

PB-11-18
502-02-68
Delegation correspondence

From: Deby Morrison [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 7:32 AM
To: LaPointe, Amber
Cc: Meed Ward, Marianne
Subject: Jan 23/18 Plan Dev Comm Delegation Notes

JAN 23/18 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

I am here to request that you defer the vote on the new draft Official Plan until after the Municipal Election on October 22, 2018.

I have four key areas of concern with regard to the new draft of the Official Plan, three of them concern the Downtown:

- 1) Rushing the adoption of the November draft Official Plan for Burlington into law.
- 2) The designation of the downtown bus station as a Mobility Hub.
- 3) The loss of the character of Brant St.
- 4) The over-intensification of the Downtown core with no way to stop.

1) The process of adopting the November draft Official Plan (O.P.PB-50-17) into law is being rushed by City Staff. City Staff released the draft O.P. in an email to the public on Nov. 13/17. The public had 14 days to comment, which was to conclude at a November 30th Planning & Development Committee meeting; City Staff planned to send the draft O.P. to City Council after the Nov 30 meeting for a vote into law in January, 2018.

On November 30/17, at the 1:00 pm meeting, City Staff received substantial opposition feedback from both the Public and Developers that this draft O.P. was incomplete and should not be rushed. City Staff announced at the beginning of the Nov. 30th, 6:30 pm meeting they were deferring their decision to send it to council.

However, as of today there are still many incomplete components of this draft O.P. There is No Transit Plan, No Transportation Plan, No Mobility Hub Plan and No specific details on an affordable housing plan. Also missing are the detailed area specific policies for the Downtown Core.

As the Downtown Core was not originally going to be part of a rewrite to the Official Plan, these policies are not ready for inclusion. These Downtown policies and the mobility hub policies are proposed to be incorporated into Burlington's new Official Plan with a future amendment during the Region's Official Plan review in 2019. So, why not wait and do it all together?

Our Official Plan won't be binding till approved by Halton Region as part of their own Regional Official Plan review which begins in 2019. We have plenty of time to let the new council complete the city's Official Plan and fit into the Region's timing. This new O.P. is going to dictate our City's future development over the next 20+ years, into the year 2041. The process should not be rushed and any vote to adopt this draft Official Plan should be deferred until after the October municipal election.

2) The Anchor Mobility Hub designation for the Downtown Burlington Bus Station should be rescinded.

In the Big Move Regional Transportation Report Plan for the GTA and Hamilton, one priority calls for "a system of connected mobility hubs" that provides travellers with seamless access to the regional transit system, supports higher density development and demonstrates excellence in customer service.

Currently the official plan designates the Burlington Downtown Bus Station as an Anchor Mobility Hub. Anchor mobility hubs are defined as a primary major transit station area in an urban growth centre and support higher density development within 800 meters. (In addition, Pearson Airport and Union Station are identified as anchor hubs due to their roles as the GTHA's primary international gateways.)

Anchor Hubs contain current or planned major regional destinations such as major institutions that include universities, colleges, airports, regional shopping centres (typically 200+ stores), hospitals (typically 300+ beds), arenas (typically 5,000+ seating capacity), and arts centres (typically 1,000+ seating capacity) and they have significant potential to attract and accommodate new growth and development.

The Regional Transportation System identifies 18 anchor hubs in the GTA with 720,100 combined total boardings in the a.m. peak hours in 2031; with the average being 40,000 boardings. The Burlington bus station is the lowest number on this list with 2,900 boardings. Union Station is the highest, moving 380,000 people in the peak a.m. hours.

Mobility Hubs provide Higher Order Transit as stated in the Ontario Places to Grow Plan GGH:. Higher order transit can include heavy rail (such as subways), light rail (such as streetcars), and buses in dedicated rights-of-way.

The Burlington Bus station does not meet any of the criteria as an Anchor Mobility Hub, and its designation as such should be rescinded.

3) The Loss of the Character of Brant Street

I am pro development of the Downtown core, but am not pro development of a canyon of 23 storey condos up the length of Brant St. I am pro smart, balanced development. And over the past six years I have been listening to the citizens of Burlington at public meetings and workshops tell City Staff and City Council that they want to maintain the character of Brant Street. Citizens want to see a plan for the Downtown Core that includes retaining the character and making it a liveable, walkable downtown developed for people.

Downtown Burlington is the heartbeat of this City. The success of our City depends upon the draw of Brant Street and the Waterfront. We have some wonderful entrepreneurial businesses Downtown and the Pier and the Discovery Center are drawing people. We have only one opportunity to get this right and nothing irreversible has been done yet. Downtown Brant St. can be an economic engine for this City bringing tourists, residents and employers if it is done right.

I am not a City planner, but I have had the privilege to travel to the great cities of the world. I can tell you from my 30 years of travel experience that people are drawn to open space, interesting space, character space, waterfront, piazzas, sidewalk patios, fountains, wide sidewalks, treed space, interesting shops, walkable promenades, architecture, history, food, art, music, entertainment, open sky and other people.

Not once, in my 30 years of travel have I or any of my travel companions been compelled to arrive in a City and seek out the streets lined with canyons of condo buildings, the streets for the best traffic congestion, the sunless streets, the franchise restaurants and stores and the areas devoid of people walking or recreating.

Why does Grow Bold translate to Grow High and Dense for Burlington? Burlington is a City like no other. It is a waterfront City. It has been voted the best mid size City in Canada for 5 years running. Citizens remain here and relocate here, because it is a mid size city and does not come with the usual large city issues, soulless street scapes, traffic, condominium canyons, crime and people that do not care about their city or their neighbours. Why don't we push the envelope and actually Grow Bold.

I propose City staff designate Brant Street from Lakeshore Rd. to Caroline Street as a distinct precinct and change the height zoning to 2 to 3 storeys on both the East and West sides. I would also propose that City staff develop a 3D model of what the final

project might look like prior to moving forward with any further development. Reference: First Avenue, Ladysmith, B.C. Named best street in Canada 2017 by the Cdn. Inst. Of Planners. <http://bit.ly/2n55k7K>

4) The overintensification of the Downtown core with no way to stop.

City Hall has been winging the development of our Downtown Core for the past decade. Guidelines from the Official Plan of 2008 have been ignored. The current City staff have not developed a vision and no detailed plans have been prepared for the Downtown for this new draft Official Plan. This City Hall reacts to Developers. How can you run a City always being behind the eight ball. It's expensive and City staff is always scrambling to keep up, having to put resources towards Development plans that never should have been submitted in the first place, but having to respond to them.

The Official Plan of 2008 states that "we would develop Burlington's historic Downtown as the City center with special attention focused on this area to revitalize it as a traditional 'people place'. This will involve encouraging retail and office development and good waterfront access." Our Downtown core was to contain living spaces, employment spaces, transit connection, affordable spaces, shopping places, all while getting better at being environmentally friendly, yet what we are witnessing is a Downtown that is being developed into a mono culture of condominiums. Where is the balance?

Over the past decade the Downtown core has been developed outside of the parameters of the current Official Plan of 4 to 8 storey building heights. The highest building approved to date is now 23 storeys at Brant St. and James St. and we are awaiting an OMB decision on a 26 storey (from 28) development at Lakeshore Rd & Martha St. The traffic downtown is already untenable for many hours each day. There are no main arteries in or out of the downtown core to keep traffic moving.

And currently there are three large construction projects in progress. The Bridgewater at Lakeshore and Pearl Streets, 144 condos in a 22 storey condo tower, a 7 storey condo tower and an 8 storey hotel (which have requested a 9th storey). The Berkely, 154 condos, in a 17 storey condo tower, at Maria and Elizabeth streets, that is also supposed to include an 8 storey office building and an 8 storey parking garage w/244 parking spaces, 60 of these for the public and 184 spaces for the office building; apparently the parking garage and office building only moving forward if the condos sell out. The Saxony, 40 condos in a 4 storey condominium at Locust and Elgin Streets, which has applied for two additional storeys during construction. That's 338 new condos and 184 office parking spaces, how many extra cars on the road is that in the downtown core?

There are at least 7 more development projects in the planning stages for the downtown core. Each time the building height approval is increased, it becomes the new benchmark. How can City Staff approve a Development at 421 Brant Street of 23 storeys and then tell a Developer at 437 Brant Street that they can only build 17 storeys? How do you stop the over-intensification? What are the mechanisms in place to stop the over-intensification?

The City has no transportation plan, transit plan or mobility hub plan, to handle this added development, yet City Hall Staff recommended a 23 storey condo tower downtown on Brant St. and 5 of the 7 City Council members voted for approval; on a property zoned for 4 to 8 storeys. The community has been shocked by City Council's majority vote to put a 23 storey condo at Brant and James Streets.

Within the November 2017 draft Official Plan **CHAPTER 11 – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT** are included the following statements: The City has identified the critical importance of public involvement. The (Burlington) Strategic Plan 2015-2040 identified as one of its four strategic directions that the City will be an Engaging City. This means that community members are engaged, empowered, welcomed and well served by their City. This commitment to engagement is part of the daily activities at the City and in particular, is important in the planning and decision-making process.”

The public had been lulled into the mistaken belief that having been invited to be a part of the decision making process by attending public meetings and workshops and having their vision, feedback and insight included in the process, that their opinion on downtown development mattered and was being heard. It was a shock to find that City Hall staff has an agenda that is not in line with majority citizen sentiment. This is not responsible, reasonable, balanced or smart development.

What is the rush? It is not necessary to even do this construction to meet the Provincial Places to Grow Act. We are on target as a City to meet Provincial targets without this development.

We are at a tipping point. Why not pause to develop a complete plan, based upon facts to govern our development to the year 2041. Even with a pause to develop a complete plan, the effect of the three in- progress downtown development projects will be unknown, as it does not appear any will be ready for occupancy in 2018.

Life passes in the blink of a eye. You are the caretakers of our City at this moment in time. So, Take Care, be thoughtful, do the research, work with the citizens, build a sustainable vision and be collaborative with developers to grow bold and grow

smart. What legacy will you leave for future generations. Will Burlington become the Jewel on the Lake it's citizens deserve it to be, on your watch?

Deby Morrison

