



DRAFT

York Region Official Plan

Environmental Groups

Feedback

September 15, 2009



Feedback

- A lot of employment growth is being projected, but is it reasonable? The idea that high value/green jobs; where are these in York Region? Projections can sometimes be too “woolly”. Want more specific information about the jobs/businesses.
 - The Region conducts an employment survey every year and tracks the business and their employment figures as well as the number of jobs that are full-time and part-time

- York Region should develop research areas that are tied into businesses. Easy to do, as there are many collages/universities that can tie into these research centres. i.e. solar panel R and D leading into manufacturing. Should have to make high quality jobs.



*Feedback for Public Information Sessions
Sept 15 - Environmental Groups*

Slide 2



Feedback

- ❑ You were talking about higher densities than traditional housing; but at the moment, when driving down 400, you still see traditional single detached development. What do you mean by higher densities, and what percentages will be townhouses vs. low/high rise apartments/condos. The only change we've been seeing is single family houses to townhouses, which doesn't truly take advantage of higher densities.
- ❑ If on the one hand, you're planning to protect natural heritage system, you need higher densities to achieve this.
 - ❑ The Region is requiring densities of 2.5 FSI along the Regional Centres and 3.5 FSI at the subway stations. As well Places to Grow requires higher densities both in intensifications areas as well as in greenfield developments



Feedback

- ❑ One of the things we have seen with elderly parents, and looking out for ourselves down the road, is the need for care. Have seen people who work at a nursing home in Maple driving in from far and wide, all hours of the day and night, because there are no local places to live that they can afford. We need to really think about affordable housing, because in addition to retail workers, there will be social/health service workers who are not highly paid.
 - ❑ Yes we agree that providing affordable housing, both rental housing and ownership housing is absolutely key. The policies being proposed require 25% affordable in new developments, and 35% in our Regional Centres and Corridors. The Region is also requiring municipalities to review and consider policies that permit second suites to help us with the affordability issues we have.





Feedback

- ❑ You have mentioned a ratio of 2:1 for population to employment. Are there policies in place to make sure that ratio is maintained? The plan is calling for 300,000 new jobs, which is about 1,000 a month. This is a lot. If that ratio starts to fall apart, York Region will become a dormitory community.
- ❑ Does our current ratio of population to jobs include all jobs, or just full time?
 - ❑ It includes both full time and part time jobs
- ❑ The Region will need to develop strategies to encourage job creation. Need to find strategies that set York Region apart.
 - ❑ Yes we agree. The Region has an Economic Strategy and is working hard to attract new industries to the employment areas



Feedback

- ❑ I want to discuss the introduction of LEED standards/expectations. Very gratifying to see it being done. But why is the ROP not being more aggressive? For example, you're only "encouraging" LEED for industrial.
 - ❑ The Plan speaks to LEED or "equivalent" and we're getting push back from the building industry about the use of this as the standard, as it can be an expensive program. They are not necessarily disagreeing with the need to provide higher levels of energy and water efficiency however, just with the LEED standard as there are alternatives out there. We're also dealing with the Building Code which has not yet caught up with the need to require higher standards and even the update to the Code in 2012 doesn't go far enough.





Feedback

- ❑ New communities will have to meet LEED standards. But what about the new development that is going on that is not part of the new communities? You can see this when you go along the 400 and all you see is sprawl. What are possible aggressive actions that the Region could take to impact development that already have their approvals but aren't built yet. We're so much more knowledgeable now than when they submitted their applications.



Feedback

- ❑ You mentioned more air quality monitoring. What are we going to do about fixing the air? Recent air quality ratings for Newmarket have even been worse than Mississauga. What are we going to do about fixing our air?
- ❑ With climate change, there is the possibility of more stormwater. There's also an issue with development and impervious surfaces. You are talking to developers about energy and conservation, but are you also talking with them about stormwater and reducing the amount that is flowing out of the system, including our waterways, and going into expensive stormwater management ponds?
 - ❑ Yes we are and the Plan calls for alternative stormwater management techniques to be used in new development and retrofits to be undertaken in existing development areas because we know this is an issue for downstream areas





Feedback

- ❑ With stormwater management ponds, every now and then you have to go in there to clean it out, destroying the wildlife. When dealing with developers/development issues, will there be policies to address this too? As for the idea of putting infrastructure in green spaces, such as that for stormwater management, I understand that stormwater will be going into waterways eventually, but hopefully we can keep stormwater management ponds out of greenways, as they destroy habitats.



Feedback

- ❑ I like the idea of using rainwater to flush toilets. My question has to do with infrastructure projects in green areas. I'm thinking about the recent public information centre about development going through woodlots. You have also talked about the new Endangered Species Act. What about for the 404 extension? This will be going through woodlots with butternut trees, and one of the conditions of permission being given to the extension was that they would take cuttings from the butternut trees. The concept of having tradeoffs, like planning trees else where to get back for what was lost, bothers me.





Feedback

- ❑ Your presentation talked about Regional Trails. The policies should include liaison with local municipalities about trails. Concerning the new policy about 30 metre buffers to certain environmental features; there are many instances where trails go over wetlands and environmentally sensitive areas. Do your policies allow trails to go through those buffer lands?
 - ❑ The Region is currently looking at whether we have a role in trails planning or development and part of our investigations includes liaison with local municipalities. Trails might be considered within buffer areas, but only if the sensitivity of the feature allowed it
- ❑ What's the timeframe for the Regional Trails?



Feedback

- ❑ You mentioned how the Master Plans are incorporated within this draft ROP. But I see inconsistencies between the Draft ROP and some Master Plans, i.e. the Transportation Master Plan is still accepting public comments until September 30 and could change.
 - ❑ Any inconsistencies will be covered off before the Regional Plan is approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- ❑ Under Bill 51, municipalities can now consider sustainable design in their official plan. Does this mean that henceforth, site plans will come before Council for review? It is not clear if this is indeed happening.
 - ❑ Generally the Region doesn't deal with site plans except where it impacts Regional Roads





Feedback

- ❑ From what you've now said, it sounds like the Region is providing a template, that the municipalities are expected to apply.
 - ❑ Once the ROP is approved by York Region, local municipalities must conform with the ROP.
- ❑ If a development application is not finalized before this occurs, will it then fall under the new rules?
 - ❑ Generally the transition occurs for new applications and old applications are finished under the planning regime in place at the time of approval



Feedback

- ❑ This brings up another issue. What about someone who has submitted a plan of subdivision, but it has sat here for 20 years and not been acted on. Is there any possibility of a grandfather clause, or a sunset clause, where after a number of years of no activity, they will now have to resubmit? Could you not put a policy in the new ROP that could do this?
 - ❑ Yes, some planning approvals, such as plans of subdivision can contain lapsing clauses that require them to be reviewed every 5 years. As well sunset clauses can be used. We have also encouraged the re-examination of older secondary plans and subdivision plans to bring them closer into conformity with the new ROP.

