

Deputation to Vaughan City Council
July 13, 2020
Agenda Item #5
OP.20.002
Mizrahi Constantine (180 SAW) Inc.

COMMUNICATION - C94
CW (PH) - July 13, 2020
ITEM # 5

Mayor Bevilacqua, Regional and Local Councillors, Staff, Ladies and Gentlemen:

My name is Esther Bobet and I live in the Thornhill area of Vaughan. My message to you tonight is twofold:

1. Community Services and Facilities are important and critical elements for a vibrant community and
2. Mizrahi Constantine (180 SAW) Inc. - hereafter referred to as Mizrahi - the proponent of this redevelopment proposal, has not done enough to address the gaps and insufficiencies in the supply of these important elements.

While the details of this redevelopment proposal – density, setbacks, architecture, parking, etc. – are important in the approvals process, we cannot and must not forget the ultimate purpose here - to create living space for people. And if this and the other redevelopment proposals for the Yonge-Steeles area are approved, there are going to be a lot of people coming to live here – more than 20,000 new residents in total, with the Mizrahi proposal alone accounting for an estimated 5620 new residents.

People bring life and vitality to a community. They bring resources that enhance the community, and through consumer spending, they support the economy of the community.

But they also place demands on local infrastructure. The “hard” infrastructure needs - for water and wastewater treatment, waste collection, electricity, and power - are important.

But just as important are the “soft” infrastructure needs – the community services and facilities that support the quality of life in a community.

VOP2010, Section 7.1 requires the proponent of any development with more than 50 units or 5000 m² of floor space to prepare a Community Services and Facilities Analysis of the impacts of their development on such “soft” infrastructure elements as community and recreational centres, parks and green space, public libraries, child care centres, schools, places of worship and public and human services such as police, fire, ambulance, health care and social services.

Here are the facts: there are currently less than 1000 people living in the immediate, or study, area. There are approximately 300 current vacancies at the two nearest elementary schools, but the local secondary schools are over capacity. There is no surplus capacity at local daycare centres and no public libraries within the study area. The nearest community centre, Garnet A. Williams, is almost 1.5km away and the nearest district park, York Hill, is 1.2km away.

The Mizrahi report identifies services and facilities (schools, daycare centres, libraries, seniors’ centres, and community centres) located to the south of Steeles Avenue, in Toronto, and to the east of Yonge

Street, in Markham, as being available for the study area residents. The report acknowledges that Vaughan residents may not be able to use some of these facilities – libraries, daycare, seniors' centres, community centres in Toronto and Markham, and also schools in Toronto – because of residency requirements. The Mizrahi report lists places of worship and social service agencies but does not say if the current available capacities can meet the needs of 20,000+ new residents. However, these are all still included in the list of services and facilities.

So where will these additional 20,000+ new residents go when they need schools, daycare, social services, and recreation? Will there be enough ambulances, seniors' centres, and green space for all of them? The Mizrahi proposal doesn't consider demands on social/emergency/health services and provides no analysis to determine if the existing services will be able to manage the additional load of 20,000+ new residents.

And what about the existing residents? Will they see their community services and facilities support decrease when they are forced to compete with 20 times the number of people that will now be living in the area?

In counting resources in other municipalities and not accounting for available capacity, the proponent has greatly overestimated the available local Community Services and Facilities resources.

Consider further the issue of green space (see Appendix 1). The Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan calls for a 50 foot wide park-like buffer – a green ribbon linear park – on the south side of Royal Palm Drive from Hilda to the southern extension of Powell Drive. Mizrahi has eliminated this parkland in its proposal. This was meant to be a transitional area from the new proposed medium rise buildings to the existing one- and two-storey homes. This linear park would have been available to, and used and enjoyed by, both existing and new residents. The proposed replacement is a small strip of one or two trees. The Design Review Committee has identified this deficiency – the proponent should heed the Committee's advice. The proposed podium rooftop "amenities" are for the exclusive use of the new building residents and are inaccessible to the existing community. There is literally no green space accommodation in this proposal. Residents, both existing and new, deserve better. Where is their green space?

These are all good questions and the proponent needs to answer them – NOW - with a plan for how they intend to address these gaps in community services and facilities that will most certainly be created with these new developments. **Even though the Mizrahi proposal is responsible for less than 28% of these new residents, Mizrahi still has a responsibility to the community as a whole to properly consider the impacts of their contribution, and to work with the other developers to create a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated plan that provides adequate community services and facilities for the WHOLE community.**

The Mizrahi report acknowledges that local schools and daycare centres are already at or exceeding capacity but it's not good enough to simply acknowledge that there are gaps in community services and facilities and defer any action to later negotiations with the City. It's not good enough to wait and see. "For later consideration or discussion with the City" is not acceptable. The time for the proponent to address these gaps is now, during the planning stage. If we wait until later, it's too late. And if the proponent doesn't have enough information on the demographics to identify the services and facilities that the expanded community will need....well, VOP2010 S.7.1 requires them to prepare a demographic

and employment profile and if the one they have prepared doesn't serve the purpose, it's time to revisit and improve that analysis.

In summary, we need the following things to happen before the proponent is permitted to proceed with their redevelopment:

1. That Mizrahi acknowledges that the existing services and facilities in the area are not sufficient to serve the expected demands of the future community;
2. That ALL developers in the area, including Mizrahi, work together NOW to create and implement a plan to fill the gaps in Community Services and Facilities; a comprehensive, coordinated and integrated plan supported by a robust demographic and employment profile; a plan that will ensure that the needs and demands of all residents, existing and new, are met;
3. That Mizrahi incorporates into their proposal the green ribbon linear park shown in the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan on the south side of Royal Palm Drive;
4. puts the green space back in Royal Palm Drive;
5. That Mizrahi submits a development proposal that respects the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan that Council approved in 2010 – a plan that is realistic and that has local community agreement and support.

In any community, the quality of life depends as much, if not more, on the services and facilities that are part of that community as it does on the size and location of one's dwelling.

Mayor Bevilacqua, Regional and Local Councillors and Staff – please ensure that the Mizrahi proposal includes a comprehensive, coordinated, and integrated plan for future Community Services and Facilities. Please ensure that the Mizrahi proposal respects the Secondary Plan, is realistic and has local community agreement and support.

Mayor Bevilacqua, Regional and Local Councillors – please respect the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan that you approved in 2010.

Thank you for your time.

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Appendix 1 - Green Space Shortages

The importance of dedicated green space is critical for a healthy, active lifestyle for people of all ages. The Secondary Plan set out the following guidelines:

“3.7.7 Publicly Accessible Open Space

New development shall incorporate publicly accessible open space corridors generally as shown on Schedule 4.

4.0 PARKS AND PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE OPEN SPACE

4.1 Location

The delineation of Parks shown on Schedule 2 is approximate and adjustments to the boundaries will not require an amendment to this Secondary Plan provided the general intent of this Plan is maintained.

4.2 Linked System

Within the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan there will be a linked system of Parks and publicly accessible open space, generally as shown on Schedule 4.

4.3 Form and Design

The form and design of the Parks and publicly accessible open space, shown on Schedule 4 shall facilitate:

- visual links to Yonge Street and Steeles Avenue West;
- safe environment for users;
- accessibility to all demographic and cultural groups, including people with disabilities; and
- comfort and flexibility for users during all seasons of the year.

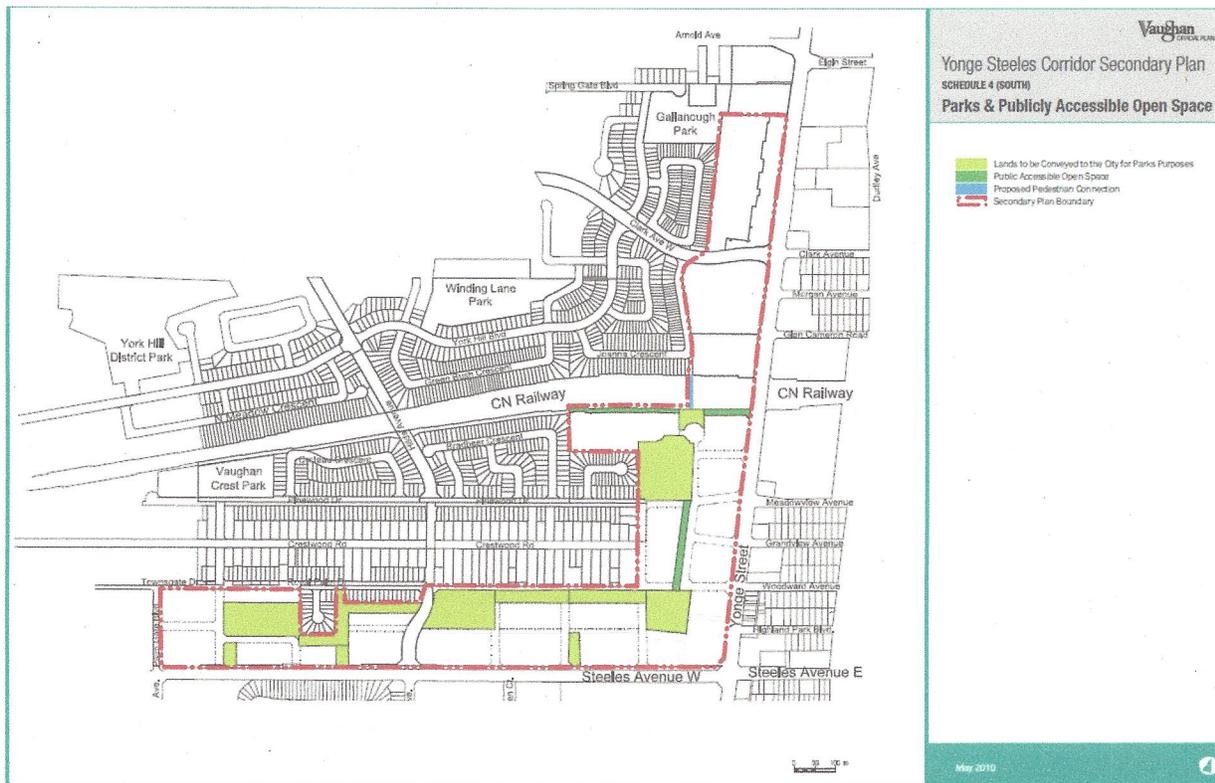
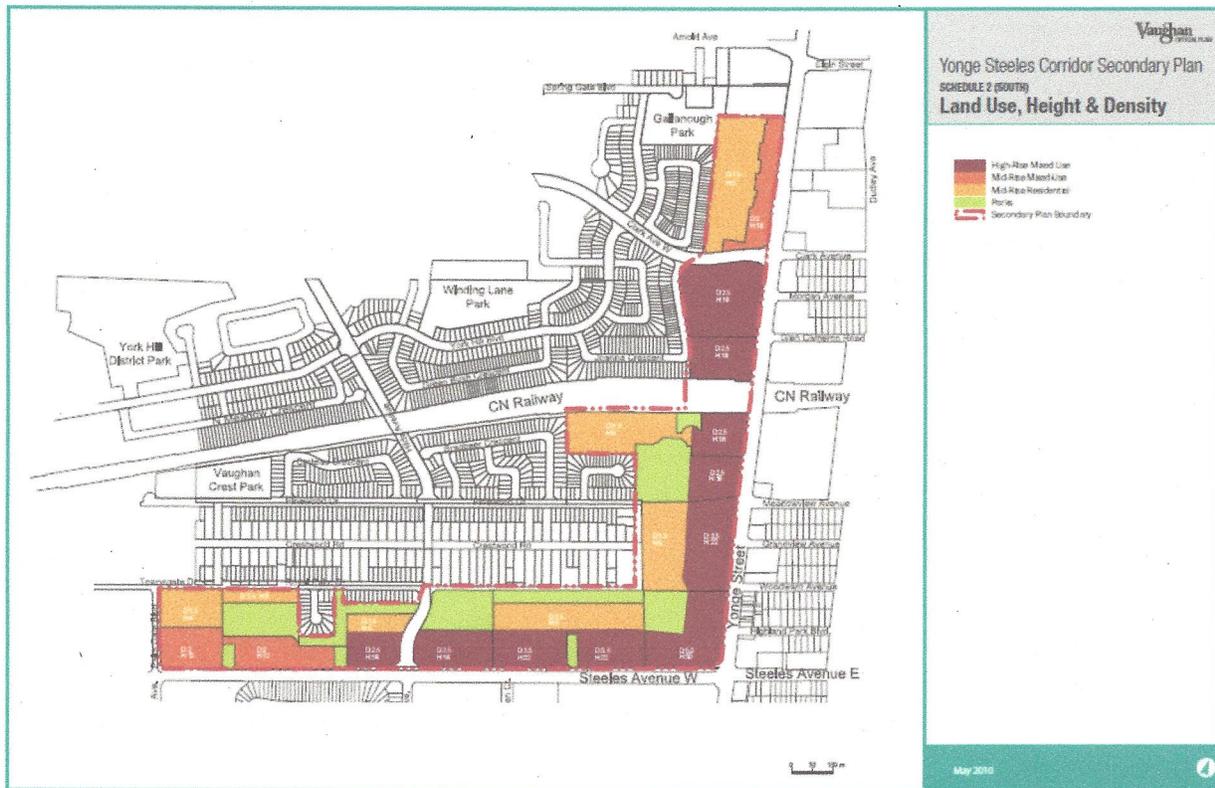
4.4 Parkland Conveyance

Parkland shall be conveyed in accordance with Official Plan policy 7.3.3.2. Lands to be conveyed for parks purposes shall be located generally in accordance with the lands shown as Parks on Schedule 4.

Any parkland required to achieve the parkland system shown on Schedule 4, which is over and above the amount that can be secured through the parkland conveyance outlined in Section 7.3.3.2 of the Official Plan, will be subject to policies outlined in Sections 7.3.3.7 and 10.1.2.8 of the Official Plan.”

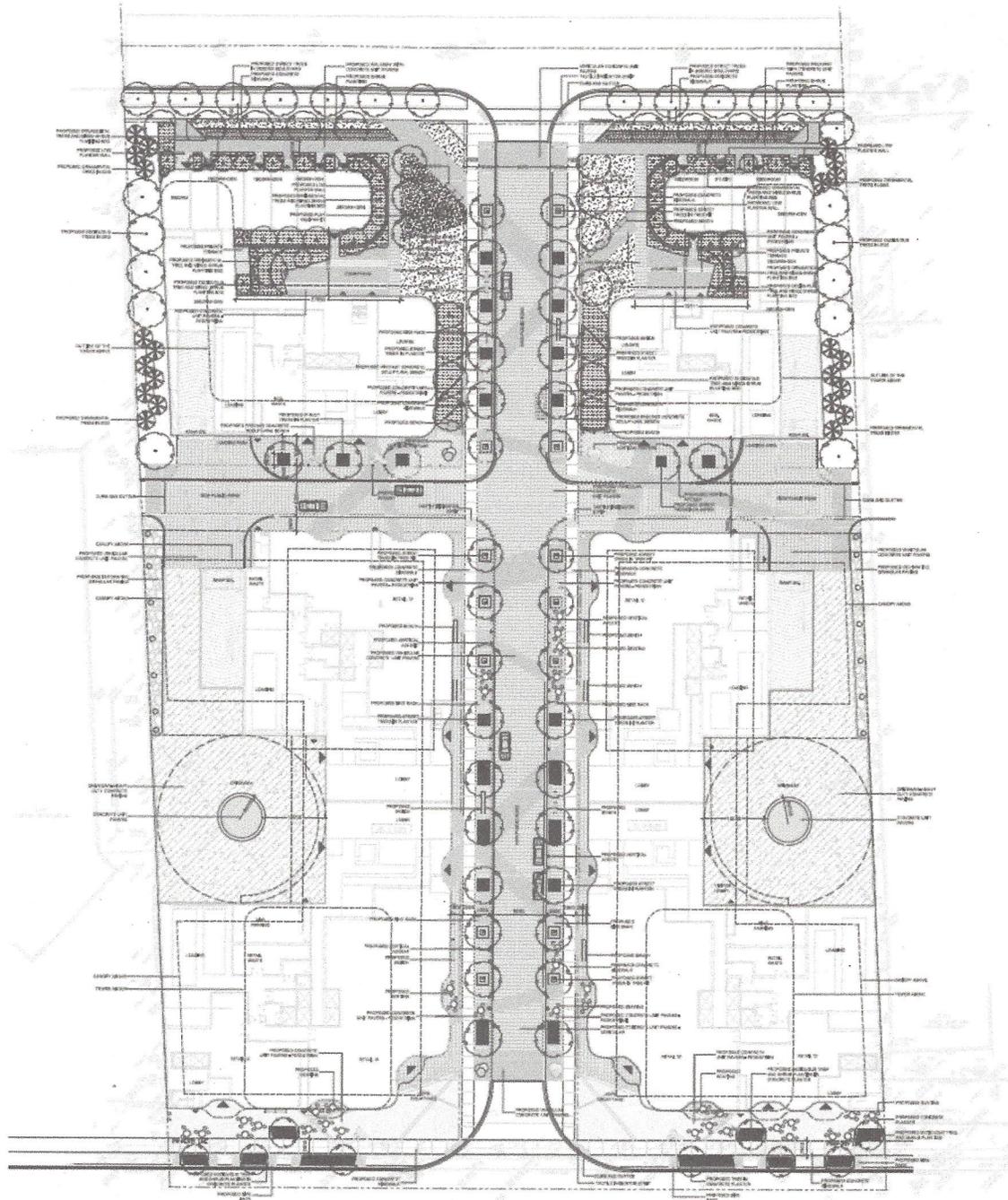
As can be seen in Schedules 2 and 4 below (marked in green), the Secondary Plan incorporated a significant portion of land in the area to serve as a green “buffer” and connector transition

between low-rise residential and the mid-rise residential properties. In particular, we note the designation of a linear park of roughly a 50-foot width on the southern side of the Royal Palm Drive Extension from Hilda to the southern extension of Powell Road.



It is therefore both surprising and glaring that the Mizrahi (Figure 1) proposal includes only a small strip of trees (two and one row, respectively) on the south side of Royal Palm for any green space, despite the very deep lot of 180 Steeles Ave West. They have instead provided podium rooftop “amenities” for the exclusive use of the building residences, but inaccessible and therefore prohibited to nearby established residences.

Figure 1: Mizrahi Detailed Site Landscaping (Urban Design and Sustainability Brief, p.87)



Mizrahi has not provided any land for public park, and any green or open space amenities and landscaping (aside from a small row of trees on the north end of the property) are all contained within and for the exclusive benefit of the new buildings. These omissions were frequently identified in the May 28, 2020 Design Review Panels for this project.

This omission of a linear park system is a missed opportunity for a significant green “ribbon” with potential amenities such as bike paths, water fountains/splash pads, sculptures, benches, playgrounds, gazebos, etc. We urge Mizrahi to reconsider their plans and design for a vibrant and substantial green ribbon linear park as envisioned and required by the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan.