



County of Simcoe
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August 26, 2016

Ms. Anne Learn Sharpe
AWARE Essa
58 Michael Street
Angus, ON L0M 1B5

Dear Ms. Learn Sharpe:

**RE: County of Simcoe – Solid Waste Management Infrastructure Projects
2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater**

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your correspondence (sent via e-mail on August 8, 2016) in regard to two County of Simcoe Solid Waste Management infrastructure projects – an Organics Processing Facility (OPF) and Materials Management Facility (MMF) – currently proposed for development at 2976 Horseshoe Valley Road West, Springwater. We appreciate your interest in these important projects and wish to address several of your statements. Please note that this response has been prepared with the assistance of County staff as it contains some specific technical content.

We thank AWARE Essa for its noted support of our plan to develop this infrastructure, despite the differences we have on the preferred location. Feedback from across the region very much supports the need to manage our own waste here in the County and look to the future as we adapt to changes in provincial legislation and increase our diversion. The message time and time again from our residents has been 'no more landfills'. We are doing our best to heed that and these environmentally-responsible initiatives are aligned with that message.

No matter the numerous benefits of these facilities, siting is no doubt a challenging undertaking. We understand that, and the siting process was not taken lightly. Our consultants, GHD Limited, undertook a process consistent with an Environment Assessment. They evaluated 502 potential sites through three screens, applying criteria such as the avoidance of wetlands and floodplains, vulnerable areas under Source Protection, Prime Agricultural Areas, and sensitive receptors to make their recommendation to County Council. Many industrial sites, including all County existing and closed landfill sites, were included in the evaluation; however, these locations did not meet critical requirements including size, location, avoidance of Prime Agricultural Areas, groundwater conditions, and location to neighbours. Extensive consultation with the public, Aboriginal communities, and various agencies was undertaken as part of this process.

In your letter, you stated that given the short list of sites, it appears that "the services provided by forests are highly underrated in the comparison criteria". To clarify, criteria was not weighted or applied value. No single criteria, including the capital cost of property acquisition, influenced the rankings more than another. Each short-listed site was evaluated thoroughly and the net effects of constructing the facilities at each location determined. The short-listed sites were then compared against each other, with the preferred site offering the most advantages.

Be assured that development is being furthered in consultation with the local municipality, conservation authority, and provincial agencies. Numerous studies are being undertaken to confirm site conditions, and to ensure compliance with municipal and provincial legislation. Of note, an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) will outline natural features of the property (including soils, vegetation, wildlife, topography, watercourses/bodies) and the ecological functions they provide and will address your concerns about the potential impact on habitat. An Agricultural Impact Assessment will address your noted concern regarding development of this facility in an agricultural area.

Regarding your comments about the "limited lifespan (of the facility) as technology in waste processing improves", this facility will be flexible to adapt to changes in our waste stream. This was considered in the siting evaluation. Having the ability to transfer garbage will be an indefinite requirement once County landfills close. We are acting now to prepare for future needs.

We certainly appreciate your recognition of our strong forestry stewardship. Our forest is the largest municipally-owned forest in Ontario and one of the largest in Canada. We own over 32,600 acres of protected forest lands across 150 different properties – and we continue to invest in expanding the forest by acquiring new land. To be clear, the proposed facility would only span across 11 acres of the 207 acre Freele Tract. The rest of the Freele Tract – approximately 95% – will remain. To put this into perspective, this infrastructure will utilize only 11 acres of 32,600 total acres that makes up the Simcoe County Forest.

Regarding your comments on tree planting and the period of time it takes for trees to reach maturity, it should be noted that sections of the Freele Tract, a working forest, were scheduled to be harvested through our forestry program well before siting was finalized. As stated in other materials, we have planted more than 20 million over the years and invest approximately \$35,000 annually into local tree planting initiatives. Tree planting will be considered, among other actions, as compensation as we move forward.

This infrastructure will benefit all our residents for years to come. We will continue to consult with nearby neighbours and businesses to listen to their concerns and feedback. We both agree that managing our own waste here in Simcoe County clearly has many environmental and economic benefits. As an added benefit, end products, such as compost and fertilizer can be used for local agricultural initiatives and support businesses and farmers across the region.

I hope that the above information is helpful and provides some clarity. We look forward to moving ahead with these projects and building on our many successful forestry and waste management programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Gerry Marshall', with a stylized, cursive script.

Gerry Marshall
Warden, County of Simcoe
Mayor, Town of Penetanguishene