



Jim Baird M.B.A., M.C.I.P.
Commissioner of Development Services

March 2, 2004

Mr. Bill Fisch, Regional Chair
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1

Dear Bill:

Re: Town of Markham OPA No. 116 Rouge North Management Plan

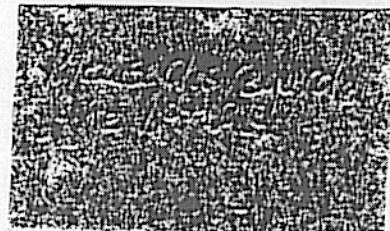
We note on the agenda for March 3, 2004 of the Planning and Economic Development Committee of the Region of York a recommendation that Regional Council give Notice of Decision to Approve Town of Markham OPA No. 116 subject to the modifications contained in the report. The Town's Amendment was unanimously adopted by Council on September 30, 2003 with the full support of the Rouge Park Alliance and the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. We are very pleased that Regional Council is set to consider the Town's Rouge North OPA and commend Regional staff for their diligence and effort in bringing forward the supporting recommendation.

In a letter to Regional Council dated March 1, 2004, Tom Hilditch on behalf of UDI and a landowners group, requests delay of adoption of OPA No 116. We also note on your March 3rd agenda a scheduled deputation by Tom Hilditch of Stantec Consulting.

Mr. Hilditch's March 2nd letter was received at the March 2, 2004 meeting of the Town of Markham Development Services Committee. Town staff were instructed to write to you and Regional Planning Committee to express the strong support of the Town of Markham for OPA116, and to request the Region to not delay the approval of OPA116.

The Rouge North planning process has been a lengthy process for the Town and one which included substantial consultation with all stakeholders including Tom Hilditch, representing the Urban Development Institute (UDI). The Town arranged a series of special meetings and consultations with Tom Hilditch, also involving staff from the TRCA and Mark Schollen, the consultant for the Rouge North Management Plan and Rouge North Implementation Manual. These consultations also included presentations to the local and full chapters of UDI.

URGENT FOR TODAY'S MEETING
FAX → BEYON TUCKER
1-905-895-3402
→ TIM BAIRD
TOWN OF MARKHAM
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DATE: MARCH 3/04

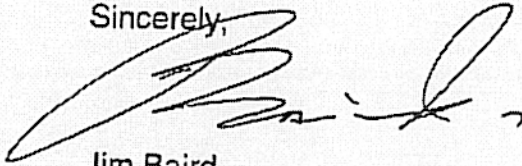


Town staff incorporated numerous modifications to the draft Amendment as a result of these fruitful discussions. On September 30, 2003, UDI submitted a letter to the Town identifying their acceptance of the Town's Rouge North Amendment (attached).

We would request that the Region grant approval to OPA116. We will continue to work with UDI, TRCA and other stakeholders to ensure the fair and reasonable application of the ecological criteria in defining future protection limits along watercourses.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Jim Baird,
Commissioner of Development Services

C. Denis Kelly
Members of Region of York Planning and Economic Development
Committee
Mayor and Members of Council
Bryon Tuckey

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Bal**Stantec**

March 1, 2004

Regional Municipality of York
Regional Administrative Building
17250 Yonge Street
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

By Facsimile 905 895-3031

Attention: Mr. Denis Kelly, Clerk

Dear Sir:

Reference: Town of Markham OPA 116 Rouge North Official Plan Amendment

Please accept this letter as formal comments regarding the Rouge North Official Plan Amendment (the "OPA"). By way of background, since 2000, I have acted on behalf of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) by participating in the consultation process that has led to the creation of the OPA and supporting materials. Over the course of the consultation period, I have provided a detailed technical analysis of the Rouge North Management Plan, presented materials to the Rouge Park Alliance (the "Alliance"), met with Markham staff, participated on the Alliance's Technical Review Sub-Committee. Our detailed correspondence from UDI York Chapter to the Town of Markham Staff dated April 23, 2002, in large part summarized our concerns and position. I have been asked to provide an update regarding our thoughts given the current circulation of this OPA to the Region of York. This letter is submitted on behalf of UDI and a concerned landowners group.

First let me say that there is a general recognition by UDI and by landowners that the Town and the Alliance have worked hard to establish the Rouge North Management Plan and to bring this amendment forward. UDI remains supportive of the general objectives of establishing a viable Rouge Park within the Town. Like others involved in this process, UDI believes that the Rouge North area is a special circumstance being an extension of the designated Rouge Park lands in public ownership within the City of Toronto. In that regard, UDI accepts this policy is applicable only to the Rouge watershed because of its unique features. We understand and support the suggestion that the policy is not to be used as a basis for OPAs in other watersheds in the GTA.

Sent by: STANTEC

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March 1, 2004
Mr. Denis Kelly, Clerk
Page 2 of 2

Reference: Town of Markham OPA 116 Rouge North Official Plan Amendment

The following summarizes two key areas of concern regarding the OPA for the Rouge Park. Other technical issues and minor clarifications are still required to ensure that the OPA reflects the best available science and planning approaches. This review builds upon substantial input already provided by UDI.

One of our primary concerns is the reliance of the OPA upon the Rouge North Plan and its companion, the Rouge North Implementation Manual. These documents make reference to evolving policies and programs currently being developed by TRCA (e.g. Valley and Stream Program review, development of a Natural Heritage Strategy, ongoing use of TRCA generated species status lists). This could result in the potential to institutionalize new and still evolving TRCA programs and approaches. It is difficult to respond to an OPA when the definition of some key aspects will continue to evolve without the opportunity for formal technical review to positively affect change or to prevent the inappropriate application of the bylaw.

While we understand that Regional Staff have identified this OPA as a policy overlay, we are concerned that the OPA does directly reference the "ecological criteria" defined to establish the park boundaries. A number of these criteria are vague and all-inclusive, which could result in a degree of uncertainty (i.e. longer approvals process, more in-field interpretation by various parties) regarding the establishment of technically sound boundaries (e.g. woodland and vegetation communities, locally significant areas, species of concern, corridor function, woodland restoration requirements). There is substantial room for interpretation of significance and boundary delineation, based upon these general criteria.

Given these key areas of concern and other related comments, I request that the Region delay the adoption of the amendment. This would permit us to have some fruitful additional discussion with staff from both the Town and Region. During those discussions, we would be pleased to share our more detailed comments and discussions regarding how we believe the OPA and supporting materials could be further enhanced.

If you have questions, please call the undersigned at 519 836-6050 x 242.

Yours truly,

STANTEC CONSULTING LTD.



Tom Hilditch
Principal, Environmental Management
thilditch@stantec.com

c. Ms. Tanya Carincli, UDI Ontario 416 498-6356

Stantec



September 30, 2003

Mayor & Members of Council
Town of Markham
Anthony Roman Centre
101 Town Centre Boulevard
Markham, ON
L3R 9W3

**Re: *Town of Markham Proposed Official Plan Amendment
Draft Rouge North Official Plan Amendment***

Dear Sirs/Madams:

The Urban Development Institute/Ontario ("UDI") is pleased to offer its comments on this proposed official plan amendment.

As you are aware, UDI has closely monitored the evolution of this official plan amendment. Since 2000, we have written to and deputed before the Rouge Park Alliance ("Alliance"), met with Town staff, wrote several letters related to our consultants (Tom Hilditch of Stantec, formerly ESG International) technical analysis of the Rouge North Management Plan and participated on the Alliance's Implementation Committee, Technical Review Sub-committee. For particular reference, we note the correspondence from UDI York Chapter to Town of Markham Staff dated April 23, 2002 and the ESG International correspondence dated January 28, 2003, which summarizes our prime concerns and position.

UDI recognizes the Alliance's efforts to establish the Rouge North Management Plan and the Town's ongoing efforts to implement the RNMP through this official plan amendment. UDI remains supportive of the general objectives of establishing a viable Rouge Park within the Town. Like others involved in this process, UDI views the Rouge North area as a special circumstance, extending the designated City of Toronto Rouge Park lands.

UDI accepts this policy applicable only to the Rouge watershed because of its unique features. We understand the policy is not to be used as a basis for OPAs in other watersheds in the GTA.

Throughout our involvement in the Rouge North Plan and Implementation Manual, UDI has stated we have substantial concerns with the various criteria referred to. It is our assumption that the Town, the TRCA and other planning authorities will seek to impose such criteria. UDI reserves the right to question

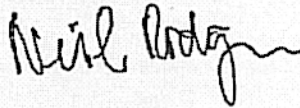
372

and/or challenge the application of the criteria as and when the Town proceeds with an urban expansion.

All along, UDI has advised Town staff that the success of this amendment in the meeting the overall policy objectives is, in large part, dependent on the efforts of public agencies working with private landowners to assist in meeting the overall objectives of the proposed plan. In light of this, UDI stresses that the implementation of the proposed amendment must be based in science in order to avoid implementation conflicts and its application reasonable.

If you have questions, please call the undersigned at 416 498-9121.

Yours truly,



Neil Rodgers
President, UDI/Ontario

CC: Mr. Jim Baird, Commissioner of Development Services
UDI York Chapter Members