

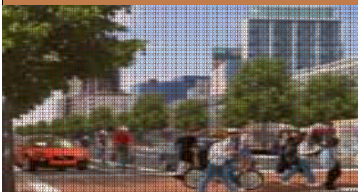


Planning for Tomorrow
York Region Growth Management

Towards a Sustainable Region

**City of Vaughan
Town Hall Meeting Feedback
September 18, 2008**

- The following comments, questions and suggestions are a summary of the public input received at the consultation session held in the City of Vaughan. Regional staff attempted to respond to questions and provide additional input. Please contact the Region if this summary does not adequately reflect your input or ideas, or if you have any additional thoughts.
- Comments from the public are recorded in black.
- *Regional staff comments are recorded in blue italics.*



Feedback



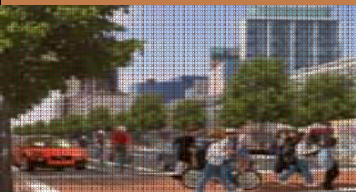
- I am worried about the environment. A number of woodlots are protected but not linked – this is especially important for wildlife. In particular, wetlands and wildlife are not being protected at Pine Valley Drive and Teston Road.
- Toronto and Region Conservation Authority is building a demonstration sustainable home at the Kortright Centre. There is to be a greywater re-use system, ground source heating, etc. The goal is to use the highest level of sustainability. My suggestion is that the Region follow its own green goals by legislating that all new development (and not just single detached dwellings) meet Energy Star, LEED Platinum or the same level as the sustainable home being built at the Kortright Centre.
- *York Region is making steps in this area - Regional building are LEED Silver for new facilities, the new Vaughan City Hall is LEED Gold, Joint EMS/Fire Station in Vaughan is LEED Gold. East Gwillimbury and Vaughan Councils require all new residential homes to Energy Star standard.*



Feedback



- The Oak Ridges Moraine Plan was created, yet did not engage the landowners. A lot of rights were taken away by the Province and landowners need compensation for this.
- Wetlands have disappeared due to OMB decisions. 70% of Ontario's wetlands have already disappeared. Wetlands and agricultural lands within the Vaughan and Markham Whitebelt will be impacted – this needs to be remedied.
- *The Region has recently completed a significant woodlands study. Overtime the Whitebelt will be developed, however significant natural heritage areas in the Whitebelt will be protected.*
- A lot of land, despite being within the Oak Ridges Moraine, has been developed – especially in Richmond Hill.
- Stop widening roads (i.e. Dufferin Street, Jefferson Sideroad).
- The heritage area in Thornhill is being threatened – York Region needs to protect this area.
- The Don River is not adequately connected – this has caused problems with flooding.



Feedback



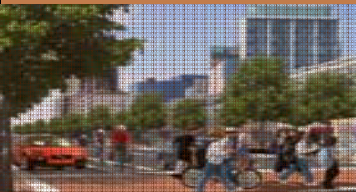
- Concerned over the quality of jobs within York Region. Employment opportunities need to go beyond big box retail, banquet halls, etc. We need to match residents with their income – stop exporting higher order jobs.
- *The proportion of residents that live and work in York Region is 53% - the lowest in the GTA. We require more highly skilled jobs, and a broader array of housing options for those in lower-end jobs.*
- Workers still need to drive if their employment is located along Highway 400 corridor (i.e. PowerStream building). We need to create better pedestrian and transit oriented environments and put better employment along arterials. We need to think about better placement to create more sustainable travel patterns.
- Development along Yonge Street and Highway 7 will be compact, yet employment continues to be approved for remote areas. We need to arrange jobs better. How can we control this? Municipalities and other agencies need to be able to say yes/no, so that the right types of employment occur in the right locations.



Feedback



- Who dictates what is “appropriate fit and scale” for intensification? For example, in a smaller village like Kleinburg, would that be a mix of bungalows and 2-3 storey buildings?
- *Local municipalities will be creating their own intensification plans to determine how and where intensification will occur. This will identify the appropriate size and locations among varying communities.*
- We need better accountability for these policies. Planners do not make decisions – politicians do. How we can ensure that policies created with this government still have teeth when the next government comes into power?
- *The hierarchy of plans are becoming increasingly specific – the Province has been establishing a tighter policy regimen.*
- Greenbelt Plan has caused the price of vacant land to increase substantially. Have these policies considered the economics of the price of land? Developers will only develop if it is feasible – higher prices could mean higher densities.
- *It is difficult to direct type of jobs to where we want them to go. Planners and Governments can make land available in the ideal location, but the market ultimately makes the decision.*



Feedback



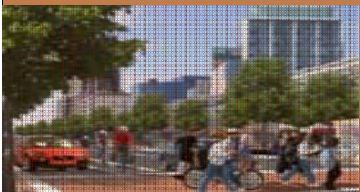
- GTA west corridor is not a highway yet, there has been no decision. It is inappropriate for York Region to show it on their presentation.
- Is York Region going to provide urban expansions to accommodate people and jobs?
- *Yes. The Whitebelt will be used to accommodate future population and employment.*
- We need to build bike lanes that are safe. Install a barrier between the bike and traffic like in Europe.
- *Council has adopted the Pedestrian and Cycling Master Plan. We are also looking a trails plan for York Region which can provide the opportunity to have off-road bike lanes.*
- We should be designating land for particular types of development and not give politicians the chance to change it. A tire store was built next to million dollar homes. It went to the OMB and despite council opposing it, the OMB approved it. This decision did not have people in mind.
- We need to support intensification, so that agricultural and green land can be protected. Children should grow up with parkland and walkable communities.



Feedback



- Planning is for people. We must attract industries to make people friendly plans. York Region must market itself more for economic development.
- To improve traffic flow, York Region should consider the use of roundabouts. They are used in Europe and the UK because they are less expensive and a land efficient alternative. The Region should undertake a pilot project for roundabouts, perhaps at King Road and Weston Road.
- Suburban street lighting is a problem. We need to stop the light pollution creeping north into King Township. The Region should legislate that new development use much less street light than is the current practice in new developments. Street lighting with motion sensors could minimize cost of power and pollution. It is becoming hard to see the stars in southern King Township.



Feedback



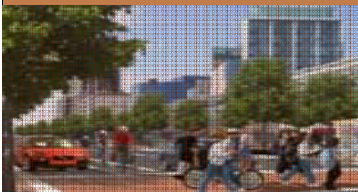
- What is the timeframe for expanding development into the Whitebelt?
- *Likely between 5-11 years, but this will depend on the market to a certain extent. Regional level designations will be considered, then detailed planning must be conducted at the local level.*
- In regards to all of the areas slated for “high density development” (i.e. Yonge Street, Highway 7) – we have to be careful that we do not overpopulate them; perhaps limit the height of high rise buildings. We do not want to create a jungle.
- Idea of “complete communities” is not clear in the Growth Management Strategy. The term can mean different things to different people. When looking at built form and design, it is okay to have 4-5 storey condos on arterial roads near single family homes, as they tend to have more open space and landscaping so can be more attractive. But many people will not accept living in 15 storey high-rises.
- To me, complete communities are self-contained, with shops, sports, culture, etc. Too often we’ve built either single family homes or employment, but we need to mix them together along with human services. We need to move away from car dependency.



Feedback



- We need to built safety into communities. We know places where high point towers have failed. At Yonge and Bloor street, an 85 storey tower is being built on 1 acre of land – this is not good.
- We need to incorporate walking/biking paths in green areas. Bring back “mom and pop” stores with the European model of meeting places and community. Green development is economically effective. We should be incorporating this into subdivision plans, along with family values to create liveable active communities.
- Concept of piazza can be used.
- We need to think about how older companies impact property values when located close to residential properties – the incompatibility of uses. i.e. Montessori schools beside auto stores.
- The auto companies along Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue create a noise problem for neighbouring communities. The OMB supports this development, but it is a horrible situation with the noise, smell and traffic. We have complained to the City of Vaughan, but nothing has been done.



Feedback



- Where does your planning staff look for best practices?
- *York Region created a Best Practices for New Communities document that looked at North American and Canadian examples.*
- European examples should be used as well, i.e. squares and walkable communities in the UK.
- How was this meeting advertised? Not many people are here.
- *In newspapers twice, email to mailing list.*
- Why is there no meeting in King Township?
- *Meetings were scheduled in municipalities with Regional Centres or with large Whitebelt areas. We will be speaking at King Council.*

