



## Comments Regarding Employment Land Conversion Preliminary Recommendations and Policy Directions

**January 2017**

The Burlington Development Committee (SDC) generally supports the proposed Policy Directions but have some concerns with the approved conversions. We would like to provide comments as they pertain to SDC Principles and Objectives (see Appendix A). Our work is based on the “Employment Land Conversion Preliminary Recommendations and Policy Directions PB-30-16” and presentation made to the Policy and Development Sub-Committee by Alison Enns on December 7, 2016 and discussion during the presentation.

### Detailed Comments on Employment Conversion Assessment

We have reviewed the Employment Lands Conversion Results report and find that of 163 properties requesting conversion, 18% were not accepted. The table from the report is given below with a summary added by us in italics at the bottom.

### **Summary of Lands Recommended for Conversion (with additions by BSDC in italics at bottom)**

Location	Occupied		Vacant <sup>19</sup>		Total (occupied and vacant)	
	<i>Net Area (ha)</i>	<i>No. of Properties</i>	<i>Net Area (ha)</i>	<i>No. of Properti es</i>	<i>Net Area (ha)</i>	<i>No. of Properties</i>
Lands Recommended for Conversion within Mobility Hubs (Table 4-1)	107.6	80	3.4	4	111.0	84
Lands Recommended for Conversion outside of Mobility Hubs (Table 4-1)	35.7	45	6.1	4	41.8	49
<b>Total</b>	143.3	125	9.5	8	152.8	133
Applications					Area	Properties
Private (Table 3-1)					236 ha	58 (35% in mobility hubs)
City (Table 3-2)					113 ha	105 (39% in mobility)

						hubs)
<i>Total</i>					349	163
<i>% Approved</i>					44%	82%

The plan showing these properties is overleaf.

Of the properties that were not approved, several were lands that are not a conversion and are seeking re-designation to another employment land use. The identification of properties is confusing as some applications are for multiple properties owned by multiple owners. A list of 42 requests is given to cover the apparent 163 properties. The ones that were not approved are:

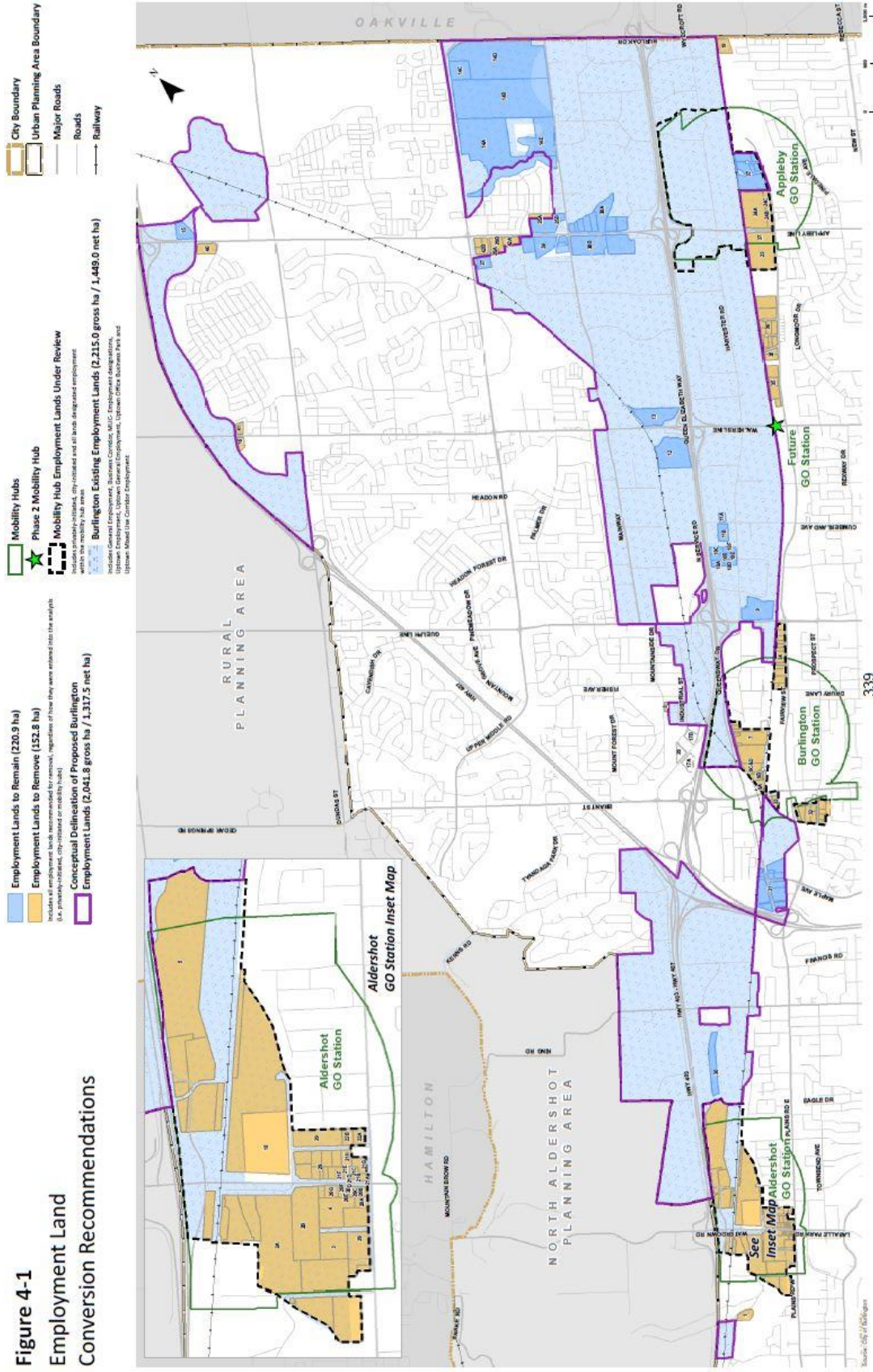
- 9 (1 address) Harvester and Guelph Line
- 10 (6 addresses) Harvester and South Service
- 11 (1 address) Cumberland and Harvester
- 12 (1 address) North Service and Walkers
- 13 (1 address) no conversion request
- 14 (5 addresses) Upper Middle and Mainway
- 25 B (1 address) 1309 Appleby at Mainway
- 27 (1 address) no conversion request
- 30 (1 address) no conversion request
- 31 (12 addresses) no conversion request
- 37 (8 addresses) Fairview and Appleby
- 38 (12 addresses) no conversion request
- 39 (2 addresses) no conversion request

Note that 6 of these were commercial and not applying for conversion to mixed use.

In general, we agree with the decisions to accept some applications and reject others. The intent appears to be to allow applications in the Mobility Hubs areas to be able to encourage the addition of residential buildings as part of a mixed use environment that will still provide employment, although not of the industrial context. Also, a number of applications were on the “fringe” area of the employment lands corridor where it made sense to tie into the existing adjacent commercial and residential developments. In particular, the applications along Fairview Street make sense as this area is part of the proposed intensification areas.

In reviewing the evaluation criteria, we do not see a way to assess the benefits to the City for the applications. We were told that the decision for approval was based on land use and that other opportunities could be available based on other factors. The City should receive specific benefits for permitting the conversions and we would like these identified.

**Figure 4-1**  
**Employment Land**  
**Conversion Recommendations**



Of the applications refused, we only have concern for No. 9 at Harvester and Guelph Line. In our opinion, the proposal is in keeping with the new development approach of the City by a willing developer.

The 2013 Official Plan identifies Guelph Line south of the QEW as the “gateway” to Burlington. See below. This seems to be in keeping with the philosophy of our new Official Plan policy directives that this Committee has reviewed. It proposes offices and a “land use mix”. We understand that this approach was developed under a “mid-town” concept with an emphasis on office use only that has since been abandoned. However, it seems much more fitting under our new Strategic Plan promoting walkable communities with a mix of residential and office use. It is also a short distance to the Burlington GO station that, with a small redraw of the mobility hub delineation would include this parcel. The current zoning permits high rise residential towers across the street (west side of Guelph Line) that would require workers in the high end office towers to navigate 7 lanes of dangerous high volume traffic to and from work in the morning and afternoon rush hours.

We have been informed that the Ministry of Transportation conducted traffic studies for the proposed development at 901 Guelph Line. Due to extreme traffic volumes, only 85,000 square feet of office space would be permitted, leaving the remainder of 1 million sq. ft. of built space to be vacant. The response to this issue is that the development will have to wait for transit infrastructure to be completed to such a degree that vehicular volumes would be decreased sufficiently to allow more office space.

Considerable communication has been conducted with the developer and City employees. The City employees who were involved are for the most part no longer employed by the City. New staff assigned to the new Official Plan do not have the benefit of the previous discussions which showed support for the development. In addition, a development application has not been made for the proposed development.

No specific mention regarding employment lands conversions is made of what the City is willing to do to encourage and support new employment in those lands that were not accepted for conversion. We were told that there could be some lenience in the Floor Area Ratio limit. In addition, the new intensification criteria could provide incentives. We would like this addressed in the final policy.

As discussed above under the 901 Guelph Line rejection, the issues of transportation affecting all the employment lands may need consideration to ensure sufficient traffic movement to accommodate traffic, especially in the morning and afternoon rush hours. In non-mobility hub areas, congestion may occur at major intersections within the employment lands corridor due to the close proximity to the QEW. We would like to see some integration of the Transportation Master Plan policies with these policies.

There appears to be no specific reference to this Committee’s sustainability principles and objectives and how they might influence the development of employment lands. With the new Official Plan and a new set of sustainability criteria, we look forward to direct reference for employment lands.

Intersection of Harvester Road and Guelph Line	<p>k) In addition to the other policies of this Plan, the following policies apply to <i>development</i> within the north-east and south-east quadrants of the intersection of Harvester Road and Guelph Line:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) this intersection is identified as a <i>gateway</i> to the City and will consist of high quality, high rise office <i>development</i> fronting and facing Guelph Line and Harvester Road. An urban plaza located at the south-east corner will signal the entry into the corporate <i>gateway</i>;</li> <li>(ii) Council <i>shall</i> adopt <i>Urban Design Guidelines</i> which will guide the form and design of <i>development</i> abutting the intersection, prior to the approval of any <i>development</i>. Building heights, <i>massing</i>, setbacks, <i>streetscape</i> and landscape features will be designed to enhance the <i>gateway</i> function of this intersection;</li> <li>(iii) the Zoning By-law <i>shall</i> contain provisions which will permit the <i>development</i> of high quality, business corridor uses at an increased <i>floor area ratio</i> of up to 2.0:1 at the south-east corner of Guelph Line and Harvester Road, in order to act as visual <i>landmarks</i> and help establish the <i>gateway</i> to the City. The Zoning By-law <i>shall</i> also contain provisions that facilitate the implementation of the approved <i>design guidelines</i>, including the reduction of building setbacks, increase in <i>floor area ratio</i>, and adjustments to landscaping requirements;</li> <li>(iv) pedestrian access <i>shall</i> be provided from lands east of Roseland Creek, over the creek and through to Guelph Line, as part of the <i>re-development</i> of lands west of Roseland Creek;</li> <li>(v) the Zoning By-law <i>shall</i> contain provisions placing an “H” (Holding) zone on the lands bounded by the Roseland Creek, Guelph Line, the CNR tracks and Harvester Road, until such time as the property owners sign a Master Servicing/Cost Sharing Agreement for future creek, servicing, traffic and streetscaping improvements in the area;</li> <li>(vi) all <i>development</i> within the lands bounded by the Roseland Creek, Guelph Line, the CNR tracks and Harvester Road, <i>shall</i> be evaluated within the context of a comprehensive site plan for the entire area that provides appropriate detail with respect to built form, land use mix, internal road pattern and pedestrian access.</li> </ul>	OPA 31
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## Detailed Comments on Policy Directions

### Policy Direction B

**Build a strategy to promote office development in the Mobility Hubs and the Urban Growth Centre.**

- 1. Modify to add details to support employment and enhance the transitional policies for mobility hubs.**
- 2. Add Walker’s as future GO station.**

We find that adding “support for employment” makes good sense. It is important to stress employment and ensure it is put into place. When recently implementing mixed use

development, employment was not stressed enough and we missed the golden opportunity to include it. Metrics such as people to jobs are needed to ensure this is carried out properly.

Adding “transitional policies for mobility hubs” will help ensure that assessments done before completion of area specific plans will fit well in with a Mobility Hubs Vision. These should be completed quickly possibly before completion of the New Official Plan. It also stresses the importance of completing area specific plans in a timely fashion.

We fully support including a potential future Walkers Go Station. It gives the City the opportunity to develop what we would like to see in the Hub area before feasibility studies are completed.

#### **Policy Direction F**

**Develop a phasing strategy for the City’s un-serviced lands, consider developing secondary plans, and continue dialog with local utilities.**

- 1. Add a policy that prioritizes area specific planning for Bronte Creek Meadows**

We strongly support negotiation of these lands to avoid only residential development as proposed by the developer.

#### **Policy Direction G**

**Investigate opportunities for limiting the amount or type of institutional uses on serviced employment lands.**

- 1. A strategy to attract another post-secondary institution uses.**
- 2. Modify policy recommendations for institutional uses. Add proposed directions related to tools for managing land use compatibility and risk.**

A strategy to attract post-secondary institution uses is vital for us to develop and implement our proposed Innovation Strategy attracting Knowledge-Based Industry.

We fully support policy directions proposed for Institutional Uses.

Regarding Risk Assessment, It should be noted that D-6 Compatibility between Industrial Facilities is a tool for determining separation distances and is **not** a risk assessment tool. As we move forward in combining mix use with employment lands and determining risk becomes more complex, risk assessment tools will probably have to be used. Move cautiously with what is trying to be achieved.

#### **Policy Direction H**

**Prepare a comprehensive strategy for employment land intensification.**

- 1. Add direction to develop and implement innovative practices for employment land intensification.**

We do not see a clear Policy Direction around innovative approaches other than suggesting that policy would use “Making infrastructure, transportation and public realm improvements in existing employment areas” and “Provide incentives to the private sector for certain types of employment



lands”; and “city desires to approach employment land intensification aggressively and will employ all appropriate tools to meet this objective”. We would like to see details to clarify this.

We suggest the approach should be to determine where we want to prioritize employment intensification and use the most appropriate tools.

### **Policy Direction I**

**Clarify the intent and definition of Employment Lands and area of employment in the policies and schedules of the Official Plan.**

- 1. Add that the findings and recommendations of the employment land conversion assessment presented in Appendix B depicted in Appendix C be referred to the development of the New Official Plan.**

This makes good sense.

### **Policy Direction J**

**Retain and where applicable refine existing Employment Land Use Designations**

- 1. Add refinements to the following designations, land uses or policy issues.**
  - a. Innovation District**
  - b. Employment Commercial**
  - c. Retail and Service Commercial Uses**
  - d. Uptown Mixed Use Centre – Employment Designations**
  - e. Recreational Uses**
  - f. Motor Vehicle Dealerships**
  - g. Mixed Use Corridor – Employment and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor – Employment**

*Innovation District* – What is proposed makes sense but we need to determine before moving forward what Knowledge-Based Industries we want to bring in and the appropriate post-secondary institute to support it. Also, what type of Innovation Park do we want to establish?

*Employment Commercial* – Agree although this goes against the original recommendation.

*Retail and Service Commercial Uses* – Agree.

*Uptown Mixed Use – Employment Designations* – Making it non-employment land makes sense but need to see new Official Plan designation before providing any final comment.

*Recreational Uses* – Agree but how will the 1200 King Road application be dealt with?

*Motor Vehicle Dealerships* – Agree.

*Mixed Use Corridor – Employment (MXE) and Uptown Mixed Use Corridor – Employment – (UMXE)*

A review of the Conversion Requests with a Mixed Use – Employment or Uptown Mixed Use – Employment zoning designation is summarized in table below:

<b>Area</b>	<b>Connected Conversion Requests</b>	<b>Conversion Status</b>	<b>New OP Zoning Designation</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Aldershot Hub</b>	<b>20 A-G, 21 A-H, 22 A&amp;B, 29</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>No change requested</b>
	<b>30, 31</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Appleby Hub</b>	<b>23, 24 A-C, portion of 37</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
	<b>Portion of 37</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Burlington Hub</b>	<b>32, 33, 34</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Uptown</b>	<b>25 A</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Uptown Medium Density Residential</b>	
	<b>25 B</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
	<b>26 A&amp;B, 42 A&amp;B</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Uptown Centre</b>	
<b>Future Walker Hub</b>	<b>35, 36</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Appleby/Mainway</b>	<b>38, 39</b>	<b>Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	<b>No change requested</b>
<b>Appleby/Palladium</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	
<b>Walker/Palladium</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>Non-Employment</b>	<b>Unknown</b>	

- It was interesting to see that the final zoning designation for each Conversion Request that currently has a Mixed Use – Employment Zoning Designation will have a different Zoning Designation in the future depending on what area they are currently located. For example the land around a Mobility Hub will have handle mixed use combining employment, commercial and residential close together whereas Walker/Palladium has a Commercial flavour. Obviously no single approach can be used to evaluate the MXE and Uptown MXE.
- Need to know what the New OP Zoning Designation will be before determining whether the proposed new usage makes sense.
- Need to know which properties associated with Conversion Request 37 were accepted as Non-Employment.
- We definitely needed to move away from the MXE and Uptown MXE as they currently are not working very well.
- Should Conversion Requests 35 and 36 that deal with a potential Future Walker Mobility Hub really be made Non-Employment now?



Sincerely,

Members of the Burlington Sustainable Development Committee

## Appendix A

The following represent a subset of SDC Principles and Objectives most relevant to the proposed Urban Structure and Intensification Policy Directions.

### Sustainable Development Committee Principles:

**Support Responsible Development** that promotes efficiency and enhances the quality of life.

**Promote Sustainable Resource Use** and conservation practices

**Have Regard for Environmental, Economic and Social Costs and Benefits** in the development and use of resources, products and services.

**Promote Responsible Stewardship** to ensure equitable use of natural and environmental resources in order to meet essential needs and both present and future generations.

### Sustainable Development Committee - Objectives:

<p><b>Full Public Participation in Development Decisions.</b> The public should be part of all planning decisions. Economic, environmental and social impacts of proposed developments should be considered.</p>
<p><b>Best Use of Land.</b> Promote the best use of land based upon an ecosystem approach to ensure environment integrity and diversity. To include but not limited to promoting environmentally sensitive lands and fertile soil for agriculture throughout the municipality.</p>
<p><b>Balanced Development.</b> Provide a community plan and an economic strategy aimed at creating sustainable and appropriate forms of development that reflect human scale and a sense of community as well as representing a balance between urban development and natural surroundings.</p>
<p><b>Efficient Urban Design.</b> To increase the efficiency of land use in the urban community in terms of energy and time, promote intensification and diversification policies that generate urban sprawl.</p>
<p><b>Accessible Community Development.</b> A new form of community development should be promoted whereby local community components such as commerce, shopping, employment, education, and recreation are readily available, preferably within walking distance of all residents.</p>
<p><b>Integration of Natural Features and Green Space.</b> Integrate natural features and green spaces in all new developments and intensification projects.</p>
<p><b>Energy Conservation.</b> Promote energy conservation through efficient land use planning and building design.</p>
<p><b>Balanced Transportation System.</b> Develop a balanced transportation system including transit, pedestrian, and cycling amenities and the best use of the road and people, with the existing facilities used to their fullest capacity.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation of Development.</b> Continuous monitoring and evaluation of development should take place to ensure that it does not have adverse impacts on the City's finances and the environment.</p>