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William E. (Bill) Johnston, M.A., LLB  
February 14, 2011

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City of Pickering  
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Dear Mayor Ryan:

On behalf of the Members of the Toronto Real Estate Board (TREB), I would like to share the views of Greater Toronto REALTORS® regarding the City of Pickering's current budget deliberations.

As you may know, TREB is an association of over 31,000 REALTORS®, from across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), working in the residential, commercial, and industrial markets. Every day, REALTORS® work to help the public realize the dream of home ownership; they help businesses to succeed; they contribute to economic growth; and, perhaps, most importantly, they help our communities to prosper. In short, REALTORS® care deeply about the livability and competitiveness of the GTA.

In this regard, no decisions are more important than those made by Pickering Council during the process to set the City's annual budget. Municipalities provide important services that help to create the quality of life that attracts residents and the competitiveness that allows businesses to succeed.

**Chief Executive  
Officer**

Don Richardson

REALTORS® know first hand that quality regional and municipal services influence the home buying decisions of the public and the location decisions of businesses. For example, it is not uncommon for homebuyers to base their decisions on proximity to good libraries, community centres, or recreation programs. With regard to businesses, efficient municipal infrastructure, such as roads that allow for on-time delivery of goods and services, are critical. With this in mind, we urge the City of Pickering and all municipalities to continue delivering efficient and effective municipal services.



Nevertheless, for the vast majority of the home buying public and business community, affordability is still the number one consideration. No matter how much a home buyer may like a particular community, it is not an option if they cannot afford to live there. Similarly, operating costs are a key consideration of any location for a business. This is notable because municipal costs, including property taxes, development charges, water rates, and other user fees, are some of the biggest home ownership and business operating expenses. With this in mind, we recognize that important municipal services must be funded fairly, but we urge the City of Pickering to ensure that these services are being delivered in the most efficient ways possible so that municipally-related home ownership costs can be minimized.

I hope you find our views helpful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Johnston", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bill Johnston, M.A., LL. B.  
President

c.c. Dierdre Mullen, President, Durham Region Association of REALTORS®