

Good evening, Mr. Chair, Mayor, Members of Council and Staff

I would like to refer to Page 12 of the report by SGL and specifically to:-

3.3 What is the Vision for the Downtown?

The public's vision for the Downtown is to provide for a walkable, accessible, vibrant downtown which is similar to that set out in Section 8.1.1 of the Adopted Official Plan.

However, the public's vision also stresses the need to maintain and add new green spaces and trees, while providing additional space for year-round activities and festivals. The character of Brant Street as the 'retail main street' of Burlington with its eclectic mix of shops, meeting places and culture will be supported and enhanced.

Lakeshore Road as the gateway to the waterfront will be maintained as an important pedestrian precinct to ensure the Downtown's sense of place is preserved.

I noted the words “walkable”, “accessible” “additional space for year-round activities and festivals” are used.

I also noted the use of the following description “Lakeshore Road as the gateway to the waterfront will be maintained as an important pedestrian precinct to ensure the Downtown's sense of place is preserved”.

Yes, the Lakeshore and Brant Main precincts should be both walkable and accessible. However I question the concept the Lakeshore precinct is currently a pedestrian precinct. It should be for sure. But it is far from that status currently.

I refer you to Page 36 of the consultant's report where it states:-

Recently completed projects and those under construction such as Bridgewater and Saxony total an additional 335 units plus commercial and office space, which results in a further 2,068 persons and jobs. That's a ratio of 6.17 people per unit.

Those projects that are approved but not yet built total an additional 732 units plus commercial space, which equals a further 1,225 people and jobs. That's a ratio of 1.67 people per unit.

I don't know why the ratios are so different.

Referring to the chart on Page 36 of the consultant's report it shows for just the combined Lakeshore & Brant Main precincts between 1,350 units for concept 1 and 1,160 units for concept 2 should be anticipated.

At an average occupancy of 1.50 people per unit (my number) generates between 2,025 and 1,740 additional residents.

Then as per the same chart an additional jobs of between 495 and 610 for concepts 1 and 2 respectively will be created.

That's a total of 2,520 and 2,350 additional people anticipated in the two precincts.

Those figures do not contemplate the increased congestion arising out of attracting people and traffic that the invigorated downtown will draw.

So my question is:-

How are we going to cope with all these additional people?

My intent tonight is not to pass judgement on Concept 1 or Concept 2.

To be honest whether it is decided to go for either of the two offered concepts, or another hybrid version, or another version altogether that results from the City being forced by outside forces to accept the tall buildings we are all fighting to prevent; we seem to be concentrating in isolation

concerning ourselves as to what the “built form” will look like. How pretty will it be?

We do not seem to be giving what I believe should be simultaneous serious consideration as to how the City will deal with the issues that result from the reinvigoration of the downtown; issues such as traffic, parking, transit and other infrastructure.

These go hand in hand and must be developed simultaneously. Look at Toronto’s experience. It built and built and built, offices and condos and subdivisions, and totally ignored traffic, parking, transit and other infrastructure issues. All those items are now real headaches.

I have put forward to you all at a previous Planning and Development Committee meeting a suggestion that the City needs to be radical in its thoughts and approach to the future of the Downtown. These concepts offered by SGL are, in my view, just tinkering.

Going off at a bit of a tangent, I would like to touch upon some things that have been said by earlier delegates. Mr Bales of Carriage House has as a part of his delegation submitted a letter to Council whinging and whining that the City has not provided his company with background research it has developed through this long study process. He infers the development community is being excluded from the City's engagement process and so cannot support the City's decision, whatever that might be. I find Mr Bales to be completely ingenuous. He and his company have

provided presentations on its proposed downtown high rise developments at Lakeshore and Pearl, and between Lakeshore and Old Lakeshore. These proposals completely ignore not only the in-force zoning bylaws but also the very clearly articulated wishes of residents not to have 20+ story buildings forming a canyon along either Lakeshore Rd. or Brant St. At those presentations he talks about bring benefits to Burlington through these high rises, but will never address the problems that will result.

A number of earlier delegates have expressed the position that residents do not want to see change in the downtown area. No one likes change. But change has to come. The downtown needs changing. It is only “ticking over” it is not “really revving it up”. I believe residents are only seeing a discussion taking place about the height of new buildings.

There is no vision being offered as to what the downtown will look like. Give people a clear vision of how everything will look after the change and I believe buy in will come.

Which brings me to my previously suggested vision of the Downtown and Lakeshore precincts.

Let's make the Downtown and Lakeshore Precincts totally pedestrianized.

That's Lakeshore to Caroline and Martha to Locust.

Obviously certain vehicular access must be allowed for residents, businesses as well as transit.

The City should offer low cost bus transit between the downtown and Mapleview Mall, Burlington Centre, the Fairview & Appleby GO stations, where free parking would be available.

This will link Spencer Smith to Brant St, push transient commuter traffic back on to the QEW, where it becomes the Provinces problem (as it should be). It will reinvigorate the downtown.

Now I don't wish to dwell on a sad event, but did anyone notice when watching news video of the knife attack that occurred in The Hague, Netherlands a week ago, that it happened right outside a Hudson Bay store, which is located in, yes you have guessed it, a pedestrian precinct.

I Googled “European Cities with pedestrian precincts” and got a list that included Vienna, Copenhagen, Prague, Zagreb, Cologne, Amsterdam, The Hague, Cambridge, Canterbury, York.

If these more populated Cities can make it work, then so can Burlington

As said earlier a pedestrian precinct in the Brant Main and Lakeshore precincts would bring the downtown and Spencer Smith Park together, it would allow for green spaces to be created and I am convinced reinvigorate our downtown.

Thank you.