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Aurora, ON
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To: futureyork@york.ca, East Gwillimbury Council and York Region Council

Vote “No” to Settlement Boundary Expansion at the October 21st Special Council Meeting

October 15, 2021

Dear Mayor Hackson, East Gwillimbury Councillors, York Region Councillors and Future York staff,

I am writing to express my concern about East Gwillimbury’s request to have York Region approve 100% build out of EG’s contested countryside lands (often referred to as “whitebelt”) by 2051. I am encouraging all York Regional Councillors to not support the allocation of growth to 100% of EG’s whitebelt lands in this MCR.

York Region should be accommodating *at minimum of 60%* of projected demand for new homes and workplaces within existing built-up areas (the intensification rate), and it should be developing its existing designated greenfield area densities no less than the 80 residents and jobs per hectare prescribed under the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017).

Settlement area boundary expansions

It would be a mistake to extend the settlement area boundary *at all* beyond its current position in East Gwillimbury. Even more so if York Regional Councillors support the allocation of growth to 100% of EG’s whitebelt lands in this MCR. Saying yes to EG’s request for 100% of their whitebelt lands supports a race to the bottom approach to planning for our future.

By voting for significant Settlement Area Boundary expansion - particularly in East Gwillimbury - York Region Council would be condemning the existing residents of Newmarket, Markham Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville to decades more of traffic gridlock and frustration. By developing the region’s greenfield areas at 50/ha, densities low enough to swallow all of East Gwillimbury’s contested countryside, and directing just 50-55% of growth to existing built up areas, York Region would make it almost certain that the vast majority of newcomers will rely on private automobiles to commute, shop

and run errands. This will put far more pressure on highways and major arterials that are already frequently clogged.

There should be zero settlement area boundary expansions for 10 years. There is lots to infill, this will give York Region a chance to do Environmental Assessments for water and wastewater servicing and settlement area boundary expansions in the Lake Simcoe watershed, as per the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, make more transit supportive communities and prioritize York's clear need for affordable housing.

I support at a minimum a 60% intensification scenario for York Region as presented in the Alternate 2051 Forecast and Land Needs Assessment Scenarios dated Sept 16th, from York Region staff, as it represents the smallest impact on farmland and the environment. This scenario requires 700 hectares of land which are currently not within settlement areas to be built on. The 50% intensification and 50 residents and jobs/ ha scenario would add 2700 ha of land to be built on.

Population and job growth

The population allocation for East Gwillimbury that was contemplated by York Region at the September General meeting was already well beyond what is needed to meet housing demand, and was already incompatible with the region's environmental obligations. Those population allocations represented nearly a quadrupling of the East Gwillimbury population in just thirty years, from 24,700 persons and 9,500 jobs in 2016, to 105,100 – 112,800 persons and 36,100 jobs by 2051.

Transparency, representation, accountability to taxpayers and residents

I believe that the East Gwillimbury Mayor and Council are interpreting residents' silence on the whitebelt issue as support for this proposal. In fact, most people are completely unaware of this proposal, and Council has done nothing out of the ordinary to bring people's attention to such a significant issue. As York Region makes such a significant decision, it is incumbent on elected officials to know if this is in fact supported by East Gwillimbury residents.

Why would Council want to eat all the Town's developable land in the next thirty years? It is fiscally irresponsible to have no Development Charge income after these lands are built out. East Gwillimbury must articulate the logic of this plan to its residents and to the Region. Is EG assuming that all future costs would be borne by homeowners through property tax? This would be great for profit-oriented home builders, however, and that may be EG's primary interest.

The Infrastructure cost per capita for EG = \$7,600 vs \$4,600 in Markham and \$6,900 in Vaughan. Therefore, if EG gets 100% whitebelt build out, it's the highest cost in the region to service. Again this is not good for the Region, the homebuyer or taxpayer.

Water, wastewater, environment

So far East Gwillimbury has done little to convince the public that it cares about the environment. The destruction of a huge mature forest for single family home development on Yonge St, between Newmarket and Bradford is an abomination. These disconnected, dead-end developments are the farthest thing from "complete communities" imaginable. There are no services you can walk or bike to unless you count a postal box. Bike lane signs in these dead-end communities do not change their shape and locations. These communities drive up our Greenhouse Gas emissions because they are not realistically navigable by any other transportation means than by car.

The wastewater servicing for this development is on hold. While we know some servicing to the area will come eventually, but it is premature to approve extensive and expensive greenfield growth without servicing guarantees.

Virginia Hackson, Mayor of EG, was the Chair of the LSRCA and continues to sit on that Board, and is pushing the biggest greenfield development proposal in her municipality. She knows full well that greenfield development is harmful to the Lake's health. This is disturbing and unjustified.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Claire Malcolmson".

Claire Malcolmson

Executive Director

Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition

The Rescue Lake Simcoe Coalition is a lake-wide member-based organization, representing 28 groups in the Lake Simcoe watershed, that provides leadership and inspires people to take action to protect Lake Simcoe. www.rescuelakesimcoe.org