

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

Re: Proposed Official Plan

Date: February 27, 2018.

I live in Ward 3 and I am here to speak against the approval of the proposed Official Plan. Two weeks ago, I received the OMB Vice-Chair's report that approved the appeal by Adi Corporation to build a 26 storey condo at 374 Martha Street at the corner of Lakeshore Road. If ever there was a proper time to use the phrase "this changes everything", it was that day.

It was a stunning reminder of the Province's power to force us to shape up and face up to the massive intensification of our downtown that comes with the territory of being designated as an Anchor Mobility Hub and Urban Growth Centre.

Our current Official Plan, passed in October 2006 by our Council of seven, with three of our current Councillors there at the time, was supposed to be in compliance with the Growth Plan of the Province. But alas, we learned that it has not been kept compliant over the years since. It is so far out of compliance that it was disregarded in the appeal. Our City team of Council and planning and legal experts did not even submit as evidence our proposed Official Plan wordings for the site that might have resulted in some compromise in height. Instead, OMB Vice-Chair Schiller pointed out that the City had no legal right to stop the 26 storey condo.

I have to ask, what was Council expecting in 2006 when it embraced, on behalf of all citizens, the Urban Growth Centre designation for our downtown? Did they imagine the coming massive re-build of lower Brant Street and its adjacent streets? Did they imagine 20 plus storey buildings at most intersections and the eventual almost complete destruction of the two storey nature of our historic downtown? I simply can't believe that they did.

Yet three Councillors from that long ago Council sit here today and I'd invite them to explain to citizens if this indeed was their plan for our downtown.

It is now quite obvious to me that the Town of Oakville was very prescient in 2005 in their assessment of the loss of control that would come if they accepted a Downtown Urban Growth Centre designation. Their Council rejected it and convinced the Province that the intensification demanded would come elsewhere in their town. If only our Council had done the same.

We the citizens are now being asked to trust this Council and the Planning Department, the ones that couldn't keep our Official Plan compliant, to endorse a new Official Plan that has heights above what we want and that has already been pierced by an approved 23 storey condo across from City Hall and now an approved 26 storey condo right at the lake and in the most southern and eastern point of our Downtown Core Precinct. It was presented by the developer as a Gateway to the Downtown.

Yes indeed, it certainly will be that and much more. It will be a lasting reminder of our hubris. It will be the precedent at the lake, the building to surpass in height by many future buildings. It will represent the low height that Council and the planners promised us by the lake, rising ever higher up Brant Street to the other Mobility Hub that is the Burlington GO Station.

Citizens can only imagine and envision heights of 30 plus storeys going up Brant Street, culminating in not 30 but likely 40 plus storey heights near the GO Station.

We are asked to trust Council and the Planning Department that in approving an Official Plan for all of Burlington, without the three other Mobility Hubs, without a transportation plan and without a transit plan, that they will just get it right on all of these important missing pieces when the time comes to add them. And that the OP rules will be enforceable.

I'm afraid we just can't trust you to do that. Now that the one entity that is really in charge of intensification throughout Burlington, the Province, has spoken and told us that they have control of our Growth Centres, not just in the downtown, but also at our GO Stations, we have no alternative but to try to at least save our downtown from becoming a forest of 20 to 30 storey highrises.

The only way that this can happen is for one of you to introduce a motion to Council to request that the Province consider the 69,000 people and jobs that are planned to be added at the GO Station Mobility Hubs as our ample contribution to the intensification of Burlington as a whole and free our downtown from this crippling intensification that will come from the Urban Growth Centre and Anchor Mobility Hub designations.

You have, in good conscience, no other choice than to take this route. Council got us into this. Now I request Council to get us out.

You simply agree to contact the Province to try to save our downtown by recovering the control of downtown re-development that was surrendered in 2006.

Do not move forward with the Official Plan approval until you add plans for the critical missing parts and have exhausted every possible avenue of request with the Province to remove the downtown from this planned over-development. I think that you can succeed, but at a minimum, you surely must try.

If you fail us in this, downtown citizens must prepare to endure ten to twenty years of construction noise, congestion, dust and dirt as tall buildings rise from foundations deep underground seemingly from every corner on Brant and adjacent streets. And the end result of this over-build will not make us the envy of other cities, will not make our downtown more livable and will not preserve our title as the best mid-size city in Canada.

Remember, from out in the lake a skyline of tall buildings jutting into the air may look good on a postcard, but for the people who actually have to live there, who have to live without rapid transit to the GO Station, with traffic congestion of intensification, without any feel of historic two storey Brant Street and its unique, independent shops, without enough parking for residents, let alone visitors to the downtown, with tall buildings everywhere they look, with wind and shadows everywhere they walk, there will be little pleasure other than looking at the lake from their window if they paid enough money for that view and wondering, was it really worth the view after all and perhaps pondering, what were they thinking when they approved this metropolis of Burlington.

Thank you.