

Markham Council
c/o Markham Clerk
PDF via e-mail to clerkspublic@markham.ca,
mayorandcouncillors@markham.ca



RE: Agenda Item 8.1, Council Meeting of February 8, 2021 -- Requested MZO for Flato

Dear Members of Council,

The Ontario Headwaters Institute is a charity working to protect the province's headwaters, natural heritage, and watersheds.

Current efforts include WaterScape, which seeks to encourage the development of a sustainability lens for land use planning in Ontario, and Headwater Alliances, which will foster community visions on protecting upland headwater areas. Each is described under the Projects tab at www.ontarioheadwaters.ca.

We agree with the direction in the staff report to not support the proposed Minister's Zoning Order for the lands near Highway 48 and 19th Avenue and offer the following observations and our recommendation to protect both this headwater area and the health of its watershed.

Observations

- The area in question lies in the headwaters of the Rouge watershed and includes extensive recharge management areas, wetlands, niche habitat for many species, and agricultural lands;
- Much of the watershed downstream of this area has been intensively developed, creating poor ecological conditions that include reduced and fragmented natural habitat as well as poor water quality;
- The poor ecological conditions downstream have left the up-stream headwater areas as a defacto reservoir of the natural heritage, water quantity, and water quality for the watershed, and upon which many aspects of the health of the whole watershed now depends;
- Given the downstream conditions, it is clear that the existing planning and permitting protocols are inadequate to ensure to continued health of the watershed should they be applied in their current form in headwater areas; and,
- An MZO for the subject area would probably provide less environmental protection than the normal planning and permitting protocols, at a time when the headwater areas of the Rouge need more protection, not less.

Recommendation

We urge the Town of Markham to not support the requested Minister's Zoning Order for this area and to in fact begin moving toward improved environmental protection for our headwater areas.

Sincerely,

Andrew McCammon

Executive Director

cc MPP Paul Calandra; TRCA; affiliated organizations; selected others

Working to protect Ontario's Headwaters, Natural Heritage, and Watersheds
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