

STAKEHOLDER MEETING SUMMARIES

- 4.1 Agriculture Liaison Group
- 4.2 Human Services Planning Coalition
- 4.3 Whitchurch-Stouffville Council Meeting
- 4.4 High School Class
- 4.5 Environmental Interest Groups

Agricultural Liaison Group - Meeting April 19, 2006		Barb Jeffrey
Presentation on Planning For Tomorrow: York Region Growth Management		
Discussion:		
Ms. Barb Jeffrey made a presentation on York Region's Growth Management initiative. The presentation included growth trends, growth management successes and challenges, and a Provincial planning context.		
Group Discussion:		
• Agriculture should be mentioned every time you mention environment • Farmers don't want infrastructure for Agriculture to leap frog York and go to Simcoe. This would result in the farmer's service sector being pushed further away • Traffic issues for farm machines on road		
Action items:	Person responsible:	
Report back to the Group in the Fall	Barb Jeffrey	

ADDENDUM TO HSPC MEETING NOTES

Feedback – Human Services Planning Coalition April 19, 2006

- The Region does an outstanding job engaging communities and partners.
- Growth is presented in Planning for Tomorrow as land or air issues, IGAP needs to be factored into this document, and how it will impact planning for tomorrow.
- Need to include Lake Simcoe watershed and ecosystem in live/work considerations, especially as our population increases northward.
- Need to emphasise Lake Simcoe as an important regional resource.
- What will the impact of growth be on Lake Simcoe quality.

4.2



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Feedback

- This level of growth and the issues associated with it over the past and projected into the future are frightening.
- Intensification not only brings infrastructure issues to play but also significant social service considerations and implications – need more of this message in the materials.
- Need to speak about funding to keep pace with social service needs. Need to continue to replay messages from HSPC around health and social services.

Feedback

- To what extent are we able to design our own destiny under Province's plan, what level of control do we have over decisions that are being made for us.
- The message is "if you're imposing this on us we need the tools".
- Do we have the ability to say no to the levels of growth being asked of us.
- Need to look at where the youth population is, they are our future in terms of employment and services, if there isn't a place for them here, our future is not sustainable in terms of our economy and quality of life.

Feedback

- The human services side of planning is still needed in Provincial planning
- Recommend a resolution asking the Province to fund a human services plan to help accommodate the additional 600,000 people coming. We need a Provincial Master Plan for human services
- Recreation and culture are important to the quality of life in the Region, would like to see a Provincial plan that would ensure that all services are in place to match growth as well as adequate funding.

Feedback

- Would ask for a sustainable funding strategy for a Lake Simcoe ecosystem strategy, that defines quality of life, recreation, culture, social and economy, which doesn't stop at boundaries.
- Would like to see Lake Simcoe watershed included in Province's Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTAH).
- Suggest an expansion of bullet number two under Environment section of Issues in Planning for Tomorrow brochure to include protection of Lake Simcoe ecosystem as well as ORM and Greenbelt.
- Need to include air and water quality in our growth plan.

Feedback

- Would like Province to support repatriation of pooling dollars to Toronto.
- Support recommendations around human services planning, hospital services can't accommodate current demand, and will not be able to accommodate further growth, especially as we're an aging society.
- Need to support the labour market, we don't have nurses, doctors or support workers, shortages are huge and will get worse.



Feedback

- Need policy assistance to provide housing choice in the Region including affordable housing choices for medium and low income families and ask Province for matching funding for services to support growth.
- Seems to be an omission of community as a resource in Planning for Tomorrow document. Voluntary sector is an important part of the economy.
- Volunteer sector is the third pillar of our community and an established group with established resources that contribute to sustainability and planning.

Summary Notes of comments made by the Public and Council at the Growth Management Information Session at Whitchurch-Stouffville Council Tuesday March 16, 2006



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Feedback

- All this growth and immigration – what is the Region doing to deal with gridlock and improve how we get around better?
- What about building a bypass?
- Transportation – so many cars go south and 3 cars in Whitchurch-Stouffville driveways. The Region can't dictate that people must use transit.
- Suggested 81,000 units will probably be built on developer owned farm lands.
- Commend you for mention of Water for Tomorrow but concerned about water waste through York Durham Sewer System.
- Environmentally friendly construction and promotion of LEED style.

Feedback

- Type of residential patterns and structures need to change – could you elaborate on those ideas?
- Is the vanilla area in Whitchurch-Stouffville for future growth?
- Some areas of Whitchurch-Stouffville have to use their cars but haven't got infrastructure/parking facilities to support access Transit for part of a trip to Toronto.
- Interested in Go Transit funding information.
- Smaller housing options important for empty nesters and seniors and the young.
- Projections of populations were a surprise to us – where do these forecasts come from and how does the Province expect to realize these forecasts?



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Summary Notes of High School Student comments made at the Growth Management Information Session at Westmount Collegiate Tuesday April 11, 2006



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Feedback

- How does the Region plan to accommodate people beyond the 12.8 year land supply?
- Need to extend subway to Vaughan.
- Why not build more roads before houses?
- Why different buses: Go, YRT & Viva?
- Why not add new toll highways?
- Are all bus routes unique or do some overlap?
- Is the Region working with GO to plan future services?
- Important to route buses where people need to go.

Summary of Comments made at the Environmental Interest Groups meeting at the Regional Administrative Building, May 25, 2006



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Feedback

- Are there Criteria for the identification of Significant Woodlands? – yes they are contained in the Significant Woodlands report
- Were did the 40% intensification target and the split with 60% greenfield development come from? - Places to Grow contains the 40% and 60%, approved ROPA 43 contains 30% intensification, even 1994 contained 20% intensification and we have achieved 17%
- Very important to have targets, both quantitative and qualitative, e.g. East Gwillimbury requires all new homes to be Energy Star, so these homes contribute positively to pollution prevention.

Feedback

- We need to be specific with what we want with new homes – e.g. for new homes the types of materials used to build homes and how waste materials are disposed of.
- As well, intensification will help with employment.
- Need a cost benefit analysis in this process, the GDP is not enough to analyze what we're putting forward into our environment and communities.
- Economics are not enough if we're destroying our environment.
- See a lot of reference to more roads in documents and not a lot of emphasis on other modes of transportation, e.g. light rail. Need to look at alternative modes that carry people more efficiently, more cost effectively and more environmentally sensitive and see them included in our documents.



Feedback

- The roads in the Region don't do much besides get us faster into gridlock, need to push Province for higher order transit including rail system and other modes of transit.
- Employment lands should all be connected by light rail as they are in Europe. Key corridors should be along GO train lines.
- For housing it seems to be that if you "Build it and they will come" but the same is true of train usage "if you increase train service then people will use it" – A behavioural change is needed
- Increased service isn't enough right now in the Region, not enough to encourage people to leave their cars at home – need incentives such as Vancouver giving preferential treatment for fuel efficient cars
- Need to prioritize fuel efficient modes of transportation so that cars are the last option.



Feedback

- There are issues with GO Trains running on CN tracks which are privately owned. Haven't seen province investing in separate rail lines, e.g. twinning of lines.
- Concern with employment growth, a large part of Ontario's economy is based on development and building, as is York Region's, what will happen when development stops. We don't have natural raw materials, don't have the transportation corridors to support a new economy.
- Because of the ORM Plan and Greenbelt, there are very few places where the Region can now grow.



Feedback

- Perception that in some ways York Region wants to “have cake and eat it to” in terms of targets, and acknowledges we have to do things differently while pursuing too many different things at once without focussing on a few important things.
- Rail lines are not even shown on the mapping on display
- VIVA is a huge risk as far as I’m concerned - the kinds of commitment needed are reflective of the approach to make everyone happy, e.g.. 40/60 split in intensification, building roads and transit with equal spending.
- There needs to be more commitment
- Need a model for growth where there is growth, and bus routes will support them, we can’t even support existing urban areas with existing services.

Feedback

- Fundamental issue is that we can't service what we have now because of the massive investment needed so why are we even talking about more growth.
- Two agendas- growing in and growing out. This applies to hydro transmission lines, sewer and water, etc.
- We need to solve our existing problems before we move on, e.g. there are only 4 GO trains into Toronto in the morning.
- With the price of fossil fuels increasing, the key element missing is energy. We do have resources in York Region but need to invest in renewable energy and conservation, instead of importing energy from other areas of North America.

Feedback

- For example - Denmark has similar geography to York Region and they do things quite differently. Need to look at what the future looks like which is actually current reality in other places.
- Need to think about our own self-sufficiency, especially with increasing costs of fuel and what that does to bringing in food, water, raw resources (e.g. coal, oil) in order to fuel the economy.
- Water for Tomorrow program is excellent and there needs to be a whole lot more of that in terms of conservation of energy, consumerism, etc. Farmers in Region are having problem selling their produce because food is being imported is cheaper. Not only does this not support local growers, it contributes to pollution to transport this food in.



Feedback

- Need to look at self-sufficiency, conservation, etc. in the context of the watershed. We have plans in place to protect these areas to some extent, but not necessarily enough safeguards in place to protect areas for the next 20 years of development.
- One overarching thing going on that will impact watershed, etc. and that is global warming. Rises in temp. of just a few degrees will impact ecosystem, water use, water levels.
- There is a giant gap in our knowledge in terms of impact of global warming on our Region.



Feedback

- Practically speaking, if we're going to build 220,000 homes, that is 220,000 roofs and potential for 220,000 solar collectors. E.g. California is investing in solar photo voltaic cells because that's money that will stay in California.
- Net zero energy homes exist that produce rather than take energy.
- Creating employment will happen in York Region if we create our own energy and create our own competitive advantage.
- Need bring impacts and advantages to a local level so that people are more aware of what's happening in their local community and environment, and awareness of our actions.

Feedback

- These forums are good in terms of sharing information, but it's information we already know.
- However, the economics are what drive people's decision making. If we mandated that things happened e.g. Energy Star homes in East Gwillimbury, and we know how to do these things now, and York Region can make it happen by requiring it so that x will happen rather than y, then things will happen but perhaps we lack the political will.
- Elections coming up are an opportune time to discuss these ideas at the community level.

Feedback

- The instruments to achieve these things could be better articulated with collateral impacts so that choices can be made and information supplied on clear benefits and impacts.
- Quantification of solar efficiency should be part of our study.
- Could do thorough procurement e.g. schools – local produce, local employees, free food where need existed. Procurement guidelines would help us get there.
- The Region has a huge opportunity in terms of Ontario Building Code review. Is the Region working on any kind of advocacy, because the impact on the Region is enormous?

Feedback

- Agricultural lands and food security needs to be addressed in ROP, because of the cost (financially and environmentally) of transportation, and we don't have ability to produce all our own food here. Our planning needs to plan for local food production and access, i.e. farmers markets in our communities, they're all big box retail stores.
- Canadian Fed of Agriculture has written emergency letter to Feds and UN – no ability to feed ourselves, esp. with climate change, floods, drought.

Feedback

- Need to invest our money into local food production and do it fast, e.g. our local farmers aren't encouraging their children to go into farming as a living.
- Region needs to support local farmers. - Is there planning for local farmers markets to be built?
- Measure not just where all these units go, and impact on environmental functions, e.g. ORM water resources, not just taking away viable farmland, but also life.
- Has York Region Council taken the Province's population targets and told them what our realistic targets are from the point of view of what our environment will support?



Feedback

- There is no planning for appropriate and affordable housing for seniors.
- Why can't we stop growing here and allow other areas of the province to grow?
- Saying that "Inch by inch is a cinch" needs to be applied in all areas of activities.
- Disagree with Brundtland's triple circle, more in favour of natural capital philosophy.
- There will be a lot of pressure on our native species from climate change, and invasive species, e.g. getting massive drought and stress, lower water tables, more extreme weather events, mostly due to urban island effect, extreme downpours will cause massive damage to infrastructure, massive erosion problems, sinkholes, etc.

Feedback

- Need to advocate for local infiltration system, and promoting more natural resiliency.
- Suggest a pilot study with developers to put together drought tolerant landscaping packages for homes so that the landscaping is already there when owners arrive.
- Greenspace in and outside of urban areas is needed to ensure infiltration, as well as access to nature.
- Has there been any consideration for setting targets for natural cover in the Region?
- Need to maintain and enhance resiliency and biodiversity.
- Regarding the York-Durham sewer expansion, in 1997 there were a great deal more alternatives contained in the Master Plan than in the 2002 update. The approach seems to be that the approach is established - "we're staying the course and this is the way we're going"



Feedback

- This infrastructure is the bones that is already in place, there's seems very little left to discuss around where growth will or will not go, regardless of targets. The investment has already been made and will have to be used.
- Meaningful discussion has to take place alongside the infrastructure piece, and the decisions have already been made. Need to get beyond this as window dressing.
- The alternatives (to the YDSS) that do exist have not been articulated, assessed and costed out and given the resources on ALL the alternatives,
- Why isn't Bathurst Street an intensification corridor?
- Compact growth needs to happen with mixed use.
- Every intersection should be a corridor or centre, everything should be within a 2km walk



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Feedback

- There are very vibrant sustainable communities in the world, and clearly York Region is not this now, and there are some wonderful things we can accomplish over the next 25 years. Hope that dialogue and information sharing can continue, and there is a lot of expertise.
- 3rd model of planning “back-casting” scenario approach, versus forecasting approach.
- Is VIVA thinking of putting parking at their stops, because people are already using their cars, might as well drive to the Viva stop.