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Subject: Concerns with Application to Expand a Dog Park Proposed for New Street / Drury Lane  
Date: Tuesday, April 19, 2022 2:01:25 AM

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Re: Agenda Item 12.4 (G.) - Leash Free Site Preference - Ward 2 , Environment, Infrastructure & Community Services Meeting

Being born and raised in Burlington, I am a 46 year resident, having resided in two homes in the downtown core. I frequent the proposed area 3-7 days per week, on my own, and with my family during the day, night, and on holidays. I am writing as a Burlington resident but I am also a member of the Burlington Tennis Club and an active parent and naturalist. I am also a part time dog walker and love nature.

I am opposed to the proposed leash-free dog park for many reasons, including: it's size, it's proximity to the tennis club and parking lot, parking capacity, safety, accessibility, loss of beautiful gem of Burlington, loss of trees, loss of open spaces, and poor site selection / community engagement process. In a nut shell, it does not follow the City of Burlington's official plan objectives. There has to be a better solution and it would be such as waste to rush this decision and proceed with a poorly designed plan that will negatively impact the neighbourhood in more ways than improving it.

My rationale explained:

### **1) Parking Capacity:**

- The shared parking lot is already unable to handle the capacity from the existing amenities, namely the Drury Lane Theatre, Lawn Bowling Club, and Burlington Tennis Club. To use these facilities, I frequently have to park at the YMCA across the street.

- Parking was a problem last year and Drury Lane Theatre was not doing productions due to Covid. They have since started their shows and parking is already an issue without adding an additional amenity for the same parking area.

- I do not believe there is additional capacity for more cars in this already limited space. The plan does not allow for additional parking or an alternate solution to engage active transportation in lieu of parking (i.e. bike racks for perimeter buildings) outlined in the proposal.

**2) Does not Align with City Grows Principle:** This plan fails to meet the City of Burlington's 'City that Grows' objectives through promoting design excellence at every scale to create safe, accessible, attractive, vibrant and sociable places that people are drawn to'. Specifically, in regards to safety, attractive, and sociable places.

### **Safety:**

- Reduced visibility: The parking lot would be completely surrounded with small exit points which are hidden from the street and public view: one one-way hidden driveway to enter, one one-way driveway to exit, a service sidewalk pathway with blocked view that goes between

the Lawn Bowling Club and tennis courts / behind the senior centre, and a sidewalk that goes towards the Tennis Club. If someone were to be in trouble or have a medical emergency, the dog park and existing building structures along the perimeter would block the view from cars and / or pedestrians going by.

- The proposed dog park amendment has not incorporated Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design by taking into consideration the public safety when using the parking lot. In turn, it creates opportunity for criminal activity by creating blind spots to entrances to both Drury Lane Theatre & the Lawn Bowling Club and reduced visibility from the street.

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- Loss of perception of being safe: The openness of this space has made it feel safe when going to / from your car at night and being alone around homeless people who frequent and stay in that area of central park.

- There are many seniors that frequent the buildings surrounding the parking lot (lawn bowling, tennis, and Drury Lane Theatre). This could be a vulnerable group that could be the most at risk, through slips / falls with no one to help and a easy target for criminal activity.

- Having the closed in parking area with only one driving exit, and two pedestrian walk ways poses a risk for anyone who was trying to flee a harmful situation. The barriers of fenced in areas combined with buildings results in a high risk situation. Particularly, for those that leave the bordering premises at night, alone to get to their vehicle. I have been there until 11:30 pm on many occasions and would no longer feel safe to do so.

### **Attractive / Sociable:**

- The City of Burlington clearly states in their official plan that major parks and open spaces are essential components of a healthy and sustainable urban area and are intended to be protected. This proposed leash-free dog park is not doing this objective and instead is making the area: less attractive by removing beautiful and healthy trees, more congested by adding fencing and amenities with already limited parking, and less open by closing off the area from use by the general population.

- Goes against the City's plan to preserve open space as part of their complete communities vision.

- The proposed dog park would be an eyesore. Especially compared to its current natural beauty. The space could be better used to have artwork displayed and have social opportunities (i.e. geocaching, picnics, heritage / history piece about the age and type of trees / old Burlington).

- It would be a loss of one of the most beautiful places in the city for parents to bring their kids to climb trees. I bring my children there and they love climbing the trees. They are the most climbable trees we have found in Burlington. We found them by chance, when my daughters attended the tennis camps at Burlington Tennis Club. Talking about them in passing over the years, I discovered that there are other families that go there just to climb the trees and they are well known in the mom circuit from people who are not members of the joint venture groups. These trees with their low and strong limbs, encourage kids to play and be active like we did when I was a kid.

## **Accessible**

- Snow removal in the winter months: There is no plan in the proposal for where snow will be stored when the parking lot is cleared in the winter. The snow has historically been placed on the perimeter on the west and north sides of the parking lot. Since we are looking at ways to use the Burlington Tennis Club in the winter months, the service gates would need to be accessible and could not be blocked. The fence on the proposed dog park should be moved further away from the parking lot to allow for a place to store snow and it should be planned for the fencing to be able to handle the added weight of snow or alternatively to physically remove the snow from the premise.
- It seems like the proposal is being squeezed in. There is no plan for additional crosswalks a traffic light being put in across Drury Lane. It is already challenging to cross the road from the YMCA parking lot, when we can not get parking in the parking lot intended for the shared use of the three soon to be 4 amenities.
- The access points to the dog park are awkward. One is directly from the parking lot, but does not provide space for safety for the dog if one became loose or not on leash while outside of the fenced area and ran in the parking lot. Cars would not see the dog in time which would pose a risk for dog safety being so close to the parking lot. Not enough space for the dog owners to react and get the dog to protect them from harm.
- Having the entrance so close to the parking lot could make putting a leash on seem pointless or unnecessary. Entrances at dog parks in other areas of the city are usually in open spaces preventing mishaps or lots of space to collect their pets with not a lot of people nearby. The parking lot in the proposal is congested and a dog on or off a leash could quickly and easily go behind the vehicle and be at risk of being hit or startling other people who may not be comfortable with dogs and be there for a completely different purpose.

## **3) Site Selection Process:**

- It appears that the community was not engaged enough in the site selection process.
- There was no visible signage displayed that site that this proposal was being brought forward.
- Since finding out about the proposed dog park on Thursday (right before a long weekend), I have some impromptu conversations with dog walkers who frequent the area. I was surprised that they also did not know and although they had dogs and used the park often for that purpose, they were not in agreement with the proposed dog park plan.
- I understand that there may be a need for a dog park in downtown Burlington or Ward 2, but I do not feel the proposed leash free dog park size or location is appropriate or ideal. First of all, this location is not in the downtown core, as described in the proposal, and does not fit in the map provided by Burlington Downtown website. [www.BurlingtonDowntown.ca](http://www.BurlingtonDowntown.ca).
- It seems as though this plan is taking a Not In My Backyard Approach (NIMBY) approach, and putting the dog park on the outskirts of the downtown core but saying it is in the downtown core. See map below. On the map, New Street is only shown as far east as Woodland in the grey area which is outside of the downtown boundary. Drury Lane and the area that is proposed, is not visible on the map of Burlington Downtown or in the immediate boundary of it.
- Other areas that are actually within the Burlington downtown core boundary that may make more sense like the open field to the west of Central High School's grounds, Spencer Smith Park, or the west end of Ontario Street. Alternatively, if you are looking for a dog park in the

Central Park area, the area in front of the library, near RYC, or a small section of the open fields would probably work better and have access to more parking.

#### **4) Greening City Community Objective - Save these trees:**

- This proposed leash-free dog park shows a different tree footprint than the actual trees currently in this space, deducing that they will be cutting down trees and planting others. This would be a disappointment to me and so many others.

- Removing the trees and / or fencing them in to no longer be enjoyed by the many children who frequent this area of the park to climb and hang from them, run around and play, sit in their shade, or have picnics under them will be a loss to our community.

- Has a study been done on the health of the trees that they are planning to cut down and how will they be replaced. I have seen the reduction in trees in the area already, I am assuming this was in preparation of this project, but it is important to outline what the City is going to do to protect the existing trees and replace those removed.

- There are many dog owners who walk through the concrete sidewalks within central park (specifically the area of the proposed dog park) for it's quiet and spacious atmosphere. The trees are a main attraction, where people (including myself) often sit under in the shade, have picnics, and get the mental health benefits of being outdoors surrounded by nature.

- For the past three years, I have been a member of the Burlington Tennis Club. While I played, my family would enjoy the treed area between New Street and Drury Lane. While the kids were in lessons and camps, the rest of us would sit in the shade, play in the grass, and climb trees. This year I enrolled my whole family and we planned to spend even more time there.

#### **5) Compatibility with the other Amenities / Impact of adding dog park**

- An impact study has not been properly completed or may have only been considered during Covid - less people because Drury Lane Theatre was not operating. Less people at any given time because of government limitations of # of people inside / outside for all three current amenities. What pedestrian traffic is being seen in that area and what is the space used for.

- Noise of barking and / or yelping could directly impact the guests enjoyment and actors concentration in productions at Drury Lane Theatre, and the enjoyment at both the Lawn Bowling and Tennis Clubs. The noise from dogs playing or fighting could impact tennis tournament outcomes and player rankings from these tournaments. There are 4 members of the National Juniors team who train and play tennis regularly as well as hundreds of tennis players that come from all over Ontario to take part in OTA Tournaments.

- The wildlife that live at that portion of the park are made up of birds, squirrels, and some interesting birds of prey have been seen.

- There is a funeral home across the street, have they been consulted on how it may impact them and their guests

Thank you for bringing my concerns forward.

Victoria Roberts

Lifetime Burlington Resident



