

Nov 11, 2021

York Region Council,

Re: Agenda Item H.2.2 Draft Official Plan

I once again ask Council to refrain from making any decisions until the Auditor General's report on the province's direction for forecasted land needs and provincial growth is released later this year.

I would like to point out that 7 minutes of my deputation had technical difficulties on the forecasted land needs presented Oct 21. As such the below is the written section that was removed and is being submitted for the public record.

The scenarios presented in York Region's staff report do not include employment lands so even if Council chooses to adopt the higher 60% intensification scenario a significant amount of employment land will still be brought into the urban boundary. I fail to understand why Vaughan will bring 710Ha of employment land into the 2051 urban boundary when 19 employment conversion requests are currently under review or have been approved¹. All of the growth in Vaughan surrounds the proposed Highway 413. What happens if it is not built? In this same area Minister Mulroney confirmed the Bolton Go Line is not a priority or planned until 2051, if development is approved in NW Vaughan it will happen long before transit is available. MZO's have been approved based on Go Transit stations in the absence of approved timelines. 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 lowered this density target. Why?

The level of greenfield development recommended on Class 1 and 2 soil, the best in Canada, is irresponsible, short sighted and does not adequately demonstrate the legislative 'need' to permanently remove these lands from agricultural production. Soil is a non-renewable finite resource; local food production will be increasingly important in the face of Climate Change. The price of food has and is rising. Regardless of ownership, or how the current lands are being farmed, or not farmed, it is our elected official's responsibility at all levels of government to create plans, policies and incentives that support, preserve and enhance local agriculture. You had a farmer speak today, the system has been structured to make farming unsustainable, unprofitable and unviable for far too long. Similar to wetlands you can't recreate soil; it is a natural and physical geological process that happens over centuries.

¹ <https://pub-vaughan.escrimemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=73600>

see pg. 4: <https://pub-vaughan.escrimemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=34935>

These lands fall within TRCA's and LSRCA flood plain. York Region's supporting documents state stormwater evaluation will be completed at the secondary plan stage. I don't understand how stormwater cannot be part of the evaluation when urbanization, the level of impervious surfaces, has a direct correlation to increased flood risk. The majority of these lands are documented as being critical for endangered species habitat, connectivity and biodiversity; also finite in southern Ontario. Development of this land is completely inconsistent with municipalities who have declared a Climate emergency and will erode York Region's ability to be climate ready and resilient.

How can you ask us to support such a large expansion on sensitive land when Council can't even protect and guide development as was intended and approved in our current Official Plans?

I remind Council members that most of you have been here for more than one term making land use decisions, these decisions have contributed to the current state of the environment in York Region, car dependent sprawl and the affordable housing crisis.

Thank you,

Irene FOrd

Insufficient time to finish - left unsaid.

I appreciate that other municipalities don't want to meddle in each other's wants but if deference to the will of local Councils is the end result then what purpose does Regional Governance serve? If the justification for supporting bad planning is that it's what the lower tier government wants then it would be more appropriate to put a motion on the floor asking for regional governance to be dismantled.

Recently, the Mayor of Vaughan asked members of the public to have an open mind. My mind is open to action on the climate emergency, to fiscally responsible growth that supports infill and transit, natural heritage protection, natural asset management, source and stormwater protection, preserving prime farmland, supports food security and healthy communities. My mind is closed to excessive, unreasonable urban boundary expansion and making the same decisions that will result in more of the same car dependent climate driving unsustainable sprawl. Are you representing your existing residents, constituents, voters today?