



Comments Regarding the Application for Amendment to the Official Plan from Neighbourhood Commercial to High Density Residential – 4880 Valera

July 13, 2015

Overall Recommendation: Conditional Approval upon developer adequately addressing the aspects of the proposed built form and neighbourhood design outlined under the Sustainable Development Committee Objectives.

Preamble

The committee has reviewed the Application and materials submitted by Wellings Planning Consultant Inc. on behalf of Emery Homes for its proposed Official Plan amendment from Neighbourhood Commercial to High Density Residential. Although the concept (outlined in Appendix 3) of the development has not been finalized, the proposed densities between 51 and 185 units per net hectare would permit the proposed concept but would also permit most forms of townhouse development, multi-plexes and apartments (of a maximum height of ten stories). The development site is located within the Alton community and is bound by Appleby Line (East), Thomas Alton Blvd (North), Valera Road (West) and a hydro corridor (South).

Recommendations

The Committee would like the developer to address the below mentioned aspects (under Sustainable Development Committee Objectives) of the proposed built form and neighbourhood design in forthcoming submissions. The Committee appreciates the opportunity to provide further review and comments on subsequent submissions.

Please note that our comments will continue to be assessed based on the SDC Principles and Objectives (see Appendix), as well as other relevant sustainable development guidelines, such as:

- LEED Canada for New Construction and Major Renovations
- LEED v4 for Neighbourhood Development
- Burlington's Official Plan
- Burlington's Urban Design Guidelines
- Burlington's Community Energy Plan
- Other relevant City, Regional, Provincial and Federal guidelines and plans

As such, we encourage the developer to consult such guidelines as they move forward with site design.

Sustainable Development Committee Objectives

Members of the Sustainable Development Committee (SDC) have provided a review of the abovementioned proposal based on the SDC Objectives that apply to the proposed development. The definitions of all of the SDC Objectives of Sustainable Development are listed in the Appendix.

Full Public Participation in Development Decisions

The committee appreciates that the applicant is seeking public input to determine the support for re-designation from Neighbourhood Commercial to High Density Residential. We encourage the applicant to incorporate ideas from the public in their upcoming site designs.

Balanced Development

Although the Committee generally supports, in principle, the shift from Neighbourhood Commercial to High Density Residential, we stress that the resulting development must provide adequate green space and public space to maintain and enhance the sense of community for current and future residents of the proposed and existing neighbourhood. Furthermore, the height of a possible apartment building are consistent within existing zoning allowances for surrounding vacant lands; however, if an apartment building is proposed, a shadow study should be undertaken and appropriate measures to mitigate shadowing should be implemented.

Integration of Natural features and Green Space

Future submissions will be reviewed to ensure adequate green space is provided.

Reforestation of the City

In future submissions, the SDC will review the development proposal in terms of space allocated for vegetation on both public and private property. We encourage the use of native, non-invasive plantings that can contribute to the natural vegetation across the urban landscape. If designed effectively, such vegetation can help support sustainable ecosystems as well as promote cohesiveness between the established residential neighbourhood landscape and the proposed high density residential development.

Efficient Urban Design

It is the opinion of the Committee that High Density Residential use on the subject property supports efficient land use, particularly considering the quantity of commercial uses adjacent to the subject property. We question, however, where additional commercial service will be recuperated as a result of the Official Plan amendment. Based on a review of the City of Burlington briefing note, titled *Council Workshop on the Commercial Strategy Study*, dated July 2014, it is our understanding that Burlington generally has adequate commercial land. It is important to ensure that land available to accommodate projected commercial growth will be maintained subsequent to the proposed amendment from Neighbourhood Commercial to High Density Residential.

Accessible Community Development

Based on a review of the Planning Justification Report, it is the opinion of the Committee that adequate commercial services and retail businesses currently exist within the Neighbourhood Commercial area in the vicinity of the subject property. Although it appears that the day to day needs of Alton community members can be met within a short walking distance, we note that local residents who attended the public meeting for the proposed amendment emphasized that the poor street network and busy intersection

reduced the walkability of the neighbourhood. Walkability is a key component to accessible and sustainable neighbourhood design, and the SDC would not support the forthcoming development application if walkability could not be achieved. As such, we recommend that the proposed development be designed to improve walkability and neighbourhood cohesiveness. Given that a Hydro right-of-way separates the subject property from the adjacent commercial complex (i.e. Walmart complex); we recommend exploring the opportunity for at least one formal pedestrian and cycling trail to be provided through the Hydro corridor as an accessible connection between the existing and proposed residences and commercial area. The trail should be well-maintained throughout all seasons; should provide adequate lighting for travel at night; and should provide surfaced ground (such as permeable pavement) to allow for easy travel in all weather conditions by citizens using vehicles such as bikes, strollers and wheelchairs.

Balanced Transportation System

The property is currently serviced by three bus routes, is located adjacent to Dundas Street (Highway 5), and is approximately three kilometers north of Burlington's Uptown Mixed-use Centre, located at Appleby Line and Upper Middle Road. The committee notes that the site traffic management report will need to consider the future Dundas BRT creation and the potential widening of Appleby Line, along with the resulting impact to the anticipated traffic. Although it is expected that the use of public transit in the area will increase over time, the Committee cautions that a 10% peak public transit usage, as indicated in the Traffic Impact Study, may be an overestimate of the likely transit use when the site is first developed. The methodology as to how this estimate was obtained is unclear, and as such we recommend further analysis. Please note that additional comments pertaining to pedestrian and cycling amenities are provided in our comments under Accessible Community Development.

Energy Conservation

Upon receiving drawings for site plan design, the Committee will provide comments related to energy conservation. We encourage the applicant to meet the standards of LEED in their site design. The committee would be pleased to provide detailed recommendations to the applicant in this regard.

Responsible Use of Natural Resources

As with comments pertaining to energy conservation, the Committee will assess the proposed development works to promote limited use of natural resources during construction, as well as reduced reliance on natural resources for the ongoing functioning of the proposed buildings.

Respectfully Submitted,

Guy Sheppard
Chair, Planning and Development Subcommittee
Sustainable Development Committee

Appendix

Burlington Sustainable Development Committee – Sustainable Development Objectives

Protection of Natural Resources: Preserve and extend accessible green spaces, shorelines, natural water courses and the Niagara Escarpment for future generations.

Reforestation of the City: Promote the replanting and management of vegetation on private and public property within the city.

Full Public Participation in Development Decisions: Allow the public to be part of all planning decisions. Economic, environmental and social impacts of proposed developments should be considered.

Actively Promote Sustainable Development: Advocate changes at the senior levels of government, as well as in the city, in order to evolve towards sustainability.

Make the Best Use of Land: Land-use decisions based upon an ecosystem approach to ensure environmental integrity and diversity. To include, but not be limited to, promoting environmentally sensitive lands and using fertile soil for agriculture throughout the municipality.

Protection and Enhancement of Natural Features: Protect and enhance Burlington's natural features by ensuring that the physical features of shorelines, agriculture lands, flood plains, forestry tracts and notable landmarks such as the Niagara Escarpment are preserved for future generations.

Natural Storm Water Management: Protect water courses in their natural state and for those water courses that have been significantly altered, restoration to a more natural state will be encouraged as opportunities arise.

Balanced Development: Provide a community plan and an economic strategy aimed at creating sustainable and appropriate forms of development that reflect human scale and a sense of community as well as representing a balance between urban development and natural surroundings.

Efficient Urban Design: Increase the efficiency of land use in the urban community in terms of energy and time; promote intensification and diversification policies rather than policies that generate urban sprawl.

Minimal Discharge of Toxic Pesticides and Other Toxic Chemicals: Promote the elimination of private and public use of toxic pesticides and other chemicals that have negative effects on the environment, particularly those known to be persistent.

Accessible Community Development: Form a new type of community development which includes readily available local community components such as commerce, shopping, employment, education and recreation within walking distance of all residences.

Responsible Use of Natural Resources: Encourage conservation of natural resources; the city should work towards ensuring that users are charged for the full local costs of their individual use of water, electricity and sanitary sewers. There should also be educational programs to encourage conservation of natural resources.

Integration of Natural Features and Green Space: Integrate natural features and green space in all new developments and intensification projects.

Energy Conservation: Promote energy conservation through efficient land use planning and building design.

Ecosystem Auditing: City of Burlington should prepare an objective ecosystem audit of the entire municipality at regular intervals.

Balanced Transportation System: Develop a balanced transportation system including transit, pedestrian, and cycling amenities and best use of the road system for movement of goods and people, with the existing facilities used to their fullest capacity.

Evaluation of Development: Continuous monitoring and evaluation of development should take place to ensure that it does not have adverse impacts on the city's finances and the environment.