

From: IRENE FORD  
Sent: Wednesday, November 24, 2021 11:44 AM  
To: Regional Clerk <ClerkGeneralLine@york.ca>  
Subject: Fw: Concerns Re: York Region Draft Official Plan - Council Meeting November 25

Please find attached my comments and correspondence for tomorrows Council meeting Agenda Item F.2.

Nov 24, 2021

Office of the Auditor General  
Bonnie Lysyk  
220 Dundas St. W., Ste #1530,  
Toronto, ON M5G 2C2

## **Re: York Region Municipal Comprehensive Review and Draft Official Plan**

I am writing today to express deep concern over the quantum of land that will be brought into York Region's urban boundary based on the current draft Official Plan that will be voted upon and endorsed at the York Region Council meeting on November 25, 2021. At this point public concern falls upon mostly deaf ears at York Region Council. I have chosen to send a letter to the Auditor General's office in support of your ongoing value-for-money audit on the Provincial direction provided in the Growth Plan, Minister Zoning Orders and land use<sup>1</sup>. At this point it seems pointless to attempt to engage York Region Council on this issue any further.

There is nothing in this plan that reflects public consultation completed by staff since the Municipal Comprehensive Review process commenced. I remain deeply concerned about the Provincial direction and lack of scrutiny from York Region Council. This sentiment was compounded recently when 16 Regional Council members chose to support the private ROPA7 developers request when there were unified recommendations and concerns expressing opposition by staff from Vaughan, Markham, York and the TRCA as well as from York Region's Federation of Agriculture, the Greenbelt Foundation and the public<sup>2</sup>. The only interests that were represented in this decision were the landowners, the developers.

I have ethical concerns about Mayor Hackson and Mayor Lovatt's insistence upon expanding the urban boundaries within their municipalities<sup>3</sup>. They appear to be using the lower tier official plan process to duplicate and conduct their own analysis to challenge and undermine York Region staff recommendations. It wastes staff time and resources and forces staff and council to repeatedly contemplate planning changes that are fiscally irresponsible, inconsistent with provincial planning legislation and contemplates changes that are not within York Region Council's authority. It is also

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-auditor-general-investigating-ontarios-land-use-policies/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escrimeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=26740> and <https://yorkpublishing.escrimeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=1c4efbd0-c117-4ce4-b7c6-0553d348ef40&Agenda=Merged&lang=English>

<sup>3</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escrimeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=25376> and see Recommendation 4 put forward by Mayor Hackson. The intent appears to stifle the fact that York Region staff are recommending significantly less urban boundary expansion. The Region sets the urban boundary expansion and land use designation, this seemed an overt attempt to exert the will of the lower tier Council and while not necessarily wrong it was enabled and allowed by all of Council. Should legislation, policy and direction be stronger to prevent this sort of interference from lower tier municipalities with the Regional Planning process.

<https://yorkpublishing.escrimeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=24719>

incredibly confusing for the public who do not understand the differences in the roles of upper versus lower tier governments. On the opposite extreme Vaughan Council has not taken any position or debated the growth that will be forced upon the municipality and until recently resisted any attempt to provide information that demonstrated that growth could be managed within Vaughan's existing urban boundary<sup>4</sup>. Now that the information is available it is too late for comment as York Region Council has already endorsed the forecasted land needs.

The scenarios presented in York Region's staff report at the September 16, 2021 Regional Special Council meeting did not include employment lands<sup>5</sup>. The analysis has not been updated to consider what impacts COVID may have. I fail to understand why Vaughan will bring 710Ha of employment land into the 2051 urban boundary when 19 employment conversion requests were recently approved. It is unclear if this change was reflected in the draft official plan and if so, how this affected the proposed urban boundary expansion elsewhere<sup>6</sup>. The proposed urban boundary expansion in Vaughan surrounds the proposed Highway 413. In this same area Minister Mulroney confirmed the Bolton Go Line is not a priority or planned until 2051<sup>7</sup>. Development in northwest Vaughan will likely happen long before transit. These will not be complete communities, a requirement of provincial planning legislation.

The greenfield density target in York Region's 2010 Official Plan is 70 people & jobs/Ha but for the land needs exercise scenario's staff used only 60. At some point the direction from York Region Council was to lower the density target for the 2051 municipal comprehensive review and presumably increased the amount of land required for the urban boundary expansion<sup>8</sup>.

York Region's presentation of key staff reports which dictate how York Region will grow over the next thirty years has been rushed and has allowed the public only the bare minimum of time to review lengthy complex documents. This is not fair or meaningful public consultation.

- Sept 16, 2021 Regional Special Council Meeting for Forecasted Land Needs<sup>9</sup>
  - Decision deferred until Oct 21 to enable more scenarios be brought forward and because it was brought to Council's attention that it was Yom Kippur

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to Appendix 1.

<sup>5</sup> Employment Lands staff report was last brought before Council Mar 12, 2020 see:

<https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=607985f5-aa03-4d9a-a5a7-95e24db3da8e&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=43&Tab=attachments>

<sup>6</sup> See Item 81: <https://pub-vaughan.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=34935>, <https://pub-vaughan.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=7a1fde6b-d662-4870-a857-1c9e5ae93ec1&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=33&Tab=attachments> and Refer to Appendix 1.

<sup>7</sup> <https://pub-caledon.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=16670>

<sup>8</sup> Refer to Item G.1 Recommendation 3: <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=f1388637-b351-42be-947d-67a4dc2e990c&Agenda=PostMinutes&lang=English&Item=9&Tab=attachments>

<sup>9</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=a062ebc1-1f89-4b91-9834-3396d052757f&Agenda=Merged&lang=English>

- Oct 21, 2021 Regional Special Council Meeting for Forecasted Land Needs<sup>10</sup>
  - York Region endorses a slightly higher intensification scenario that is relatively meaningless.
  - The only rationale provided for not acting on the level of public concern was NIMBY. Essentially, York Region Council members will not be able to overcome their bad planning decision of the past through intensification in existing communities due to anticipated local opposition. So instead they support expanding the urban boundary and building sprawl in areas that have no known servicing solution, are inconsistent with provincial planning policy and will result in more car-centric sprawl with known negative impacts on social determinants of health, the environment and climate change.
- Nov 11, 2021 Committee of The Whole Meeting, Draft Official Plan<sup>11</sup>
  - Draft Official Plan is presented but does not include Council direction from Oct 21, 2021
- Nov 22, 2021 Council Meeting, Draft Official Plan<sup>12</sup>
  - Draft Official Plan is edited to include direction from Oct 21, 2021 and errors corrected on surrounding densities of MTSA.

There's nothing in this official plan that benefits existing residents. It will create more car dependency, increase traffic and congestion (which tragically is becoming a matter of public safety for our children) and is an abandonment of regional representation for current constituents because it prioritizes infrastructure investment away from existing communities to greenfield development. Investment in established areas is shifted to new communities and priorities are spread too thinly to be effective.

The lack of civic engagement and submissions to the November 11, 2021 meeting is not a reflection of a well-supported plan but instead a reflection of the fact that concerned residents do not feel that the majority of York Regional Councillors are listening to them, or representing their needs.

Thank you and I look forward to the impending value-for-money audit report.

Sincerely,

Irene Ford  
Vaughan, York Region Resident

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<sup>10</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=f643d823-720a-41d6-a4bf-a957fa7aa724&Agenda=Merged&lang=English> also perhaps of interest

<https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.aspx?DocumentId=27200>

<sup>11</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=228608f4-d57d-485a-a462-b12bec2e4b08&Agenda=Merged&lang=English&Item=29&Tab=attachments>

<sup>12</sup> <https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=910bcc2c-fdf3-43c7-81cb-b56c649e99a8&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English>

Appendix 1: Photo of Vaughan Staff Memo demonstrating projected growth is already accommodated within the existing urban boundary.

**RE: Estimate of additional population within the City's Urban Boundary**

Dear Honourable Mayor and Members of Council;

Staff were recently in receipt of a Council email inquiring if we could provide some more information regarding growth and population estimates for areas contained within the City's urban boundary.

Staff have therefore prepared the following chart for Council's information which provides an estimate of the population potential within the City's urban boundary, which could range from approximately **250,500** to **276,050**; depending on how lands endorsed for employment conversion develop. Based on the Region's population forecast, Vaughan is projected to add a minimum total population (including intensification and greenfield area) of approximately **250,000** to the year **2051**.

<b>Residential Lands within the City of Vaughan</b>	<b>Population Potential</b>
Residential Designated Lands within Major Transit Station Areas, including Secondary Plan Areas and Lands subject to Minister Zoning Orders (this includes all MTSA areas including VMC, Hwy/7Weston, Concord, Promenade, Yonge Street Corridor, Hwy 7 Corridor, Block 27, Centre Street, and the Keele/Hwy 7 MZO)	221,500
Other Residential Secondary Plan Areas including Minister Zoning Orders (this includes Vaughan Mills including the MZO, Block 41 and remaining development areas in Woodbridge Centre, North Kleinburg, Kipling Avenue)	23,000
Other Residential Lands, this includes primarily Block 61 West Nashville Heights, Major Mackenzie and Weston Road area, Block 40/47, Kipling/Hwy 7)	6,000
<b>Total Population potential within designated residential Lands</b>	<b><u>250,500</u></b>
Lands Subject to Employment Conversions endorsed by York Region in 2020 (19 sites totaling 365 hectares) At this time these lands have not been designated for residential uses. For the purposes of this projection, assumed an average of 70 persons per hectare	25,550
<b>Total Population potential with Employment Conversion Lands</b>	<b><u>276,050</u></b>