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**INFORMATION REPORT FOR PUBLIC MEETING -
PROPOSED AMENDMENT NO. 69 TO THE
YORK REGION OFFICIAL PLAN (1994)
(19-OP-1994-069)**

STATUTORY MEETING INFORMATION REPORT

The Regional Planning and Economic Development Committee held a Public Meeting on April 4, 2012, pursuant to Section 17(15) of the *Planning Act*, as amended, to inform the Public and receive comments regarding the Proposed Amendment No. 69 to the York Region Official Plan (1994) (19-OP-1994-069), and recommends the following:

1. Receipt of the presentation by Josh Reis, Planner, Community Planning;
2. Receipt of the following deputations:
 - a) Paul Lowes, Principal, Sorensen Gravely Lowes Planning Associates Inc. on behalf of Westlin Farms; and
 - b) Douglas Anderson, on behalf of residents Del and Hilda Bedard
3. Adoption of the recommendation contained in the following report dated, March 8, 2012, from the Commissioner of Transportation and Community Planning.

1. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

1. Staff receive and review comments from the public and responses from the circulation of the proposed amendment, and prepare a future report with recommendations for future consideration by the Planning and Economic Development Committee.

2. PURPOSE

This report provides an overview and description of proposed Amendment No. 69 to the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended). The application has been submitted to redesignate the subject lands from 'Agricultural Policy Area' to 'Rural Policy Area' to facilitate the development of a nine-hole private golf course.

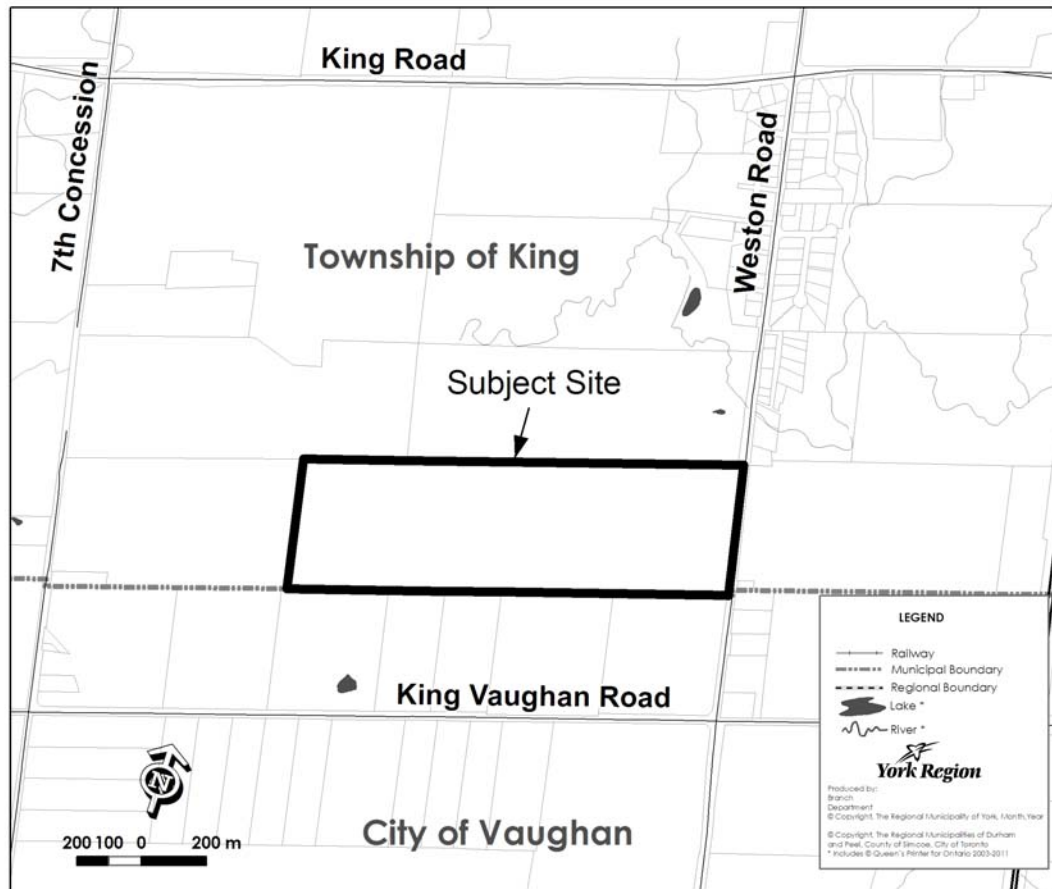
The purpose of this report is to provide Committee and the public information in regard to proposed Amendment No. 69 to the Region of York Official Plan (1994, as amended), for the purpose of the statutory public meeting. Regional staff will receive comments and feedback from the public meeting for consideration in a future report to Committee and Council on proposed Amendment No. 69.

3. BACKGROUND

Subject lands are located on the west side of Weston Road, south of King Road, within the 'Agricultural Policy Area' of the York Region Official Plan

Regional staff have received an application submitted on behalf of Westlin Farms Inc., Owner of the subject lands, to amend the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended). The subject lands comprise 52 hectares of land legally described as Lot 2, Concession 6, municipally known as 12470 Weston Road, located on the west side of Weston Road, south of King Road, in the Township of King (see *Figure 1*, below). Further, the subject lands are adjacent to the municipal boundary of the City of Vaughan.

Figure 1
Subject Lands



The 52 hectare site is currently used primarily for agricultural purposes, and contains a wooded area located in the northwest portion of the subject lands. The Agricultural Impact Study, submitted by the applicant, identifies that approximately 70% of the subject lands comprise prime agricultural land. In addition, there are two dwellings located on the subject lands; one dwelling is a second home for the Owner, the second dwelling is the residence of the farm manager. Adjacent uses include estate residential and the hamlet of Laskay to the north, and rural residential and agricultural uses to the east, south and west.

The proposed amendment would facilitate the development of a 9-hole private golf course

The purpose of the proposed amendment is to re-designate the subject lands from 'Agricultural Policy Area' to 'Rural Policy Area' to facilitate the development of a 9-hole private golf course for personal use by the Owner and his family. The applicant has also submitted a Local Official Plan Amendment and Re-zoning application; however, at the

time of the writing of this report, the local applications had yet to have been deemed complete by Town staff, as they await additional information and studies.

The proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment application would amend the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended), since the York Region Official Plan (2010) is currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board and therefore not in effect.

On December 7, 2011, Regional staff deemed the proposed amendment complete under the *Planning Act*

On December 7, 2011, staff notified the applicant, as per Section 22(6.1) of the *Planning Act*, that the proposed application was complete. The application was initially received by Regional staff on June 11, 2010. Subsequently, on July 9, 2010, Regional staff indicated the application was incomplete pending receipt of an Agricultural Impact Study to assess the agricultural capability of the subject lands. The proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment has now been circulated to the prescribed agencies for review and comment.

Notice of Complete Application and the Public Meeting was advertised in the Toronto Star and local papers on February 2, 2012

On February 2, 2012, notice of receipt of a complete application and notice of the statutory public meeting was advertised in the GTA Section of the Toronto Star, and the affiliated papers of the York Region News Group (including The Era, Georgina Advocate, The Liberal, Thornhill Liberal, Vaughan Citizen, Markham Economist and Sun and the Stouffville Sun-Tribune).

4. ANALYSIS AND OPTIONS

The proposal seeks to amend the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended) to redesignate the subject lands from 'Agricultural Policy Area' to 'Rural Policy Area'. The following provides an overview of the Provincial and Regional policy context, as it pertains to the subject lands and prime agricultural lands.

The Provincial Policy Statement (2005) supports the protection of prime agricultural land for agricultural uses

The Provincial Policy Statement (2005) (PPS) provides direction on matters of Provincial interest, related to land use planning. Specifically, Section 2.3 of the PPS requires the protection of prime agricultural lands for agricultural uses, secondary uses, and agricultural-related uses. The PPS does allow for the exclusion of land from prime agricultural areas for limited non-residential uses under Section 2.3.5.1, provided that:

- a) The land does not comprise a specialty crop area

- b) There is a demonstrated need for land to be designated to permit the proposed use
- c) There are no reasonable alternative locations which avoid prime agricultural areas
- d) There are no reasonable alternative locations within lower priority agricultural lands

While the Greenbelt Plan applies to a portion of the subject lands, the proposed golf course development is not proposed in the Greenbelt Plan Area

The Greenbelt Plan provides protection for agricultural land and ecological features by identifying appropriate locations for development and urbanization. The wooded areas of the site which consist of land in the northwest corner of the property and flanking the northern portion of the property comprise part of the Natural Heritage System of the Greenbelt Plan. However; the conceptual site plan does not propose development within the area designated by the Greenbelt Plan.

Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe recognizes the importance of protecting prime agricultural land for agricultural uses

Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe provides a framework to help guide land use planning decisions and resource protection by directing development into the built up areas of the Region. Section 4.2.2. of the plan contains policies encouraging the protection of Prime Agricultural Areas.

Regional Plan Policy supports the protection of agricultural uses from non-farm developments

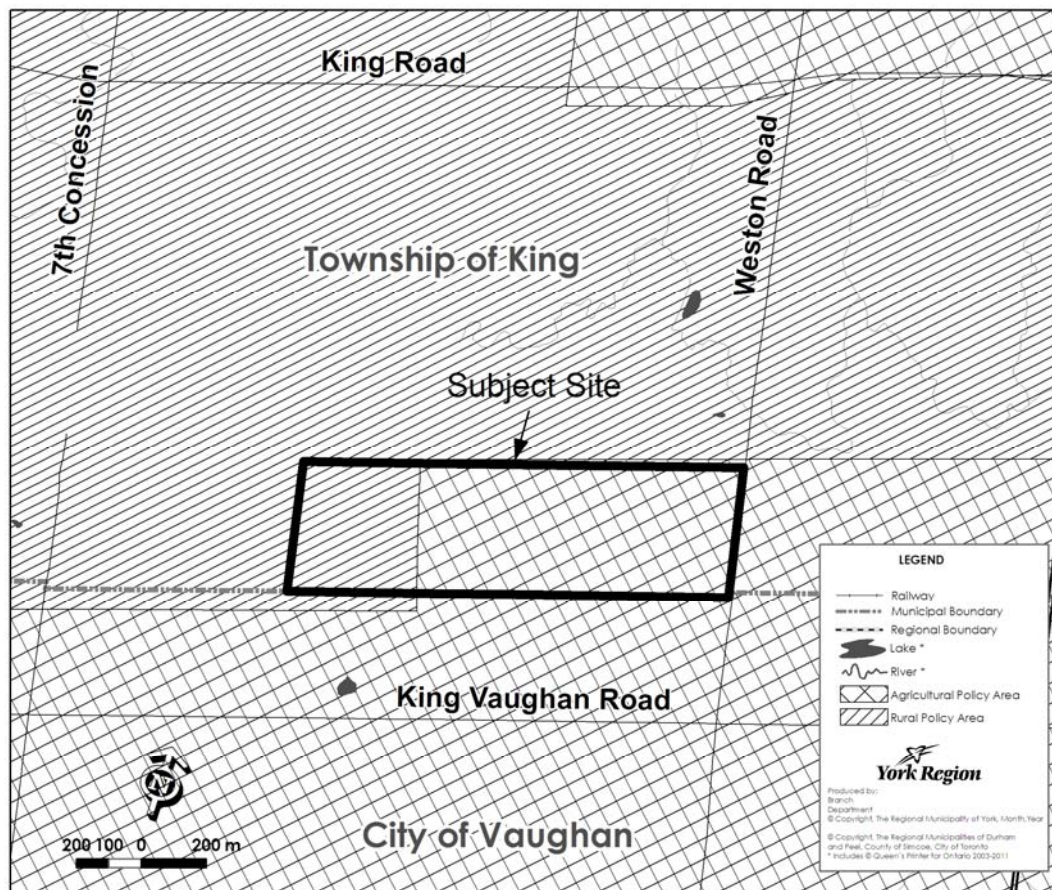
York Region has a long-standing history of protecting agricultural lands from non-farm development. The subject lands are designated 'Agricultural Policy Area' and 'Rural Policy Area', as shown on Map 6 of the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended) (see *Figure 2*, below). Policies in the Plan recognize and protect agricultural lands from non-farm development. In order to permit major recreational uses, such as a golf course, the lands must be reclassified to 'Rural Policy Area', based on a full agricultural assessment that the lands are no longer appropriately classified as agricultural, as proposed by the applicant.

In addition, a portion of the site forms part of the Region's Greenlands System, as identified on Map 4 of the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended); however, no development is proposed within the lands identified as Greenlands System.

Within the 'Rural Policy Area' of the York Region Official Plan (1994, as amended), recreational uses, such as a golf course, may be permitted, subject to criteria identified in Policy 5.9.2, as follows:

- a) the need and demand for the proposed use at the proposed location
- b) why the location of the proposed use is required and appropriate
- c) the impact of the proposed use on the agricultural land base and farming activities
- d) the impact of the proposed use on environmental functions, attributes and linkages
- e) the proposed use cannot be accommodated in partially or fully serviced settlements
- f) the use conforms to the servicing policies of this Plan
- g) the proposed use is compatible with surrounding uses
- h) the ability to provide adequate potable water supply and sewage disposal system

Figure 2
Agricultural and Rural Policy Areas



The York Region Official Plan (2010) continues to support the 'Agricultural Area' designation of the subject lands, which does not permit a golf course

The proposed York Region Official Plan was modified and approved by the Minister on September 7, 2010. Although this Plan is not yet in force and effect, due to appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board, this Plan provides direction on economic, environmental and community building policies in York Region to 2031. The proposed York Region

Official Plan designates the lands 'Agricultural Area'. This designation permits normal farm practices, agricultural uses, agriculture-related uses, and secondary agricultural uses within the 'Agricultural Area'. The proposed development of a 9-hole private golf course does not conform to the policies of the York Region Official Plan (2010).

The proponent has appealed the York Region Official Plan (2010)

It is important to note that the proponent has appealed the York Region Official Plan (2010) as it pertains to the subject lands, and the related policies requiring that refinements to the 'Agricultural Area' be undertaken through a municipal comprehensive review. The transition policies of the York Regional Official Plan (2010) would accommodate any decision on the proposed amendment, once the new plan comes into effect.

Region's Land Evaluation and Area Review study identified the subject lands as being prime agricultural lands

As part of the York Region Official Plan conformity exercise, the Region undertook a Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study to assist in updating the Agricultural and Rural land designations of the York Region Official Plan. As it pertains to the subject lands, the results of the LEAR study identified an overall LEAR score of 8.7 out of 10, with the Land Evaluation component scoring 8.8 out of 10 for the lands. (Generally, LEAR scores greater than 6.0 identify potential prime agriculture lands.) The LEAR study therefore reinforced the prime agricultural designation.

Although the Lands are located adjacent to the GTA West Corridor Study Area, the Study Area has no impact

The GTA West Corridor is a proposed key transportation link within the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The subject lands are located adjacent to the Preliminary Route Planning Study Area. The application has been circulated to all interested provincial Ministries as part of the province's "one-window" review.

Applicant has submitted applications to amend the Township of King Official Plan and Zoning By-Law

The applicant has also submitted concurrent applications for a local Official Plan Amendment and re-zoning to facilitate the development of the proposed 9-hole private golf course. However, at the time of the writing of this report, these applications had yet to be deemed complete by the Township of King, as local staff require additional studies and analysis to be submitted.

The Township of King Official Plan (1970) designates the subject lands 'Rural'. Golf courses are prohibited in the 'Rural' designation but are permitted under the 'Open

Space' designation. Accordingly, the applicant has submitted an amendment to the Official Plan of the Township of King to redesignate the subject lands 'Open Space'.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

6. LOCAL MUNICIPAL IMPACT

A local Official Plan Amendment and rezoning application has been submitted to the Township of King to facilitate the proposed development. Regional Community Planning staff will continue to consult with local staff with regard to regional and local applications.

7. CONCLUSION

Provincial and Regional policies require the protection of prime agricultural land from non-farm development, including a 9-hole private golf course. The proposed amendment to redesignate these lands from 'Agricultural Policy Area' to 'Rural Policy Area' is not supported by the Region's Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) study, and the lands are appropriately identified as prime agricultural, which would not permit a golf course. Staff will receive all comments and submissions made at the public meeting for consideration by staff in its decision.

For more information on this report, please contact Josh Reis, Planner at 905-830-4444 Ext. 1515 or Paul Belton, Manager, Development Review at Ext. 1507.

The Senior Management Group has reviewed this report.

(The attachment referred to in this clause is attached to this report.)

Proposed Amendment No. 69 to the York Region Official Plan (1994)

Presentation to the Planning and
Economic Development
Committee

Josh Reis, Planner
April 4, 2012

Proposed Regional Official Plan Amendment No.69 (ROPA 69)

Overview

- ❑ Location
- ❑ Proposal
- ❑ Policy Context
- ❑ Recommendation

Location

- ❑ Weston Road, south of King Road
- ❑ 52 hectares
- ❑ Approximately 70% Prime Agricultural



Proposal

- ❑ To redesignate the eastern portion of the subject lands from 'Agricultural' to 'Rural' in the Regional Official Plan (1994, as amended).
- ❑ The proposed amendment would facilitate the development of a 9-hole private golf course.
- ❑ Complete application and Notice of Public meeting advertized.
- ❑ Proposal has been circulated for comments.



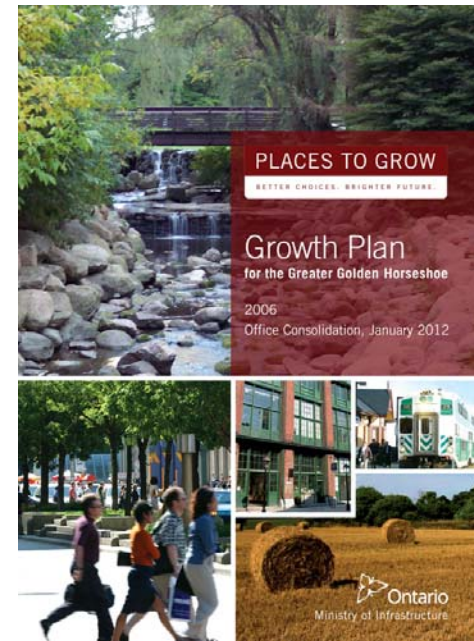
Card of the Course

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Par	4	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	5	35
Yards	405	372	426	150	448	186	461	384	575	3,407

Westlin Farms Golf Course
Concept Plan
May 31 2010
Prepared By: Carrick Design Inc.

Provincial Policy Context

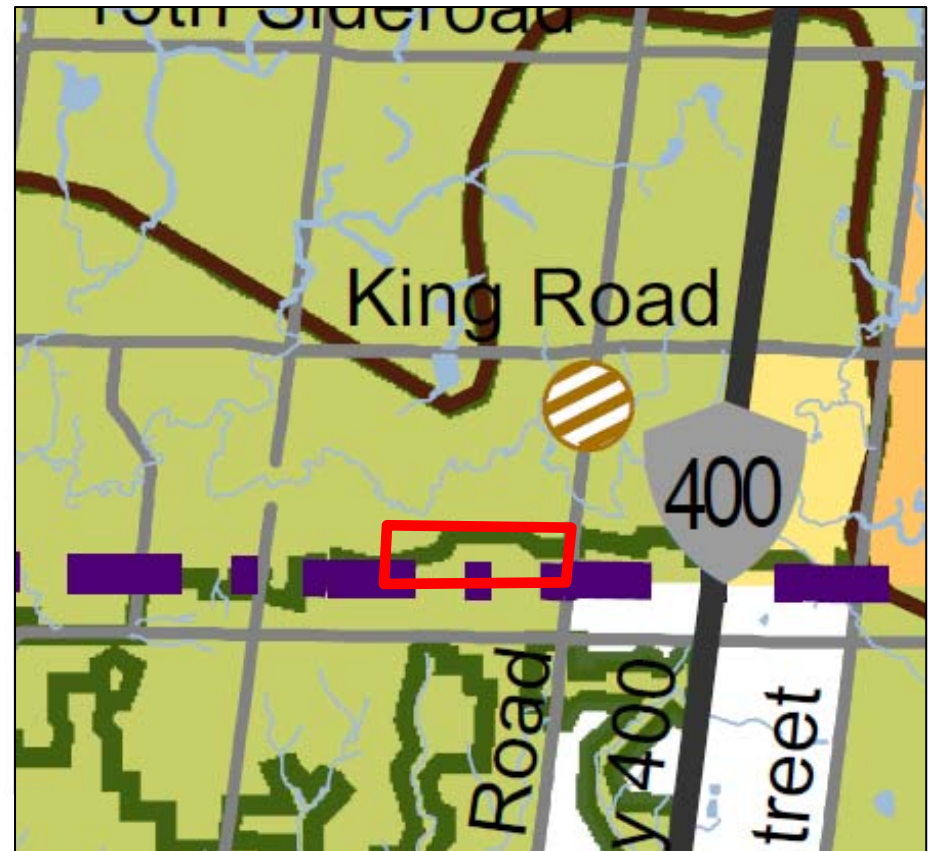
- ❑ Provincial Policy Statement (2005) supports the protection of prime agricultural land.
- ❑ Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe encourages the protection of Prime Agricultural Areas.



Regional Policy Context

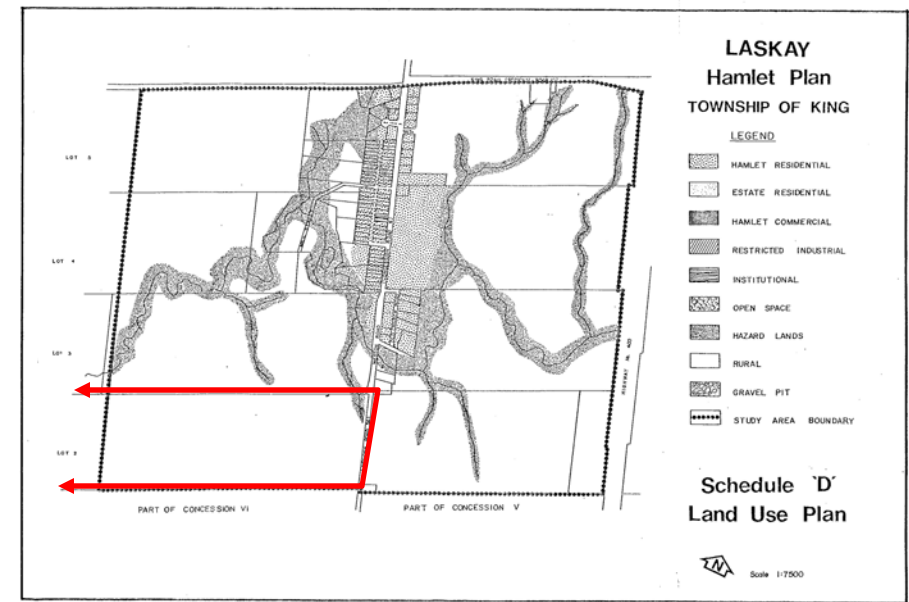
- ❑ Subject lands are designated “Agricultural” in the Regional Official Plan (1994, as amended) and the Regional Official Plan (2010, under appeal)
- ❑ These Plans support the protection of Agricultural land from non-farm development.
- ❑ Applicant has also appealed the Regional Official Plan (2010) Agricultural related policies.

York Region Official Plan (2010)



Local Policy Context

- ❑ The Township of King Official Plan designates the subject lands 'Rural'.
- ❑ A local Official Plan Amendment and rezoning application has been submitted to the Township of King to re-designate the subject lands to 'Open Space'.



**Township of King Hamlet Secondary Plan
(OPA 23)**

Background Studies

- ❑ York Region Land Evaluation and Area Review (LEAR) - score of 8.7 out of 10.
- ❑ Applicants studies identified that 70% of the lands are Prime Agricultural.



Recommendation

It is recommended that:

- ❑ Staff receive and review comments from the public and responses from the circulation of the proposed Amendment, and prepare a future report with recommendations for future consideration by PEDC.

**Proposed Amendment
X
to the
Official Plan
for the
Regional Municipality
of York**

AMENDMENT X
TO THE OFFICIAL PLAN
FOR
THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

PART A - THE PREAMBLE

1. Purpose of the Amendment:

The purpose of the Amendment is to change the land use designation on the subject lands shown on Schedule 'A1', attached hereto and forming part of this Amendment, from "Agriculture" Policy area to "Rural" Policy Area and to establish site-specific policies to permit the use of the lands for a 9-hole private golf course with no membership for the personal use of the owner of the property.

2. Location:

The subject lands affected by this Amendment are located Part of Lot 2, Concession 6, Township of King. The lands currently contain two dwellings and associated farm buildings.

3. Basis:

Council has enacted this amendment in response to the following:

- 3.1 An application has been made by Westlin Farms Inc. for a 9-hole private personal golf course with no membership that includes practice range, clubhouse and associated maintenance and accessory buildings.
- 3.2 The subject lands are currently designated "Agriculture", as shown on Map 6 of the Region of York Official Plan 1994 (office consolidation 2008).
- 3.3 Under the current Official Plan designation, a golf course is not a permitted use. However, the proposed private 9-hole golf course for personal use will be in keeping with the policies and objectives of the Official Plan.
- 3.5 The proposed 'Rural' use of the land will be in keeping with the character of the surrounding lands.
- 3.6 The Amendment will be implemented by a Township of King Official Plan Amendment and site-specific zoning by-law amendment.

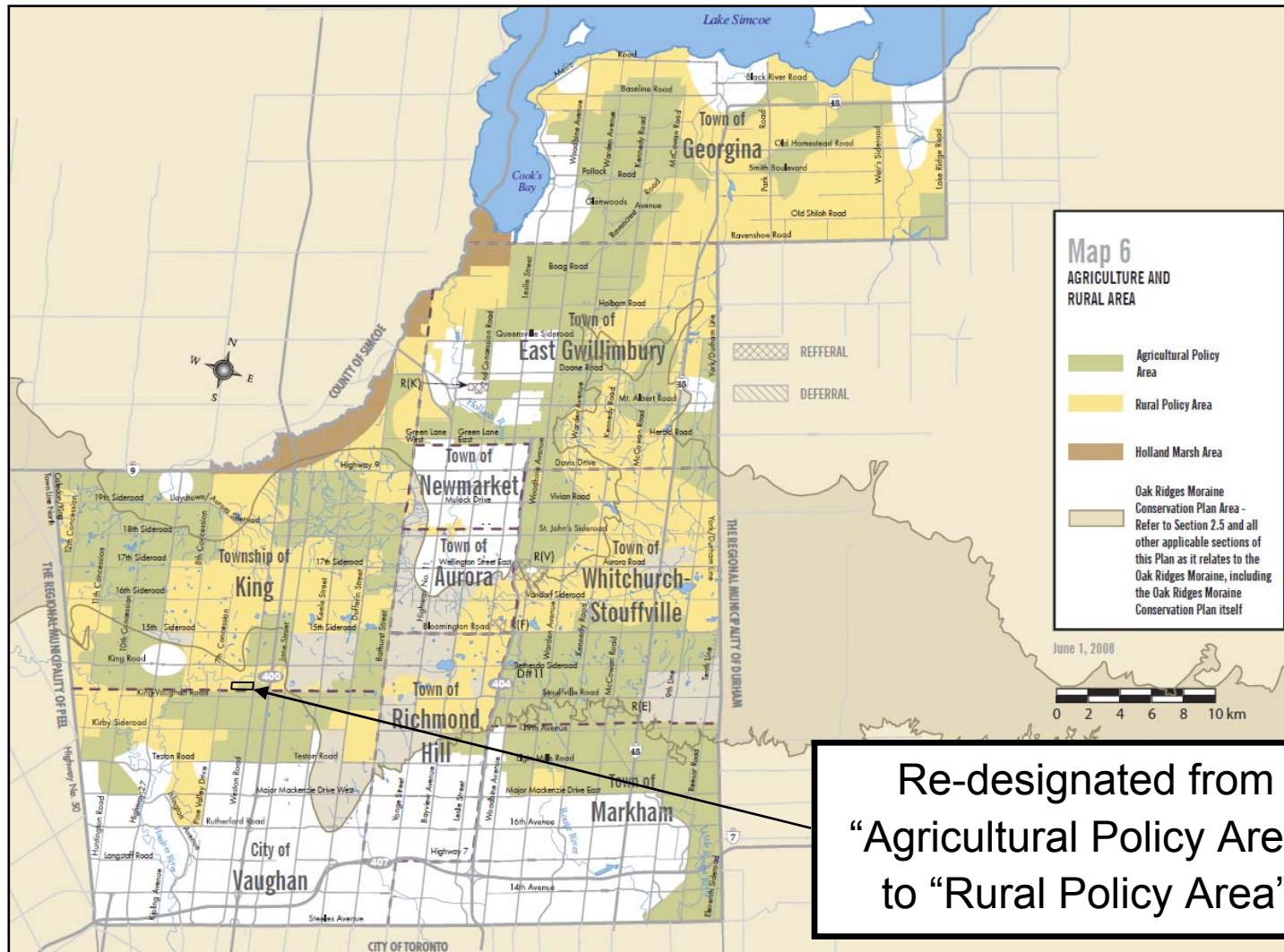
PART B - THE AMENDMENT

All of the Amendment entitled PART B - THE AMENDMENT, consisting of the attached Map changes to Map 6 of the Region of York Official Plan constitutes Amendment X to the Official Plan for the Region of York.

The Official Plan for the Region of York is hereby amended by the following:

1. That Map 6 – Agriculture and Rural Policy Areas of the Official Plan is amended as follows:
 - a) by deletion of the “Agriculture Policy Area” or portions thereof, shown in GREEN on Schedule 1 to this amendment and by the addition of the “Rural Policy Areas” or portions thereof, shown in YELLOW;

Schedule '1'



This is Schedule '1' to Regional Official Plan Amendment _____
Passed this _____ day of _____, 2010