

June 23 2022

To: City Plan 204, Official Plan Update committee

This is in response to a letter that I happened to see published in the City of Richmond Hill Official Plan Update Committee Meeting on November 30, 2021. In the letter, the author, Mr. Brian Chaplik, who identifies himself as the "Chairman" of the village core residents association, provides comments on the "Key Directions" Report, City 2041.

Although Mr. Chaplik attempts to express some general concerns regarding the Key Directions Report, his main points can be summarized as maintaining the status quo in the village core in terms of density and growth.

First I'd like to mention that as a resident of "cottage lane" which is located on the north west corner of Yonge and Major Mackenzie Dr., we do not consider ourselves part of the village core and Mr. Chaplik certainly does not represent us.

My family moved to Richmond hill 22 years ago. We loved our cottage lane and took care of it as our own with a lot of pride and joy. In the last four years one of the homes was sold to a developer and soon it became clear that our precious laneway is no longer going to stay as is. We became more involved in what our area could become as possibilities of future development arose and soon learned through our local counselor, who is the current mayor, that there is a tendency to resist any large development in the vicinity of the downtown area. We have since provided our own input on the importance of our area as part of the MTSA for maximum density development and its further positive implications in improving growth and business opportunities for the downtown area.

Now that I'm retired, I take my dogs for a walk downtown every day. I must confess that it is more by necessity for my dogs than by choice of having a pleasant walk. Walking through downtown Richmond hill, every day I remind myself that, how is it possible that for the last 22 years that we lived here, our downtown area has not only not improved in any shape or form but it has increasingly run down. Thankfully the abandoned house across from the church on the east side of Yonge st. was finally demolished so people could at least feel safe to walk by. During my walk I see more homeless people living around the McConaghy center and within the surrounding bus stops than families walking around and enjoying each other's company. There are no viable businesses or any upscale restaurants. If my family wishes to enjoy a nice evening walk and dinner, we go to Unionville or even New Market downtown, even though we are within 5 min walking distance from downtown Richmond Hill.

I have since realized that this is what the "lets not grow Richmond Hill" attitude by the previous Mayor has done to our city which is now continued by the current Mayor and further encouraged by those who are represented by Mr. Chaplik. They feel so

entitled that they would like all of Richmond Hill to themselves. If we keep this up there will not be a livable Richmond hill any longer and, maybe then, they can have it all since no one else would want to move here and those who do would certainly move out. May be that's their intention. May be the new and diverse Richmond Hill does not suite the taste of those who've lived here for many generations.

Mr. Chaplik should recognize that the answer to all his three main concerns is growth. A viable, high-density development along the MTSA corridor will create the demand for a variety of rewarding and lucrative high-end businesses to cater to the needs of all those who will be within walking distance. We do NOT need 8 to 10 hair styling shops within a 100 meter from each other. Currently, downtown Richmond hill is catering to a select group of outsiders rather than the people of downtown itself.

Our cottage lane area is strategically located away from the "village core" and the heritage homes and provides approximately 3-4 acres of property for a high-density development within the MTSA corridor with a potential to create a large community within walking distance to the downtown core. This will subsequently demand the city of Richmond hill and the downtown businesses to offer a better and certainly a more vibrant alternative to what currently exists. I am certainly glad that I was never asked to vote for Mr. Chaplik to represent our cottage lane and that is just as well since we don't consider ourselves as part of the "Village Center".

We want growth for the city of Richmond hill so that, hopefully, our children and grandchildren will enjoy the area for the years to come rather than watching their downtown slowly become a ghetto neighborhood only so few older generations can feel comfort in not experiencing any CHANGE in their lives.

Martin Abramian
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