

Property owners oppose roundabout

Have you ever really fell in love with a place?

I did when I moved to King Township after living in Vaughan for 10 years. Since then we have embraced becoming part of this community.

We have joined our local church, school, volunteered, shopped locally, attended many King Township events and explored many of our parks, trails, villages and more. One of the things I most like about King is the people who live here. Many are long-time residents and almost everyone shares a common passion ? how much they love living in King!

My heart is sinking after reading your recent article on ?Navigating King Township's first roundabout.? My family is one that will be directly and negatively affected by this proposed roundabout.

There are many details and points that have been left out as there is a definite ?spin? on this issue. But perhaps I should thank you for publicly showcasing how our Mayor Steve Pelligrini and Ward Councillor Debbie Schaeffer have thrown us under the bus!

Up to this point we had been hopeful that our local representatives would be on our side, willing and able to help us. To say that King politicians and regional staff are working with landowners to ?alleviate problems early in the process? is a bit of a stretch!

There are actually several issues here. Yes, safety is a huge concern, much of which comes from improper speed limits and inadequate road signs (some are totally in wrong locations), which does nothing to address the speeding issue along here. We have been trying to get York Region to change the speed and signage for years to no avail and actually been told it could cause of all things, ?sign pollution!?

There is little police presence along this stretch so not much of a deterrent for speeders. There is a huge issue with westbound drivers going through school bus lights on an almost daily basis. Many calls and Roadwatch complaints have been sent in to York Regional Police, but so far they have yet to actually do something about it. Oddly enough, when I stand waiting for the school bus with my camera in hand drivers stop for the school bus lights, so it's not a case of they can't stop in time, but choose not to.

Will a roundabout really change that? We have been told by Regional staff and officials that there are not enough officers to put them everywhere where they are needed.

Of course there needs to be needs to be improvements to the intersection because there are many accidents there. I have spoken to numerous residents and everyone would like to see a traffic light and proper turning lanes, not a roundabout. What about painting ?Slow?? across the roadway prior to the intersection, rumble strips coming down the hill to slow people down before getting to the intersection, a solar powered sign that indicates the speed drivers are travelling approaching the intersection? What about actually having the police there sometimes?

I have seen all of these measures be very affective in other locations. There are many solutions to this problem. All of these changes would address all of the safety concerns and no one is more aware of that issue than we are because we actually live here and our children play here and get on the bus here! Drivers will only temporarily slow down to navigate the roundabout but by the time they reach my driveway they will speed away again towards Jane St. Do you really think drivers will suddenly drive 60 along here unless it's enforced? Furthermore, traffic signals can be put on timers and/or sensors so that you really don't have to wait very long to turn left!

There was no mention about how much land will be expropriated from landowners. Our neighbour to the east will lose approximately an acre off her property and we are slated to lose 25 feet across our frontage. Our neighbours to the west will also be affected.

It's of little comfort to me, that ?the Region expropriates more land that is immediately necessary, in case more is needed in the long-term.? The questions local residents have to ask is why? What is next?

The roundabout will be large enough to accommodate a four-lane highway. It will cost more than \$2 million. So, it's not a matter of will this happen but when.

York Region is looking for a thoroughfare to connect to the 400, both Pellegrini and Schaeffer have mention this during conversations when we voiced our concerns.

What will happen to our property values? Residents to the west and east of us should be very concerned if this type of infrastructure is allowed to be put in place, then there will be nothing to stop the Region down the road from expropriating their land to make way. We are also very concerned about the environmental impact that this could have. There are wetlands that could be directly affected; many trees that will be cut down and agricultural land will be affected. So much for peace and tranquility, not to mention privacy! The roundabout will end up approx. 30 feet from Joyce's well. Will her well water be contaminated from road salts? What about mine? What about yours?

We have been trying to negotiate with the Region for the last two months but have made little or no progress. We have been getting conflicting information from various sources stating it has already been approved and there is nothing we can do about it, and later being told from an inside source it has yet to be approved. There has been little information about it until now. Residents don't know much about it.

Letters have just been sent out to some local residents to inform them of the open house Oct. 16, but several have been sent to the wrong address or wrong name.

What happened to taxpayers having actual input in these types of decisions? It appears to us that York Region and King Township have decided to ?trial? this spot and it doesn't matter what we want or think. If this is the first roundabout will there be more?

After speaking to residents who live in Aurora, they say their roundabouts are very dangerous because no one understands what they are supposed to do. The traffic flow is dependent on drivers yielding to one another which often doesn't happen the way planners think it will.

So, are they really as safe as officials will lead us to believe? What about winter driving conditions as unsure drivers who will navigate this roundabout?

This seems like a real case of theory and reality just don't mix. On paper it might look good, but in reality there are many more factors that need to be taken into account, such as the grade of the hill here.

It just seems ridiculous to many residents. We have been trying to get the word out about this and what's really going on. We have been putting up flyers and distributing a petition for anyone who is interested.

Jamie Puopolo