

From: cadtocam

Sent: Monday, May 8, 2023 4:22 PM

To: Clerks Richmondhill <clerks@richmondhill.ca>

Subject: Submission for the May 10th Council Meeting on Item 15.1.8 RHC Plan

Clerk,

Please attach the enclosed file as a written submission for the May 10th Council Meeting, specifically for Agenda Item 15.1.8 (SRCM.23.06 - Richmond Hill Centre Secondary Plan). This document was originally presented as part of my council delegation on May 3rd. Regrettably, I was unable to fully address its contents within the 5-minute time limitation on behalf of the Richmond Hill Umbrella Residents Group (RHURG) at that time.

Thanks

John Li

Richmond Hill Umbrella Residents Group (RHURG)



Richmond Hill Center (RHC) Final Draft Secondary Plan Review

**Richmond Hill Umbrella Residents Group (RHURG)
May 2023**

Submitted by John Li



RHURG

RHC - Aiming for Union Station North or Sleepy Town Expansion

#2

- The RHC Final Draft overlooks the difficulties posed by the previous Sleepy Town development strategy, leading to costly expenses for residents. The proposed plan, with its flawed residents-to-jobs ratio and world-record density, lacks practicality and sustainability, as shown by real-world examples. While it's possible to place blame on Doug Ford, it's reasonable to ask the council to take the lead in developing a revision that prioritizes practicality, sustainability, and livability.
- The RHC Secondary Plan is the largest planning project in Richmond Hill's history and will impact the city for years to come, and all stakeholders should have time to review the draft for improvement. The proposed plan may harm employment and strain resources with a population increase. It's crucial to revise the draft to consider past challenges and prioritize community wellbeing. **The current RHC draft is insufficient and needs substantial revision.**

The City's RHC Plan Requires A Complete Revision

The RHC Plan Should Strive to Offset the Damage Caused by the Provincial EMZO, Rather Than Exacerbating It.

Summary of Population and Jobs Opportunity in the RHCSP					
	2023 Final Draft			2021 Draft	Difference 2023 vs 2021 Draft
	Provincial Portion: High Tech EMZO Lands Only	City Portion: RHCSP (excluding EMZO)	Total RHCSP April 2023	Total RHCSP Oct 2021	
Lands Area (Hectare)	16.3	43.7	60	60	0
Estimated Population	34,900	16,100	51,000	33,800	17,200
Estimated Jobs	7,900	2,100	10,000	16,500	-6,500
Total People & Jobs	42,800	18,200	61,000	50,300	10,700
Density (P&J/Ha)	2,625	417	1,017	838	178
Jobs to Population Ratio	22.6%	13.0%	19.6%	48.8%	-38%
Job Shortages	9,550	5,950	15,500	400	15,100

Sources: Richmond Hill Staff Report SRCM.23.06

Surprisingly Low

The Predicament We are Facing: In 2017 Richmond Hill Fell Short of 30,000 Jobs

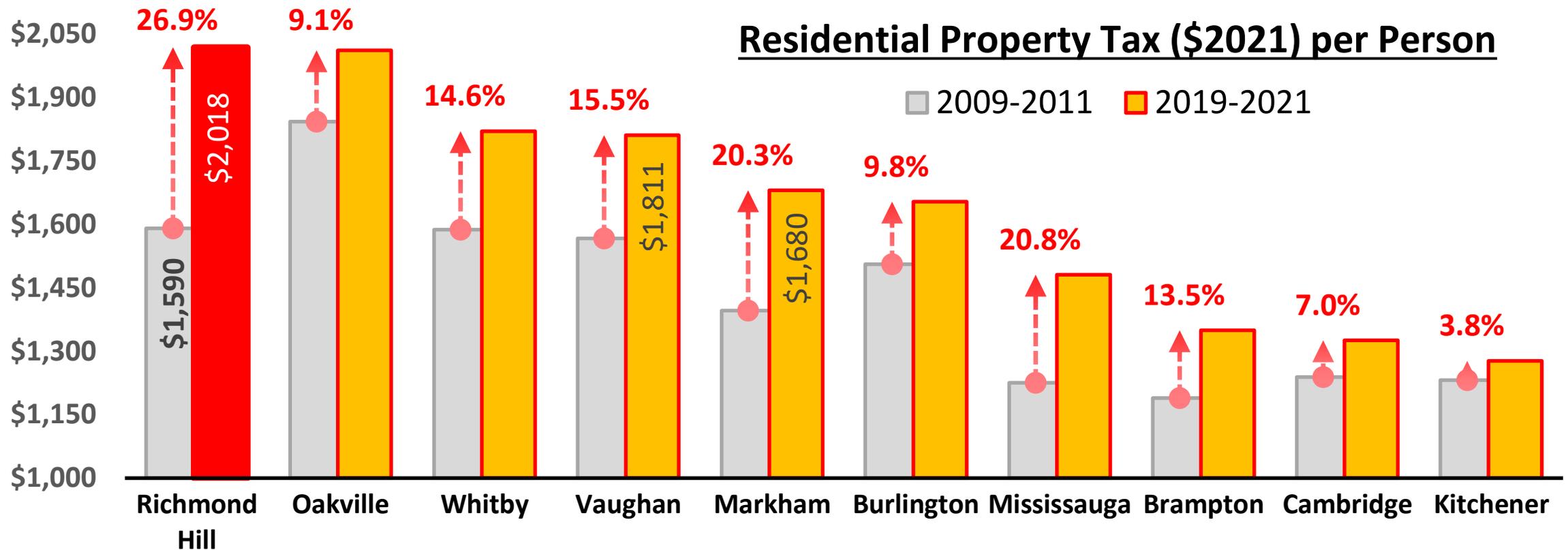
(Residents to Jobs ratio 2.8 : 1)

Job Opportunity to Population Ratio in York Region					Family Income
Municipality	2016 Population	2017 Job Opportunity	Jobs to Residents Ratio	Job Opportunities Compared to the Regional Average	2016 Median Household Income
York Region	1,109,650	561,954	50.6%	0	\$95,776
Markham	328,970	172,440	52.4%	5,842	\$89,028
Vaughan	306,230	217,943	71.2%	62,861	\$105,351
Richmond Hill	195,020	69,085	35.4%	-29,678	\$88,353
Newmarket	84,220	41,362	49.1%	-1,289	\$95,589
Aurora	55,450	25,083	45.2%	-2,998	\$106,708

The Consequences of a "Sleepy Town"

At the Expense of Residents

Highest Tax Hike in Similar Cities by Amount and Percentage Increase!

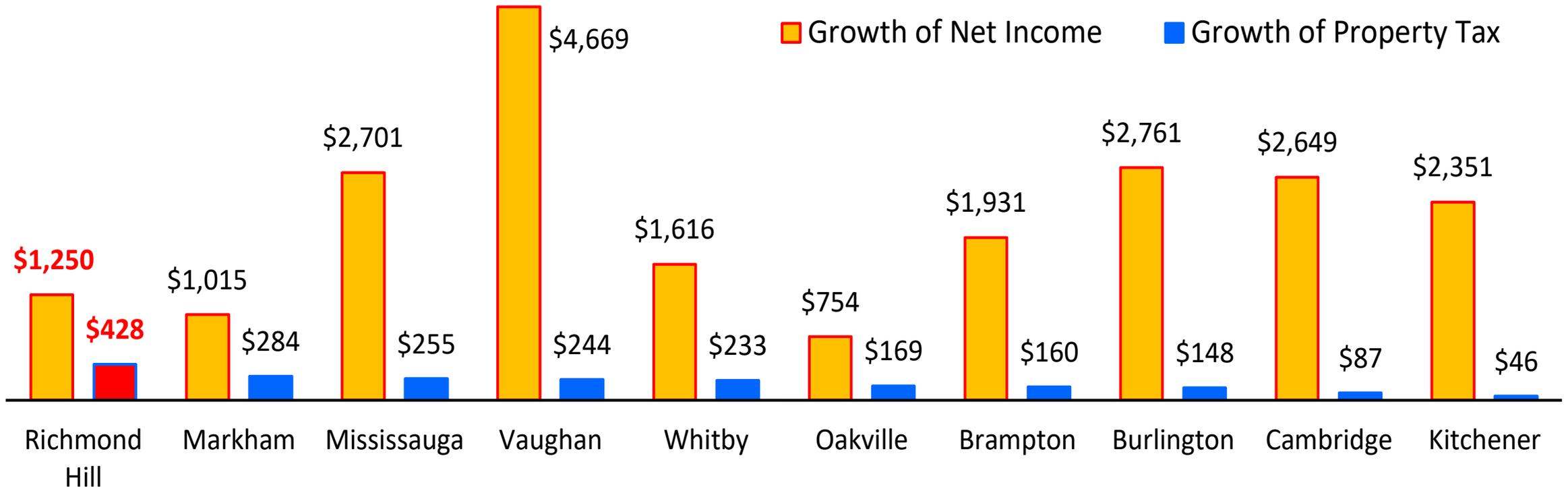


Sources: Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, *Financial Information Return*; Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; *2011 Census*; *2016 census*, *2021 census*, *Census Profile*; *NHS Profile*; Table 18-10-0005-01.

The Consequences of a "Sleepy Town"

At the Expense of Residents

Largest Bite of Resident Income Growth in Similar Cities by Amount and Increase!



Comparing Net Income Growth and Per Person Property Tax Increases Over a Decade in 2021 Dollars

Sources: Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, *Financial Information Return*; Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; *2011 Census*; *2016 census*, *2021 census*, *Census Profile*; *NHS Profile*; Table 18-10-0005-01.

Lessons From the Past: The Consequences of Refusing to Listen to Taxpayer Involvement in Municipal Planning

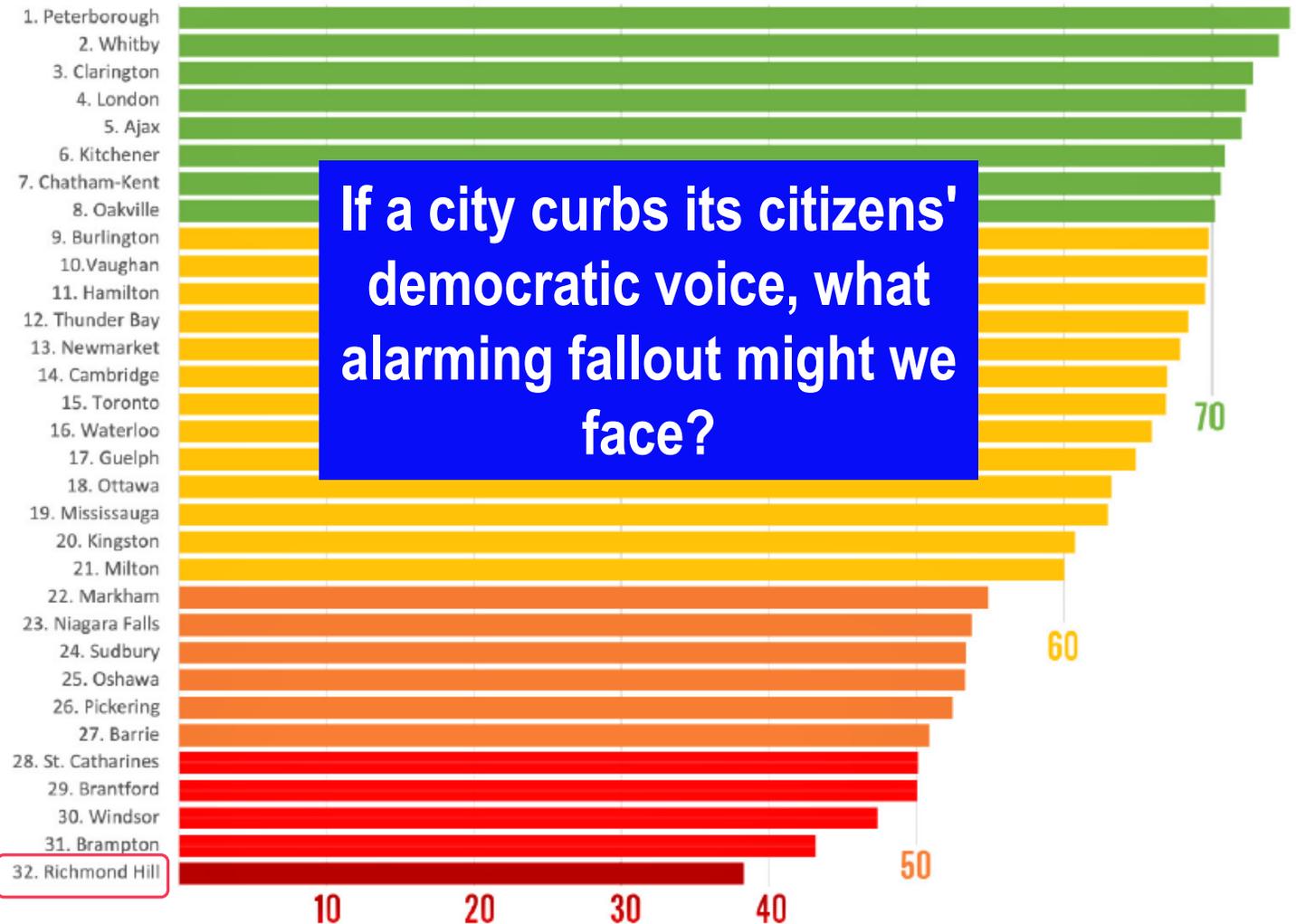
- Richmond Hill Planners Insisted on 1,200 sq ft as Average Apartment Size for over 5,000 units in the Yonge/Bernard KDA, despite being told it was not in line with market trends, historical data, ongoing applications, or common sense.
- Yet the reality is that our planners confused basic planning terms in a survey led to York Region inaccurately calculating the average apartment size. The Richmond Hill planners then used this erroneous size as evidence against the residents in the LPAT court, resulting in the residents losing the appeal on density. As a consequence, the Yonge/Bernard KDA plan was skewed, allowing developers to build an additional 50% of units and worsen the already unrealistic hyper-density plan.
- Do you think that our planners were unaware that the 1,200 sq.ft size was incorrect? They were not ignorant. Yet, why did they refuse to listen? The answer lies in a display of arrogance rooted in power, as these individuals held the authority to disregard residents without facing accountability.
- When a matter as straightforward as this has gone unaddressed for years, how can residents trust that the council and city planners will handle their concerns fairly and appropriately in more complex planning situations? The Council is in need of taking concrete steps to restore residents' trust in the city and ensure their rightful participation in planning matters.

Municipal Democracy Index

Overall rankings based on cumulative points from a possible total of 150

Why are residents not permitted to surpass the five-minute limit for speaking on intricate planning matters?

**32. Richmond Hill
(rock bottom)**



Evaluating RHC's Final Draft Plan: A Few Questions are All You Need

- 1. Will the RHC's Final Draft Plan bring any benefits to Richmond Hill and its residents? If so, what are they?**
- 2. Can Richmond Hill planners provide a few examples from anywhere in the world of a similar density and infrastructure that offers a quality of life?**
- 3. Does Richmond Hill want to create another record on its 'Sleepy Town Economy' with this plan?**
- 4. Does Richmond Hill have sufficient infrastructure, schools, parks, and transportation systems to support this plan?**
- 5. If not, does Richmond Hill have the required capital funds to construct the necessary infrastructure?**
- 6. Has this plan been fully examined by all stakeholders? If the plan fails, who will bear the consequences: the planners or the residents?**

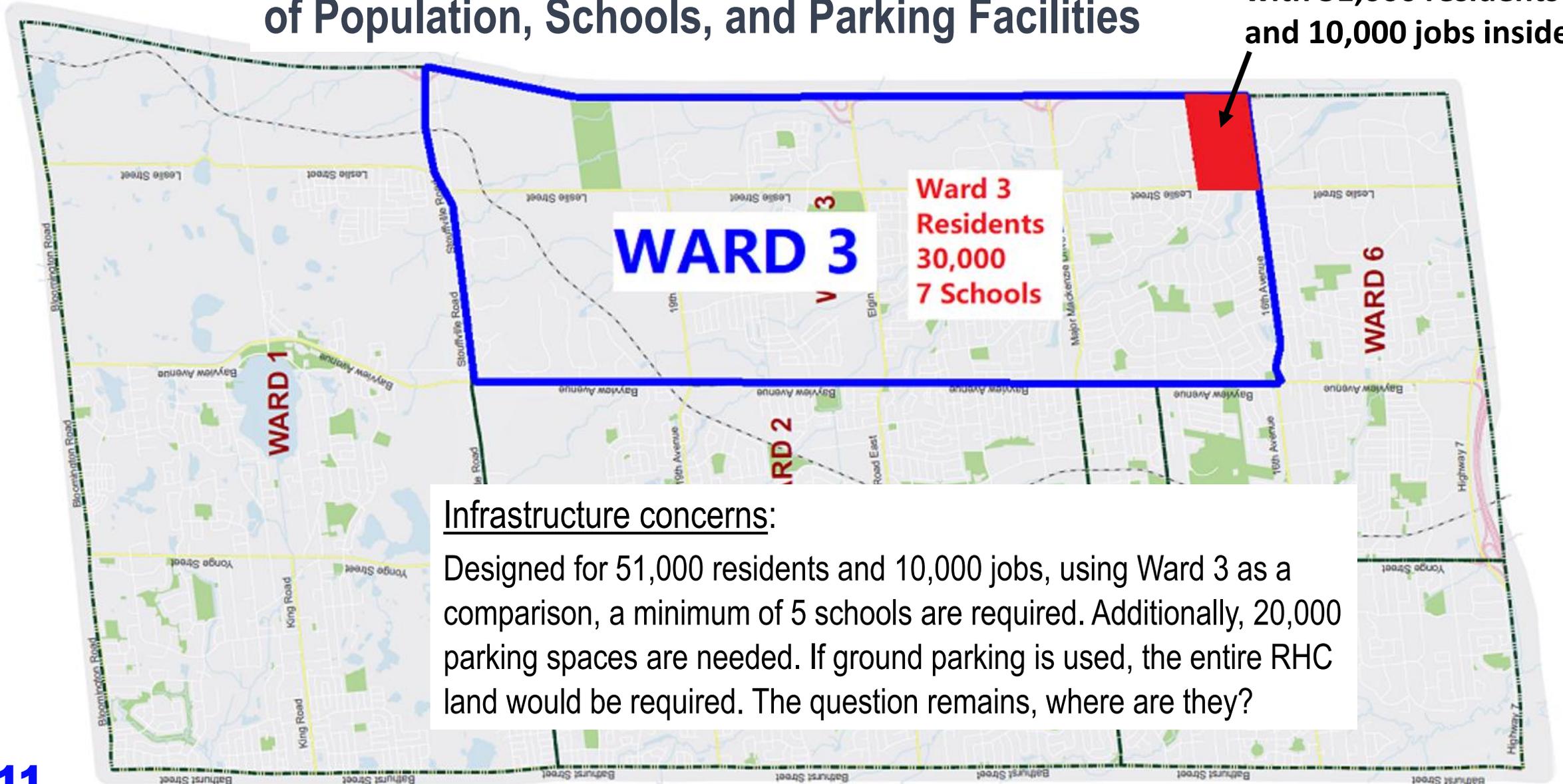
If the answers to the above questions are all negative, why should the plan be approved?

Are Two Schools Enough for RHC?

- Richmond Hill has around 200,000 residents and 40 public schools, meaning an average of 5,000 residents per school. With a planned capacity of 51,000 residents, RHC would require 10 schools based on this ratio. Even if the standard is doubled, with one school for every 10,000 people, the RHC would still need 5 schools.
 - 33 Elementary schools (20 Public, 13 Catholic)
 - 7 Secondary schools (5 Public, 2 Catholic)
- In a neighborhood, St. James Town, with comparable population density to the proposed RHC, the 2021 census data shows that 12.1% of the population is aged 6-17 years. Using this percentage, it is expected that over 6,000 students would be served by the RHC. This raises questions about the feasibility of the conclusion that only 2 new schools are needed for the RHC.
- Similar concerns also apply to the unrealistic parking assumptions.

Visual Comparison of Ward 3 and RHC in Terms of Population, Schools, and Parking Facilities

Equivalent size of RHC with 51,000 residents and 10,000 jobs inside



Infrastructure concerns:

Designed for 51,000 residents and 10,000 jobs, using Ward 3 as a comparison, a minimum of 5 schools are required. Additionally, 20,000 parking spaces are needed. If ground parking is used, the entire RHC land would be required. The question remains, where are they?

Why Transform an Economic Powerhouse into a Bedroom Community?

The Consequences of a Misdirected Development Plan

- Union Station area in downtown Toronto has a residents-to-jobs ratio of 1 to 11.8, while in RHC it's just 1 to 0.2, only 1.7% of Union Station.
- Approving such a low ratio in Richmond Hill's downtown could harm economic development and amplify its "Sleepy Town Economy," putting further financial strain on residents.
- The city lacks resources for the necessary infrastructure support for the RHC 51,000 residents.

To what extent can we trust the following claims regarding the RHC plan's credibility?

- 1) A new downtown for Richmond Hill **(Is it just a "Bedroom Downtown"?)**
- 2) A place defined by its high-quality design and public realm
- 3) A place for all people
- 4) A place for people to walk, bike and take transit **(Is downtown Manhattan a good place to bike?)**
- 5) A sustainable, healthy, and resilient place **(Can it truly be called sustainable and healthy?)**
- 6) A place that supports new technology and innovation

Features of the Union Station Area

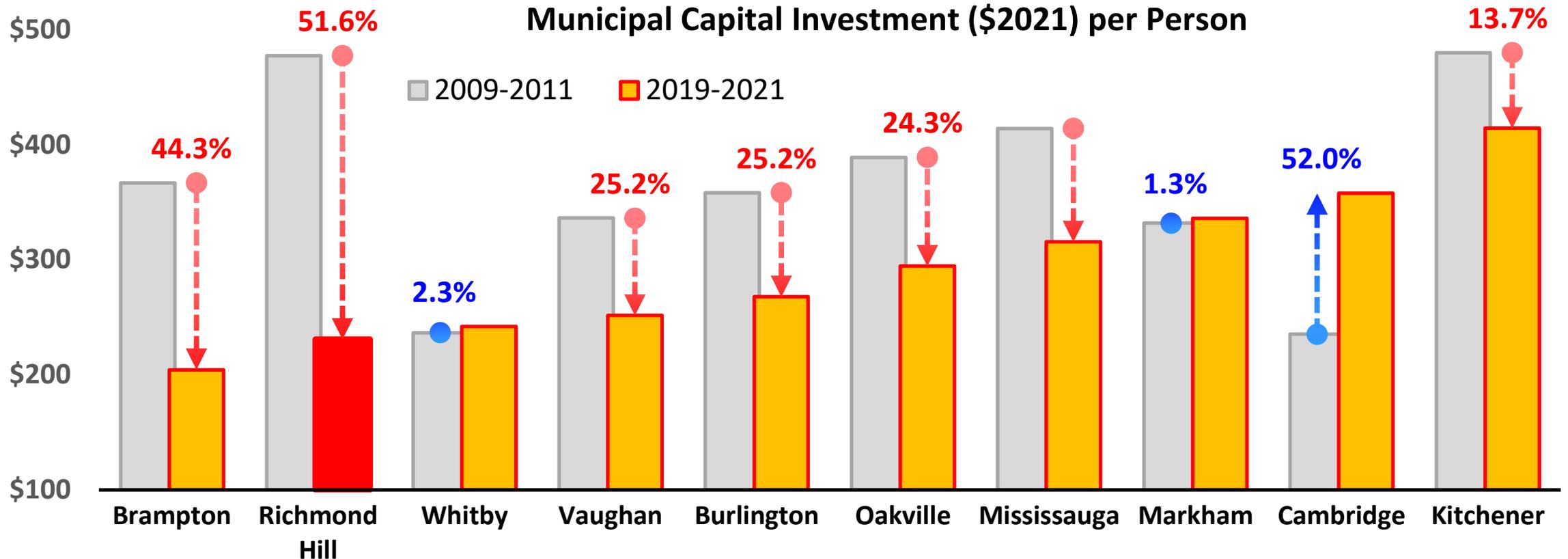
Residents account for only **8%**, but 600k jobs nearby.

Skyscrapers here serve primarily as employment centers, requiring significantly fewer resources.



Richmond Hill is Unlikely to Have Funds for RHC Infrastructure

The financial deterioration of the city has led to a record reduction among all municipalities in capital investment (-51.6%), to maintain its daily operations.



Sources: Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, *Financial Information Return*; Statistics Canada, *2006 Census*; *2011 Census*; *2016 census*, *2021 census*, *Census Profile*; *NHS Profile*; Table 18-10-0005-01.

Richmond Hill Has Ample Supply of Residential Applications

1. Facts of 118 Applications			3. Analyses	
Condo/Apartment	15,439 units		Proposed Population	43,327 Residents
Townhouse	3,509 units		Employment needed by proposed population	21,663 Jobs
Semi-Detached House	399 units		2020 Estimated Richmond Hill Population *	210,000 Residents
Detached House	742 units		2041 Richmond Hill Population Target	277,900 Residents
Total	20,089 units		R.H. Population Growth Target in the Next 20 Years	67,900 Residents
2. Common Data			Annual Average Population Growth Target	3,395 Residents
Condo/Apartment	1.92 residents/unit		How many years of population growth targets have been covered by the 118 ongoing applications	12.8 Years
Townhouse	2.83 residents/unit			
Semi-Detached House	2.88 residents/unit			
Detached House	3.51 residents/unit			
Jobs to Residents Ratio	50%			

* Based on 2016 R.H. Census population data and national population growth rate from 2016 to 2020

- Source: Richmond Hill Official Plan and Zoning Bylaw Applications, Feb 25, 2021
- Please note that the above is only a partial list and does not encompass the hundreds of applications that conform to the Official Plan and zoning bylaws.

TTS Survey: Subway Use Unlikely to Significantly Reduce RHC Traffic Congestion

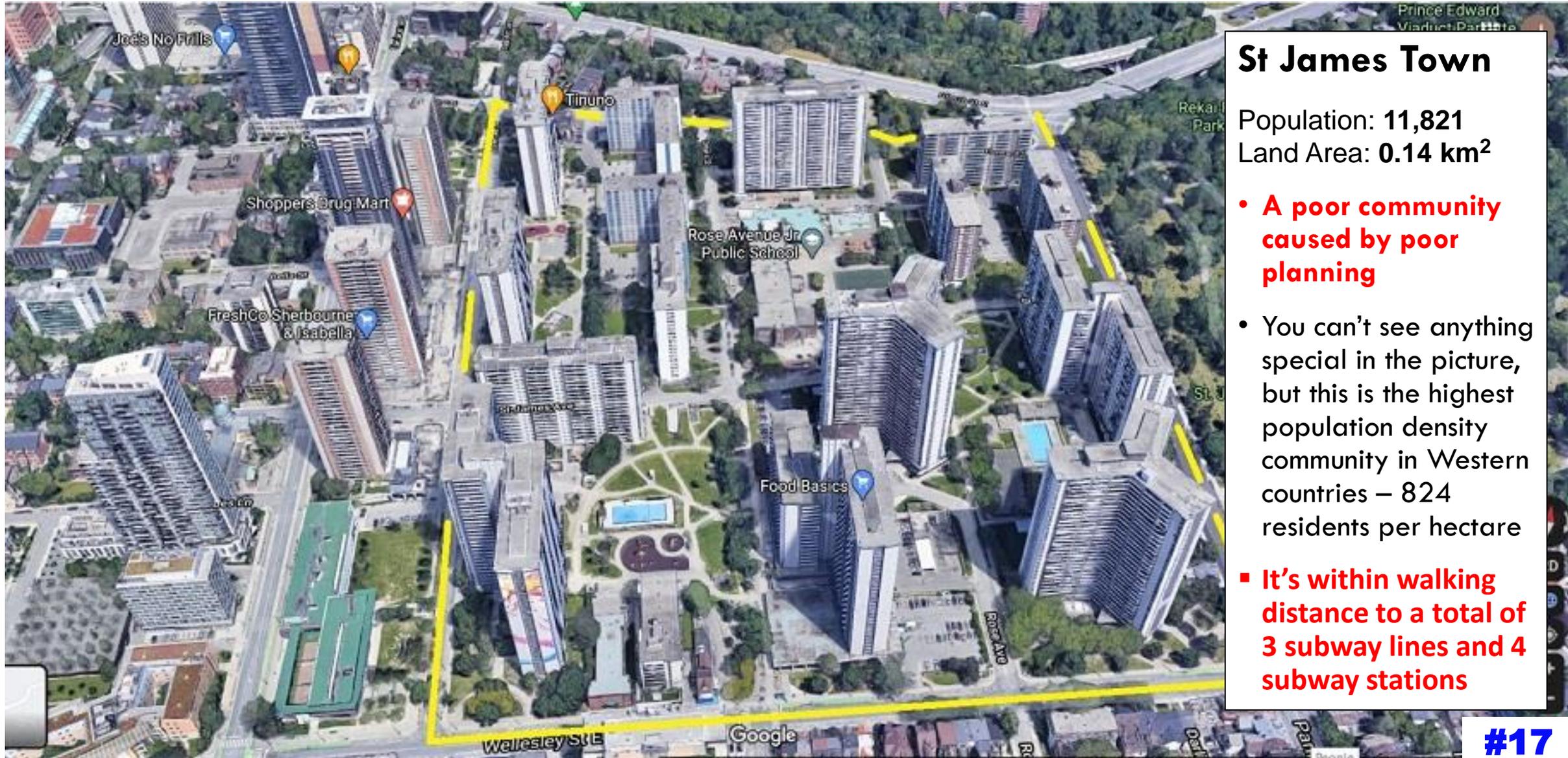
Distance from Downtown --- Travel Implications

2016 TTS stats

	Location	% AM peak travel to DT	% Average Peak Transit Share	Zero Car HH (2011 TTS)
PD 1	Downtown	63%	31%	45%
4	Mid-Town	31%	32%	21%
11	NYC*	23%	35%	22%
	Richmond Hill	10%	13%	4%
	Aurora	7%	8%	3%
	Newmarket	5%	7%	8%
	Georgina	2%	1%	3%

* PD 11 (NYCentre) has highest average peak transit use and it achieves over 80% MS for AM peak trips to and from PD1
 Lower values from PDs 2 and 4 reflect higher walk/bike use by residents

The Current Plans for RHC by Both the Province and City May Lead to It Becoming an Overcrowded and Impoverished Area, Similar to St. James Town



St James Town

Population: 11,821
Land Area: 0.14 km²

- **A poor community caused by poor planning**
- You can't see anything special in the picture, but this is the highest population density community in Western countries – 824 residents per hectare
- **It's within walking distance to a total of 3 subway lines and 4 subway stations**

Request for Validation: Comparing RHC Draft with Successful, Similar Projects

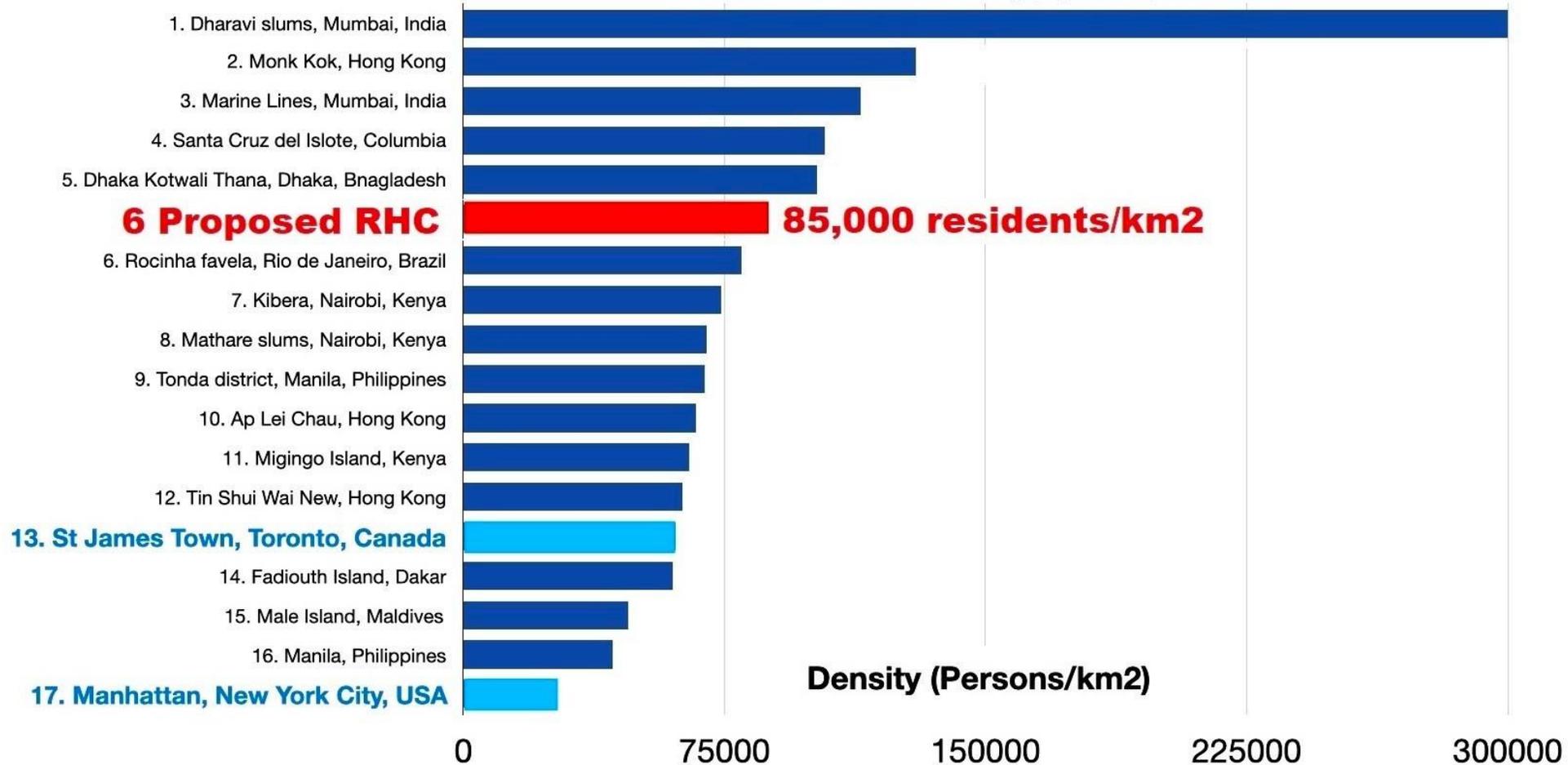
- While we acknowledge that there are numerous other concerns in this RHC Final Draft, we regret that we are limited by time constraints and unable to address them all here. We anticipate that our planners have prepared comprehensive reports, rich with data and future projections, to substantiate this draft, as has been the case in the past.
- It might be challenging for residents to contest these projections; similarly, planners are bound by historical data and existing evidence, which cannot be dismissed or altered. Hence, if all proposed outcomes are indeed credible, planners should be able to showcase real examples of comparable projects - those embodying similar density and infrastructure to the RHC - that have proven successful. **Providing such examples would significantly mitigate opposition. We respectfully request that they do so.**

Seeking Evidence: Infrastructure Capable of Sustaining Future Density

- While we acknowledge the planners' future projections, we kindly request examples that demonstrate how comparable infrastructure can effectively accommodate the anticipated density while still preserving livability.

17 Most Densely Populated Places on Earth

www.kickassfacts.com/17-densely-populated-places-earth/2/



Request To Put The RHC Final Draft On Hold For Improvement

- In conclusion, it's evident that the RHC Final Draft is a flawed plan that will have a significant impact on our community for the long term. While we understand that the city is under pressure from the provincial government, but we cannot simply shift the responsibility and blame it all on Doug Ford. It is not our expectation for the new council.
- Richmond Hill has had many plans in the past, but they have often been impractical or purely formal. The RHC Final Draft has not taken into consideration the challenges caused by the past Sleepy Town development strategy and has ignored the sustainability and livability of our community. We believe that the city can do better than the current draft.
- Therefore, **we request that the Final Draft be put on hold**, and all stakeholders be given sufficient time to examine it for improvements. We urge the council to consider the long-term impact on our community and develop a plan that is practical, sustainable, and promotes the livability of our city. It is our hope that the revised RHC Final Draft will reflect the needs and aspirations of our community.

Thank You

RHURG