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Members of Planning Committee
Southwest Area
File No. 0-7609

My name is Tim Brown and I represent the West Talbot Landowners Association. Our Lands are situated south of Southdale Rd., West of Colonel Talbot Road and North of Pack Road. We understand that the Southwest Area Study does not include our lands in their study simply because the Urban Growth Boundary line skirts around these properties thereby excluding us; but we could not resist, once again, to explain not only our concerns, but to raise some positive points for the city and to finally ask one question.

There are only nine landowners in this block and seven of them go back several generations under the same family name with some of the lands actually being deeded by Col. Talbot himself. For many years we have all enjoyed our farms, our neighbours, and the peace and quiet that a country life presents. This lifestyle, through no fault of our own, no longer exists. We no longer have private use and enjoyment of our own lands! We are now surrounded by development, overrun by trespassers, bombarded by water overflow from surrounding drainage ponds and congested by traffic which will soon worsen with the completion of 2 new high rise apartment buildings nearby currently under construction.

We, as a group, wonder if we have done something to offend City Hall and have been intentionally left out of the Urban Growth Area. We have been told the reason is to preserve agricultural lands and if this is the case, please let me explain. This whole block consists of only 90 acres of land that is cropped with the remainder being bushland, pasture, and an orchard that has been out of production for many years and sadly gets uglier as time goes by.

Our concerns include:

First, the erosion through our woodlot is out of control. I included a photo showing the extreme erosion in some areas reaching widths of 15 feet and depths up to ten feet taking down huge trees and eventually dumping tons of silt directly into Dingman Creek. Several years ago, a study was initiated by the city and conducted by the MNR to examine this issue. We have never had access to the results of this study as all of our attempts to acquire them

have gone unanswered. Since the erosion was never a problem before we believe that it is a direct result from overflow from drainage ponds constructed in the subdivision located directly North from us along Southdale Road, West of Boler Road. This issue desperately needs to be addressed.

Secondly, trespassing – every single landowner in this block is fed up with the local public thinking these lands are public property. We post signs only to have them torn down, often the same day. We have daily issues with Motorcycles, 4-Wheelers, Partiers, Paint ball groups, Hunters, Target shooters, off leash dog walkers and also the insult of being used as a garbage dump. We also receive threats when we try to stop these trespassers and inform them that they are on private property. Because of the trespassing we no longer have private use and enjoyment of our own lands. I, personally, do not dare taking my German Sheppards back for a run through my own bush for fear of running into another dog off leash. That doesn't seem fair to me. I operate a horse boarding facility at 3133 Colonel Talbot Road offering trail riding through the bush and I have expressed for years to the city that because of the intrusive trespassing, that it was immanent there would be an accident on my farm. Well, that has now happened. Last week 2 bikes back in my trails spooked a horse that in turn through his rider. This very experienced equestrian rider not only broke her nose but also suffered major facial bruising and other minor bruising and soreness. Thank goodness we have a strict policy regarding wearing a helmet! I have lost business over this fact and quite frankly I cannot blame them for leaving. It has become a dangerous environment. Some motorbike riders actually seem to enjoy spooking horses and will turn around the second time to do it again! The bikes and ATV's also drive on our planted crops causing thousands of dollars in crop damages. The trespassing also extends to the front of our property, our residence where we live. At lease once a week we will notice anything from a stroller on our front lawn with the family at the fence of one of our paddocks visiting our horses, or sometimes they just simply drive up our driveway, past our house, go to our barn where the family gets out of their vehicle to "pet" our horses. What would happen if I wanted to go to their house, park my truck, and hang out in their backyard? Every time a family decides to visit our "petting zoo", we have to immediately stop whatever we are doing and go outside to educate them. Some children are equipped with carrots and apples to "treat" our horses. We have to explain to them that we are a private farm and they are not welcome to drop in. It is dangerous to let children pet or treat animals they do not know.

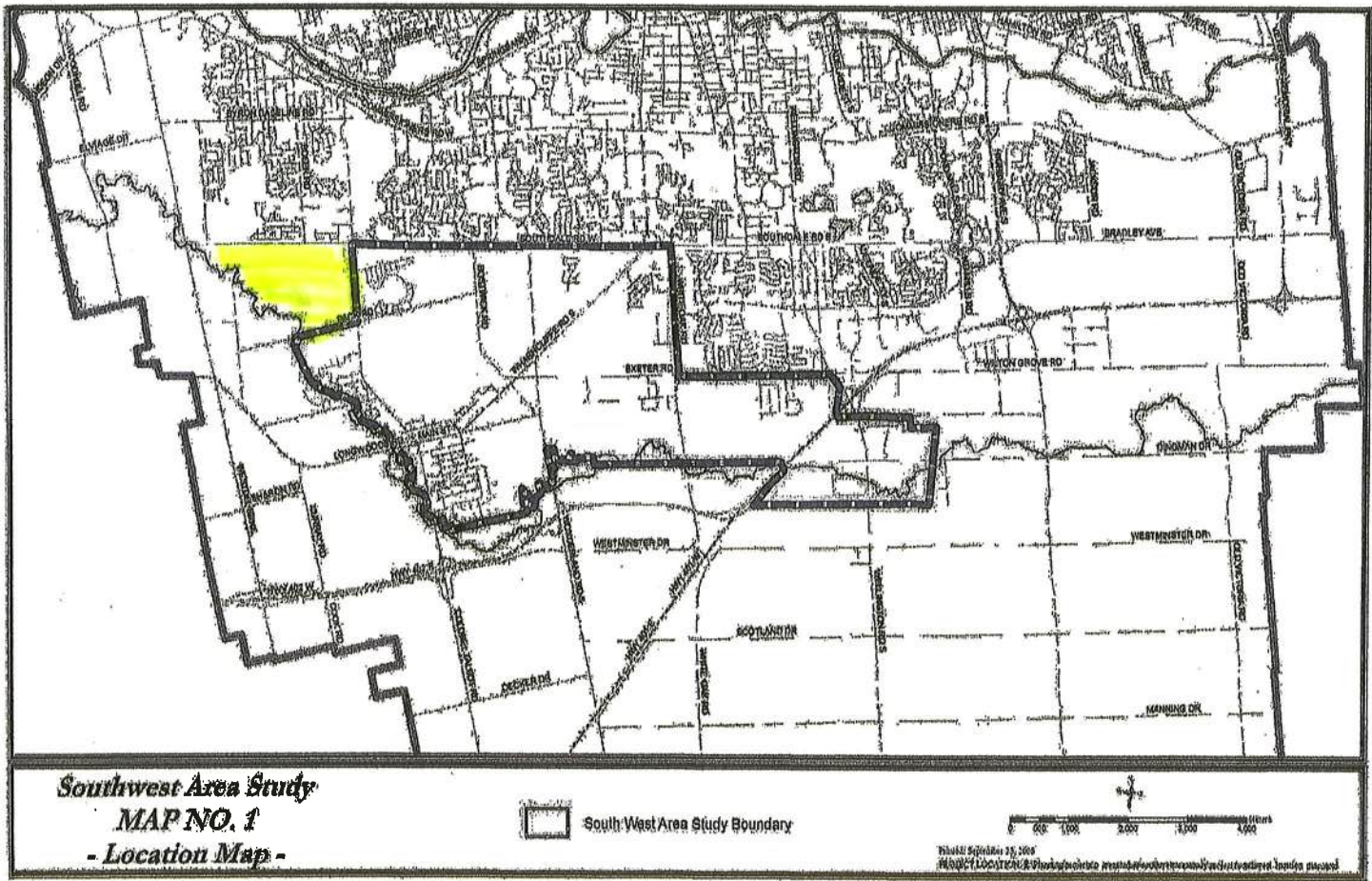
I am sure many of you may remember the small child that lost her finger feeding a horse on a school trip last year. We are terrified this could happen on our farm. Horses are not mean if they bite while accepting a treat from a little one, they could easily mistake a finger for a carrot. Especially if there are more than one horse there and they are in competition for that treat. The trespassing is truly way out of control and we are pleading for help.

In the cities Vision 96 report there is a quote regarding a buffer. It states, "...ensure proper separation between farms and cities so that adverse impacts such as those from Livestock and manure don't impact the city and pressures such as traffic, light, noise and air quality issues from the city don't impact the farms." With this quote in mind the city's recent growth in this area has negatively affected not only our ability to farm but also to have personal use and enjoyment of our own property. The current buffer is Colonel Talbot Road and that is not working...at least not for us. We believe that if these lands were included in the urban growth are, not only would it provide a proper buffer between urban and rural, it would also offer the city many benefits. With these lands included in the city's plans, the city would have access to the largest woodlot in the city's west end. It is beautiful and has the potential to join Lambeth and Byron with Dingman Creek as its corridor. We envision bike paths, nature trails and with the potential revitalization of the Dingman Creek Conservation Area along with a couple of foot bridges a natural park setting to rival Springbank Park could be created. Also the extension of Boler Road through our properties makes perfect sense from a traffic control measure, just not while we are still attempting to farm it!

The West Talbot Landowners respectively and collectively request to have the Urban Growth Boundary changed to include our lands. We believe this beautiful area could greatly benefit the city and might offer us the possibility to relocate to the country to carry on in peace. The current situation is unfair, unsafe, and honestly unacceptable to us. Our one question to you is simply this- Why have these lands been excluded when you were prepared to go as far south east as you did?

Thanks

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the initials 'JB' followed by a stylized flourish.



Highlighted Area represents West Talbot Lands

