

Presented by Larry Griffith to the Planning and Development Committee January 23, 2018

As I understand it, we are meeting and/or exceeding our growth requirements as per the provincial Places to Grow plan. There is no need for the over-intensification in the proposed Official Plan and the changes to our downtown's landscape that will result. I am not against growth. We need it, but we need it to be done in a controlled, planned and responsible manner.

We do not have enough downtown parking today and not enough is being required in the proposed new plan. Downtown commercial entities are suffering today and this plan will only make things worse. We must create and support a vibrant downtown business community and the parking requirements in this plan do not do that.

Downtown traffic congestion is a huge problem today that needs to be addressed now. Construction that will result from the over-intensification in this plan will only make things worse.

Construction of more tall, high density buildings will only add to the problems of traffic flow, parking and the loss of retail and commercial entities during the years it will take to complete construction. It is not clear how long this construction could last. It may be many years of disruption.

The over-intensification recommended in this plan will put huge pressure on existing infrastructure and there does not appear to be a detailed plan to address this critical area.

I do not understand the need to designate downtown Burlington as an Anchor Mobility Hub. In fact, the downtown does not meet the definition as there is no rail access. In addition we don't have a road network that would support the implied traffic growth. So, trying to use this designation as justification for downtown over-intensification is only fooling ourselves.

We are already seeing huge changes to the downtown's landscape through the results of the violations that have occurred to the existing Official Plan's height and density rules. The current Council has already demonstrated that it does not adhere to its own plans based on the approvals of so many tall buildings currently approved or under development. The Bridgewater, Berkley and 421 Brant Street are all examples of the rules being ignored. If this new plan goes forward, it's scary to imagine just how far they would let developers push the envelope - 30, 40, 50 stories???

Council appears to be rushing the approval of this plan by ignoring public communication and input. Good plans need to be thorough, understood by all and complete to be achieved. This is far too important to let speed dictate the outcome. I would like approval to be delayed until after the upcoming election to allow time for citizens and councillors to fully understand the short and long term implications of what's in it.

If we approve the height and density allowances contained in this proposed Official Plan, we will change the downtown look and feel forever. Our waterfront and our downtown are not renewable resources. Once they are gone, they are gone forever.

This is not just a downtown residents' problem. I have yet to meet or hear from a Burlington resident who is in favour of permitting these tall buildings or for the level of intensification that is to be permitted in the downtown area. I do not believe that 7 Council members should speak for the entire City on this critical issue. This is so important to the future of Burlington that I propose that the only way to settle this is to hold a City wide referendum that will permit the citizens to determine the outcome. I'm sure my comments sound very repetitive and everyone is tired of hearing the same old things being said over and over. Well, I suggest to you that that's the message here. Listen to the people and do what they're telling you to do. Don't sell this city like Toronto and Mississauga did. At least Hazel McCallion didn't sell their downtown waterfront crown jewel of Port Credit.