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#15

MARKHAM GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Submission to Markham Council

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Lorne McCool

BACKGROUND

- TAXPAYER REPRESENTING MYSELF
- WORKED FOR THREE GREAT MAYORS
 - ROMAN, SCARPITTI, COUSENS
- 20 YEARS AGO, INITIATED PLANNING FOR ORIGINAL CORNELL, MARKHAM CENTER, AND ANGUS GLEN PLANS
 - TO DEVELOP ALTERNATIVES TO THE TRADITIONAL EXTREMES OF SPRAWLING SUBDIVISIONS AND SEAS OF HIGHRISES

BACKGROUND(CONT'D)

- A LOT CHANGED OVER 20 YEARS
- COUNCIL, STAFF, GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR POLICIES, CONSTRAINTS, OPPORTUNITIES, PERSPECTIVES AND, INEVITABLY, DEVELOPMENT "MODELS" AND PLANS
- YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO DEAL WITH SOME SITUATIONS NOT OF YOUR MAKING , AND SHAPE THE MOST POSITIVE OUTCOMES FROM THEM
- WHERE YOU'RE FORTUNATE ENOUGH TO "CALL THE SHOTS" YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO FORGE YOUR OWN LEGACY

PURPOSE

- TO ASK COUNCIL TO EXERCISE BALANCE AND MODERATION IN DECIDING ON MARKHAM'S FUTURE:
 - DO NOT TIP THE SCALES TO AN EXTREME
 - DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE CARRIED AWAY BY A GALLOPING, BLINKERED HORSE FROM ANY CAMP

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

- DON'T ARGUE ABOUT SUBURB vs CITY, HIGHWAY 7 vs AVENUE 7
- ARGUE ABOUT THE QUALITY AND IMPACT OF WHAT'S HITTING THE GROUND
- ENSURE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CONTRIBUTES TO CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS UPLIFTING NOT IRRITATING...REFRESHING NOT DEFLATING
- BE RIGOROUS ABOUT DEMANDING SUPERIOR DESIGN RESULTS FROM ANY PROPOSALS NOT UP TO PAR

QUALITY (CONT'D)

- BE UNRELENTING IN RELATION TO ANY PROPOSALS THAT DEMONSTRATE A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY
- GUARANTEE THE BAR WILL NEVER BE PERMITTED TO FALL SO LOW AS TO MAKE THE ONLY DANGER, ONE OF TRIPPING OVER IT
- WHEN YOU HAVE TO SETTLE FOR "GOOD ENOUGH", PLEASE MAKE CERTAIN IT'S GOOD BEFORE YOU SETTLE
- KEEP UNDISTINGUISHED BUILDINGS, ANONYMOUS SUBDIVISIONS AND EXCESSIVE SEAS OF HIGH-RISES AT BAY... ALL ARE PRODUCTS OF STUNTED, NOT SOARING VISIONS

SPRAWL?

- BE AS CONCERNED ABOUT VERTICAL SPRAWL AS HORIZONTAL SPRAWL
- A CONTROLLED EXTENSION TO AN URBAN BOUNDARY IS NOT SPRAWL

AGRICULTURAL LANDS

- LAND-USE TRADE-OFFS ARE UNAVOIDABLE IN ONTARIO GROWTH CENTRES
- AGENCIES WOULD INTERVENE IF MARKHAM'S ACTIONS THREATENED PROVINCIAL / REGIONAL AGRICULTURAL SUSTAINABILITY
- TRANSFER THE GROWTH ALLOCATION TO ANOTHER COMMUNITY?
- RE-DISTRIBUTION WITHIN YORK REGION WOULD STILL RAISE IDENTICAL ISSUES

AGRICULTURAL LANDS (CONT'D)

- PROVINCE IS UNLIKELY TO PERMIT A GROWTH ALLOCATION "CAP AND TRADE" MARKET BETWEEN CITIES AND REGIONS ACROSS ONTARIO
- "FOODBELT" CONCEPT IS PREMATURE AND DEMANDS CLEARER DEFINITION, BROADER CONSIDERATIONS AND PROVINCIAL/REGIONAL BUY-IN
- AMPLE AGRICULTURAL LANDS REMAIN OUTSIDE THE PROPOSED BOUNDARY TO DO WHAT YOU WANT, WHEN YOU BETTER DEFINE WHAT THAT IS AND ITS' CONSEQUENCES
- THE OPPORTUNITY IS NOT LOST

100% PROPOSAL

- 21 YEARS OF FUTURE GROWTH DUMPED INTO THE EXISTING URBAN BOUNDARY
- ON TOP OF DENSITIES THAT ARE ALREADY STACKED HIGH
- NO ONE HAS ANY IDEA HOW IT WILL LOOK AND FUNCTION OR THE CONGESTION IT WILL EXACERBATE

TIMES DEVELOPMENTS

HIGHWAY 7

WARDEN TO SHERIDAN GARDEN CENTRE

- 18 HIGHRISES FROM 12 TO 20 STORIES, 78% OF WHICH ARE 18 TO 20 STORIES;
 - 4500 UNITS ...ALMOST 50% OF ALL UNITS ORIGINALLY ENVISIONED FOR THE ENTIRE MARKHAM CENTRE PLAN
- EQUAL TO 1/3 OF ALL UNITS PROPOSED BY PLANNING DEPT. FOR THE WHOLE URBAN BOUNDARY EXPANSION AREA TO 2031
- DOESN'T INCLUDE HIGH-RISES FROM ABUTTING "HOLD-OUT" DEVELOPER
- ONE OF THOSE "EXISTING CONDITION" SITUATIONS YOU HAVE HAD TO SHAPE TO PRODUCE THE MOST POSITIVE OUTCOME

CORNELL

- CURRENT HEIGHT MAXIMUM IS 4-12 STORIES ALONG HWY 7
- PRELIMINARY PROPOSALS/REQUESTS BY SOME LANDOWNERS FOR HIGHER DENSITIES ALONG HWY. 7 INVOLVING UP TO 30 STOREY HIGH-RISES
- PLANS IN ABEYANCE/ON HOLD PENDING MARKHAM COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

LANGSTAFF GATEWAY

HWYS. 407/7- YONGE TO BAYVIEW

- MARCH 2, PUBLIC MEETING NOTICE SAYS:
“A NUMBER OF HOUSING OPTIONS ARE PROPOSED, FROM HIGH DENSITY POINT TOWERS TO MID-RISE, MIXED-USE BUILDINGS TO TOWNHOMES..”
- PUBLIC NOTICE DOESN'T SAY:
32 HIGHRISES FROM 20 TO 50 STORIES, 50% OF WHICH ARE 40 AND 50 STORIES

PERSPECTIVE

- THESE PLANS WILL EXPRESS COUNCIL'S VISION FOR FUTURE HIGH DENSITY DEVELOPMENT IN MARKHAM
- LIKE IT OR NOT, THEY WILL SERVE AS “MODELS” AND PRECEDENTS FOR REDEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE IN MARKHAM
- THE SCALE AND INTENSITY OF HIGH-RISES IS A CONCERN

IMPACT OF MARKHAM PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS

- 80% OF NEW GROWTH TO 2031 WILL BE WITHIN THE EXISTING URBAN BOUNDARY
- PROFOUND SHIFT IN HOUSING MIX
- SINGLE FAMILY:
56% IN 2006, FALLS TO 39% IN 2031
- APARTMENTS:
11% IN 2006, RISES TO 32% IN 2031
- SEMI'S AND TOWNS:
33% IN 2006, DROPS TO 29% IN 2031

PLANNING RECOMMENDATIONS (CONT'D)

- REDUCTION IN SEMI'S AND TOWNS WILL WORSEN CHOICE, AVAILABILITY AND AFFORDABILITY OF GROUND-ORIENTED HOMES FOR FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN
- GROUND-RELATED HOUSING IS NOT AN ENEMY
- THE "... Bold intensification target of 60% based on Council's preferred direction to accommodate more residential intensification.." IS A LITTLE TOO BOLD

ASSUMPTIONS

- MARKHAM WELCOMES A BROAD RANGE OF HOUSING TYPES AND DENSITY CHOICES ALONG WITH HUMAN-SCALE URBAN CENTRES
- MARKHAM WANTS TO CONTINUE TO BE RECOGNIZED FOR THE QUALITY, CHARACTER AND LIVEABILITY OF ITS' BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS

REQUESTED ACTION

- ADOPT A NEW URBAN BOUNDARY BASED ROUGHLY ON YORK REGION / MARKHAM STAFF COMPROMISE (APPROX. 52%-55%)
- RE-CONSIDER THE INTENSITY OF THE LANGSTAFF GATEWAY BUILDING PLAN
- TURN DOWN SECONDARY PLAN AMENDMENTS FOR EXCESSIVE HEIGHTS IN CORNELL
- INCREASE, OR AT LEAST MAINTAIN, THE CURRENT PROPORTION OF SEMI'S AND TOWN'S IN THE OVERALL HOUSING STOCK BY REDUCING THE APARTMENT ALLOCATION

CONCLUSION

- MANAGE GROWTH WITH MODERATION AND BALANCE
- KEEP THE QUALITY BAR HIGH
- ENSURE NEW DEVELOPMENTS CONVEY A COMPELLING AND INSPIRING VISION OF MARKHAM
- IN THE WORDS OF THREE GREAT MAYORS:
 - COUSENS..... "MAKE SURE IT'S BETTER"
 - SCARPITTI... "MAKE SURE IT'S UPLIFTING"
 - ROMAN..... "DON'T SCREW IT UP"