
Burlington City Council Workshop
Identifying the OP re-examination scope and process for moving forward

Meeting Notes for Discussion Items

Date: March 18th, 2019

Location: Burlington City Hall, Council Chambers

Big Picture Aspirations

In terms of hoped for higher-level outcomes of the re-examination of selected facets of the OP, wouldn't it be great if...[What]?

- That reflects the vision of the community for the future of Burlington
- The residents believe that the Official Plan represents their values for the future of the City
- Completed in a timely manner
- Once complete, would like to see the rules maintained. (Other levels of government)
- Economically sustainable community well into the future, where people of all ages and incomes can afford to live here
- If we had an official plan that could withstand multiple challenges at LPAT
- If the Official Plan functionally improved the quality of life for the residents of Burlington. Intensification that works.
- Not only are we built out and have an aging population we require adequate housing to ensure people can continue to live here.
- Celebrate the wonderful things in the adopted OP – focusing on the few areas that need to be changed
- Get across town faster on the bus and in our cars
- We get similar commercial space for existing commercial space.

Issues and Itches

Council ‘top-ups/refinements/points of emphasis’ re: key themes emerging from the advance interviews with Council:

- Employment lands and employment conversions. Business is changing (retail trends). Brick and mortar. Commercial / retail use in employment areas?
- Clarity of expectations of population and employment growth (Province and Region) and what the implications of those expectations are to the discussion.
- Staff direction was modified (and other matters) modified at Council
- Process. If something is in the adopted OP Council must actively take steps to remove it. If an issue is not in the OP there are other processes and opportunities to build in a response to those issues.
- Timing with the Regional Official Plan (Q3, 2020) alignment. Modifications, alignment concerns.
- Hoped to have had the Mobility Hub work complete alongside this review. Mobility Hub track and process.
- Waterfront Hotel property, how will this property relate to the Official Plan. Important piece – explain the connection.

Setting the Context

Questions of fact/clarification:

- Comment: I am not sure how well served we are by thinking of this plan as a 100 year plan. We cannot predict what the world will look like in 100 years. We can plan within the planning horizon – knowing that regular reviews are required. It is important to understand that we are planning for the next 5 years. Action now.
- Plazas – OPA – Speak plain English. Introduce the subject of the 12 storey height at Appleby Village. How do we align and reconcile 12 storey permissions in the Official Plan with 3 storey zoning?
- Ears perked up about future proofing the Official Plan. Where did we do that? Examples provided by Rosa. How does it impact our OP. How did we come to that?
- Point of clarification – no range of heights inclusive of community benefits. 4 storey up to 8 (Downtown Core). You’ve brought that into other policies.
- Height limit is a height limit. We do not control what comes in the door.
- We talk a lot about height – density. How many people and units are too much. Expectations of the public. Appearances are one thing traffic is another. Marry the two concepts.
- Timelines: Regional OP/MCR – Q3-2020 – Mobility Hubs are the second story line.
- Downtown and the mobility hub. Concerned when we are building new building in former commercial areas – at grade space is different (potentially less) and the shape of the space. Concern about pushing out smaller tenants. Could we ask for space for space?
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Presenting a Critical Path: Recommendations for Moving Forward

Councillor questions/comments:

- Issues of conformity identified by the Region
- Rules changing issue: Existing Official Plan; currently working to modify the adopted Official Plan. My understanding is that there is only a small window of opportunity. Do this together? It is important to get this done now. We always seem to be a little bit behind.
- Fully understand focus for next year. Concerned about the vague nature of reference to the Housing Strategy and the Integrated Mobility Plan (mid 2019- with timelines – informed by ICB study).

Gauging Expectations for the OP Re-Examination

What do we want the OP re-examination to **Do** — what are the issues, themes, topics, opportunities and outstanding questions that need to be addressed in the scope of work?

- Keep in mind our residents and to not make it costly down the road (what services do we need to provide to keep up with growth) fairness, environmental responsibility. We do not want it to cost us in 30 or 40 years - sustainable. Mindful of residents needs and expectations. Asset management perspective
- Captured input in the original slides (Presentation)
- Bring back some of the motions on the OP from the last term of Council (Clerk to include). Height is density – more traffic more parking, more users and it relates to streetscape feel on the ground and these things are increasingly important. Taxpayers are subsidizing parking not being built. Visitor – extra car as a monthly permit in the municipal lot- impacts customer access to parking.
 - Height and density in certain sites/precincts.
- Commercial space issues in the downtown. Noted with interest – Waterfront Hotel planning study options, requires discussion. It is a big hole in our study. Schedule D highlights this prominent location. Might be too important to miss.
- Concerned with language and how we protect the rural area through the Official Plan. Self sustaining development in the rural area (opportunities for clear language).
- Commercial space issues – a number of plazas replaced and renewed. Perhaps a minimum percentage of commercial returns. People miss the complement of services that do not return after redevelopment.
- Language around Brownfield and Heritage. In the past year there have been examples of innovative policies in other municipalities.
- Urban Growth Centre designation – does it fit there or should it be at the Burlington GO?
- Mobility Hub – considering through ICB
- Growth Targets – looking at the City describing what we want. Proactive about where we want to see the accommodation of growth. We need to have a conversation about what more growth can or should it take?
- MTSA's discussion from the Province that they can change the designation. What does delineate mean? 500 -800 m around the

station. It is a circumference ? a line? Some opportunities for clarification.

- Good public engagement process.
- Interest/ concern related to the Neighbourhood Centre – fairly substantial increase. Check back in to see if the community has any further ideas.

What are the **Restrictions** — what must the OP re-examination not do?

- Province – MMAH -has asked municipalities to hold off on significant changes. (TC) Region has discussed with the Province we are learning that it is a caution rather than a direction. (HM) Region will continue their work. Changes will/may arise but work should move forward – adjust. Work will continue.
- OP re-examination starts from the adopted OP – not the existing OP.
- Must not go against the Regional Official Plan – avoid future conformity issue.
- Definitely one year. Could it be condensed? Community is tuned up and prepared. A full consultation will be possible in a short period of time. A lot – but fast. Would there be a benefit in doing it more quickly? Sooner is better. (TC) workplan resourcing, target dates, milestones, find the time to consider at Council.
- Must be done within the year. Fairest way to move forward for all of us. Province right down to the residents. We can accomplish a lot together.
- Given the narrow scope the hope would be that the Mobility Hub, OLR, Waterfront Hotel done – avoid fragmentation. Having said that recognize the changes that have occurred over the last little while. Less than a year.

What are we willing to **Invest** (time, resources, expertise, etc.) to facilitate a positive OP re-examination outcome?

- Money, expertise, time
- Bring in outside resources and help
 - As part of this – examine what types of studies that would be required to achieve.
 - Growth framework/ growth analysis. Settle this issue – to ensure defensibility.
- Level of expectations – know where we are going, what is acceptable

What **Values** (and/or principles) must we embrace as part of the process?

- Built out with an aging population. Mindful of long term impacts of decisions today.
- Public engagement – but more than that – Public satisfaction. It must be their plan. See that it reflects their vision for the community.
- Transparency
- Accountability
- Defensible and in conformity
- Communication – being as creative as we can possibly be. Many modes have been delivered. Look to other communities – people receive information in many different ways. Fewest number of people disconnected from process. Accessibility to communication. Concerned that it will seem too downtown focused – this is a Burlington issue for discussion.
- Education – if we can educate about why the City needs to grow. We all have a role in meeting the need to accommodate growth. It could work for everybody.
- Clarity – people need to understand what they are going to get from and in their city in the mid – term. Why we are going there. The need for public satisfaction must be married with defensibility and it can be hard. Combination of education, communication and listening. Important.
- Being specific. We are reviewing the downtown and this . Clarity about specific questions that will be asked. We must move away from the vague general language.

What are the **Essential Outcomes** — those few things that are absolute ‘must haves’ for you to consider the OP re-examination a success?

- Must pass and must be accepted by the Region
- Unique – ensure that we end up with a plan very specific to our community.
- Timelines essential completion
- Protecting the character of the Downtown.
- Change some of the height and density provisions in the OP (lower) to strengthen brownfield and heritage matters where possible.

Questions and Clarifications

- (HM) Heritage and Brownfield policies to be considered at the review of the downtown? Brownfield could have broader implications. Heritage is narrow to the Downtown.
- (LS) Clarity of policy in the rural area – or was it modifications? Main concern is around the language. Concerns about what we might be anticipating from a language perspective.
- Can we contain it to the Downtown? Ability to resource and achieve needs consideration. Comfortable that we can advise. Report and recommendation.
- Retail plazas – outside the downtown. Broaden to include Neighbourhood Centre policies.
- (TC) need a better sense of public engagement scope. Keep council informed – concern to keep focus.
- Waterfront Hotel – Master planning exercise and a separate process. History. What is the go- forward plan for this site?

Preliminary Discussion on Engagement: *Who, Why and on What?*

Whom do we need to engage in the re-examination process — and to what end (that is, on which facets/topics of the OP)?

- How do we actually get an effective public engagement process? What kind of technology is out there to improve our engagement process? Not facebook. Machine learning, AI can be done in a way to connect with a large part of the population
- Website can be utilized more effectively (landing page)
- Maybe we should move the conversation out of City Hall – different moderators. Understand the issues and draw the people we need to hear. Don't do the same old.
- Feedback that electronic notices are not effective. Can we coordinate with City-talk. Ward specific town halls and an agenda outlined to everyone. That would augment the e- communication in an important way.
- How we communicate. Different parts of the community are at a different state of understanding. Glean intelligence about where the community is “at”
- Go out to the people. Facebook live, telephone town hall – expensive but money well spent. People found the budget TTH very effective. Mailouts for sure. This might be crazy – knock on doors. What if...could we have an army of volunteers knocking on doors. This conversation is happening. Here is how you can get involved. Nothing that replaces the door to door connection.
- Key is to not ask people to come to us all of the time. Catch people who are not normally in the Council Chambers. Social media, facebook, challenge is reaching younger adults. Powerful communication tool – through advertising. In their car or on the bus. How do we reach them on our streets. You have to catch them more than once. Serve as a reminder and supported by direct mailing or a quick check on facebook
- Seniors are easier to engage with, than the busy families, young people. Discipline of asking questions. Statistically significant surveys. Agree – properly trained surveyor –door to door would work. Six years work. Ensure clarity of communication. What represents good communication and good questions.

- All of the above. Given time, we will have to be efficient. Mailout is effective. Backed up properly with social media. A little bit of everything in a timely manner.
- Knocking on the door – difficult. Election was the door to door. Reflected in the current request to make these changes.
- Engaging Citizen’s Advisory Committees – BIAs , Economic Development Corporation

Who?	What Topics?
• Chamber of Commerce	•
• BIA, sports groups, large audiences	•
•	•
•	•

Are we talking to everybody about everything?

- Area specific issues. Residents have an investment in the downtown – at the end of the day each ward may be focused differently
- Avoid anecdotal interpretations – well informed - clearly groups organized already with the City. Generalized sampling. Carefully created questions developed around what information we must have. We need to have professionals in survey research involved.
- Seeking opinion from everyone? Responsibility to educate – process, question.
- Don’t need to talk about everything. We did that already. Need to be ready to respond about everything. We got the views of the public about the OP. Largely the things we are trying to address. Come to them with our process. (adopted OP general)
- Concerns around the downtown everywhere. Do not dismiss the feedback we do hear because it isn’t given to us by 185,000 people. Statistically significant survey challenges (ex. Land line) However, with all of those caveats we need to deeply consider what it is that they are telling us. When you start to hear suggestions. Want a richness – whether one person or 1000s if it is a good idea it should be in the OP.
- Definition of a “storey” (move above)
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Any early ideas for potential outreach/engagement approaches?

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Looking Ahead and Open Forum

What's next?

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Additional participant comments/observations

- Do not lose sight of other studies (Housing Strategy etc.) – keep them close in the timeline. Could we collectively come up a priority list to ensure that we move forward on important studies.
 - If we can go out to the public with a broad timeline and how everything syncs together. It is a concern and there may be some angst in the community. Explain the reason for the timelines. Reasons how everything fits together.
 - Employment lands – is there a limit to the number of uses in terms of specific businesses. Ex. Could there be employment land that could have three places of worship or three storage units.
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- One team moving forward. Leadership of Council