

Burlington's Proposed New Official Plan (February 2018)
Statutory Public Meeting
Tuesday February 27, 2018, 6:30 pm
City Hall Council Chambers

Thank you for this opportunity to stand before you and share my thoughts on the latest version of the Plan. I was not going to come. After you approved the application for 421-431 Brant St at James I was disillusioned by the Planning staff and most of my elected officials. When the 24 storey application arrived a few weeks ago for the other corner I experienced an 'I told you so moment'. And then when OMB approved the Adi development at Martha and Lakeshore, in part because the city was not averse to height, I threw up my hands in despair - as my perception is that you have lost control of our downtown on us.

So why am I here? This is YOUR last chance to get it right. If you screw up this opportunity, there is no going back. Downtown will be ruined FOREVER. I am here because I want to tell you what's missing from the Plan to protect the downtown Burlington I use and love. I know we have to intensify. However, I feel this Plan is not going to give us what we need. I will lay out my reasons for this concern. I'm hoping my speaking here can lead to improvements. My views are shared by so many other people who are not speaking here tonight. Please don't let me and them down.

I am not going to go on about the heights in the various precincts. I believe they are all much too generous. It will destroy the feel of our downtown, and they are unnecessary for us to meet any of our targets. I've said it all before so I am not going to repeat it tonight.

First off, I want to tell you that I read the entire new draft OP. Yes from cover to cover. I would like to thank you for removing the tower from the centre of Village Square and also for removing the Cannery designation from the NE corner of Brant and Lakeshore.

Chapter 1 talks about the desire to achieve a complete community. This is what I want to focus on tonight. These would include all the amenities needed for residents in the downtown to live, work, and play here. It includes parks, recreational facilities, offices, medical services, daycare, seniors gathering areas, youth gathering areas, and a mix of housing, etc. After reading the entire document, and in particular Chapter 3 on Complete Communities, and then comparing it to the buildings that are coming into our downtown, I don't see how the two can be reconciled.

If the future means everyone living in towers, how can we replicate the living experiences of what people currently enjoy in neighbourhoods? We need developers in Burlington to include amenity spaces for basketball courts, tennis courts, road hockey rooms, just like they are doing in Toronto, in the latest towers being built there. They also need to build community garden spaces on the sunny side patios or roofs so residents can grow their own vegetables. We need some creativity about what we are expecting from the developers. We know we are going to get the "smooth jazz" pool, bar, and lounge that every developer includes for their hipster clientele. Challenge **them** to Grow Bold in **their** design. I spent 35 years in the Federal Government dealing with contractors. I know the games they play. They bargain hard for what they were going to give you anyway, just so you feel like you won something, when in fact you lost, because you gave away more than what you would have got if you hadn't blinked first.

In Chapter 2 under Population and Employment Distribution, Table 1 shows a population in 2031 of 193,000 of which we are not far off. It also shows an employment target of 106,000 for which we are

further off. Why are we focusing so much on residential instead of putting in place policies that will attract employment to our downtown? For a Complete Community, how can we get the Daycare centres, the hardware stores, grocery stores, entertainment venues, that we will need to satisfy the activities of the residents? How can we tailor our specifications so that developers will include these spaces in the towers they propose building? Currently, we are lucky to get one floor of office. The condos will come without trying as they are cheap to build.

As an example in the Chapter 3 Policies you only state you will examine opportunities for partnerships to increase the supply of affordable housing. Why not include a standard of one unit for each additional floor of height granted above what the current zoning is that must be provided to the Region as part of the Community Benefits - similar to what you included for public parking and office space.

Also in Chapter 3 Parks and Open Spaces are addressed. It even states an objective of ensuring an adequate and equitable supply are available throughout the city. And yet Lions Park is showing a designation of half St Luke's/Emerald Neighbourhood Precinct and half Downtown Core Precinct. That would mean that the neighbourhood could lose the park and potentially gain 2.5 storey and 17 storey buildings. Why is it not protected under the Downtown Parks and Promenades Precinct?

With all the intensity planned for the Downtown Core Precinct, I am surprised there is still no mention of a new park south of James and north of Lakeshore on the east side of Brant. There will be thousands of people moving into this area. If we are looking for Complete Communities, where is the park for this community? Any family in this area would need to cross a major road to reach an existing park. Are the children to play on the new promenade?

In Chapter 6 on Infrastructure and Transportation, it talked about Active Transport for pedestrians and cyclists with such measures as wide sidewalks and barriers to protect cyclists. These are important in our crowded downtown streets. We can't make the roads narrower to achieve this so we need greater setbacks for the buildings. I didn't see this proposed anywhere.

Chapter 6 also covered Goods Movement. This is critical in our intensified downtown if we want it to function well as we already have problems with most buildings built to their property lines. There are no places for couriers to deliver packages, moving vans to move residents, delivery vans to deliver goods, pick up and drop off places for visitors coming for residents, trades people to make repairs to units, taxis to wait for their fares to arrive. Are they all to double park on the active roadway lanes? These issues must be dealt with clearly and effectively in our Plan and not left to developers to provide these necessities, out of the goodness of their hearts.

In Chapter 7 under Design Excellence I read all the "Shalls" and was left with the impression we don't need to award extra height for much if developers complied with all our design excellence standards. Unless these are only our **wish list** that we get with Section 37. It should be mandatory for buildings to be built to these standards. This is Burlington, folks. Don't sell yourself short by thinking no one will develop here if you ask for too much. They will come and they will build. Just be clear and firm on everything you want. Don't give it away. It is **too** precious.

In Chapter 8 on the Downtown Urban Centre, one of the objectives is to conserve cultural heritage resources and maintain character defining areas. The most significant aspect of our downtown, other than its waterfront and unique shops is the heritage look and eclectic feel of our downtown streets. Yet I don't see this anywhere in the document. Our shop fronts are unique. There are many heritage buildings that are not yet designated. Contrast this with developers who want to create their landmark

glass towers. Mr. Carnicelli referred to Brant Street as dumpy when we were speaking out about losing the character of Brant Street with new development so you can see **they** are not going to protect or recreate this aspect. It is up to city planners and Council to embed this in our OP. We can have new heritage look and feel built with the new construction coming.

In the section on the Downtown Core Precinct it states that one additional storey will be granted for every 150 sq metres of dedicated office floor space and every 8 underground parking spaces dedicated for public use. So if they build 150 metres of office space they get an additional 750 metres of residential. These standards are much too generous for what we get in return. Please make it fairer to the city.

In Chapter 8 you also address downtown parking. It says the city will explore opportunities for public private partnerships to expand the supply of public parking. How about just putting it right in the requirements that X number of parking spaces must be provided for public use in relation to the amount of commercial space they have at ground level. End of discussion.

In the explanation of Community Benefits in Chapter 12 you talk about giving extra height, density, or intensity for providing what should be standard in any development proposed for our downtown. A sustainable building? Come on. It doesn't cost extra to do this stuff any more. It saves money down the road in operations – but then developers don't care about that stuff because they don't operate these Goliaths after they build them. A floor of office – our standards already state some buildings need three uses while others only need two. Make them all three purpose and get something useful for your Section 37 instead.

I'm about out of time, so I hope my thoughts will encourage you to take a bolder stance on what we need to have in our OP to have a better downtown. Please don't rush this through approval. The Region won't be considering it until 2019. **Take** the time to get it **right**. Thank you for listening.

Deedee Davies

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