

Marie Lippens
19646 Leslie St
Queensville, ON L0G 1R0
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Mr. Mark Nykoluk, P. Eng.
Senior Project Manager, Transportation Services
Regional Municipality of York
17250 Yonge St
Newmarket, ON L3Y 6Z1

RE: Doane Road Realignment

Dear Mr. Nykoluk:

I am writing in regards to the Doane Road project and recent developments that have occurred. It is my understanding that on Sept 20, 2011 Committee of the Whole Council of the Town of East Gwillimbury voted against the realignment of Doane Road along its existing route, which is the Region's preferred alternative, as identified through the extensive EA study.

At this particular meeting, a small number of stakeholders opposed to the alignment addressed Council. One or more Council members had previously met with one or more of these same residents in their homes prior to the meeting. The concerns expressed had to do with the fact that they had been told that the section of Doane Road surrounding Leslie Street was to be moved south and the homeowners on this road would enjoy a private road. This is the picture painted by Council to their constituents over a number of years. The Town and Region were both well aware of the Town's plans and residents' expectations. Here's where it gets complicated – the Province has a piece of legislation calling for an Environmental Assessment, of which the definition can be found at the link below:

http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/environment/en/industry/assessment_and_approvals/environmental_assessments/index.htm

“Under the Environmental Assessment Act, the environmental assessment (EA) program promotes good environmental planning by determining and managing the potential effects of a project prior to implementation...The EA program ensures that public concerns are heard. EA balances economic, social, cultural and natural environmental needs so that projects benefit Ontario.”

This EA is required to be performed to *protect* the local environment. Yes, we are talking about the trees and birds and fish, but we are also talking about the social, cultural and economic needs of the local environment.

The local environment of this particular stretch of Doane Road is difficult to define. The number of stakeholders is small yet diverse. They all see a different 'ideal' solution to this problem. Some would like to see Doane Road untouched; some vehemently encourage its development as soon as possible. Some want to fit in with the Community as it grows. Some want to be as segregated as possible from it all. What is a common denominator with those strongly opposed is this – they've lived here for over 20 years and are ready to cash in. They want to see a decision made that makes their property and/or homes the most exclusive estate or the most sought-after commercial property in this moment of 'opportunity'. Doesn't everyone want to see their life's work pay off as much as possible? How can you not feel entitled to a 'jackpot' when you've been told it's coming all these years?

I'm sorry to say to these people that they are not entitled to a jackpot. Their properties are nicely valued and will remain that way. The fact is that everyone seems to have an opinion on the Doane Road project. Perhaps it is a measuring stick that residents are using to size up how all of the proposed growth will affect them, and how these types of projects will be handled.

The part about this that is wrong is the way the project was communicated from the beginning. Council members told residents that the Regional Road in their official plan would go in a certain place. The problem with this is that Council does not get to say where exactly a Regional Road goes. The Region does. An official plan is a great outline, but we all know that the picture on the paper and the actual development of the Town will not be identical. What the residents can and did do was to stay apprised of the process that goes into development projects – mainly the EA process. It was long, it was thorough and there was a lot of input from many perspectives. These characteristics are ideal – everyone had a chance to put in their ideas, all aspects were examined from many viewpoints, arguments were made and the numbers came out the way they did. In retrospect, it is no wonder that the existing road is slightly favoured from an environmental standpoint than putting in a brand-new road right beside it. I do question the Town's reasons for trying to plan it this way from the beginning. It causes the group of homes on the existing Doane Road to put themselves in this 'bubble' where they are supposed to be sheltered from the impending growth. In the end, they would simply be a segregated piece of land that will no doubt break up the flow and sense of community the Official Plan strives for.

I feel that Council was bullied by a group of residents that night to change their vote. Someone is affected regardless of where this road goes. Council must choose where they stand based on the facts, and it is offensive to see them swayed by rumours and rhetoric.

One year ago I purchased my property after looking into the Doane road project extensively and speaking to the Region, who assured me that this project had only two possible outcomes – the EA had shown that the preferred route was the existing alignment, but there was a small chance that the 2A alignment could be chosen based on

a number of factors including the social issues. The Region had no reason to deceive me then – I had no stake in it whatsoever and would have been able to walk away without a look back. That same choice has of course been available to all stakeholders over the last 30 years who may have been uneasy with the risk of development at their front and back doors – leave before it affects you! I can only see one reason to stick it out this long, with impending development always just around the corner –the rewards that (could) come with it. Any smart investor knows that with higher returns comes higher risk. I'm sorry if the EA did not come out as the residents on Doane Road would have liked. But if a road is to go through there, legislation is in place to protect routes that affect the environment unnecessarily. For all of the opposition I've heard, there have been no revelations regarding environmental, social or any other factors. They have all been accounted for. I've read a number of letters suggesting the OP alignment is the perfect solution.

Statements such as these: the OP alignment could be built without "one tree having to be cut down or houses expropriated...it would also prevent any wells or septic systems being affected, ponds being drained and an entire drainage system altered". This is completely false! There is no way to build a 4-lane road without affecting an entire drainage system. Multiple homes with private wells and septic systems will certainly be affected, mine included. Drainage would now affect a virgin woodlot *as well as* the woodlot surrounding the Leslie St/Doane Rd intersection *and* the infamous man-made pond. Water does not see the property lines we draw. We're at the top of a hill here - if a 4-lane road is built anywhere in the area, these things are affected.

As far as safety, there is a big problem with the intersection as it sits and adding traffic lights will be a favour to us all. I have had to witness way too many close calls and welcome a lighted intersection.

I am here for the long haul – I am raising a young family and want to see this community blossom and thrive. The road where it sits is essentially at the edge of the planned Queensville Community. It does not 'cut it in half', as some have claimed. What does cut it in half is to leave a dead-end section of road in between a new development and a main east-west roadway. This will disallow some in the new development to easily access transit, etc. and instead get into their cars. Great idea.

It is my sincere hope that the smoke and mirrors put out there will not undo years of study, planning, consultation and work. It will not make this wrong right. It would continue the wrong.

Thank you for your support.
Sincerely,

Marie Lippens

CC: Town of East Gwillimbury Council Members and CAO Thomas Webster, Regional Chair Bill Fisch and General Manager of Roads at York Region, Paul Jankowski