



**“TOGETHER OUR VOICE IS STRONGER”**

<http://unionvilleresidents.ca>

## **Participant Statement for Ontario Land Tribunal Case # OLT-24-000009**

Applicant: Markham Suites Hotel Ltd.

March 15, 2024

C:/URA-HiltonOLT2024-03-15

The Unionville Residents Association (URA) represents residents in Markham Ward 3. The proposed development, at 8500 Warden Ave, is immediately adjacent to our western boundary.

The URA closely monitors development proposals in our area. We have been involved in numerous OMB/OLT hearings, either as a party or participant. Our goal is always to maintain **liveability** and achieve **complete communities** for Markham residents, both existing and future, while recognizing the need to accommodate high population growth, preserve farmland, mitigate climate change and comply with provincial policy. We support intensification along rapid transit corridors, as with 8500 Warden, subject to provision of **adequate physical and social infrastructure**.

We have been closely involved in the development of a new Secondary Plan for Markham Centre, most of which lies in Ward 3 and includes 8500 Warden. We view a current and updated Secondary Plan to be vitally important, as it defines the key aspects of a community – population, number of jobs, transportation infrastructure, parks, schools etc.

After years of study and consultation, Markham staff presented a “Recommended Development Concept” to Markham’s Development Services Committee on July 5, 2023. The Concept has the level of detail that is needed, including jobs, retail, roads, transit, schools, parkland, community centres, etc. Presumably this represents staff’s and the consultant’s expert opinion on how best to **balance** development with liveability, environment, provincial policy, sustainability etc. Therefore, although not yet finalized in a Secondary Plan, we have been using this Recommended Concept as a benchmark to define complete communities and liveability.

We have deputed twice to Markham Council on the proposal by Markham Suites Hotel . On May 11, 2021, we urged deferral of any consideration of the proposal until the Markham Centre development concept was further advanced. On December 12, 2023, we expressed shock at the large gap between the Markham Suites proposal and the Recommended Development Concept from July, 2023. The specific concern is the FSI of 7.45 versus 5.0, a 50% increase, which represents many more residents, and therefore much more pressure on physical and social infrastructure.

Even more alarming is that other recent development approvals in the area have also exceeded the Recommended Development Concept.

In a response to questions from Council in December, Markham staff has indicated they are modifying the Recommended Development Concept. However, there has been no update to date.

The URA position is, until the new Recommended Development Concept is unveiled and incorporated in a new Secondary Plan, **this application should not be approved**. We simply don't know if, based on the new higher population, whether

- Additional or wider roads are needed, perhaps on the Markham Suites lands
- Additional parkland is needed, perhaps on the Markham Suites lands
- Additional schools are needed, perhaps on the Markham Suites lands
- Additional community facilities are needed, perhaps on the Markham Suites lands

And a myriad of other unknowns.

**Until the Secondary Plan is finalized, we simply don't know if this proposal represents good planning.**

In conclusion, URA urges that this development proposal not be approved until there is a finalized Secondary Plan. Once the Secondary Plan is approved, this application needs to be consistent with the development concept in that plan.