

Mr. Dwayne Campbell  
Director of Planning  
Northumberland County

May 24, 2024

Dear Mr. Campbell.

RE Growth Management Future Official Plan Amendment- Publication Consultation.

I attended the Public Open House yesterday afternoon and listened to the presentation at 4:30 but was not able to stay for all the follow up questions. I am writing today, to outline some initial thoughts on the proposed Growth Plan, as it may have a big impact on residents of the Town of Port Hope where I have been living for the past 20 years.

Let me begin by saying that in my former professional life, I was working for the Federal, and Provincial governments and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. I had been involved in urban growth management studies for over 40+ years; principally in terms of their environmental design, watershed perspectives and infrastructure considerations related to transportation and servicing studies. I directed between 2000 and 2019, the development of four watershed plans for the TRCA. I have extensively studied the nearshores of Lake Ontario, with respect to nearshore water quality impacts of nutrient loadings from watersheds. I also served as a Canadian Advisor to the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission for two years prior to retirement in 2019. In addition I was an advisor to CIDA in the late 1990s transferring Canadian Expertise in Watershed Management to the State of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

The following points summarize my initial review.

1. It is totally inappropriate to assign all the major growth to the Town of Port Hope. The excuse that Cobourg is built out and the growth needs to be west focused is not a logical statement as your consultant made it sound in the meeting. To begin, the old municipal boundary of Port Hope is equally as built out as Cobourg, under the current OP. The opportunity to advance urban boundary outside of Ward1 exists only because the former Harris government forced the amalgamation of Hope Township with the Town of Port Hope. Hamilton Twp for some unknown reason was able to escape being amalgamation with Cobourg. At the time of amalgamation in Port Hope most of the infrastructure needed for future urban growth was positioned in Cobourg- (County Planning Services, Hospitals, OPP, Court Houses etc.) Big box retail all moved to Cobourg. If pressed I am certain the current provincial government would support boundary changes to Hamilton Township bringing new lands for urban growth into the Town of Cobourg.
2. The designation of the block of future urban land depicted on the schedule map sent to my house makes no sense to me. Your consultant said at the public meeting no one would want to see growth north of the 401. That statement is simply wrong. One only has to look further west and you can see that Newcastle, Bowmanville, Courtice, Oshawa, Whitby,

Ajax and Pickering all utilize lands north of the 401 for their urban expansion. The lands depicted for the western urban expansion of Port Hope pose challenges in terms of local road networks :with only two east west roads available to convey more subdivision traffic (Marsh Road and Lakeshore Road). There are no logical routes for future roads that pass through the Rapley subdivision, in an East West direction. Your consultant also cited the nuclear waste management site as a constraint. He failed to mention the existence the Whites subdivision, immediately adjacent to this site and housing along the entrance on Toronto Road. Servicing of the proposed site will be costly as there will be a requirement to collect and pump sewage across the Ganaraska River to Sewage Plant vs. the use of gravity flow networks if the lands north of the 401 were used for development.

3. Providing options for public consultation is a good thing. I need to read more of the background documents or earlier reports, but typically growth management planning efforts present several areas within a municipality for future growth. Why is there not some pressure on the province to develop lands they already own in the Wesleyville area? The key point is this reduces the need to remove any class 1 agricultural lands and takes the cost of planning and servicing growth off the plate of Town of Port Hope taxpayers. These lands are much closer to GTA which the planning consultant used as his rationale supporting the parcel of land depicted in the attached schedule.
4. Lands North of the 401 to the west of the Ganaraska river offer less impacts on prime agricultural lands and provide a clean slate for innovative and sustainable urban planning of neighbourhoods, transit friendly road networks, green spaces and supporting amenities such as retail and community centres. You could save money by linking lands to west of Highway 28 with servicing of the employment lands east of Hwy 28 , and north of the 401. Town water was recently delivered to Welcome and there is municipal land already purchased suitable for a new community centre and or elementary school.
5. Planning of urban expansion in the Town of Port Hope will need strong Provincial commitment that the future widening of the 401 and planned bridge replacements will also consider the transportation connections needed to support commuters getting safely on and off the 401. Let's not create the transportation mess that exists in Bowmanville and Newcastle all over again. Expanded parking will be required at the VIA train station and there is a need for a Go Bus station in Port Hope.
6. My last concern is who pays for all this development? Should these cost not be shared across Northumberland County if 100% of the growth the county needs to provide is being focused on the municipality (Port Hope). Development Charges fees as you are well aware, are increasingly subject to new funding formulas established by the province. With the logic of making new homes more affordable – in fact there are no actual savings with the true costs now downloaded to municipal tax bills.

7. Growth is very much needed, and I recognize that it is something apposed by many residents. For the record I fully support urban growth, but only for growth on lands best suited and the most cost effective for servicing and allowing a clean slate for innovative planning by the Town of Port Hope.

In closing I look forward to receiving a detailed response to this correspondence.

Gary Bowen

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