



**NORTH PICKERING
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

**Annual Report
2003-2004**

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**TO THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO**

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR HONOUR:

For the information of Your Honour and the Legislative Assembly, we have the privilege of presenting the Annual Report of the North Pickering Development Corporation for the year 2003-04

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. John Gerretsen
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Minister Responsible for Seniors

ROLE OF THE NORTH PICKERING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The North Pickering Development Corporation was created by statute in 1974, under the *North Pickering Development Corporation Act, 1974*, to be responsible for community planning and development of the North Pickering Land Assembly. The directors are senior civil servants from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and Management Board Secretariat. The Corporation's mandate is to promote business growth, leverage private investment and enhance job creation by marketing the provincially owned land for development and facilitating the land use planning process.

Background Information

In the early 1970s, the provincial government acquired approximately 8,100 hectares of land – which became known as the North Pickering Land Assembly – through expropriation and purchase. The original intent was to develop a community of approximately 250,000, in conjunction with a proposed federal international airport to the north. However, plans for the airport were discontinued and the Province did not proceed with development.

Parts of the original land assembly have since been allocated for the Rouge Park, the community of Cornell (located in the Town of Markham), and the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve. The Seaton lands – approximately 2,800 hectares located in the City of Pickering – continue to be owned by the province (see map entitled North Pickering).

In 1989, the Corporation was established as a Schedule II agency. Funding for the Corporation is made possible through an advance for the Province of Ontario that is to be re-paid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund from sales proceeds of the disposition of the Seaton lands.

Throughout the 1990s staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing continued the planning and public consultation process ultimately leading to Secondary Plan approval by the City of Pickering for the East Duffins portion of Seaton and designation of the northern portion as an Urban Study Area.

In 2001, the Province acted to protect natural and water resource features on the Oak Ridges Moraine, preserve agricultural land and focus development in approved settlement areas. Following stakeholder and public consultation, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act, 2001* was introduced on November 1, 2001 and passed on December 13, 2001.

While the legislation was being developed, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing asked David Crombie to mediate an agreement between private landowners and

the Province to protect key lands in Richmond Hill and Uxbridge that were subject to extreme development pressures and an Ontario Municipal Board hearing.

The resulting agreement protects certain sensitive lands on the Moraine through future land exchanges for provincially owned lands in North Pickering. To facilitate this exchange of lands, the Province created the North Pickering Land Exchange Team (NPLET) as part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Consequently, the North Pickering Development Corporation has funded the team and the team represents the interests of the Province in the planning and development of the provincially owned lands in North Pickering.

During 2002-2003, the provincially appointed negotiator, in consultation with staff, initiated discussions with the private landowners of Richmond Hill and Uxbridge in an attempt to reach an agreement, which would see the eventual exchange of some of the Seaton lands.

Discussions continued with the landowners through 2003. In September 2003 the government called an election for October 2003, thereby placing further discussions with the landowners on hold. On November 4, 2003, the newly elected Liberal government sought a moratorium on development on the Oak Ridges Moraine Richmond Hill lands until November 20, 2003. During this period a new agreement was negotiated with certain Richmond Hill landowners to protect additional Richmond Hill lands on the Moraine for a new park. This subsequent agreement will ensure that the Moraine lands are linked in a continuous corridor with lands to the east and west; better protection of environmentally sensitive lands around kettle lakes, including Phillips Lake.

To acquire these additional new lands in the Richmond Hill area, the government agreed to exchange additional lands in North Pickering. Negotiations resumed with the Richmond Hill owners in December 2003.

Two significant and related initiatives were commenced in 2003-2004. First to facilitate the land exchange, a Category "C" class environmental assessment for the acquisition of lands in Richmond Hill and the disposition of lands in Seaton was initiated by the Ontario Realty Corporation. Second, work began on the preparation of a Development Plan for the North Pickering lands, under the authority of the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES AND INITIATIVES FOR 2003/04

- **Negotiations around land exchange agreement with Richmond Hill landowners** – throughout 2003, the Ministry worked towards concluding a draft land exchange agreement with the Richmond Hill landowners. While discussions continued with the landowner from Uxbridge, consideration of a process for moving towards arbitration with the owner was discussed. Due to the election in October 2003 and the additional land agreement in Richmond Hill, negotiations were recommenced to account for additional lands to be protected.

- **Minister's Zoning Order** – In April 2003, the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing designated the Seaton lands and the Pickering portion of the Duffins-Rouge Agricultural Preserve lands as a development planning area under the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994*.
- **Request for Proposal - Development Plan for North Pickering** - in June 2003, the ministry invited prospective proponents to submit proposals for the preparation of a Development Plan for North Pickering pursuant to the provisions of the *Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1994* ("OPDA"). The proposed Development Plan would be a visionary plan for a new community based on "Smart Growth" principles. It is anticipated that the Development Plan would represent an exciting new generation of community building that would serve as a showpiece for Ontario. The winning firm in the proposal call, Planning Alliance Inc., commenced preparation of the Plan in 2004.
- **Peer Review of Infrastructure Costs** – in June 2003 a peer review of infrastructure costs associated with development in Seaton was undertaken as part of the ministry's due diligence in the land exchange negotiations and to assess the financial commitments required of the Province regarding cost sharing and/or front-end financing agreements.
- **Establishment of a Vendor of Record (VOR) List for Land Surveying Services** - in July 2003 the ministry issued an invitation to prospective proponents to submit proposals for the provision of land surveying services with the intent to create a VOR list of land surveying consultants. The purpose for creating such a list was that as discussions with the private landowners of Richmond Hill come to a close, it was recognized that it would be necessary for the ministry to survey those parcels of land, which would be identified as part of the land exchange. In addition, it would be necessary for the Ministry to survey the balance of the properties that would either remain in the possession of the Province or be eventually sold or otherwise disposed. As a result of the Request for Proposal, nine (9) land surveying firms were identified and have agreed to enter into a VOR relationship with the Ministry.
- **Minister's Zoning Order** – on November 04, 2003, the government imposed a temporary freeze on the construction of homes on the Oak Ridges Moraine in Richmond Hill while it continued discussions with landowners on how to better protect the Moraine. The lands subject to the Order were previously approved for development and were in the process of being cleared and prepared for services and public utilities.

As a result of these discussions, the government was able to provide for a larger public park that will permanently protect this portion of the moraine and the ecological functions it performs. The extended park would widen the wildlife corridor, protect more of the environmentally sensitive lands and protect more lands around Phillips Lake. In addition, development on the Richmond Hill lands

was reduced by 900 housing units and a contribution of \$3.5 million from the developers for park improvements was negotiated. The Minister's Zoning Order was revoked on November 20, 2003.

- **Built Heritage Consultant** - in March 2004, the services of a built heritage consultant were secured to provide information on the built heritage features of certain properties, which are part of the provincially owned lands in Seaton. Once completed, this work will support the requirements of the class environmental assessment and provide background information for the land use planning exercise proposed for North Pickering. The information will also be used to address tenant, resident, First Nation or municipal concerns about the impact of development on the cultural heritage of Seaton.
- The Corporation continued to monitor and provide due diligence on the outstanding advance to the Corporation estimated at \$9.941M (for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2004).

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Salary and benefit expenditures for the North Pickering Land Exchange Team are paid by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and are recovered from the Corporation. Other Direct Operating Expenditures are covered directly from the Corporation's budget. The accumulated expenditure will be repaid to the Consolidated Revenue Fund from the revenue generated when lands are sold in Seaton.