

June 6th Members' Meeting

Our next members' meeting will be on **Monday, June 6th, 2016 at 7:00 pm at the Markham Pan Am Centre**. Our URA subcommittee will present

1. York Region Transportation Plan by Transportation & Traffic sub-committee
2. Zoning bylaw review URA submission by zoning bylaw sub-committee
3. Carlton Park Master Plan

We look forward to seeing you on Monday, June 6th.

York Region Transportation Master Plan – Unionville Highlights

York Region's Transportation Master Plan (TMP) is moving rapidly towards completion by mid 2016. Our April newsletter highlighted some major short-term changes likely to occur in and around Unionville, including Regional Express Rail by 2022, four new mid-block crossings of Highway 404, and environmental assessment studies (likely leading to road widenings for HOV/transit) initiating for Bayview, Kennedy, McCowan and 16th Avenue. Other important initiatives include reviewing/potentially eliminating left turn restrictions into stable neighbourhoods, removing truck bans on most regional roads and constructing more physically separated cycle lanes.

As work on the TMP continues, it has become increasingly clear that York's ambitious construction plans are running up against the cold reality of insufficient public funds. Unless new funding sources are found, badly-needed transportation infrastructure will continue to lag well behind population growth.

The York Region TMP will be discussed at our June members meeting.

2124123 Ontario (formerly Scardred 7) Downzoning



Members will recall the controversy within URA around the 2015 proposed 350 unit downzoning by Times Group at Highway 7/Village Parkway. URA ultimately expressed no objection once Times agreed to transfer the extra density to their development on the south side of Highway 7, as part of a 1600 unit upzoning for that property. A second developer also on the northern side of Highway 7, 2124123 Ontario, has now similarly applied to downzone their approved condo apartment building to townhouses, a net drop of 180 units. Despite arguments that the total density on Highway 7 will increase due to the south side upzoning, Development Services Committee unexpectedly narrowly voted to support staff and deny the application. Stay tuned as further events occur in this surprising area!

GO Whistle Cessation

Markham is making good progress on GO Train whistle cessation. A staff report was presented to Development Services Committee on May 24, which included a detailed list of required upgrades at each of the 13 crossings to meet both new federal grade crossing regulations and anti-whistle requirements. Costs were estimated to total \$5.4M, with \$1.3M to Markham, \$2.2M to York Region and \$1.9M to Metrolinx. Discussions with both York Region and Metrolinx are in progress to obtain budget commitments for 2017.

Proposed New Provincial Land Use Policies are Significant



Members will recall that in 2015, the Province initiated a coordinated review of four key land use plans, including the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) and the Greenbelt Plan. In December, the Crombie Advisory Panel released its recommendations on how to amend and improve these Plans.

In early May, the Province released its proposed changes to these four plans. While changes are proposed in many areas, the two of greatest interest to URA are:

- Increasing the intensification target in the Growth Plan to a minimum of 60% of all new residential development to occur in the existing defined built up area, versus 40% today.
- Increasing designated greenfield area density targets (ie new developments outside the built up area) to a minimum of 80 residents + jobs per hectare, versus 50 today.

York Region has been working on an update to its Official Plan to 2041. Different Region-wide intensification scenarios have been analyzed by staff planners. Staff are clearly pro-intensification and acknowledge the lower capital and operating costs from higher intensification. However, they have misgivings about intensification targets beyond 50% and designated greenfield targets beyond 70, as this would force virtually all new home construction to be apartments or condos. Staff believe a significant fraction of new-home buyers still want single family detached homes, and hence believe that > 50% and >70 is unrealistic from a market perspective.

Proposed New Provincial Land Use Policies (continue)

What will be the effect if the province implements these higher targets? Will York Region rebel, especially as money from the province to construct rapid transit is inadequate? Will developers step up lobbying and/or appeal to the OMB? Will the prices for detached homes continue to skyrocket? Will the home construction market crater? Will the anticipated growth not materialize?

Just as the original 2006 plans changed the face of land use planning in the GGH, the proposed 2016 changes also appear to be very significant, although many questions remain. Public consultation is planned by the Province until September 30, 2016. URA will continue to closely monitor this activity.

Carlton Park Master Plan



The City is undertaking a planning exercise to redevelop Carleton Park (Carleton Rd, just west of Village Parkway). URA is represented on the stakeholder committee. At the inaugural meeting, numerous new offering ideas were nominated, including splash pad, permanent washrooms, shaded seating, planters, increased natural areas and specialty gardens. Numerous improvements to existing offerings were also nominated, such as improved pathways, landscaping, play equipment, lighting, playing fields, access, parking and signage. The City hopes to hold one or two additional meetings and then approach Markham Council with final ideas and funding request in the Fall.

Zoning Bylaw Review Phase 2 Submission



URA zoning bylaw review sub-committee has recently submitted our recommendations on rooming housing, student housing and minor variance to the City of Markham.

We recognise the need to increase residential density in some areas of the City of Markham, by building more affordable housing and at the same time many residents would like to maintain suburban less dense, quieter life style. We recommended the City of Markham to restrict rooming housing with license in high intensification area as defined in official plan land use map.

URA accepts the definition of rooming housing defined in current zoning bylaw as *"a building that does not exceed 3 storeys, where lodging is provided for 4 or more persons in return for remuneration or the provision of services (or both); and where rooms do not have both bathrooms and kitchen facilities for the exclusive use of individual occupants."*. However, this leaves rooming houses with 3 or less renters completely unregulated. We recommend that city staff to review options for this class of house, and make some proposals for bylaw control. We understand that London has such a framework.

URA also accepted the definition of secondary suits in 2008 Draft as *"a second residential unit in a detached house, semidetached house or rowhouse that consists of one or more rooms designed, occupied or intended for use, including occupancy, by one or more persons as an independent and separate residence in which a facility for cooking, sleeping facilities and sanitary facilities are provided for the exclusive use of such person or persons"*. URA recommended only 2 residents are permitted in one property, a minimum of 1 parking space and be permitted with license in Markham.

Since Human Rights Codes precludes the "labelling" of a property as exclusively student housing, the City is only left with the options of Rooming Houses or Secondary Suites to house the initial estimate of 4000 students, which is expected to rise quickly to 10,000 students. Should a student house be defined, we recommended the student housing be permitted to University or College only.

URA believes that the existing zoning bylaws provide sufficient opportunity to build a large, high value home in most parts of Markham. URA recommends that the City and the Committee of Adjustment should have default position to only permit build within the zoning bylaw.

What is the URA?

A non-partisan association of the residents of Unionville

- ✓ Boundaries: Warden Ave. to McCowan Rd. and Sixteenth Ave. to Hwy 407
- ✓ Founded in 1974 to protect the interests of the community
- ✓ Registered with the Province of Ontario and the City of Markham

What does URA do?

- ✓ Stays current on events, activities and issues in Unionville
- ✓ Keeps our members informed through regular email broadcasts and monthly meetings with guest speakers on relevant topics
- ✓ Ensures that residents' views are known and communicated to local, regional and provincial government officials
- ✓ Maintains a website that contains information on active issues
- ✓ Organizes special events, such as candidates' meetings, during elections

Join Us!!

Together Our Voice
Is Stronger

Membership information can
found at:

<http://www.unionvilleratepayers.com/membership.html>