

DEPUTATION REQUEST

REGIONAL COUNCIL

OCTOBER 21, 2021

Subject: Planning for Growth to 2051 with a Youth Perspective

Spokesperson: Katie Konstantopoulos

Name of Group or person(s) being represented (if applicable):

Youth Food Committee, a working group of the York Region Food Council

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

Correspondence attached.

OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL CLERK

1-877-464-9675 x. 71320

york.ca



To:

Regional Clerk's Office, York Region

Subject:

Planning for Growth to 2051 with a Youth Perspective

Spokesperson:

Katie Konstantopoulos

Name of Group or Person(s) being represented:

Youth Food Committee, a working group of the York Region Food Council

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

In York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR), we believe that Council and staff have neglected to consider the Youth Perspective.

As representatives of the Youth Food Committee, a working group of the York Region Food Council, we value social justice in navigating our relation to food, land and the community we call York Region as home. We acknowledge that food access in York Region is about land use, and our food system exists in relation to other systems. Having a say in how land is planned is important to the future of our green space, local agriculture, and inclusive, complete, and transit-oriented communities. We must ensure that the plans of today, including this MCR, consider our place in the future.

Planning for Growth to 2051 cannot happen without the involvement of young people and the recognition of the ongoing climate crisis. We must think of the long-term impacts on our community and the environment instead of the short-term benefits where only specific people and communities will prosper. With a review of the existing motions tabled here today, which concern our communities now and into 2051, we are concerned about the following:

1. **The impact on agricultural land and the disappearing "white belt"** (with 80% being designated by 2051 and the consideration of "future urban" identification in the remaining areas), as well as the reduction in the amount of quality agricultural land in and around urban areas, which is key to York Region's capacity for food security in the coming decades.
2. **The impact of urban sprawl both environmentally and socially** in our automobile-centric cities, where boundary expansion into "white belt" lands and greenfield areas has been chosen over urban infill and intensification in areas already zoned by municipalities for mixed use, commercial, and residential development.
3. **The environmental impacts of these changes**, including the damage they have on ecosystems and conservation efforts in the face of the ongoing climate crisis, which goes

directly against the recommendations of York Region's own Sustainability Strategy and New Communities Guidelines. We believe it's possible to meet intensification targets without expanding our boundaries if we invest in dense, walkable communities within our cores, local food and green infrastructure, and the associated public transit increases that are desperately required in the region.

4. **The possibility that the "affordable housing" built using this plan will not be sufficient for our communities**, as it may not offer "missing middle" housing and inclusionary zoning within the region, including mixed-use and multi-use areas, which has the potential to increase our vulnerability to aspects like food insecurity and effectively lock young people out of the already-broken real estate market.
5. **The potential for MZOs to be leveraged against York Region if development does not occur in the ways that have been outlined in MCR**. To us, MZOs are an undemocratic, ignorant, and short-sighted way to pass uninformed and often-destructive plans which leave out communities of all backgrounds. More importantly, MZOs control the process of determining the future of a community without involving the voices of that community, and we rebuke their use in York Region.

Further to the above points, we are also concerned that:

6. **Young people in York Region continue to be overlooked** through the lack of meaningful public consultation, and the assumption that current forms of consultation are robust enough to meet the needs of varied municipalities and their residents.
7. **This entire process so far (and the potential use of MZOs) seems to circumvent the need for direct consultation** with Indigenous communities, Black communities, and People of Colour, as well as disabled community members, 2S and LGBTQIAP+ community members, and community members seeking shelter who are disproportionately impacted by land use policies, food insecurity, and the overall livability of York Region.
8. **If the Province and York Region Council pass these projects without engaging with the results of a robust consultation process, or through an MZO, they will continue a pattern of neglect in our Region** which politically, socially, and economically disenfranchises our residents and neighbours. We have municipal planning processes, committees, groups, and organizations in place to ensure the needs and wants of the community are considered with land use planning, well into the future. Let's use them.

Young people who live, study, work, and play in York Region are also the future leaders of York Region. Having a say in these projects is critical. We are requesting your commitment to further consultation and co-creation opportunities, in addition to a review of what has been proposed to date and the rejection of line items on today's agenda which contradict the needs of our community. We also look forward to the mobilization of York Region Youth who are interested in land use planning and other topics critical to the functioning of our communities, and we hope you will include us as key stakeholders in the Region's future endeavours.