

From: Tom Zelenka

Sent: Monday, May 19, 2025 1:24 PM

To: David West david.west@richmondhill.ca ; Clerks Richmondhill clerks@richmondhill.ca

Cc: Jana Zelenka

May 19, 2025

Dear Mayor David West and Members of the City Council,

I am writing as a concerned resident of the Richmond Hill to formally object to the proposed development of a large-scale condominium complex at 107 Hall Street. This project, as currently envisioned, is fundamentally incompatible with the character, infrastructure, and zoning intentions of our low-density residential neighborhood.

1. Zoning and Historic Community Character

The surrounding neighborhood is zoned for low-density residential use, which has fostered a quiet, family-oriented environment with single-family homes and townhomes and green spaces in the historic Richmond Hill. In fact, when the original homes were built on the neighbouring Mill Walk Court, not even a two-car garage was allowed to be built facing the street to preserve the heritage nature of the community. The introduction of a high-density condominium complex would significantly alter the character of the area, undermining the very qualities that make this community desirable and livable. The proposed high-rise condominium would dramatically disrupt the architectural harmony and cultural heritage that define this area. Such a development risks eroding the unique identity of our town of Richmond Hill, which has been carefully preserved over generations.

2. Infrastructure Strain

The existing infrastructure—roads, sewage systems, water supply, and public services—was not designed to accommodate the increased demand that a large condominium would bring. Traffic congestion, parking shortages, and overburdened utilities are foreseeable consequences that would negatively impact all current residents. Hall street is a narrow street where not even the city bus can turn onto without coming into oncoming traffic which has to give way for the bus to turn. It was never designed for the type of traffic that a 300-unit condominium would add, nor can it be expanded to make accommodations given the existing homes on the street. Parking on Hall Street and Mill Walk Court is already an issue whenever there is a performance at the nearby Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts where

overflow cars part all along Hall Street and on Mill Walk Court. I have witnessed many near misses with the already increased traffic on Hall Street and such a development would certainly put in danger the many children that walk to school along this route. A proposed development such as this belongs on Yonge Street or another large artery and not on a small residential street like Hall Street. Further, during the years of construction where would all the large trucks being staged to remove/bring materials and workers park? Instead of this development, the council should consider how the large parcel of vacant land on the East Side of Yonge Street across from Richmond Heights Plaza could be redeveloped for condominium proposal such as this – not on a small residential back street.

Further, this large number of new residents would certainly increase the strain on O.M. MacKillop Public School. Already our kids have oversized classes when attending due to capacity issues. Will the developer also be paying to increase the capacity of the school to accommodate accordingly, or will that burden fall on all the other taxpayers in the neighborhood? The capacity of the existing school systems must be considered when evaluating such a large high density development.

3. Environmental Concerns

The proposed development will lead to the loss of the current green space on the subject lands, increased pollution not only from the increased traffic but from the years of construction of such a large project, and disruption of local ecosystems. These environmental impacts are particularly concerning given the growing need for sustainable urban planning and climate resilience.

4. Precedent and Property Values

Allowing this development sets a precedent for future high-density projects in low-density zones, potentially leading to a cascade of similar proposals. The tall 170-foot buildings will place the existing homes and townhomes into shadow, increase traffic and alter the historic small-town community which will erode property values. This is an externalization of costs that the builder is not compensating existing residents for. Further, this development is likely to destabilize the long-term planning vision for our historic Richmond Hill community.

5. Lack of Community Engagement

Many residents feel that this proposal has moved forward without adequate consultation or transparency. Where letters from the city are distributed when a neighbor wants to build 30cm closer to the property line, or a pool in their yard, we have not received anything from the city regarding the proposal to build this enormous condominium next door. I urge the City Council to prioritize inclusive dialogue and consider the voices of those who will be most affected by this decision. Furthermore, before any such large-scale development proceeds, City Council

should identify which First Nations have a historical or current connection to the land in question. This includes both treaty and non-treaty Nations. City Council should notify affected First Nations early in the planning process, provide clear, accessible information about the proposed development, and allow sufficient time for meaningful input. Council should work with Indigenous communities to identify sacred sites, burial grounds, and culturally significant landscapes.

In light of these concerns, I respectfully request that the City Council reject the current proposal and instead pursue development plans that align with the existing zoning regulations, Richmond Hill historic heritage and community values. Years ago, there was a proposal for townhomes on this land that appeared to meet or nearly meet the zoning, historic community character, and infrastructure requirements. I would encourage the City Council to recommend such a such a proposal to the developer instead.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am available to discuss this further and would appreciate the opportunity to speak at any upcoming hearings on this issue.

Sincerely,

Tom Zelenka

17 Mill Walk Court

Richmond Hill, ON L4C 0P6