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October 27, 2010

Mr. Arvin Prasad, M.C.I.P., R.P.P.  
Director, Planning Policy and Research  
Regional Municipality of Peel  
10 Peel Centre Drive  
Brampton, ON  
L6T 4B9

Dear Mr. Prasad:

Subject: Region of Peel Official Plan Amendment No. 24 - Minister's Draft  
Decision  
MMAH File Number: 21-OP-9601-24

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Please find enclosed a Draft Decision on Region of Peel Official Plan Amendment No. 24 (ROPA 24) which was adopted by Regional Council on April 22, 2010 under By-law 34-2010. ROPA 24 is intended to bring the Region's Official Plan into conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Greenbelt Plan while being consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, 2005. Full conformity with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan is expected to be addressed through a future subsequent ROPA.

We acknowledge the dedication, commitment and effort the Region has demonstrated towards completing and adopting ROPA 24. We appreciate the collaborative approach between the Region, local municipalities and the Province to ensure effective implementation of provincial policies and plans and are particularly pleased with the pre-consultation process and the on-going efforts of staff from our respective organizations throughout the review and adopted plans. We look forward to continuing this collaborative approach prior to the Minister issuing a Final Decision.

To this end, our Draft Decision reflects many of the comments that we had made to the Region during the draft stage. The Draft Decision is intended to mark a starting point for the next round of meetings and discussions between provincial,

local and regional staff. The Draft Decision includes 110 modifications and two proposed non-decisions. A number of the modifications are either minor or technical in nature while others are more significant requiring substantially more discussion and detailed analysis. The more substantive issues are identified below:

### **Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review**

ROPA 24 includes several policies that defer to the lower-tier municipalities with respect to settlement area boundary expansions and the conversion of lands within employment areas. Section 5.4.5.2.4 for example, directs the Town of Caledon to include policies in its Official Plan which require that a municipal comprehensive review be undertaken prior to the consideration of an expansion to the boundary of an existing settlement area. It remains our position that it is the Region's responsibility to undertake a *Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review* to justify settlement area boundary expansions and the conversion of lands within employment areas. We have included modifications in our Draft Decision to clarify that such planning exercises are to be led and undertaken by the Region in consultation with the lower-tier municipalities. We have further clarified this Growth Plan requirement by defining the term '*Regional Municipal Comprehensive Review*' in the Glossary. The Minister modified the Region of York's Official Plan to include the same definition in their recent decision.

### **Non-Decisions**

Through our Draft Decision, we have proposed two non-decisions at this time. Our reason for doing so is to get a better understanding of the Region's background analysis before proceeding. The two non-decisions highlight the areas in which provincial and regional staff will focus their efforts over the next several weeks.

#### *Population, Household and Employment Forecasts (Table 3)*

The Draft Decision proposes a non-decision be made on the population, household and employment forecasts for the City of Brampton and the Town of Caledon. It remains unclear, despite having carefully reviewed ROPA 24 and the background reports entitled 'Places to Prosper - Managing Growth in Peel Region' and 'Employment and Employment Lands' how the population, household and employment forecasts presented in Table 3 were arrived at; how they correspond to the existing land supply that is available throughout the Region; what the ultimate land need will be in the Region to meet the proposed forecasts (both residential and employment); what 'take-outs' were used to determine existing land supply; and how the intensification and density targets of the Growth Plan are being assigned across the Region.

These, and other questions, will be asked when our staff have an opportunity to

meet with the Region in the coming weeks.

*Regional Employment Land Budget 2006 - 2031 (Figure 15)*

Similarly, we are also proposing a non-decision on Figure 15 in ROPA 24. Based on our review, it appears as though the methodology employed has not changed since we provided comments on the proposed amendment. Our review of Figure 15, and the 'Updated Employment and Employment Lands' paper continues to be that the Region used various assumptions that either underestimates the existing employment land supply or overestimates the need for new additional employment lands. These assumptions include the following:

- structural vacancies and net-to-gross development factors are used to reduce the existing designated land supply and also to determine the future land demand; and
- previous employment densities are being used to determine future land need rather than using the Growth Plan density target of 50 residents and jobs per hectare.

ROPA 24 also defers to the lower-tier municipalities to identify where employment lands are located and what employment uses are permitted within these areas. MMAH is proposing modifications within the Draft Decision that require the Region to take a strong leadership position with respect to employment lands. MMAH is seeking input from the Region on two policies that are essential to ensuring the employment forecasts will be met and that the Region will have a basis for evaluating applications to convert lands within employment areas to non-employment uses. First, the Region must identify what constitutes an employment use, and second, must clarify what uses are not permitted in employment areas.

### **Greenbelt Plan**

Section 3.1 of the Greenbelt Plan distinguishes between prime agricultural areas and rural areas within the Agricultural System and contains a distinct policy framework for each of the land use categories. ROPA 24 should distinguish between prime agricultural areas and rural areas given the rural land use designation is more permissive than the latter. Recreational, tourism, institutional and resource-based commercial/industrial uses are permitted within rural areas and not in prime agricultural areas. We have included modifications in our Draft Decision to distinguish between rural areas and prime agricultural areas. Further discussion is required between regional and provincial staff to confirm the extent of Peel's prime agricultural areas.

## **Lake Simcoe Protection Plan**

The Lake Simcoe Watershed extends into Peel Region. We understand the Region intends to bring its Official Plan into conformity with the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan (LSPP) through a separate amendment. As an interim measure, MMAH has included modifications in the Draft Decision to map the Lake Simcoe Watershed and to reference the LSPP. MMAH has taken a consistent approach with York and Durham Regions.

## **Schedule and Figure Amendments**

The Draft Decision notes that Schedules B, D, D3 and Figures 4 and 16 will be replaced with new Schedules and Figures. The new Schedules and Figures will be attached to the Final Decision. We have attached a list of the modifications to be made to the Schedules and Figures. Like the policy modifications, these modifications will be discussed between the Province and the Region over the next few weeks. We would appreciate that the Region amend the Schedules and Figures accordingly and forward the revised materials to the Province for insertion into the Minister's Final Decision.

## **Next Steps**

We encourage you to review the enclosed Draft Decision carefully. You will note that several of our modifications have been carried over from our comments dated October 6, 2009. We suggest provincial and regional staff work closely and collaboratively over the month of November to bring ROPA 24 into greater conformity with provincial plans and policy.

Thank you for your cooperation and commitment to developing an official plan that fully conforms to provincial plans and policy. Should you have any questions regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact David Sit, Manager-Planning Projects at 416 585 6583.

Regards,



Larry Clay  
Regional Director

Attachments: Draft Decision, List of Schedule and Figure Amendments

c.c.: Mr. Tanzeel Merchant, Manager Planning and Analysis, MOI  
Steve Strong, District Planner, MNR