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To: Clerks Richmondhill <clerks@richmondhill.ca>
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A City prides itself with the Architecture and Community Design. The design of architecture and communities will leave a legacy for future generations.

In this case, Parkway Hotels is proposing to build a 42-storey tower right adjacent to the west boundary of City Hall building and putting another eight 42-storey towers in the same compound as City Hall. Because of the proximity of these towers to City Hall, people would often associate these towers as a “product” of Richmond Hill and how Council exercise due diligence to oversee development projects in the City. Hence, these towers could become the “curse” or “praise” of City Hall.

The City Plan 2041 Key Directions Report was endorsed by Council on February 9, 2022 to set future direction of growth and development in Richmond Hill. The Report identified a Key Direction for this Area “to Provide a Civic Presence relative to the City’s Municipal Administrative Building with an Open Space Facility”. It identified the importance to establish the existing municipal administrative building as a place for civic interaction. It was suggested that there would be improvements to green spaces around the building to provide more of a “City Hall” appearance, and to enhance placemaking at the site.

In this case, the site is very small site and Sheraton Hotel and Convention Centre has already taken up most of land on site. In order to find room to put in the 9 towers, Sheraton will use the surface parking and loading dock area to build the towers. There is not much architectural design of the land. Sheraton did not provide a secondary plan to identify streetscaping, parkland, public recreational area, pedestrian walkway and amenities in this compound. The only “green space” provided for the whole compound (which includes City Hall) is a park of 1 acre, which does not meet the minimum municipal standard for dedication of parkland for 3460 new dwelling units.

According to the site plan, there will be only one entrance/exit to the compound (which includes Sheraton Hotel and Convention Centre, City Hall and the 9 towers) on Highway 7 and one entrance/exit on Leslie Street, with NO traffic signal installed at the entrance/exit. With the additional 4000 vehicles to the compound resulting from the construction of 111 hotel suites and 3460 condo units, there will be vehicles lining up on Highway 7 and Leslie Street coming in and leaving the compound. Highway 7 will be brought to a complete halt during rush hours. Turning into the compound without traffic lights would put drivers at risk of accidents.

So who would want to go through these trouble and risks to go to City Hall?

If approved by Council, this development would create a concrete forest with 9 towers five times the height of City Hall surrounding the Municipal Administrative Building. Is this the kind of “civic presence” and “placemaking” that Council wishes the City Hall to become? Is this the image and legacy that City Council wishes to create for Richmond Hill?

Since the proposed towers are to be built around City Hall, it will adversely affect the “work environment” of the Councillors and municipal employees. Like the neighboring residents in the condo buildings, the municipal employees will be impacted by the problems caused by this

invasive development, such as traffic gridlock, overcrowding, blocked views and shadowing effect, noise and air pollution, fire safety, lack of green space, etc.

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