



NORTH DURHAM NATURE

Champions for nature in Uxbridge, Brock and Scugog since 2013

November 22, 2021

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Principal Planner
Region of Durham

RE: OPA 2021-005 and S-U-2021-01

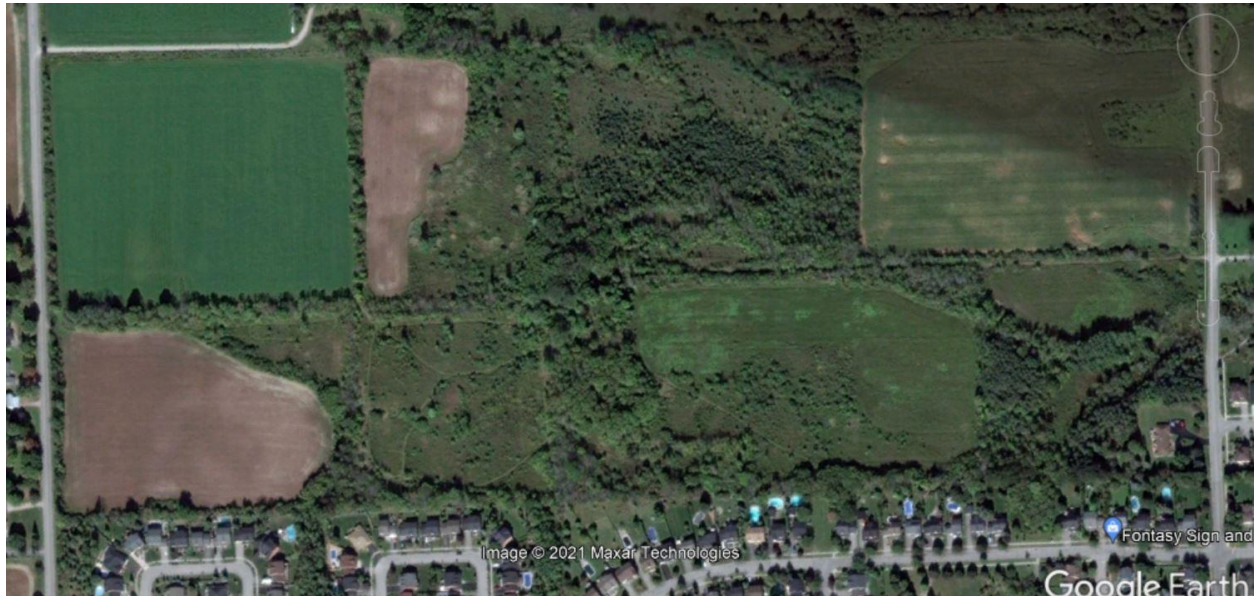
The Board of Directors for *North Durham Nature* is submitting this letter in opposition to Bridgebrook Corporation's application to amend both the Uxbridge Official Plan and land use zoning pertaining to lands at 7370 Centre Road. As an organization promoting the importance of the natural environment in our community, we feel that this development, situated in a designated Greenbelt Protected Countryside area, will have a variety of negative impacts on the natural heritage features therein.

Firstly, this proposed development will surround and impact several riparian tributary areas of the Uxbridge Brook and lead to degradation further downstream. The Environmental Impact Study by Beacon Environmental (2021) shows lot lines of the development plan come into close proximity to and even extending into the wetland boundaries at HDF2, which have been classified as valued and important. Adjacent human activities will interfere with breeding fauna, exacerbate the spread of invasive species, as well as chemically and physically alter the waterway itself through lawn sprays, road salt, and erosion. Furthermore, Tributary HDF1 which includes wetland and its buffer, in fact, will be completely buried. Proposed removal of significant woodland around HDF2 and construction of road infrastructures will impact temperature sensitive fish and other aquatic organisms by decreasing shade and changing water flow. It is important to protect these headwaters to maintain downstream wetland integrity.

Secondly, the report also cites the potential impact on provincially protected endangered species—specifically, 51 Category 2 and 3 Butternut trees along the southern boundary and potential bat roosting habitat. Compensation planting of this large number of Butternuts is not equivalent to retaining established trees as there is no guarantee that new plantings will succeed nor can we rely on follow-up to replace unsuccessful plantings. Curtailing urban sprawl is key in protecting pockets of any remaining natural areas, so as to prevent the range of fragile species such as bats from further decrease. This entire area should not be disturbed.

Thirdly, and a bigger issue is how the previous landowner had already destroyed a large piece of natural habitat on the property before transferring it to the developer. This way they could conduct an Environmental Impact Study of the little bit of natural vegetation with fewer environmental constraints than were previously present. The October 28, 2021 issue of *Uxbridge Cosmos*, states that Major Dave Barton questioned activities on this land prior to presenting the application. The mayor is quoted saying "It seems a little odd that someone would clear land for agricultural purposes and then 24 months later put in an application for development". The intention of the landowner is clear, get rid of the environmental constraints to make it easy for the developer to put in more houses than they otherwise could have.

Google Earth photos from 2017 and 2021 (below) show how much natural vegetation was removed. By our calculations approximately 5.7 ha of forest, 6.3 ha of shrubland (cultural thicket) and 1.6 ha of deciduous hedgerows were removed for a total of 13.6 ha. That is a lot of wildlife habitat. How many healthy Butternuts or bat maternity trees were cut down and burned before the environment was assessed by Beacon Environmental? Landowners who engage in this kind of shameful activity should not be rewarded. Despite all the vegetation that has previously been removed, the plan put forward still requires the removal of some of the remaining natural area, including a piece of wetland.



Google Earth, 2017



Google Earth, 2021

In addition, there is increasing global demand to begin action on our climate crisis. By carrying on promoting urban sprawl into rural communities, this will contribute to transportation issues which are a significant component of the carbon footprint. Supporting 588 new homes will require additional community services which will further push the urban boundary. Our organization promotes the protection and regeneration of natural areas that help offset these carbon inputs. This green space is

what many people in this community value when they choose to live in a small rural town. We urge the Uxbridge council not to approve the proposed development on lands at 7370 Centre Road.

We appreciate having the opportunity to be able to comment on this most important local matter.

Respectfully,

Cara Gregory, President
North Durham Nature