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January 13, 2020

Dear MPP McKenna,

Thank you for your interest in the Official Plan Review matters detailed in my January 2020 newsletter. We're honoured to count you among our readers and subscribers!

We're gratified that you have found the information useful, as have so many of our residents, and that the newsletter has prompted further dialogue about issues in our city, which is one of its purposes.

Please allow me to take the opportunity afforded by your correspondence to summarize the journey we have been on, where we are at, and next steps in the process of reviewing our Official Plan and vision for downtown.

Our current Official Plan was created in 1997 and has been updated more than 100 times since. Our current plan has enabled the city to be recognized as the Best Community in Canada, and the Best Community to Raise A Family, as well as achieve - 12 years early - our city-wide population of 185,000 by 2031. We are also well on our way to surpassing our population and growth densities for the downtown of 200 people or jobs by 2031.

Nevertheless, in 2016, the previous council chose to develop a new Official Plan rather than continue to update the existing one. That led to the 2018 Adopted Official Plan, which the current city council is in the process of revising to better respond to the community's vision for our city, particularly downtown.

To support the review of both the current and the Adopted Official Plan, council initiated two studies in early 2019: the Scoped Re-examination of the Adopted Official Plan related to the downtown policies, and an Interim Control Bylaw to conduct a land use study to consider the role and function of the downtown bus terminal and the Burlington GO station on Fairview Street as Major Transit Station Areas, and as well to examine the planning structure, land mix and intensity for the lands identified in the study area.

That work kicked off last February, and the one-year Interim Control By-law expires March 5th of this year.

Given the MTSA and UGC currently exist in Regional and Provincial policy, and did so at the time we began our review, our work to update our Official Plan was required to conform to the existing designations.

Council and the community are keen to discuss the appropriateness of the designations. As a result, last year, council also directed staff to, at the conclusion of our studies, review the designations for the MTSA and UGC downtown.

The ICBL land use study has just been completed, with the report released to council and the community in late December 2019. Discussion of this matter is happening at committee on January 14, 2020. The scoped re-examination of the Adopted Official Plan policies is expected to be completed and considered by council in April 2020. After completion of both studies, staff will report to council in May 2020 on any proposed changes to the Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area designations applicable to Burlington's downtown and the Burlington GO that could be recommended as a result of any proposed Official Plan and Zoning By-law amendments arising out of the studies.

Over the past year, the City has consulted with the Region on the status and process steps related to the ICBL land use study and the scoped re-examination of the Adopted Official Plan policies. The City will continue to work closely with the Region of Halton and the Province on any further changes that might be proposed regarding the Urban Growth Centre and Major Transit Station Area designations as the result of the report directed to be brought forward to Council following completion of the studies. It is expected that the process to seek any changes to provincial legislation will be complex. While a formal request to the Province would ultimately be required, there would be several steps that would first need to be completed including reporting back to City and Regional Council for required approvals.

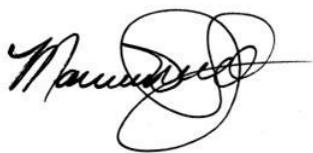
The sequencing of steps is to ensure that our discussion on all planning matters, including these designations, is grounded in good planning analysis, policy and principle. This will be particularly important should the City ultimately seek any amendments to the provincial Growth Plan.

We believe the analysis provided by both studies will be immensely helpful to the Province, Region and City of Burlington as we move into the next step of discussions together about the MTSA/UGC designations downtown.

We welcome and will need your involvement and assistance in this next step and appreciate the offer in your letter to work with myself, the city manager and council on these matters.

I look forward to the next step in this journey and am grateful for your continued assistance in these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Marianne Meed Ward', with a stylized, looping flourish at the end.

Mayor Marianne Meed Ward
City of Burlington