

Mizrahi Intro Written Deputation – on behalf of SFRA

My name is Jordan Max, and I am the Vice President of the Springfarm Ratepayers Association or SFRA, which has been formally registered with the City since 2016. Our boundaries in Ward 5 are from Yonge to Bathurst, and Steeles to Centre, and includes the proposed redevelopment sites. The SFRA is not against redevelopment *per se*. We accept redevelopments that are within the established planning parameters set by the City, and that respect their local context.

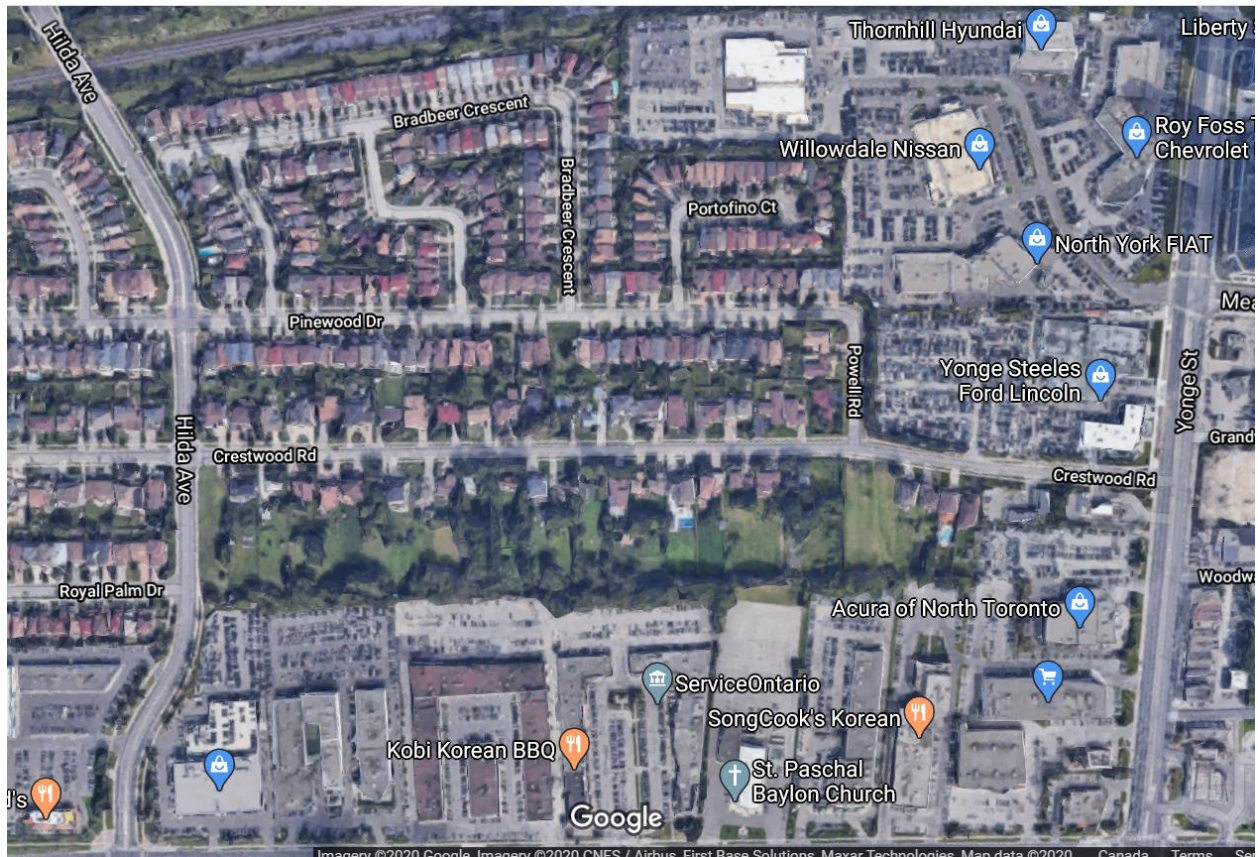
Four years ago we challenged RioCan's proposed 22-storey condominium building at the Springfarm Plaza on Clark at Hilda, on the grounds that it was clearly out of character and proportion with a four-storey zoning allowance. We do our homework. We presented factual analysis on the different elements that illustrated those points, and Council was receptive to our positions. RioCan subsequently abandoned that project. We are even more deeply concerned about the extent of this redevelopment on our residents' daily lives than we were with RioCan's. To paraphrase the famous Yogi Berra saying, "it's déjà vu all over again".

Since we are holding this meeting on two adjacent proposals, much of that analysis is common to both proposals, while some details are different. However, first we want to provide some historical and contextual information to better understand the area these proposals affect.

a) Introduction to the Crestwood neighbourhood

The Crestwood neighbourhood north of the redevelopment site itself shows up in aerial maps since at least 1953. Crestwood Road includes a variety of size homes, and 300-foot deep lots on the south side, with older bungalows and larger recently constructed single detached dwellings. North of Crestwood Avenue, north to the CNR rail corridor, is an area consisting of low-rise residential dwellings on lots typically smaller than those on Crestwood Avenue that dates back to around 1987. Many residents have lived here for at least 30 years. There are approximately 230 single-family homes in the area. To ensure that the opinions and needs of these local residents most directly impacted by these developments were understood and represented, SFRA formed a Crestwood Committee, many members of whom have provided written submissions and oral deputations.

Figure 1 shows an overview of the area. The residential area is north of the green ribbon in the middle, and south of that are a series of retail strip mall plazas accessed from Steeles Ave, with parallel parking and interior parking lots, a church, a private school, five car dealerships, and another 6 dealerships immediately north on the west side of Yonge Street, north of Crestwood Road.

Figure 1 – Crestwood Area Map**b) OPA 210 – Thornhill Community Plan**

In 1987, Council approved Official Plan Amendment #210 ('OPA #210', also known as the Thornhill Community Plan), and designated it as a "General Commercial Area". This designation permits the existing commercial uses to continue and permits retail stores, restaurants, banks and business and professional offices, but precludes residential.¹ OPA 210 was subsequently amended by OPA #255 to Mixed Commercial/Residential Area, with a limit of 124 units/hectare. However, the Yonge Frontage is designated as General Commercial.

c) Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan

As one of Vaughan's Primary Centres in the Official Plan, the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan was approved by Council in September 2010 and adopted by York Region in January 2016. It replaced OPA 210, and is a well-thought-out plan, which recognized the value of Yonge & Steeles as an intensification area. It was built on the assumption of a future TTC subway station at Yonge & Steeles.

¹ Yonge Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan, City of Vaughan, September 2010, p. 2



“1.0 The policies of this Plan have been designed to address either the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit Service along Yonge Street or the extension of the Yonge subway to Highway 407.” (page 1)

The Secondary Plan allowed for 30 storeys of height for high-rise mixed residential use at the northwest corner of Yonge and Steeles, with office space as a priority, tapering west down to 22 stories (where 180 and 100 Steeles Ave West are), with densities ranging from 5.0 down to 3.5 respectively, and mid-rise residential use of 5 storeys and a density of 1.5 FSI.

The Secondary Plan has a linear park as a green space buffer, internal roads north of Steeles, and extends Royal Palm Drive from Hilda to Yonge. It meets all VOP and provincial planning objectives.

The approved Secondary Plan is sufficient and provides a realistic and proportional transition from a single-family neighbourhood to a more urbanized format. It is currently under LPAT appeal by the developers. However, the developer's reports have not provided any quantitative proof that 22 storeys and 3.5 FSI is insufficient to meet local and regional planning objectives.

Figure 2 – Secondary Plan

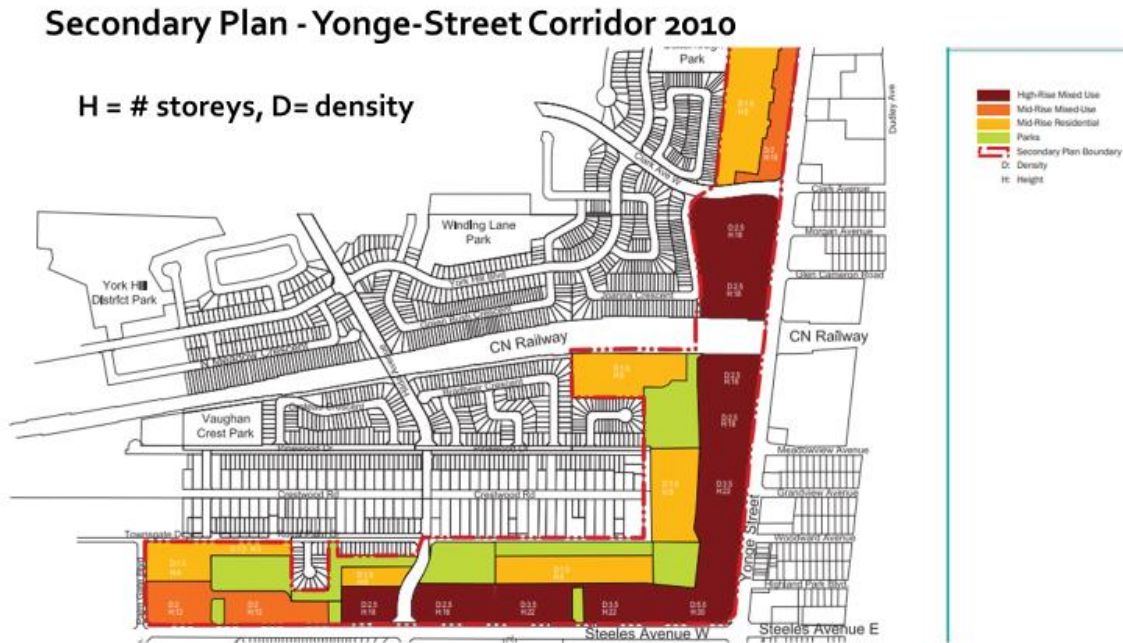
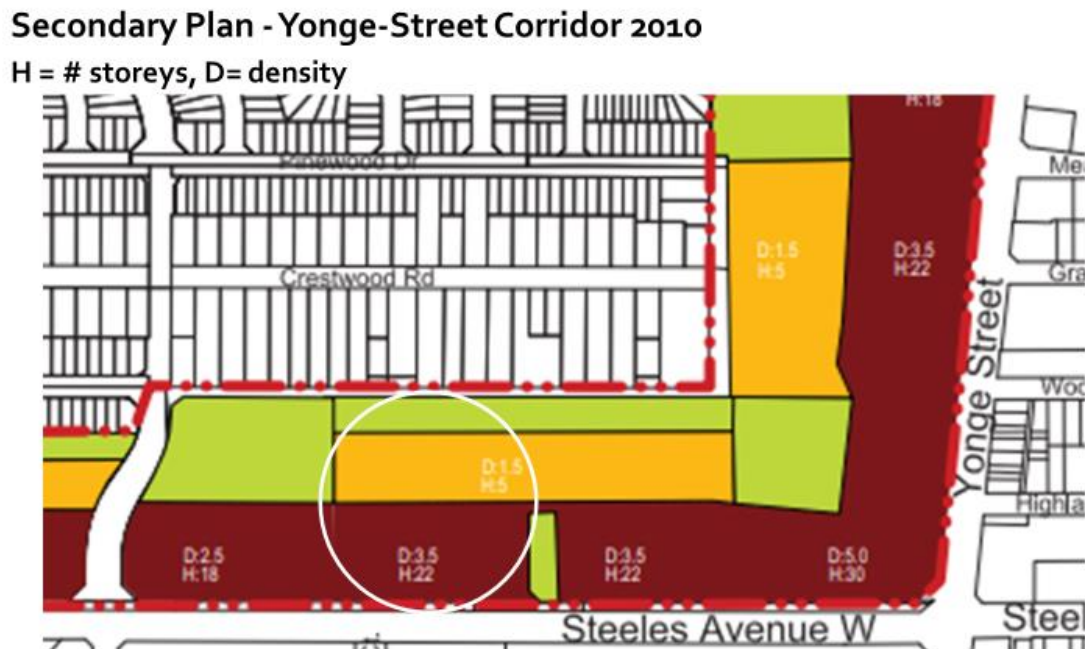


Figure 3 - Secondary Plan Height and Density limits for 180 and 100 Steeles Ave West



Since the Secondary Plan was appealed to the OMB in 2010, apparently the uses and limits now revert to OPA 210. Since the OPA 210 precludes residential use, the developer now wants it

both ways: he argues that the Secondary Plan is not in effect, thereby relying on a lower threshold to argue why he needs even greater height and density.

d) Resident survey results highlights

In May and June 2020, SFRA carried out a survey of the local area residents within our catchment area to determine the current area issues, their response to the redevelopments, and what their preferences for additional local benefits would be for all of the proposed redevelopments. We received 264 responses, including 1/3 of those residents living between Steeles and the CNR tracks and Hilda to Yonge. 85% identified traffic congestion at Yonge & Steeles, followed by local cross-traffic at major intersections, and car dealer test drive speeding on internal roads as a persistent safety issue, followed by lack of municipal services at 35% and other car dealer-generated issues.

Sixty-five percent of Local residents frequently patronize the local restaurants and stores in the strip mall plazas on the north side of Steeles, which have extensive surface parking and are almost always full.

The most frequently-noted concerns with the proposal are increased traffic congestion at Yonge & Steeles, increased height and density, increased local cross-traffic, overcrowded retail stores, and a dramatic change in the local neighbourhood character. Residents appreciate that the developments could provide at and below-grade access to the future subway station, although these are in the Gupta proposal. Retail shops would be of interest although it is uncertain how they would park nearby as currently. Fifty-seven percent of respondents could accept building heights of up to 30 storeys, and another 37% said it would depend on how the buildings were massed and sited. When asked about possible improvements to the proposals, the top-ranked items were mature shade trees, access to underground parking for the subway station, community facilities and public spaces, and an open-air amphitheatre, followed by a seniors centre, family-sized residential units, internal road connections, outdoor fitness equipment, a grocery store, indoor community theatre, and other similar public amenities. Finally, 56% preferred to see only owner-occupied condominium units in the residential towers, while 44 percent wanted to see a mix of owner and rental units.

e) Major Concerns

The SFRA's Crestwood Committee has spent a considerable amount of time reviewing in depth the submitted technical reports and studies on both redevelopment proposals. We are all amateurs, not paid professional staff working for the City or developers. We found substantive errors in assumptions and methodologies supporting and justifying the proposal. In some cases, the work is incomplete, inaccurate, or shoddy. There is no provision for surface parking for the numerous local at-grade retail stores and restaurants that will replace those currently well serviced by surface parking. Patrons of those stores will not be able to access the underground parking. Do they honestly expect that all patrons will walk, bike, or take public transit to do local shopping or have meals out?

We found that both proposals violated the Urban Design Guide by locating the origin of the 45-degree angular plane to transition from lower-rise residential 33 feet north of the site's property line, which allows for 16 floors as the first intersect with that extended 45 degree line. Correctly, it would intersect with the third or fourth floor based on current setbacks from the property line.

And as you hopefully know, if you have a poor foundation, the building above it is going to be shaky and ultimately unsafe. The same is true for questionable studies and reports. No amount of artistic architecture can correct that.

We have substantial concerns with the number of buildings, proposed heights and densities. From the World on Yonge, Vanguard building and 10 Tangreen, we know what 25 to 34 storey buildings in the vicinity look like, and they tower over and shade the area. The Mizrahi-proposed buildings ranging from 16 to 45 storeys are more than double those allowed in the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan approved by Vaughan Council in 2010. The proposed addition 20,000+ people to the immediate area from this and the three other projects is a 2000% increase in population. Two thousand percent, 20 times the current load. It will have a disastrous impact on traffic congestion, public transportation, green space, internal roads, shadow, wind, infrastructure, and community services and facilities. These are explained in greater detail in other written submissions by local residents.

Simply put, there are too many buildings crammed into the site, with excessive height and density.

Moreover, despite knowing the current shortage of parks, community centres, libraries in the area, the developers have chosen to not include any features or benefits to residents of the immediate neighbourhood that will be overwhelmed. Nor is there any apparent attempt in the proposal to relate, integrate or co-ordinate it with its adjacent, equally large redevelopment. Simply put, this is not good planning. You will soon be hearing more on each of these concerns from local residents.

f) Projects Integration

Council is being asked to receive two adjacent proposals for high-rise development on their own merits. Another one, from Gupta, is at the northwest corner of Yonge & Steeles, with two 52 storey and one 65-storey residential towers was submitted over a year ago. A fourth one, adjacent to the Gupta one, is anticipated from Humbolt Properties, and the preliminary concept shown to SFRA is consistent with 3 residential towers of around 50 storeys. Taken together, these four projects, all within 500 metres of Yonge & Steeles, constitute at least 16 residential buildings, with around 7,500 units, resulting in upwards of 20,000 new residents.

Section 8.5 of the Secondary Plan was quite explicit that the entire area be planned in a block, so that there would be connections between internal roads, relationships between different projects, and co-ordination of open and green space and community facilities.

8.5 Development Plan

“A detailed Development Plan shall be prepared by all significant development proponents within High- Rise, Mid-Rise, Low-Rise Mixed-Use and Mid-Rise Residential designations to establish the contextual relationship of the proposed development to existing and proposed development in the surrounding area in accordance with Official Plan policy 10.1.1.6. In addition to the provisions of Section 10.1.1.6, such plans should include the following:

- i. A Phasing Plan in accordance with Section 8.6, showing how orderly development will be achieved on the development parcel over the long term and how coordination with the provision of servicing, parks, roads, human services, transit and other infrastructure improvements will be achieved including consideration of the equitable sharing of the costs of public infrastructure with adjacent landowners;
- ii. A Travel Demand Management Plan in accordance with Section 5.9 of this Plan;
- iii. The location and massing of proposed buildings and open spaces in relation to existing and proposed developments in the surrounding area;
- iv. A plan for providing a range of housing choices that reflect a variety of types, tenures, unit sizes to meet the needs of a range of residents, including affordable housing provision, in accordance with Regional Policies;
- v. A Community Services Impact Statement in accordance with Section 7.1 of this Plan;
- vi. Pedestrian comfort considerations on the public realm through the submission of wind and sun/shadow reports;
- vii. Light, view and privacy considerations for residents and workers;
- viii. Sustainable design initiatives in accordance with Section 6.1 of this Plan;
- ix. Mitigation of urban heat island effects through the use of green or white roofs and greening to increase shade and cooling;
- x. The preservation and enhancement of the tree canopy; and
- xi. The provision of innovative on-site approaches to managing stormwater that include natural stormwater infiltration, recovery of stormwater and reuse through the use of storage facilities such as cisterns and low-impact development to achieve the criteria and requirements identified in Appendix 1.” (pp. 13-14)

The current proposal does not indicate any connections or linkage between the two adjacent projects, particularly the internal east-west service roads. Each project has been designed as a standalone entity, and in fact is inward-facing, with no regard for integration with neighbouring properties, which was frequently noted at the May 28, 2020 Design Review Panel's initial assessment.

Moreover, since the four land owners mentioned above are part of a larger Landowners Group and are currently in multi-party mediation at LPAT to appeal the Secondary Plan, it is certainly not unreasonable that they be expected to work together to integrate, rationalize and co-ordinate their respective projects as a cohesive whole. Even if individually they could not afford community features or benefits, they could most certainly afford them by pooling their resources.

SFRA's position is that Council must consider the impacts of these four projects in their combined entirety, and demand that the landowners collectively work with the City and local residents to create an overall Development Plan for this new, mostly vertical neighbourhood, within the reasonable guidelines of the Yonge-Steeles Secondary Plan.

g) Conclusion

On behalf of the Springfarm Ratepayers Association, and the local residents, I urge Council to send this developer a very strong message to rework their proposals to comply with the limits and requirements that this Council approved in the Yonge-Steeles Corridor Secondary Plan. The Secondary Plan made sense then, it still makes sense today.

If Council agrees to substantially modify or gut the Secondary Plan, it might as well just tear up its Official Plan and all other Secondary Plans, as they will become meaningless. The Official Plan clearly stated the unique value of the VMC as the place with highest densities and the tallest buildings Yonge and Steeles is not intended to be another VMC. Vaughan will just be known as Houston North, where planning is irrelevant and whatever developers want, they get. I hope that this is not Council's wish.

We reiterate: the SFRA is not opposed to redevelopment *per se*, but it must be well-thought out, proportionate, integrated, co-ordinated, and negotiated with local residents. The Springfarm Ratepayers Association is ready to roll up its sleeves and work co-operatively with the developer, as long as it respects the local community and approved Secondary Plan. Please don't let Edifice Complex and architecture prevail over common sense and consistent use of good planning.