

PRESENTATION / STATUTORY PUBLIC MEETING / NOV. 06/2017

“ I would say that building anything over fifth floor should be referring to airspace authorities. You are not part of the earth anymore because you cannot see what’s happening at ground level while the people on the ground cannot see where you are”

Not words spoken by a fool but by world-renown and highly respected architect Jan Gehl. He designs buildings that foremost keep the well-being of people in mind.

He firmly believes that high rise is not the ONLY answer to density; he deems THAT as a very unsuitable one, one that undermines the character, livability, social fabric and even the public health of a city.

Our city of Burlington has an urban growth boundary – Lake Ontario. An in-depth study of a similar city has shown that there are seven key reasons why high rises kill livability :

1. HIGH RISE SEPARATE PEOPLE FROM THE STREET.

Because it is not as easy as walking out your front door, people who live on high floors are less likely to leave their apartments. Jan Gehl : “What high rise does is separate large numbers of people from the street. We end up with a city that is detached from Street life so we end up with a city that is based on enclaves and gated communities. Meaningful contact with ground level events is possible ONLY from the first few floors in a multi-story building. Anything and anyone above the fifth floor is definitely out of touch with ground level events”.

2. HIGH RISE SCALE IS NOT THE HUMAN SCALE.

High rises are so tall that they make no visual sense to a pedestrian at eye level. You cannot see the whole building unless you are in another high rise. You become lost and engulfed in glass-mortar- steel canyons which can seem to be isolating and dehumanizing.

3. HIGH RISE RADICALLY REDUCE CHANCE ENCOUNTERS AND PROPINQUITY (it embodies nearness in space/ time and relationship)

Proximity refers to physical proximity, a kinship between people. It happens in public spaces such as on the street in parks, civics squares and public transportation. High rise diminish people participation and interaction. High rise creates a very finite and encapsulated world, a world of silos.

4. HIGH RISES ARE VERTICAL SPRAWL.

Sprawl is when something is built inefficiently and takes up too much space. High rise takes up too much vertical space for something (in this case: dense housing) that could be achieved with much less height. The city of Portland- Oregon, for instance, struggles at the moment with speculative high rise that largely remain empty. Vancouver on the other hand shows excessive prices for living space. So who wins ?

5. LOW & MID-SIZE BUILDING OFFERS RESILIENCE AND AFFORDABILITY.

Small footprint apartments and shops, set in a fine textured urban fabric, will yield smaller profits spread out among many individuals and businesses in the community. Over centuries, this HUMAN scale urban fabric has proved to be adaptable to changes in political and economic times, making the community resilient and durable. The cities of Paris, Barcelona and Amsterdam – to mention a few - support continuous retail along the street, making every neighbourhood walkable. We have a small variety store near Burlington Towers, run by beautiful people who like to chat and make every effort to be a meaningful part of our Ontario Street & vicinity community. I cannot see the 21 story Molinaro proposal offer that kind of homely atmosphere.

6. HIGH RISES ARE SELDOM GREEN.

An extensive study by the University of British Columbia has revealed that high rise buildings are subject to the effects of too much sun and wind on their glass skin. In spite of technological improvements, the data shows that high rise uses almost twice as much energy per square metre as mid- sized structures. Steel and concrete produce a lot of Green House Gas. Wood traps it. Concrete is 10x more GHG -intensive than wood. How will the City of Burlington fit in the global picture of GHG reduction ?

7. HIGH RISES ARE NOT GOOD FOR YOUR HEALTH

The effects of high rise on mental health have been researched and documented. It keeps children and elderly from getting sufficient reason & exercise to go outside. Instead it encourages them to stay home, flip on the tv or engage themselves in other couch-potato activity. Psychologist Daniel Cappon concludes in his extensive studies that " high rises deprive people, especially children, of neighbourhood peers and activities.". He believes that the level of ALIENATION and ISOLATION – factors that have been proven to negatively impact health and even shorten people's lives – increase with the height of the building. He bluntly concludes : We must not go on with blindly building these vertical coffins for the premature death of our civilization.

IN CONCLUSION :

I urge City Council to put RESPONSIBILITY before OPPORTUNITY.

The Molinaro group has the land and exploits opportunity for money in a neighbourhood that suffers from severe traffic congestion , has a lack of play areas for kids and has little or no parking for its many big events . EXAMPLE :

The Sound of Music parade this year showed a very poor attendance. Who wants to come downtown anymore if you cannot park your car? If I may add to our city's traffic picture :

Heidi Ave – Burlington City Hall = 30 minutes

Fonthill. - Burlington City Hall

Need I mention the Newstreet section between Guelph and Walkers Line ?

The Molinaro plan of 21 stories is nicely wrapped with inclusion of shopping facilities. Indeed, they do build attractive structures.

I am, however of the opinion that their proposed plan resembles a wolf dressed in Cinderella clothing and , if allowed to build the proposed plan, will only add to the dangers associated with traffic congestion. It's drive entrance and exit is almost across that of Burlington Towers !

So what we will then be looking at is [SCALE EXAMPLE]. > \ vs. /

The City of Burlington has the entrusted power of responsibility to the livability of its citizens. Simply think 6, not \$ 6 000 000.

Thank you.

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