrastructure remediation projects in the lower reaches of the creek in the existing downstream Ajax community.”. The consultant’s recommendation in the current Growing Durham report did not incorporate the resolution, as amended by the Authority, to update the watershed plan prior to the regional official plan amendment (OPA). Neither was TRCA staff’s initial recommendation to update the watershed plan prior to the local OPA included. Instead, the consultant’s recommendation is to require a watershed plan at an even later stage in the planning process – in advance of or concurrent with the secondary plan process. There are many issues that are appropriate to study and resolve at the secondary plan level. However, staff feels there are a number of high-level issues associated with the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek that need to be addressed prior to designating all these lands for urban uses. These high-level issues include:

- A comparison of the agricultural viability of the subject lands to other whitebelt lands currently being excluded from the urban boundary. The headwaters of the Carruthers Creek contains some very high quality agricultural operations that may have increasing value as near urban, close-to-market agricultural lands. The subject lands are surrounded by Greenbelt lands and may have better long-term viability for agriculture as compared with other whitebelt agricultural lands in Clarington. The Clarington lands are contiguous with adjacent urban lands and closer to the lakeshore urban corridor. A comparison of these lands for their long term agricultural viability should be undertaken in accordance with policy 2.2.8.2 f) of the provincial Places to Grow Growth Plan.
- The completion of Durham’s Master Water and Wastewater Servicing Study to determine if the subject lands can be serviced in accordance with Durham’s goal to provide servicing in a logical, sequential and cost-effective manner, as compared to other whitebelt lands. This is also recommended by the Region’s consultants. The lands in the Carruthers Creek headwaters are surrounded by Greenbelt Plan lands and isolated from other urban lands, making servicing to this area potentially more difficult and costly.

- An analysis to show when the subject lands would be needed within the ten-year local urban boundary given the uncertainty around the airport, the current economic uncertainty and the projected time for the build out of the Seaton lands. Seaton is being planned for 70,000 residents and 35,000 jobs over a projected period of 15 to 25 years. If efforts at intensification in existing urban areas and the provision of improved transit to serve these areas bears fruit, the full development of Seaton, and the need for additional urban fringe lands in the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek, may be many years in the future.
- Completion of an update to *A Watershed Plan for the Duffins Creek and Carruthers Creek* to, among other things, assess the environmental carrying capacity of the watershed, define a sustainable natural heritage system and address potential flooding and erosion impacts to downstream residents and infrastructure.

In summary, there are too many unknown and outstanding issues to be addressed for the lands in the headwaters of the Carruthers Creek watershed to warrant their inclusion in the regional urban boundary at this time.

**Report prepared by: David Burnett, extension 5361**

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**For Information contact: David Burnett, extension 5361**

**Emails: [dburnett@trca.on.ca](mailto:dburnett@trca.on.ca)**

**Date: October 07, 2008**