

Tony LaMantia, CEO of the Waterloo Region Economic Development Corporation state the following three points in italics followed by responses correcting the misinformation:

***Here are three reasons the Wilmot land assembly has to happen:***

***1) We've had the lowest industrial vacancy rate in Canada for years. This is a big problem - we've missed out on billions in investment and thousands of jobs.***

- This is not true. According to the Region of Waterloo's own studies our industrial vacancy rate has averaged 2.6%, several times higher than most GTAH municipalities that average only a 0.6% industrial vacancy rate. We currently have several million square feet of industrial and commercial buildings sitting vacant in Waterloo Region, and we have entire industrial parks such as Waterloo's Generation Park and Wilmot's Industrial Park that have yet to sell a single lot in decades despite being shovel-ready and on the market with hundreds of acres of industrial lands and room for dozens of major companies.

***2) Wilmot is the best option, it's flat, close to transportation routes, far from our water sources and represents just 0.35% of the Region's farmland. This isn't a food scarcity issue.***

- Wilmot is not the best option and it appears that not only were no other sites considered but proper studies haven't even been completed yet for this site that is contrary to our Regional Official Plan, the Wilmot Official Plan, and all previous Master Plans as well as in violation of the Countryside Line and other significant farmland protection regulations.

The site is not flat as there is more than 6 storeys of elevation change from one end of the site to the other and it is directly adjacent to some of the hilliest parts of Waterloo Region - greatly complicating needed rail spur construction.

The site is far from Highway #401 with no easy access to it, only a single highway reaches this distant site, and more than 80% of local municipal roads only being tar & chip are not suitable for large traffic volumes.

It is actually directly adjacent to the primary groundwater recharge areas of the Waterloo Moraine, contains several creeks and streams, and parts of the proposed site are already within well-head protection areas without even taking into account the significant water/sewage needs of such a massive industrial development within a watershed that is already exceeding its assimilative capacity.

While the farms to be destroyed may represent 0.35% of Waterloo Region's farmland, this development will negatively impact and compromise agricultural operations for kilometres in every direction and this absurd location for such a massive industrial complex more than 25km distant from our urban centres of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge and where any sort of development has never even been contemplated will have negative implications on groundwater, area wells, local roads/traffic, noise, pollution, and numerous other negative impacts that will disrupt one of the most productive prime agricultural areas of Canada. The negative impacts will be very costly and far-reaching.

We are already losing more than 319 acres of farmland every day in Ontario, the loss of such a vast tract of farmland in Wilmot - not only for this mega-industrial site but hundreds if not thousands of additional acres for accompanying developments is certainly not sustainable - particularly when our Regional Official Plan had a viable plan for more than 300,000 new residents and 170,000 new jobs with almost no farmland loss. It seems that no climate change, sustainability, nor environmental considerations have been taken into account for this proposed mega-industrial site as it is so contrary and stands to override so many Regional and municipal efforts to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions and lower our environmental impact. The use of already compromised greyfield, brownfield, and exhausted aggregate pits which abound throughout the Region doesn't even seem to have been considered instead of the destruction of this prime agricultural land that comprises less than 1% of all land in Ontario.

In an era of rapidly changing global climate, food scarcity is an issue that we all need to anticipate. - particularly in light of scientific predictions for the years ahead and the 40% of the world already facing food and water scarcity.

***3) The business community is supportive. We are hearing the loudest voices in opposition, but anyone who supports growth and prosperity in our community - especially business leaders - are for it. I know because they tell me.***

No one is against growth and prosperity in our community. However, Agriculture and Food Processing is our #1 Industry in Waterloo Region, generating more revenues and providing more jobs than any other industry. Our farms are amongst the most successful and profitable in all of Canada. We shouldn't be destroying our #1 economic driver, our countryside and our farmland in hopes that one day some new unknown industry might be convinced to come and set up shop here.

It is this distant, confounding location with so little existing infrastructure, such significant costs to develop, and with so many negative impacts that seem to have been so poorly studied that is causing concern. It is the lack of transparency, so many secret backroom meetings, the lack of any studies or research made publicly available (if they even exist), or even a single public meeting for what could be one of the largest developments in the history of Waterloo Region that is causing so much concern and causing tens of thousands of citizens to speak out in concern and opposition.

Lets build a mega-industrial site using proper transparent planning processes, that is congruent with our Regional Official Plan and all previous planning, that has proper plentiful public consultation and engagement, that our elected officials can actually talk about and not be muzzled, and that has full financial accounting and cost estimates so taxpayers clearly understand the costs and benefits.

Lets ensure that it is sustainable and doesn't come at the expense of other already successful industries, businesses, and communities. Lets ensure that it can compete globally to attract world-leading companies - not this proposed Wilmot site that only meets 7 of the 44 criteria of Ontario's own Job Site Selection criteria compared with other potential sites in Waterloo Region meeting 36 to 42 of the 44 criteria.

We can't have winners and losers in our community. The widespread public opposition to this proposed site is clear by the thousands of lawn signs up throughout the Region and the tens of thousands of signatures against it. We need a site that everyone in Waterloo Region supports - not just some of the business people who stand to profit the most from it.