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Delegation Material

Concept Plan Comparison Burlington Waterfront Hotel Study (November, 2017)

Allan Ramsay Planning Associates Inc. were retained by the Citizen's Plan B Group to provide a comparison of the two emerging concepts prepared by the City of Burlington as part of the Burlington Waterfront Hotel Study and the amended Plan B concept plan. Specifically, the Citizen's Plan B Group requested the following:

- the overall development yield in terms of the total floor area and floor space index (FSI)
- the proposed building heights
- the relevant setbacks of the podium and the towers
- the potential for additional lands to be added to Spencer Smith Park
- compliance with key parameters of the City of Burlington Tall Building Guidelines
- overall consistency with the general principles that were identified through the Burlington Waterfront Hotel Site Study.

Sketches of the proposed concept plans are provided in Appendix A. It is important to acknowledge the various concept plans are neither detailed site plans nor construction drawings. As a result information dealing with setbacks, floor area, etc. has been estimated.

Emerging Preferred Concept Plan 1 – is based on 2 separate buildings. The westerly building has a building height ranging from 14-20 storeys and is located opposite the block between Brant St. and John St. The easterly building has a building height ranging from 20-25 storeys and located opposite the block between John St. and Elizabeth St. The concept plan maintains views to the lake along the Brant St., John St. and Elizabeth St. view corridors but does not provide for the extension of Spencer Smith Park.

Emerging Preferred Concept Plan 2 – is based on a single podium with 2 separate towers. Similar to Emerging Preferred Concept #1 the towers range in height from 14-20 storeys (westerly) and 20-25 storeys (easterly). The building is situated within the easterly two-thirds of the site which provides for the extension of Spencer Smith Park and the enhancement of the



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Brant St. view corridor to the lake. The placement of the building will obstruct the John St. view corridor to the lake.

Amended Citizen's Plan B Concept Plan – is based on a single podium with 2 separate towers. The towers range in height from 22 storeys (westerly) and 14 storeys (easterly). The building is situated within the easterly half of the site which provides for significant extension of Spencer Smith Park, the enhancement of the Brant St. view corridor to the lake while maintaining the John St. view corridor to the lake.

Table 1 - Building Height (Storeys)

	Emerging Preferred #1		Emerging Preferred #2		Citizen's Plan B
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	
Podium	4	4	4	4	4
East Tower	20	25	20	25	14
West Tower	14	18	14	20	22

All options maintain a 4 storey podium and maintain the requirements of the Tall Building Guidelines of a minimum height of 3 storeys and a maximum height equivalent to 80% of the width of the Lakeshore Road right-of-way.

Under both of the City's emerging plans the west tower is proposed at 14 storeys and the east tower at 20 storeys. Both of the City's concept plans also include the option of increasing the height of the west tower from 14 to 18 storeys and increasing the height of the east tower from 20 to 25 storeys.

The Plan B concept proposes 2 towers of 14 storeys (east) and 22 storeys (west).

Table 2 – Floor Space Index***

	Emerging Preferred #1		Emerging Preferred #2		Citizen's Plan B
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	
Overall	2.9	3.8	2.7	3.5	3.95

*** Floor Space Index (FSI) is a measure of the intensity of the development on a site. It is often used in mixed use developments where other measures of intensity such as residential density may not provide a representative indication of the size and mass of a building. FSI is calculated as the ratio of total floor area of a building to the total site area.

The City's base concepts for the 14 and 20 storey buildings yield FSIs between 2.7 and 2.9. When the building heights in each of the City's concepts are increased to 18 and 25 storeys the



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FSIs also increase and range between 3.5 and 3.8. The 3.95 FSI of the Amended Plan B proposal is the highest FSI of all of the concepts.

The differences in FSI between the concept plans can generally be attributed to the size of the tower floor plates (see discussion under Table 4).

Table 3 – Building Setbacks from Lakeshore Road and Tower Stepbacks

	Emerging Preferred #1		Emerging Preferred #2		Citizen's Plan B
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	
Podium	4.8 m		4.8 m		4.8 m
East Tower	7.8 m		7.8 m		7.8 m
West Tower	7.8 m		7.8 m		7.8 m

*** Under the Tall Buildings Guidelines (2.1(c)) a podium setback of 6.0 m is preferred, although a minimum setback of 4.8 m is acceptable.

Under the Tall Buildings Guidelines (3.1(e)) towers are to be stepped back at least 3.0 m from the podium.

All of the concepts provide setbacks to the podium and towers that are in keeping with the Tall Building Guidelines.

Table 4 – Tower Floor Plates and Tower Separation

	Emerging Preferred #1		Emerging Preferred #2		Citizen's Plan B
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	
	Tower Floor Plate				
West Tower	500 m ²		675 m ²		750 m ²
East Tower	670 m ²		640 m ²		750 m ²
	Tower Separation				
	33 m		32 m		11 m

*** Under the Tall Buildings Guidelines (3.2(c)) the tower should be slender and not exceed 750 m².
Under the Tall Buildings Guidelines (3.1(c)) a minimum separation of 25 m is to be provided between towers.

All of the concepts provide tower floor plates that are generally in keeping with the maximum requirements of the Tall Building Guidelines. However, on a comparative basis, the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plans have relatively smaller tower floor plate



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than the Plan B alternative. For example, the tower floor plates in the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 are between 66% and 90% of the allowable floor area and, in the Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #2 the tower floor plates are within the range 85% to 90% of the allowable floor area.

With respect to tower separation the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plans exceed the minimum 25 m requirement of the Tall Building Guidelines. The City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 has a minimum tower separation of 33 m while Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #2 maintains a minimum 32 m separation. In contrast, the Plan B alternate plan provides only an 11 m tower separation, well below the guidelines.

The issue of tower floor plate sizes and tower separation distances are very much interdependent. A smaller floor plate has the potential to result in increased tower separation distance. For example, under the Plan B alternative should the tower floor plates be reduced to be similar in size to the smaller floor plates in the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 a tower of separation to approximately 21m.

Table 5 – Parkland, Open Space and View Corridors

	Emerging Preferred #1		Emerging Preferred #2		Citizen's Plan B
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 1	Option 2	
	Public Open Space and Private Open Space				
Private Open Space	✓		✓		✓
Potential Park Extension	x		✓✓		✓✓✓
	View Corridors				
<u>View Corridor</u> - Brant St. - John St. - Elizabeth St.	Maintains Existing Maintains Existing Maintains Existing		Enhanced Obstructed Maintains Existing		Enhanced Maintains Existing Maintains Existing

Each of the concept plans provide sufficient opportunities for private open space to serve the residents of the proposed development.

Although the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 provides a central open space corridor opposite John St. this concept plan does not provide an opportunity to extend Spencer Smith



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Park. The proposed westerly building in Concept Plan 1 is situated close to the property line adjacent to the Park. Under the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #2 there is an opportunity for an extension of the Park as the proposed building is setback approximately 32m from the park boundary. The greatest opportunity for an extension of the Park is under the Citizen's Plan B concept. In this plan the proposed building is setback approximately 55m from the park boundary. Any extension of the Park will require municipal acquisition through purchase, park dedication and/or community benefits (Section 37 of the Planning Act).

Each of the concept plans present different view corridor opportunities. The City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 maintains the existing views of the lake from Brant St., John St. and Elizabeth St. In contrast, the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #2 provides an enhanced view of the lake from Brant St. but places the proposed building at the foot of John St. City Staff have suggested the John St. view corridor could be preserved by incorporating a glass atrium in the building that would allow for views through to the lake, while also creating a view terminus with a building at the foot of John Street. However, as demonstrated in other locations in the City such as Spencer's Landing buildings with glass atriums provide obstructed views to the lake at best.

The Citizen's Plan B Concept provides an enhanced view of the lake from Brant St. while maintaining the existing views along John St. and Elizabeth St.

Conclusions

Each of the three concept plans has amply demonstrated that the site can be intensified through the development of a landmark building(s). Each concept plan provides development yields ranging from 2.8 FSI to 3.95 FSI and building heights within a range of 14 to 25 storeys. Except as noted above, the key design parameters of the City's Tall Building Guidelines can be satisfied.

The concept plans can be distinguished as follows:

- the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #1 maintains existing views to the lake and a minimum 25 m tower separation, but does not provide an opportunity to increase public open space through the extension of Spencer Smith Park
- the City's Emerging Preferred Concept Plan #2 provides an opportunity to increase public open space through the extension of Spencer Smith Park and maintains a minimum 25 m tower separation, but results in an obstructed view of the lake from the John St. corridor
- the Citizen's Plan B Concept provides an opportunity to increase public open space through the extension of Spencer Smith Park and maintains and/or enhances views to the lake from



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Brant St., John St. and Elizabeth St. However, this plan does not achieve the minimum 25 m tower separation as set out in the City's Tall Building Guidelines.

In my opinion, further dialogue is warranted between the City, the landowner and key stakeholders in order to further evaluate the concept plans and identify how the important issues of public open space, views to the lake and tower separation can be resolved in a collaborative manner.

Yours truly,

Allan Ramsay, MCIP, RPP
Principal, Allan Ramsay Planning Associates Inc



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APPENDIX 1

Figure 1 - City's Emerging Preferred Concept #1





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Figure 2 - City's Emerging Preferred Concept #2





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Figure 3 - Citizen's Plan B

