

**Witness Statement of
Marion H. Thomas
Seaton Hearing Coordinator, Whitevale and District Residents' Association**

1. The development proposal for Phase 1 will cause negative traffic and fiscal impacts for all residents of the City of Pickering.

I. Background

2. My husband and I have lived in the Hamlet of Whitevale since 1978. When Whitevale became a Heritage Conservation District, our house at 489 Whitevale Road was included.
3. After our move from Malton to Whitevale, I worked for many years at IBM calculating accruals and providing support for educators and students. I then worked as a constituency assistant to members of provincial Parliament. I am currently retired but still work for Elections Ontario as an automation co-ordinator.
4. I have been actively involved, both individually and as a member of the Whitevale and District Residents' Association ("WDRA"), in the planning processes for the Seaton Community since 1989.
5. The WDRA grew out of the "Save Whitevale Society", which was formed in response to the Ontario Government's announced intention to build a city on 25,000 acres of expropriated farmland in North Pickering in 1972. The WDRA usually meets once a month. Our main objective is to preserve, promote and enhance the heritage of Whitevale and its surrounding agricultural land.

II. Experience and Interest in the Matter

6. I have been deeply involved in the development proposal in its current form since 2005. I have invested considerable personal time to understand the details of the proposed development on the following issues: heritage, traffic and transportation and fiscal impacts on the City of Pickering and its residents.
7. Overall, I believe that this planning process has not met its potential. I am disappointed by a plan that fails to live up to our expectations. Our community had such tremendous hopes for Seaton.

8. I was a member of the Seaton Community Group that met to discuss whether it would be possible to start from scratch and really plan a workable sustainable community in Seaton. The culmination of those meetings is contained in a booklet we produced in the spring of 1991 entitled "Seaton: A Planning Guide". Our hope at the time was to have a community with schools at the centre. Now there is a community with schools relegated to the periphery, an alignment of roads which will destroy an irreplaceable viewscape and a road pattern that has the potential to overwhelm the small hamlet where I have lived for 35 years.
9. On traffic and fiscal impacts alone I have made numerous requests to the City for reports and studies to help me understand how the Seaton development will impact our community.
10. I have also spent my own money to seek out information regarding the development under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.
11. As a result of the above, I understand the issues in the hearing and can critically assess the development proposal.

III. Issues Addressed

- Seaton Landowners' Group: Issue 1
- City of Pickering: Issues 2, 4, 19, 24
- Whitevale and District Residents' Association: Issues 28-30, 32, 35-36

IV. Opinion on the Issues

Traffic

12. The WDRA seeks a significant improvement on the current proposed east-west route through the Seaton development for Phase 1. Whitevale Road is to be closed to prevent through-traffic, but these traffic calming measures and closures have not yet been decided. Consultation with the WDRA and those directly impacted by the traffic measures should be included in the draft conditions of subdivision approval.
13. The Hamlet of Whitevale receives approximately 800 vehicles per day. This has not always been the case. Traffic through Whitevale has always been a problem. Prior to the building of the connection between Steeles

Avenue and Taunton Road, Whitevale Road was a major commuter road, complete with accidents and concerns for pedestrian safety. I have experienced firsthand the effects of an increase in traffic on Whitevale Road. On two occasions, my hydro has been disconnected as a result of drivers striking the hydro pole in front of my home with their car. During the winter months, cars have been stuck in the ditch in front of my home and on one occasion, a car smashed into a vehicle parked in my driveway. The reduction of the speed limit to 40 kilometers per hour, the addition of speed humps, numerous potholes, the reduction in the size of the bridge, the construction of Highway 407, the Steeles/Taunton Connection and the paving of the York/Durham Townline have all been instrumental in reducing the volume of traffic on Whitevale Road. This is not local traffic, instead many of the cars going to or from Toronto to elsewhere in Durham Region.

14. Whitevale Road is an undulating country road which includes a one-lane bridge. I am concerned that Whitevale Road will not remain in this state due to recent reports and studies regarding the proposed replacement and enlarging of the bridge and proposed drainage improvements that would include re-paving the road. Currently, the condition of this road, with its many potholes and speed humps, make it so that traffic must proceed at a slower pace. On occasions when traffic on nearby east-west roads is diverted, Whitevale Road becomes extremely backed up. I invite the Board to visit Whitevale and drive along this road.
15. Given that critical information on traffic volumes is either unavailable as of this date or has not been updated since the Proposed Staged Servicing and Implementation Strategy ("SSIS") was revised in October 2012, I do not believe the development will be adequately serviced by roads or public transportation proposed in the SSIS. There appears to be no evidence to support the contention that the proposed roads and transportation are sufficient.
16. The planning and construction of the Whitevale By-pass bridge must proceed in Phase 1 to provide new and current residents with appropriate east-west passage. The evidence shows that other east-west corridors are at capacity and that Whitevale Road is not a suitable alternative.
17. The one report that states this bridge need not be built in Phase 1 used the original population for Phase 1 development of 19,600. The population for Phase 1 has nearly doubled to 37,000 without this report and analysis being revisited. Page 14 of the SSIS, based on previous assumptions, states:

"The assessment undertaken in support of the SSIS has clearly demonstrated that the extensive additional arterial road capacity and new network connectivity to be implemented in Durham Region coincident with the development of Phase 1 Seaton will provide adequate vehicular capacity and connectivity for Phase 1 Seaton without the necessity to widen Steeles Avenue west of the York-Durham Townline."

18. In April 2013, City of Pickering Council also restated the fact that it passed Resolution 94/11, relating to the construction of the Whitevale By-pass in Phase 1. Therefore, the SSIS must be revised to reflect engineering opinions, Durham Region's past concerns and Council's direction. We continue to believe that Council's Resolution #94/11 be upheld.

19. I am very concerned the By-pass will not be built until traffic becomes a problem for all new and existing residents, and by then it will be too late. I am reminded of the City of Pickering's promise to look into building an Altona By-pass with the region many years ago. I am not certain of the date that this was promised but it was prior to the paving of the York-Durham Townline from Steeles to Whitevale Road and prior to the sale of lands in the Agricultural Preserve. The Pickering Official Plan describes its construction in conjunction with Hwy 407. This has not yet occurred, and the Hamlet suffers as a result.

20. We are dismayed that we had to hire a Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering expert to defend the City's residents. His conclusion is that the City of Pickering and Region of Durham could do the traffic and transportation infrastructure in a better way. We agree.

21. I recommend a strengthening of the draft conditions of subdivision approval to ensure traffic remains as-is through the Hamlet, the entire east-west Whitevale By-pass is planned and built earlier, and public transportation is improved earlier to reduce vehicular trips to fulfill the policy directions and promise for this development.

22. I also recommend that the movement of construction traffic through the Hamlet be addressed to minimize the negative impacts on Whitevale.

Fiscal

23. The Fiscal Impact Study has not been made available as required by the Central Pickering Development Plan ("CPDP"). I have been requesting

this document for over a year from the City of Pickering, and although the document was referenced in the fiscal impact review by Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., I am still encountering a road block in accessing this document.

24. The City of Pickering said there will be no tax increase in April 2013. I believe the Seaton development, in its current form, will financially impact the City of Pickering and its residents. I believe there will be a tax increase.
25. The City of Pickering shares our concern on fiscal impacts, which is why it is negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding with the Seaton Landowners' Group. I believe more money is required from the developers and the Province of Ontario. This would not be unfair or unjust given the favourable deal they received from the land exchange with the Province in 2004.
26. I recommend a strengthening of the draft conditions of subdivision approval to ensure there are no fiscal impacts to the City of Pickering or their residents.

V. Reports

1. City of Pickering CAO Report #CAO 03-13, April 15, 2013;
2. Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., The Fiscal Impact of the Seaton Community Re: City of Pickering Service Provision, April 10, 2013;
3. Durham Regional Development Charge Background Study March 19, 2013;
4. Staged Servicing and Implementation Strategy, October 2012 and December 2011;
5. Durham Region comments on SSIS July 22, 2011 and December 19, 2012;
6. BA Group Report, Review of Phase 1 External Road Network, March 2012;
7. City of Pickering Resolution #94/11, April 26, 2011;
8. Central Pickering Development Plan, 2012;
9. Pickering Official Plan (Edition 6 and the approved OPA 22 amendments);

10. Witness Statement of Mr. Jeff Mark, plus accompanying reports;
11. Land exchange FOI documents; and
12. Seaton Planning Guide, prepared by the Seaton Community Group, Spring 1991.

Submitted by Mrs. Marion Thomas
May 7, 2013