

To: Mayor Scarpitti and City of Markham Councillors,

I have been following (and been involved in) events for the last two years, with respect to the Baha'i Temple and National Centre Proposal.

It now seems Council are on the brink of approving this project which appears to have been viewed positively by the city from the outset. There's even been support expressed by a number of out-of-province Baha'i Officials. **Yet the voices of many residents, who will have to live with the destruction and chaos this project will thrust upon us, are largely being ignored.**

There can be no doubt at this point as to how a large number of our community feels about this proposed development: **It is the wrong location.**

The following is a summary of actions taken by concerned residents.

### Meetings and Submissions

- Six meetings held over 2 years, producing:
- **54 deputations and 61 written submissions opposing this development**

### Media Coverage

- Two newspaper articles were initiated:
- May 25, 2023 – The Thornhill Liberal - *"Baha'i Temple Proposal Raises Concerns."*
- October 2024 – Markham Economist & Sun – *"Residents Oppose Massive Baha'i Temple Complex Coming to Markham's German Mills Settlers Park."*

### Surveys and Petitions

- Three surveys/petitions conducted.
- **Total signatures "against" the project: 1763**
- **Undecided: 2**
- **Total signatures "for" the project: 1**

### Change.org Petition

- Petition to change the street name of Leslie Street, north of Steeles Ave, to Meadowlark Gate
- **Signatures: 324**

\*\* Residents felt "Leslie Street" gives a false impression of a main arterial road as per the Official Plan for Places of Worship, whereas this section is actually a dead end street. Petition results were sent to the city mid 2023. No response received to date.

## Summary of Community Objections Regarding Development Project

A Google search using “community objections” produced the following document (This is only a portion that I thought most relevant).

“A City of Markham Development Services staff report should absolutely include community objections for consideration when evaluating a development application for approval; this is considered standard practice in responsible planning to ensure all perspectives are considered before making a decision.”

### Key reasons why community objections should be included:

Transparency and accountability.

Informed decision making

By clearly outlining community concerns, the staff report demonstrates that the city is actively listening to residents and taking their feedback into account

For each objection, the staff should provide a detailed analysis explaining how the concerns will be addressed or why they are not considered valid.”

## In Conclusion

The City of Markham Planning and Urban Design Department, through the Staff Report, has reviewed the project proposal. They have recommended that the project proceed to the voting stage at Council. This recommendation includes necessary amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law, ensuring the project aligns with city regulations and vision. But does it? There are many issues that we have highlighted over the past two years, that we feel have not been addressed; the parking shortfall, the lodging, amount of buildings and temple height, etc.

Without all these issues being properly addressed, it raises concerns about the project's approval being predetermined. Are there any conditions under which this project's approval would be denied? The community is paying attention.

Once again I reiterate, Councillor Irish stated that **Residents Come First**. The above data compilation illustrates how strongly many in our community oppose this development **at this location**. What more does it take for Councillor Irish, Mayor Scarpitti and ALL Councillors to hear us?

Respectfully,

Gail Lavery