

**Delegation by Gary Scobie to Planning & Development
Committee, City of Burlington**

**Re: PB-81-17
Proposed Downtown Mobility Hub Precinct Plan
Burlington**

Date: November 30, 2017.

I am here tonight to address the Downtown Mobility Hub Plan.

I am opposed to this plan to over-intensify Brant Street and the
Downtown Core south of Ghent Avenue.

First, let's define Mobility Hub. It is supposed to be a location
where a number of modes of transportation come together as a
network to facilitate the movement of people easily between these
modes. The obvious Mobility Hubs in Burlington are the three GO
Stations. They each have 1) large parking areas for cars and
bicycles, free of charge, 2) all modes of transport available – GO
trains, automobiles, City and GO busses, bicycles and walking and
3) convenience, with reliable and frequent GO train scheduling.

For people wanting to commute east to Toronto or further in the GTA or travel for recreation or culture to downtown Toronto, taking the GO train is preferable to sitting in traffic on the QEW. It is stress-free, reduces overall pollution and many commuters start their work day while still on the train.

I looked up the latest Metrolinx statistics on the Burlington GO Station Mobility Hub. 2700 to 3700 people start or stop their train commute each weekday morning at this station. How do they get there to board the train or depart from the station after leaving the train each day? Well 82% of them use their cars, parked in the lot or the garage. Only 5 – 10% use public transit. This seems to be the pattern at most GO stations in the GTA, overwhelmingly dedicated to automobile drivers.

How can we make better use of these GO Stations as Mobility Hubs? Cater to people who take the train often by building intensified housing in the form of high rise condominiums, like the Paradigm. This allows them to live at or near the station, so they

can walk to it. It means no more space taken up by additional parking facilities, since these newest riders don't need a car to get to the train. They don't need a car to go grocery shopping since the Walmart is right there near the Burlington station. This form of intensification makes sense in so many ways, as long as the tall buildings do not intrude into existing neighbourhoods of single family dwellings. I am worried that some of these tall buildings suggested near Ghent Avenue may do so. However, the concept of intensification around Mobility Hubs, mandated by the Province, does have merit, as long as it does not go beyond intensification into over-intensification.

Now, let's focus on the Downtown Mobility Hub. What features does it have to qualify it as a Mobility Hub? Well, unfortunately it doesn't seem to qualify as a Mobility Hub. Unlike our three GO Stations, our Downtown Bus Station 1) doesn't have large parking lots to handle a thousand cars. The parking lots it does have aren't free either. So that's a big fail. 2) the Bus Station doesn't have

any trains. It only has busses, bike racks and costly parking. It does have walkability, if you want to use the bus transit system and you live nearby. Still though, not looking very good. Now if there was a dedicated light rail rapid transit line or subway going to the GO Station, that would certainly attract more commuters. But alas, I don't see that coming in the near future. 3) convenience – there is an improving scheduling of busses, but it is not the preferred way of anyone who has a car to join the traffic in a bus instead of their own car. It's only livable transit for people who can't drive or can't afford a car. Definitely not the preferred way to travel in Burlington.

So, let's look at the Metrolinx stats for this Downtown Mobility Hub. Well, about 3500 people come into the downtown each morning and 3500 leave the downtown. About the same numbers that use the Burlington GO Station each morning. But here's the rub – 85 – 90% of these people use cars to do this. A higher percentage than GO train users. Only 3 – 6% use public transit.

So more people use cars to enter or exit the downtown each morning than those who use cars to make use of the Burlington GO Station.

Nearly all of these people are not using transit in any way to come to their jobs downtown or to go to their jobs elsewhere. Private automobile transport rules the downtown. Our Bus Station serves a low number of people each day who have no other choice than to ride the bus.

And think of this. Someone who has a car in the northwest part of Burlington and needs to get to work in the southeast part. Is he or she going to drive to the Downtown Bus Station, pay to park all day and pay to take a bus to his or her employment location? No, he or she has a car, so will drive the car directly to the job. No extra parking expense and no extra time wasted waiting for and riding the bus.

From the Metrolinx stats, only a handful of people are using the bus system. This is the final fail in the test. A transit system that appeals to only a few people, that is chronically underfunded and that has no real plan to move people efficiently and rapidly.

Metrolinx's own statistics fail to show that this is a valid, working Mobility Hub. It is a "pretend" Mobility Hub at best.

And a "pretend" Mobility Hub should not be enough qualification to bring on the intensification that a real Mobility Hub is entitled to.

I don't know if this designation of the downtown as a Mobility Hub is some leap of faith by our provincial masters, as in "if we pretend hard enough, it will be a Mobility Hub" or some cynical manipulation of the public who will only accept intensification if it comes with a Mobility Hub designation attached. Either way, I am neither impressed nor convinced. I am very disappointed though. Was Council a willing participant or was Council given no choice by the province? I don't know and expect I won't get an answer.

What I do know is that Downtown Burlington is no more a Mobility Hub than Downtown Oakville is. And Downtown Oakville has not been designated a Mobility Hub and will be spared the over-intensification zeal and the high rise makeover because of it.

You, as our Council need to talk to the Minister responsible for Metrolinx and Mobility Hubs, representing the citizens of Burlington, and request that this mistake be corrected, so that this rush to intensify the lower downtown area can be halted.

The first necessary step would be to turn down this Downtown Mobility Hub Plan tonight. If you vote “Yes”, you will start the Burlington downtown on a path of re-development of our most historic and famous street. A path that I believe most citizens are opposed to. I’m asking you to vote “No” on this Plan.