

March 8, 2023

Item #13

Mar 7, 2022

Vaughan Council

Re: MUNICIPAL HOUSING TARGET AND MUNICIPAL HOUSING PLEDGE, MORE HOMES BUILT FASTER ACT, 2022 (DEFERRED)

It is disappointing that City of Vaughan staff are so willing to sign on to the Housing Target set by the Minister of Municipal Housing and Affairs (the Minister), which essentially requests Vaughan build all of the housing allocated in York Region's recently approved Official Plan by 2031, twenty years ahead of schedule.

There is no opposition to the building of more housing, that 1.5M homes are needed to accommodate the forecasted growth in Ontario. The concern is that the Minister's pledge is reckless, irresponsible and short sighted because the province fails to acknowledge or provide corresponding incentives that actually address the true barriers to building affordable and accessible homes; that create built environments, communities that improve social determinants of health; spend our property tax payer dollars responsibly (by the City of Vaughan and York Region).

It is highly concerning that the Minister of MMAH sent this communication directly to lower tier Councils and choose to ignore York Region. As identified by your own staff York Region is responsible for the "delivery of all relevant service, e.g. water, wastewater, roads, and transit to be accelerated accordingly". How can the City of Vaughan pledge to increase housing in the absence of support from York Region who is responsible for the infrastructure required to service this growth? Why are staff, Council and the Minister acting as if Regional Governance doesn't exist? Who is watching out for our property taxpayer and speaking for the interests of York Region as a whole?

It is an affront to Vaughan taxpayers to suggest there is no financial implications from this Housing Pledge when York Region staff have repeatedly warned about the financial jeopardy they are placed in as a result of provincial indecision on waste water servicing and the prioritization of greenfield growth approved in York Region's Official Plan as well as multiple MZO's endorsed in areas that do not have water and wastewater servicing. Forcing advancement of more costly infrastructure.

If Vaughan Council feels compelled to support this unrealistic housing pledge, consider the following.

1. Pass a motion and promise the citizens of Vaughan that none of the homes pledged in the Housing Target will be built on the Greenbelt or Oak Ridges Moraine. Including the Greenbelt removal already approved in Block 41 and on the Oak Ridges Moraine on the northeast corner of Teston Rd and Dufferin Street where the Minister has suggested that the lands will be redesignated in a future amendment to O. Reg. 140/02 (Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan) Refer to Map 2: https://prod-environmental-registry.s3.amazonaws.com/2022-11/Redesignations%20or%20Removals%20Map%201%20to%2011_0.pdf Item 14 here:

<https://yorkpublishing.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=37394>

2. The Housing Pledge address critical needs to properly address the housing crisis including housing type, location and provision of affordable and accessible housing.
3. Develop a plan to deliver the missing middle as requested during the Committee of the Whole Budget Meeting Jan 18, 2023 refer to: <https://urbanhulk.ca/2023/01/30/the-missing-middle-in-vaughan/>
4. Clearly articulate to the Minister MMAH that Schedule 10 of Bill 23 brings more uncertainty of the ability of York Region to provide service capacity at the levels of growth proposed. In the absence of provincial decisions and direction on waste water servicing capacity the City of Vaughan and York Region **cannot meet the Housing Target Pledge.**
5. The City nor York Region have master plans, official plans or budgets that accommodate and responsibly plan to double our housing target by 2031. Request other levels of government commit guaranteed resources over a clearly identified timeline to ensure Vaughan and York Region can successfully deliver on the Housing Pledge.
6. Stop frustrating residents by accepting development applications as complete that require major infrastructure upgrades and servicing capacity whose timelines are uncertain. Prioritize development application that deliver on what Vaughan residents want, they are asking for missing middle, to creating communities, built environments, that people want to live in, stay in and foster social capital. Stop prioritizing greenfield and tall sprawl that are the worst development pattern possible from a Climate Change perspective.
7. Implications of Bill 23 brings legislative certainty to the reduction of development fees collected in the future by municipalities. While the Minister has promised that municipal shortfalls will be covered there is no legislative certainty that this will actually happen. Should the province continue down this path municipalities need more certainty that the growth will not be achieved on the backs of property tax payers and at the expense of a reduction in existing and future infrastructure services, natural heritage or responsible land-use planning that prepares Vaughan for the realities of climate change.

I hope that Vaughan Council will take these concerns seriously and respond to the Housing Pledge accordingly. At the very least Council acknowledges this is a laudable goal due to the absence of commitments from other levels of government.

Regards,
Irene Ford
Member of Stop Sprawl York Region and Stop The 413