

Regional Council Special Meeting

October 21, 2021

Item E.8

**Additional Submissions Received in Opposition to
Expanding Existing Urban Boundaries**

To the Members of York Regional Council

Please vote “No” to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st!

Protect our food security! Too much prime farmland has already disappeared. We need to protect our last remaining farmland in order to ensure that a growing population will have enough food. Agriculture is an important contributor to our economy.

Protect our biodiversity! We have already lost too many wetlands and natural areas. By protecting natural areas we can increase our biodiversity, ensure healthier communities and ease the financial impact to municipalities.

Protect against urban sprawl and mitigate climate crisis! Urban sprawl development is a major contributor to the climate crisis in Ontario. It destroys green lands and makes even more car-dependent communities, increasing emissions from transport and construction. Urban sprawl ends up costing the taxpayer more money because of the huge areas of infrastructure which need to be constantly repaired and replaced. The effects of climate crisis are very expensive and devastating to people and businesses. Climate crisis is already bringing so much suffering to the vulnerable, poor people around the world.

According to UNICEF “Almost 1 billion children are at an extremely high risk of the impacts of climate change.”

"Impoverished families in developing countries are often the least to blame for man-made climate change. Yet they typically bear the worst impact." World Vision

Sincerely,

Valerie and David Burke, Thornhill Residents

Dear York Region Council,

Re:Vote "No" to Settlement Boundary Expansion at the October 21st Special Council Meeting

York Region is at an historical point in determining its future. It can continue with 20th Century old school thinking about development or it can start a 21st Century climate informed innovative strategy to development. Transportation, buildings and land use are among the top contributors to global warming. We will park transportation (which you as a council can influence) for another time. Preserving agriculture and natural spaces is a key strategy in addressing the climate crisis. Forests and wetlands are huge carbon sinks and assist in preserving biodiversity of both plants and animals. Agriculture obviously feeds our growing population and with a push to regenerative agriculture can also contribute to carbon sinks and healing the soil. How we create new homes and work places in York Region needs to stop looking at settlement boundary expansion and start engaging the smartest, most creative and innovative developers to deliver what York Region needs within existing urban areas and already approved greenfield space. Density, mix of uses and physical retrofits are the tools to create sustainable communities that can meet the needs of our growing population.

We recognize the province has instructed municipalities to provide detailed plans to accommodate population growth, but there are ways to address this with new and innovative thinking. York Region already has 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused but already open for development. It does not need more. Creative building in this available space, plus strategic intensification in existing communities can ensure that we are building a carbon neutral future for the next generations.

Sprawl is a major driver of climate change in Ontario. It destroys green lands and makes even more car-dependent communities, increasing emissions from transport and construction. Building within existing urban areas isn't just possible - it's desirable. People want livable, walkable communities and vibrant neighbourhoods with public transit options that work for them - not cookie-cutter sprawl.

York Region can be a world leader in sustainable community development. With the right decision-making and the right developers we can show how it can be done and must be done. It just takes courage. Vote "No" to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st

And as you engage in this new paradigm of development, here are things you should include in the design (with thanks to Walter Bauer):

Near-Net Zero Housing(\$65,000 net on the sale price - payback in 40 years). No cost to developer providing house sells. Listed in order of priority.

1. Do not install natural gas on the street -\$5,000/house
2. Heat pump: ground source (for multiple), air source (cold climate model) for individual houses: \$20,000 per house

3. (25) 275 watt solar panels 435 square feet: \$25,000.
4. 110 amp-hour (13kW-hr) battery bank primarily for heat pump night time use: \$15,000
5. Energy or Heat Recovery Ventilator: \$1,000
6. 50 Amp receptacle in garage for zero-emission vehicle: \$2,000
7. Spray foam insulation to building code levels: no additional net cost
8. Exceptionally air tight (comes with spray foam insulation)
9. Additional insulation layer on outside to minimize thermal bridging.
10. Canadian Energy Star windows and doors with an energy rating above 34e: no additional cost.
11. Outdoor clothes line: minimal cost
12. Drain-water heat recovery: \$1,000
13. Heat pump water heater net \$2,000
14. Power-over-ethernet (PoE) wiring for lighting: -\$1,000
15. Permeable driveways
16. Native plants and trees in landscaping package, no additional net cost
17. Community garden with water stand, no significant cost

Thanks for your time and consideration

Russ Coles

Hi,

I am writing to urge council members to utilize existing development zones and avoid further sprawl in York. Better building options exist such as tiny home communities and affordable walkable communities. We need to take bold steps to preserve farm lands, green spaces. Wetlands and forests.

Please make the right choice and vote no on expansion and yes on preservation.

Thanks,

Mark Goldsworthy

I can't believe Premier Ford is attempting to put up another highway, and take more land. The area is being swallowed up by people who don't give a damn about the environment, and greedily think only of profit. Please, please, don't let this happen. It would be a crime. Pave Paradise, put up a parking lot. I vote a resounding NO!

Norma Quesnel

I am a resident of neighbouring town Thornhill, but grew up in Richmond Hill. Being able to see nature and wildlife inspired me from a young age. So I humbly ask you to vote no to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

We need to keep this land safe and instead invest in existing neighbourhoods to give them what people need to not have to rely on their cars. We also need intact greenspace to meet climate goals, protect from flooding, clean the air, and for physical and mental health.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Ashley Dadoun

I Charles Aldred Has Lived in York Region For over Forty Three Years And have lived off of this Land By The Farmer's Who Had Harvested This Land For Our Food. I have never Seen any Business industry look out for anyone But Themselves And Their Share Holder's And The Greedy, This Doe's Not help Feed The Poor or give Homes To the Homeless, All it does is Fill The Pockets of greedy people care nothing for these people. "GOD" says ask and it will be given And I'm Asking In"GOD's" That These Thing Will Not Going through,Because we Need To Take Care of Our Poor And Homeless And Hungry Children,Before We fill The Pocket's Of Doug Ford's rich Friends And The Farmer's Need This Land To Grow Crop And Feed The People. SO NO IS MY ANSWER TO THIS.

Charles Wm. Aldred

Our original email was too late for inclusion in the September 21 Special Meeting. We assume the same document will be discussed at the October 21 meeting. Our opinion has not changed. On the contrary, in the interim we have had time to research the issue and are appalled that the proposed boundary change (Scenario 2) is even under consideration.

We have read the “Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios in Response to Consultation” report and hope that Council, while considering the facts and figure it contains, will bear in mind that the most important input is given at the end by “other stakeholders”.

The agricultural community is absolutely right in condemning the loss of any additional farmland. Such loss flies in the face of the concepts of food security, buying locally produced goods, and the preservation of green space.

From the Public Consultation section it is clear that, for residents, quality of life is more important than growth for growth’s sake.

Markham Council is to be commended for recommending a reduction in its planned settlement area. As shown in Table 4, only Scenarios 3 and 4 provide reasonable support for that direction. The recommended Scenario (2) uses Markham’s initiative to help justify increasing the settlement area in East Gwillimbury – this negates Markham’s efforts.

We are asking you to do what’s right for York’s environment, and for present and future residents, by choosing not to expand the Settlement Area Boundary. Please vote for Scenario 3 or 4.

Thank you,

Tony and Angela Farr

Good Morning;

My name is Louisa Santoro and I’ve been a resident of York Region since 1981.

I’m writing to Council to ask that you vote NO to any boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on Oct. 21/21.

Do you know that York Region has the best farmlands in Ontario?

Let’s protect our last remaining farmland and natural green spaces.

Sprawl destroys green lands and is a major driver of climate change.

Louisa Santoro

Please vote NO to expanding York Regions Settlement Area Boundary

Richmond Hill resident

Lou Boswell

October 16, 2021

To York Regional Council:

Expanding York Region's Settlement Area Boundary even further would be an unmitigated disaster for its forests, wetlands, open spaces and farmland, because it would commit the Region, for 30 years, to more than double the rate at which it has been bulldozing green space. Put in concrete terms this means that while York Region used about 6,400 acres between 2001 and 2019 the new plans would see it burn through roughly 25,000 more acres by 2051. It would pave some of the last non-urbanized headwaters of the Rouge and Don rivers, and push a huge volume of people & pavement into the Lake Simcoe watershed, which has absolutely no more capacity to absorb more sewage or urban runoff.

York Region has failed to consult properly. Unlike peer regions, (e.g., Hamilton, Halton) it has not consulted on a fleshed-out fixed Settlement Area Boundary option. The formal discussions it claims to have held were so poorly publicized that they went unnoticed by many of the most engaged council-watchers in York Region.

While York Region paved roughly 6,400 acres between 2001 and 2019 – that's 357 acres per year – the new plan would see the region burn through a further 25,000 acres by 2051 – that's 791.5 acres per year – more than double the past rate.

There is absolutely no land supply shortage in York Region. The proposed Settlement Area Boundary expansion would add 5,000 more acres to the roughly 20,000 of countryside York Region opened up years ago, but which has never been used.

In addition to paving some of the last unbuilt headwaters of the Rouge and Don rivers, this plan would see a huge number of people and a huge area of sprawl forced into the sensitive Lake Simcoe watershed, which simply doesn't have the capacity for more sewage or runoff. Environmental NGOs warned York and the province in a joint letter of January 19th, that there is presently no sustainable way to increase sewage capacity in Upper York Region, and that no further settlement expansion should be directed to that part of York Region. A provincial regulation actually prohibits approval of the "Upper York Sewage Solutions" proposal.

This plan betrays existing York Region residents by squandering the next 30 years of growth on more low-density sprawl. That growth is desperately needed to complete existing neighbourhoods, which have not yet developed the densities and mix of uses that are required for people to rely on active transportation. While a strong majority of York Region residents say they "simply can't get by without a car" as things stand, 80 per cent of those with an opinion (64 per cent, vs. 16 per cent who disagree) say they'd "much prefer" to live in a neighbourhood where they "didn't need to use a car to do [their] shopping, recreation, entertainment, or commutes to work or school." This plan is likely to prevent that from happening within the next three decades.

York Region is not legally obligated to extend its urban boundary, even though the province and land speculators are trying to strongarm the region into doing so. On the contrary, this plan contravenes the Provincial Policy Statement, which requires York Region to direct all of its

future growth to places where it can support public transit and can minimize land consumption and servicing costs. It will be extraordinarily difficult to achieve this in the fragmented chunks of land which this plan would see added to the Settlement Area Boundary. Right now, the land which is next to the proposed new settlement areas has low rates of public and active transportation. Building more sprawl will make the situation worse. Instead, York Region should build in the existing settlement area, especially in areas close to existing public transit.

Please act now to stop this disastrous move to build sprawl.

Sincerely,

Despina Melohe

Mayor Emmerson and Regional Councillors:

As a resident of Aurora for over twenty years, I'm urging this Regional Council to consider the enormous implications of its collective vote at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st. You have choice: to be prudent and protective of the natural heritage, farmland and clean water that are ours to enjoy but which will **always** belong to future generations **OR** you can sign away any hope of preserving these lands for the long-term when, importantly, such **preservation** of the Province's natural heritage, water and agricultural resources **remains a Key Provincial Interest** as per the Provincial Policy Statement 2020, a document that represents "**minimum standards**" and which recognizes the need for **communities that are resilient to climate change**.

You are no doubt aware there is enough suitable land available within settlement area boundaries to satisfy the projected population increases for **the next 30 years** and that **about 20,000 acres** is currently sitting unused. Therefore, I'm particularly keen to understand why some Councillors, particularly Mayor Hackson, are energetically seeking **at this time** to acquire whitebelt lands for future development. Why now? Where's the data that shows a definitive reason to secure natural areas for future development when the need is not even proven to exist? Based on what I've read, **settlement area boundary expansion should be zero for the next ten years**. In the meantime, this would allow for essential Environmental Assessments to be completed and the effects of such expansion to be thus known and properly considered. As it stands, any expansion at this time would contravene the **Guiding Principles of the Growth Plan**, particularly those 'supporting the achievement of complete communities', 'protecting and enhancing natural heritage, hydrologic and landform systems, features and functions' and 'supporting and enhancing the long-term viability and productivity of agriculture'.

In short, **I'm urging you to say 'no' to the expansion of any settlement boundary**. The future of our remaining natural areas and farmland should not, in my opinion, be decided by the current Regional Council. This would represent a grave disservice to a future Regional Council whose hands you will tie and whose role it **should** be to make an informed decision as and when the needs and priorities of York Region in 2051 are better known.

Thank you for considering my thoughts on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wendy Kenyon

Dear Members of York Regional Council,

Please vote "NO" to any settlement boundary expansion at the October 21st, 2021 Special Council Meeting.

Recently I drove to Innisfil and saw a lot of farmland disappearing to make space for sprawling houses. A very sad sight!

We need to protect our farmland and natural areas for future generations! And we need to mitigate Climate Change. Urban Sprawl is not sustainable!
And building more highways to support Urban Sprawl is definitely the wrong direction for Climate Change!

During this pandemic we are having a shortage of everything and we can not afford to lose more farmland and lose our local food sources.

Please, think of our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren's future!

Thank you for considering a more sustainable and livable York Region!

Sincerely,

Elisabeth & Anthony Tan

Dear York Region Council Members,

My family and I have resided in Richmond Hill for over thirty years. I am writing to ask the council to vote "No" to any settlement boundary expansion at the York Region special council meeting on Thursday October 21, 2021. Voting "No" is necessary in order to have any chance of achieving a sustainable low-carbon community by 2051 in order to meet Canada's carbon emissions targets.

The expansion would not only be irresponsibly destructive. It is also totally unnecessary since York Region already has roughly 20,000 acres of green field land open to development but currently unused.

As a resident of York Region I want a livable community with walking, biking and public transit options.

Voting "No" will help to avoid sprawl, minimizing land consumption and servicing costs, protecting our last available farmland and natural areas.

Regards,

Kathleen Wong

To whom it may concern,

I am a resident of Markham and I am writing to ask York regional council to vote "No" to any settlement boundary expansions and commit to a 60% intensification target.

The plan presented at the September special meeting would abandon any credible pretense of trying to achieve sustainable, low-carbon communities by 2051—as we'll need to do to meet Canada's carbon emissions targets. Settlement area expansion is a major driver of climate change in Ontario, because of more car-dependent communities, increasing emissions from transport and less-efficient low-density housing. Rather than ratcheting down the rate of climate-killing sprawl, it would more than double the rate at which the York Region countryside is destroyed.

This sprawl is also counter to what most residents want: walkable cities. Transit in the region is already inadequate, forcing many to rely on a car, and I cannot see the impetus to improve it under this proposal. The same-old thinking of commuter culture applies; which is counter to the aspirational 15-minute city (<https://www.15minutecity.com/>) that many residents would actual enjoy, and is how many of the "best" cities in the world operate.

Best regard,

Frank Vignando, P.Eng.

To all who can make a difference,

Hello,

I am writing to ask that you please vote no to Settlement Boundary Expansion at this next special council meeting on Oct. 21st.

My husband and I moved here to Sutton West, two and a half years ago, from Toronto where we met. We both grew up in small towns, he in Quebec and myself in British Columbia. It was our dream to find a suitable small town home and live again surrounded by green space, and a slower pace of life. Particularly since we became grandparents, to have a place for the kids to come and visit away from city life.

I'm sure you are aware of all the key points as to why this proposed Settlement Boundary Expansion is not only an undesirable proposal, but also quite shocking! So much of our existing green lands and farm lands have already disappeared, and in its place we see a sprawl of car-dependent bedroom communities, increasing emissions contributing hugely to climate change. I understand that York Region has approximately 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused, but already open to development. Wow! Where does it stop! And what possible sense does it make?

Why not focus the next 30 years of new homes and workplaces in the York region to complete the region's existing neighborhoods. Give them the density and mix of uses, physical retrofits they need to make people less dependent, not more dependent on cars.

Why not work hard to preserve a way of life that is truly community driven, that offers what people really want. Livable, walkable, communities. Vibrant neighborhoods with public transit options that work for them. Not soulless cookie cutter sprawl!

Most importantly, I ask that you work to protect our last remaining farmland and natural areas for future generations. Our grandchildren and their children's children.

Thank you for reading my letter to you. Please do what you can to stop this Urban sprawl now!

With hope,
Lee Whalen

Council / Committee meeting and date: 10/21/2021

Agenda item number: intensification review

Subject: Mc Review Intensification

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation: I am not in agreement with data presented to the public about development needs in York Region.

Linda Wells

October 21, 2021

‘Opposition to Expanding Existing Urban Boundaries’

To Mayors and Regional Councillors,

As a fourth-generation resident of York Region, I treasure our small and large towns, our villages and hamlets, and our spectacular countryside. But I worry about the future for the next generation.

It astounds me why the Region of York would consider handing over contested countryside / “white belt” areas to sprawl developers and land speculators when the region already has the room to develop within its existing urban boundaries. I urge you to vote “No” today to any settlement boundary expansion.

New, low-density urban sprawl is unsustainable, environmentally reckless, and ultimately costly to existing and future taxpayers. York Region needs to complete the region’s existing neighbourhoods and aim for 60 to 80 per cent intensification. Continuing to build in existing neighbourhoods would provide greater density of workplaces and housing, more affordable housing, and access to public and active transportation — while protecting and preserving our farmlands, wetlands, forests, open spaces, and water-sheds.

Expansion of existing urban boundaries would exacerbate the climate crisis. How can we possibly achieve sustainable, low-carbon communities going forward when our governments are stuck in 1950s thinking — destroying countryside for the sake of distant, car-dependent, highway-dependent suburbs.

The decisions you make today will determine what our future looks like. Please listen to your residents, not developers. We want livable, affordable, walkable communities and vibrant neighbourhoods; and that can be achieved within existing urban boundaries. More than ever we value access to open spaces, forests and trails, clean lakes and rivers, and wildlife; and we can protect that if we keep the existing settlement boundaries. Please vote “No” to any settlement boundary expansion.

Thank you.

Catherine Wellesley
Newmarket, Ontario

Dear Regional Clerk,

This is a plea for you to vote NO to any settlement boundary expansion on October 21st – or any other date.

I am a grandmother, and a resident of York Region for the past 30 years.

Our farmland and remaining natural areas are precious resources that should not be squandered with more development. Of course, new houses and places of employment are needed, but there is room for that within existing neighbourhoods.

Building within existing neighbourhoods also helps the fight against climate change, by lessening the need for transportation. This is healthier for all of us.

Please, don't cave to the developers. Consider ordinary people, like me and my children and grandchildren – maybe like you and your children and grandchildren – and vote accordingly.

Sincerely,

Christine Tansley.

Hello Mayors and Councillors,

My name is John Willson, I live in York Region and have done so for most of my life. My parents and children live in York Region as well. I am writing to ask you to vote "No" to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

York Region's healthy mix of urban, rural and wild spaces is the envy of municipalities all around the world. We can only build or pave over green spaces once before they're gone. I want to preserve our last remaining farmland and natural areas for our benefit and enjoyment today, and for future generations.

We should use the next 30 years of expected growth to fill in the region's existing neighborhoods. Dense urban areas with good mixed use are healthier in every way. When people live close to where they work, learn, shop and play, they can walk more and drive less, which means a low-carbon community and happier healthier citizens. Given the steeply rising costs of emitting greenhouse gases, providing services and maintaining infrastructure, efficiency should be of primary concern when planning the future shape of our region.

York Region has roughly 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused but already open to development. There is no need for us to open up more, despite what profit-driven developers might tell you.

People want livable, walkable communities and vibrant mixed-use neighbourhoods with public transit options that work for them -- not cookie-cutter sprawl. Building within existing urban boundaries is the preferred way to go.

Thank-you for listening to your constituents and considering what is best for the region.
-John

John Willson, P.Eng.

To York Region Council ;

Please take a serious second look at the planner's plan to allow new development on rural lands. The plan would commit York Region to more than double the rate at which countryside is destroyed, paving over some of the last non-urbanized headwaters of the Rouge and Don Rivers. This is particularly important as the headwaters must be allowed to remain open and free of any development. Paving over also means pushing a huge volume of development into the sensitive Lake Simcoe watershed. (as noted by Claire Malcomson who raised concerns about the Lake's ability to accommodate sewage from the new development)

Putting up single housing is the worst possible intensification rate and the most environmentally damaging. What we need is more rental and low income housing for the people who work in Aurora/Newmarket. Possibly the rest of the Region needs this too but I am not familiar with them. Newmarket has proposed such housing and I hope this will go forward quickly.

There is plenty of room within the urban settlement boundaries for development growth. This is where development should and must take place! Please turn the planner's proposal down and vote for new plans that confine development to the urban settlement boundaries.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Zajac,

Regarding: Vote “NO” to Settlement Boundary Expansion at the October 21st Special Council Meeting.

Dear Members of York Regional Council,

My name is Angela Grella and I own residential property in both the City of Vaughan (Ward 3) and the City of Markham (Ward 1).

Today, I am asking York Region Council to pause and refrain from making any decisions or endorsements regarding the ongoing Municipal Comprehensive Review until the Auditor General’s value for money audit on the province’s land-use planning and growth planning process is completed and released by the end of 2021.

There has been a lot of debate recently regarding urban boundary expansion. Some say that sprawl is what we do. Some, like the current Mayor of Vaughan, say that it is disingenuous for people who live on “sprawled” land, like I do, to be against future sprawl. I say to these people. What is the definition of insanity? To do the same thing over and over again expecting a different result each time. The mistakes of the past do not mean that they need to be repeated. To open up a further 5000 acres of York Region’s last remaining prime farmland and natural areas to be paved over with giant sprawl developments is not a reasonable increase to our urban boundary. That would be 5000 acres that will never again be able to grow food to feed our residents. The province is being greedy and forcing York Region to unlock 30 years of land. We must protect our last remaining farmland and natural areas for future generations. The environmental impact of expansion would be devastating. Lost prime farmland, food trucked in from elsewhere, longer commutes into the city causing pollution. Sprawl is not a sustainable solution to our population growth.. The only benefits are to land developers, trade unions, and city councillors who would gain developers’ favour by voting in favour of settlement expansion.

The expansion of York Region’s settlement area boundary would mean new infrastructure costs-and single family homes would not generate as much property tax as medium density housing and mixed use development within the current boundaries. There is room for growth within York Region’s existing settlements. Taxpayers simply cannot afford to continue subsidizing sprawl.

Expansion into the Whitebelt and Greenbelt is not the solution to affordable housing. Does the Ford government honestly believe that we are so gullible to believe that more single family homes built on farmland will solve the issue of home affordability for Ontarians? Developers are in the business of making money and will charge the market rate for a new home based on current market value/demand.

The major barriers to accommodating all projected growth within an existing neighbourhood and built-up areas are counterproductive municipal land use policies preventing the missing middle from being added to an existing neighbourhood. It is certainly within the jurisdiction of each municipality to change their own zoning to make gentle intensification within existing neighbourhoods both legal and economically feasible and consequently ensure that housing demands may be met without settlement area boundary expansion. Housing choices are not only single family homes or tall towers. Municipalities need to address the issue of supply and affordability by amending existing zoning to permit the building of duplexes, triplexes, and low-rise walk up apartments on similarly sized footprint as a new single family dwelling. And in order to preserve the existing neighbourhood setting or the so-called “neighbourhood character”, the municipality could implement urban design guidelines that ensure the existing scale, building typology, and visual cohesiveness of our residential streetscapes are retained. Infill adds to our tax base whereas new sprawl infrastructure costs the taxpayer.

Another major barrier to accommodating all projected growth within an existing neighbourhood and built-up areas is the current single use infrastructure. The majority of York Region’s intersections are lacking in mixed use development and have underutilized space. Many regional intersections have single story retail plazas that do not support transit. Why were no residential units built above these retail/commercial units to provide housing options? These areas need to be intensified with mixed use

projects that bring together where people work, live, shop, learn and play. Municipalities need to embrace mixed use development and zoning within our current settlement boundaries.

In closing, I am opposed to expanding York Region's settlement area boundary into farmland and the Greenbelt, and ask the York Region Council to vote no to any settlement boundary expansion. We do not need to expand the boundary to accommodate growth. York Region has roughly 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused but already open to development.

My fellow York Region citizens and I need visionary, ambitious members of the regional council who will not repeat the same "insane" solutions to growth that we have followed for so many generations. Regional councillors need to demonstrate strong environmental leadership and adhere to York Region's Greening strategy. Let the great minds in our municipal and regional planning departments explore other innovative urban planning options to accommodate growth within our existing settlement area boundary. Options include the transit communities being proposed around the Yonge North Subway Extension. Another option is a transit community that needs to be built around the new GO train station near Keele and Rutherford.

Greed is not an option. Vote "No" to expanding York Region's settlement area boundary. Please protect our last remaining farmland and natural areas for future generations.

The City of Hamilton's mayor, Fred Eisenberger said it best. "It would be irresponsible not to look at a frozen boundary as the city plans to accommodate growth projections over 30 years. The focus must be in the best long term interest of the city or region. A no expansion option is not a no development option."

Sincerely,
Angela Grella

Dear Regional Clerk and Other Officials Concerned:

I have been a resident farmland owner for nearly 30 years in King Township. My husband and I raised our 3 sons here, and I am now a grandparent to 8 grandchildren who visit my farm and home regularly. One of my sons and his family have been attempting to buy farmland here themselves and hope to be living here in the near future.

Please so not put more pavement on this beautiful land of King Township, please preserve existing wetlands, farmlands and natural areas for future generations; for the balance of nature that makes this area a wonderful place for both people and creatures and wild growth plant diversity to live.

The miracle of this environment so close to the urban sprawl of Vaughan and areas south is precious for all of us here now, breathing our air, and drinking our groundwater.

Let's keep it that way.

Vote NO to settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

York Region Council - please use York Region's existing neighbourhoods for new homes and workplaces by increasing density, mix of uses, and physical retrofits needed in order to make people less dependent on cars. STOP SPRAWL.

York Region already has 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused but already open to development.

Keep living costs down for citizens by building affordable housing within existing towns and cities in York Region.

By building housing and businesses within existing urban areas, York Region can grow in a way that is safe and sustainable, and gives people the chance to live in vibrant, affordable and walkable communities.

Please feel free to contact me by email or telephone, xxxxxxxx

Beverley Richardson

To Whom It May Concern:

I am a resident of Markham who was shocked and devastated to hear that York Region Councillors are considering the option of developing remaining farmland in Markham in a 30 year urban sprawl plan.

I do not need to inform York Region Councillors of the municipal as well as provincial, federal and world wide targets of net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Your very own York Region Climate Change Action Plan written in March of 2020 clearly delineates this goal repeatedly. How does the approval of car dependent urban developments meet the goal of net zero GHG emissions? This plan also states in Action 10: "Increase use of more sustainable modes of transportation, such as walking, cycling and transit" and in Action 11: "Promote a sustainable and resilient food system". Neither of these crucial actions, along with many others in York Region's own plan, will be manifested with the approval of big sprawl builds which will decimate precious farmland and the potential of our future generations to have clean, healthy living conditions.

Please consider future generations of York Region and DO NOT vote in favour of urban sprawl and paving over farmland.

Sincerely,
Colleen Frankovich

My name is Mary Asselstine and I am a parent, grandparent and active community volunteer living in Schomberg.

I am asking that Council vote "No" to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

Our remaining farmlands and natural areas are precious and provide local food resources, clean air and water, recreational and health opportunities and support habitat diversity. Protection of these areas and consolidation of residential growth are critical for the fight against climate change. Instead of expanding settlement boundaries, promote increases in density, encourage a mix of uses, and support physical retrofits in order to make people less dependent on cars. York Region has roughly 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused and open to development. We don't need more.

I trust you will do the right thing to ensure a healthy future.

Regards

Mary Asselstine

Schomberg

Dear YR Councillors

We are writing as a York Region citizens, long concerned about environmental issues, especially climate change. We have children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and grandnephews and grandnieces living in York Region. In this case we are writing to you about urban and suburban sprawl developments.

When we turn farmland and other green space into housing, we lose much that is irreplaceable, and gain nothing that cannot be had in other ways.

If York Region approves more sprawl development, we will lose farms that are close to where people live at a time when local food is increasingly necessary. Climate change is making food production in many parts of the world more difficult, even in Canada, so relying on imported food makes our well-being more precarious. Farmland and green spaces in York Region are also our main carbon sink, our main way of fighting climate change. And we cannot simply build more farmland, fields and forests later.

At the same time, there are many alternatives to sprawl development. Developers like building on farmlands because it's cheap and easy – the land has been largely cleared and levelled for them. But that doesn't make it good for the rest of us. It is much better to build a bit higher and a bit closer, and build for mixed uses – live, work and play. We are not talking about highrise tower blocks – we dislike them as much as anyone does. The so-called “missing middle”, buildings three to five storeys high, can provide affordable, attractive housing with a much lower environmental footprint than sprawl tract houses. At the same time, the denser housing will allow more people to live closer to work, entertainment and friends; and to walk, cycle and use transit to get there.

We need housing and business places, but we need our green spaces and farms much more. There are no reasonable compromises.

On October 21, please vote to preserve our forests, fields, wetlands and farms, and vote “NO” to expanding our settlement boundary.

Sincerely,

David Kempton and Peggy Stevens, Newmarket

Clerk of York Region,

For the sake of our lives and well-being, council MUST choose to protect completely the 50000 acres of rural land to be voted on this Oct. 21. Councilors must vote against development.

Over 85 percent of Ontarians insist that we need to protect our greenspace and we are increasingly committed to its protection. Here are the crucial reasons why.

1. Science has proven that green space improves physical health and mental/emotional well being.
2. Green space cleanses the air and helps prevent air pollution.
3. The land in question provides fresh food close at hand especially when transportation costs are high and many countries are suffering drought
- 4 Its wetlands filter the water and keep an adequate supply with more to spare.
5. This land absorbs carbon which will help slow down climate breakdown. We need to do all we can for our survival on this planet.
6. We must avoid sprawl and build within the strict urban boundaries where the services are already in place. This will make it worthwhile to increase up- to- date modern sustainable public transport like the advanced communities of the world.
7. Greenspace protects diversity of nature which benefits us in complex ways.
- 8 Protecting this land from building will keep the rivers and lakes clean-- especially Lake Simcoe which cannot sustain more concrete and waste around and in it.

And so on...

.So this land must be protected. It is a human right to survive.

Anne Dalla Rosa

My family and I have lived in York Region for more than 30 years. I am a longtime resident of Richmond Hill and have worked in Markham for most of my career. My family and I feel that no issue will have a greater impact on the future of York Region than the proposed expansion of its settlement boundary. Once the process begins, the deleterious effect of such an expansion will be felt throughout the region. For this reason, I ask the council to vote “No” to any settlement boundary expansion and to refuse East Gwillimbury’s request to open up all its remaining land outside the Greenbelt to development,

Our region needs to commit to accommodate 60% or more of population and job growth within existing built-up areas with a further commitment to develop green field land within the existing settlement area.

The current plan presented at the September special meeting abandons any credible pretence of attempting to achieve sustainable, low-carbon communities by 2050. This plan would more than double the rate at which the York Region countryside is destroyed.

Expanding the settlement area boundary will not create more housing, because the housing crunch in the GTA—and York Region—is not the product of any land shortage. York Region already has roughly 20,000 acres of green field land already open to development but sitting unused.

If our York Region Councillors vote for settlement Area Boundary expansion - particularly in East Gwillimbury, the residents of Newmarket, Markham Vaughan and Stouffville will be subjected to decades more traffic gridlock and frustration.

They’d be locking in car-dependent low densities both in the new developments, but also in the existing neighborhoods that would be deprived of the extra people and workplaces they need to let residents rely less on cars.

As residents of this region, we want livable, walkable communities and neighbourhoods with Functional public transit options that work.

The proposed Settlement Area Boundary expansion would add 5000 acres to the already unacceptable amount of countryside

The proposed Settlement Area Boundary expansion would add 5000 acres to the already unacceptable amount of countryside in York Region open to sprawl. We must protect our last remaining farmland and natural areas for future generations.

λ In a poll conducted this April by Innovative Research Group, a strong majority of York Region residents said they “simply can’t get by without a car” as things stand, 80% of those with an opinion (64%, vs. 16% who disagree) said they’d “much prefer” to live in a neighborhood where they “didn’t need to use a car to do [their] shopping, recreation, entertainment, or commutes to work or school.” 69% of existing York region residents with an opinion either way said the “GTA should accommodate new workplaces and homes in existing neighbourhoods and make

People must be able to live in neighbourhoods with easy access to public transit, not just cars. York Region council must take action accommodate projected demand for single family, semi-detached and missing middle housing in existing neighborhoods, rather than green field development.

78% of current residents in York Region said that they would support adding more fully and semi-detached homes to their own neighborhoods (vs. 7% who opposed it). 68% supported adding more homes generally “in buildings of 1 to 3 storeys” to their neighborhoods (vs. 13% opposed). Even for “homes in buildings of 4 to 6 storeys”, supporters outnumbered opponents by a margin of 19%.

Also, this plan is not in line with the Provincial Policy Statement, which requires York Region to direct all of its future growth to places where it can support public transit investments, and can minimize land consumption and servicing costs.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully the council to vote “No” to expanding York Region’s Settlement Area boundary.

Anne Lacey

To: York Region Council

Re: Projected Growth and Land Needs Assessment, Special Meeting, October 21, 2021

I am a resident of King Township and an active community member with a keen interest in wise planning for the long term future which ensures protection of prime farmland and York Region's rich natural heritage systems. I am recognizing the high significance of the decisions before you regarding forecast growth, building complete communities and making efficient use of the land and infrastructure within our existing settlement areas.

I am writing to ask York Region Council that Council vote "No" to settlement boundary expansion in any of the nine local municipalities at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

Our remaining farmland and natural areas are very valuable for long term food security, clean air and water, recreational and health opportunities and support for bio-diversity. Instead of expanding urban boundaries, set an intensification rate of 60% or higher. Markham and Newmarket have already indicated a strong goal in achieving higher intensification.

In addition, establish densities of 80 persons/jobs per ha or higher for greenfield lands within the urban boundary in order to establish complete, vibrant communities with a range of forms of housing to meet a great variety of needs. In addition higher densities will make more cost effective use of existing infrastructure – water and wastewater services and municipal transit.

Turning around the legacy of car-dependent sprawl to a plan for complete communities, abundant preserved farmland and a flourishing natural environment will support health and well-being long into future. Thank you for this opportunity.

Sincerely, J. Bruce Craig

I am vehemently opposed to expanding the urban areas in York Region. I understand expanding development in the existing urban areas taking advantage of public transit instead of adding to the urban sprawl. Expanding further outward just doesn't make sense. It is disappointing to see councillors at the municipal level as well as the regional level ignoring constituents wishes. Has it been forgotten who they represent. It shouldn't be to pander to the developers as we see so much of these days.

We need to protect the green spaces, farmland and of course the environment.

Long time York Region Resident.

D. Harris

Dear Regional Council

I am a York Region resident and I urge and implore you to vote “No” to any settlement boundary expansion at the Special Council Meeting on October 21st.

From what I have read, there appears to be 20,000 acres of land currently available for development that hasn't been developed. Why, then, open another 5000 acres up for development?

It doesn't make sense. Even the staff memo by Basso, Mahoney, et al. suggests that bringing the 5000 acres of whitebelt into the urban development mix would be a mistake, leading to potential legal liability, and a likely inability to meet the provincial intensification targets. The report also implies that intensifying above the 50% target would be better, as it will save greenspace and bring our growth in line with provincial and regional infrastructure, leading to lower costs going forward and giving Council more options and agility as time moves forward.

This report does point to the major landowner interest in the area as a key driver of the decision you are facing on October 21. It certainly feels like this landowner interest is the real reason for the debate over opening up land for development. Surely their holdings in the white belt would increase in value significantly if the land was allowed to be readily developed.

Regardless of the motivation, York Region recently published its Housing Solutions and Climate Change Action plan. Opening up this additional land for development will go against both these plans. On climate, as many other writers have pointed out, less green space will lead to more car use, higher emissions, worse heat islands and harder to control floods. Intensifying development would respectively, reverse those costs on a per person basis.

However, I want to focus on how this plan will harm housing in York Region. The Housing plan's first goal is to increase the rental supply, and particularly the supply of affordable rentals. The homes that will be built in the white belt will not contribute to this goal and will likely work against it. The reason for this is that any homes built in the white belt will not be affordable. Because they will generally not be built close to services, only car owners will be able to access them. As a result, they will not need to be built densely, and so they will mostly be built as luxury homes. They will be too expensive, and there will be too few of them, to impact the price at the bottom end of the housing market. Furthermore, if these homes are rented out, they will most likely be rented for top dollar, potentially creating additional pressure on neighbouring landlords to demand more from their tenants, leading to rent inflation and predatory evictions. Truly affordable homes have to be close to amenities, and serviced. What is needed is vision to increase density in our existing communities so that they can be spaces to live, work and play for York residents.

It's true that people like space, but I live in Newmarket and had to buy a house that was bigger than my overall needs because I could not find a home that allowed me to have a home office and space for my aging parents without getting a home larger than 3000 sq ft. I am exceedingly fortunate to have the household income and the family help necessary to afford my home, but I know low income people have ailing parents that they want to live with too. We need government and developers to look at our current and projected demographics and - squaring that information with the reality of climate change - develop our communities into what we need, not just what affluent people want.

One last point, when you think of those parts of the world that inspire you, my guess is that they have a sense of place - either they are big thriving cities, charming towns or bucolic country sides. The type of development that I fear will happen as our urban sprawl continues are cookie cutter 2-3 storey subdivisions and big box plazas. No one is inspired by a parking lot. We should build and nurture the big city Markhams, quaint Mount Alberts, and bucolic Kettleby's of our Region for our children and our future prosperity.

Thank you for your attention. Vote no on October 21.

Sincerely,
Lee Webb

Hello there,

Quick note to say we need more nature and less pavement.

It boggles the mind that in the midst of a climate catastrophe, York Region is thinking about reducing precious greenspace.

Please don't. Say "No" to sprawl.

Sincerely,

David Love

To Richmond Hill council,

As a life long resident of York Region I am vehemently opposed to expanding the urban areas in York Region. I understand expanding development in the existing urban areas taking advantage of public transit instead of adding to the urban sprawl. Expanding further outward just doesn't make sense. It is disappointing to see councillors at the municipal level as well as the regional level ignoring constituents wishes and pandering to wealthy developers.

We need to protect our green spaces and farmland for the future. Please make the right call and be on the right side of history.

Pauline Turko

Dear Regional Council,

I am writing to ask you to please vote NO to further urban sprawl in our region.

I have been a resident of Newmarket since 1980. During that time, I have witnessed the growth of the town and York Region and the effects that growth has had, both positive and negative. Certainly population growth has brought more amenities to our town, but also all the results of urban sprawl.

Have we not reached a tipping point? Does the 1950's solution of more subdivisions, more malls, more of the same fast food joints and big box stores repeated ad infinitum apply in 2020? We have learned so much about climate change and environmental problems, about the importance of local food supplies and locally-run businesses, as well as public transit and walkable distances to services.

Please vote NO to this outdated fix for population growth, and encourage the study and implementation of more creative and environmental solutions to balancing the needs of the people, the creatures and the land that sustains us all.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Church

I object to overdevelopment in York Region.

Hope you reconsider.

Thanks

Teresa Ramcharan

We must protect our remaining farmland and green spaces from any further expansion.

I am a parent, grandparent, and retired teacher. I am writing today because I am deeply concerned about the ill-considered and rapid expansion of urban boundaries in York Region which will result in further loss of green spaces, cause more greenhouse gas pollution, more traffic, more roads such as the proposed Highway 413, which will impact woodlands, farming and rural communities, thus leading to even greater pollution and threatening our water sources.

Urban sprawl will move us farther away from addressing the crisis of climate change caused by greenhouse gas emissions at a critical time in our history. We have been warned by all credible environmental scientists and most recently by the IPCC, that we have a short window of time to reduce carbon emissions in order to avert a climate breakdown.

Rather than expanding boundaries York Region Council should mandate using the existing 20,000 acres of greenfield space that are already open to development, to increase density and mixed use of space and develop rapid transit which will make people less dependent on cars. Such development within existing boundaries would lead to better and more livable communities, rather than encouraging or allowing monster homes to be built that accommodate few at the expense of the environment and the health of the many.

It must be remembered that council members and all politicians were not elected to cater to the desires of developers, but rather to protect the well-being of their constituents.

Thank you for your time,

Frances Bazos, Newmarket, Ontario

Dear York Regional Council,

The IPCC report on climate came out only a few months ago, telling many of us what we already know, and what's striking is how this reiteration of the intensification of ongoing and impending climate change impacts altered nothing as regards the Ontario provincial and municipal governments plans for urban development.

Additionally, as the report was published, wildfires blaze across Canada, and other places, and elsewhere, droughts intensified, as did heat waves. The science on climate change is (and has always been) undeniable, but if anyone still has doubts, take a look at what's happening, check out your air quality index for the day. Is it a bit smokey, perhaps? It's right there in front of us. We are living this right now.

Astonishingly, there was no sudden government responsiveness to these realities. The IPCC report launched and nothing changed. For example, the plan for the Bradford Bypass is to continue exactly as is, unrevised, with no new environmental assessments intended before construction begins, and the only environmental assessment on hand being from 1997. A promise of 'nature trails' nearby does nothing to remedy the environmental impact of this proposed highway. Nothing has changed.

The bypass continues to be rightly called into question by local environmental groups and concerned citizens who want clarification on the impact of this development decision, wondering if this is truly the best way to manage perceived growth of communities, given our ecological pressures and climate realities in the year 2021.

This Growth plan is decidedly car and concrete centric, imprinting itself on valuable wetlands. So it is indeed necessary to ask how well, if at all, does this design centre the health of our species, the wellness of our land, air and water systems, and the priority of reducing our carbon emissions? If this plan cannot be proven ecological advantageous, if its ecological consequences cannot be adequately addressed, how good is this plan, or any similar plan, for us, truly?

The onus is on our community leaders, both political and business, to propose plans that better align with ecological truths. Our community framework significantly needs to shift and widen to recognize that decisions made within human drawn municipal and provincial borders reach beyond those borders, because they impact our ecologies, which know no bounds, impacting our collective air and water and food building capacity, and our ability to exist on a planet with a liveable temperature.

I'm not sure why developers and political leaders keep avoiding this. We are all living here, in the climate change era, coexisting with wildfires. If you keep perpetuating a business and community planning model that keeps contributing to climate change, and downplays our broad based ecological health, what will that do to your profit and quality of life, eventually?

Wouldn't it make more sense to change this mode of operation, and choose, for example, to work with environmental groups, rather than always opposing or obstructing their messaging. We need business and planning models to change so it stops contributing to these negative ecological impacts. This is possible. There are other ways.

And so we can start with a serious rethink of the intended development plans in Simcoe and other municipalities. All leaders need to check their presumption that what happens to the ecology in Innisfil or Bradford or Oshawa or Toronto doesn't need to matter to the rest of us. In the year 2021, there can be no denying our ecological interconnection: it matters very much, indeed.

Sincerely,
Julie Johnson

I am a long-time resident of York Region (since 1994) and have watched as our towns have grown exponentially, as a result of farm fields and open spaces being bulldozed for residential development. I am told that York Region has roughly 20,000 acres of greenfield land sitting unused but already open to development. Urban sprawl, compared to building affordable housing within existing urban areas, drives up housing costs for municipalities, while being a major driver of climate change. Protecting our Region for future generations by reducing our carbon footprint should be at the forefront of all decision-making, so please vote NO to Settlement Boundary expansions.

Thank you, Andrea Scott-Pearse

Hello,

I'm a light manufacturing worker who commutes to and from Etobicoke five days a week by public transit. In my spare time, I write fantasy novels; I have six available online. But I'm not here to discuss fiction today.

Sprawl is a very real concern of mine, having grown up in this area and already seen so much greenspace disappear. It was bound to happen given the population explosion that occurred here; I think the house I'm living in right now can't be more than 12 to 15 years old. However, I believe there are ways to expand, house people, and make room for their public and consumer needs without adding another 5000 acres of green lands to development plans. Especially when roughly 20,000 acres of greenfield lands are already sitting unused yet open to development.

One of the best improvements I have seen in the past couple decades did involve development: it was the addition of that express bus lane to Highway 7, the improvement to public transit that it represents. And that reflects the aspects of my neighbourhood that I do appreciate: walkability, quick access to public transit, and decent planning; my niece can walk to school a lot more easily than I could when I lived in an older development that lacked sidewalks, where everything I needed to access from school to shops seemed spread out. I would prefer the plan going forward to focus on tinkering with the density, mixed use, and physical retrofits required in existing communities to help them be walkable, have great working public transit, and be less super-car-dependent. I'm concerned that the type of communities that arise from rapid sprawl tend to induce demand for more cars and driving in the short term, then traffic volume gets worse, and this accelerates the demand for more highways to handle more cars; more greenspace cleared out. Some form of expansion will realistically happen in a growing community, but I would like to believe there's a smart and careful way to do it with the lands already open to development if necessary.

And while climate change is a global problem that will take a global effort to mitigate, finding ways to preserve our green space seems like something that can be done at the local level to stop things from getting worse faster.

Have a great day

Dylan Madeley, Independent Novelist

Dear Regional Council,

I am writing to ask you to please vote NO to further urban sprawl in our region.

I have been a resident of Newmarket since 2018. During that time, I have witnessed the growth of the town and York Region and the effects that growth has had, both positive and negative. Certainly population growth has brought more amenities to our town, but also all the results of urban sprawl.

Have we not reached a tipping point? Does the 1950's solution of more subdivisions, more malls, more of the same fast food joints and big box stores repeated ad infinitum apply in 2021? We have learned so much about climate change and environmental problems, about the importance of local food supplies and locally-run businesses, as well as public transit and walkable distances to services.

Please vote NO to this outdated fix for population growth, and encourage the study and implementation of more creative and environmental solutions to balancing the needs of the people, the creatures and the land that sustains us all.

Sincerely,
Mykola Buryeyev

Chair Wayne Emmerson and members of council,

The purpose of my deputation is to register my opposition to any further expansion of the settlement area. Further expansion of the kind proposed would only lead to more sprawl, and would put at risk headwaters of the Rouge and Don rivers. Growth in population should be directed to urban areas that can support public and active transportation. We need density, not sprawl. Our limited farmland and greenspaces must be protected.

Teresa Porter

My name is Colin Huebert and I am a resident of York Region. I am submitting this deputation to express my support of the York Regional Council considering options for future development that don't involve expanding into rural lands

(<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/york-region-development-environment-groups-resident-concerns-1.6178642>).

I would like to reiterate points made by Phil Pothén from Environmental Defence:

- York Region has failed to consult properly. Unlike peer regions, (e.g., Hamilton, Halton) it has not consulted on a fleshed-out fixed Settlement Area Boundary option. The formal discussions it claims to have held were so poorly publicized that they went unnoticed by many of the most engaged council-watchers in York Region.
- While York Region paved roughly 6,400 acres between 2001 and 2019 – that's 357 acres per year – the new plan would see the region burn through a further 25,000 acres by 2051 – that's 791.5 acres per year – more than double the past rate.
- There is absolutely no land supply shortage in York Region. The proposed Settlement Area Boundary expansion would add 5,000 more acres to the roughly 20,000 of countryside York Region opened up years ago, but which has never been used.
- In addition to paving some of the last unbuilt headwaters of the Rouge and Don rivers, this plan would see a huge number of people and a huge area of sprawl forced into the sensitive Lake Simcoe watershed, which simply doesn't have the capacity for more sewage or runoff. Environmental NGOs warned York and the province in a joint letter of January 19th, that there is presently no sustainable way to increase sewage capacity in Upper York Region, and that no further settlement expansion should be directed to that part of York Region. A provincial regulation actually prohibits approval of the "Upper York Sewage Solutions" proposal.
- This plan betrays existing York Region residents by squandering the next 30 years of growth on more low-density sprawl. That growth is desperately needed to complete existing neighbourhoods, which have not yet developed the densities and mix of uses that are required for people to rely on active transportation. While a strong majority of York Region residents say they "simply can't get by without a car" as things stand, 80 per cent of those with an opinion (64 per cent, vs. 16 per cent who disagree) say they'd "much prefer" to live in a neighbourhood where they "didn't need to use a car to do [their] shopping, recreation, entertainment, or commutes to work or school." This plan is likely to prevent that from happening within the next three decades.
- York Region is not legally obligated to extend its urban boundary, even though the province and land speculators are trying to strongarm the region into doing so. On the contrary, this plan contravenes the Provincial Policy Statement, which requires York Region to direct all of its future growth to places where it can support public transit and can minimize land consumption and servicing costs. It will be extraordinarily difficult to achieve this in the fragmented chunks of land which this plan would see added to the Settlement Area Boundary. Right now, the land which is next to the proposed new settlement areas has low rates of public and active transportation. Building more sprawl

will make the situation worse. Instead, York Region should build in the existing settlement area, especially in areas close to existing public transit.

I strongly encourage York Region Council to follow actions taken by other engaged municipalities (Hamilton / Halton) by increasing public consultation on this matter, and to fully investigate a zero sprawl option before moving forward. There is no reason to rush such a crucial decision, which will have a profound and long lasting effect on the residents of York Region and the surrounding natural environment.

Furthermore I would like to ask three questions:

- 1) Why has there not been adequate public consultation on this matter?
- 2) Why hasn't a zero sprawl / fixed area settlement option been fully investigated?
- 3) Do you have accurate data on what the population will be once all in-settlement lands have been developed, under varying density regimes? And if no, should this not be determined before making a decision?

October 18, 2021

York Region Council
17250 Yonge St,
Newmarket, ON
L3Y 6Z1

Re: Item F.1. Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment
Scenarios in Response to Consultation

Dear Mayor and Members of Council,

Please vote "no" to expanding settlement boundaries in York Region.

To start with my overarching rationale: in the urban areas we should be targeting for 60% intensification and for employment lands 70-150 ppl/ha depending on magnitude of transit. My rationale for these bold targets is climate change and the need to stop paving and destroying agricultural land. Furthermore, there is the financial reality that the dense communities and the employment lands created, when meeting these targets, will be the lowest cost in terms of building and supporting the necessary infrastructure i.e. municipal services and public transit.

It is simply not acceptable to destroy 2000 hectares when it is possible to reduce the amount of new community lands to 700. Furthermore, both Peel and Waterloo are targeting for higher intensification than what is being proposed by York Region. All four of the other municipalities referenced in the report have higher density targets than YR's target.

I think the comparison to the other municipalities is particularly relevant as there is the risk defined by YR Planning Staff: the Province may reduce its priority higher order transit such as the subway and high speed GO if the region is not growing as "smartly" as other regions. Recall that "smart" growth is all about density and intensification and not about how many new kms of new roads are produced.

And I have two other more specific comments.

I am totally supportive of the motion put forward by Mayor Pellegrini and seconded by Mayor Scarpetti that the white belt lands in King Township should not be included to accommodate proposed growth to 2051 and instead that growth should be redirected to the settlement areas. Support of

this specific motion is entirely in line with initial comments: it is imperative to stay within the current settlement boundaries.

I am relieved to read that regional staff is saying that it is not prudent to designate lands when the feasibility, both technically and financial, for new infrastructure to deliver municipal services is not certain. If I have understood it correctly this is a reason for not assigning more population more growth to the Nobleton area beyond 10,800 and minimizing growth in East Gwillimbury. Having said this, I must say that I applauded Councillor Iafrate's letter of September 15, 2021, where she questions why York Region did not push back on the growth assigned by the Province.

I believe it would also be prudent to not be redesignating lands through to 2051. I do not believe that forecasts for employment land needs through to 2051 are robust enough to merit re-designating lands away from greenbelt (agricultural, wetland, open space); planning for growth in a phased manner of 10 year increments would minimize risk of truly wasting an irreplaceable asset i.e. our undeveloped, natural spaces.

Respectfully,

Debbie Schaefer, resident in King Township and King Township Councillor

.

Dear York Region Council Members,

I am writing to express my profound opposition to the plans to open up more land for sprawl-style development without adequate public consultation. That these plans are being rushed through, behind the scenes, is deeply disturbing and upsetting. This failure to adequately consult the residents of the region, whose quality of life and futures will be impacted, is highly suspect and highly partisan.

As you know, the latest IPPC report is clear that without radical changes to how we use and protect land we are heading for a climate catastrophe. The science is abundantly clear, as are the evolving geopolitics surrounding the droughts, fires, and catastrophic storms that will become our new normal. This is not the time to be opening up more land, especially when there is no imminent shortage. We desperately need to stop making these decisions solely based on economics and what developers want.

As food supply becomes more unstable and unpredictable, is this really the time to be paving over farmland? As our experience with the pandemic demonstrated, as a country that relies on imports for so much of our food, where will we grow it if we've built luxury homes on all of the quality agricultural lands? And environmentally sensitive wetlands, headlands, marshes and forests cannot be replaced. Their value to our water supply, if the economic benefit were quantified, far out-weighs the short-term economic benefit of building over them.

Yes, we need to build homes. But we need radical change in what and how we're building, and we need to be cognizant that the decisions we make now are going to affect the futures of our children and grandchildren. Once we've destroyed these natural resources they won't be coming back. We have many options to intensify and build within existing urban boundaries. We've got to stop building like it's 1950 and accept the changing reality of what is environmentally sustainable.

I am not anti-development, but other regions have managed to plan for development and save farmland, rivers, wetlands and other priceless natural resources. I think that rushing this through under the cover of the pandemic is a betrayal of democracy.

Please press pause on these changes. We need to do better.

Yours sincerely,
Elaine Jackson

Unionville Residents Association
Written Submission and Deputation on “Planning for Growth to 2051 – Consideration of Motions”
York Regional Special Council Meeting, October 21, 2021, Agenda Item E.1

URA-LandNeedsAssmt2021-10-21-Dep

This is an official submission from the Unionville Residents Association. We are one of Markham’s largest and most active resident associations and have been very involved in this issue. We last deputed to you on this topic at the Special Council Meeting on Sept. 16, 2021.

At that deputation, we summarized the benefits of intensification and urged Council to work up additional scenarios with higher levels of intensification than the recommended phased 50/55% case. We were very pleased that Mayor Taylor’s motion to study 60% regional intensification passed. And we want to thank York planning staff for producing timely results showing that 700 ha of community land would be needed for urban expansion (plus of course 1100 ha for employment lands). The community land need is an impressive 66% lower than the 2050 ha from the recommended 50/55% scenario.

We think 60% intensification is a very reasonable target for York Region. The staff memo splits the 700 ha between Markham and Vaughan. We are agnostic on how this area should be split between East Gwillimbury, Whitchurch-Stouffville, Markham and Vaughan, and leave it up to staff to balance the needs and wishes of each municipality. Agricultural land is valuable everywhere in York Region.

As you are probably aware, on October 18, Markham’s Development Services Committee looked carefully at the benefits and risks and passed a motion by a healthy margin urging York Region to adopt the 60% intensification target. Based on the preliminary allocation by York staff, which can change, only about 200 ha of Markham’s whitebelt would be designated for community use under the 60% case, versus 925 ha irreversibly lost under the 50/55% scenario.

The York staff report does a nice job of describing the benefits of 60% regional intensification. It would result in the protection of the majority of the whitebelt for continued agricultural use. It would direct the majority of the Region’s growth to Centres and Corridors and MTSA’s well supported by Regional and Provincial infrastructure. This of course has benefits to traffic and taxes.

The report is silent on other benefits, but obviously higher intensification reduces our greenhouse gas footprint, improves the potential for active transportation which benefits community health, and provides more opportunities for affordable housing.

With greater intensification comes more lower-priced higher-density units. This creates more opportunities for people to enter the home ownership market, who would otherwise be excluded. Our dialogue with a major developer in the Region also indicates that higher density units can be brought to market at a more rapid pace than ground-based housing. I know we share this goal of greater affordability with all of York Council.

The report cites the main risk of 60% as being potential slow market take-up for higher density housing units. We agree that market conditions must be considered, but the current rate and scale of developer applications in the Centres and Corridors is ramping up, not down. This ever-present market risk can be mitigated by closely monitoring market builds and trends (already occurring) and by **adjusting the intensification rate, if necessary, at the next Municipal Comprehensive Review in 10 years or less.**

If, on the other hand, York settles on the lower 50/55% rate, this will assign 2050 ha to community use, which cannot be clawed back and could sit in limbo for decades similar to the Pickering Airport lands.

Going 60% now, with the potential to revise at the next MCR, is a **“no regrets” approach**. After all, who really knows what the future holds. The staff and Watson reports suggest that the 75+ age group will account for an astounding 55% of the demand for high density units during the 2051 planning horizon, releasing 40,000 single detached units to the market. But maybe more, maybe less!

Staff talks about the need for strong phasing policies to ensure that the 2050 ha are developed in an orderly fashion, consistent with infrastructure. Well, in our view, the best phasing policy is to designate 700 ha now, revisit the land budget again in 10 years at the next MCR, and release more land if needed. No regrets. No risk. Strong phasing.

We urge York Council to direct staff to use the 60% regional intensification scenario and revisit in 10 years or less.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

REGIONAL COUNCIL

OCTOBER 21, 2021

Subject: Municipal Comprehensive Review

Spokesperson: Sally Shearman

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

Brief summary of issue or purpose of deputation:

In York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review, Council and staff must prioritize the needs of today's residents and environmental concerns. Extensive greenfield development abandons existing communities because it puts investments in new communities, which neither benefits today's residents nor the environment. Focus on infill development in built up areas and spare our farmland, wetlands, and waters the impacts of new greenfield development. Building in built up areas supports climate change targets, increasing the availability of affordable housing, and achieving viable public transit service for more people.

1. Do not approve the 50 – 55% intensification target. How does the 50 - 55% intensification scenario align with the public priorities on your York Region's MCR website? (see <https://bit.ly/2WpGVhW>)
2. The Region is already achieving 50% intensification and 62 residents & jobs / hectare. Do not go backwards! Provide analysis of 70 % & 80% intensification targets, and put them in context that is meaningful for residents. Consult.
3. There should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years. There is lots to infill, this will give YR a chance to do Environmental Assessments in the Lake Simcoe watershed, make more transit supportive communities, meet the Region's Greenhouse Gas emission targets, and prioritize York's clear need for affordable housing.
4. Building out all of East Gwillimbury's Whitebelt lands would be a huge waste of farmland, and is the most expensive place to build in York Region at \$7600 per capita for servicing costs. Developing 25% of EG's Whitebelt lands, as endorsed by staff, is the most that should be supported by York Region.

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5. Stouffville's persistent requests to expand settlement areas on the Oak Ridges Moraine are not compliant with provincial policies. It would require big pipe infrastructure being put where it should not be. Instead, staff and Council must respect provincial planning regulations that protect the Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine and say no to this request.
6. York Region must follow designated policy 4.1 of the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan which says that an Environmental Assessment is required in the Lake Simcoe watershed for expansions of settlement areas and sewage treatment facilities.
7. As noted by staff, YR needs strong phasing policies that will prevent leapfrog sprawl and high cost to taxpayers and the environment. Staff seem to understand that; please support the strongest phasing policies you can.

RE: A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and the Proposed Land Needs Assessment Methodology

1. Introduction:

My name is Sally Shearman, a resident of York Region for 40 plus years, and a resident of East Gwillimbury for 11 years. I am a certified organic farmer operating Sharon Creek Farm for 11 years. York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review, Council and staff must prioritize the needs of today's residents and farmers as well as environmental concerns. I am calling on both Mayor Hackson and York Region Council members to oppose the current endorsement of converting East Gwillimbury's remaining Whitebelt lands (contested lands) to urban sprawl. According to the Ontario Farmland Trust, Ontario has lost 2.8 million acres (18%) of its farmland to urbanization and aggregate mining. Currently Statistics Canada figures (2016) report a daily rate loss of 175 acres of farmland in Ontario per day. This is alarming as less than 5% of Ontario's land base can support agricultural production of any kind (Ontario Federation of Agriculture, 2021).

Given the ample quantity of 114,000 acres of unused already designated greenfield land (Environmental Defence, 2021) there is no need for all Whitebelt lands to be included in urban development planning. Farmland loss can be avoided by completing existing communities (increasing density to ~100 people and jobs/ha) in York Region's cities and towns in order to accommodate growth over the next 30 years. I call on Council members to liaise with the provincial government on the issue at hand and offer alternatives to avoid an all inclusive proposal of developing 3,400 hectares (80%) of Whitebelt land. More is desperately needed to protect East Gwillimbury's prime agricultural land and communities, wetlands and forests from segmentation, fragmentation and destruction.

To provide perspective on the breadth of responsibilities an organic farmer assumes I; supply local food security, environmentally manage land by preserving native trees, creating pollinator habitat, working rigorously to maintain healthy chemical-free soils for future generations to grow fruit and vegetables, enhance biodiversity, conserve wildlife habitat and use principles and practices that are ecologically minded and climate-friendly . As such, from an agri-environment perspective the Whitebelt expansion plans will turn vast swathes of East Gwillimbury's remaining fertile farmland into wasteful, car-dependent sprawl which is irreversible, extremely unsustainable and does not align with improving air quality and reducing reliance on automobiles as stated in York Region's March 2020 Climate Change Action Plan (p. 15, 23).

2. Body: Key Arguments

2.1 Paragraph 1:

The province's updated *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2020* mandates that 81% of population growth be pushed out of Toronto and into suburban areas through replacing farmland and natural heritage with urban sprawl (Schedule 3 of Growth Plan Greater Golden Horseshoe). In essence, this strategy means lowering Toronto's density targets and consequently forcing suburbs to swallow 30 years of land at once in July 2022 by using a market-based Land Needs Assessment Methodology. This planned urbanization on East Gwillimbury's remaining fertile farmland abandons existing York Region communities by investing in new communities, which neither benefits today's residents nor the environment. Instead of extensive development on Whitebelt land in East Gwillimbury, Whitebelt land should be added to the Greenbelt and therefore secure the same level of legal protection which would safeguard local food systems, water, air quality, wetlands and forests that all play vital roles in mitigating and adapting to the climate crisis. York Region has already paved roughly 6,400 acres between 2001 and 2019, which is 357 acres per

year. This new plan would see the region plough through an additional 25,000 acres by 2051 – that’s 791.5 acres per year – more than double the past rate (Environmental Defence, 2021). This is staggering and highly unnecessary as The Land Needs Assessment Methodology should and can be interpreted and applied in a manner that results in the lowest projection of additional land to accommodate residential and employment growth.

2.2 Paragraph 2:

The reality is that York Region has failed to consult the public, most especially the agricultural community, properly on the proposed urban expansion of the entire Whitebelt. The formal discussions claimed to have been held were underpublicized and did not provide an adequate opportunity to voice concern and dissent. Unlike peer regions who have consulted with stakeholders (e.g., Hamilton and Halton) York Region has not consulted on a fleshed-out fixed Settlement Area Boundary option. Hamilton and Halton have demonstrated that despite the province’s intentions and the approach taken by land use planning consultants, both the *Land Needs Assessment Methodology for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)* and the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2020)* fail in depriving regional and single-tier governments of their authority to avoid outward expansion into remaining fertile farmland. York Region can instead opt to change zoning and incentivise growth within existing built-up boundaries for the purposes of accommodating all projected housing and workplace demand. On these grounds, it is at the legal discretion of York Regional Council, not the Land Needs Assessment Methodology, nor consultants, nor staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs who control the levers of decision-making and as such can disable urban development plans on Whitebelt land.

2.3 Paragraph 3:

There should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years and in fact York Region is not legally required to meet market demand through Whitebelt development. Building out all of East Gwillimbury's Whitebelt lands would be a huge waste of farmland, and is the most expensive place to build in York Region at \$7600 per capita for servicing costs (The Town of East Gwillimbury, 2020). There is plenty to infill within York Region based on projected propensities whereby market demand can be met with more semi-detached homes, row houses and apartments. According to recent polling, 73% of residents in existing neighborhoods across the GTA would support more semi-detached homes, row houses and apartments, 63% support more homes in buildings one to three stories tall, and more than half support buildings four to six stories tall (Survey by Innovative Research Group April 16-23, 2021). This alternative allows York Region to invest within and complete existing communities by reducing car-dependency, creating more transit supportive communities, meeting the Region's greenhouse gas emission targets and prioritizing affordable housing in built up areas rather than developing Whitebelt farmland.

3. Conclusion (Motion Forward)- I move that York Region Council, Mayor Hackson and the East Gwillimbury Council delay the response to July 1, 2022 and use the intervening time period to consult with local residents and to integrate land use planning proposals with the Provincial Agricultural Mapping Systems, and the Climate Change Action Plan.

Recommendation (i)

- There is ample capacity for accommodating housing and employment growth in currently built-up areas. The current growth plan betrays existing York Region

residents by squandering the next 30 years of growth on more low-density, car-dependent sprawl. Existing communities within East Gwillimbury do not have the population densities and mix of uses that are required for people to rely on active transportation and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicle use. I urge you to focus growth within the built up areas of York Region as this aligns with York Region's March 2020 Climate Change Action Plan, increases the availability of affordable housing, and achieves viable public transit service. The current plan contravenes the Provincial Policy Statement, which requires York Region to direct all of its future growth to places where it can support public transit and can minimize land consumption and servicing costs. This cannot be achieved in stranded, fragmented chunks of developed land the current Whitebelt urbanization plan would create. It is much more sensible and environmentally favourable for York Region to build in existing settlement areas.

Recommendation (ii)

- The Regional Council must act appropriately and consult with both the public and farming communities on alternative options for accommodating projected growth. Please advocate for East Gwillimbury's Whitebelt land to be added to the Greenbelt and be protected from development. As York Regional Council has the legal authority on where to accommodate growth, I urge you to shift focus onto existing neighborhoods and make decisions that complete existing York Region communities. Choose the lawful alternative of changing zoning bylaws to encourage construction within existing neighbourhoods. This will prevent expanding the settlement boundary into East Gwillimbury's prime farmland, and will thereby protect our local food supply, water, wetlands, watersheds, forests and prevent air pollution from increased greenhouse gas emissions due to car-dependent, low-density residential and commercial sprawl.

Recommendation (iii)

- I am asking you to spare our existing fertile Whitebelt farmland and take environmental accountability for future generations by not doubling the destruction of the countryside. Land consultants expressing views are not authoritative, nor are Ministry staff when interpreting York Region's obligations. York Region is not legally obligated to extend urban boundaries unless definitively determined that it is impossible to accommodate this growth and satisfy market demand via sustainable intensification, redevelopment and designated growth areas already in existence within the existing settlement area. Please exercise your legal authority to make proactive decisions on local food security, climate, equity and public health concerns that directly impact existing York Region residents. Lastly do not give in to provincial and land speculator pressure tactics.
- In York Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review, Council and staff must prioritize the needs of today's residents and environmental concerns. Extensive greenfield development abandons existing communities because it puts investments in new communities, which neither benefits today's residents nor the environment. Focus on infill development in built up areas and spare our farmland, wetlands, and waters the impacts of new greenfield development. Building in built up areas supports climate change targets, increasing the availability of affordable housing, and achieving viable public transit service for more people.

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October 20, 2021

Mr. Wayne Emmerson, Chairman

York Region

regional.chair@york.ca

Dear Mr. Emmerson,

Stop Urban Sprawl

- York Region has failed to consult properly. Unlike peer regions, (e.g., Hamilton, Halton) it has not consulted on a fleshed-out fixed Settlement Area Boundary option. The formal discussions it claims to have held were so poorly publicized that they went unnoticed by many of the most engaged council-watchers in York Region.
- While York Region paved roughly 6,400 acres between 2001 and 2019 – that’s 357 acres per year – the new plan would see the region burn through a further 25,000 acres by 2051 – that’s 791.5 acres per year – more than double the past rate.
- There is absolutely no land supply shortage in York Region. The proposed Settlement Area Boundary expansion would add 5,000 more acres to the roughly 20,000 of countryside York Region opened up years ago, but which has never been used.
- In addition to paving some of the last unbuilt headwaters of the Rouge and Don rivers, this plan would see a huge number of people and a huge area of sprawl forced into the sensitive Lake Simcoe watershed, which simply doesn’t have the

capacity for more sewage or runoff. Environmental NGOs warned York and the province in a joint letter of January 19th, that there is presently no sustainable way to increase sewage capacity in Upper York Region, and that no further settlement expansion should be directed to that part of York Region. A provincial regulation actually prohibits approval of the “Upper York Sewage Solutions” proposal.

- This plan betrays existing York Region residents by squandering the next 30 years of growth on more low-density sprawl. That growth is desperately needed to complete existing neighbourhoods, which have not yet developed the densities and mix of uses that are required for people to rely on active transportation. While a strong majority of York Region residents say they “simply can’t get by without a car” as things stand, 80 per cent of those with an opinion (64 per cent , vs. 16 per cent who disagree) say they’d “much prefer” to live in a neighbourhood where they “didn’t need to use a car to do [their] shopping, recreation, entertainment, or commutes to work or school.” This plan is likely to prevent that from happening within the next three decades.
- York Region is not legally obligated to extend its urban boundary, even though the province and land speculators are trying to strongarm the region into doing so. On the contrary, this plan contravenes the Provincial Policy Statement, which requires York Region to direct all of its future growth to places where it can support public transit and can minimize land consumption and servicing costs. It will be extraordinarily difficult to achieve this in the fragmented chunks of land which this plan would see added to the Settlement Area Boundary. Right now, the land which is next to the proposed new settlement areas has low rates of public and active transportation. Building more sprawl will make the situation worse.

Instead, York Region should build in the existing settlement area, especially in areas close to existing public transit.

Please help to stop urban sprawl.

Thank-you.

Sincerely,

Sandra MacKenzie

Resident of Newmarket