

Newsletter June 2024

Save the date: Our 2024 Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday June 15 at 10:00 am at the Pine Grove Church on Concession 7 just north of Reg. Rd. 21 in Uxbridge Township. You can choose to tune-in via Zoom from your home, or attend in-person. The formal part of our meeting will take about 30 minutes. Please join us! We will send out a Zoom link, agenda, financial statements and 2023/24 minutes in the coming days. This year we will be adopting a new by-law to meet the requirements of the Ontario Not for Profit Corporations Act. You can read more about this topic here: [Ontario Not-for-Profit Corporations Act \(ONCA\) - Ontario Nonprofit Network \(theonn.ca\)](https://theonn.ca). We'll send a copy of that out at the same time.

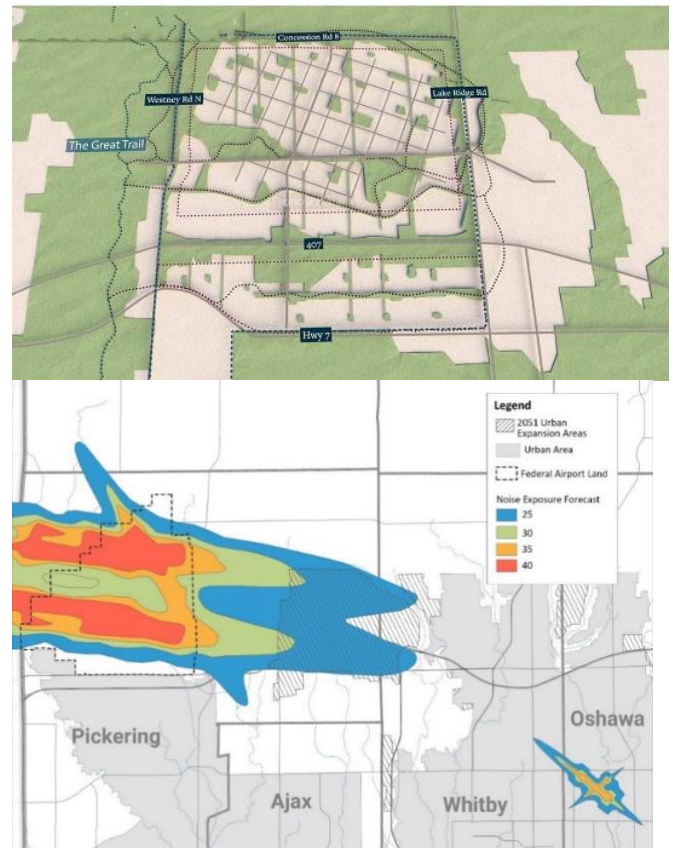
If you are thinking that it seems only yesterday since we held our last AGM, you are right. Several years ago we shifted our meeting date from June to November because of Covid. We've been trying to get back on track ever since. Our financial year-end is May 31st and so a meeting on June 15 will put us back in sync.

Northeast Pickering: You may recall a proposal for a large “mixed-use master planned community” called *Veraine* in northeast Pickering. The Dorsay Development Corporation owns 4000 acres bound by Highway 7 to the south, Westney Road North to the west, Concession Road 8 to the north, and Lake Ridge Road to the east.

GDA has argued in submissions and deputations over the years that this development is not needed, given the Seaton development and other options within existing urban areas. At the 23rd hour in last year's adoption of a new Official Plan for Durham, these lands were suddenly included in the lands designated for urban area expansion.

The Province, in its recent review of Durham's Official Plan, indicated that these lands should **not** be included because they are the subject of a Ministerial Zoning Order placed many years ago to keep housing and airplanes separate. Pickering Mayor Kevin Ashe has since been pushing to revoke the MZO (you can read about it here: [Opening northeast Pickering for development in conflict with future airport flight path | insauga](#)).

Veraine is being marketed as being built close to a new airport, meaning the inhabitants of *Veraine* will live close to their high-paying high-tech jobs at the airport. But if the airport is built then *Veraine* wouldn't be built. And if the airport isn't built, the new community would not be near to that source of high-paying jobs. A Catch 22 if ever there was one, and an issue we are tracking.



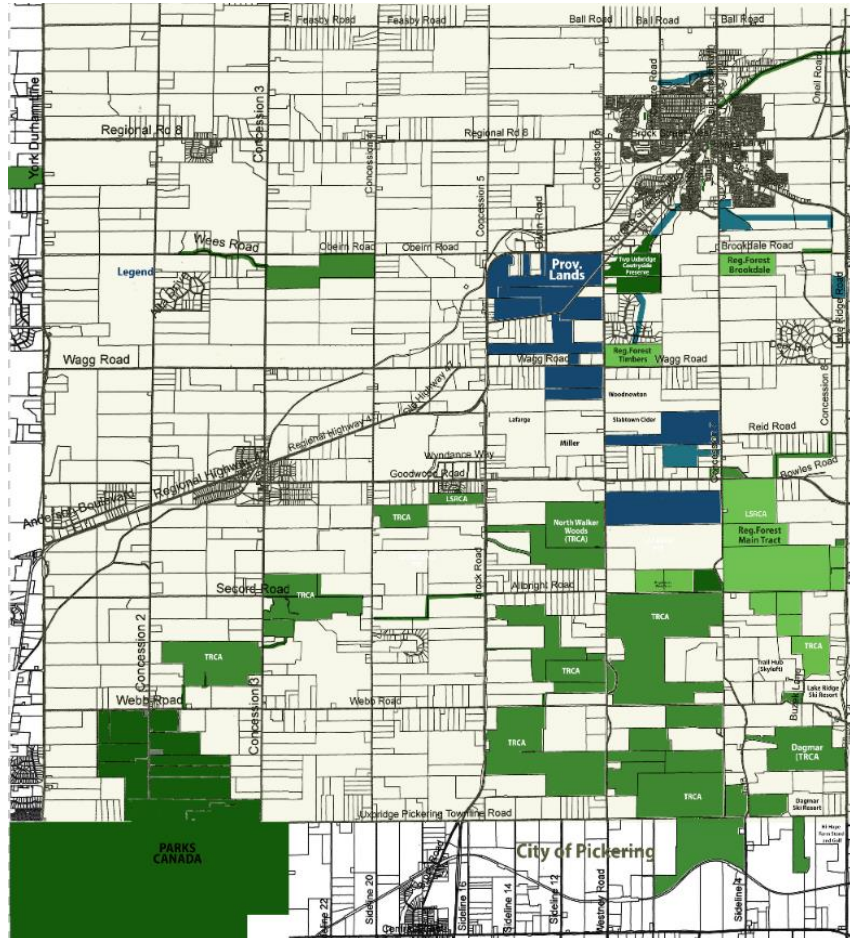
Flight path noise estimations, Draft DROP, Figure 12, p. 114

Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park: We continue to work hard as part of the planning committee along with partners from Nature Conservancy, Schad Foundation, Region of Durham, Township of Uxbridge, TRCA and LSRCA.

The Park is to be made up of individual parcels of lands, starting with six provincially owned parcels, totalling 532 hectares (1,315 acres). The map to the right shows those lands in blue; you might recognize them as what we called the “Tannenbaum lands” at every AGM for two decades. We are implementing the vision first developed in 2002 in partnership with several organizations and presented by then-Mayor GerriLynn O’Connor to the public for feedback.

Creating a new provincial park happens in stages. First, there is consultation about whether it is a good idea, and what might need to be considered. That stage has been completed and there was strong support for the new park.

The next stage is formal regulation of the lands and we expect that will take place very soon. At that time, the new Park will officially come into being and work can begin on developing a management plan for the lands.



GDA is leading the land acquisition team, recommending and securing key links to improve connections between the various parcels of land and create a strong link to the Rouge National Urban Park (darker green, lower left in map above). For the second time, GDA is recipient of funding from the Greenbelt Foundation to support costs associated with some of these land acquisitions – such things as surveys, legal costs, land appraisals. We are grateful to the Greenbelt Foundation! These funds have helped move the project forward more quickly than would otherwise be possible, and help private landowners determine the best way to have their land included in the new Park.



You can follow the progress of the birth and development of this new Park by visiting this website from time to time for updates: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/proposal-create-uxbridge-urban-provincial-park>

Parking near the trails: A reminder that if you are a GDA member you are entitled to use a code which exempts you from paying the parking charges near the trails in the south part of Uxbridge Township. This exemption recognizes the strong partnership and support given by GDA to the Township and other partners. This year’s code is **GREEN2024** and is effective up to December 31st.

Chainsaw safety training: A reminder that GDA will sponsor another one-day chainsaw training course this fall. We are partnering with Uxbridge Township and Ontario Parks to deliver this great course. As in the past, GDA will cover the registration costs for anyone who wishes to take this practical one day course. In exchange,

your name will be added to list of trained chainsaw volunteers who help keep the trails clear of fallen trees. Stay tuned for the date, and the course will be held locally on October 7. Get in touch if you are interested and we'll hold a spot for you at info@greendurham.ca.

Trail maintenance: You may recall that GDA has been subsidizing the TRCA's mowing budget for a number of years. The funds helped them keep the trails in a better state than they could otherwise manage. These mowing costs are now being supported by the parking charges. TRCA is late getting started because of recent wet weather but anticipates mowing the first of three mows in the next week, with a crew member walking ahead to flush birds. Our volunteers will do touch-ups in areas which need more frequent mows, and in areas which may be harder for a small tractor to reach. Please get in touch if you feel there are areas in Walker Woods, Glen Major, North Walker, and Skyloft tracts which are in need of a mow in the coming spring/summer/fall season.

Membership: Thanks to all of you who have renewed your memberships, and a reminder to others to do so. Memberships are \$25/year payable by cheque or via e-transfer to Info@greendurham.ca. Your membership helps us stay in touch with you, and lets others know there is a significant group of citizens which share a common vision for this special area. You are welcome to attend the AGM regardless of membership status, but only members who have paid in 2023 may vote.

Honouring Brian Buckles: Yesterday Brian Buckles received the Steve Hounsell Greenway Award from Ontario Nature. This award is given to a group or an individual working to preserve a core area of corridor of natural habitat.

For over fifty years Brian has worked tirelessly for the protection of green spaces and the conservation of natural habitat in what is now the Oak Ridges Moraine. Starting with the expropriation of lands by the federal government for an airport in the early 1970's, Brian - with the support and drawing skills of his wife Jane – has worked continuously to protect, and then develop a vision for the lands of north Pickering, south Uxbridge and adjacent Greenbelt lands. He has spent thousands of hours traipsing across the land, strategizing with mayors and politicians and meeting with stakeholders and landowners to find the best connections to provide continuous natural green space for animals and humans alike along these important headwater lands.



L to R: Jane Buckles, Susan Fleming, Brian Buckles

Brian has pushed for expanding the amount of land protected for conservation and encouraged land stewardship on both publicly and privately owned lands for five decades now. Brian is a policy wonk through and through, with extensive knowledge of land planning principles and policies. He is also a true map lover who is passionate about protecting nature and creating trail connections that link communities and people who care about the natural world. With his quiet, understated but relentless manner, he has pushed forward policies and trail linkages that have effected real change in his community both on the ground and in legislation. For Brian, people using trails means more people are engaged to fight to protect the nature they love.

Well done Brian! We are proud of you, and proud to work with you.