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**From:** Mackenzie Ridge Rate Payers Association <mackenzieridgerpa@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 9:32 AM  
**To:** Council@vaughan.ca  
**Cc:** Coles, Todd <Todd.Coles@vaughan.ca>; Rob Kenedy <rkenedy@yorku.ca>; Mackenzie Ridge Rate Payers Association <mackenzieridgerpa@gmail.com>  
**Subject:** [External] Protecting Vaughan Whitebelt, Greenbelt, ORM, or CA.

May 12, 2021

Dear Mayor Bevilacqua and Vaughan Councillors,

I was informed recently that the province revised direction for Official Plan updates forcing municipalities to plan 30 years into the future with inflated growth targets. I am concerned to hear that if York Region's Official Plan proceeds as currently recommended Vaughan will lose 100% of the remaining white belt lands and the Greenbelt will be the hard urban boundary. I also have heard that Vaughan staff are preparing a staff report with Vaughan's comments and recommendations back to York Region Council for the June 8 Committee of the Whole Meeting.

Here are the points of interest Irene Ford sent to some Vaughan Ratepayer Groups:

- York Region Official Plan deadline for submission to the province is July 2022. Timelines are set so Official Plan approval will be by the current provincial government. Expanding the urban boundary is worse than one off MZOs, it's a giant gift to developers. Once land is in the urban boundary it is unheard of it being converted back to agricultural/rural. The main objective is to delay approval of the Region's Official Plans.
- York Region's Official Plan if approved by the province dictates the urban boundary/land use designation. Vaughan's would be based on this and approved one year after the Region's. ***Vaughan is married and committed to whatever urban growth boundary approved in the Region's Official Plan.***
- At the Mar 18 Special Regional Council Meeting some of the most important planning staff reports for the Region and City of Vaughan were crammed together with little to no public notification. We knew the Bradford Bypass and Highway 413 would be on the agenda but the addition of these documents was like being ambushed (plus arranging presentation from MTO staff). It achieved two objectives, it overwhelmed and exhausted the public and council members.
- On Mar 18 the narrative literally changed from the highway will not cause sprawl to we need to build the highway because we

plan to build sprawl.

- York Region's MCR consultation page or Official Plan consultation pages I find to be misleading. For instance under agriculture it links to a map showing all the areas they want to keep for prime agriculture but the map attached to the 2015 Forecast and Land Needs shows recommendations for urban boundary expansion. There is an updated 2051 Official Plan Survey.
- Typically Official Plans look forward 20 years, the Province is forcing 30 years. This is the real driver of why York Region will lose 80% of its remaining whitebelt lands, farmland in both Vaughan and Markham, 3,400 HA to development, not the population growth.
- Our Regional representatives in Vaughan are doing a great disservice to their citizens b/c as far as I can tell they are letting this slip through under the radar with as little public engagement as possible. Have you seen it on a newsletter?

#### **Points Specific to Vaughan:**

- Vaughan will lose 100% of its remaining Whitebelt lands. - Whitebelt lands are not sprawl in-waiting nor designated or approved for growth. Most, if not all, is zoned prime farmland. Whitebelt land is land that is not Greenbelt nor within the urban boundary. In order agricultural land to be rezoned 'need' must be demonstrated, this seems a subjective process to me.
- Vaughan's Regional Councillors need to be called out. They are critical of nothing and enabling an item of great importance to the future of our city to be bulldozed through during a global pandemic. Citizens are distracted, unaware, unable to be consulted. We need to Plan there is no question, but the public needs to be involved and aware.
- We know the land suggested for urban boundary expansion is mostly owned by very powerful and influential developers (refer to Friends with Benefits article below). Unsure about the piece on the east side of the 400.
- York and Vaughan staff are advocating for strong phasing policies, but it is unclear to me if it will mean anything since planning legislation has changed to favour developers.
- Vaughan never approved its natural heritage plan and is required to do so during this Official Plan Review.
- Climate Change - There is 143 pages in the Attachment form York Region on Forecasted Land needs the words Climate Change are not mentioned once. Land use is a driver of Climate Change, how is this factored into the evaluation?
- Vaughan may be able to accommodate the planned growth within its existing boundaries, we have the VMC going up plus other developments that have been approved above and beyond the 2010 Official Plan, what about recently approved secondary suites? It's all about the assumptions that are feed into the model (see Environmental defence webinar).
- There is opportunity to improve our existing communities, but the direction is all towards sprawl that goes up (high rise) and out (single family). If we continue to sprawl out and up we will never invest in our existing communities, be able to support density and the services and amenities that come with density. This will achieve what residents are actually asking for when consulted: sustainable climate friendly communities, healthy communities, walkable communities.
- If Vaughan Council supports this they basically are supporting developing everything in Vaughan that is not protected by the Greenbelt, ORM, or CA. Council will have succeeded in paving everything in Vaughan that is within their jurisdiction. The Mayor will see this is great b/c it is an indicator of economic growth but it is not an indicator of community well-being or livability.
- Ownership is an issue, most of the land is not owned by farmers anymore. Regardless, ownership is not a right to development. The research is quite clear: sprawl leads to negative public health outcomes and social determinants of health, compounds and climate change impacts and the infrastructure creates a future burden for taxpayers. To do so during a pandemic, climate emergency and at the expense of public goods especially of a finite resource, soil, is irresponsible and I fail to understand how this could be in the public interest.

This information is of concern, and I am hoping, as elected officials, all of you will act accordingly and protect the Vaughan Whitebelt, Greenbelt, ORM, or CA.

Best,

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