

June 6, 2010

Dear members of Vaughan Council:

I am a Vaughan resident of 12 years, and wish to communicate my opposition to the proposed Urban Boundary Expansion as outlined in the Official Plan, Volume 1, which includes expansion into the whitebelt lands.

As a member of Sustainable Vaughan, I do not believe the City has proven to me that the expansion is necessary or that it will not have a negative environmental or economic impact. There have been no environmental or economic studies available to justify expanding the urban boundary.

The entire process concerning expansion onto white belt lands has been undemocratic and rushed. I urge York Region and the City of Vaughan to establish a five year moratorium on expansion into the white belt lands in Vaughan. This proposal will provide the City with ample time to properly conduct a study concerning expansion and the resulting cost implications.

I also request a more open process where the public will be allowed to debate this very controversial and significant decision, similar to what the City of Markham has conducted. Until that time I do not believe the proposed expansion has been conducted in an open, consultative and democratic manner.

At a recent York Region public event - The Run for Vaughan in support of the proposed local hospital, I had an opportunity to explore the whitebelt area the city is proposing for further residential development. How wonderful it was to be running a 10K in beautiful wide open green spaces, spaces that are needed to balance our city, to show citizens that nature and all it's priceless features are valued.

The thought that this may be jeopardized angers me, makes me want to shout **THIS IS NOT WHAT WE WANT, AND NOT WHAT WE ELECTED OUR OFFICIALS TO DO ON OUR BEHALF.**

Following our 10K run, we were addressed by local & regional councillors. I laughed when I heard one councillor have ambitions of making Vaughan "one of the greatest cities in Canada to live in". Really? I think it's a bit of a joke to consider that this is possible when we have lawsuits littered throughout our present council, when we are constantly mocked in the media as "the City above the law", when we are perceived to allow development to take place everywhere and anywhere within our city - whether it makes sense or not! I don't know how many times I've read in newspapers and magazines that our city is actually run by developers. It's difficult at times to not become cynical

City Council has an opportunity to stand up and do something that's right for our City and for its hard working residents who pay sizeable property tax. We want a City that provides affordable housing for people of all ages, at all stages of their lives. Concentrate higher intensification on lands surrounding public transit & shopping malls for example, so that we can provide apartments, condos, townhomes, retirement residences as well as single family units. I believe that 80% homes in Vaughan presently are single family units. Perhaps this made sense 30 years ago in Vaughan's early stages, but it no longer reflects our society's needs or desires.

Where are university students (York is so close by), young single people starting out, early retirement people, and the elderly supposed to live? Recently I spoke to many residents in the National Estates area - probably the most expensive homes in Woodbridge. I listened as one man (65 years old) told me he lived there for 30 years, but was thinking of moving on to a condo. I thought to myself if Vaughan does not provide more of these, where will these people move to? Will they be forced to move out of an area they have invested their whole life in, made friendships in, and whose businesses they have supported for 30 years? That would be a "displaced" individual in my mind.

I believe that as councillors it is your responsible duty to reject York Region's Official Plan with the inclusion of an urban boundary expansion in Vaughan as it provides for a premature and unjustified urban expansion. Intensify our existing lands, offer people choices and put an end to urban sprawl that has littered our communities. That's what a City does that has leadership, vision, responsibility, respect and great character.

Do the right thing and maybe people will start writing about the Great City of Vaughan.

Thank you for your consideration.

Erminia Lombardi