

Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee Meeting Delegation – September 16th, 2020

RE - Taking a Closer Look at the Downtown: recommended modifications to the adopted Official Plan (PL-16-20)

Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee Members participating in this delegation:

Mark Mikkelsen-McGuire, Nick Morrison, Julia Ricottone, Darcy Oberding, Karl Wulf, Sille N Mikkelsen, Michael Zoratti, Christa Papavasillou, Zahan Khursigara, Catherine Oberding, Katherine Krolicki.

Executive Summary

Overall, the Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee supports the official plan for downtown. With that in mind, our position is that there needs to be a greater focus on increased access to green space, alternative parking options (underground parking with parks on top) and cycling infrastructure.

We think there needs to be increased space for patios on Brant Street instead of on-street parking. The extended outdoor patios have proven effective during the COVID-19 pandemic and enhance the community.

Increase the size of the sidewalks to promote walkability.

In the plan it says bike-able vs. cycling can we confirm this? We would like to see a tracker which would show the bike traffic on the streets downtown to know the numbers. Ex. you can't plant a tree you can't see (not sure on the exact quote said).

We want to improve the safety of both drivers and cyclists and see a protected barrier to increase safety. Increase the number of bike racks downtown. This could be built in the future by commercial users.

No more single-family neighbourhoods – more so limit the redevelopment of small homes into massive single homes. Would be better as multi-unit areas.

Keep village square small and low level. A unique area for small retail and restaurants.

John St, Lower Brant, lakeshore - Podiums can be higher, we are ok with more height when designed well. Building design, not just height, at the street level is important to ensure a pleasant pedestrian experience. In Mixed-use buildings, higher podiums can accommodate retail space on the ground floor and offer more square footage for office space on the 2nd or 3rd floors.

Connect the Rambo creek – to walkway/promenade to lakeshore – walking promenade connecting Spencer Smith connecting to Old lakeshore.

Delegation in Full

(3-minute read)

To Burlington's Mayor, Council, and Staff,

Overall, the Burlington Mayor's Millennial Advisory Committee supports the official plan and believes there is still room for improvement. Areas of improvement include the design of Brant Street, future mobility plans, and zoned densities. Our main focus on the downtown plan is that there needs to be a greater focus on increased access to green space, alternative parking options (underground parking with parks on top) and cycling infrastructure.

The design of Brant Street as a market-main street can be further enhanced by providing increased space for patios and pedestrians instead of maintaining existing on-street parking. This has proven effective during the pandemic, showing that it is a great way to bring about a sense of community, and enhance the right of way.

In addition to Brant street, we believe that an increase in sidewalk width should be applied throughout the downtown, which improves the walkability of the area while also decreasing the impression of mid to low-rise buildings on streets.

Further speaking to how people move about downtown, we want to ensure that the needs of those who use the bicycle as their form of transportation are adequately accommodated along the entirety of their journey. Requiring sufficient bicycle parking to be included in future developments will aid the city in reaching its goal of increased active transportation use by giving people safe areas to park their bicycles.

The committee is interested in the plans for a trail along Rambo creek, and believe a promenade connecting Spencer Smith Park to Old Lakeshore would serve to increase the attractiveness of the area and provide more space for people to spend time with their friends and loved ones.

The committee will do their part in providing input to the downtown urban design guidelines as they undergo public consultation to address cycling, walking, and other issues that are outside the scope of this document, but would like to emphasize the need for safe cycling infrastructure in the downtown to increase the safety and comfort of all road users.

Regarding the zoned densities we would like to keep the village square small and low level. We see it as a unique area for small retail and restaurants, adding to the charm of downtown, and would love to see more areas like it.

When considering the zoned densities on John Street, Lakeshore, and Lower Brant, we believe that it is possible to increase the maximum podium height to three floors. Higher podiums can accommodate retail space on the ground floor, and offer more square footage for office space on the second or third floors. Though height can be a factor, building design at the street level is important to ensure a pleasant pedestrian experience and can rationalize adding a third level to the podium.

The committee also fears that the maintenance of single detached residential zones may lead to the redevelopment of small homes into massive single homes, which will only harm our ability to meet our continuously evolving density targets. Allowing the development of low-rise missing-middle housing (this being buildings that can hold between two and four families) in these neighbourhoods can enhance the neighbourhood character while also accommodating population increases when necessary.

One thing that jumped out to the committee was a language change in the document. Originally the document said “bikeable” but it was changed to “cyclable”. Throughout this delegation, we have used the term cyclist to refer to people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds that use a bicycle as a form of transportation. We ask that staff confirm that this definition is the same as the intended definition in the downtown master plan, and does not focus solely on those who cycle for sport.

Can an explanation be provided for the reason for the language change from “cyclable” to “bikeable”?

- To some, cycling refers to those who cycle solely for sport and can be seen riding in groups on the road
- Cycling facilities should welcome people of all backgrounds and ages, if possible we would like written clarification
- At the end of the day, the cycle implies a bicycle, while the bike could be misinterpreted as a motorbike.

Another question for staff is regarding Village Square. With the plan proposed to the council, will it be possible to develop another area similar to it?

In conclusion, the Burlington Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Committee is happy to see some of the changes made to the plan and believe that an increased focus on green space, alternative parking options, and cycling can help make our marvellous downtown even more beautiful.

Mayor’s Millennial Advisory Committee Members participating in this delegation discussion on 16 September 2020:

Co-Chairs Mark Mikkelsen-McGuire, and Karl Wulf

Committee Members Nick Morrison, Julia Ricottone, Darcy Oberding, Sille N Mikkelsen, Michael Zoratti, Christa Papavasillou, Zahan Khursigara, Catherine Oberding, Katherine Krolicki.