

Summary Notes of Public comments
made at the Growth Management
Public Information Session
in Town of Markham
Thursday March 23, 2006

Feedback

- I represent "STOP" Community group involved in Hydro discussions, want to commend the Region on consultation and Sustain York Symposium as moving in the right direction, have some recommendations:
 - The discussions with Hydro were extensive, comprehensive, day long workshops. An open house for dialogue is a start, but hope there is a more in-depth opportunity for consultation, perhaps a task force.
 - All levels of government have to be engaged, creating a comprehensive strategy.
 - Our environmental assessment process is a sham – environmental considerations are not factored in at the beginning of the process, which focuses on technical and financial considerations.

Feedback

- Environmental considerations and community vision has to be factored in at the beginning of the process.
- It was suggested that, given that the power supply issue is potentially one aspect of “smart growth”, York Region should hold more extensive meetings in order to obtain more public input. Concerned that, while this current consultation is valid and appreciated, it does not allow for extensive and necessary dialogue.
- Unfortunately some community groups (such as STOP) have been treated like the enemy for voicing concerns and suggesting what kind of community we want to see.
- Recommend a more thorough consultation process, more detailed discussions, need more tools to communicate extensively.

Feedback

- Regarding the energy issue, the same issues are happening across the country – communities are fighting and trying to address rampant growth. We should learn from the experience of others and consider other best practices.
- STOP feels that municipalities have been permitted to approve development without the necessary infrastructure in place.
- How much can we control the growth that we’re facing, how much control do we have over creating the types of communities we want?
- Can we limit growth, manage, or direct it? What role does the Places to Grow Act play in forcing us to grow in a manner that could be too rapid?
- This process is very important, perhaps need workshops on each topic.
- How much growth can occur through intensification, concern around development on greenfields.

Feedback

- Have you considered intensification of employment lands?
- There is room in older areas for intensified development and new uses.
- When roads are built, they're very wide, there are issues around walkability.
- Crossing major roads is a barrier to pedestrians and the development of transit.
- Often have to go backwards to use Viva or drive to use it.
- A number of things talked about tonight will be important in terms of arts, culture and heritage.
- With population growth and intensification, arts, culture and heritage need to be part of planning and this will help people stay here and enjoy living here.
- Need same type of structure for arts, culture and heritage as human services and glad to see it as the fourth pillar.
- How will arts culture and heritage considerations be implemented?

Feedback

- How does the official plan for York Region and local communities mesh with each other, and can we dictate policy to local municipalities.
- Still haven't seen affordable housing in the Region, the Region has talked about it, and information is in our literature, but still have yet to see it, especially for youth, homeless families.
- We have always thought we are a community of high income earners but we do have homeless individuals.
- We need to address this, we need a sustainable solution, we need to provide affordable housing within our borders.
- Very concerned about transportation, way too many cars in the Region already. Consultations on Cornell talked about living working and playing within the community, the congestion is impassable around these communities.
- These communities have not been planned properly in terms of transportation needs and impacts.

Feedback



- Fear that intensification will make this worse, apartments and condo's etc. will create more cars not less.
- Can we control this, can we stop this. If we can't build the infrastructure to support these communities, then we should stop building them.
- What is the growth in the number of cars used on the Region's roads in comparison to transit use during the same time?
- What's happened in Cornell since they were supposed to be working, living and playing there. How many people are driving out of Cornell to work?
- We're about to run into the same problem with 'new urbanism' with Markham Centre and generation of traffic.

Feedback



- Under our current numbers around the number of people who commute out of the Region, then about 12,000 out of 17,000 will be commuting out of Markham Centre to work.
- We have a lack of media in York Region, we are consumed by Toronto media, we don't have our own Radio, TV stations or daily newspaper. Communities of comparable size (e.g. Peterborough) have their own daily newspaper.
- Without these outlets, we don't have the same mechanisms for dialogue and communicate messages.
- The title of the Session – Towards a Sustainable Region, the word is a different word for different people, perhaps too vague, e.g. housing, environment.
- How do we compare our growth and/or progress with past years?
- People are the greatest threat to the environment.