**October 31, 2023**

Dear Province of Ontario:

As a business owner in Barrie, I have seen first-hand the efforts that the City is undertaking to create an environment that is well-suited to allowing businesses to start, grow, and thrive in the community and to keep itself competitive in servicing the growing demand in the region for business expansions, relocations, and foreign direct investment.

While the City is making advancements in helping bring commercial and industrial development projects to market, it remains challenged in fulfilling the demands and requirements of prospective investors. With an extremely limited supply of serviced land on the market and available for sale to end users, the City continues to lack shovel-ready parcels of employment land, both in terms of volume and variety in size. This is particularly noticeable as it relates to serviced, shovel-ready contiguous tracts of developable properties that are 10+ acres in size.

This inability to fulfill the needs of existing and prospective businesses requiring suitable space to build continues to challenge the City in its ability to make progress on its provincially mandated employment targets of 150,000 jobs by 2051. Real outcomes of this situation include businesses that are currently based in Barrie and looking to expand being forced to explore options outside of the City, new investors/businesses being unable to consider Barrie as a potential home for their business, and the City’s reputation in the site selector/real estate community continuing to be that of a market that has an inadequate supply of sites and is unable to suit the needs of new prospects or its existing businesses.

To combat these challenges and maximize the investment opportunities for the City, and by extension the Province, Barrie is in need of additional vacant and readily serviceable employment lands that would provide land and facility ownership opportunities to prospective investors in the community.

I feel strongly that the City of Barrie is best positioned amongst the municipalities in the region to provide the services and infrastructure necessary to meet the needs of growing and new businesses. It is my hope that the Province will continue to engage in further discussions with the City to explore options that can increase the supply of employment lands and ensure that the economic prospects of the city, region, and province as a whole are maximized by capitalizing on Barrie’s attractiveness as a place for businesses to establish, grow, and succeed.

Yours truly,