

November 18, 2019

Richmond Hill  
Mayor & Council  
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RE: Section 5.4.4(b) of Procedure By-law EMPLOYMENT AREA CONVERSIONS  
Committee of the Whole, Wednesday November 20, 2019

Reviewing the amount of employment land left in Richmond Hill in comparison to other York Region municipalities we need to consider whether it is in city's best interest to convert these to housing. Municipalities such as King & Stouffville bemoan the fact that if commercial and industrial employment is under developed, the greater part of the tax burden will fall on residents to shoulder infrastructure and service costs. Richmond Hill, with a population of over 200,000 has less vacant employment lands than municipalities such as Aurora, Georgina and East Gwillimbury with populations of around 50,000. Having housing situated at the two GO stations will only perpetuate a suburban, bedroom community model instead of a place in which to work, live and recreate.

One of the intentions of properly designed mixed use is to get people out of their cars by offering useful amenities close by or within the development. As an example, I live in the Kettle Lakes townhouses (which I love) but during public consultations among the issues I requested was mixed use, including a grocery store, perhaps at the corner of the development. That did not come to pass. As a result there are now over 400 additional vehicles travelling 3kms along North Lake Road to get groceries in Oak Ridges. This bad planning, creating unnecessary extra traffic could have easily been remedied through mixed use. Every condo should have a grocery (not just a convenience) store at ground level if it is not within walking distance to amenities.

I am in favour of compact mixed use housing, but let's leave it for our designated residential areas. Instead, let's support economic development by making a concerted effort to attract innovative, visionary businesses to our existing employment lands. We will then provide vocational opportunities for people who wish to live but also work in Richmond Hill. One good way of relieving gridlock. Please think this through carefully so there are no regrets in the future.

Sincerely  
Gloria Marsh, Executive Director  
York Region Environmental Alliance  
<http://www.yrea.org>