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**Subject:** FW: York Downs development - list of important unresolved issues  
**Attachments:** Voting Awareness on York Downs.pdf

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**From:** morris

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 11, 2018 5:26 PM

**To:** Mayor Frank Scarpitti - Markham; Councillor, Don Hamilton - Markham; Regional Councillor, Jim Jones - Markham; Regional Councillor, Joe Li - Markham; Councillor, Alex Chiu - Markham; Councillor, Amanda Collucci - Markham; Councillor, Colin Campbell - Markham; Councillor, Karen Rea - Markham; Councillor, Valerie Burke - Markham; Deputy Mayor, Jack Heath - Markham; Regional Councillor, Nirmala Armstrong - Markham; Councillor, Alan Ho - Markham; Councillor, Khalid Usman - Markham

**Cc:** Councillor, Logan Kanapathi - Markham

**Subject:** York Downs development - list of important unresolved issues

Dear Mayor, Deputy Mayor, regional councillors and ward councillors,

This email is follow up on yesterday's DSC meeting. I have made a list of issues that clearly remain outstanding on the York Downs development. These issues are important and point to the need for you either to vote no or to postpone the decision on the York Downs project on Wednesday, September 12. Why rush? For such a massive project, we need to have answers to the numerous issues listed.

Kindly read the attached document. I will bring copies to the meeting.

Thank you,

Nesta Morris MSc (Planning Studies) and a resident of the Normandale area just south of York Downs

## A big decision - but many unknowns

York Downs is a major project, but many issues remain very unclear. York Downs and the FUA (North Markham **F**uture **U**rban **A**rea) will add 52,000 people to Markham, another 13%. These people will have to use Kennedy, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Village Parkway, Warden, Woodbine and the 404. Will Markham grind to a halt? What happens to our economy when arterial roads are completely clogged up?

Please think about the impact of York Downs on traffic in Markham. Many big questions remain unanswered. Before voting on York Downs, please clear up all the questions and holes in the information. September 12, 2018 is not the right time for the vote. It is too soon.

Before you change Markham forever, please be clear about what you are voting on and the implications for everyone in Markham especially those most affected by traffic on Kennedy, 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Village Parkway, Warden, Woodbine and the 404:

1. **Be clear about what is in the proposal** being voted on! At the moment, it is mix of an old (April 2018) submission and Minutes of Settlement ideas from the URA and NCRA (these ideas are supposedly without prejudice but some have appeared in the recent public report) and possibly even the council's in camera discussions
2. Be clear that **residents have not been given an opportunity to see what their council is voting on**
3. Be clear about the **high number of units** in the huge York Downs project (at 300 football fields, York Downs is one of largest developments in Canada)
4. Be clear about the **number of units in each stage and phase** (sub-stage) of the project
5. Be clear that the **developer's traffic consultants haven't even finished their traffic analysis** (e.g., they are still working on the Warden/16<sup>th</sup> Avenue intersection and there are inconsistencies between their work and what we see and count in reality) and **their reports have not been peer reviewed**
6. Be clear about the **traffic monitoring and phasing proposal, the triggers, and who will decide and how**. All these issues are undecided as yet. The developer wants to build almost half the project (something like another Beckett Farm) right away with no more analysis and without facing up to the traffic implications
7. Be clear that there is **no evidence that the ideas put forward to keep traffic moving (bigger intersections, traffic light adjustments, bigger roads, HOV lanes, transit, and walking or cycling to work) will be effective** enough to save Markham from gridlock
8. Be clear about the **risk of the Normandale community being landlocked in their area** unable to gain access to the road network

9. Be clear about **road widening. At \$10 m of our tax dollars per km**, voters want to be sure we will not simply end up with three lane congestion instead of two lane congestion. As road widening takes years to complete, what happens to the traffic while waiting??
10. Be clear about **whether enough people will drive together to justify the HOV/transit lane** (experience elsewhere shows that it can be very difficult to get a significant number of people to drive together especially when most work destinations are distant and scattered as is the case for Markham residents)
11. Be clear about **whether enough people will use transit to justify the HOV/transit lane** (York Downs homes will be very expensive. The walks, waits, transfers, and extra time required to use the transit service are unlikely to attract these people especially in bad weather)
12. Be clear that the **developer's traffic analysis is based on old data** (2011 and 2015), but traffic has already increased
13. Be clear about the **loss of wild life and green space amenity** for Markham
14. Be clear about the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) view on **flooding**
15. Be clear about the **endangered barn swallows** on York Downs, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry (MNR) requirements for these birds, and the implications the MNR requirements may have for the project (e.g., number of units and shifting of units)
16. Be clear about the need for **an independent peer review of environmental matters and traffic matters**. As a councillor said at Monday's DSC meeting, **it's time the fox stopped guarding the chickens**, especially on such a large project. In other words, how can residents be comfortable when it is the developer who pays for the traffic analysis and the environmental analysis?
17. Be clear about the **multi-use path on 16<sup>th</sup> Avenue** (its location, appearance, etc)
18. Be clear about the issues involved in **linking the walkways** proposed for York Downs with walkways in surrounding areas, especially across six-lane roads

Finally, to quote from the comments of a resident and then a lawyer at the DSC meeting on Monday:

19. **Stop putting the cart before the horse!** That means **do not vote yes to York Downs and simply assume that things will sort themselves out**
20. **Stop flying blind when you vote.** That means do not vote yes when you cannot explain and justify the implications of the York Downs development

York Downs will affect thousands of residents. There are simply **too many unknowns to decide on York Downs today. A decision today is premature and obviously not in the best interests of the public.** As two lawyers said on Monday, a decision today to go ahead with York Downs *regardless of the unknowns* is an irresponsible decision.