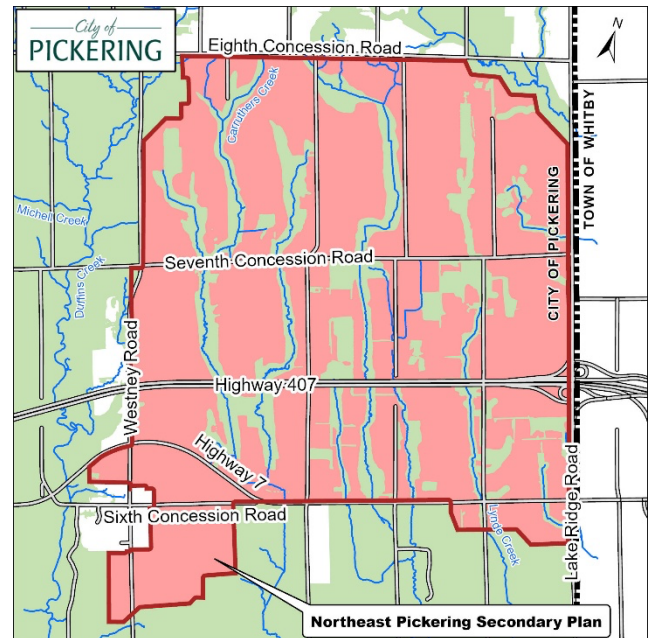




**The Northeast Pickering Development Plan:** The planned development of these agricultural lands continues to be contentious. GDA has consistently argued that development of these lands is not needed and that development should take place close to existing infrastructure such as sewage, roads to the south. Durham council voted against their staff's recommendation during the Envision Durham planning exercise and instead chose a developer-recommended growth scenario to urbanize more than 9,000 acres of farmland. Durham Region's official plan has been approved by the Province.

The plans for this area of urban expansion have been discussed at a series of public consultations this winter. Many concerns have been raised by farmers, neighbours environment and planning experts. The rights holders to these lands, the Mississauga of Scugog Island First Nation have expressed concern that they have not been consulted adequately and Pickering has paused plans to allow time for meetings to take place with MSIFN. A good summary article appeared recently:

[https://www.durhamregion.com/news/pickering-council-pauses-decision-on-plans-for-new-community/article\\_186946aa-8746-5702-8f7b-0884678f80d5.html?source=newsletter&utm\\_content=a01&utm\\_source=ml\\_ni&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_email=CB41F579DDB1B6186E4C9145725FAA46&utm\\_campaign=drha\\_86868&utm\\_term=latest](https://www.durhamregion.com/news/pickering-council-pauses-decision-on-plans-for-new-community/article_186946aa-8746-5702-8f7b-0884678f80d5.html?source=newsletter&utm_content=a01&utm_source=ml_ni&utm_medium=email&utm_email=CB41F579DDB1B6186E4C9145725FAA46&utm_campaign=drha_86868&utm_term=latest)



**Alto Rail Consultations:** While the Alto Rail corridor may not be built for many years yet, decisions about the route the trail will follow will likely be made within the coming months. Again, comments from as many voices as possible are important. Several of us attended the open houses held by Alto Rail's consultants in February and registered our concerns about north-south nature and trail corridors between Lake Ontario and lands further north being severed and disrupted. On the other hand, opportunities may exist to strengthen these connections for nature and trails and expand trails onto un-used rail lines. We hope to see these concerns reflected in such things as wildlife and trail underpasses. The Alto representatives have been present at the public consultations on the Pickering lands. Everything is connected to everything else, it seems! Visit this link to learn more about the plans for high speed rail:

<https://en.consultation.altotrain.ca/shaping-the-canada-of-tomorrow-with-high-speed-rail>

**Uxbridge Urban Provincial Park:** Our work as a partner in this project has been identifying and securing certain important connections for the Park on certain adjacent private lands for nature and for trails. We are nearing the fruition of many months of hard work. We liaise with private landowners, work with them to identify possible parts of their lands which might make the trail system better. We arrange land appraisals, secure funding and work with Township of Uxbridge staff and the landowners to develop agreements which will make these connections permanent. We hope to have many of them completed in time for our usual June AGM when we can share more details with you.

**And lastly: We have a Motus hit!** We had our first pick up of a bird on GDA's MOTUS station in East Duffins Headwaters- a northern saw-whet owl. It started in northern Ontario last fall, dipped into the US and recently came back up and hit our station on March 10th. Here is a link to the page, it shows the route the owl has taken so far.

<https://motus.org/dashboard/#e=profile&d=stations&s=15916&f=%7B%22dtStart%22%3A%222025-04-03%22%7D> Click on "Animals Detected" and you should see the path.