

Wetlands In the Balance

Duffin Creek vs. Durham Live

What is the proposal?

A 240 acre site next to Highway 401 is being developed into casinos, restaurants, waterpark, hotel, film studio and cinemas. The \$1.5 billion proposal has been in development since 2014. The Ontario Municipal Board approved the development in 2017.

Bill 229, Schedule 6 proposal

Proposed changes to the *Conservation Authorities Act*, tabled on November 6, 2020, removes Conservation Authorities' ability to decide on permit applications when developments interfere with watercourses or wetlands.

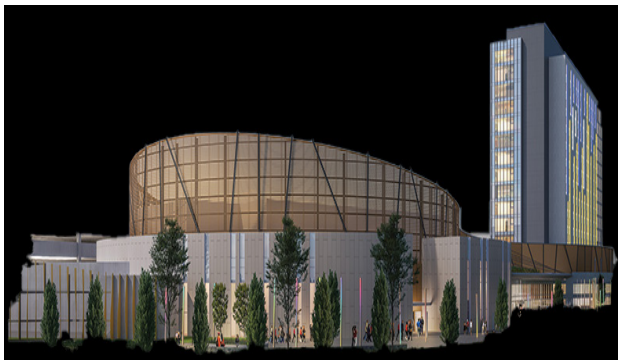


Figure 2: Durham Live Casino and Hotel Concept
Credit: Daily Commercial News

The Controversy

The provincial government approved a Ministerial Zoning Order on October 30, 2020 to speed up the site's development, removing opportunities for appeals or consultations by citizens or environmentalist.

The development will remove 57 acres of natural heritage and hydrological features. This includes a Provincially Significant Wetland that received the designation in 2005. A 4 million square foot warehouse will be built on it.

Who opposes the project and Bill 229?

Environmental Defense, David Suzuki Foundation, Ecojustice and Ontario Nature are among NGOs campaigning against the development. On November 30, 2020, these groups announced legal action against the Ford government over these changes. The Town of Ajax and the Green Party of Ontario have also voiced opposition. Citizens are also raising concerns. Conservation authorities like Credit Valley Conservation Authority are among those speaking out about Bill 229.

Site in context of region

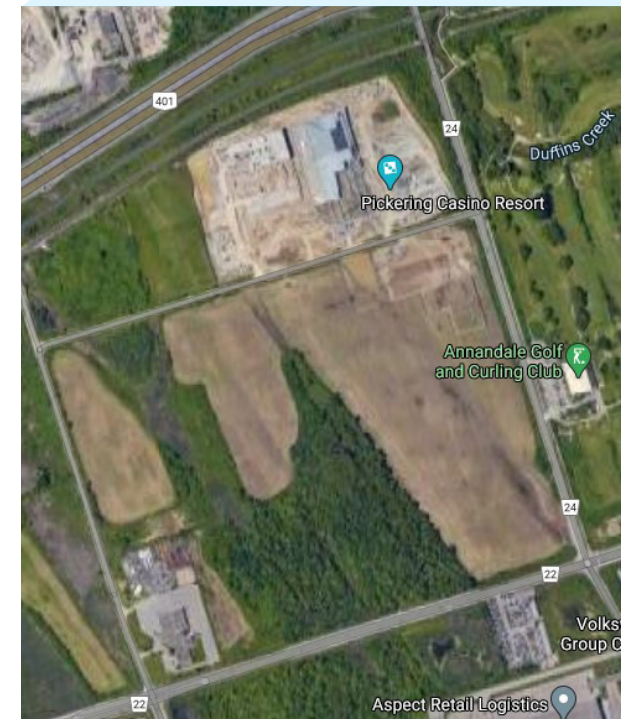
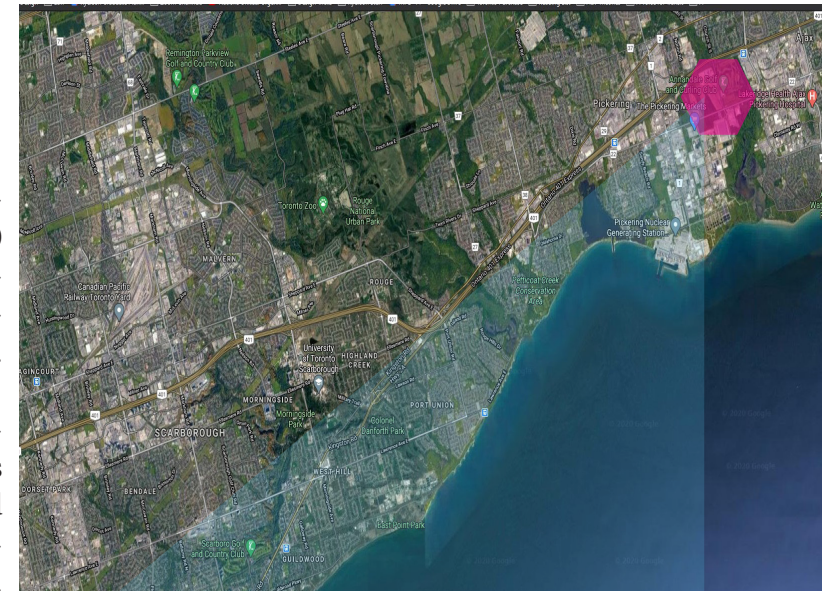


Figure 1: Property in development Credit: Google Photos

Durham Live Proposal

According to the Town of Pickering, the project is estimated to contribute \$1.3 billion in incremental annual GDP and over \$625 in annual total tax revenues.

Impact on municipal coffers

The Town of Pickering reports that Durham Live will create up to 10,000 jobs. It expects to see \$20 million annually in payments from the complex once built.

1 New Highway 401 Road Crossing

The City of Pickering and Pickering Developments Inc. are undertaking a Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) for a new Highway 401 road crossing.

2 Casino

TriBro Group wants to reportedly build a Las Vegas-style casino. Slots and gaming tables generate tax revenues for municipalities. The Town of Ajax received more than \$61 million in revenue from its Slots at Ajax Downs in 2017.

6 Ampitheatre

Outdoor concerts will increase noise pollution, affecting wildlife. Potential implications include decreased hiking visits to nearby Duffins Creek because of it compromising nature's serenity.



Figure 3: Durham Live Concept

Credit: SvN

"Gambling increases stress, harms financial well-being, increases crime, contributes to job losses and lost work productivity, and can lead to addiction."

- Wellesley Institute, 2013 / Griffiths, M., 2004

5 Cinema

Movie-watching during COVID-19 has changed with potentially habit-changing implications after the pandemic. A 30-theatre complex in Vaughan will be converted into a housing site. It is unclear how Durham Live will manage increased traffic coming to and from the site.

4 Waterpark

A waterpark is planned despite Duffins Creek's proximity to the development. There is no commitment to sustainable design practices to be implemented.

3 Hotels

A 225-room 5-star hotel and a 350-room hotel with a convention centre are planned. There are no environmental commitments for these proposed facilities.

Lower Duffin's Creek Watershed Co-Benefits

USD 235-577 billion: The annual global market value of animal pollinated crops. (IPBES, 2016)

Credit: "Hiker and Dog" by Stanley Zimny (Thank You for 52 Million views) is licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0



1 Black-and-White Warbler



Credit: "Black-and-White Warbler" by Aaron Maizlish is

Since 1970, 618 million warblers have been lost in Canada and the U.S. (SDG 15: Life on Land)

2 Trees



Credit: Jean-François Obregon

3. Local Business

Trails boost spending at local businesses from visitors who eat and shop after their hikes. Increased local tourism leads to higher small business profits and increased provincial tax revenues. The proposed Ontario tourism rebate in 2021 may lead to increased eco-tourism. (SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth)

7. Outdoor Activities

Spending time in nature can reduce anxiety, stress and depression. Ontario Parks reported a 7% annual increase in car camping in August 2020. Decreased healthcare costs are a co-benefit of time spent outdoors. (SDG 3: Good Health and Wellbeing)



Credit: "File:Duffins Creek - panorama (1).jpg" by deltawhiskybravo is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 v

3



Credit: @ pickingmarkets (Instagram)

4 Canada Warbler



USD \$6.8 billion
The avoided mortality and morbidity from trees' air purification.
(Nowak et al., 2014)

Roughly accounting for 10.5% of Ontario's 2020-21 on health care spending

5



Credit: "deer track in sandy soil 2" by Aaron Jacklin is licensed under CC BY-SA 2.0

5. Soil

Soil contains three times the amount of atmospheric carbon. It retains rainwater, filters pollutants and is a habitat for organisms. Duffin's Creek has sandy loam, sand or gravelly sand. Its removal for developments results in lost agricultural or garden productivity. (SDG 15: Life on Land)

6. Fish & Water

Bring Back the Salmon has worked since 2006 to restore the native Atlantic salmon populations extirpated in the 1890s. It is co-led by the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the Government of Ontario. Anglers spend \$1.6 billion annually in Ontario. (SDG 14: Life Below Water)



Credit: Atlantic Salmon in Lake Ontario, Bring Back the Salmon, 2020

What you can do!

Get Political:

Multiple organizations are fighting the Duffins Creek MZO and Bill 229, Schedule 6's proposed changes to the Conservation Authorities Act.

- Email the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs:
comm-financeaffairs@ola.org

- Email your MPP:
<https://davidsuzuki.org/action/help-stop-ontario-bulldozing-nature/>
<https://environmentaldefence.ca/newmode/conservation-authorities-need-help/>
<https://ontarionature.good.do/psws/email/>

Consider volunteering or donating to these organizations.

- Email your Councillor, Regional Councillor or Mayor:
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1GpEERBkdjHfzxIFhO6Cgis91vgC-uasT1KzrkBHCgX3I/edit?usp=sharing>

- Read media outlets covering these issues:
www.TheStar.com
www.DurhamRegion.com
www.YorkRegion.com

Lake Ontario Salmon Restoration Program AKA Bring Back the Salmon

Twitter: [@ontariosalmon](https://twitter.com/ontariosalmon)

Instagram: [@ontariosalmon](https://www.instagram.com/ontariosalmon)

Environmental NGOs

Twitter:

[@envirodefence](https://twitter.com/envirodefence)

[@DavidSuzukiFDN](https://twitter.com/DavidSuzukiFDN)

[@OntarioNature](https://twitter.com/OntarioNature)

Instagram:

[@envirodefence](https://www.instagram.com/envirodefence)

[@davidsuzukifdn](https://www.instagram.com/davidsuzukifdn)

[@ontarionature](https://www.instagram.com/ontarionature)

What can investors do:

Insurers, asset managers and pension funds can issue or invest in resilience bonds, which incentivize natural infrastructure (e.g. coastal) protections:

IISD Report "[Advancing Natural Infrastructure in Canada](#)" (December 2019)

Climate Bonds Initiative - [Climate Resilience Principles](#)

"Agency, however, is more about grasping at possibility than conforming to probability."

-Marshall Ganz, 2010



Credit: dek dav



Credit: gabriele82



Credit: Jon Clayton