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CONSULTING**

planning + urban design

PB-76-17
502-02-68
Delegation Material

Planning and Development Department
City of Burlington
426 Brant Street
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Z6

December 1st, 2017
File 8717

Attn: Rosa Bustamante, Manager of Policy Planning – Mobility Hub

**RE: Burlington GO Mobility Hub Preferred Concepts: Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO – Public Meeting (Report #: PB-76-17)
1035 Brant Street and 2021 Plains Road East
City of Burlington**

Weston Consulting is the authorized planning consultant for Brant-Plains Holdings Inc., the registered owner of 1035 Brant Street and 2021 Plains Road East in the City of Burlington (herein referred to as the “subject lands”). At this time, formal development applications have not been submitted to the City of Burlington for review. However, this letter is provided in response to the GO Station Mobility Hub Preferred Concepts: Aldershot GO, Burlington GO and Appleby GO (Report #: PB-76-17) prepared by Brook McIlroy Incorporated, N. Barry Lyon Consultants, Dillion Consulting and City Staff, which are being presented to Burlington’s Planning and Development Committee on December 4th, 2017. Staff have recommended that the Committee receive and file report PB-76-17 regarding the preferred concepts for the City’s three GO Station Mobility Hubs.

We understand that these concepts are preliminary in nature and are intended to guide the preparation of a land use planning policy framework through an Area Specific Plan process.

Furthermore, we can advise that there have been ongoing discussions with Planning staff in relation to the Burlington GO Mobility Hub concept. A meeting was held on November 23, 2017 to provide comments and input to staff on the ‘preferred’ concept based on our client’s development aspirations.

Description of Subject property

The subject lands are located on the northeast corner of Brant Street and Plains Road East, approximately 500 metres northwest of the Burlington GO Station (Figure 1). The property at 1035 Brant Street is currently occupied by a one-storey commercial plaza (Brant Plains Village) and the property at 2021 Plains Road East is occupied by two office buildings (Ontario Court of Justice and Halton Court Services). The subject lands abut Leighland Road, which provides access to Brant Street for local employment uses and an existing residential enclave.



Figure 1 - Subject Property

Burlington GO Mobility Hub Preferred Concepts

The Preferred Concept: Land Use, for the Burlington GO Mobility Hub dated November 9th, 2017 identifies the area around the Brant Street and Plains Road East intersection as *Mixed Use 1 (Low-Mid Scale Intensity)* and *Mixed Use 2 (Mid-High Scale Intensity)*. The subject property is identified as *Mixed Use 1 (Low-Mid Scale Intensity)* (Figure 2). The Staff Report (PB-76-17) does not provide specific policy or a description on the intent of the *Mixed Use 1* or *Mixed Use 2* designation; however, it is understood that land use policies will be refined and determined as part of the Area Specific Plan process.

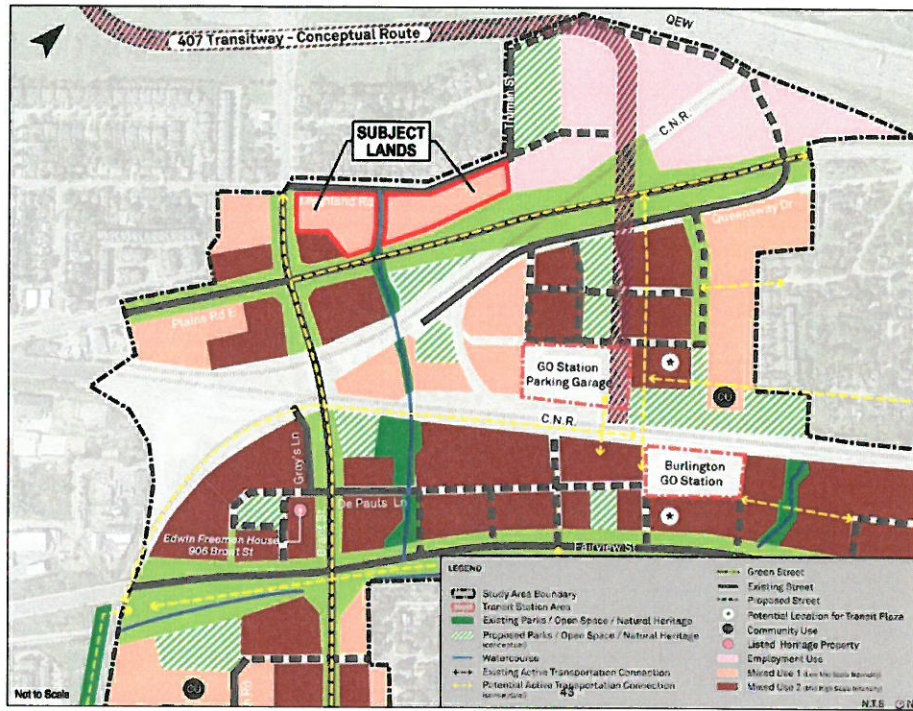


Figure 2 – Burlington GO Mobility Hub – Preferred Land Use Concept

The Preferred Concept: Height for the Mobility Hub identifies the subject property as *Mid Rise (4 to 11 Storeys)* (Figure 3).

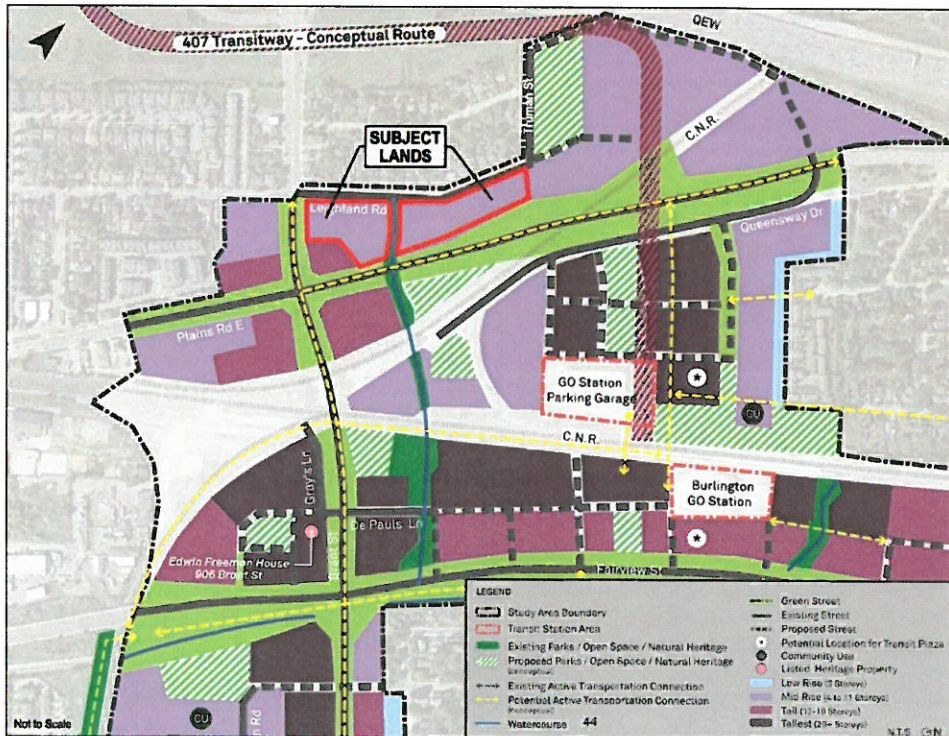


Figure 3 – Burlington Go Mobility Hub – Preferred Height Concept

Both the Preferred Concept: Land Use (Figure 2) and Preferred Concept: Height (Figure 3) identify Brant Street and Plains Road East as a *Green Street*. The Staff Report does not provide specific policy or description on the intent of the *Green Street* designation; however, it is understood that these policies will be refined and determined as part of the Area Specific Plan process.

Recommended Revisions / Policy Considerations

We are pleased to provide the following comments and recommendations for the City’s consideration:

1. Boundary adjustment to the extent of “Tall” area for the North-west corner of Brant Street and Plains Road East

The preferred concept generally shows heights of 12 – 19 storeys at the intersection of Brant Street and Plains Road East, and the proposed height concept for the Brant Street and Plains Road intersection seems to follow an apparent parcel ownership boundary rather than an appropriate planning area unit.

We recommend extending the “Tall” area for the lands along the proposed *Green Street* fronting Plains Road East from *Tall (12 – 19 storeys)* and *Mid Rise (4 to 11 storeys)* to the Municipality’s conceived built form of *Tall (12 – 19 storeys)*. The recommended adjustment would extend from Brant Street to east of the existing natural feature on the subject lands.

Figure 4 illustrates the general extent of the proposed adjustment.

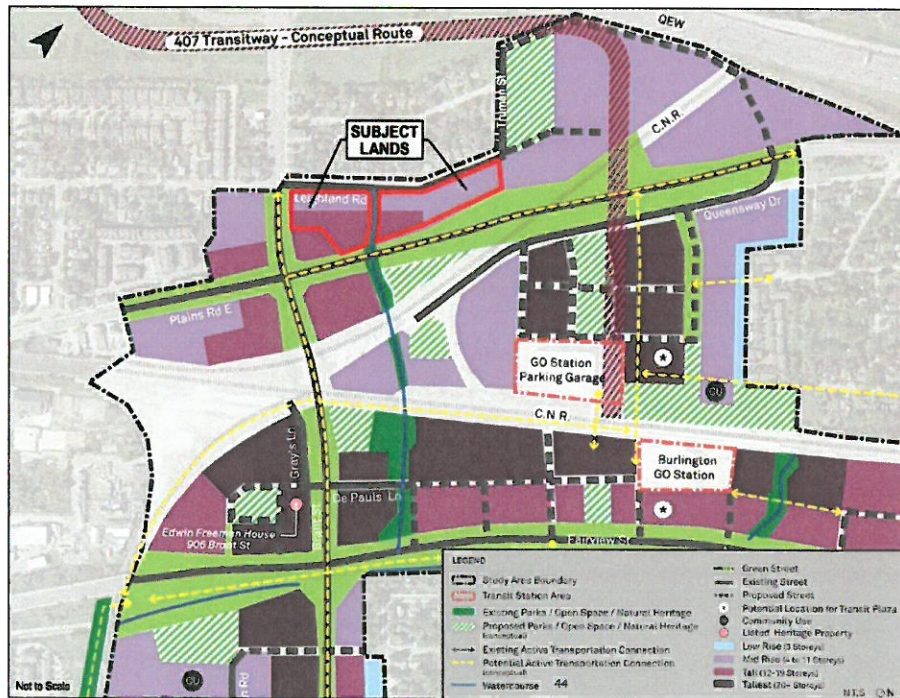


Figure 4 – Proposed Revision to the Preferred Height Concept

In our opinion, the proposed adjustment of the *Tall (12 – 19 Storey)* area for the subject lands is appropriate for the following reasons:

- *Development of a Nodal concept with linear bands of transition*

The current height concept conceived for the Brant Street and Plains Road intersection creates an imbalanced street condition between adjacent blocks. The proposed adjustment of the height along the Brant Street/ Plains Road East intersection will support the development of a Node that achieves a compact, transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly land use that supports residential, employment and retail related uses. The adjustment of the *Tall (12 – 19 Storeys)* area would allow for a consistent built form on both sides of Brant Street and Plains Road East supporting a corridor and nodal configuration. This configuration meets the City's objectives for development in Nodes and Corridors/ Intensification Corridors by achieving a "*multitude of planning objectives by combining a broad range and intensity of employment, shopping, public service facilities, residential and complementary uses such as open space, institutional, and cultural uses*" (Draft Official Plan, November 2017, Section 8.1.).

In keeping with the Provincial policy direction, the City of Burlington is preparing a new Official Plan. The draft Official Plan (dated November 2017) provides direction for redevelopment of Mobility Hubs and Major Transit Station Areas. The Brant Street and Plains Road East intersection is identified as a *Mixed Use Node and Intensification Corridor* and is also located within a delineated *Mobility Hub* per Schedule B – Urban Structure of the City of Burlington's draft Official Plan (dated November 2017). Proposed policy 2.3.1 m) and o) states:

m) Lands identified as Mixed Use Nodes represent areas with a concentration of commercial, residential and employment uses with development intensities generally greater than surrounding areas. Nodes are generally located at points where two or more transit routes intersect.

o) Mixed Use Nodes and Intensification Corridors will be a focus of reurbanization. These areas vary widely and will be guided by the underlying land use designations of this Plan. Some areas will be planned to evolve with higher residential intensities and a full mix of uses, while others may permit a more limited range of employment-oriented permitted uses, both designed to achieve their planned function. These areas will support the frequent transit corridors and provide focal points of activity and a vibrant pedestrian environment and facilitate active transportation through careful attention to urban design, enhancing the opportunities for the location of public service facilities and institutional uses.

The Brant Street and Plains Road East intersection is intersected by a number of transit routes (i.e., Route 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 18, 21, 50, 52, 87, 101). Per Policy 2.3.1 m) and accordingly, the Brant Street and Plains Road East intersection would be defined as a

Node. It is our opinion, that increasing the permitted heights of this intersection, and extending the tall heights along the Plains Road East frontage would maintain the City's objectives of the draft *Mixed Use Node and Intensification Corridor* urban structure policies.

- *Better building relationship and interface along Plains Road East and the proposed Green Street and increased design flexibility*

Through urban design guidelines and strategies, increasing the proposed built form along the Plains Road East frontage would allow development of the lands to be contiguous to the proposed *Green Street* along Plains Road East. The *Green Street* represents an opportunity to enhance connectivity, walkability and connections along the street. Tall buildings along this corridor can create opportunities to provide publicly accessible open space as they can achieve a higher density threshold through slender built footprints and built form. A reduced building footprint and well designed podium allows opportunities for open space and park space connectivity. In comparison to a mid-rise built form which, in order to achieve a high-density threshold, mid-rise buildings are designed in a 'slab' orientation, limiting opportunities to create connectivity between neighbourhoods and open space.

In addition, the increase in building height would allow for greater flexibility in building typologies and provide greater flexibility in creating attractive urban environments.

- *Depth of the Parcels*

The proposed adjustment would support development that recognizes the existing parcel depth of the Brant Street / Plains Road East Node. The parcel depth of the subject lands allows for the development of tall buildings along the south portion of the lands that can be designed to provide a transition to adjacent low rise neighbourhoods through a gradation in massing, height and building design. This transition would be achieved through the application of good planning and urban design principles.

The proposed adjustment could be implemented through the policy development stage and further enunciated through guidelines as part of the ongoing Area Specific planning process.

The consideration of policies and guidelines in support of the proposed adjustment would be consistent with the objectives of Metrolinx's The Big Move Transit Plan, which mandates the establishment of a Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The Metrolinx RTP fulfils the Province's commitment to implement a transportation network and policies of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The Big Move Plan outlines a Provincial strategy to connect Mobility Hubs to provide seamless access through a regional transit system. Mobility Hubs are defined as Major Transit Station Areas, within the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan, 2017), which have a high development and redevelopment potential and provide access to the regional transportation system. Major Transit Station Areas/ Mobility Hubs are generally defined

as the area within an approximately 500 metre radius of the transit station. The subject lands are approximately 500 metres, northwest of the Burlington GO Station.

It is our understanding that Metrolinx is in the process of reviewing the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The review and update of the RTP has been coordinated with the review of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017) which came into effect on July 1st, 2017, replacing the Growth Plan 2006. A draft of the updated RTP, *Draft 2041 Regional Transportation Plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area*, was released on September 14th, 2017. The draft RTP conforms to the Growth Plan 2017, which together, sets the policy framework for managing growth, establishing complete communities and delivering sustainable transportation choices. The draft RTP continues to provide a Provincial strategy for a regional transit system, recognizing the Growth Plan 2017 population projections for 2041. Both the Growth Plan 2017 and the updated RTP prioritize planning of Major Transit Station Areas on Priority Transit Corridors, directing residential and employment growth to support a compact built form and transit usage. Furthermore, Mobility Hubs are intended to integrate transportation and land use and accommodate an intensive concentration of employment and residential uses. The Burlington GO Mobility Hub is identified along a designated Priority Transit Corridor.

We are pleased to provide the following policy and guidelines recommendations for consideration of the proposed adjustment of the *Tall (11 – 19 Storey)* area. Recommended policies and guidelines could include, but are not limited to:

- *Official Plan and/ or Area-Specific Plan policies that reference the City's Tall Building Guidelines to encourage compatible good urban design principles.*

The draft Official Plan provides policies that could ensure compatibility and proper building design with consideration for the surrounding context. The urban design criteria found in Section 7.3, in addition to the adopted Tall Building Guidelines (May 2017), will reinforce the principles of good urban design and built form.

- *Transition in Scale and Good Building Design Principles*

Tall buildings should respect the scale of the local context through an appropriate transition in height and massing. Appropriate massing and heights provide horizontal separation and transition to low rise neighbourhoods and open space. This can be accomplished through the following policy and guideline tools:

1. Angular planes – a 45-degree angular plane, measured from the low rise stable areas, to provide transition in scale from tall buildings to low-rise neighbourhoods that will limit shadow and overlook on neighbouring properties.
2. Building envelope parameters (floor plate size and articulation) – slender, point form towers with compact floor plates cast small, faster moving shadows as well as improve sky views and permeability between buildings. A maximum floor plate size of 750

square metres, which includes all building areas, provides adequate tower setbacks and spacing to ensure good built form principles.

The 750 sq. metre maximum could be addressed through a site-specific guideline, where it can be demonstrated adequate tower separation and setbacks can be achieved.

3. Minimum horizontal separation distances – the placement of towers can minimize negative impacts on neighbouring properties. The minimum separation distances of 25 metres between towers can establish tall buildings that protect sky views, privacy and daylight.

- *Enhanced Public Realm Principles*

The proposed adjustment would encourage the development of tall buildings along the corridor which creates opportunities to provide publicly accessible landscaped open space as they can achieve similar density through slender building footprints and built form. Slender building footprints allow opportunities for open space and park space connectivity. In comparison to a mid-rise built form, in order to achieve a high-density threshold, mid-rise buildings are designed in a more ‘slab’ orientation, limiting opportunities to create connectivity between neighbourhoods and open space. Guidelines to provide accessible open space connectivity would enhance the City’s vision of development Plains Road East and Brant Street as *Green Streets* in addition to proposed public parks along Plains Road East.

- *Density Distribution*

It is our understanding that City staff are currently undertaking an exercise to determine the allocation of density throughout the Mobility Hub. We understand that the preferred concept was planned to exceed a minimum projected density target of 300 people and jobs per hectare. We recommended that the proposed density correspond to the height to ensure it correlates with the built form and heights that can be achieved on a site-by-site basis.

2. Incorporation of “Tallest” Building Sites

We recommend that the height mapping allow for two “Tallest” building sites at the Brant Street and Plains Road East intersection. We suggest that these “Tallest” buildings be identified through site specific policies through the Area-Specific Plan process. Figure 5 demonstrates the proposed location of two possible “Tallest” building sites, which we believe is appropriate. The proposed recommendations concerning the possible “Tallest” building sites are not intended to make representation for the property at the corner owned by another party, who may ultimately be satisfied with the current height permissions. The representations for the proposed “Tallest” building site is only for the subject lands.

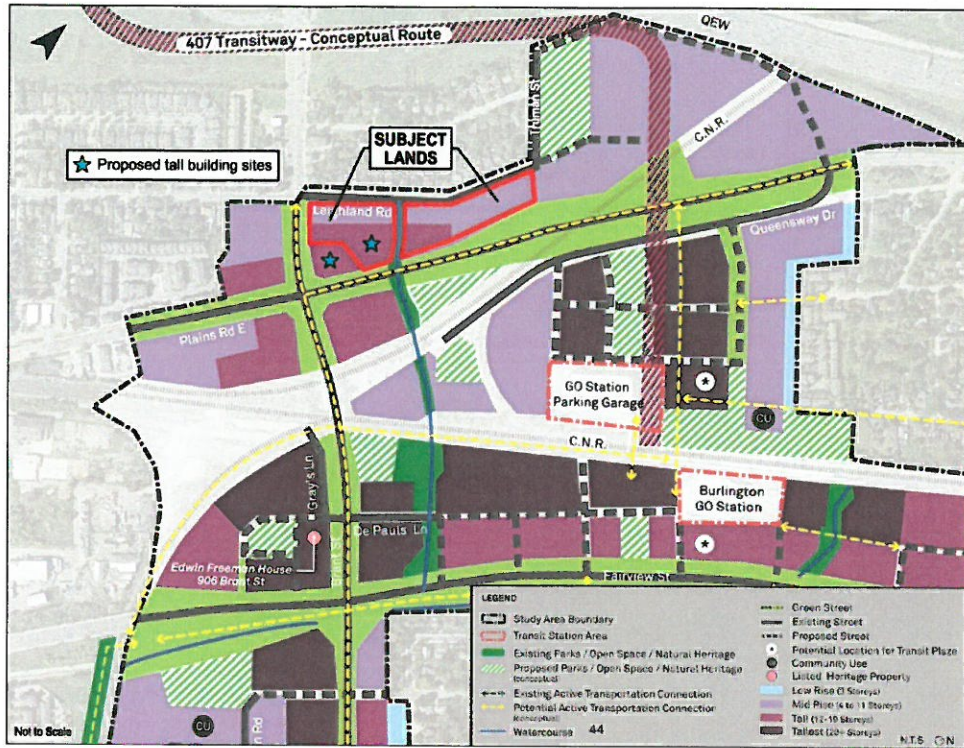


Figure 5 – Proposed Revision to the Height Map

The proposed two “Tallest” building sites are appropriate for the Brant Street/ Plains Road East intersection for the following reasons:

- *Nodal Emphasis*

The proposed “Tallest” buildings at the Brant Street and Plans Road East intersection emphasize the intersection as being a Node in close proximity to the Burlington GO Mobility Hub. Nodes are defined as strategic urban growth locations in a City that is supported by multi-nodal transportation options.

Furthermore, the Brant Street/ Plains Road East intersection operates as a gateway into the Mobility Hub south along Brant Street and east along Plains Road East.

- *Enhances Public Realm*

The proposed “Tallest” buildings at the Brant Street and Plans Road East intersection emphasizes the articulation of a street level podium condition while reinforcing the public realm and connectivity to public open spaces and proposed *Green Streets* while achieving appropriate density.

- *Built Form*

The proposed “Tallest” buildings at the intersection would maintain a block-wide built form reinforcing a sense of scale and maintaining a height and massing at a prominent intersection in the Mobility Hub area. The proposed “Tallest” buildings would reinforce the nodal and comparative patterns of the proposed heights intended for this area.

In addition, the pairing of tallest buildings would be a preferable design scenario to a single tall building as currently envisioned.

It is recommended through the consideration of the site-specific policies and guidelines; the proposed “Tallest” buildings would be subject to the following built form guidelines to ensure compatibility with the surrounding contexts. These guidelines would include but are not limited to:

- The tower portion of a tall building will be subject to a slender floor plate and shall not exceed 750 square metres, excluding balconies;

The size and shape of the tower floor plate combined with the height and placement of the tower would provide an overall massing of a tall building that minimizes the visual and physical impacts of the surrounding streets, parks, open space and neighbouring properties. When adequately separated, slender point form towers with compact floor plates cast smaller and faster moving shadows, which improve the overall access to sky views, permits views between buildings and minimizes the overall impact of shadowing on neighbouring properties.

- The shadowing of tall buildings shall be in accordance with acceptable shadowing/ sky view practices outlined in the City of Burlington Tall Building Guidelines;
- All buildings would be subject to a 45-degree angular plane;
- Provide separation distance between towers of 25 metres or greater, measured from the exterior wall of the building, excluding balconies; and,
- Horizontal separation distance to support tall building transitions to abutting neighbourhoods.

The intent of the above comments are to provide site-specific provisions to ensure the “Tallest” buildings are designed in a manner that is compatible with the surrounding context. The incorporation of these policies and guidelines into the ongoing Area Specific planning process would ensure the City’s Tall Building Guidelines (2017) are implemented to address compatibility with the surrounding area while maintaining the City’s objectives for the Mobility Hub.

We look forward to working with City staff through the Area Specific Plan process for the Burlington GO Mobility Hub. We reserve the right to provide further comments on the policies and/or

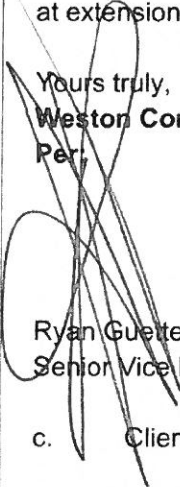
schedules of the Area-Specific Plan process and GO Mobility Hub review as it relates to the subject lands.

Our clients wish to ensure the appropriate future development of the subject lands through the proposed built form/ density and policies and provisions of the Area-Specific Plan and GO Mobility Hub planning process.

We respectfully request to be notified of the release of any modification to the proposed concept and any future meetings in relation to the review process and the formulation of Official Plan policies.

Should you have any question, please contact the undersigned at extension 241 or Mark Condello at extension 257.

Yours truly,
Weston Consulting
Per,



Ryan Guetter, BES, MCIP, RPP
Senior Vice President

c. Clients