March 5, 2015

City of Barrie
70 Collier Street, Box 400
Barrie, ON
L4M 4T5

Dear Mayor Lehman and Members of Council:

Re: Harvie Road/Big Bay Point Crossing

On behalf of North American (Park Place North) Corporation, I would like to add our voice to those advocating for the speedy construction of the Harvie Road Crossing; a project that keeps getting bumped down the road in the City’s Capital Budget despite being a prominent fixture in the City’s Transportation Plan for at least 15 years. This critical connection is long overdue and a much-needed solution to the constant congestion that Barrie residents and businesses are forced to endure in the vicinity of Hwy 400 due to delays in providing the necessary east-west road capacity servicing old south Barrie. These delays also represent a missed opportunity by the City to facilitate private growth and investment that would benefit existing taxpayers and businesses.

As you know, Park Place has worked closely with the City to fully fund and build significant transportation improvements in south Barrie. These upgrades were necessary because traffic on Mapleview Drive and at the interchange with Highway 400 was already a nagging problem before Park Place and other new developments in South Barrie came online. As a condition of approval, Park Place spent $7.1 million on municipal and provincial road-related infrastructure improvements several years ago to address these traffic concerns. These enhancements included widening Mapleview Drive, Bayview Drive and the ramps/interchanges at Highway 400 together with related traffic signal upgrades. Although these capacity improvements were beneficial, they cannot be improved upon any further and were not intended to service all of the new residential developments in south Barrie and Innisfil.

In addition to the $7.1 million Park Place spent on improving the municipal/provincial road network and $1.6 million in current annual property taxes, our development alone has contributed $10.0 million in development charges directly to the City (plus approximately $1.5 million more from IBM). To date, the City has not applied those dollars into the most pressing infrastructure issue in old south Barrie. Further delays in addressing this east-west road capacity issue will also curtail the full build-out of the Park Place lands which are estimated to generate an additional $22 million in

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development charges and approximately 2.5 million more in annual property taxes when we can bring more businesses like IBM and Barrie Medical to the Park Place Office Estates lands. The City’s investment in the Harvie Road crossing would realize a significant financial return not only from Park Place, but would also open up significant opportunities for growth and investment by neighbouring landowners should the City finally decide to facilitate that opportunity by proceeding with this and related critical pieces of urban infrastructure in the area.

We understand that Council has been moving forward with this project and that it seemingly enjoys broad political and public support. However, progress on final phases of the EA has been questioningly and inexplicably slow since approval to proceed was first granted three years ago. The Harvie Road Crossing Environmental Assessment started five years ago in 2010 with construction scheduled to commence six years from now in 2021. In contrast, the Business Plan for 2015 proposes a schedule for McKay Road that starts an Environmental Assessment in 2015 and ends with a fully serviced crossing and interchange in 2022. It appears, where there is a will there is a way.

The Harvie Road/Big Bay Point Crossing is critically important to facilitate any future office investments by Park Place, to our neighbouring businesses who depend on just-in-time delivery to be competitive, to those in need of timely access to the new Barrie Primary Care Medical Centre and especially important to all the existing residents and taxpayers that need access to the highway or simply need to get across this major divide in the middle of the City. We urge Council to instruct staff to use every means possible to accelerate the current schedule to ensure the construction of the Harvie Road Crossing is expedited.

Sincerely,

Steven K. Bishop
Vice-President, Development Services
North American Development Group