



SUBJECT: Waterfront Hotel Planning Study

TO: Community Planning, Regulation & Mobility Cttee.

FROM: Community Planning Department

Report Number: PL-28-22

Wards Affected: 2

File Numbers: 560-01

Date to Committee: April 5, 2022

Date to Council: April 12, 2022

Recommendation:

Receive the “Waterfront Hotel Planning Study Planning Justification Report” dated March 23, 2022, prepared by The Planning Partnership Limited, attached as Appendix “A” to community planning department report PL-28-22; and

Endorse in principle the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study, the recommended Preferred Concept Plan, site-specific draft Official Plan policies, directions for a future Zoning By-law amendment and site-specific Urban Design Guidelines as detailed in Appendix “A” to community planning department report PL-28-22; and

Consider the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study findings in Council’s consideration of the site-specific development applications for 2020 Lakeshore Road.

PURPOSE:

This report presents the findings of the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study (the “Study”) and recommends Council’s endorsement, in principle, of the preferred concept plan, site-specific draft Official Plan policies and site-specific urban design guidelines for 2020 Lakeshore Road (the “Subject Site”).

Vision to Focus Alignment:

- Increase economic prosperity and community responsive city growth
- Improve integrated city mobility
- Support sustainable infrastructure and a resilient environment
- Building more citizen engagement, community health and culture

Background and Discussion:

1.0 Background

The Study was undertaken to provide a land use and urban design framework to inform site-specific policies to guide a future redevelopment of the Subject Site. Figure 1 shows the location of the Subject Site and defines the surrounding Study Area.



Figure 1: Subject Site and Study Area

The City retained The Planning Partnership Limited to undertake the Study, which began in early 2017.

In November 2017, an update on the status and progress of the study was presented to Council at the Planning and Development Committee Meeting ([PB-67-17](#)).

As a result of additional community and stakeholder input in early 2018, staff report [PB-23-18](#) was brought to the Planning and Development Committee in June 2018. At that time, Council endorsed a set of key policy directions to advance the development of a final development concept for the Subject Site.

Subsequently, the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study was placed on hold due to other various priorities in the Community Planning Department such as the new Official Plan process.

With the re-examination of the downtown policies (Taking a Closer Look at the Downtown) completed, the new Official Plan approved, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing's approval, with modifications, of the Regional Official Plan Amendment (ROPA) 48, the Study resumed in late 2021.

On January 11, 2022, staff report [PL-15-22](#) was brought to the Community Planning, Regulation and Mobility Committee to inform Council that the Study was resuming where it left off in 2018 with an anticipated timeline to completion of 16-17 weeks. At this meeting, the Committee passed the following motion regarding the resumption of the study:

Direct the Director of Community Planning to complete the Waterfront Hotel Study within the statutory time frame of processing the pending application related to the Waterfront Hotel (2020 Lakeshore Road) so as to inform the review of any development proposal on this site in accordance with the policies of the Official Plan.

This report responds to the above staff direction (SD-01-22).

2.0 Discussion

In line with the project Terms of Reference (Appendix "C" of this report), the Study provides recommendations for a preferred concept plan for the Subject Site along with recommendations for implementation of the preferred concept including a draft Official Plan Amendment, direction for a future Zoning By-Law Amendment and site-specific Urban Design Guidelines.

An overview of the Study findings is summarized below:

- The recommended preferred concept (2022):
 - has regard for matters of Provincial Interest, policy and legislation and has been designed with consideration for the intent of the applicable Regional and Local Municipal policies and guidelines;
 - reflects overall alignment with City's in-force Official Plan (1997), the new Official Plan (2020), ROPA 48 and emerging context within the Study Area;
 - delivers a vibrant mix of uses that will reinforce and support the continuing evolution of the Downtown;
 - provides for a compact built form that is transit supportive, provides for a range of housing, supports intensification and provides for a range of uses
 - enhances the streetscape along Lakeshore Road unified with a common language of materials and design elements;
 - provides for public view corridors down Brant and John Streets to Lake Ontario;

- provides for on-site parkland dedication to enhance public access to Spencer Smith Park and build upon an important landmark through high quality open space;
- Proposed urban design guidelines will provide site-specific guidance related to the conditions and context of the site to implement the Vision and Principles established through the consultation process and subsequently endorsed in principle by Council in early 2018;
- An Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to the in-force OP is required to implement the findings of this Study, and include site specific directions related to matters such as massing and scale, transportation and public open spaces; and,
- A Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) will be required to implement the OPA. The Study recommends that a rezoning process take place in the future to consider the Preferred Concept (2022) and would also be supported by detailed technical studies.

The following sections of this report summarizes the recommended preferred concept and implementation tools.

2.1 Final Report – Recommended Preferred Concept

The recommended preferred concept is based on the inputs and work completed in 2017 and 2018, feedback on the emerging preferred concept (2022) and consideration for the relevant policy drivers and changes since the Study paused in mid-2018. Section 6.0 of the Planning Justification Report (see Appendix “A”) provides a comprehensive overview of the preferred concept plan.

See Appendix “B” of this report for the Recommended Preferred Concept Plan (2022).

Highlights of the Recommended Preferred Concept

Highlights of the preferred concept include:

Land Use / Built Form

- Building heights: 21 storeys for the west tower and 22 storeys for the east tower
- John Street public view corridor with a minimum width of 18 metres
- Stepping down of built form toward Lake Ontario
- 3-storey podium/street wall along Lakeshore Road
- Active at-grade uses like commercial, retail and restaurants
- Focus on a strong pedestrian relationship to the streets and public spaces

Public Realm

- Enhance Brant Street as a gateway to the Downtown, the Waterfront and the Waterfront Trail
- Enhance the entrance to Spencer Smith Park and the Brant Street public view corridor
- Additional public parkland identified on the west and south sides of the Subject Site:
 - West side: 0.13 ha
 - South side: 0.05 ha
 - Total: 0.18 ha
- Provide a John Street public view corridor and inclusion of a privately-owned public space (POPS)
- Maintain existing trees along Lakeshore Road

Mobility and Access

- Remove existing vehicular access at the foot of Brant Street
- Site access for parking and loading from Elizabeth Street
- Active Transportation route along Lakeshore Road, including a painted buffered bike lane as identified in the City's Cycling Master Plan
- No surface parking on site

2.2 Final Report - Implementation

Draft Official Plan Amendment

The Study recommends an Official Plan Amendment (OPA) to the in-force OP to implement the findings of the Study.

A draft OPA to the in-force OP is appended to the Planning Justification Report (Appendix "A").

The OPA will provide a site-specific framework that will guide development of the subject site. The OPA will also include the implementation of site-specific directions, including those related to massing and scale, transportation and public open spaces.

Key policies from the Draft OPA include the following:

- Objectives related to on-site parks and open spaces;
- Site specific height and density requirements;
- Parking and vehicular access; and
- Key view corridors and vistas.

Future Zoning By-law Amendment

A Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) will be required to implement the OPA. The Study recommends that a rezoning process take place in the future to consider the Preferred Concept. Furthermore, the Study provides that:

“A future rezoning process, supported by technical studies and further evaluation, would allow for flexibility to achieve an interesting built form that would better respond to the landmark nature of this site. This ZBA process would take place in the future and would advance additional engagement through the statutory public process. It would allow for the principles of this Study to be further advanced and explored through meaningful active engagement with the public and stakeholders of this project. Furthermore, a rezoning in the future would allow for community benefits to be leveraged through Section 37.” (or in accordance with alternative benefit charges).

Site-Specific Urban Design Guidelines

The Study recommends site-specific urban design guidelines that will apply to the development of the Subject Site.

The intent of the site-specific urban design guidelines is to augment and enhance the City existing urban design documents by providing site-specific guidance related to the conditions and context of the site. They will work together with the guidance provided in the City’s design documents to implement the Vision and Principles established through the Study’s consultation process phase and subsequently endorsed in principle by Council in June 2018.

The site-specific urban design guidelines are provided in Section 6.3 of the Study (Appendix “A”).

The recommended site-specific urban design guidelines provide guidance with regards to:

- Built Form (Building Placement; Building Height, Massing and Transition; Tower Separation; Podium Height; and Setbacks / Stepbacks);
- Access and Mobility; and
- Public Realm (John Street View Corridor; Spencer Smith Park; Lakeshore Road; and Elizabeth Street).

2.3 Staff Position on The Study's Recommendations

Staff are supportive of the recommendations as outlined in the Study, including the preferred concept plan and implementation tools, for the following reasons, as outlined in Section 10 of the Study (Appendix "A" to this report):

- Delivers a vibrant mix of uses that will reinforce and support the continuing evolution of the Downtown;
- Has regard for matters of Provincial, Regional and Local Municipal policies and guidelines;
- Includes tall mixed-use buildings with commercial uses at grade, and residential and/or hotel uses which address many Provincial, Regional objectives and aligns with the overall directions established by ROPA 48;
- Achieves the City's vision as articulated in the in-force OP (1997) and considers the policy direction of the new OP (2020);
- Provides residents and jobs and public open spaces in this central location that will further support the creation of a complete community; and,
- Creates a special place by balancing significant new redevelopment with public amenities and accessible open spaces.

2.4 Completion of The Waterfront Hotel Planning Study

As per the project Terms of Reference (Appendix "C" of this report), it is staff's opinion the completion of the Study has been fulfilled with the delivery of The Planning Partnership's Planning Justification Report.

The intent of the Study is to guide the review and consideration of site-specific applications for the subject site.

Given that site specific applications have been submitted for the subject site, it is staff's recommendation that Council consider the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study findings in its consideration of the site-specific development applications for 2020 Lakeshore Road.

Strategy/process

In early 2022, the Study resumed where the work plan left off in 2018 to build upon and advance the work completed in 2017-2018 and community input received during the earlier phases of the Study. The final phases of the Study have had regard for the current Provincial, Regional and local policy framework, the current and planned context in the downtown, as well as further public engagement opportunities throughout February 2022.

As directed by City Council on January 11, 2022, the Study has been completed expeditiously to inform the review of any development proposal on this site in accordance with the policies of the Official Plan.

In staff's opinion, the completed Study presented in the Final Planning Justification Report satisfies Part III, Subsection 5.5.9.2 l) of the in-force OP with respect to the completion of a master plan that addresses the integration of the subject site with the publicly owned lands to the south and west and the private development to the east, and addresses other matters such as preservation of lake views and enhancements to the public realm.

Options Considered

The Study considered a wide range of considerations in developing first, design concepts, the various emerging preferred concepts and the recommended preferred concept for the subject site. As per the Terms of Reference (Appendix "C" to this report), the Study methodology included:

- Site and Context Review;
- Background and technical studies;
- Opportunities and constraints analysis;
- A robust engagement process including workshops, surveys and open houses; and,
- Evaluation of land use concepts based on public feedback, applicable policy framework and urban design considerations.

A wide range of approaches and options were considered in developing the recommended preferred concept.

Financial Matters:

The work completed to date through the Study has been funded by the landowner and administered by the City of Burlington. The study has been completed within their original project budget.

Climate Implications

Not applicable.

Engagement Matters:

A summary of consultation that took place in 2017 and 2018 as part of the Study is described in Section 2.0 of [PB-23-18](#). “What We Heard” workshop reports (June 2017, July 2017 and September 2017) prepared by The Planning Partnership are appended to the Planning Justification Report (Appendix “A”).

As discussed in Section 2.1 of this report, further community and stakeholder engagement took place in February 2022 to inform the development of the preferred concept, including a virtual public open house and public survey.

Engagement on the Emerging Preferred Concept (2022)

Building upon engagement completed as part of the Study in 2017 and 2018, additional engagement was undertaken in 2022 as the study resumed.

On February 15, 2022 a virtual public open house was held to provide an overview of the study process and hear from the public. The project team presented an emerging preferred concept (2022), followed by a question and answer period.

Following the virtual public open house, participants were asked to share their feedback on the emerging preferred concept (2022) by emailing the staff project lead or visiting the Study’s Get Involved Burlington page to submit feedback through an online portal. Get Involved Burlington also provided a copy of the public meeting presentation, video recording and an overview of the emerging preferred concept highlights. Feedback was received until Tuesday March 1, 2022 and shared with the project team to inform the final preferred concept.

In total, 175 responses were received, including:

- 19 emails;
- 2 letters via email; and
- 154 responses via the Get Involved Burlington survey.

For a snapshot of the comments received on the emerging preferred concept (2022), see pages 17-18 of the study report (Appendix “A” of this report).

See Appendix “D” of this report for all feedback received on the emerging preferred concept (2022).

Other Tactics

The following engagement tactics were used to notify members of the community about the opportunities to engage on the emerging preferred concept (2022):

- Email notices through Get Involved Burlington;
 - Area-specific mailout;
 - Digital screen as (City Facilities);
 - Media Release;
 - Burlington Post – City Update; and
 - Social Media, including a Facebook event, Instagram and Twitter.
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Conclusion:

Staff recommends Council receive the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study, City of Burlington, Planning Justification Report dated March 23, 2022 prepared by The Planning Partnership Limited, and endorse, in principle, the preferred concept for the subject site together with the draft Official Plan Amendment, directions for a future Zoning By-law amendment and site-specific Urban Design Guidelines. The Study provides a strategic framework to guide the review and consideration of site-specific applications for the subject site. Staff recommends that Council consider the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study findings in Council's consideration of the site-specific development applications for 2020 Lakeshore Road. The findings of the Waterfront Hotel Planning Study establish a framework that will contribute to the vibrant downtown area and enhance the community's access to the waterfront and the downtown.

Respectfully submitted,

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Appendices:

- A. Burlington Waterfront Hotel Planning Study Planning Justification Report prepared by The Planning Partnership Limited (March 23, 2022)
- B. Preferred Concept (2022) prepared by The Planning Partnership Limited (March 21, 2022)
- C. City of Burlington Brant & Lakeshore Planning Study Terms of Reference (January 22, 2015)
- D. Feedback Received on the Emerging Preferred (2022)

Report Approval:

All reports are reviewed and/or approved by Department Director, the Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director of Legal Services & Corporation Counsel.