

Weston Down Ratepayers Association

1 Blackburn Blvd.
Vaughan, Ontario, L4L 7J2



Mr. Chairman & Members of Regional Council,

Written Deputation submitted for June 23rd, 2016 York Region Meeting

RE: York Region Transportation Master Plan

My name is Dr. Anthony Franciscucci and I am the President of the Weston Downs Ratepayers Association (WDRA) who represents the residents in the area bounded by Rutherford Road to the north, Weston Road to the east, Langstaff Road to the south and National Estates to the west.

I am writing to you today to address the York Region Transportation Master Plan (YRTMP), which is before you for approval at Regional Council on June 23, 2016. The three areas in particular that I'd like to address with Council include, the **Pine Valley Drive Missing Link and Special Study Area**, the **Langstaff Road missing link** and the use of **Turning and Vehicle Restrictions**.

First, let me begin by addressing the Pine Valley Drive missing link. The YRTMP indicates that "there will be transportation deficiencies in north-south capacity in the Pine Valley Drive corridor area" and suggests that there are "no options for connecting Pine Valley on the traditional grid" (page 149). I agree with the YRTMP in that I also believe there will be transportation deficiencies in north-south capacity in the Pine Valley area. In fact, I strongly believe the deficiencies exist today and will be further exacerbated over the 2041 time horizon. However, I do not agree with the notion that there are "no options for connecting Pine Valley on the traditional [road network] grid". While the YRTMP is correct that the City of Vaughan declared the lands for the Pine Valley missing link as surplus and did convey the lands to the TRCA, the City also has the power to expropriate those lands back through the powers granted to it under the Expropriations Act of Ontario. Furthermore, while the Ministry of the Environment of the Ontario Government excluded the same lands for the Pine Valley missing link from the original environmental assessment (EA) in 2006, they did not provide a rationale for this exclusion and therefore would suggest that an EA has never been done for these lands. This simply begs the question, why would the Ontario Government exclude the Pine Valley missing link lands from an EA without providing a supporting rationale. Where is the transparency and fairness in government? Furthermore, a decade has past since the terms of reference for the original EA and much has changed since then. All this is to suggest that given the transportation deficiencies in the north-south capacity in the Pine Valley Drive corridor area identified by the TMP task force, now is the time to revisit that obscure decision by the Ontario Government of 2006 and suggest that a new EA be conducted to determine the feasibility of opening the missing link. Furthermore, I wanted to draw your attention to the notion that there may be a group of opponents to the opening of the Pine Valley drive missing link that may suggest that the Ontario Government's Greenbelt legislation now protects these lands from development. I would like to suggest that while this is true, in that they are protected from the development of homes or other building structures, the same Greenbelt legislation has a provision (see section 4.2 of The Greenbelt Plan (2005) - <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page189.aspx>) that allows for the development of road infrastructure "to serve the substantial growth projected for southern Ontario". Again, given the transportation deficiencies in the north-south capacity in the Pine Valley Drive corridor area identified by the

TMP task force, this would suggest that the development of the Pine Valley Drive missing link would meet these requirements. The Weston Downs Ratepayer's Association urges the members of Regional Council to keep the Pine Valley Drive missing link on the YRTMP agenda and to move forward with a special study (or an EA) to understand the feasibility of developing the Pine Valley drive missing link.

Second, I would like to address the Langstaff Road missing link from Jane Street to Keele Street. The WDRA fully agrees with this part of the YRTMP. I believe that the lack of the Langstaff Road overpass over the CN rail yards contributes to the congestion on the Regional road that surround our community, coupled with the poorly designed road network within our community, which leads to traffic infiltration through our community. The traffic infiltration problem is a systemic problem created by the City of Vaughan and York Region that has affected the safety and well being of our residents for the last 25 years. I urge Regional Council to make this missing link a priority and to consider advancing the development to an earlier phase of the York Region transportation network.

Lastly, I would like to address the use of Turning Restrictions. The YRTMP suggests that York Region's road network "must be protected" ... and that the road network is "impeded by turning restrictions at intersections and restrictions on the use of Regional roads by certain vehicle types. These restrictions will be reviewed and future use minimized." While I can appreciate this objective, I think the decision to allow or not allow turning restrictions should be made in context and not used as a blanket or overarching decision. There may be certain circumstances in some parts of York Region, where the Regional Road network is strained or overcapacity during peak times due to several missing links in the Regional Road network in the area, which when coupled with an improperly designed community/ local road network, results in severe traffic infiltration to the local community. Sometimes, the only way to restore the safety and quality of life for the residents of the local community is to keep the Regional Road traffic on Regional Roads, through the use of turning restrictions.

As you consider the recommendations in the YRTMP, I urge you to also take into consideration the information provided above. The Weston Downs community has endured the brunt of the challenges created by the development of both the local community and the Regional road network for over 25 years. It could be another 25 years before some of the recommendations suggested in the YRTMP are actually implemented. Act now to support the Weston Downs community.

Respectfully,

Dr. Anthony Francescucci
President
Weston Downs Ratepayers Association

contact@westondownsra.com

www.westondownsra.com

www.openpinevalley.com

cc: City of Vaughan Ward 3 Councillor
City of Vaughan Regional Councillors
City of Vaughan Mayor