

February 9, 2008

1965 Bur Oak Ave.
Markham, On
L6E 1W4

Mr. Denis Kelly
Region of York
denis.kelly@york.ca

RE: 16th, Bayview Avenues, Kennedy, & McCowan Rds: further to the Town of Markham's January 22nd Council meeting rallying support to NOT widen any of these corridors to 6 lanes.

Dear Mr. Kelly:

Dear Chair Fisch, Regional Councillors & Staff of York Region

On Tuesday, Jan. 22, 2008, I attended a meeting of my local Town of Markham Council to support the request of Regional Councillor Wong, Councillor Shapero and Councillor Burke asking York Region to seek alternatives to widening Bayview as well as 16th Avenue, Kennedy and McCowan Rds. I am compelled to express a number of concerns if York Region seeks to go forward with these initiatives.

This is a step in the wrong direction when it comes to the serious challenge that our metropolitan area faces when it comes to carbon dioxide emissions. The average household in York Region has between 2 and 4 cars. The reason that people buy cars is that we keep building things farther away and we don't put in sidewalks when we put in stores and neighbourhoods. Currently, we have lots and lots of roadways in York Region. Making them wider will bring more cars and congestion onto the roads and also send the message that driving by yourself everywhere (especially to work) is okay.

Well, it is not okay. I know I sound like I'm ranting but I am serious when I say that if we don't start getting citizens into the buses, walking, riding bikes or carpooling, we won't have a stable enough planet to enjoy our beautiful communities like the one I live in here in Markham.

When I move to Markham 9 years ago, there was some congestion but not a lot. With all the new houses, the corridors going out of Markham are completely congested. First of all, stop building more houses until the light rapid transit is in place, and secondly, make it more of an incentive for people to take transit or carpool. We should get the businesses involved in these projects. They need to take a lead and partner with the municipal stakeholders.

I know the new “Markham Town Centre” is a live-where-you-work community but it’s not built yet. Also, I hate to say it, but without a park or trail getting me out of this town centre, it’s not very friendly to recreational use.

I strongly urge the Region of York to stop making roads wider and focus on getting people to use their cars more wisely. I can guarantee you that building wider roads will just inconvenience the current users for several years while the improvements take place and then the congestion will continue to be there.

I cannot attend the meeting in person to discuss this but I am available for consultation after I return from vacation on February 25th.

Please, Chair Fisch, I urge you to re-think this whole project. Talk to the engineers outside the Planning department, talk to citizens, talk to people who have grand-children. Those grand children are inheriting a very big Climate Change problem and we’re just adding to it.

With the huge investment in transit and work/live communities that we are making, I feel that we do not need wider roads.

Thank you very much.

Sandra McEleney
Markham Resident and Member, Conservation Committee