

February 1st Member Meeting



Our next monthly meeting will be on Monday, February 1 at 7:00 pm at the Stiver Mill, 9 Station Lane. We have speakers from the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation to discuss the Provincial Review of four acts, including the Greenbelt Act and Places to Grow Act (see article on Crombie Report – page 3). Come and hear about Markham's future growth and environment!

Tree Preservation at Intensification Sites

On January 21 representatives of the URA and Trees and Residents for Urban Environment (TRUE) met with planning and urban design staff at the City to review the lessons learned from the Varley Plaza redevelopment with respect to tree preservation. While we had to agree to disagree about how well the Varley situation was handled, we have some hope that the issue will now be front of mind when planning staff review future in-fill site plans throughout Markham. We were also pleased to hear from urban design staff that, like us, they are concerned by the lack of underground setback standards in the current zoning bylaws and by the lack of provision for green buffers between different residential types. These issues are being addressed in the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw Project now underway in Markham.

Renewing your membership is easy!

- Online at <http://unionvilleratepayers.com/>
- In person at monthly member meeting
- By cheque mailed to URA membership
4261-A14 Highway 7 East, Suite #235, ON L3R 9W6

Varley Plaza Construction starts February 1st

A public meeting was held on January 20 to discuss the construction plan for this development. Construction will start February 1 and last about 2 years. Work will be from 7:00am to 7:00pm weekdays only. Up to 60 trucks/day will enter/leave the site using Sciberras Rd, Eureka St, Main Street and/or Fred Varley Drive. The pedestrian walkway from Eureka to Fred Varley will be closed. Worker parking will be largely adjacent to the GO tracks on the space used by the Farmer's Market on Sundays.

Markham Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw



As per the November 2015 URA newsletter, Markham is undertaking a zoning bylaw review in order to provide the ability for the city to enforce land use policies of the newly approved Official Plan 2014. Currently there are 46 zoning bylaws that have evolved over the years. The project will consolidate and streamline them into one comprehensive geographical web-based zoning bylaw.

There are 20 review areas identified by staff with some of key issues highlighted as below

Key Review Areas	Key Issues
Current City Regulations	able to protect undesirable changes but do not encourage change & growth
46 Existing Bylaws	inconsistent definitions, structure, format and layout create confusion
Site Specific Zoning	inconsistent between sites, as some allow new use new definition
Minor Variances	41% setback related , 15% lot size related, 14% building volume related
Infill Housing	incompatibility of redevelopment or new lot creation in established neighbourhoods
Interface between residential & non-residential uses	incompatibility due to emissions, noise, odour or facilities such as airport, rail, industries, waste, energy generator, day care, education, health etc.
Residential Accessory	size, height, location, privacy, overlook and impact on landscaped area
Residential Amenity Space	amenity space only exists in site specific zoning and needs to be in multi-unit residences and townhouses
Home Occupation	define home occupation and prevent negative impact to neighbours
Greenway & Special Areas	restrict development in greenway, TRCA and special provision areas
Parking Standards	8 types of residential standards, 46 types non-residential standards, 25 parking ratios, parking design
Place of Worship	site specific zoning allows in residential, business, community areas
Automotive Uses	fuel station or garage lot area, setbacks, outside storage, sales of propane
Drive Thru	noise, hours of operation, stacking lane, setbacks, principal vs accessory use

Key Review Areas (continue)	Key Issues
Affordable & Shared Housing	province allows secondary suites, shared housing , related & unrelated persons in occupancy. Remove barrier for disabilities
Student Housing	zoning bylaw does not distinguish students from other types of occupants
Medical Marijuana Production	medical marijuana is not addressed in official plan nor zoning bylaw; issue is where production facilities with odour, security, distribution be permitted
Addiction & Recovery Centre	needle exchange and methadone maintenance treatment centres exist in York Region. Should Markham define differently than clinics or hospital?
Adult Entertainment	adult entertainment parlours only permitted by site specific zoning; body rub parlours of erotic or sexual nature not regulated in zoning bylaw

Detailed discussions, presentations and staff reports can be found in the link below

<http://www.markham.ca/wps/portal/Markham/MunicipalGovernment/AboutMunicipalGovernment/MajorCityProjects/ZoningBylawProject/>

City staff will be producing a strategic direction and recommendation report by March 2016 per public consultation prior to Christmas 2015. URA will organize a work group if there is enough interest and will engage city staff on the bylaw areas of interest to URA members. If you are interested or need further information, please by all means send an email to info@unionvilleratepayers.com

Land Use Advisory Recommendations - Crombie Report

The Ontario government is reviewing four provincial land use plans to support the environment and economic growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area:

- the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe
- the Niagara Escarpment Plan
- the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan
- the Greenbelt Plan

To co-ordinate the review, the Ontario government appointed a 6 person land use advisory committee chaired by David Crombie, ex-Toronto mayor, to conduct a 10 month study with public consultation and develop recommendations on how to amend and improve the plans.

The Advisory Committee released its report "Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe : 2015 – 2041" on December 7, 2015 with key recommendation below

- Grow the Greenbelt by adding 2 million acres of land with hydrological significance such as headwater of rivers, moraines, ground water recharge areas, urban river valleys
- Increase support for local food and a local agricultural sector in Southern Ontario, creating up to 700,000 jobs and a \$30 billion economy
- Build complete communities with mixed land uses, diverse housing types, broad employment opportunities, quality open spaces and multi-modal transportation choices
- Accelerate climate change response to mitigate global warming by building transit aligned with low carbon high density urban smart growth communities

The Province's website states that the Province will review the advisory panel recommendations and seek public input on any proposed amendments to the various acts in early 2016. Full Report "Planning for Health, Prosperity and Growth in the Greater Golden Horseshoe : 2015 – 2041"

<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10882.aspx>

Friends of the Greenbelt will be sharing more information on this topic at our members meeting of February 1.

GO Train Whistle Cessation

City staff reported to Development Services Committee on January 25. Progress on whistle cessation has been good. Preliminary costs and schedules have been developed. Staff requested approval to continue with the program, culminating in construction completion in Summer, 2018.

URA gave a deputation supporting the staff request. A public meeting will be held in March and a staff update in June.

Unionville Home Society Redevelopment



A three day design charrette was conducted in mid-January, with participation by URA members. A public debrief was held on January 15, where the conceptual site plan was presented, including

- 100 unit extension to the Long Term Care facility, plus a two level parking structure
- 250 unit senior's tower (rent geared to income) owned by Housing York Inc. Height 4 to 12 stories, with underground parking
- Large central park and a 6000 sq ft community centre in the Housing York building
- 175 to 225 condominium townhouses by Minto, some on one level for seniors. Either at-grade or underground parking
- Site ingress/egress via traffic light at Highway 7, Aldona Drive and Anna Russell Way.

The proponents will be submitting an application to the City in February, with a statutory public meeting expected in the Fall. Construction on the Housing York building would be between early 2018 and late 2019. Construction on the Minto units would be from early 2020 to late 2021.

Markham Welcomes Syria Refugees



The City of Markham hosted a Syria Refugee Summit on January 26. Federal Minister of Immigration & Citizenship John McCallum described the Syria refugee process and different ways that the community can help in welcoming and supporting the refugees. The Private Sponsorship of Refugees Program (PSR) was discussed extensively. Essentially sponsoring organizations will need to provide 12 months commitment to help the refugees -from arrival in the airport, settling into daily living, language support to job finding. A financial commitment of \$12,600 is required which includes 12 months income support. Details of the PSR can be found in the link below

<http://lifelinesyria.ca/sponsor/>

For those who want to donate money, the federal government has extended the Syria Emergency Relief Fund to February 29, 2016. It will match every dollar donated by organizations or individuals. Details are in the link below

http://www.international.gc.ca/development-developpement/humanitarian_response-situations_crises/how_to_syria-syrie_comment.aspx?lang=eng

For those who want to donate gifts, daily living items or services, Woodgreen Community Centre has launched their "Housing Opportunity & Marketplace Exchange" connecting sponsors, donors and refugees as per link below

<http://www.woodgreen.org/SyrianRefugeesApplication.aspx>

The URA will consider our options on this topic at our February 1 meeting.

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 hot topics)
- ✓ Ensures our residents' views are known and communicated to local, regional and provincial government officials and representatives
- ✓ Provides information on our website on active issues
- ✓ Organizes special events (e.g. All-Candidates meetings during elections, issue based meetings)

Join Us!!

Together Our Voice
Is Stronger

For more membership info, please go to our web site

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