

November 6, 2025

His Worship the Mayor and Members of Council
City of Pickering
One The Esplanade
Pickering, Ontario L1V 6K7

Re: Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan — request for deferral and agriculture-specific consultation/mitigation

Dear Mayor and Councillors,

The National Farmers Union – Ontario (NFU-O) represents thousands of farmers across the province, including producers in Durham Region and the City of Pickering. We support new homes and jobs, while safeguarding Ontario's best farmland and the agricultural system that sustains food security and rural economies.

The NFU-O is deeply concerned about the Northeast Pickering Secondary Plan because:

- The study area is overwhelmingly prime farmland. The city-commissioned Agricultural Impact Assessment (AIA) confirms the NEP Secondary Plan Area is ~1,720 ha and largely within a prime agricultural area. If fully built out, it would permanently remove ~1,720 ha of prime agricultural lands from production.
- Fragmentation harms farm viability. The AIA explains that fragmenting farmland reduces efficiency, raises operating costs, and increases conflicts with non-farm uses; new development in prime agricultural areas should avoid further fragmentation wherever possible.
- Most active operations and tile-drainage investments lie north of Hwy 407. The AIA therefore recommends phasing any development south of Hwy 407 first to minimize impacts on existing farms and infrastructure.
- Public input prioritizes protecting farmland and avoiding sprawl into whitebelt/prime farmland areas. The City's own Agriculture & Rural Areas online-survey appendix records numerous comments to stop expansion into farmland, avoid re-zoning, and build up, not out.

Our requests:

1. Defer approval of the NEP Secondary Plan until the City has held a dedicated working session with affected farm operators and recognized agricultural organizations (NFU-O, OFA, CFFO, DRFA/DAAC, OFT), and published a consultation record responding to farm-specific issues (fragmentation, buffers/MDS, trespass, haul routes for farm

equipment, drainage/outlets, and right-to-farm education). (See AIA themes referenced above.)

2. Publish an agriculture mitigation package tied to the plan and implementation tools, including:
 - edge-planning/MDS compliance and defensible buffers;
 - stormwater designs that avoid run-off/flooding onto farm operations;
 - measures to reduce trespass, conflicts and nuisance complaints;
 - protected equipment routes/turning movements; and
 - drainage protection so existing tile-drained fields retain function. (All respond to impacts the AIA identifies.)
3. If Council advances the file, adopt the AIA's phasing direction and start south of Hwy 407 to minimize direct harm to the cluster of active operations and tile-drainage north of 407.

NFU-O is ready to participate immediately in a city-led session to ensure good planning and good farming can co-exist in Pickering.

Respectfully,



Max Hansgen
President, National Farmers Union – Ontario
613-464-1251

Cc: City Clerk; City Development; Economic Development & Strategic Projects