

City Of Burlington Budget Telephone Town Hall

As a follow up to the telephone town hall held on October 18th there were a number of questions raised by residents for which there was insufficient time to respond to during the event. The following is a consolidation of those questions and responses. Where possible the questions have been grouped into common themes.

Transportation / Traffic

Question: Are the traffic lights in the budget? The bike lanes are all East and West none are South-North will this be added in the future?

Response: All new warranted traffic signal installations are included in the 10 year capital budget and forecast. The city is currently working on updating the 2009 Cycling Master Plan which will, among others things, provide recommendations on a minimum cycling network that includes east-west and north-south routes in a prioritized fashion. This work will then be fed into the capital budget and forecast for consideration.

Question: Concerned about hotels/condos going up, and how traffic will be worse.

Response: Traffic impacts from all development is examined by staff and new higher density growth will be purposefully directed to areas where multi-modal transportation is greatest. In terms of growth areas, the downtown, and the mobility hubs situated at all three GO stations will take the majority share of new development. A multi-modal transportation system provides the greatest potential to help alleviate the traffic impacts of new developments.

Question: I don't support the bike lanes everywhere as they are mostly luxury. They should have smaller buses for less as opposed to larger buses for more that are empty.

Response: Bike lanes are not proposed on all roadways but rather planned on routes that will encourage commuter trips. This means that planned cycling facilities will continue on arterial roadways and will provide travel options thus reducing vehicular travel demand.

The City has purchased some smaller thirty foot buses in 2017 but we still need the flexibility to have a mix of larger buses in our fleet to accommodate some of our routes that need the capacity to carry more passengers, such as the Route 1.

Question: I just wanted to comment on the traffic Fairview seems to be backed up going West.

Response: The Plains Road/Fairview Street is a major east-west corridor across the city and absorbs spill over traffic from the QEW on a daily basis. City staff are currently working on improving the traffic flow on Plains/Fairview through improved

communication between traffic signals that will allow better monitoring and timing modifications. We are also working with our Transit Department to implement technologies at signalized intersections that will provide priority to buses moving through the corridor. Improvements to transit travel time will encourage more transit use which in turn provides a level of relief to auto users as well.

Question: Is there any money being put into updating traffic management systems?

Response: Yes. There is funding to improve our traffic signal communication system.

Question: What is being done about the flow of traffic in the city?

Response: Traffic flow in the city is affected by a number of factors. QEW spillover is one of the most significant and the city is limited in terms of completely absorbing this influx. Having said that, there are some things we can do. For example, we are currently working with provincial staff to implement a monitoring system at the traffic signals situated below the Skyway Bridge. This monitoring system will allow automatic recognition of incidents and implement a pre-determined plan to adjust timing in order to alleviate the impact of the traffic diversion.

Ultimately, reduction in single occupant auto demand is the best long term solution. While the city has historically depended on the automobile, we must focus on and build modes of travel that provide opportunities for a shift away from cars. Not everyone can, or is willing to take transit, ride a bike or walk to their destinations, however, there are growing numbers who do. Our strategic plan pillar “A City that Moves” and our upcoming Transportation Master Plan will spell out how to build transportation options for all residents.

Transit

Question: Is concerned about high transit costs.

Response: The City of Burlington currently subsidizes transit fares by 65 per cent. Our PRESTO fare card e-Purse price which replaces our former adult paper tickets is \$2.70 and is the lowest in the GTHA other than Hamilton.

Question: What's going on with transit bicycles and bylaws?

Response: We have bike racks that hold two bicycles on our conventional buses which are easy to use. There are no bylaws that restrict this service. Using our bike racks is a great way to integrate your trip using different modes of transportation.

Question: Why do the buses not stop at the Maplevue Mall?

Response: The buses stop on street at Maplevue Mall because of the travel time to take buses into the mall due to congestion in the parking lot. The walking distance from the street into the mall is considered an acceptable distance by transit industry best practices. This allows us to move passengers whose destination is not the mall as quickly as possible to the end of their trip.

Fire Department

Question: Often a fire truck will arrive before ambulance. Is this needless duplication? Why are they managing food drives etc.?

Response: The city has entered into a tiered response agreement that see fire crews respond to serious medical calls. It is recognized that immediate cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and early defibrillation, with an automated external defibrillator (AED), can more than double a victim's chance of survival. In fact, early defibrillation, along with CPR, is the only way to restore the victim's heart rhythm to normal in a lot of cases of cardiac arrest. For every minute that passes without CPR and defibrillation, however, the chances of survival decrease by 7–10 per cent. The response time of fire crews is such that trained personnel may be on scene sooner than a paramedic crew. As such the survivability of Burlington residents is enhanced as a result of the Fire Departments participation in the tiered response agreement. Ultimately we all want to provide our valued citizens with the highest level of protection and pre hospital care.

The Burlington Fire Department is the communities' fire department, it is there to serve, protect and support everyone in our wonderful community. It is not just there to respond in a reactive manner. It takes great pride in supporting community initiatives that provide for those less fortunate than ourselves. It does not manage food drives, but it does proudly support and offer convenient drop off points for the great many citizens who generously provide food and clothing. The wonderful community volunteers that do manage the various food drives do so with minimal resources and rely on the caring and generosity of the community. The least we can do is assist in the way that we do and we are proud to do so. This community spirit, the ability to graciously help one another, is one of the many reasons that make Burlington such a wonderful place to live.

Financial Management

Question: We have a \$9.4 million in debt charges. Why aren't we using this contingency fund to reduce debt charges? Why are we saving and paying not paying down debt?

Response: The 2017 operating budget included \$9.4 million for the repayment of debt. Debt financing is used for some capital projects with repayment over a 10 year period. The \$9.4 million of debt charges equates to over \$90 million of capital works that were

completed and financed using debt. The city monitors how and when debt is used based on the interest rate environment, ensuring we are able to repay the debt on an annual basis through a debt limit policy, and that the capital asset financed from debt has a life greater than 10 years.

The 2017 operating budget also included a Provision to the Contingency reserve of \$1.8 million. The provision does not equate to a savings account but rather is an annual allocation to the contingency reserve for existing and potential litigation expenses for legal and human resource matters.

Question: With respect to the proposed capital budget the parking is a very significant investment in 2021 I was curious what that might be related to?

Response: The approved 2017 capital budget has a project for the design and construction of a parking facility of approximately \$18 million funded from parking reserve funds. This project is a placeholder for future parking requirements in the downtown. A 2013 parking report (TS-07-13) identified additional spaces in the downtown based on future growth. A follow up study and report is due to be completed in 2018. The study, along with statistical analysis of the city's parking occupancy equipment will assess parking needs to determine the future need and potential location for any possible additional parking facilities.

Parks Maintenance

Question: What is being done to clean up the garbage in the parks?

Response: Waste receptacles are located in each park for disposal of waste. Litter picking is regularly performed during the main operating season of May to September when there is seasonal staff in place. Community Clean-Up Days are held each spring. Specific areas of concern can be reported to the Roads and Parks Maintenance Department for follow up by emailing rpm@burlington.ca.

Infrastructure Renewal

Question: When is money going to be put back into our streets?

Response: In 2014 Council approved a long term asset management financing plan that included a dedicated 1.25 per cent annual tax levy dedicated to infrastructure renewal. This plan would see the existing infrastructure deficit and funding gap closed within 20 years. In 2016 Council approved an additional \$20M over a four-year period to address now need road renewal in particular for roads that were resurfacing

candidates in order to renew these roads with a much more effective resurfacing before they deteriorated to the point of requiring more costly full reconstruction.

Question: My inquiry is that in past budgets we have squandered away millions in the pier performing arts centre and bicycle lanes. Can our mayor leave the legacy of infrastructure?

Response: same as above

Other

Question: I would like to propose a solution for unemployment they should force mandatory full service gas stations which would increase employment.

Response: This is not something municipal governments would do. Labour laws are a provincial responsibility.

Question: I would like to propose that the work schedule be staggered in Halton to reduce traffic congestion.

Response: Our focus is on providing sustainable transportation and complete streets which help people lessen their dependence on cars and use public transit, bicycles, walking and other modes of transportation.

Question: I'm concerned about the closing of high schools in Burlington and the affect it is having on the community. In regards to Robert Bateman and Lester B Pearson.

Response: As you may be aware, the city is not involved in the operation of schools. The city will work with the school board, as we have in the past, as they undertake their next steps. There is a mandated process that the school board has to undertake and we are monitoring that process.

Question 1: In regards to housing I know people who have been on a waiting list for over ten years what will be done about this?

Question 2: What is being done for low income housing and rental properties?

Response: Halton Region is responsible for the subsidized housing program, also known as rent-geared-to-income (RGI). This program provides safe, well-maintained rental housing for individuals and families with low and moderate incomes.

Question: Is there any money in budget for rat problem in Burlington?

Response: Mice and rats are considered pests and it is the responsibility of the home owner to contact a pest control agency. If you feel you have an infestation with these pests you may want to contact the Halton Health unit at 905-825-6000. For addition information please visit <http://www.halton.ca/cms/One.aspx?portalId=8310&pageId=130006>

Question: What can be done to catch speeders around our schools?

Response: If there are speeding concerns, please contact Halton Regional Police to file a complaint. The Police will investigate and conduct patrols if needed.

Question: What is the plan for invasive species control?

Response: Invasive species is a federal and provincial task. Please contact your member of parliament or the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry or the Ministry of Fisheries and Oceans.