

Protest Against Yonge-Steeles Developments July 2020

Office of the City Clerk
City of Vaughan
Planning files OP-20-001, Z.20.004
Planning files OP-20-002, Z.20.005
(Also Planning files OP-18-016, Z.18.028)

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As a long time owner and resident in the nearby condominium building at [REDACTED] Tangreen Court, I continue to object to the proposed developments in the Yonge-Steeles area. Also refer to my letter of October 2019 to Vaughan about the Gupta / Icona proposal. I also refer here to the Salz and Mizrahi proposals.

The following five developments have been formally or informally proposed for the Yonge St - Steeles Ave W area.

- > Salz: Steeles Ave W - 1765 apartment units + retail + commercial, FSI 8.4, approx 2.0 ha
- > Mizrahi Constantine: Steeles Ave W - 2080 apartments, FSI 6.46, approx 2.4 ha
- > Gupta / Icona: Yonge-Steeles - 1900 apartments + hotel + retail, FSI approx 14, approx 1.2 ha
- > Humboldt: Yonge-Steeles - approx 2.0 ha, other details unknown
- > unnamed: Yonge-Steeles - details unknown

Estimated total: approx 10000 units + retail, commercial, hotel, approx 25000 residents on approx 10 ha

The main issue is that the density and total volume of the proposed buildings is far greater than the area can possibly carry. It is much more than the already dense "Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan" published by the city. It would be profitable for developers but very harmful for the area and its people. Let us review some particular problems:

Roads - Road capacity is essential for personal and public transit, to transport goods, and for emergency vehicles. The Yonge-Steeles intersection is already a choke point for left turning traffic at busy times. Toronto has proposed an exclusive bus lane along Steeles Ave W which would further reduce local traffic capacity. There would be many difficulties for traffic entering or leaving the developments. The construction operations for the apartment buildings would also constrict traffic. Cars would spill over onto the local side streets.

Public transit - Transit capacity is limited by the choke points at the Yonge-Steeles corner and at the Finch subway station. There is a plan to possibly extend the Yonge St subway north, but not until after the planned northeast line (Ontario line). If built, the Yonge St line will not be finished until the 2030s. Its construction would block traffic in the same way that Eglinton Ave is being blocked now by transit work.

Parking - Only about one parking space per two apartments is proposed, for example 1272 spaces for Gupta (including hotel parking) and 876 for Mizrahi. It is absurd to suggest that half the units will have no parking, with no near term rapid transit.

Health and safety - The present pandemic emphasizes dramatically the contagion threat in very dense environments. Also, if there is a fire or electrical failure or merely an elevator malfunction, older residents may be unable to get out.

Community benefits - There is no apparent provision for public parks or any other community benefits.

Children - A population of that total size will have several thousand children. There does not seem to be any place for them to play safely, or go to school.

Economics - The economics and reliability of prebuild apartment sales are questioned by wise buyers. There has already been a failure by the Gupta group at a different location. If the recession continues, or a credit crisis causes an interest rate rise, there will be bankruptcies and failures, it has happened before.

There are also specific issues about the two developments now under study:

Salz - This development appears to have a street outlet at the traffic light leading from the Centerpoint mall. This would be reasonable except that it is already too busy for traffic to turn easily at peak times. With more auto and pedestrian traffic at that point, this would become more difficult.

The density is high (FSI = 8.4). Also, the Salz proposal does not have any information about parking, public amenities, and other relevant matters.

Mizrahi - This one is even worse. Its outlet to Steeles Ave is somewhere near Tangreen Court. There is no traffic light there. Moreover, it is not allowed to put a traffic light there: When my condo association (YCC 366, 10 Tangreen Court) asked about putting a traffic light at Tangreen Court, they were told by the city of Toronto that this could not be done because a light there would be too close to the light at the Centerpoint mall, causing too much disruption between the traffic waiting at the two lights.

Bear in mind that the Steeles Avenue road allowance is entirely within the city of Toronto, meaning that traffic control on Steeles Avenue is apparently regulated by Toronto, not Vaughan or York Region.

With no traffic light, it would be difficult and unsafe for traffic turning left in or out of the property. Also, there would be a temptation for pedestrians to jaywalk dangerously across Steeles Ave to reach the bus stop at Tangreen Court.

Also, there is a lack of parking. On the sign in front of the Mizrahi property it says that there will be 2080 apartments but only 876 resident car parking spaces. With no rapid transit service there should be one space for every apartment.

Again, density is high and there are no public amenities shown.

In conclusion, these proposals should be rejected. These developments would severely impact the neighbourhood, and would be unsatisfactory for their future residents.

Yours truly

Stephen Clodman