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**Sent:** Friday, November 29, 2024 1:07:18 PM

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**Subject:** Committee of the Whole December 2, 2024 - Staff Report ES-04-24 - Flood Mitigation Strategy

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Mayor Meed-Ward and Members of Council:

On behalf of Carriage Gate Homes and its affiliate companies, this is further to correspondence that you have received from WE HBA regarding Staff Report ES-04-24. We fully support the comments and recommendations that they have provided.

We have engaged expert environmental planners, hydrologists and floodplain engineers to assist us with our review of the staff report and the detailed studies that have been completed to-date. In addition, we have had detailed discussions with City Staff and Conservation Halton (CH) regarding potential flood issues and the proposed mitigation strategy. Building upon the comments provided by WE HBA, please consider the following:

As noted in the staff report, through the Official Plan Review process in 2019, the City of Burlington commenced a review of potential flood risks within the Lower Rambo Creek Watershed. Conservation Halton has updated its flood hazard mapping across the watershed including the Burlington GO MTSA and the Downtown. The recommendations provided by City Staff include the completion of a detailed study to assess the benefits and costs associated with a program of infrastructure improvements and mitigation measures that are needed within these areas. This is needed for the City to fully realize the redevelopment of the Burlington GO MTSA and Downtown areas. These areas are essential contributors to the City's Housing Pledge to the Province of Ontario and the successful implementation of the City's Housing Strategy.

While Conservation Halton has assisted the City of Burlington to identify potentially affected areas and the associated risks, the City of Burlington is ultimately responsible for the implementation of necessary flood mitigation solutions to protect public health and safety. Now that hazards and risks have been identified, the City of Burlington has prepared a course of action to respond to and mitigate the risks. We commend City Staff for the work that they have done and Report ES-04-24 clearly indicates the next steps needed to implement a comprehensive flood mitigation strategy.

Most importantly, the Staff Report acknowledges that solutions should align with the nature of the area and the specific issues that are being addressed. City staff recognize that these lands are urban in nature and as such, urban solutions are required. We strongly support this approach and request that within an urban environment, a degree of flexibility is needed to accomplish the purpose and intent of the mitigation strategy and to protect public

safety. Commonsense urban engineering solutions building on existing precedents such as flood walls will need to be considered.

The City's staff report seizes this opportunity to present a preliminary summary of a number of mitigation options and alternatives and identifies the need to carefully execute the program. This is outlined in the Staff Report and includes:

- The City and Conservation Halton must work together to update flood hazard and flood risk existing condition modelling based on any new information as recommended by the City's Phase 2 Study and CH to inform/support decision making for potential infrastructure improvements and potential revision to CH Flood Hazard Mapping as part of the proposed next study referred to as the "Downtown Flood Hazards Mitigation Environmental Assessment".
- Continued engagement with the development community and their consultants, to collaborate on the development of possible alternatives to minimize the local risks and impact of floodplains and spills.
- Advance the Hager Rambo Diversion Channel (HRDC) and Rambo Creek Flood Hazard Mitigation EA (upstream of Fairview Street) in coordination with CH staff.
- Endorse and support CH's Spill Flood Hazard Policy update.
- Request that the Province work with City and Conservation Halton staff to discuss competing Provincial objectives and policies related to growth and development and natural hazards in Strategic Growth Areas, explore policy options, and advance Provincial technical guideline updates. Some of these policy options should consider matters such as:
  - Consideration for a different hazard class in built up areas which no longer exhibit "natural" flood plains due to significant enclosures and channelization
  - Using elements of the draft Spill Flood Hazard Policy to examine means of distinguishing hazards attributable to riverine flows vs. those related to spills
  - Endorsing the use of properly engineered structural techniques (for example flood walls) to allow for removal of hazards subject to a high standard of engineering care including long term commitments to operations and management.

We fully support staff's recommendations and we encourage the City to consider our comments, expedite the mitigation program and work expeditiously with us and the building industry. WE HBA and its members want to be part of the process and the solutions as we are all committed to safe and complete communities in Burlington. As we are all working together towards common goals, a coordinated effort is in everyone's best interest and we request that we be part of this process.

**In conclusion:**

Although flood mitigation is being appropriately addressed, the City and the building industry now find themselves in a very unusual predicament. The existing policies and procedures established by the Ministry of Natural Resources conflict with the policies and directions established by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to build more housing faster to address the housing crisis. While it appears that the solutions proposed by City Staff will address the MNR mandate, the ability of the City of Burlington to expedite new housing is in jeopardy. Therefore, a balanced approach is essential. To do this, we request the City of Burlington to continue processing existing applications and accepting new development applications that should be evaluated on the basis of their planning merits. Each development is required to satisfy the regulatory requirements established by Conservation Halton and the processing of development applications by the City does not compromise Conservation Halton authority and there is no additional risk to the City and its development partners. We all agree that preserving the health and safety of existing and new communities is the most important consideration, yet the production of new housing is also a critical Provincial directive that should not and cannot be compromised. This will place the City in the best position to fulfill its commitments to the Province and implement its Housing Strategy.

As noted above, in addition to participating in discussions with the Province, we are happy to discuss our submission with Council and city staff to find solutions.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Regards,

**Mark Bales | MCIP, RPP, MLAI**



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