



Planning for Tomorrow
York Region Growth Management

Towards a Sustainable Region

York Region Open House – Feedback
May 15, 2007
Newmarket

The following comments, questions and suggestions are a summary of public input at the consultation session in the Town of Newmarket. Regional Staff attempted to answer questions and provide additional input. Please contact the Region if this summary does not adequately reflect your input or ideas or if you have additional thoughts.



Discussion



- Upset about all development that will take place, un-natural for people to be herded into high density housing and for children to live in high density townhouses with no yards.
- Feel this whole thing is a tax grab and development bonanza for people in federal government and developers.
- The environment is suffering from this with only a few people making a lot of money from this.



Discussion



- Buildings are here for the long run and difficult to replace.
- Disappointed with what's happening to Oak Ridges Moraine with prior approved development.
- Why is all of this taking place? What types of jobs will be provided? Are they just part-time jobs without benefits for minimum wage which will not allow for a family to live?
- Why is a very legitimate question. York Region is one of the most attractive areas to live in the GTA. We have a lot of people immigrating to Canada and most to the GTA.



Discussion



- It is not Regional staff or Council who are deciding this, but rather, the Federal and Provincial government need to accommodate this growth and it's up to the Region to determine where this growth goes, and how we're going to accommodate it.
- Housing types will be dictated by the buying public.
- We cannot just have retail jobs in the Region, need a mix of high quality and high paying jobs so that our work force can actually work in York Region.



Discussion



- Asking the Region to consider alternative energy. Commercial and residential buildings should include rough-in of solar water heaters.
- The Region needs to have a renewable energy committee, we should be striving to meet the Kyoto accord.
- We must consider different types of architecture to make sense of the future needs of planning.
- Propose the use of sugar beets as an alternative form of fuel, important to protect children from poor air quality generated by fossil fuels.



Discussion



- We need to think differently about these issues, our draft Sustainability Strategy is Council's first effort to think about how we do things differently and meet initiatives like Kyoto.
- More people will also mean more vehicles contributing to air quality, including a new incinerator. How is the Region going to control poor air quality?



Discussion



- Very encouraged by what the Region has put together, like the way the Sustainability Strategy is put together, would encourage us to go further and set targets for things like greenhouse gas reductions, water conservation.
- Other organizations would benefit from following these targets and partnering with the Region.



Discussion



- Please do communicate with other areas like Viva that held their public meeting the same nights as these consultations.
- Concerned about farmland disappearing in whitebelt area.
- Built heritage is very important.



Discussion

- The oldest heritage conservation district of Thornhill is right on Yonge Street and it's no longer walkable because of Viva and road widenings.
- Emphasize built heritage.
- No intensification can be done on Yonge street before proper storm sewers are built.
- Solution to widening roads is not working – use what we've got. To have a pinch point on Bayview in a 200 year old area is not going to work.



Discussion



- Pedestrian considerations are important to transit.
- What is the Region doing to encourage industry to sustain itself as well as to increase the number of jobs.
- York Region's economy is very diversified and very strong, and our employment growth rate has historically been higher than our population growth rate.



Discussion



- How is the Region encouraging people to take transit, especially as it is more costly than the TTC.
- Will there be some retrofitting of existing communities to make them more walkable?
- Making existing communities more walkable is something we need to look at.



Discussion



- Concerned with the amount of growth happening and water quality – will the water table be degraded.
- Most of Newmarket's water is from groundwater, but committed to not taking any more water to supply new growth, but will come from Lake Ontario.



Discussion



- Have we netted out areas that cannot be developed in the whitebelt?
- What will the form of development be in the whitebelt.
- Will agriculture be provided in Oak Ridges Moraine and Greenbelt rather than the whitebelt?
- A large part of the greenbelt is protected for agriculture.



Discussion



- Growth will have a significant impact on the array of health services required.
- How much support does the Region give to the existing hospital infrastructure.
- Regional documents have revealed a shortage of affordable housing, how does the Region plan to address low vacancy rates in the southern part of the region and lack of affordable housing in the Region.



Discussion



- York Region is a nice place to live, but need to plan for next generations.
- Concern with incinerators and air quality.
- If we wanted to increase our waste diversion, we do not have the amount of waste needed to incinerate, encourage the Region to look at alternative strategies to avoid incineration.
- What is happening to the “light pink” areas approved for development on the maps.
- Has there been any attempts to go back into areas where development has already been approved to renegotiate densities.



Discussion

- Are there any incentives to encourage developers, even in existing approved areas, to change the form of development.
- Sustainability principles – how do we negotiate trade-offs between conflicting areas? How can the Region start to deal with trade-offs of higher densities? Is there enough green infrastructure? We need publicly owned land so that people will accept the tradeoffs.
- Intensification is about choosing the right location, the right height, the right design.
- We need to consider what other countries are doing in terms of providing jobs.



Discussion



- Encourage the Region to go further in terms of sustainability, particularly in our attitudes towards the car – our communities are planned for the car first, we need to go further than linking our natural areas just for recreation.
- How do we change the mindset around the car, what would convince people to walk or cycle?
- Our urban structure is designed to be traveled by car, no amenities for bikes, no sidewalks.
- Worldwide, the nice places to be are those that have public spaces like public squares.
- Pedestrians and cyclists should have the right of way. If it's easier to walk and cycle people will drive less.



Discussion



- What is the Region's vision for a Regional airport?
- Our problems are relating to too many people and too little space.
- Density is a reality when the government want to use immigration as an industry and as a way to keep the economy going and expecting people to live in an un-natural way.
- Meetings are more efficient if minutes of past meetings and agendas.

