

January 27, 2006

Mayor & Members of Council
City of Vaughan
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, Ontario
L6A 1T1

c/o The Clerk
John Leach



To the Mayor and Members of Council

I attended the Committee of the Whole Meeting on Monday January 16, 2006 to witness the presentation of the Yonge Street Study.

I was relieved when Councillors Jackson and Shefman proposed the Council approved deferral of the Study Presentation in order to allow more time for discussion and to hold an evening session permitting the residents of Thornhill to participate in a review of this proposed monumental change.

During the partial presentation that did take place at that meeting the Urban Strategies Inc. representative referred to the key stakeholders being the City of Vaughan, Town of Markham, Region of York, York Region Rapid Transit Consortium, property owners and local residents.

With reference to the "key stakeholders" comment, I reviewed Agenda Item # 29 as prepared by the Planning Department and found no references to the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill or her sister committee, The Thornhill Village Festival & Parade Committee. Both of these groups have been active in the Thornhill Village for more than 30years.

The Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill (S.P.O.H.T.) has helped preserve many of the important Heritage Properties that make Thornhill what it is today. S.P.O.H.T. was also key in establishing the Heritage Districts in both Vaughan & Markham and we continue to work with both Councils to support growth while preserving the streetscapes within the Districts under the Heritage Guidelines. S.P.O.H.T. is the only resident's group representing the Yonge Street corridor as well as the local side streets within the Village regardless of Municipal Boundaries and we trust that both Vaughan & Markham Councils consider us to be "key stakeholders".

The Urban Strategies Inc. representative also provided an overview of the workshops and public open houses that his firm had conducted stating that they had received input from both residents and business interests.

As a concerned citizen, I attended a number of these open house meetings and found that a great deal of predetermined design information was being presented. There was no real participation in the creating of the proposal and one was able only to observe an already preconceived plan based on statistical data and models copied from other proposals or developments existing in other jurisdictions.

As a member of both the Thornhill Historical Society and the Festival Committee I approached the Urban Strategies Representative and asked for copies of these plans so that S.P.O.H.T and the Festival Committee could spend the time necessary to understand the full impact of the proposal and respond as a group. Originally, I was told they would provide us with plan copies after they were revised to include public input however when I followed up I was told they were not available. On further enquiry I was provided with a name and number of a Town of Markham staff member who was coordinating the Study on behalf of Vaughan & Markham. Several attempts to secure copies of the plans proved fruitless. (ps. Other than some bus shelter sketches, I have had the same kind of success with the Rapid Transit group as well)

My request of the Mayor and Council is;

- that Urban Strategies conduct a special Yonge Street Study Presentation meeting with the Society for the Preservation of Historic Thornhill & The Thornhill Village Festival & Parade Committee prior to re-presenting it to Council.
- that Council ask for and make public the comments / input from the public open houses & workshops etc., related to the Yonge Street study.
- that Urban Strategies show where any input was incorporated and provide comments as to why and where it could not be considered.
- that Council entertain a submission from S.P.O.H.T. with regards to further input to the Study before accepting and endorsing the Yonge Street Study.

In closing, I would ask that Vaughan Council also recommend that presentations to the Town of Markham & the Region of York be delayed until S.P.O.H.T. has had an opportunity to prepare and present a submission to each Council.

Yours truly,

Brian Ryan
Member (since 1984)
The Society for The Preservation of Historic Thornhill
The Thornhill Village Festival & Parade Committee

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cc, The Mayor & Members of Council
Town of Markham