

Regional Council Special Meeting

October 21, 2021

Item E.9

Submissions Received in Opposition to

Item H.3

**“Fully Include Town of East Gwillimbury
Whitebelt Lands in the 2051 Timeframe”**

The following form letter, with slight variations, was submitted by those listed below the letter.

Dear Mayor Hackson and East Gwillimbury Councillors,

I am writing to express my concern about East Gwillimbury's request to have York Region approve 100% build out of EG's contested countryside lands (often referred to as "whitebelt") by 2051. I am encouraging all York Regional Councillors to not support the allocation of growth to 100% of EG's whitebelt lands in this MCR.

York Region should be accommodating *at minimum of* 60% of projected demand for new homes and workplaces within existing built up areas (the intensification rate), and it should be developing its existing designated greenfield area densities no less than the 80 residents and jobs per hectare prescribed under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017).

Settlement area boundary expansions

It would be a mistake to extend the settlement area boundary *at all* beyond its current position in East Gwillimbury. Even more so if York Regional Councillors support the allocation of growth to 100% of EG's whitebelt lands in this MCR. Saying yes to EG's request for 100% of their whitebelt lands supports a race to the bottom approach to planning for our future.

By voting for significant Settlement Area Boundary expansion - particularly in East Gwillimbury - York Region Council would be condemning the existing residents of Newmarket, Markham Vaughan and Stouffville to decades more of traffic gridlock and frustration. By developing the region's greenfield areas at 50/ha densities low enough to swallow all of East Gwillimbury's contested countryside, and directing just 50-55% of growth to existing built up areas, York Region would make it almost certain that the vast majority of newcomers will rely on private automobiles to commute, shop and run errands. This will put far more pressure on highways and major arterials that are already frequently clogged.

There should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years. There is lots to infill, this will give York Region a chance to do Environmental Assessments for water and wastewater servicing and settlement area boundary expansions in the Lake Simcoe watershed, as per the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, make more transit supportive communities and prioritize York's clear need for affordable housing.

I support at a minimum a 60% intensification scenario for York Region as presented in the Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios dated Sept 16th, from York Region staff, as it represents the smallest impact on farmland and the environment. This scenario requires 700 hectares of land which are currently not within settlement areas to be built on. The 50% intensification and 50 residents and jobs/ ha scenario would add 2700 ha of land to be built on.

Population and job growth

The population allocation for East Gwillimbury that was contemplated by York Region at the September General meeting was already well beyond what is needed to meet housing demand, and was already incompatible with the region's environmental obligations. Those population allocations represented

nearly a quadrupling of the East Gwillimbury population in just thirty years, from 24,700 persons and 9,500 jobs in 2016, to 105,100 – 112,800 persons and 36,100 jobs by 2051.

Transparency, representation, accountability to taxpayers and residents

I believe that the EG Mayor and Council are interpreting residents' silence on the whitebelt issue as support for this proposal. In fact, most people are completely unaware of this proposal, and Council has done nothing out of the ordinary to bring people's attention to such a significant issue. As YR makes such a significant decision, it is incumbent on elected officials to know if this is in fact supported by EG residents.

Why would Council want to eat all the Town's developable land in the next thirty years? It is fiscally irresponsible to have no Development Charge income after these lands are built out. East Gwillimbury must articulate the logic of this plan to its residents and to the Region. Is EG assuming that all future costs would be borne by homeowners through property tax? This would be great for profit-oriented home builders, however, and that may be EG's primary interest.

Infrastructure cost per capita for EG = \$7,600 vs \$4,600 in Markham and \$6,900 in Vaughan. Therefore, if EG gets 100% whitebelt build out, it's the highest cost in the region to service.

Water, wastewater, environment

So far EG has done little to convince the public that it cares about the environment. The destruction of a huge forest for single family home development on Yonge St, between Newmarket and Bradford is an abomination. These disconnected, dead-end developments are the farthest thing from "complete communities" imaginable. Despite the addition of bike lane signs, there is clearly no where to walk or bike to unless you count a postal box. These communities drive up our Greenhouse Gas emissions because they are not realistically navigable by any other transportation means.

The wastewater servicing for this development is on hold. While we know some servicing to the area will come eventually, but it is premature to approve extensive and expensive greenfield growth without servicing guarantees.

Virginia Hackson, Mayor of EG ,was the Chair of the LSRCA and continues to sit on that Board, and is pushing the biggest greenfield development proposal in her municipality. She knows full well that greenfield development is harmful to the Lake's health. This is disturbing and unjustified.

Joe Goode

Richard & Ann Marie McComb

Claire Malcolmson

Mj Hanley

Nury Rugeles

Antonio Gonzalez Chapman

Susan Beharriell

Brigitte Beck

Mayor Hackson and Councillors:

I am writing to express my deep concern about East Gwillimbury's request to build out **100% of its contested countryside lands** ("whitebelt lands") **by 2051**. What purpose can this possibly serve, other than to meet the insatiable appetite of developers and those who 'ride the wave'? East Gwillimbury's request conflicts wholeheartedly with the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 which calls for **preservation** of the Province's natural heritage and agricultural resources **for the long-term and as a matter of provincial interest**. Importantly, policies of the PPS represent 'minimum standards'.

My understanding from the September Regional Council meeting is that East Gwillimbury's population allocation is already well beyond what is required to meet housing demands and, concerningly, already conflicts with the Region's environmental goals. This significant tipping of the scale and apparent disregard for the environmental consequences does not represent good planning. Furthermore, the developments I'm seeing cannot, in all good conscience, be classified as "complete communities" and, as such, contravene the Guiding Principles of the **Growth Plan**.

Lastly, I'm particularly disappointed with Mayor Hackson's push for a massive development proposal within her own municipality while simultaneously sitting on the Board of the Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority. I would respectfully remind Mayor Hackson of her important responsibility towards **protecting, enhancing and restoring** the Watershed as opposed to facilitating its further unnecessary and inappropriate development.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wendy Kenyon

Oct 17 2021

Dear York Region Chairman and Council,

I am writing to express my concern about East Gwillimbury's request to have York Region approve 100% build out of EG's countryside lands (often referred to as "whitebelt") by 2051. I am encouraging all York Region representatives to York Regional Council **not** to support the allocation of 100% growth of EG's whitebelt lands in this Municipal Comprehensive Review.

York Region should be accommodating *at minimum*, 60% of projected demand for new homes and workplaces within existing built up areas (the intensification rate), and it should be developing its existing designated greenfield area densities at no less than the 80 residents and jobs per hectare prescribed under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017).

There should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years. There is lots to infill, this will give York Region a chance to do Environmental Assessments for water and wastewater servicing and settlement area boundary expansions in the Lake Simcoe watershed, as per the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, make more transit supportive communities and prioritize York's clear need for affordable housing.

I support at a minimum a 60% intensification scenario for York Region as presented in the Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios dated Sept 16th, from York Region staff, as it represents the smallest impact on farmland and the environment. This scenario requires 700 hectares of land which are currently not within settlement areas to be built on. The 50% intensification and 50 residents and jobs/ ha scenario would add 2700 ha of land to be built on.

The population allocation for East Gwillimbury that was contemplated by York Region at the September General meeting was already well beyond what is needed to meet housing demand, and was already incompatible with the region's environmental obligations. Those population allocations represented nearly a quadrupling of the East Gwillimbury population in just thirty years, from 24,700 persons and 9,500 jobs in 2016, to 105,100 – 112,800 persons and 36,100 jobs by 2051. The wastewater servicing for future development is yet to be determined. While we know some servicing to the area will come eventually, it is premature to approve extensive and expensive greenfield growth without servicing guarantees.

Sincerely
Sylvia Bowman

Mayor Hackson and Councillors:

I am writing to express my complete and total opposition to East Gwillimbury's request to have York Region approve 100% of whitebelt lands as part of their developable area and inclusion into the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) for the Growth Forecasts to 2051. It is my understanding that whitebelt lands are primarily for agricultural and rural uses and should only be developed as a last resort, when no other developable lands exist. Of course, the development community would like these additional whitebelt lands to be made available now, but this request contravenes one of EG's **OP** objectives: *"This Plan also provides for **long term protection** of the Town's environmental areas, cultural heritage features, historic community and rural countryside"* and conflicts with the **Growth Plan's** Guiding Principles to prioritize **intensification** and support achievement of **complete communities**.

Furthermore, it is well documented that the Upper York Sewage Solutions pipeline, which provides allocation capacity to EG, is almost at capacity and it would not be upgraded until 2030, limiting and restricting development for the next 8 to 10 years. Given that EG's current urban area population is estimated at **31,000** with limited growth between today and 2030, York Region's estimated 2051 population growth to **112,800** is likely to be extended at least another 10 years to 2061 if not more. A population growth of **over 80,000** people over a 30 year period, with restrictive growth in the first 10 years, is challenging and ambitious. York Region's *"Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Need Assessment scenarios"* presentation to Regional council on September 16, declared that **"20% remaining Whitebelt not required by 2051 proposed in East Gwillimbury"**. It is the opinion of many that there is enough developable land within EG currently to accommodate the future growth for the municipality, without using 100% of the whitebelt lands available. Where's the need analysis for this request? So why would this Mayor and this Council want to use up all of the Town's remaining 20% of future developable lands within the next 30 year projection period, when currently there is plenty of developable land to accommodate future developments?

Mayor Hackson, I am sorely disappointed that you, as a current Board member of LSRCA and thus, in that role, knowing the importance of retaining agricultural lands and natural heritage features that will help mitigating greenhouse gases and provide flood protection are personally advocating for more greenfield development that is harmful to your community and Lake Simcoe's health. This is concerning and unjustified.

Council, you should recognize that the inclusion of the remaining whitebelt lands in this current Regional MCR is **unnecessary** and that they should be protected and preserved for the benefit of current and future generations beyond 2051. **Therefore, I urge that you vote against their inclusion in the MCR.**

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George Skoulikas
President, Henderson Forest Aurora Ratepayers Association (HFARA)