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"Entrepreneuring Since 1983"

October 4, 2009

Regional Chair and Members of Council
Region of York Administrative Centre
Region of York
17250 Yonge Street,
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1



RE: Draft York Region Official Plan Review:

Dear Honourable Members of Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in my community's Regional affairs. My address will be brief as I hope to succinctly articulate my concerns about the so-called – Vision - of the proposed Draft of the Regional Official Plan. Moreover, I wish to draw your attention to and highlight what I believe are workable revisions and goals that must be considered for this Regional OP vision to succeed.

To that end, I will preface my comments by stating that I have previously attended the Statutory Open House for the OP review, which was held in this building on September 29, 2009. While in attendance, I observed the OP presentation(s) facilitated by Mr. John Waller, Long Rang Strategic Planner. Whereby, I addressed two main issues with him. They were; Affordable Housing; as well as Transportation and Logistics.

The Region has a mandated, that require 25% of new housing units must be affordable housing ; and new housing in Regional Centres and Corridors increase their affordable housing to 35%. This required strategy is outlined also in the Region's Housing Supply Strategy hand-book as well.

Many concerned attendees at the Statutory Open House, as well as the other municipal town hall meetings voiced their concerns over Affordable Housing, as well as Transportation and Logistics also.

However, history has shown us that affordable housing is not something in which developers readily wish to invest in. Moreover, in the past decades when a shortage of affordable housing results, our two major governments [federal and provincial] have actively participated in funding initiatives to prop up that short-fall.

To that end, I offered the following suggestions to address this issue of;

1) Affordable Housing:

No where in the current Official Community Plan, or the proposed new Official Plan is there any provision for a well designed and appointed Mobile Home Communities [herein referred to as MHC]. [similar to those found throughout parts of Arizona and Florida in the USA]. It should be noted that these MHC in these above-noted States feature such things as; curbs and gutters, sidewalks and street lighting as would be found in many urban single-family communities throughout the Region today.

For the most part, these MHC are inhabited by mostly baby-boomers [born between 1946 and 1966] and/or their parents. This group of cohorts are generally retired and well established financially.

By ensuring the proper allocation of well designed and built MHC throughout the Region, we would create additional affordable housing throughout the Region that would be both ascetically pleasing, but most of all highly desirable. If allowed, I would suggest that immediately selling one thousand units would [in various areas] would not be an exaggeration.

While I am in no way advocating that Region allocate the full 25% and 35% of affordable housing in this regard, it would be however in my respectfully submission that; – inappropriate and fundamentally unwise planning, as well as limited vision on behalf of the Region of York would result if NHC allocation of at least some of the Region's mandated affordable housing space be dedicated for MHC which is affordable housing by any standard. Moreover, not to allow these MHC would not be in keeping with Good Planning Practices, which has been successfully replicated in other parts of the Country and the United States of America over the years.

How does this address Slide #6 in the Draft York Region Official Plan Statutory Open House document whereby you state **"Forward looking has stood the test of time"**. By not making provision for MHC, does this is this not an oxymoron - and - contrary to York Region's Official Plan Sustainability Framework and the Provincial Places To Grow – Better Choices and Brighter Future documents?

To that end, I offered the following suggestions to address this issue of;

2) Transportation and Logistics:

Many challenges face our nine Municipalities and the Region as we embark through the next 22 years of planned development and manageable growth. However, we should be able to take comfort in knowing we are guided by a well developed and thought-out vision within our new Regional Official Plan.

But, we must keep ever present in our minds and cognizant that one third of the Canadian population is baby-boomers, not to mention, the USA, Great Britain, Australia, as well as some other countries]. That means baby-boomers were born between 1946 to 1966. Because they make up 1/3rd of the population, the first groups of baby-boomers are turning 64 years old. Therefore, by the time the new Regional official Plan is in its final expiration, the oldest baby-boomers will be 86 years old and the youngest baby-boomer will be just past the current age for collecting the old-age security pension from the Federal and Provincial governments. Therefore, careful consideration and strategic planning is imperative for adequately addressing this significantly large group of our population. That means such things as; increased handicap parking spaces when designing parking lots; more and easier accessible to streets, recreational areas [parks, buildings, streets, housing]; scooter paths; power walkways; audio ability provisions in housing, recreation, transportation, etc; increased medical services and hospitals; reduced traffic calming measures; as well as a host of other important issues the aged will require.

Finally, communities are faced with increasing gridlock throughout their communities as we intensify development and grow our Region which is currently one million people. This gridlock phenomenon will only be further exasperated as we proceed forward in the next 22 years and beyond when we see our Region grow to over 1.5 million people and almost 800 thousand jobs.

One solution to addressing this gridlock, while reducing commute times, as well as and maybe more importantly substantially contributing to a greener environment - would be to take the lead role and be the nation's catalyst and implement a **Regional, Provincial and Federal Smart/Green Initiative.**

That is to say; individually and/or cooperatively introduce an inducement program and movement that which would be bequeathed upon any adult person who could successfully demonstrate that he/she lived within an approved short distance from where they worked (distance to be set). This inducement could be in the form of Federal and/or Provincial personal tax credit at the end of each taxation year; and/or a property tax credit;

As well as introduce a comprehensive public educational and awareness program highlighting not only the financial, but personal health related benefits to live and work in close proximity, but highlight the environmental beneficial impact we would have on our Region, province and country, not to mention the world.

While these above-noted suggestions may require legislative study, review and change, the biggest hurdle one might need to overcome may very well be the collaborative partnership effort and commitment, as well as an overall desire and willingness of all stakeholders to succeed.

Finally, I believe that it is paramount and fundamentally important to enlist oversight of a well established demographer such as the likes of Dr. David Foot [University of Toronto professor and private demographic consultant] be allowed to review the finding of the proposed new O.P., vet the O.P. and then allowed to present his/her findings and recommendations to committee, staff and the public before Regional Council's final disposition of the O.P..

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the proposed Region of York Official Plan, which will serve as our community's ships rudder steering our united nine municipalities into the next 22 year future and beyond extrapolate the merits of these recommendations and ensure provisions are set forth hereto.

Should you require further information, please feel free to call me.

Respectfully;



A.W. (Art) Field L;PI.

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"Entrepreneuring Since 1983"

September 29, 2009

John Waller
Director Long Range Strategic Planning
Region of York Administrative Centre
Region of York
17250 Yonge Street,
Newmarket, Ontario
L3Y 6Z1



RE: Draft York Region Official Plan Review:

Dear John Waller:

Thank you for your in-depth presentation on Draft O.P. review on September 29, 2009 at the Regional Administrative Centre. During your presentation, you stated that the Region will require 25% of new housing units to be affordable housing ; and new housing in Regional Centres and Corridors increase their affordable housing to 35%. This required strategy is outlined also in the Region's Housing Supply Strategy book as well.

After your presentation and during the comment and question segment there were a number of attendees that were extremely concerned about affordable housing and indicated that there was simply not enough affordable housing available to those in need.

History has shown us that affordable housing is not something in which developers readily wish to invest in. Moreover, in the past decades when a shortage of affordable housing results, the two major governments have actively participated in funding initiatives.

There was also a great amount of discussion centering on traffic congestion and generalize logistics – both currently and 22 years hence. These same concerns were echoed in your presentation as well. With revised street width mapping, the identification of 400 series interchanges and flyovers and regional street design guidelines being some of the catalysts for accommodating these aggressive growth numbers in the Region over the next 21 years or so.

To that end, I offered the following suggestions;

1) Addressing: Affordable Housing:

No where in the current Official Community Plan, or the proposed Official Community Plan is there any prevision for a well designed and appointed Mobile Home Communities herein referred to as MHC. [that are found throughout parts of Arizona and Florida in the USA]. It should be noted that these MHC in these above-noted States feature such things as; curbs and gutters, sidewalks and street lighting as would be found in many urban single-family communities throughout the Region today.

For the most part, these MHC are inhabited by mostly baby-boomers [born between 1946 and 1966] and/or their parents. This group of cohorts are generally retired and well established financially.

By ensuring the proper allocation of well designed and built MHC throughout the Region, we would create additional affordable housing throughout the Region that would be both ascetically pleasing, but most of all highly desirable.

While I am in no way advocating that Region allocate the full 25% and 35% of affordable housing in this regard, it would be however in my respectfully submission – inappropriate and fundamentally unwise to not allocate at least some of the Region's mandated affordable housing to MHC. Moreover, it would not be in keeping with Good Planning Practices, which has been successfully replicated in other parts of the Country and the United States of America over the years.

However, when I raised this issue and asked you directly "will the Region re-consider their previous policy of NO Mobile Home Communities and now allocate MHC. You abruptly stated "No! We don't want them here!" How does this address your slide #6 in your presentation whereby you state "Forward looking has stood the test of time". Is this not an oxymoron and contrary from York Region's Official Plan Sustainability Framework and the Provincial Places To Grow – Better choices and Brighter Future.

2) Addressing: Transportation and Logistics:

Many challenges face us and our nine municipalities and the Region as we embark through the next 22 years. However, we can take comfort through the guidance by anticipated new Regional Official Plan.

We must keep ever present in our minds that one third of the Canadian population [USA, Great Britain, Australia, and some others] are baby-boomers. That means baby-boomers were born between 1946 to 1966. Because they make up 1/3rd of the population, the first groups of baby-boomers are turning 64 years old. Therefore, by the time the new Regional official Plan is in it's final expiration, the oldest baby-boomers will be 86 years old and the youngest baby-boomer will be just past the current age for collecting the old-age security pension from the Federal and Provincial governments. Therefore, careful consideration and strategic planning is imperative for adequately addressing this significantly large group of our population.

That means such things as; increased handicap parking spaces when designing parking lots; more and easier accessible to streets, recreational areas [parks, buildings, streets, housing]; scooter paths; power walkways; audio ability previsions in housing, recreation, transportation, etc; increased medical services and hospitals; reduced traffic calming measures; as well as a host of other important issues the aged will require.

Finally, communities are faced with increasing gridlock throughout their communities as we intensify development, as you and the majority of attendees present so appropriately outlined. This gridlock phenomenon will only be further exasperated as we proceed forward in the next 22 years and beyond.

One solution to addressing gridlock and reduce commute times, while substantially contributing to a greener environment would be to take the lead and implement a **Regional, Provincial and Federal Smart/Green Initiative.**

That is to say; an inducement would be bequeathed upon any adult person who could successfully demonstrate that he/she lived within an approved short distance from where they worked (distance to be set). This inducement could be in the form of Federal and/or Provincial personal tax credit at the end of each taxation year; and/or a property tax credit;

While these above-noted suggestions may require legislative change, the biggest hurdle one might need to overcome may very well be the collaborative partnership and overall desire and will of all stakeholders to succeed.

Furthermore, I believe the oversight of a well established demographer such as the likes of Dr. David Foot [University of Toronto professor and private consultant] be allowed to review the finding of the proposed new O.P., then allowed to present his/her findings and recommendations to committee, staff and the public before Regional Council's final disposition of the O.P..

In conclusion, I respectfully request that the proposed Region of York Official Plan, which will serve as our community's ships rudder steering our united nine municipalities into the next 22 year future and beyond extrapolate the merits of these recommendations and ensure provisions are set forth hereto.

Should you require further information, please feel free to call me at the above-noted number(s).

Respectfully;

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Art Field'.

A.W. (Art) Field L;PI.