

**Address to Council on December 8th, 2021:**  
**Official Plan Update Key Directions, concerning location and role of City Hall**

Members of Council,

I want to address the matter of the location and role of our City Hall, as raised in the draft of the Key Directions Report for the new Official Plan.

This subject has been of my concern since my family moved to Richmond Hill in 1986. The main controversy in these years, was the future of our village core.

The old town offices and council chamber on Yonge Street were cramped and inadequate. But when the town moved from the old location it was a setback for the vision of a healthy and vibrant downtown core.

The current City Hall seems to be functional, but it is totally out of place. 229 Beaver Creek is located at the fringes of our City, only 100 meters from the boundary with Markham, and far removed from the libraries, performing arts centre, neighbourhoods, parks, recreation centres, schools, places of worship, and places where people and families like to mingle. Now the Planning Department “heard from the public that there is a desire to establish the existing municipal administrative building as a place of civic interaction.” (page 60). The Key Directions report concludes, that the administrative offices at East Beaver Creek should provide more of a City Hall appearance, where residents find a place to interact with each other and with government. I politely question whether anybody in the public ever connected the broad call for a true City Hall with the location on East Beaver Creek.

For a long time the majority of public opinion favoured bringing the City Hall of Richmond Hill back from the fringes to the centre of our city. The city owns lands on the south-west corner of Yonge and Major Mackenzie next to the Central Library and near the wave pool. A special committee of Council, including residents, discussed some years ago the development of a true “Civic Precinct” at this location, consisting not only of the library, skating rink, sledding hill, amphitheatre and market square, but also a true City Hall. This committee was suddenly put on hold, just before the last municipal election, presumably due to worries about the cost of the project, and the staff was asked to consider alternative ideas.

Now the staff have presented their finding, that “a new City Hall may not be prudent” at Yonge/Major Mackenzie (page 75), and instead recommends creating a new city hall in Beaver Creek. The report suggests that this is in line with the wishes of residents. Residents I have heard from, and there are many, would say that is not their preference at all, and that the report is misleading.

Let’s put the heart of Richmond Hill, our City Hall, back into the centre of our City! This is the plea of one engaged citizen of our city. Thank you for listening to my presentation.

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