

# ***LAND USE COUNCIL***

*"advocating social, economic and environmental balance in government legislation affecting land"*

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May 1, 2010

Town of Markham Mayor and Council  
101 Town Centre Boulevard  
Markham, ON., L3R 9W3

Ladies and Gentlemen:

**Re: Saving Family Farms**

The Land Use Council is an Ontario consortium of private sector Associations mandated to track government policies affecting privately owned land as well as the activities of special interest groups relating to or influencing such policies.

In that context we have examined a recent submission of the Academic Alliance for Agriculture, identified as a number of faculty members associated with several prominent universities, that calls for Town of Markham council "support" of family farms under council jurisdiction. It appears this initiative contemplates "saving" farmland as a geographic asset. However it ignores the reality that statutory harassment, permanently depressed commodity prices and virtually no tariff protection is unlikely to attract new believers in the business of making a living from Markham area agricultural land, "saved" or otherwise..

Whether the Council invited this submission, whether its authors are expressing personal or transplanted views, whether, in either case, same might be later considered grounds for litigation - these are typical of many questions arising from the Academic Alliance for Agriculture paper.

Meanwhile, this example of collective academic thought lacks structural clarity and outlines no workable business plan. In our view, "enhancing markets for locally grown food" is not a business plan. Moreover, Dr. Etcheverry and Darcy Higgins do not identify or evaluate saleable produce in accordance with best management practices. Nor do they provide a marketing program with detailed cost lines as would be required to meet generally accepted accounting principles in any application for start-up funding from reputable financial institutions.

Their generalized expertise and assurance of "support" doesn't recognize Guelph University and its extensive data bank that highlights institutional failure to address the income crisis prevailing in Ontario agriculture where excessive regulation has devalued land equity and destroyed occupational incentive. Instead, ideological platitudes abound while systemic problems such as the ever-increasing average age of to-day's farmers and the generational rollover thereby required to support the illusion of profitable greenbelt and food belt farming in the absence of financial viability are not mentioned.

Legal precedent confirms injury to business viability arising from government decision or the claims of professional lobbyists sometimes warrants directed recovery of injurious costs from those traditional sources of commercial damage. In that regard, it is unclear whether the Academic Alliance submission to Markham council enjoys the support and binding commitment of the institutions its authors appear to represent. Thus creditability of the document and accountability of its individual signatories may later relate to allegations of injurious affection within the agricultural industry, a possibility that deserves vigilant attention in advance.

We urge Town of Markham authorities to review a recent paper from the Fraser Institute regarding common law rights of land ownership. This incisive analysis confirms the importance of those rights to Canadian society at large and can be seen at:

[http://www.fraserinstitute.org/Commerce.Web/product\\_files/key-concepts-property-rights](http://www.fraserinstitute.org/Commerce.Web/product_files/key-concepts-property-rights)

In summary, our consortium feels many members of Markham's council may be influenced by the views of individuals and groups with less than sufficient knowledge of to-day's agricultural complexities. We accordingly suggest, with respect, that the recent Academic Alliance paper is noticeably short of detail essential to its official adoption by Council which, in turn, might unintentionally cause or contribute to injury and hence to compulsory restitution to injured parties in perpetuity.

Thanks for your attention.

Bruce Pearse, Chair  
Land Use Council  
16190 Highways 7 & 12  
Sunderland, Ontario, L0C 1H0  
Phone: 705-357-3054 / Fax: 705-357-3963

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**The Land Use Council is a public service consortium sponsored by the combined memberships of:**

***Food Chain / Halton Region Federation of Agriculture / Ontario Landowners Association  
Ontario Property and Environmental Rights Alliance / Peel District Federation of Agriculture***

***E-Mail:*** [landusecouncil@gmail.com](mailto:landusecouncil@gmail.com)

***Web Page:*** [www.landusecouncil@gmail.com](http://www.landusecouncil@gmail.com)

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**Hau, Lucy**

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**Subject:** FMarkham's Foodbelt / Markham's Quality of Life / Canada's Quality of Life

----- Original Message -----

From: Zeesman, Bernie

Sent: Thu May 06 11:30:21 2010

Subject: Markham's Foodbelt / Markham's Quality of Life / Canada's Quality of Life

Thank you for your time everyone.

I am a very concerned York Region citizen. This is an issue across York Region and the rest of Canada. However, Markham is currently at a turning point. Myself along with many other citizens are concerned that dwindling farmland will be further diminished if the York Region 22-yr growth plan is not altered.

I do not profess to be an expert on the topic but it is clear just by reading the local articles and following the reports that farmland is disappearing at an alarming rate. Instead of focusing on grow, grow, grow; can we not focus on getting what we have functioning and working properly? Clearly, the full speed ahead approach to growth across all of North America has led to major ecological and economical issues not to mention energy, traffic and pollution issues.

Let's take a stand and do it right this time. A time-out if you will. Let's stabilize all of those issues and really look at how growth can work properly with consideration to all involved including farmland.

If we can accomplish this, we can be a model to the rest of Canada and the world. It's not all about money folks!

So in conclusion, we are encouraging you to "DO THE RIGHT THING!"

1. Please refrain from passing the regional official growth plan until further public consultation and planning has occurred in Markham;
2. Limit Markham's population growth to less than 25% over the next 22 years;
3. Create a permanent Markham foodbelt and natural heritage system by expanding the Greenbelt from the Oak Ridges Moraine southward to Major Mackenzie Drive;
4. Protect communities from over intensification - enact height restrictions near existing residential communities (e.g. six storey maximum).

Thanks again for your time and attention.

Please consider the environment before printing this email!

Bernie Zeesman



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# Ecological Integrity

3227 Nightingale Way  
Oakville, Ontario, L6M 3S1

andrew@ecologicalintegrity.com  
416 231 9484

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May 8, 2010

Mayor and Council  
Markham, Ontario  
PDF via e-mail

**RE: The Proposed Markham Foodbelt**

Dear Mayor Skarpitti and Members of Council,

The possible establishment of a Markham Foodbelt has captured the imagination of many people who live in southern Ontario and beyond, and requires wise consideration of many issues.

Currently, global trends on ecological integrity, international trade, and food security present uncertain scenarios, at best. Key challenges include:

- continuing reductions in biodiversity and crop pollination;
- the impacts of changing temperature and precipitation patterns on staple foods;
- increased competition for dwindling oil supplies, resulting in huge cost increases for transportation, effecting everything from rice and coffee to bananas and orange juice; and,
- the draining of agricultural sources of water, from the Ogallala Aquifer and glacier-fed prairie rivers, as well as the increasing salination of other sources of water and indeed many fertile river deltas.

In the face of these uncertainties, it behooves Canadians to protect agricultural lands for future generations. Long term benefits include:

- maintaining the ecological integrity of the bio-region;
- expediting the transition to a low-carbon local economy;
- fostering the development of sustainable communities with a healthy mix of agricultural and urban uses; and, of course,
- providing enhanced protection for national food security.

The challenges of a vibrant foodbelt are legion and not all, such as those dealing with taxes on agricultural land, the valuation of ecological goods and services, or possible agricultural land-banking, are within your purview.

However, the fundamental vision and commitment must be yours.

I urge you to move forward on the establishment of a Markham Foodbelt and to address problematic details as they arise.

Sincerely,

*Andrew McCammon*

(4)

Hau, Lucy

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Subject: FW: Vote for the Markham Foodbelt

----- Original Message -----

From: Darcy Trevelyan

To: Kitteringham, Kimberley; Scarpitti, Frank; Jones, Jim; Landon, Gord; Virgilio, Joseph; Heath, Jack; Shapero, Erin; Burke, Valerie; Hamilton, Don; Webster, John; Horchik, Dan; Kanapathi, Logan; Chiu, Alex; Moretti, Carolina

Cc: Huguette Allen <huguette@greenparty.ca>

Sent: Sun May 09 01:29:00 2010

Subject: Vote for the Markham Foodbelt

Hello Mayor and Councillors of Markham

I just watched David Suzuki describing the bold steps your city is poised to make and if he supports it, I do too. Please don't get nervous about this, it is the right thing to do even if developers and land owners cry about communism and socialism. They are small in number. Please think of the rest of your community. I live in Vernon BC and have grown up watching acres and acres of ranch land and orchards up and down the Okanagan Valley destroyed for the sake of big houses and yards. Our local governments need someone to look up to. Your town, like mine, sits on some of the relatively minuscule amount of the Canadian landscape that is good for producing food and I'm sure your grandchildren will appreciate local food if you let them.

Thank you

Darcy Trevelyan

(5)

**Hau, Lucy**

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**Subject:** FW: Support the Markham Foodbelt Proposal

----- Original Message -----

To: webmaster@environmentaldefence.ca <webmaster@environmentaldefence.ca>; Kitteringham, Kimberley

Sent: Fri May 07 23:26:06 2010

Subject: Support the Markham Foodbelt Proposal

First name:

Trish

Last name:

McCormick

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to share with you my strong support for the proposal before Council for a Markham Foodbelt.

Protection of the Town of Markham's remaining farmland and green space is one of the most critical issues facing Markham. The community's farms and farmlands are vital to the tradition of Markham and a permanent Markham Foodbelt would be a major step in protecting this important heritage.

Protecting farmland and green space in Markham makes sense for our neighbourhoods, our watershed and our local food supply.

Thank you, and I look forward to your support.

Sincerely

Hau, Lucy

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Subject: FW: please say YES to FARM BELT

----- Original Message -----

From: Patricia McCormick

To: Kitteringham, Kimberley; Scarpitti, Frank; Jones, Jim; Landon, Gord; Virgilio, Joseph; Heath, Jack; Shapero, Erin; Burke, Valerie; Hamilton, Don; Webster, John; Horchik, Dan; Kanapathi, Logan; Chiu, Alex; Moretti, Carolina

Sent: Fri May 07 23:48:19 2010

Subject: please say YES to FARM BELT

Dear Mayor and Councillors.

Please vote YES to the FARM BELT and make Markham a model community for all North America.

Please compensate older farmers who want out and let young people with a passion for 21st century farming create local market garden

and livestock farms.

Please stand against developers.

You will be so honoured and respected for taking this stand against urban sprawl on class A farmland ! for generations, for eternity, to come.

Thank you. Sincerely,

Patricia McCormick

Hau, Lucy

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Subject: FW: re Markham's Quality of Life

----- Original Message -----

From: Anne Faulkner

To: Kitteringham, Kimberley; Scarpitti, Frank; Jones, Jim; Landon, Gord; Virgilio, Joseph; Heath, Jack; Shapero, Erin; Burke, Valerie; Hamilton, Don; Webster, John; Horchik, Dan; Kanapathi, Logan; Chiu, Alex; Moretti, Carolina

Sent: Tue May 11 08:13:33 2010

Subject: re Markham's Quality of Life

Thank you so much Markham Council for your wonderful work and leadership, by requestint the expansion of the Greenbelt from the Oak Ridges Moraine south to Major Mackenzie Drive by creating a Markham Foodbelt. Excellent proposal!

I taught for 33 years in York Region including Markham and Unionville, where I also taught Mayor Bell and Mayor Roman's children - a long time ago, it seems.

It gives me great joy today to read your proposal and I wish you the best, but it comes as no surprise that Markham always a leader in the past is now a leader for the next generation.

Anne Faulkner



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**Hau, Lucy**

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**Subject:** FW: Support the Markham Foodbelt Proposal

-----Original Message-----

From:

Sent: May 10, 2010 8:07 PM

To: webmaster@environmentaldefence.ca; Kitteringham, Kimberley

Subject: Support the Markham Foodbelt Proposal

First name:

carmela

Last name:

marshall

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing to share with you my strong support for the proposal before Council for a Markham Foodbelt.

Protection of the Town of Markham's remaining farmland and green space is one of the most critical issues facing Markham. The community's farms and farmlands are vital to the tradition of Markham and a permanent Markham Foodbelt would be a major step in protecting this important heritage.

Protecting farmland and green space in Markham makes sense for our neighbourhoods, our watershed and our local food supply.

Thank you, and I look forward to your support.

Sincerely

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<http://greenbeltalliance.ca>