

Response from Karen Rae candidate for Ward 4 Markham City Councillor
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1.Many roads are already at capacity and we are not able to build or widen enough roads to accommodate all the new residents that will move to Markham. Higher density developments should have a maximum number of parking spaces allowed, not a minimum number as we currently have. Building a high-rise tower with each unit having a parking space allows the owner and/or tenant to have a vehicle. If we used a calculation based on a maximum number of parking spots instead; for example 50% of units could have a parking space, then 50 % of occupants would need to take alternate modes of transportation. However, our public transit would need to be frequent, affordable and be part of a seamless network to more locations on where people want to go.

Covid has changed the way we live and more employers may allow people to work from home and support flexible working hours which will help reduce the traffic on roads during what we all know as rush hour. Technology is constantly changing and companies are already experimenting with drones to transport goods and people. We need to try and plan for the future, not just the current situation of today.

2.The province has already mandated that second suites are allowed in every detached, semi and townhouse. Markham does not have a policy to allow second suites as of right and land owners are required to go to Committee of Adjustment for approval. We have estimated that there are more than 10,000 basement apartments yet less than 1000 are legal. Allowing second suites as of right will allow the City to license and hence revoke a license if there are any issues at the property, but more importantly, the city can ensure that the units are built to code and are safe for tenants to reside in. I supported the policy back in the previous term to allow second suites and will support it again when our new comprehensive bylaw comes back to Council for approval.

3.Markham has a green print and sustainability policy already but we need to ensure that the policies are reviewed and updated as required. Our planning staff with the support of Council encourage all new developments low and high rise to build more sustainable buildings and green roofs. In

Markham Centre high rise development uses Markham District Energy for their heating and cooling.

Open green space and parks not only help with climate change but are essential for the wellbeing of all residents. Yes, I will continue to advocate for more open green spaces, trail systems and parks. Each municipality needs to increase their tree canopy, we already have a number of initiatives in place like the trees for tomorrow and partnerships to encourage homeowners to plant more trees on their own properties. We do need to find solutions on how we can expand the planting of trees in our newer communities, where the lots are smaller and do not always have enough space for a tree to grow.

4. I do not believe that the extension of urban development into protected lands is justifiable. Protecting our environment supports our ecosystem, making site alterations on wetlands for example could have an adverse impact at an alternate location as the water will still need to go somewhere.

Hope the above explains a little in my opinion and is not too long.

regards

Karen Rea