Salz Proposal Written Deputation – Height & Density

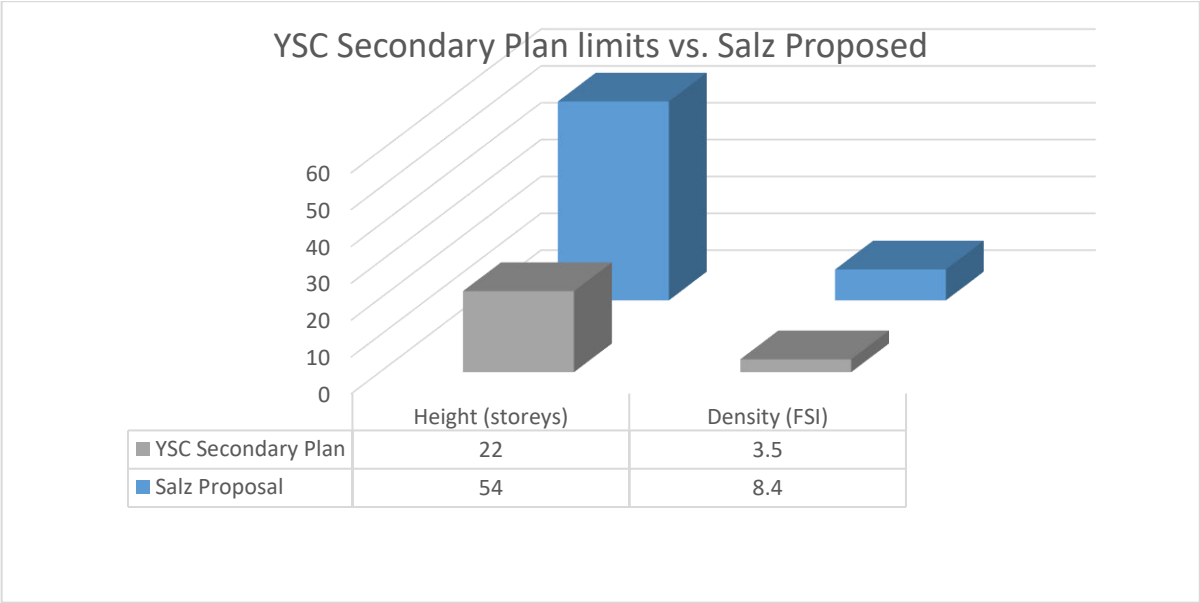
My name is Brian Gerstein, and I live at [redacted] Glenmanor Way. I back onto the North side of Clark Avenue between Yonge and Hilda. I have lived in Thornhill since 1999.

I'm going to focus on the most important driver of this redevelopment proposal, namely the extent and scale of this redevelopment, and how it will impact the current neighbourhood – as expressed in height and density, but shown from the ground level context. In reality, height and density determines the net number of people and their cars who are going to move into those new residential towers and clog the roads and other infrastructure, community and other public services. The more buildings, the more floors, the more residential units, and the more people who will live there. It's as simple as that.

According to the submitted reports, the Salz proposal alone will add 1,765 residential units, at a City of Toronto Census average multiplier of 2.7 people per household, or 4,766). And there are three other proposals adjacent with equal or greater numbers. So, all in all, 20,000 people added to an area of Vaughan whose immediate local population, with 230 homes, is less than 1,000. 20 times the current population, 2,000 percent. And if the actual multiplier is greater than 2.7 persons per households, for example young families, the total will be even higher. We just don't know.

Figure 1 graphically shows the disproportionate difference between the Secondary Plan limits in height and density and Salz's proposal – maximum height of 54 storeys vs. 22 allowed (245 % higher), and density of 8.4 versus 3.5 allowed. (240% higher). Double the height and over double the density.

Figure 1: Salz Proposal vs. Secondary Plan Limits



The onus is on Salz (and by extension, all of the other 3 developers) to prove by facts and logic that the Secondary Plan this Council approved does not provide enough heights and density to support intensification. If that were the case, we would expect that at least one of the submitted reports or studies would crunch those numbers and provide objective evidence. However, NONE of the submitted reports or studies contains ANY quantitative calculations or mathematical analysis to substantiate their requested heights and densities, which are DOUBLE that are allowed as of right now in the Secondary

Plan. The consultants were paid to justify whatever heights and densities the developer demanded, and they delivered. And they faithfully indicate how the proposal meets all the objectives of all provincial, regional and municipal plans and policies – except one, the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan.

I have included two maps to illustrate what the current area profile is like – with a 34 storey, and two 31-storey buildings that already tower over the area.

Figure 2 shows the view facing east from Hilda Avenue and Steeles. You can clearly see the World on Yonge – 2 towers of 31 storeys on the Markham side of Yonge. There is another condominium building being finished but not yet on Google Maps (Vanguard) at 25 storeys, and 2 condominiums further north (but down the hill) at 18-20 storeys.

Figure 2 – View facing east from Hilda Ave at Steeles

Figure 3 shows the ground view on Crestwood Road how the World on Yonge (31 storeys) and Vanguard (25 storeys) look from 500 metres away. I want you to appreciate the vast difference in scale between single-family homes and 31 stories. Why? Because most of the proposed buildings are near that height, and many are almost 150% of that height.

Figure 3 – street view facing east on Crestwood Road

Now let's look at what we would expect to see with the Secondary Plan, in terms of building heights and profile in Figure 4, which shows 5-storey buildings in the foreground and 22 storey buildings at Steeles. Note that you can still see the North York skyline in behind.

Figure 4 – Projected heights of 180 &100 Steeles Ave W as per Secondary Plan

View of 180 & 100 Steeles Ave. W from Crestwood Road as per Secondary Plan

Figure 5 is a crude scale projection of what the proposed Salz buildings at 180 Steeles Ave W would look like as viewed from the south side of Crestwood Road. I want you to fully appreciate the scale of those developments, particularly the 49 and 54 storey towers, and how they exceed anything else in the area looking south. You will also notice that collectively they resemble a wall, blocking out much of the southern skyline. And this doesn't include the 2 Steeles West proposals with 65 and 52 stories, nor what Humbolt Properties next to it will propose in the near future at the left side of the photo. No more skyline in view. Of course, this doesn't show the fancy architectural features, but don't be deceived by that. It's the mass that counts, not the form.

Figure 5 – Projected perspective view of 180 & 100 Steeles Ave. West from Crestwood Road

There is another matter which I wish to bring to your attention on the proposal, as shown in Figure 6. The City's Urban Design Guide requires a 45 Degree Angular Plane from residential areas towards the nearest new building, starting at the rear property line.

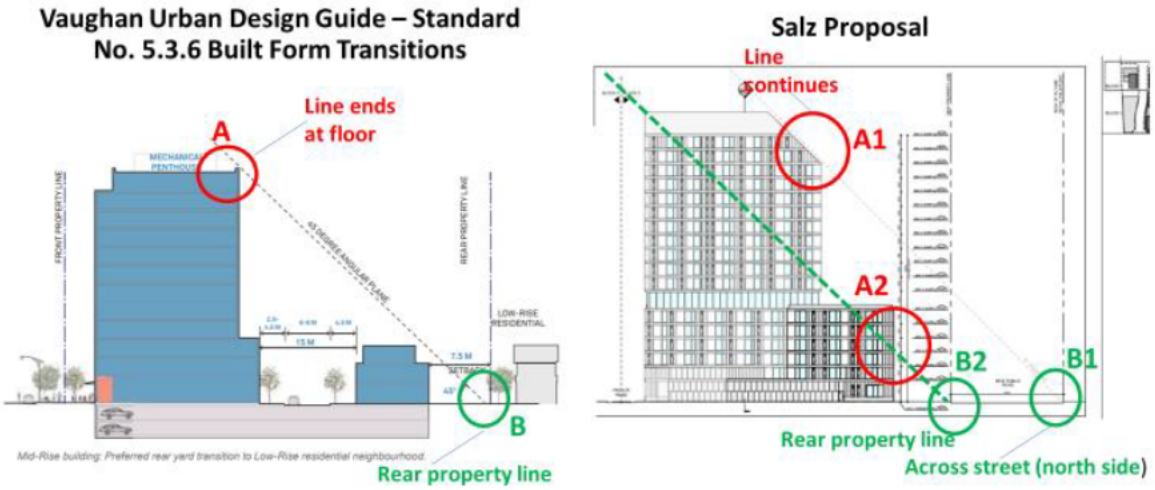
There is another matter which I wish to bring to your attention on the proposal, as shown in Figure 7. The City's Urban Design Guide requires a 45 Degree Angular Plane from residential areas towards the nearest new building, starting at the rear property line.

If you look at the right side of that figure, you will see that the Salz proposal, you will see that the 45 degree angle, marked as B1, actually starts 33 feet further north, on the north side of Royal Palm, which would be city property, and the 45 degree line intersects the mid-rise building at the 16th floor (A1). You will also see that unlike the Design Guide, which cuts off the building height at the 45 degree line intersect, the building has two extra floors using an 45-dgree angled wall. That's the first problem.

Furthermore, if the line were actually starting at the rear property line (B2), the line in green dashes would intersect the first building at A2, the 3rd floor, meaning only a three storey height is possible.

Whether these two errors were deliberate or accidental doesn't matter, but they dramatically changes what height would be allowed with the current setback from the rear property line.

45 Degree Angle Variances – Errors add height



Benchmarks for height and density

The other argument made in the Planning Justification Report and Urban Design and Sustainability Brief is that Yonge-Steeles is a Primary Centre under the 2010 VOP. Table 1 shows that to date, only 2 of those primary centres besides the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre have approved Secondary Plans. They both either have or assume a TTC Subway Station and the necessary density to support those stations' usage. Those are the Steeles West and Yonge-Steeles. So while the City has the VMC and 5 Primary Centres, the only useful benchmark comparators are Steeles West and the VMC. Steeles West has a height limit of 30 stories, with a lower density limit than Yonge & Steeles, and the VMC only 35 storeys.

Table 1: VMC and Primary Centre Height and Density Comparison

Name	Height Limit (max.)	Max. approved	FSI Density Limit (max.)	FSI Max. approved	Context/Other Features
Vaughan Metropolitan Centre (VMC) – Secondary Plan	35	60 (171%)	6.0	12.9 (215%)	VMC Subway station (terminus) and Vaughan downtown
Bathurst & Centre St. (Thornhill Town Centre)/Promenade Secondary Plan	22	35 (159%)	2.7	4.4 (163%)	Promenade Bus Terminal Regional Mall (Promenade)

Jane St. & Major Mackenzie Dr. (Mackenzie Health Campus)	n/a		n/a		Health Centre
Steeles West	30		4.0		Black Creek Pioneer Village Subway station
Vaughan Mills Business Centre (SP11.7)	10		2.0		Regional Mall (Vaughan Mills)
Weston Rd. & Highway 7	n/a	33	n/a	4.59	
Yonge St. & Steeles Ave. (SP 11.3)	5-22-30		1.5/3.5/5.0		Yonge-Steeles Subway station
180 Steeles Ave. W.	16, 16, 25, 29,39,45	TBD	6.46	TBD	
100 Steeles Ave. W	5,18,18, 49,54	TBD	8.40	TBD	
2 Steeles Ave. W.	52,65	TBD	12.9	TBD	

Height comparisons

Finally, the other question that has to be asked and answered is how the proposed building heights compare to others in Vaughan, the "me too" method which is used to rationalize similar heights. Figure 8 is a map of all buildings, proposed, under construction, or built that would meet or exceed 45 storeys in Vaughan. The ONLY cluster of buildings with these heights are located in the VMC, which is of course Vaughan's downtown and a subway terminus. The highest building at the VMC was approved at 175% of the allowed height. Salz wants 245%. The circle on the right side is Yonge & Steeles – the Gupta proposal, which is for 52 and 65 storeys. The Salz proposal hasn't been loaded yet, so it doesn't show up. One other interesting thing you will notice is what isn't there – Steeles West at Black Creek Pioneer Station. In fact, the tallest building at or around that station is 4001 Steeles Ave West, at 17 stories.

The only comparable benchmark for height to Yonge and Steeles (with a proposed subway station that is not a terminus) is Steeles West, and the Secondary Plan for Steeles West includes maximum heights of 30 stories and 4.0 density. The VMC is both Vaughan's downtown, as well as a current subway terminus, so it should have the highest limits of any area in Vaughan by a long shot.

Figure 8: Map of 54-storey buildings in Vaughan

Figure 9: - Salz proposed heights compared to City of Toronto locations

Yonge-Steeles may be a cross-road of two major arteries, and straddle three municipalities, but it is NOT the VMC, it's NOT Yonge & Sheppard, it's NOT Yonge & Eglinton. Its proposed subway station is not a terminus, nor does it have another subway or LRT line running across Steeles, nor is Centrepoint a major regional mall like Scarborough Town Centre. So let's be realistic in our comparisons, and not fall into Edifice Complex. Unless you want to relocate the Vaughan Metropolitan Centre to Yonge & Steeles, I

ask you to respect the Secondary Plan you approved in 2010, and tell Salz to respect it too. 22 and 5 stories are sufficient and manageable within existing infrastructure.

In conclusion, Salz hasn't provided any quantitative evidence that the Secondary Plan's height and density cannot meet provincial, regional and municipal policies. I have shown you how dramatically the proposed buildings visually overwhelm the local residential neighbourhood, in gross disproportion. I have shown you that if you try to compare "apples to apples", you cannot compare Yonge & Steeles to the VMC, nor any major intersections in the City of Toronto. The proposed heights and density are not grounded in reality, just greed. I urge you to tell Salz to respect the Secondary Plan Council approved only 10 years ago or redo it with community input and agreement.