

Planning Future Development Yonge South Corridor

Back in January William Greer of Municipal Planning Consultants, a firm hired by the Town of Richmond Hill to study a 600 foot corridor on both sides of Yonge Street from the Markham-Vaughan Roads intersection south to Highway 7, told a public meeting that Richmond Hill has a rare opportunity to plan development on Yonge Street.

His firm was hired in October, has held four meetings for public information and input and is now ready to present its recommendations to Richmond Hill Council. Should council adopt these recommendations they will become part of the new comprehensive official plan which will govern development throughout the whole town during the next two decades.

The proposal presented by Greer and his colleagues, Miss Edith Ganong and Mr. Jack Little, to the public at Bayview Secondary School May 30 was the fifth draft. The fourth had been presented to a public meeting some weeks ago at which members of the public criticized proposed densities of population, a proposed opening of Palmer Avenue to Yonge Street and a proposed linking of Church Street South (a residential area) with a service road to proposed industrial development running south to Highway 7. The fifth draft omitted the opening of Palmer, cut off the industrial service road at Hillview Drive on the north and reduced the density of housing units per acre in some cases.

Present at the meeting were about 100 members of the public, all members of Richmond Hill Council's Planning Committee - Chairman David Stephenson, Regional Councillor Lois Hancey, Councillor Jack Major, Graeme Bales and Andy Chateauvert - and Councillor Lou Wainwright.

Elongated colored drawings of each of the five proposals which have been advanced were displayed on the wall, and the fifth was presented in sections by means of a projector on the back wall of the stage, and a public address system, which echoed badly, was provided.

OPEN SPACE STRIPS

A strip of landscaped open space is indicated on both sides of Yonge Street with the parkway belt also being indicated at Highway 7. As the plan progressed northward prestige industrial and general industrial development was indicated on the east side with some housing at a density of 15 and 50 units per acre as the corridor nears Markham Road. On the west side the land use along the Yonge Street frontage ranged from highway commercial to 50 unit per acre housing. The plan shows Edgar Avenue being extended across Yonge into the industrial area and 15 unit per acre housing between Westwood and Edgar on the west.

Between Oak Avenue and Carrville the west side is again designated highway and office commercial and the east side general and prestige commercial with a green belt running northward to link up with green belts to serve as walkways and bicycle paths right up to Markham Road.

From Carrville to Weldrick, on either side of Observatory Lane on the east side housing at 50 units per acre is indicated. On the west side the density is again 50 UPA and 30 UPA.

From Weldrick to May, the Yonge Street frontage is again highway commercial with a green strip separating it from existing residential development on the west. On the east the housing density is shown as 30 UPA and Hillview as an access to the industrial service road.

It is also indicated that Harding could continue across Yonge where a civic centre could include a hotel, institutional and office buildings.

THE PUBLIC SPEAKS

The first member of the public to approach the microphones asked for a definition of 15, 30 and 50 UPA. Miss Ganong reported that 15 UPA could mean two or three storey row housing, 30 UPA stacked town houses or four-storey apartment buildings (depending on the zoning bylaw) and 50 UPA could bring seven to eight storey apartment buildings (or higher depending on lot coverage).

Referring to the purple square on the southwest corner of Roosevelt Drive and Yonge Street, Don Varley of 9 Roosevelt Drive asked if it was council's intent to change the zoning on the first residential lot on the south side of the road from residential to commercial. The purple (indicating commercial) designated the property occupied by Falconbridge Mines (an L-shaped property) as C1 office commercial, but had been squandered off to include the first residential lot.

VERY GENERAL

Mr. Liddle answered that the proposals on the drawings are of a very general nature. He pointed out that the town has two prime documents - an official plan and a zoning bylaw. The official plan is a master plan indicating the long-term intentions of the municipality, he explained, and doesn't get down into the nitty-gritty.

way belt would contain a highway and a linear corridor for utilities such as hydro, sewers and water in combination with a green belt. Then he added, "Personally I don't think the intersection of two major highways is the right place for any recreational installation."

Mr. Birchall continued by expressing concern about urban sprawl, noting that the jail farm is the only existing greenbelt between Metro and Richmond Hill and expressing a desire to see it remain in the official plan as a (agriculture) 1. "In the long range it could be developed as a passive park or recreation area."

EFFECT ON OBSERVATORY
"What effect will the prestige industry have on the observatory?" he asked. "It has a certain status and gives Richmond Hill a status throughout the world. To put a park in a built up area is very costly, I know, but this land is now in public hands and developing it as a park would not be dispossessing people."

Mr. Rimon answered that Markham's official plan has designated the farm industrial since 1964. "The owners do not have any plans to turn it into a park. As to the domed stadium, I don't think

any action has been taken by council since the public hearing was held in this auditorium some weeks ago."

MAJOR RESOURCE
"The David Dunlap Observatory is important to the prestige of Richmond Hill," stated Dr. Tom Bolton of that University of Toronto-owned institution. "It is one of two major university research centres in Canada today, and in 1972 the work done by scientists at David Dunlap Observatory accounted for two of five major achievements in astronomy in the world. It is a major resource for the community through its open houses on Saturday nights and as a teaching institution."

NO PLACE TO GO
"We can't move - there's no place for us to go where necessary darkness would last long enough to make the move worthwhile. The only place would be into the snowbelt which would adversely affect the operation of the telescopes. It would cost us \$5 to \$10-million to move."

Dr. Bolton went on to enumerate several aspects of the proposed zoning which is causing the scientists much concern, including the overall level of development, of shifting the centre of gravity of the town to the south

which would bring more lights "and inevitably be bad for us no matter how hard the town tries to control the lights."

"We are particularly worried about the area around Carrville Road," he continued. "The commercial area worries us. I'm afraid you are talking about buildings which will come up to the height of the observatory, making a very serious impact on us. We would rather see the industrial service road go north of Hillview through the undeveloped area and that Hillview be blocked at the railway so that the only access to the observatory would be from Bayview. This would prevent high density traffic passing by which would be very serious indeed. The hotel across Yonge could cause problems with night time activities. Any lights in close proximity to us can cause us problems."

INFILTRATION?
"We like the observatory, we like to see green grass and trees, but what chance do we have when we have developers infiltrating planning boards and councils?" asked a woman in the audience.

"We have to be practical," stated Mr. Stephenson. "We can have only as much green

as we can afford. As developers come in they are not going to dictate to us, through planning committee and parks board we will do the dictating."

"There is no planning board now," explained Mrs. Hancey. "It's now the council which does the planning. As for infiltration by developers it's the responsibility of citizens to recognize this at election time."

Another questioner said, "I assume all services are in this area?" The answer was in the negative - no sewers, no water. "Are we working in conjunction with the Ministry of Transportation and Communication, which is planning to rebuild Yonge Street?" he continued. The answer was yes and that the widening is not expected before 1976.

"How far away are the water and sewers?" he went on. "I only know what I read in the newspapers," replied Mr. Stephenson, but estimated it would be one to five years. "Nothing can go until the sewers come?" was the next question. The answer was that it was the town's intent to have all planning done in the event the sewers do come and pressure for development

can be controlled in the way the town wants it to go. Mrs. John Graham wanted a clarification of the terms prestige industrial and general industrial and was told that prestige is light industry with no open storage, no fumes, no noise, usually with offices and other related uses. Motels could also be established.

"Were the consultants influenced by the proposed domed stadium?" was another question. "The reply was no, that their report was prepared before the domed stadium proposal was made. Is a similar study being planned for any other area in town, asked David Fayle. Again the answer was no.

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