



YORK REGION FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE

SERVING THE FARM COMMUNITY SINCE 1940

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COMMUNICATION
CW - SEPT. 2/14
ITEM - 12

August 28, 2014

Mayor and Members of Council
City of Vaughan
City Hall
2141 Major Mackenzie Drive
Vaughan, ON
L6A 1T1

Re: Application for Block Plan Approval BL.40?47.2003 Block 40/47 Developers Group Inc. Ward 3,
Vicinity of Pine Valley Drive and Teston Road – Compatibility with Adjacent Rural Uses

Mayor and Members of Council

On behalf of the York Region Federation and its 700 farmer members from across York Region I urge you to further increase the buffering requirements between Upper Cold Creek Farm and the adjacent proposed residential development.

The most recent amendment to the Block Plan,

xv. Compatibility with Adjacent Rural Uses

Residential Uses, as provided for in this Plan, shall be developed in a manner that is compatible with adjacent Rural/Agricultural Uses. Measures to ensure compatibility will be considered and implemented through the draft plan of subdivision/zoning approval processes. Such measures may include: the provision of buffer areas, landscaping and screening, setbacks, building massing and grading measures that minimize the use of retaining structures;

would allow for any one of the above measures to be used, while the reality is that to be an effective buffer between the uses on the farm and surrounding the residence there must be several measures employed at the same time all working together.

The property line between these two properties will be a permanent boundary between urban residences and Greenbelt agricultural land. And as such the buffering requirements along this section of the proposed development are very different than other areas from a safety, economic, and environmental perspective.

The Greenbelt Plan does provide guiding language from in dealing with this issue - specifically, **Section 3.1.5 External Connections.**

The Greenbelt Agricultural System is connected both functionally and economically to the prime agricultural resource lands and agri-food sector beyond the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

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*To support the connections between the Greenbelt's Agricultural System and the prime agricultural resource areas of southern Ontario, municipalities, farming organizations, and other agencies and levels of government are encouraged to consider how activities and changes in land use, **both within and abutting the Greenbelt**, relate to the broader agricultural system and economy of southern Ontario and they should **plan appropriately to ensure both functional and economic connections are maintained and strengthened**.*

The Vaughan Official Plan 2010,

2.2.2 Natural Areas and Countryside

*Understanding the Urban Structure starts with understanding how Vaughan's **Natural Areas and Countryside** have shaped the City.*

*In the north end of the City, the **Countryside**, made up of predominantly **agricultural** lands on some of the best soils in the country, complements the **Natural Areas** by providing additional environmental benefits such as wildlife habitat and infiltration and contributes to a diverse economy.*

*Many of the features in the **Natural Areas and Countryside** are protected by the Provincial Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans. This Plan carries forward these policies and, wherever applicable, makes them more explicit. In some cases, important lands fall outside of the Provincial plans, and Vaughan has made a commitment to protecting them as long term assets.*

*2.2.2.2. To maintain a significant and productive **Countryside** within the **Municipal Boundary** of the City of Vaughan, and to recognize the important role of the **Countryside** lands for agricultural uses, food production, **rural** uses, and in providing open space connections between **Natural Areas**.*

And,

5.2.8 Growing Agriculture and Food Production

*The **agricultural** industry forms a large part of the Greater Golden Horseshoe economy. As the basis for this industry, a large portion of **agricultural** lands are protected from development through the Greenbelt Plan, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan and other Provincial, Regional and municipal initiatives. Vaughan's farmland plays an important role as an **agricultural** asset, wildlife corridor and transition zone between the urbanized areas and York Region's **Agricultural** and **Natural Areas** north of the City. Increased interest in locally grown food, community agriculture and urban agriculture has the potential to increase the economic potential of agriculture. The remaining **Countryside** and its **agricultural** and agriculture-related uses will be preserved as important and valued components of Vaughan's economy.*

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To provide an adequate buffer between the current and future agricultural uses such as livestock living in the field, large farm equipment tilling or harvesting or spraying crops, on the one side of the property line and residential uses such children playing, flower or vegetable gardening and quiet enjoyment of a residential property on the other side of the property line several measures must be put into place. There could also be concerns with dumping of residential yard waste over the fence, children climbing over the fence to play on the farm land, or an inadequate fence being pushed over by the cattle.

An agricultural property is not a pastoral open space, it is a place of business that requires many of the same buffers that would be used next to an industrial complex.

We request that at a very minimum there should be a requirement to use several of the measures set forth in the Compatibility with Adjacent Rural Uses section and that Council recommend changes to the Official Plan that would strengthen their buffering policies along permanent Greenbelt boundaries to become a leader in protecting the viability of the farms in the City of Vaughan. We would be happy to provide assistance in the development of more protective policies concerning Greenbelt edge buffering.

Thank you for your time.

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